

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Journal of Intercultural Studies

ISSN: 0725-6868 (Print) 1469-9540 (Online) Journal homepage: www.tandfonline.com/journals/cjis20

The Contemporary Politics of Race

The New Racial Regime: Recalibrations of White Supremacy, by Alana Lentin, London, Pluto Press, 2025, 284 pp., £21.99

Sandeep Bakshi

To cite this article: Sandeep Bakshi (20 Jun 2026): The Contemporary Politics of Race, Journal of Intercultural Studies, DOI: 10.1080/07256868.2026.2690619

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/07256868.2026.2690619

Published online: 20 Jun 2026.

Submit your article to this journal

View related articles

View Crossmark data

Full Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at
https://www.tandfonline.com/action/journalInformation?journalCode=cjis20

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

BOOK REVIEW

The Contemporary Politics of Race

The New Racial Regime: Recalibrations of White Supremacy, by Alana Lentin, London, Pluto Press, 2025, 284 pp., £21.99

> White supremacy is the unnamed political system that has made the modern world what it is today.
> - Charles W. Mills, *The Racial Contract*, p. 1

Offering an astute 'conjunctural analysis' (Lentin 2025: 25) of the current epoch's rising totalitarianism on a global scale, *The New Racial Regime: Recalibrations of White Supremacy* engages Cedric Robinson's formulation of racial regimes to comprehend the recursive process of racialisation, subjugation and exploitation. Alana Lentin uncovers the archival groundwork of Black radical, Indigenous and anti-colonial thought, establishing racial regime as an analytic, to orient our understanding of the present moment of perpetual crises as an inevitable 'recalibration' of white power. Racial regimes are context-specific 'structures or institutions in themselves' (7), operating through mechanisms of knowledge production in all spheres – political, economic, and social. Puncturing hegemonic modes of knowledge production remains momentary since dominant racialised epistemological structures re-naturalise themselves through enactments of white forgetting or 'cunning obfuscations' (27). The reproductive formations of racial regimes are subtended by racial capitalism. Nevertheless, race requires an understanding of its operations historically as well as a critical account of the processes by which the racial informed capitalism. In this regard, racism, the effect of racial regimes, permeates all forms of polity and social organisation, including thinking of 'radical intelligentsias' (Robinson 1983: 28), to borrow a term from Robinson, even when denied.

Recursive racial regimes operate through processes of restitching, i.e., recalibrating mechanisms of power such that in times of crisis they consolidate their hold through immediate backlash (– 'whitelash', cf. Lentin 2025: 54), transnationally. Akin to the Fanonian notion of shifting paradigms of racism, racial regimes adapt to evolving political and socio-economic zeitgeists, renewing enduring formations of power hierarchy in the process. Similar to the operation of race as an ongoing process, racial regimes reconstruct political authority by espousing transformed enactments of control in opposition to demands of justice. Such reconstructions possess the potential to multiply across transnational sites. Lentin provides multiple examples to corroborate the analysis: the war on woke and Critical Race Theory (CRT) in the US following the Black Lives Matter mobilisation swiftly segued into state anxiety about Islamoleftism in France. Rising ultra-conservative and fascist authoritarianism in the global north, and by influence and extension in the global south, in this scheme, emerge as established forces of order, concealing the structures and mechanisms necessary to feed its power. The redaction of syllabi and disappearance of entire departments engaged in research and teaching on race/racism, gender and/or sexualities constitute the key effect of the process of restitching, evincing that 'education has always been a site of control' (44). The material damage intensifies since the discursive arrangement manifested in these attacks requires labour to organise around defensive strategies. Debating proponents of racism or CRT opponents, Lentin urges, extending Stuart Hall's

analysis, has the capacity to sensationalise the issue, drawing energy from adept scholars, and more significantly, enables institutional reclamation in a reductive manner. The trivialisation of questions on race appearing in 2020, when the French Education Minister, Jean-Michel Blanquer, accused French universities of being hotbeds of Islamoleftism, constitutes an apposite case in point. The phantasmagoric term, what Lentin describes as 'representational mythologies' (5), with scant bearing on research in universities, has endured in French media since.

As racial regimes renew – stitch themselves anew – their authority, a readjustment of actors implicated in upholding white supremacist systems emerges. It is only through the bringing in novel actors that 'new' racial regime operationalises. Certain members of conventionally disenfranchised communities (Black, Brown, people of colour, women, and queer political representatives *inter alia*) are corralled into systems of power to perform the labour of resecuring the ideological status quo. For instance, the current racial regime that safeguarded its survival through renewal following Covid-19 and BLM mobilisation regularly tasks Brown Home Secretaries in the UK – Priti Patel, Suella Braverman, and Shabana Mahmood, amongst others – to vilify migration and antiracism in return for positions of power. As Lentin avers, we are unable to fully comprehend the operations of racial regimes without providing an exhaustive historical account of race/colonial structures. Following critical race scholars such as Hall, Lentin suggests that the notion of race as a social construct fails to acknowledge how it operates as a structural mechanism. In this regard, neat taxonomies of right wing/left wing politics (or even man/woman) become reductive since members from various political groupings enable viability and renewal of race (and gender) oppressive systems. Additionally, as the Zionist redeployment of the attack on CRT to rein in and excise pedagogies of emancipation in relation to Palestine illustrates, white supremacist operations require as well as mobilise several ethnicities and multiculturalism 'for racial colonial […] and pro-genocidal ends' (150).

The incorporation of racialised brown and POC representatives in the establishment of the new racial regime serves several purposes. Firstly, it inevitably re-naturalises the colonial/racial social order globally where erstwhile entrenched hierarchies receive a new lease. Relatedly, it casts a wider net for the dissemination of racist ideologies without necessary recourse to purportedly guilt-ridden white subjects. The labour of out-performing racism, so to say, rests on the shoulders of select members of racialised communities. It bears reminding that the cancellation of Shamima Begum's UK citizenship, effectively rendering her stateless, was initiated and achieved by the Pakistani-origin Home Secretary, Sajid Javid, in 2019. As criticism from antiracist organisations strengthened, Javid weaponised his own Muslim working-class migrant background to quell the tide. Patently, then, the effective operation of racial regimes requires tokenised formations of racial relations, which can be summoned to negate demands of justice or reparation. In this context, one critical function of racial regimes comprises marshaling racialised subjects into positions of power to invalidate certain forms of antiracism. Lentin contends that Black radical thinking suffered a similar disavowal in another era (107). Working as a strategy of deflection, such invalidation elicits from antiracist organisations and coalitions a response whereby they reorient their labour towards a defence of their own frameworks of analysis.

Institutionally, the redaction of CRT and history of slavery syllabi and other forms of repression function to circumscribe dissent, including especially the criticism of Israel's current genocide in Palestine. Deriving from embedded mechanisms of 'white forgetting', the injunction to opponents of current formations and renewal of injustice reinforces the longstanding idea of 'getting over it', thereby dislodging expansive accounts of history from public discussion. Within institutional parameters, Lentin postulates, in tandem with

direct attacks on studies of race, the co-optation of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) initiatives serves to consolidate the power of racial regimes through a double-pronged stratagem. In the current conjuncture, whilst CRT falls under the accusation of anti-semitism, the capture of EDI allows Zionist mobilisation to delegitimise anticolonial formations in Palestine, Lebanon, Iran, and globally. Lentin intimates that such manoeuvring is rendered possible due to the conventional oversight of CRT to integrate discussions on colonialism and imperialism in its remit, which would allow opposition to the genocide in Gaza. In an analogous manner, Chapter 5, 'Against Definitions', offers a discussion on the repercussions of such attacks since white supremacists emerge as self-proclaimed saviours of Jews in an effort to render invisible from public eye the historical working of white supremacy's anti-semitism. In this scheme, the criminalisation of protesting genocide in Palestine operates in parallel with the establishment of the racialised/Muslim other as a threat to Jewish communities. Recent examples include the push to wield the onus of 'inherent' anti-semitism on subsequent Muslim migrants from Syria and Afghanistan in Germany or what Anna Younes, following Jasbir Puar, terms the 'trope of "new anti-semitism"' (Younes 2020: 252; Puar 2011: 140).

In our age of over-investment in the term 'decolonisation', propelled as a buzzword in academia and activism, Lentin engages with Indigenous thinking and decolonisation in a connective frame. This intervention comprises *The New Racial Regime*'s most significant contribution in the field of critical theory. Implicating the processes of co-optation of the terms 'Indigenous' and 'decolonisation' allows for a carefully sufficient understanding of the ways through which the 'white possessive' enacts its violence (of both appropriation and expropriation). Lentin provides the exemplar of Zionist claims of Jewish Indigeneity to critique the discursive analyses that suppress Palestinian voices in addition to marginalising the labour of Indigenous activists and scholars in settler colonies in the USA, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand regarding long-pending demands of land sovereignty. Within the relational human framework of Indigenous epistemology and anti-(settler)colonial resistance, solidarity with Palestine remains actively voiced. Nevertheless, distortions of conceptualisations of Indigeneity work to debilitate resistance to colonial and imperial systems, allowing for ongoing recalibration of the new racial regime. In the process, punitive enactments of disciplining dissenters or radical Indigenous activists and scholars through epistemic erasure, occlusion, and substitution (to echo Pratt 2022: 265–271) become a normative institutional stance. Misinterpretations of decolonisation abound and proliferate and are even necessary for the construction and perpetuation of the racial regime. Without capturing the language of decolonisation, the racial regime cannot operate coherently and structurally. In this context, armed resistance and self-determination of communities and peoples enshrined in international law are perceived as the egregious outlier as the process of domestication and repackaging of decolonisation 'in a wrapping that is palatable' (Lentin 2025: 218) takes form. Remaining vigilant to this 'restitching' of the racial regime and resisting its demands then becomes the Fanonian mission of our generation.

Author contributions

CRediT: **Sandeep Bakshi:** Writing – original draft.

ORCID

Sandeep Bakshi https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4095-0209

References

Lentin, A., 2025. *The New Racial Regime: Recalibrations of White Supremacy*. London: Pluto Press.
Mills, C.W., 1997. *The Racial Contract*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
Pratt, M.L., 2022. *Planetary Longings*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.
Puar, J., 2011. Citation and Censorship: The Politics of Talking About the Sexual Politics of Israel. *Feminist Legal Studies*, 19 (2), 133–142.
Robinson, C., 1983. *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press.
Younes, A.-E., 2020. Fighting Anti-Semitism in Contemporary Germany. *Islamophobia Studies Journal*, 5 (2), 249–266.

Sandeep Bakshi
ECHELLES, Université Paris Cité, Paris, France
sandeep.bakshi@u-pariscite.fr http://orcid.org/0000-0002-4095-0209

© 2026 The Author(s)
https://doi.org/10.1080/07256868.2026.2690619
Check for updates