



PROJECT MUSE®

Mongrel Nation

Dawson, Ashley

Published by University of Michigan Press

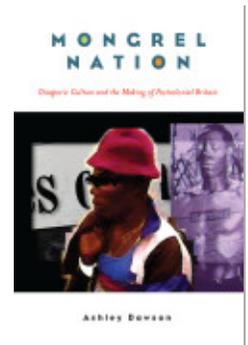
Dawson, Ashley.

Mongrel Nation: Diasporic Culture and the Making of Postcolonial Britain.

University of Michigan Press, 2007.

Project MUSE., <a href="

<https://muse.jhu.edu/>.



➔ For additional information about this book

<https://muse.jhu.edu/book/7061>



Colonization in Reverse

An Introduction

THE ICONIC IMAGE OF POST-1945 MIGRATION TO BRITAIN UNWINDS ON a grainy old Pathé newsreel. Standing on the wooden deck of a battered troop carrier named the *Empire Windrush* as it docks at Tilbury on 21 June 1948, the calypso singer Lord Kitchener offers up a lyrical performance of a song composed specially for the occasion. Lord Kitchener's "London Is the Place for Me" conveys the immense optimism felt by this initial group of migrants to the colonial metropolis:

London is the place for me
London, this lovely city
You can go to France or America
India, Asia, or Australia
But you must come back to London City

Well believe me, I am speaking broad-mindedly
I am glad to know my mother country
I've been travelling to countries years ago
But this is the place I wanted to know
London, that's the place for me

To live in London you're really comfortable
Because the English people are very much sociable

They take you here and they take you there
And they make you feel like a millionaire
So London, that's the place for me¹

Lord Kitchener boarded the *Empire Windrush* with his fellow singer Lord Beginner at Kingston docks, Jamaica, departing for Britain appropriately enough on Empire Day, the twenty-fourth of May. Four hundred and ninety other predominantly male passengers from various islands in the Caribbean accompanied the calypsonians. "London Is the Place for Me," which Lord Kitchener composed during the voyage across the Atlantic, is the fantasy of a colonial subject who imagines himself returning to the welcoming bosom of his mother country. In retrospect, the song seems painfully naive. But, of course, there is a history behind this precarious innocence. Schoolchildren in Britain's many tropical colonies had been fed a diet of British literature for a half-century or so by the time Lord Kitchener set sail for Britain.² According to colonial ideology, Britain originated democracy, the rule of law, and the ethics of good sportsmanship.³ How could she fail to provide an adequate welcome to her colonial sons and daughters? Sung in Standard English rather than the Trinidadian creole that typified most calypso songs, "London Is the Place for Me" dramatizes the crushing weight of Britain's colonial educational apparatus, which taught colonial subjects that they should be proud members of such a great and beneficent empire. Lord Kitchener's own bombastic sobriquet itself appears to testify to the tenacious hold of this imperial mythology on members of the colonial working classes.

Yet the buoyant optimism of the song also illustrates the powerful feeling of agency inspired by this voyage to the metropolis. The Caribbean men and women on board the *Empire Windrush* had, after all, booked passage from the colonial periphery to London, the center of the world at the time. In fact, a significant number of the boat's passengers had already been to Britain, helping to defend the motherland from the Nazi onslaught during the Second World War.⁴ Walking down the gangplank at Tilbury, many of these migrants from the Caribbean felt that they were coming to collect the reward for their faithfulness as British subjects.⁵ Others, intent on helping to rebuild the devastated motherland, saw the voyage to Britain as a continuation of their wartime sacrifice.⁶ Some, Lord Kitchener apparently among them, sim-

ply sought the affluent and cosmopolitan life represented by the London of their dreams.

Would the British cities inhabited by these Caribbean migrants and those who arrived later from Asia and Africa correspond to the glamorous image conjured up in Lord Kitchener's calypso? In a poem published early in the postwar period, Jamaican poet Louise Bennett poses precisely this question. As the host of a BBC radio weekly focusing on Anglophone Caribbean culture during the late 1940s and early 1950s, Bennett was particularly well placed to address the issue of migration from the colonies. Acting as a cultural broker, Bennett documented life in the Caribbean for a British audience, recording the experiences of migrants who arrived in the metropolis filled with the high hopes instilled by the colonial educational system. Her poem "Colonization in Reverse," written in a playful Creole vernacular voice that evokes the lively oral culture of her island's peasantry and working class, reflects a sense of excitement and ambition similar to that found in Lord Kitchener's work.⁷ As its title suggests, however, Bennett's poem is also permeated by a witheringly ironic attitude toward the imperial legacy that connects Caribbean colonial subjects to the British motherland. Migration to the metropolis is not simply a footloose escape from the parochialism of the islands for Bennett. Her poem implicitly suggests that this migration is also a willful and aggressive act, one that springs from the bloodstained history of colonialism and slavery in the Caribbean:

Wat a joyful news, Miss Mattie,
I feel like me heart gwine burs'
Jamaica people colonizin
Englan in reverse.

By de hundred, by de t'ousan
From country and from town,
By de ship-load, by de plane-load
Jamaica is Englan boun.

Dem a-pour out o' Jamaica,
Everybody future plan
Is fe get a big-time job
An settle in de mother lan.

Wat a islan! What a people!
Man an woman, old an young
Jusa pack dem bag an baggage
An tun history upside dung!⁸

Miss Lou, the opinionated and cantankerous persona whom Bennett employed in many of her dramatic monologues, is clearly given to comically hyperbolic accounts of contemporary events. Although her zealous description of the postwar exodus from Jamaica may magnify the truth in order to impress her friend Miss Mattie, it nonetheless is shot through with stinging insights concerning the historical conditions that occasioned this migration. It is patently clear to Miss Lou, for instance, that the relation between Britain and Jamaica is far from the benign one conjured up by the cliché image of the motherland. Instead, that relation is grounded in exploitative and at times violent colonial power. To migrate to the motherland is, then, to issue a radical challenge to this history of subjugation. The passengers on the *Empire Windrush*, Miss Lou says, turn history upside down.⁹

Like Lord Kitchener, Miss Lou acknowledges that Jamaicans are packing their bags for economic reasons, participating in the cycles of poverty-driven migration that the people of the Caribbean endured after the abolition of slavery and the economic decline of the sugar plantations. But the passage to Britain was not simply another arduous trek in search of a decent wage, with all the pain of ruptured family relations and cultural alienation that such a history implies. Rather, “Colonization in Reverse” describes a mass migration that overturned the spatial and cultural apartheid cementing colonial rule. For despite the powerful fiction of British subjecthood, which suggested that all the members of the empire were equal in the eyes of the reigning king or queen, imperial power was based on a firm distinction between colonial metropolis and colonized periphery. Subjecthood and citizenship were distinct and uneven categories.

There was a tight economic logic to this unequal imperial dispensation.¹⁰ Resource extraction took place in the colonial periphery: slaves from Africa, sugar from the Caribbean, cotton from India. Conversely, manufacturing and the accumulation of capital took place primarily in the metropolis.¹¹ Both poles in this uneven relationship were essential components of the system, but they had to be kept distinct. If the colonies began to manufacture and sell finished commodities outside

the sphere of imperial preference, for instance, they would have a powerful lever with which to pry themselves out of a subordinating colonial relationship. By the 1930s, the campaign of India's Congress Party for precisely such economic and political autonomy, known as *swaraj*, had gained critical momentum. In addition, waves of strikes and radical union agitation spread across the Caribbean and Africa as the worldwide economic depression hit home during the late 1930s, in many cases unleashing movements for political independence.¹² In all of these cases, popular struggle focused not simply on national autonomy, but on overcoming the underdevelopment that colonial power patently imposed on the periphery. Driven by this history of uneven development, the migration of colonial subjects to Britain brought the economic subordination integral to the colonial system home to the metropolis, sparking correspondingly intense political struggles.¹³

There was a potent cultural logic to this brutal arrangement as well. Postwar Britain inherited a tradition of imperial arrogance. For instance, during negotiations that led to the Atlantic Charter, Churchill sought to diminish any suggestion that proclamations concerning the Allies' fight for democracy in World War II might apply equally to the colonies.¹⁴ Although there was certainly an element of cold political and economic calculation in Churchill's hypocritical stance, cultural attitudes concerning the inferiority of colonial subjects played an equally important role. The colonies were not sufficiently mature for self-rule, British leaders such as Churchill believed. Implicit in this tutelary position was a long history of racist state power and ideology. During the middle to late Victorian era, the zenith of British power, European imperialists legitimated their subjugation of other parts of the globe using a variety of pseudoscientific biological theories that ascribed natural dominance to northern Europeans. Racial theorists such as John Knox drew on social Darwinist doctrines to argue for the supremacy of the European racial "type," which was conceived as absolutely distinct from other human populations.¹⁵ This spurious appropriation of Darwinian theory assumed a linear, teleological model of temporal evolution and imposed this model on the space of the globe. The metropolis was seen as the summit of a refigured Great Chain of Being, with the colonies representing an evolutionary prehistory of modern humanity.¹⁶ A natural corollary of this spatiotemporal grid was a concern with the possible degeneration of Europeans when they encountered the less evolved peoples of the colonial periphery.¹⁷ Crystallizing in eugenics,

late imperial concern with the purity of European bloodlines led to the proliferation of campaigns for improved birthrates and selective sterilization under the aegis of the racial state. After 1945, state-mandated management of sexuality in the quest to prevent the proliferation of mongrel breeds was transferred from the colonies to postimperial Britain.¹⁸

These ideologies of difference and innate superiority were far harder to dismantle than the political-economic system of imperial preference. Long after Britain lost its colonies, it retained its insular sense of cultural superiority. Indeed, the more potency they lost on the global stage after the eclipse of imperialism, the harder some Britons clung to the illusory status symbol that covered their bodies—their white skin—and the immutable cultural difference that it seemed to signify. Of course, this reified model of national identity had no historical foundation. As long ago as 1700, Daniel Defoe described the English as a “Mongrel Half-Bred Race.”¹⁹ Ethnic and national boundaries and the legal definitions that police them are mutable, and are always subject to dispute and negotiation.²⁰ The exclusionary and insular character of British national self-definition is in fact evidence of the unstable, mixed-up identity of Britons. Stability, after all, is only sought in situations of significant flux.²¹ The migration of colonial subjects to the British metropolis forced this mongrel nation to reckon with its long history of imperialism and racism.²²

It is far from clear that Britain has reconciled itself to this legacy. Admittedly, the British government has acknowledged racial inequality and persecution through legislation such as the Race Relations Act and has engaged in remarkably candid examinations of institutional racism in recent years such as the MacPherson Report. Nevertheless, over the last half-century British political leaders have repeatedly resorted to the scapegoating of so-called ethnic minority groups for the nation’s social problems.²³ Indeed, what Stuart Hall called “popular authoritarianism” has become a fundamental characteristic of British political and cultural life. Writing in the context of the manifold crises of the late 1970s, Hall and his colleagues at Birmingham’s Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies argued that British leaders were dismantling social democracy and the redistributive role of the state. Both dominant parties legitimated this transformation through an ideology of law and order that singled out Britain’s nonwhite population as the cause of the nation’s economic and social ills and that subjected them to punitive forms of

policing that, in turn, catalyzed uprisings which tended to confirm white stereotypes about black lawlessness.²⁴ While this popular authoritarianism may have been particularly evident during the crisis conditions of the 1970s, Britain's black and Asian populations were ostracized and targeted for repressive policing and immigration legislation from the onset of mass migration. They remain so today, as the behavior of New Labour after 9/11, which I discuss in my conclusion, has made clear. From the Notting Hill riots of the late 1950s to the murder of Stephen Lawrence forty years later, Britain has a long tradition of both institutional and popular racism that legitimates harsh treatment of those who are not perceived as "native." Such enduringly exclusionary discourses of national identity and the popular authoritarian ideologies they help legitimate are an integral element not simply of domestic policies such as refugee and asylum laws, but also of Britain's enduringly imperial stance in the world, as the nation's role in the "War on Terror" suggests.

Mongrel Nation documents the history of resistance by African, Asian, Caribbean, and white Britons to such insular representations of national identity.²⁵ As was true of anticolonial culture in general, such resistance was never exclusively reactive. Instead, antiracist struggles galvanized the cultural resources of oppressed peoples, creating dynamic new aesthetic and political constellations whose transforming thrust exceeded the struggle immediately at hand.²⁶ In postcolonial Britain, resistance to exclusionary nationalism led immigrants and their children to invoke the heritage of internationalism that developed during anticolonial struggles in Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean. Diasporic communities in Britain denaturalized the confining boundaries of the nation-state by marshaling these internationalist traditions. In addition, by enacting fresh ways of being British, members of the postcolonial diaspora helped to reconfigure social categories such as race, gender, and sexuality that cemented conventional definitions of national identity.²⁷ Although many white Britons found the novel cultural practices of postcolonial migrants profoundly threatening, the newness introduced to Britain by members of the Asian and African diaspora also offered important routes of escape for many from stultifying local traditions. Investigating the legacy of Britain's imperial past, *Mongrel Nation* provides a historical account of the novel identities created in the factories, dance halls, streets, and other contact zones of postcolonial Britain.²⁸

THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF RACISM IN
TWENTIETH-CENTURY BRITAIN

So-called ethnic minorities currently constitute less than 6 percent of Britain's total population.²⁹ Approximately 30 percent of this number is of African descent, 61 percent are of Asian descent, and 9 percent classify themselves as of mixed-race background. Of course, these groups are disproportionately concentrated in urban areas, where they often constitute the majority population of any particular borough, making the designation "ethnic minority" particularly misleading. In addition, a significant percentage of Britain's African, Asian, and Caribbean population was born in Britain.³⁰ Unlike the United States, which actively encouraged skilled immigrants from around the world to settle within its borders after 1965, Britain ended primary immigration from its former colonies in 1971. As a result of this policy, more people have left Britain during the last fifty years than have immigrated into the country during the same period. What then explains the moral panic over inundation by foreigners that vexes postimperial Britain?

The increasingly restrictive immigration laws of the postcolonial era have long been interpreted as a response to popular racism.³¹ Typically, the racial bigotry of substantial numbers of ordinary Britons is seen as having placed pressure on the state to deal with civil discord. Leading members of both liberal and conservative parties, it is argued, responded to white racism such as the 1958 Notting Hill riots by enacting increasingly restrictive immigration legislation. During the period after 1948, such legislation gradually led to the transformation of British subjecthood from a universal category based on the extensive geography of the empire (*ius soli*) to an exclusionary identity based on notions of racial purity (*ius sanguinis*).³² However, this reading of Britain's postcolonial racial politics ignores the driving force of the state and the elite groups that dominate it in codifying forms of racial difference and in catalyzing racist reactions to the presence of postcolonial subjects in Britain. Indeed, state racism preceded popular antipathy to the presence of nonwhite immigrants in Britain by at least a century.³³ Postcolonial racism in Britain has been seen by critics who ignore this lineage of state racism as a product of the inherent xenophobia of individual Britons, a phenomenon that is completely divorced from state policies and their underlying economic motives.³⁴ British society is consequently viewed as an undifferentiated aggregate, a description that derives from stereo-

typical discourses on national character. Against this ascription of mass pathology, *Mongrel Nation* insists on the embedding of cultural phenomena such as racism in a political-economic framework.³⁵ Processes of racialization in Britain were clearly initiated by the state after 1948 through particular government policies. Although policymakers often clashed over the measures the government should adopt, their decisions were always informed by the economic imperatives and crises produced by Britain's declining imperial power. By tracking the novel articulations between culture, the state, and capital that arose as Britain lost its imperial hegemony following 1948, *Mongrel Nation* captures the relational nature of the interlocking cultural, political, and economic processes at play across contemporary geographic spaces.

The British state and the elite who dominated and directed it reacted to their imperial subjects' claims to freedom of movement and equal opportunity after 1945 with hostility bred from the attitudes of racial supremacy fostered by centuries of imperial power. The policies they instituted after the arrival of the *Empire Windrush* played a pivotal role in disseminating exclusionary definitions of national belonging and are hence directly culpable for the rise of racism and fascism in postimperial Britain.³⁶ For example, when the *Empire Windrush* docked in Tilbury, Clement Attlee, the prime minister, described the nonwhite imperial subjects who disembarked as engaging in an "incursion" into Britain and made minimal provision for their successful resettlement in the metropolis.³⁷ Another member of the Cabinet suggested transporting those aboard the *Empire Windrush* to East Africa, where they might be of economic utility without sullyng the blood of Britain's white population. Yet Attlee and his Cabinet ultimately made no attempt to ban the entry of colonial subjects. This ambivalence on the part of the policymaking elite was a product of the economic and political contradictions in which Britain found itself following the war. Of course, Britain had just won a war against fascist powers whose doctrines of racial supremacy formed an explicit and essential part of their national ideology; in such a context, the British government could ill afford to adopt overtly racist policies. In addition, deeply in debt and with a shattered infrastructure, Britain needed the captive markets and opportunities for capital accumulation afforded by imperial preferences and the sterling area in order to rebuild its economy and shore up its eroding status as a world power.³⁸ Yet settler-populated dominions such as Canada and Australia were growing increasingly restive with the forms of political

and economic subordination required by the commonwealth system. In addition, India's long struggle for independence finally bore fruit in 1947. Faced with such threats to the empire, Attlee's government passed a Nationality Act in 1948 that established the universality of British subjecthood, offering a powerful symbolic reaffirmation of the imperial system. By proclaiming formal equality throughout the empire, the 1948 Nationality Act sought to defuse anticolonial nationalist movements and to placate the declared anti-imperialist position of the United States, the preeminent capitalist power after the war.³⁹ However, this measure conformed to the system of global apartheid that had characterized British imperialism: imperial subjects were to be formally equal but geographically separate. As a consequence, the government moved to fill the postwar labor shortage by recruiting European—in other words, white—workers rather than citizens from the colonies.⁴⁰ When colonial subjects like those aboard the *Empire Windrush* began to exercise the rights the Nationality Act guaranteed to them by migrating independently to the motherland, the forms of racial hierarchy and subordination that underpinned the empire and the government's labor recruitment scheme quickly surfaced. The government's proclaimed inclusive legal model of national belonging, it became clear, fundamentally contradicted the exclusionary definitions of national identity developed during Britain's colonial expansion and imperial rule.

Despite the small number of immigrants arriving from the colonies during the early postwar years, the increasingly apparent hostility of both Labour and Tory governments to their presence in Britain had a significant impact on the conditions under which they lived.⁴¹ For instance, despite the apparent clash of interests between employers seeking workers and the government, which, as the 1949 *Report of the Royal Commission on Population* made clear, feared racial hybridity, official hostility toward nonwhite immigration had an economic functionality. By eroding the political and social rights of migrants, government policies made them more vulnerable to superexploitation. As it had to a more limited extent during the interwar era, British capital attempted to employ workers from abroad to further accumulation following 1945. Migrant labor in general is attractive to employers because the state has to bear little of the cost of their social reproduction.⁴² With the full employment that accompanied the economic boom of the 1950s and early 1960s in Britain giving employers relatively small leverage on workers, migrants from the colonies played the vital role of replacing

white workers who refused to take up physically demanding and socially undesirable forms of manual labor.⁴³ Despite their impressive qualifications on average, British employers and the state slotted these nonwhite immigrants exclusively into unskilled positions. This policy could only be legitimated on racist grounds: nonwhites were perceived as simply unfit for skilled tasks, despite their formal qualifications. By failing to challenge such employment policies, the British government implicitly gave its imprimatur to strategies of subordination derived directly from colonial policy. In addition, as it did in European countries such as France and Germany that encouraged labor migration from their colonies or poorer neighbors, migration to Britain played the vital role of restraining wage increases during the postwar period.⁴⁴ By tacitly aiding employers in their search for a more “flexible” and hence more easily exploitable workforce, the state helped undermine the power of organized labor and advanced a strategy of accumulation based on the fragmentation of the working class along racial lines.

Notwithstanding the utility of migrant labor in the postwar era, the policymaking elite evinced significant resistance to the presence of colonial and postcolonial subjects in Britain. Although the commitment to maintaining imperial power initially prevented the state from moving officially to restrict nonwhite immigration, various administrative measures were adopted that were intended to discourage would-be migrants. Colonial officials, for example, were encouraged to make passports far more difficult to come by at points of embarkation. Such measures did little to offset the economic pressures that encouraged emigration, and, as migrants continued to arrive in the metropolis, British policymakers became actively involved in legislating a transparently racial model of national identity that represented some British subjects as more authentically British than others. In March 1954, a small number of Tory members of Parliament began a debate by alleging that “immigrants” were abusing the welfare state and that “virile young men” from the colonies posed a threat to law and order.⁴⁵ Two years later the Tory government established a working party on immigration whose final report was not published since it failed to find substantial economic grounds to restrict immigration. However, when racist riots erupted in 1958 in Nottingham and in London’s Notting Hill neighborhood, the government found the excuse it needed to introduce legislation restricting immigration. Although the rioters were universally condemned by the press and by members of the government as

hooligans, Prime Minister Macmillan argued that their violence necessitated the introduction of legislation that would maintain public order by restricting immigration from the Caribbean and South Asia. The sheer presence of nonwhite citizens was thus seen as a natural and inevitable catalyst of white discontent, making black Britons responsible for the disorder produced by racist whites. By portraying the Caribbean residents of British cities as the catalysts of racial conflict, the government conveniently brushed over its own role in fostering the social conditions that helped generate conflicts such as the Notting Hill riots. Cuts in spending for social services such as housing provision and education during the post-*Windrush* era helped ensure competition between Commonwealth migrants and the most marginalized sections of the white working class. State policies thereby fostered conflicts that exacerbated tensions deriving from the postwar strategy of capital accumulation, which often pitted white and black workers against one another.⁴⁶ As it had in the colonies, this strategy of divide-and-conquer produced predictable forms of conflict along the reified racial lines that the state itself had played the primary role in fostering.

Just over a decade after establishing the liberal Nationality Act of 1948, the British government effectively if not formally repealed the right of imperial subjects to reside in Britain. The Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1962 subjected immigrants from the colonies to numerical controls based on their skills and job prospects, notwithstanding their formal citizenship as British subjects. No corresponding effort was made to control migration from Ireland and other European nations. This act thus codified the forms of racist discourse that had circulated informally among members of both Labour and Tory governments since the arrival of the *Empire Windrush*.⁴⁷ Ironically, the act precipitated a vast increase in the number of migrants, who sought to gain entrance to the promised motherland before the gates were slammed shut. Further measures to heighten the juridical insularity of British nationality followed in short order. Despite having condemned the 1962 act as racist, the Labour Party shepherded its own restrictive legislation through Parliament only six years later.

The xenophobic discourse that characterized demagogues such as Enoch Powell, whose notorious speech of 1968 predicted “rivers of blood” unless black Britons were rounded up and deported, was the logical outcome of this competition between the mainstream political parties to pass racially exclusionary immigration legislation. During the

mid-1970s, for instance, the explicitly racist and fascist National Front achieved significant electoral impact by calling for the repatriation of all black British citizens, whether or not they had been born in the country. In 1981, Margaret Thatcher effectively inverted this relationship between the radical racist fringe and the mainstream by drafting a new Nationality Act that formally rescinded the provisions of the 1948 act. British national identity, long based on exclusionary informal parameters, at last became a matter of blood belonging.⁴⁸ While explicit talk of repatriation died down following Thatcher's politically astute co-option of the fascist vote, exclusionary definitions of national identity had been codified that sanctioned myriad forms of racist denigration, harassment, and inequality.

The Nationality Act of 1981 also bore the clear stamp of eugenically tinged fears concerning the purity of British bloodlines. Since representations of the nation as a patriarchal family codified in the act of 1948 were no longer tenable because of their blatant gender discrimination, the new act substituted an imagined community of gender equality that was predicated on clearly defined racial boundaries.⁴⁹ As Louise Bennett suggests in "Colonization in Reverse," black women were a particularly virulent problem to both these versions of community. As potential reproducers of difference within the homogeneously conceived body politic, black women as well as people who engaged in sexual relations across cultural and racial lines threatened to transgress the assiduously maintained boundaries that circumscribed the pure community of Britishness. If, as Ranu Samantrai puts it, "nationality is lived in the modality of gender," definitions of belonging were articulated during the post-*Windrush* era in a manner that underlines the intersections between gendered and racialized definitions of national belonging.⁵⁰

It was around the question of gendered representations of racial difference, then, that the historic compromise that extended full citizenship—in the political, economic, and civil senses of the term—to all residents of Britain during the post-1945 period was most clearly unraveled.⁵¹ Unable to resolve the contradictions in conditions of capitalist production and reproduction, neoconservatives adopted a strategy of racial scapegoating to cement their political hegemony. As the state came to penetrate social life to an unparalleled degree after 1945, so it became ever more split between the conflicting imperatives to satisfy the economic conditions for capital accumulation, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, to secure the social conditions for self-legit-

imization. With the internationalization of significant sectors of British capital after the 1960s, few incentives remained to stimulate the creation of a national strategy for capital restructuring.⁵² Given the internationalization of capital after 1970 and the uneven impact of Britain's decline, the tendency of what Bob Jessop calls a two-nations project was to expand privileges for those perceived as good citizens in areas such as transport and housing where private property entrenched privilege. At the same time, the "bad citizens," who suffered the brunt of widening differentials within the wage-earning classes and the shift of public wealth to private hands through neoliberal privatization, were increasingly stigmatized.⁵³ Of course, black and Asian Britons suffered disproportionately from the blighting economic and social impact of post-Fordism.

The role of racial scapegoating in postcolonial Britain highlights the links between cultural phenomena such as "race" and broader political-economic currents. By unraveling such links, black British activists and critics sought to debunk exclusionary definitions of British identity. The antiessentialist aspects of this critique have helped stimulate significant interest in black British cultural studies. Too frequently, however, such interest has focused exclusively on the cultural plane, ignoring the political economy of racial subordination that was an important element in the militant antiracism developed by African, Asian, Caribbean, and white Britons in response to the scapegoating policies of the postimperial era.⁵⁴ *Mongrel Nation* recuperates the radical critique of racial capitalism developed by black British activists and theorists. This recuperation makes possible a political economy of culture and resistance that spans the shift from Fordism to post-Fordism in Britain after 1945. In addition, as its title suggests, *Mongrel Nation* emphasizes the enduring saliency of the nation-state as the primary scale at which transnational flows of capital, culture, commodities, and people are regulated. Through its emphasis on the consistency of postimperial British racial politics and economics, *Mongrel Nation* helps challenge the elisions that have characterized recent theories of diaspora and globalization.

READING RESISTANCE FROM BELOW

Louise Bennett's "Colonization in Reverse" satirizes the essentialism and ahistoricism of the British racial imaginary and, in doing so, offers

a remarkably prescient overview of the specific forms of xenophobia that developed in Britain during the half-century after the arrival of the *Empire Windrush*. To start with, Miss Lou, Bennett's humorous speaker, delivers a swift and cheeky jab to the common charge that migrants from the Caribbean were stealing white people's patrimony in one way or another:

Oonoo [You] see how life is funny,
 Oonoo see de tunabout,
 Jamaica live fe box bread
 Outa English people mout'.

For wen dem catch a [arrive in] Englan,
 An start play dem different role,
 Some will settle down to work
 An some will settle fe de dole [public assistance].

Jane say de dole is not too bad
 Because dey payin' she
 Two pounds a week fe seek a job
 Dat suit her dignity.

Me say Jane will never find work
 At the rate how she dah-look,
 For all day she stay pon Aunt Fan couch
 An read love-story book.

Wat a devilment a Englan!
 Dem face war an brave de worse,
 But I'm wonderin' how dem gwine stan'
 Colonizin' in reverse.

If Caribbean people become parasites on the British welfare state, Miss Lou argues implicitly, they are simply engaging in an inversion of the long colonial history of expropriation and exploitation. In the metropolis, former colonial subjects can refuse work that does not suit their dignity, a luxury that was obviously seldom a possibility for the vast majority of the colonized. The British public, masters of the art of taking bread out of other people's mouths according to Bennett, now protest hypocritically about competition from former colonial subjects. Bennett may seem to homogenize the English here. Perhaps she should

have spoken only of the ruling class. However, even the British working class came to constitute a labor elite during the imperial period, with all the relative entitlements in comparison with the working classes of the colonies that this entailed. The empire thus helped to create a culture of consolidation that united working and upper classes within Britain.⁵⁵ After 1945, this imperial legacy was invoked to portray colonial and postcolonial immigrants as aliens whose presence threatened fundamental British traditions. Miss Lou's caustic exclamations over the difficulty the British have in adjusting to migration from the colonies satirizes precisely the kind of rhetoric deployed by ideologues of both mainstream and fringe political parties after 1945.

The racist stereotypes conjured up by Miss Lou do not, however, relate simply to economic issues. For while she sits at home collecting public assistance, Jane is reading romance novels. This suggests that she is not simply an unproductive subject, but is also endowed with an active emotional and sexual imagination. Through the figure of Jane, "Colonization in Reverse" conjures up the phobic image of black women's reproductive capacity. The lingering, eugenically tinged construction of national identity in postwar Britain ensured that black maternity would be represented as irreconcilable with national belonging.⁵⁶ During the postwar period, the state's focus on the reproduction of a pure body politic in fact shifted from the empire to Britain itself. As immigrants began arriving from the colonies, concerns about the constitution of the British people were increasingly aired. In 1949, for instance, the Royal Commission on Population declared in its report:

British traditions, manners, and ideas in the world have to be borne in mind. Immigration is thus not a desirable means of keeping the population at a replacement level as it would have in effect reduced the proportion of home-bred stock in the population.⁵⁷

Britain's recent defeat of fascist powers like Germany and Italy—both of which had placed a strong emphasis on control of women's sexuality—made it difficult for policymakers to advance openly eugenicist policies. However, cultural assumptions concerning the overlap of "race" and nation did have pronounced effects. The specter of racial degeneration was a driving force behind state immigration policies in the second half of the twentieth century. These policies, in turn, had a strong influence on popular consciousness in Britain, catalyzing increasingly harsh

forms of racial prejudice, inequality, and, ultimately, violence as the nation sank deeper into a postimperial funk. Using the disarmingly satirical voice of Miss Lou, Louis Bennett's "Colonization in Reverse" charts the course that an increasingly exclusionary construction of British identity would take during the next half century.

As Bennett suggests, migration to Britain was the initial, foundational challenge to the imperial system that had heretofore structured the world of the colonized.⁵⁸ In laying claim to the rights of passage from the periphery to the metropolis, colonized and postcolonial subjects sought to dismantle the political, economic, and epistemological hierarchies on which imperialism rested.⁵⁹ Migrants from the Commonwealth forced former colonial nations to confront the decentering experiences undergone by colonized peoples for centuries.⁶⁰ This spatial mobility was not, however, the only act of resistance engaged in by migrants to Britain. Myriad other forms of insubordination necessarily followed in the wake of this seizure of control over geographical movement, as Britain's racist imperial culture was imported back home. Not all of these acts were political in the usual sense of the term. In fact, in order to register the acts of quotidian resistance engaged in by former colonial subjects in Britain, traditional definitions of political action need to be expanded radically. At least three generations of black and Asian Britons have now encountered and fought back against various forms of institutional and popular racism. Some of them have certainly resorted to parliamentary agitation, organized social movements, and demonstrations in the streets of Britain's cities. But the resources that enabled these communities to overcome racism have never been limited to such institutional, state-oriented sites.⁶¹

"Colonization in Reverse" again proves prescient in this regard, subtly suggesting some of the other cultural resources Britain's black and Asian communities have had at their disposal. Miss Lou's young friend Jane engages in the kind of everyday acts of sabotage that were important weapons in the arsenal of the racially oppressed in Britain.⁶² She loafs. She refuses to look for a job that doesn't satisfy her. She brazenly exploits Britain's relatively generous welfare state. This ability to thrive while living without a wage became more rather than less important to second-generation black and Asian women and men as Britain's postcolonial crisis spiraled out of political control after the 1960s.⁶³ Other significant forms of opposition that *Mongrel Nation* discusses include subcultural sartorial styles, illicit sexuality, performative

traditions such as carnival, calypso, reggae, dub poetry, bhangra, rock music, and street riots.⁶⁴ The subversive content in these traditions is not always immediately apparent. As James Scott argues, forms of resistance among subordinate individuals and groups are not always legible by those in positions of power, and therefore constitute “hidden transcripts” that intersect with the sphere of formal politics only on occasion.⁶⁵ Since history tends to be written either by or at the behest of socially dominant groups, Scott turns to these hidden transcripts in order to recuperate and record the experiences of subordinate people whose lives would not otherwise be accessible.⁶⁶

When intellectuals such as Louise Bennett migrated to Britain, they brought radical anticolonial traditions of cultural recuperation and expression along with them. British culture thereby came to be infused with practices of internationalism that prominent British radicals of the era overlooked, to their great detriment. Moreover, the work of writers such as Bennett provides examples of precisely the kind of counterhegemonic blend of aesthetics and politics that cultural studies scholars have helped excavate in recent years. Louise Bennett’s “Colonization in Reverse,” for example, does not simply document acts of sly sabotage engaged in by recent immigrants. In addition, the poem itself is an act of resistance. Bennett’s use of the Creole vernacular is part of a nationalism from the bottom up that has consistently animated diasporic writers and artists in Britain over the last fifty years.

Mongrel Nation’s analysis of the making of postcolonial Britain begins with discussion of Sam Selvon, one of the most important writers of the post-1945 Caribbean Renaissance to settle in London during the 1950s. Unlike contemporaries of his such as V. S. Naipaul and George Lamming, both of whom lived in London in this period but wrote predominantly about life in the Caribbean, Selvon depicted conditions for his countrymen and women *in Britain* in his groundbreaking novel *The Lonely Londoners*. Following in the footsteps of earlier cultural nationalists such as Trinidad’s Beacon Group, Selvon used vernacular Caribbean speech patterns and scabrous popular cultural forms such as calypso, documenting the struggles of the first generation of migrants to Britain rather than looking back with nostalgia or anger to life in the tropics. The veiled eugenicist concerns over the purity of British blood that figured in public policy of the era are mirrored, I argue, in Selvon’s accounts of the sexual exploits of predominantly male migrants in the metropolis. If his work offers a poignant depiction of

the isolation and alienation black Britons faced during the early years of settlement, Selvon's poetic novel also limns the resources of resistance transmitted through transnational expressive culture, resources that empowered postcolonial settlers in Britain as they demanded access to the pubs, the streets, the airwaves, and other important public spaces of the nation.⁶⁷

Once postcolonial subjects from the Caribbean, Africa, and Asia settled in Britain, distinctions between migrants from different areas of the former empire tended to melt away in the furnace of racial subordination. The significant disparities between people arriving in Britain from independent island cultures such as Trinidad and Jamaica became less important, for instance, as people from the Caribbean had to band together against white lynch mobs such as those who roamed the streets during the Notting Hill riots of 1958. Similarly, their considerable cultural differences did not prevent people from the Caribbean, Africa, and Asia from uniting in the face of exclusionary definitions of national identity that reduced all nonwhites in Britain to the status of illegitimate "aliens." Intent on blocking such divide-and-rule strategies, activists among the immigrant communities in Britain adopted the unifying label *black* in order to strengthen the bonds of solidarity among those subjected to racism in the metropolis. As the contributors to *The Empire Strikes Back* pointed out, it made little difference whether immigrants to Britain were called "blacks, browns, darkies, nig-nogs, or Pakis."⁶⁸ The goal of such derogatory racial labels was the same: to represent nonwhites as outsiders, an invading force of dangerous aliens who threatened British identities that were conceived as pure and perpetual. Collective action, postwar immigrants to Britain quickly learned, was the only viable means of combating such forms of xenophobia given their minority status. The label *black* thus came to operate primarily as a political signifier, denoting experiences of racialization and resistance shared by the African, Asian, and Caribbean settlers of the postwar period.⁶⁹ Unlike in the United States, in other words, where *black* refers exclusively to people of African origin, in Britain the term functioned less as a category of shared biological identity than as a form of conscious affiliation based on political solidarity. This usage helped to highlight the arbitrariness of racial categories. The political practices of black Britons suggested that "race" was not based on primordial phenotypical or other forms of biological difference, but was instead a mutable social construction.⁷⁰ Behind seemingly commonsense racial categories lay

specific histories of contested domination and subordination. By rejecting essentialist models of racial difference, the political solidarity of Asian, Caribbean, and African communities dismantled monolithic representations of national identity. Antiracist struggle thereby came to function as a contact zone, a cultural space in which cosmopolitan cultures interacted with one another to create new, radically composite formations that enabled black Britons to militate against exclusionary nationalist traditions in postcolonial Britain.⁷¹

Traditions of overtly internationalist cultural politics were most evident in Britain during the 1960s and 1970s, when the Caribbean Artists Movement and offshoot groups such as the Race Today collective were active. I discuss these groups and the cultural politics of internationalist antiracism in my second and third chapters. “Black Power in a Transnational Frame” highlights the conversations that took place between pivotal figures of the period such the Trinidad-born civil rights activist Stokely Carmichael (aka Kwame Ture) and the poet Edward Kamau Brathwaite. These personal and political exchanges took place against the backdrop of the global antiracist struggle during the 1960s, a context that has come to seem increasingly relevant with the revival of traditions of internationalism and anti-imperialism over the last decade. Activists such as Carmichael drew explicit parallels between anticolonial freedom fighters in the Third World and antiracist militants in core nations such as Britain and the United States. Although black Britons lacked mass-based formal national antiracist organizations such as the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) of the United States, the proximity to colonial experience of first-generation immigrants to Britain meant that Black Power’s anticolonial lexicon had great resonance on both sides of the Atlantic. Cultural politics played a crucial role in activating this transnational imaginary. Indeed, a crucial component of the era’s radical internationalism was a political and aesthetic populism grounded in the vernacular cultures of diasporic groups in Britain. Thus, Stokely Carmichael helped articulate a transnational black activist imaginary grounded in a signifying homology between the racialized ghettos of the developed world and the colonies of the Third World. By contrast, for Caribbean Artists Movement cofounder Edward Kamau Brathwaite, whose epic poetic cycle *Rights of Passage* traces the black Atlantic migrations of the peoples of the African diaspora, the key to the subterranean unity of peoples of African descent is to be found in “nation language” and other popular expres-

sive forms that survived the Middle Passage. Drawing on their knowledge of diasporic history and culture, Carmichael and Brathwaite helped flesh out the transnational antiracist imaginary invoked by radical young Black Power activists, models that have gained revived resonance in the work of contemporary theorists such as Paul Gilroy.

Invocations of anticolonial struggle in the metropolis took on increasing saliency during the 1970s. Britain avoided the massive urban upheavals that took place in the United States during these years as well as government-orchestrated surveillance of and attacks on activists such as the FBI's Counter Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO). Nonetheless, as the serried crises of Britain's welfare state unfolded, black and Asian Britons' access to public space was radically curtailed through a number of draconian state policies. Perhaps most pivotal was the conflict between the British police force and black communities over carnival celebrations during the mid-1970s. The work of dub poet Linton Kwesi Johnson, an active member of the Race Today collective and one of the first artists to articulate a specifically second-generation black British idiom, lies at the center of my discussion of the politics of belonging in this period. Johnson and the Race Today collective were actively involved in the revival of carnival as a celebration of diasporic culture in these years. Blending insurrectionary celebrations of antiracist culture in the Caribbean with popular license in the streets of Britain's capital city, carnival was viewed by British authorities as a menace to public order. They responded to carnival just as colonial authorities had in Trinidad, attempting to suppress it by main force. The battles that erupted around the annual carnival were symptomatic of broader policies of harsh policing that were imposed on black communities during these years. Linton Kwesi Johnson's mobilization of dub music and reggae poetry to document and intervene in these struggles extended the tradition of vernacular cultural activism of previous generations while offering a novel voice that appealed to young, second-generation black Britons. As I document in this chapter, LKJ's celebration of the Caribbean carnival tradition also inspired young Asian and white activists, allowing them to jump the scale of the nation-state and offer searing critiques of the contradictions of countries such as Britain that proclaimed their liberalism while clinging tightly to imperial traditions.⁷²

Despite their obvious merits for antiracist organizing, Black Power-derived models of internationalist solidarity were challenged by

the emergence of new voices within black British communities during this period. By the late 1970s and 1980s, groups like the Organization of Women of Asian and African Descent (OWAAD) disputed the patriarchal characteristics of black nationalism while asserting their loyalty to the broader antiracist struggle.⁷³ At the same time, a series of provocative films by independent black media collectives such as Sankofa highlighted the importance of sexuality and sexual orientation.⁷⁴ In “New Ethnicities,” Stuart Hall provides a theoretical overview of these shifts, arguing that traditional, homogenizing definitions of blackness were being destabilized by other cultural affiliations to class, gender, sexuality, and ethnicity.⁷⁵ Yet despite the decentering of the label *black British*, Hall held that the term should not be jettisoned. Racism’s tenacious grip on public life in Britain underlined for Hall the enduring necessity of collective solidarity, notwithstanding an increasing sensitivity toward cultural differences. The findings of the MacPherson report concerning the breadth of institutional racism in British society have confirmed the necessity of unity among Britain’s racialized groups during the new millennium.⁷⁶

Hall’s acknowledgment of new ethnicities is, of course, a product of the increasing strength of struggles by women and gay people for equality in Britain. Although these movements began to impact black and Asian communities during the 1970s, gender and sexuality have been important issues within ethnic minority communities since the inception of mass immigration after 1948. Louise Bennett’s “Colonization in Reverse,” with its satirical invocation of colonial eugenicist discourse, underlines the interarticulation of diverse axes of identity, including gender and race, in postcolonial Britain. The reproductive capacity of black women like Bennett’s character Jane was, as the poet implicitly predicted, a target of both formal and informal regulation by British authorities after 1948.⁷⁷ Similarly, stereotypical and phobic representations of black male sexuality often sparked various forms of white terror in postcolonial Britain. Processes of racialization cannot therefore be understood without also examining the role of gender and sexuality in constituting competing forms of black British identity and resistance.

Buchi Emecheta’s London trilogy anticipates many of the themes developed by radical black and Asian feminist groups such as OWAAD. By injecting perspectives and concerns derived from her Nigerian heritage into the parochial world of nascent British feminism during the 1970s, Emecheta was one of the first voices in what would grow to be a

chorus interrogating Western feminism, pushing for a decolonized theory and practice of transnational sisterhood. One of the first black women novelists to be published after 1945, Emecheta documents her experiences as a Nigerian immigrant to Britain isolated both by an oppressive marriage and by popular and state racism in Britain. Emecheta's brutally frank depiction of her by turns parasitic and domineering husband offered a direct challenge to unitary models of black subjectivity by challenging their primary ground of articulation: the family. Indeed, by exposing the patriarchal character of certain African traditions, Emecheta disrupted facile Afrocentric philosophies of the era. As I demonstrate in chapter 4, however, Emecheta also drew strength from her Nigerian roots, and thereby offered an implicit rebuke to the largely unchallenged universalistic tenets of the socialist feminism that dominated in Britain during these years. In addition, Emecheta used her documentary fiction to criticize the position of dependency foisted on poor white and black British women by the post-war welfare state. If she rebelled against the family-based oppression of her marriage, Emecheta is just as critical of the infantilizing ministrations of the welfare state. In place of both these institutions, her novels call not simply for a more inclusive model of British national identity, but for new forms of social citizenship grounded in radical democratic practices among working-class women of all colors. Drawing strength from the traditions of women's solidarity she experiences while living "in the ditch," Emecheta finds an experiential basis for the kind of transnational feminist solidarity that theorists such as Hazel Carby subsequently analyzed.

Despite the saliency of these issues for black and Asian Britons, historians and cultural studies analysts have devoted relatively little attention to the relations between race, gender, and sexuality during the postcolonial era.⁷⁸ This should perhaps not be so surprising given the fact that it is in the areas of gender and sexuality that the most intense struggles *within* black working-class cultures have taken place in Britain.⁷⁹ Faced with persistent institutional and popular racism in Britain, community leaders have often been tempted to play down class and gender differences in order to close ranks and don the mantle of community representatives.⁸⁰ While such cultural nationalism may help consolidate resistance to oppression, it tends to be underpinned by a reactionary politics of authenticity. For instance, women are frequently represented under such circumstances as pivotal symbols of

autonomous cultural identity and tradition, placing enormous pressure on them to conform to the dictates of conservative traditions.⁸¹ Strong resistance has emerged from within black British communities to this arrogation of authority and suppression of internal difference by leaders who are often male and middle class. These struggles challenge the tendency among both critics and policymakers to embrace monolithic definitions of community.⁸² By tracking clashes over gender and sexuality, *Mongrel Nation* offers a history of black and Asian cultures in Britain in all their vital and sometimes contradictory complexity, looking at where ordinary people are rather than where it might seem politically desirable for them to be.⁸³

If Emecheta's feminism provoked criticism for undermining black unity in the face of British racism, Salman Rushdie's novel *The Satanic Verses* definitively disrupted any lingering illusions about simplistic black-white binaries. Significant segments of the Asian community had been chafing against the *black British* label for some time before the firestorm over Rushdie's novel erupted, arguing that it elided the specificity of their experience.⁸⁴ As prominent a theorist as Paul Gilroy, for example, discusses resistant cultural traditions in relation to a geographical framework—the black Atlantic—that renders the colonial experience of Asians invisible.⁸⁵ By 1989, when the crisis over Salman Rushdie's novel *The Satanic Verses* tore the British public sphere apart, the Asian community had itself begun to fragment along religious lines that echoed the communal fractures on the subcontinent all too closely. British Muslims felt that other Asians had done little to support their efforts to challenge what they perceived as insulting and stereotyping representations of Islam, and began to identify themselves through their religious affiliation rather than their geographical origin. This internal cultural segmentation not only made it less likely that African, Asian, and Caribbean communities in Britain would adopt a common political identity by the 1990s, but also brought the politics of South Asian communal boundary policing home to the postcolonial metropolis.⁸⁶ If earlier generations of activists were animated by links to anticolonial nationalist movements around the world, by the late 1980s the exhaustion and corruption of such movements and their displacement by the insurgent force of religious fundamentalism became evident within Britain itself. In my chapter on *The Satanic Verses*, I discuss the novel's depiction of the policing of women's sexuality within these communal conflicts in South Asia and, increasingly, in Britain. While Rushdie is

certainly no paragon of feminism, his novel does spotlight the homology between control of the Word and control of women that underpins fundamentalist religious movements of all denominations. As Rushdie's work makes clear, transnational movements such as political Islam are shaped significantly by their local articulations. Consequently, this chapter explores the interarticulation of struggles over communal identity and honor with policies advanced by the British state in the name of multiculturalism and immigration control during the 1980s. If Rushdie's attempt to dismantle both nascent Islamist movements and the racist British state helped catalyze a lamentably Manichaeic culture war, his project of developing critical voices *within* the main religious traditions has been taken up by courageous British-based groups like Women Against Fundamentalism.

As we have seen, British authorities and opinion-makers have a long tradition of downplaying racial conflict and inequalities while simultaneously pursuing policies that foster such divisive forces. This remains true in the postracial, multicultural Britain trumpeted by Tony Blair's New Labour Party. In my sixth chapter, I discuss the lingering career of racial difference in Britain through the unlikely lens of Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*. Although this novel was justly celebrated for its vivacious depiction of the hybrid cultural world of second- and third-generation, mixed-race British youths, Smith's novel focuses on the novel forms of biopower that are the flip side of these sunny forms of cosmopolitanism. Fittingly, Smith's portrait of colliding multiracial dynastic families over the last half-century is preoccupied with the history and contemporary return of eugenics. *White Teeth* offers a witheringly satirical take on the overweening ambitions of contemporary genetic engineering as well as the often-dogmatic beliefs of those who would challenge new forces of biodeterminism. Smith's work thus highlights the extent to which issues of racial difference continue to structure British identity in this supposedly "postracial" age.

Since the publication of Smith's debut novel, Tony Blair has led Britain into a "war on terror" that has seen the revival of many of the imperial age's hoary rhetorical chestnuts. Yet Britain's renewed imperial zeal has not simply surfaced out of the blue. Apologists for "humanitarian intervention" abroad and the clampdown on civil liberties within Britain have drawn on racialized discourses of national identity that did not simply disappear when Britain lost its colonies. As *Mongrel Nation* demonstrates, representations of insular and exclusionary

British identity helped legitimate popular authoritarian ideologies and practices throughout the period after 1945. Essentialist accounts of Britishness have been at the bottom of practices as diverse as the informal “color bar,” racialized immigration policies, and draconian policing practices. Despite the gradual implementation of antiracist, multicultural state policy, Britain has retained structures of racial inequality and the popular authoritarian ideologies that legitimated them throughout the last half-century. Recent celebrations of Britain’s hybridity tend to highlight the cultural impact of black and Asian Britons while ignoring the enduring obstacles they face. Indeed, the effect of racial discourses is evident in the reified notion of a “clash of civilizations” to which current leaders have recourse in order to legitimate their policies of imperial invasion and occupation.⁸⁷

Today, however, there is no neat distinction between the empire and the “mother country.” The rhetorical convolutions of Tony Blair’s opposition between “good” British Muslims and the “bad” Muslims of Al Qaeda are an indication of the difficulty of legitimating imperial policies that results from the mongrelization of Britain. Such facile discourses of assimilation to a homogeneous British national identity have become increasingly untenable as the inequalities and consequent conflicts of neoliberal globalization have come home to roost in Britain. Just as the popular authoritarianism of Britain’s postcolonial period was consistently criticized, opposed, and, at times, successfully dismantled by antiracist activists over the last half-century, so contemporary opposition to the Anglo-American invasion of Iraq draws on reservoirs of anticolonial internationalism illuminated by *Mongrel Nation*.