

# Racialized Casteism: Exposing the Relationship Between Race, Caste, and Colorism Through the Experiences of Africana People in India and Sri Lanka

Sureshi M. Jayawardene<sup>1</sup>

© Springer Science+Business Media New York 2016

**Abstract** Contemporary South Asian sociality is marked by signifiers of race, caste, ethnicity, and colorism. Examining the particular social inequalities and marginalization experienced by Africana people in these societies uncovers the dialectical interrelationship between caste, race, and colorism. This yields an understanding of how race and its more trenchant inflection, racism, function in South Asia. Interpreting implications for Africana politics in South Asian societies requires a theorization of these categories. *Racialized casteism* is an analytic that reveals the relationship between race, caste, and colorism in South Asia and highlights how Africana presence indisputably raises the significance of race thereby intensifying the outcomes faced by Siddis and Kaffirs.

**Keywords** Indian Ocean · African Diaspora · Siddis · Kaffirs · Racialized casteism

...the Aryan race created Western materialistic and industrial technological civilization wherever the historical and economic circumstances were ripe.  
Cheikh Anta Diop, *Precolonial Black Africa*

Our hypothesis is that racial exploitation and race prejudice developed among Europeans with the rise of capitalism and nationalism, and that because of the world-wide ramifications of capitalism, all racial antagonisms can be traced to the

---

✉ Sureshi M. Jayawardene  
sureshi@u.northwestern.edu

<sup>1</sup> African American Studies, Northwestern University, Crowe 5-128, 1860 Campus Drive, Evanston, IL 60208, USA

policies and attitudes of the leading capitalist people, the white people of Europe and North America.

Oliver C. Cox, *Caste, Class, and Race* (1948)

Wherever he goes, the Negro remains a Negro.

Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin White Masks*

## Introduction

In the contemporary moment, Siddis and Kaffirs—two African-descended populations—are marginalized communities in their host societies of India and Sri Lanka and are caught in their social, cultural, and political milieu.<sup>1</sup> Present-day South Asian sociality is marked by signifiers of race, caste, ethnicity, and colorism in addition to categories like gender, religion, language, and class.<sup>2</sup> Some scholars situate race, caste, and colorism in universal isolation to one another on the grounds that South Asian societies are not built on Western-like racial hierarchies.<sup>3</sup> However, some Black scholars contend that “the West” is more far-reaching than a mere geographically bound location.<sup>4</sup> To interpret the implications for contemporary politics in South Asian societies, it is necessary to historically situate the ways that these signifiers have been mobilized in the service of colonial and imperial enterprises. Indeed, there exist

<sup>1</sup> Shihan de Silva Jayasuriya and Richard Pankhurst, “On the African Diaspora in the Indian Ocean Region” in *The African Diaspora in the Indian Ocean*, eds. Shihan de Silva Jayasuriya and Richard Pankhurst (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2003), 7–18; Helene Basu, “History on the Line: Music and the Formation of Sidi Identity in Western India” *History Workshop Journal* 65 (2008): 161–178. Siddis and Kaffirs are two African populations in India and Sri Lanka. The term “Siddi” (or Sidi) is a derivative of the combination of *sayyid*, an honorific title used in Arabic, originally to denote someone in the lineage of the Prophet Muhammad and the Arabic *saydi*, meaning captive or prisoner of war. This appellation was given indiscriminately to enslaved Africans and African sailors working on *dhows* (Arab sailing vessels) and in Indian Ocean ports. The term “Kaffir” is an ethnonym used to refer to African-descended people in Sri Lanka, regardless of religion and faith. It has negative connotations in some African contexts (e.g., in South Africa, where Kaffir was historically used as a racial epithet). However, in the Sri Lankan context, the term comes from the Arabic word *kafir*, meaning nonbeliever (i.e., non-Muslim).

<sup>2</sup> Several scholars have used the term in theorizing about Indian social organization. See Steve Barnett, “Approaches to Changes in Caste Ideology in South India,” in *Essays on South Asia*, ed. Burton Stein (Hawaii: University Press of Hawaii, 1975) for a discussion relating modern instantiations of caste to ethnicization. David A. Washbrook, “Ethnicity in Contemporary Indian Politics,” in *South Asia*, eds. Hamza Alavi and John Harriss (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1989) argues that religion, language, and caste symbolize ethnicity. Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Habitations of Modernity: Essays in the Wake of Subaltern Studies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002) locates the origins of ethnicity in categories of religion, caste, and language. For a discussion of ethnicity signifying the reach for a grounding within the postmodern push for diversity see Deepa S. Reddy, “The Ethnicity of Caste,” *Anthropological Quarterly* 78, no. 3 (2005): 543–584 and Stuart Hall, “The Local and the Global,” *Culture, Globalization and the World System*, ed. Anthony D. King (London: Macmillan, 1991), 19–40. For a discussion of ethnicity as defining distinctive groups of solidarity and strategic alliances that demand both conceptual and material recognition, see Talcott Parsons, “Some Theoretical Considerations on the Nature and Trends of Change of Ethnicity,” *Ethnicity: Theory and Experience*, eds. Nathan Glazer and David P. Moynihan (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975).

<sup>3</sup> Govind Sadashiv Ghurye, *Caste and Race in India* (Popular Prakashan, 1969). Oliver C. Cox, “Race and Caste: A Distinction,” *American Journal of Sociology* (1945): 360–368.

<sup>4</sup> Barnor Hesse, “Racialized Modernity: An Analysis of White Mythologies,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 30, no.4 (2007): 643–663; Edouard Glissant, *Caribbean Discourse: Selected Essays* (Caraf Books, 1992), 22.

traditional scientific explanations for race and orientalist discourse regarding South Asia.<sup>5</sup> Yet, the ineluctable goal of South Asian social organization based on these specific signifiers not only equates status with European ideals of superiority and achievement but also reinforces conclusions that Blackness and the qualities of Black being are inferior. While issues of social marginalization are present in all societies, these problems are pronounced in formerly colonized spaces which are plagued by age-old colonial processes and institutional practices that mark cultural and social difference and also serve as the basis for economic and political exclusion.<sup>6</sup> As the above epigraphs suggest, the advent of modern racialization is easily traced to Eurocentric thought and culture and the Africana racial subject remains tethered to these originary forces of racialization that seek to maintain his/her/their subjugation the world over.

In this theoretical essay, I analyze the relationship between notions of race, caste, and colorism as they have been historically constructed and deployed in India and Sri Lanka and how Africana communities in these societies are thereby affected.<sup>7</sup> I argue that the lack of scholarly attention to this dialectical relationship in the specific context of the Siddis and Kaffirs leads to a mischaracterization of the enduring nature of race and caste in Africana life in South Asia. This essay begins with a discussion of the significance of this research, followed by a literature review organized into subsections. These subsections include an introduction to Siddis and Kaffirs, the racialization of South Asia, and the onto-colonial relation in South Asia. This is followed by a discussion of the linkage between race, caste, and colorism vis-à-vis Africana racial subjects. The next section explores how “Blackness” figures into race-caste discourse through Africana positionality. I then move toward a definition of *racialized casteism* and conclude with a discussion of the importance of such a focus in future studies of the western Indian Ocean African diaspora.

<sup>5</sup> Orientalist discourse refers to the romanticized conceptualization of the Orient in the European imaginary, viewing it and treating it as weak and feminine, and providing justification for its penetration and development by the West. It is the Orientalist that gives voice to the Orient, he/she “makes the Orient speak.” Willed over the Orient, this doctrine exaggerates and distorts images about the continent writ large. See Edward W. Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (London: UK, 1978).

<sup>6</sup> Harihar Bhattacharyya, Partha Sarkar, and Angshuman Kar, “Introduction,” in *The Politics of Social Exclusion in India: Democracy at the Crossroads*, eds. Harihar Bhattacharyya, Partha Sarkar, and Angshuman Kar (Oxon, Canada: Routledge, 2010), 1–14.

<sup>7</sup> For more extensive discussions on the term, “Africana” and its utility within the discipline of Africana Studies, see: *Africana: The Encyclopedia of the African and African American Experience*, eds. Kwame Anthony Appiah and Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (New York: Basic Civitas Books, 1999), s.v. “Introduction”; John H. Clarke, “Africana Studies: A Decade of Change, Challenge, and Conflict,” in *The African American Studies Reader*, ed. Nathaniel Norment (Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 2007), 292–301. James E. Turner, “Africana Studies and Epistemology: A Discourse in the Sociology of Knowledge,” in *The African American Studies Reader*, ed. Nathaniel Norment (Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 2007), 74–87. Marquita Pellerin, “Benefits of Afrocentricity in Exploring Social Phenomena: Understanding Afrocentricity as a Social Science Methodology,” *The Journal of Pan African Studies* 5, no.4 (2012): 149–160. Drawing on their definitions, in this paper, the term “Africana” refers to people of African descent around the world, their essential interconnectedness beyond phenotype, relating them to land, history, and culture; implies the inclusion of the “total” phenomenon of the Black experience; and by centering Africa in the analysis of Africana people, an ideological move is made to improve their global conditions.

## Significance of Research

Many scholars have investigated the issues of caste and colorism in South Asia at length and some have sought linkages between race and caste toward establishing common platforms to address discrimination and oppression at an international level.<sup>8</sup> However, the linkage between these signifiers as they mark the socialities of Africana racial subjects has not been previously investigated in spite of the burgeoning research on Siddis and Kaffirs specifically and western Indian Ocean African diaspora more broadly. While the ethnic makeup of South Asian societies is varied and cultural and ethnic diversity is well explored academically, scholarly interest in African presence in these locations is a more recent development. Therefore, studying the cleavages created by hierarchies of race, caste, and colorism to further understand how they mark the lives of Africana people in the region is necessary. One of the consequences of not exploring the nexus of race, caste, and colorism is that dominant discourse will continue to attribute social inequalities experienced by Africana people in South Asia to the very nature, culture, and heritage of these communities themselves, or as Shihan de Silva Jayasuriya claims, the absence of their European masters.<sup>9</sup> Such views can easily fortify a lack of interest and complacency among government and other entities of power in responding to Africana social issues. Another consequence is that it buttresses the view that South Asian societies are free of race and racism due to the absence of White people and the end of colonial rule. However, as this essay will detail, the presence of Africana subjects in South Asian societies does indeed evoke colonial ideas about racial difference and highlight the racialization now inherent in local forms of social differentiation. Thus, it is essential that race, racism, caste, and colorism are appropriately contextualized in order to understand and act against their continuing significance in the present and future of Africana people in South Asia.

## Literature Review

The following review of literature begins with basic demographic information regarding Siddis and Kaffirs, then illuminates the Indian Ocean Slave Trade particularly

<sup>8</sup> See Sekhar Bandyopadhyay, *Caste, Culture and Hegemony: Social Dominance in Colonial Bengal*. (Sage, 2004). Christophe Jaffrelot, *Dr Ambedkar and Untouchability: Analysing and Fighting Caste* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005). Anupama Rao, *The Caste Question: Dalits and the Politics of Modern India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009). Gail Omvedt, *Land, Caste, and Politics in Indian States* (South Asia Books, 1982). Dipankar Gupta, ed., *Caste in Question: Identity or Hierarchy?* (India: SAGE Publications, 2004). Louis Dumont, *Homo Hierarchicus: The Caste System and its Implications* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980). Mary Searle-Chatterjee and Ursula Sharma, eds., *Contextualising Caste: Post-Dumontian Approaches* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994). Vasanth Kannabiran and Kalpana Kannabiran. "Caste and Gender: Understanding Dynamics of Power and Violence," *Economic and Political Weekly* (1991): 2130–2133. Hiroyuki Kotani, ed., *Caste System, Untouchability, and the Depressed* (India: Manohar Publishers & Distributors, 1997). Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, *Castes in India: Their Mechanism, Genesis and Development* (India: Patrika Publications, 1916). Ishita Banerjee-Dube, ed., *Caste in History* (London: Oxford University Press, 2008). Shiv Visvanathan, "The Race for Caste: Prolegomena to the Durban Conference," *Economic and Political Weekly* (2001): 2512–2516.

<sup>9</sup> Mel Gunasekera, "Where 'kaffir' is no insult," *The Telegraph*, November 20, 2009, accessed April 2, 2015. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/expat/expatnews/6613354/Where-kaffir-is-no-insult.html>

focusing on its effects in South Asia, and discusses how race was introduced to and became normalized in South Asian societies.

### *Siddi and Kaffir Demographics*

Research indicates that in present-day India, Siddis comprise a population of about 40,000, a numerically small social minority compared to the national population of over one billion people.<sup>10</sup> They are settled across India in Gujarat, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Karnataka, and former Portuguese territories of Daman, Diu, and Goa.<sup>11</sup> Many work as agricultural laborers and farmers. Public conceptualizations of Siddis are defined by stereotypes and assumptions which are fueled by a caste ideology as well as anti-Black racist sentiment. Some Indians consider Siddis inferior and classify them among the untouchables and other lower caste groups; others perceive them as “carefree” and “unreliable”; and yet some others only value Siddi athletic and artistic capabilities.<sup>12</sup> These perceptions are indicative of the racist stereotypes similar to those about African people in the USA and other areas.

With regard to Kaffirs in Sri Lanka, scholars note that exact numbers are difficult to confirm due, in part, to the prevailing ethnic-racial categories of national enumeration that classify those who do not belong to the main majority and minority groups simply as “others.”<sup>13</sup> Most Kaffirs reside in semirural areas along the island’s eastern and western coasts.<sup>14</sup> Many of them are employed as day laborers, while few are more gainfully employed. Since Kaffirs are neither indigenous to Sri Lanka nor considered a special population, there are no government sponsored programs that facilitate equitable opportunities and access to resources for them. As a result, quality education is significantly hindered. Scholars note that the general Sri Lankan view of Kaffirs is that they are “unimportant” and “unpopular.”<sup>15</sup> For Shihan de Silva Jayasuriya, the fact that increasing exogamous marriages over the years have led to more mixed populations identifying with majority ethnic groups supports the idea of assimilability among Kaffirs as well.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Pashington Obeng, *Shaping Membership, Defining Nation: The Cultural Politics of African Indians in South Asia* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2007).

<sup>11</sup> Abdulaziz Y. Lodhi, “Linguistic Evidence of Bantu Origins of the Sidis of India,” *TADIA: The African Diaspora in Asia—Explorations on a Less Known Fact* (2008), 301–313.

<sup>12</sup> Obeng, *Shaping Membership*.

<sup>13</sup> Shihan de Silva Jayasuriya, “The African Diaspora in Sri Lanka,” in *The African Diaspora in the Indian Ocean*, eds. Shihan de Silva Jayasuriya and Richard Pankhurst. (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2003) 251–288. The 2011 census recorded 0.13 % “others,” which includes small minority populations like self-contained Kaffir communities.

<sup>14</sup> Department of Census and Statistics Sri Lanka, “Census of Population and Housing of Sri Lanka, 2012” <http://www.statistics.gov.lk/PopHouSat/CPH2012Visualization/htdocs/index.php?usecase=indicator&action=Map&indId=11> (accessed April 12, 2015); de Silva Jayasuriya, “The African Diaspora in Sri Lanka.” In terms of a collective group identification that could have held potential for political mobilization, in Sri Lanka, Kaffirs appeared in the census records from 1871 to 1921 in proportionate numbers of males and females. However, they ceased to appear as a separate ethnic group in the census since 1911 and are currently categorized broadly under “others” alongside several small minorities. There is no clear indication for this change in the Department of National Statistics in Sri Lanka.

<sup>15</sup> Maura O’Connor, “Getting to Know the Kaffirs through Music and Dance” *The Sunday Times*, November 9, 2008, accessed April 20, 2015 [http://www.sundaytimes.lk/081109/Plus/sundaytimesplus\\_10.html](http://www.sundaytimes.lk/081109/Plus/sundaytimesplus_10.html)

<sup>16</sup> cf. de Silva Jayasuriya, “The African Diaspora in Sri Lanka.”

*Siddis and Kaffirs: Accounts of the Indian Ocean Slave Trade and its Effects*

Indian Ocean historians note that the Indian Ocean Slave Trade (IOST) significantly accounts for forced movement of Africans across the Indian Ocean and was initiated by Muslim Arabs.<sup>17</sup> Contemporary settlements of Siddis and Kaffirs are largely the result of this migration from the African continent.<sup>18</sup> The IOST dates from as early as the sixth century until as late as the twentieth century.<sup>19</sup> Unlike the Transatlantic Slave Trade, the IOST did not develop as a large-scale industrial economic enterprise. Under Arab control, personal and mercantile circumoceanic ties characterized trade in human cargo. Several Arab merchants were small dealers who also prioritized trade in ivory, spices, and animal hides.<sup>20</sup> Arab domination of the trade resulted in the spread of Islam as well as growing trade contracts that contributed to greater African migration across the Indian Ocean to South Asian sites.<sup>21</sup> Historians note that enslaved Africans were considered an important “raw material” and often seen as prestigious in South Asia.<sup>22</sup> For example, Indian elites preferred Africans’ loyalty and skills as servants and soldiers over native laborers.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, enslaved Africans were brought to the region as “special servants in the courts of Muslim Nawabs and Sultans [as in the case of Siddis in India], while...others came as herbalists and midwives. A few were brought by Indian merchants returning home from Africa.”<sup>24</sup> Research highlight two major distinctions between slavery in the Indian Ocean world and the Atlantic world as the basis for why racialization did not occur in the former. While bonded labor was an essential component of Indian Ocean slavery, unlike in the Atlantic plantation labor did not characterize this slave enterprise. A second distinction is in the volume of human traffic. No more than 75 to 100 enslaved Africans were transported aboard *dhow*s (sailing vessels) at a time and were disposed of at scattered points along the Red Sea, Persian Gulf, and at various South Asian ports.<sup>25</sup>

European involvement in the IOST first occurred when contact was made between Europe and eastern and southern Africa in the late 1480s. Control of the IOST exchanged hands a number of times with each successive colonial regime.<sup>26</sup> Above all, “from the fifteenth century on, the Portuguese took shipments of captive Africans to the Persian Gulf region, India, China, and Japan; the Dutch who transported them to India and Indonesia; the French

<sup>17</sup> Pashington Obeng, *Shaping Membership, Defining Nation: The Cultural Politics of African Indians in South Asia* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2007); Joseph E. Harris, *The African Presence in Asia: Consequences of the East African Slave Trade* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1971); Shihan de Silva Jayasuriya, *African Identity in Asia: Cultural Effects of Forced Migration* (Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2009); Richard Pankhurst, “The Habshis of India, Appendix E,” in *An Introduction to the Economic History of Ethiopia* (London: Lalibela House, 1961). In addition to forced movement by way of capture and subjugation, Africans also migrated voluntarily across the Indian Ocean. This movement resulted from long established trade networks in the littoral. Trade between Africans and Indians existed from as early as the sixth century. In Sri Lanka, the earliest African presence on the island was in the fifth century when Abyssinians were trading in Matota, a northwestern province.

<sup>18</sup> Edward A. Alpers, “Recollecting Africa: Diasporic Memory in the Indian Ocean World,” *African Studies Review* 43, no.1 (2000): 83–99. Joseph E. Harris, *African Presence*.

<sup>19</sup> Obeng, *Shaping Membership*.

<sup>20</sup> Harris, *African Presence*.

<sup>21</sup> de Silva Jayasuriya, *African Identity*.

<sup>22</sup> Pankhurst, “The Habshis of India,” 409–422; de Silva Jayasuriya, *African Identity*.

<sup>23</sup> de Silva Jayasuriya, *African Identity*.

<sup>24</sup> Abdulaziz Y. Lodhi, “African Settlements in India,” *Nordic Journal of African Studies* 1 (1992): 85.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

who shipped them to India and the Mascarene Islands (Bourbon and Mauritius); the British took them to India, Mauritius, and China; and of course all of them and the Danes shipped captive Africans to Europe and the Americas.”<sup>27</sup> Servitude continued to be an important feature of enslavement even under European control. For instance, in 1630, under Portuguese rule in Sri Lanka, a reinforcement of African soldiers was sent from their base in Goa, India, to aid the colonialists in defeating the native dynasty on the island.<sup>28</sup> Following Portuguese rule, the Dutch continued to use African labor for building fortresses, as nannies, housemaids, gardeners, and water carriers.<sup>29</sup> Labor in the IOST was largely characterized by domestic and military forms of servitude.

The IOST is undoubtedly a historically complex, protracted, and heterogeneous event in the traumatic and forced movement of Africans. However, European involvement in the IOST is especially prominent. Europe’s initiation of the rise of colonialism, and the dissemination of “race” as a global ideology and tool for governance, imperialism, and capitalism form the basis on which postcolonial South Asian societies have been designed. Furthermore, South Asian societies’ response to decolonization and the development of their own principles of difference are easily traced to Europe’s engagement with the region. Today, public awareness of Siddis and Kaffirs is limited to the principally negative ideas in circulation about these communities and the deep-seated sense of caste ideology, even in remnant form, that distinguishes between groups. Although they are minorities, Siddis and Kaffirs are victim to the very particular effects of Western-derived anti-Black racism that fiercely contributes to their already marginalized positions in these societies.

### *South Asia and Race*

To begin an investigation of race in South Asia, it is essential to discursively contextualize this concept in its earliest possible form in the colonial imagination. At its origination, “race” encompassed at least three distinct denotations: genus or species; tribe or nation of people who share a common stock; and the pronounced division of mankind.<sup>30</sup> In terms of South Asia in particular, as South Asian Studies scholar Peter Robb notes, the concept of race was subject to another level of meaning—“a congeries of attributes.”<sup>31</sup> Many scholars argue that Europeans effectively developed the notion of race and its related ideology, White supremacy, based on ideas about non-European populations. Black psychologist Camara J. Harrell’s work is instructive in thinking through the very specific nature of race and its relationship to the rise of Europe. He writes, “A set of historical forces in Europe shaped and refined the terror that Europeans would unleash on

<sup>27</sup> Joseph E. Harris, “Expanding the Scope of African Diaspora Studies: The Middle East and India, A Research Agenda,” *Radical History Review* 87 (2003), p. 158.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> As quoted in Peter Robb, *The Concept of Race in South Asia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), the earliest dates for these initial definitions of race are said to have been 1596, 1600, 1605, and 1774. These are significant dates in relation to European conquest in Africa, Asia, the Pacific, and the Americas. For the definition of race as referring to distinct ethnic group, the O.E.D. date is 1842.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

inhabitants of the rest of the world.”<sup>32</sup> Marimba Ani and Samir Amin hold similar views.<sup>33</sup> South Asian Studies scholars also acknowledge this relation. David Arnold maintains that non-Europeans were not only phenotypically different, but characterized by different cultural imperatives, climates, dietary habits, and physiological responses to illnesses of that time.<sup>34</sup> While the classic racial distinction is inherent to coloniality and its establishment of Europeanness vis-à-vis non-Europeanness, Black Studies scholar Barnor Hesse reminds us that it was not merely the phenotypically various bodies that fell prey to racialization—so did the related geographies, climates, cultures, and practices.<sup>35</sup> It is clear that as Europeans encountered new and different people and places, they were collectively renamed, remapped, and reordered into what historian Michel-Rolph Trouillot calls an “international hierarchy of races, colors, religions, and cultures.”<sup>36</sup> Thus, in Hesse’s view, race cannot be understood as a construction solely located in phenotype and physicality.

When confronted with native forms of human differentiation in South Asia, Europeans reinterpreted these concepts in terms that were familiar to their own worldview. In effect, South Asian caste differentiation was interpreted through the lens of race and racial ideas developing in European thought at the time. The vast Asian region came to be viewed as a weak and effeminate Orient as a result of European discourses of racialization directly associated with physicality and phenotype.<sup>37</sup> Scholars note that these conceptualizations were strengthened by European perceptions about climate and disease in the South Asian region, relating harsher environments to the darker skinned natives and their ability to endure inclement conditions.<sup>38</sup> Scholars note how colonial taxonomies established a linkage between racialized bodies and racialized territories, cultures, and practices, associating non-European bodies with strictly non-European practices and traditions. This association subsequently became the fundamental colonial relation that produced what Barnor Hesse refers to as “a distinctively modern colonial, social reality, an onto-coloniality” that we currently inhabit.<sup>39</sup> The concept of the onto-colonial facilitates a more nuanced analysis of sustained colonial ideologies and taxonomies in formerly colonized non-White non-Western societies that once actively formed the colonial project.

<sup>32</sup> Camara Jules P. Harrell, *Manichean Psychology: Racism and the Minds of People of African Descent* (Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1999).

<sup>33</sup> Marimba Ani, *Yurugu: An African-Centered Critique of European Cultural Thought and Behavior* (Maryland: Afrikan World Books, 1994). Samir Amin, *Eurocentrism* (New York: NYU Press, 1989).

<sup>34</sup> David Arnold, “Race, Place, and Bodily Difference in Early Nineteenth-Century India,” *Historical Research* 77, no. 196 (2004): 254–273. More discussion of the role the body played in racial conceptualization is in the next section of this essay.

<sup>35</sup> Hesse, “Racialized Modernity.”

<sup>36</sup> Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Haiti, State Against Nation: The Origins and Legacy of Duvalierism* (New York, Monthly Review Press, 1990), 110.

<sup>37</sup> Robert Aldrich, *Cultural Encounters and Homoeroticism in Sri Lanka: Sex and Serendipity* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2014), 18. One example of this tendency is that of John Davy, a physician in the British forces in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, who observed and compared differences in height, bone structure, physical features such as hair—on the scalp and face, countenance, and morality between natives of Sri Lanka and Europeans.

<sup>38</sup> For more detailed discussion of the foundational discourses that marked phenotypic difference see: Arnold, “Race, Place and Bodily Difference.” Said, *Orientalism*; Said, *Orientalism*.

<sup>39</sup> Hesse, “Racialized Modernity,” 658–9. Hesse elaborates the onto-coloniality as “the modernity of social realities historically brought into racialized being by colonial regimes of demarcations, designations and deployments, that is to say, as the effects of onto-colonial taxonomies.”

*The Onto-colonial Relation and South Asia*

The following discussion highlights the construction of South Asian socialities as part of the onto-colonial space, illustrating how South Asia became racialized. The colonial relation between Europe and South Asia is central to discerning the processes through which knowledge of the contemporary world has been formulated in Indian and Sri Lankan societies.<sup>40</sup> European thought and culture are key to understanding race and racism, and particularly so in the genealogy of the race concept.<sup>41</sup> Such an approach engenders the observation that an “Other” was (and is) an integral component of European culture which functions as the driving force of White supremacy, European cultural imperialism, and the penchant for widespread control over all non-European people.<sup>42</sup> The circulation of notions of “race,” which are believed to have first emerged in the late 1600s, further corroborate this. For example, in this time period, French physician and traveler, Bernier’s travel log provided detailed descriptions to Europeans about places that were unknown to them.<sup>43</sup> His observations in India and western Asia led him to organize humanity into four or five species (or races), distinguishing each of these based on physical features (such as hair, stature, nose, lips, etc.), geography, and most importantly, skin color.<sup>44</sup> Other scientists mirrored Bernier’s lead.

Following the early scientific discoveries and discourses of Bernier, Linnaeus, and Blumenbach in the eighteenth century, Robert Cox’s analysis of skulls confirmed interpretations of the exaggerations of animal propensities among certain humans.<sup>45</sup> Among Hindus, the tendencies he described were jealousy, polygamy, and the presence of unnatural desires.<sup>46</sup> Much later, in the early twentieth century, replacing the psychometric tests administered by Europeans, Indian natives Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis and Venkatrao Vithal Kamat adopted a number of intelligence tests and refashioned them to fit the particular local language and cultural contexts thereby normalizing and formalizing psychometric testing in South Asia.<sup>47</sup> This is a clear example of how initial European scientific approaches to human difference were adopted by South Asian natives. Transplanting European ideas in South Asian societies, thus, paved the way for

<sup>40</sup> Ishita Bannerjee-Dube, “Caste, Race and Difference: The Limits of Knowledge and Resistance,” *Current Sociology* 62, no.4 (2014): 512–530. Although South Asia does not deal with race and racial politics much in the same manner as the West, “race” as a global ideological construct developed in relation to Europe’s contact with Asia as well as Africa. While the conceptualization of race vis-à-vis Africa is well documented, there is little scholarly discussion of the role that Asia played in this relationship.

<sup>41</sup> Junaid Rana, *Terrifying Muslims: Race and Labor in the South Asian Diaspora* (NC: Duke University Press, 2011).

<sup>42</sup> Marimba Ani, *Yurugu. An African-Centered Critique of European Cultural Thought and Behavior* (Maryland: Afrikan World Books, 1994).

<sup>43</sup> Arnold, “Race, Place and Bodily Difference”; Vijay Prashad, *Everybody was Kung Fu Fighting: Afro-Asian connections and the myth of cultural purity* (Boston: Beacon, 2002).

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.* In the eighteenth century, Bernier was followed by Swedish scientist Linnaeus who altered the method of raciology with scientific classification schemes. At the same time, German naturalist Blumenbach who developed the field of physical anthropology was the first to establish a link between the African man and the ape.

<sup>46</sup> Robert Cox, *Transactions of the Phrenological Society*, VII, no. XL (1834): 577–603.

<sup>47</sup> Shivrang Setlur, “Searching for South Asian Intelligence: Psychometry in British India, 1919–1940,” *Journal of History of the Behavioral Sciences* 50, no.4 (2014): 359–375.

the concept of “race” to emerge more steadily as a tool for governance and continued colonial control. The crystallization of race in relation to caste during the colonial period progressed into the postcolonial era and has played a substantial role in shaping nationalist policies. Scholars note that on the one hand, South Asian elites promoted an all-inclusive national identity that reflected European Enlightenment ideals. On the other, they conscripted a kind of communalism, that is, the enactment of ethno-religious identities over inclusive secular nationalism.<sup>48</sup>

The mobilization of European ideas of race is evident in taxonomies related to South Asia. H.H. Risley’s thought and practice offers a rich demonstration of this. In his pursuit of anthropometry and craniology as the primary tools of race-based ethnography, Risley argued that this scientifically rooted race sentiment in India had “shaped the intricate groupings of the caste system” and further “preserved the Aryan type in comparative purity throughout Northern India.”<sup>49</sup> Significant in Risley’s proclamation is that on the one hand, a European conception of race sentiment was a recognizable characteristic in Indian Society by the late nineteenth century alongside which Indians sought to shape a nation-state and national identity. On the other hand, scholars note that Europeans pursued arguments that located race as a category and its more trenchant inflection, race sentiment, within indigenous Indian ontologies that posed further challenges to Indian efforts in creating an independent egalitarian society.<sup>50</sup>

Irrefutably then, Europe’s contact with South Asia provided the grounds for further testing their preexisting notions about racial difference. European discourses of race were hegemonic in their universal application. While both colonizer and colonized were classified under nineteenth century taxonomies of race, even those inauspiciously categorized were generally convinced of its validity and relevance and embraced these new ideas.<sup>51</sup> In contrast, however, in the nineteenth century, activists and intellectuals employed comparisons of race and caste to assess and criticize social inequalities that derive from these categories.<sup>52</sup> For instance, many Indian writers castigated American racism during the Cold War and similarly, several African American intellectuals and political figures ranging from W.E.B. Du Bois to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Black

<sup>48</sup> Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986). He argues that both responses were discursively manufactured by the colonial rule of difference and were acquired discourses in that they expressed the essential difference of the indigenous population in terms legible to the West and relied on the conceptual lexicon of Western history and political thought. Giorgio Shani, “Indigenous Modernities: Nationalism and Communalism in Colonial India,” *Ritsumeikan Annual Review of International Studies* 4 (2005): 87–112.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.* In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Risley was a civil servant and British ethnographer whose avid promotion of physical anthropology in the service of the colonial enterprise gained him notoriety. Part of this project entailed the definition and differentiation of Indian society in largely biological terms. Most notably, Risley’s beliefs in a biologically justified racism galvanized his conclusions that “race sentiment” in India transcended the “intolerant pride of the Brahman” and was predicated upon “a foundation of fact which scientific methods confirm.”

<sup>50</sup> Crispin Bates, “Race, Caste, and Tribe in Central India: The Early Origins of Indian Anthropometry,” in *The Concept of Race in South Asia*, ed. Peter Robb (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 219–259; Said, *Orientalism*, 1–3; Harrell, *Manichean Psychology*, 15. Said’s meditations on “orientalism” offers an incisive reading of the European investment in the discursive potential of these ideas. Drawing on Frantz Fanon’s *Black Skin, White Masks*, Harrell explains this dualism in the following manner: “The Manicheans conceived of blackness and things associated with it as evil. Whiteness, or light, became associated with good.”

<sup>51</sup> Bates, “Race, Caste, and Tribe.”

<sup>52</sup> Nico Slate, “Translating Race and Caste,” *Journal of Historical Sociology* 24, no.1 (2011): 62–79.

Power leaders condemned India's caste-based oppression.<sup>53</sup> The fact that Eurocentric ideology took root in many South Asian cultures with the rise of colonialism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is an important consideration and lends itself to further comprehending this history through Barnor Hesse's concept of the onto-colonial. With the spread of mass media and consumer goods in the twentieth century and certainly, the twenty-first century, Eurocentric ideology continues to infiltrate South Asian societies. Tracing the history of racial ideology among Europeans in relation to South Asia and the resultant circulation of these notions in India and Sri Lanka reveals how colonial determinations of racial difference mapped neatly onto already held ideas of social differentiation among natives in these societies. These renderings of difference are still very present in contemporary South Asia. Approaching the question of race in South Asia through a focused analysis of the historical colonial context and its linkage to native thought and practices harkens back to Edouard Glissant's astute observation: "The West is not in the West. It is a project, not a place."<sup>54</sup>

### **Linking Race, Caste, and Colorism: The Beginnings of Racialized Casteism**

In South Asia, caste categories form a complex system of social organization. Many scholars have explored this with various questions in mind. However, the relationship between these categories and their impact on diasporic Africans in South Asia is yet to be investigated. In order to understand this relationship, it is necessary to review the concept of caste in terms of its origins, how it was redeployed as a result of the colonial encounter, and finally to highlight its specific effects on Africana communities in South Asia. Whereas existing scholarship either folds caste and race into one category or denies the presence of race in South Asia at all, the following discussion brings into view the development of race, caste, and colorism as a uniform force.

Since its origin, the notion and utility of caste has progressed over time. Some scholars credit the Aryan invasion in the second millennium BCE as the definitive moment through which the caste system first materialized in the region.<sup>55</sup> Others question the validity of this. Cheikh Anta Diop, among others, maintains that caste ideology was alien to the Aryans but due to a southern Cushite influence was adopted by them and transformed into an economic classification system.<sup>56</sup> The Aryans, whose physical features were quite distinct from indigenous and earlier inhabitants of India, attempted to preserve these distinctions through a form of social organization known as the caste system.<sup>57</sup> Ultimately, what resulted was Brahmins dominating non-Brahmins

<sup>53</sup> Ibid. Ishita Banerjee-Dube, "Caste, Race and Difference: The Limits of Knowledge and Resistance." *Current Sociology* 62, no. 4 (2014): 512–530. Banerjee-Dube cautions against the tendency to fold caste into race in order to advance platforms of cross-cultural and international solidarity in struggles against the oppression of Third World peoples.

<sup>54</sup> Edouard Glissant, *Caribbean Discourse*, 22.

<sup>55</sup> Romila Thapar, "The Theory of Aryan Race and India: History and Politics," *Social Scientist* (1996), 3–29.

<sup>56</sup> Cheikh Anta Diop, *Precolonial Black Africa: A comparative study of the political and social systems of Europe and Black Africa, from antiquity to the formation of modern states* (Westport, CT: Lawrence Hill & Company, 1987).

<sup>57</sup> Ibid. Added to this, Diop argues that the Aryans added ideals of materialism and the possession of goods to the Cushite caste system underscoring social organization based on economic distinction rather than ethnic differentiation.

which firmly established beliefs of the latter's inherent inferiority.<sup>58</sup> This is evidenced by years of caste-based discrimination of lower caste groups by high caste groups.<sup>59</sup>

Due to colonial contact, caste gained new meaning for South Asian social organization. As Brahmanic theories of Indian social arrangement gained acceptance among colonialists, the "tribal" as the logical antithesis of the Brahmin was reified.<sup>60</sup> The "tribal," or the "Dravidian," provided the fertile grounds for colonialists to test theories of racial difference. As intermarriage between "tribals" and Aryans increased, both colonialists and natives used this as grounds for explaining the proliferation of intermediate castes.<sup>61</sup> Under British rule, caste was employed in a more sophisticated form for the particular intents of British social engineering.<sup>62</sup> Scholars point to the earliest official iteration of caste in the national census of 1865, 1872, and 1881 in India. They note that this was based on a Brahmanic theory of caste.<sup>63</sup> Denzil Ibbetson, a colonial administrator, summarized this prevailing theory of caste in his introduction to the 1881 census of Punjab: (1) caste is an institution of the Hindu religion and entirely specific to it; (2) caste consists primarily of a four-pronged classification of people under Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Sudra; (3) caste is absolute and perpetual, having been transmitted generationally throughout Hindu history and myth.<sup>64</sup> Theorizations of the caste system demonstrate that society is divided into a vast number of hereditary groups, distinguished from one another and connected altogether by three broad features: (1) separation in matters of marriage and contact both directly and indirectly; (2) the division of labor, where each group has, in theory or by tradition, a profession from which its members can depart only within certain confines; and (3) a hierarchy, which ranks the groups in relative superiority or inferiority to each other.<sup>65</sup> Moreover, this system is described in terms of orthodox Hinduism, the only religious doctrine wherein caste is sacrosanct.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Sharma, "Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and the Aryan Invasion (2004)"; Waughray, "Caste Discrimination and Minority Rights." India is considered the locus of the genesis of caste regionally. As a result, scholarship on caste in South Asia doggedly maintains that upon arrival in India, the Aryans proceeded to distinguish themselves from the native Dasas and Dasyus, which ultimately led to the creation of the caste system.

<sup>60</sup> Bates, "Race, Caste, and Tribe." Indrani Chatterjee, "Abolition by denial: The South Asian example," in *Abolition and its aftermath in Indian Ocean Africa and Asia*, ed. Gwyn Campbell (New York: Routledge, 2005), 150–168.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Denzil C.J. Ibbetson, *Report on the Census of Punjab 1* (Calcutta: Government of India, 1881). See: Annapurna Waughray, "Caste Discrimination and Minority Rights: The Case of India's Dalits," *International Journal on Minority and Group Rights* 17 (2010): 327–353. Prashad, *Karma* (2000). An indeterminate number of geographically based, hierarchically ranked kinship groups—*jati*—are present alongside the *varna* system in Indian society. These kinship groups serve as the operational units of the caste system and their principles are localized and much more varied than with *varnas*. Although *varnas* are fixed and immutable, *jati* are innumerable due to groups merging or subdividing as in marital ties. *Jati* rankings have also been regularly contested.

<sup>65</sup> Louis Dumont, *Homo Hierarchicus; The Caste System and its Implications* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974); Nicholas B. Dirks, *Castes of Mind: Colonialism and the Making of Modern India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

<sup>66</sup> Waughray, "Caste Discrimination and Minority Rights"; Robert E. Frykenberg, "The Social Context: Caste and 'Color,'" *Christian History and Biography* 87 (2005): 28. Hindu adherents aside, caste as well as caste-based discrimination is found among adherents of other religious affiliations such as Islam, Sikhism, Buddhism, Jainism, Parsism, and Christianity. These groups are stratified into castes based on their lineages and lifestyles.

There has been debate about the racial nature of caste. For instance, during emerging nation-building political movements in the twentieth century, avid opponent of the Hindu Right, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, vehemently disputed the regnant paradigm that the Aryan invasion and the emergence of the caste system provided a racial foundation for distinctions between higher and lower castes in India.<sup>67</sup> Instead, Ambedkar proposed that the difference between Aryans and native Indians was more cult-like and religious than racial. To distinguish between the two groups, the primary arguments made were in terms of the natives' lack of sacrifice, prayers, priests, and hymns, but also in terms of their perceived deviance and different rites. Even as Ibbetson pointed out that caste was more of a social than religious category, the basic idea of racial difference between both (1) northern and southern Indians and (2) low and high caste groups achieved widespread popular acceptance.<sup>68</sup> Since caste is inherited and, therefore, a social position one is born into, progressing out of or changing this status throughout the lifespan is impossible. As a result, social status is determined by birth and cannot be subjected to alteration through personal effort.<sup>69</sup> The treatment of lower caste groups as inferior peoples is key to debates about the racial factor of caste. While the Scheduled Tribe status formally renders Siddis external to the caste system, as people with dark skin and in lower social positions, society conceives of them as inferior alongside the Sudra and dalits (untouchables) who are also in similar socioeconomic positions and are lower castes.<sup>70</sup> Historically then, not only has the caste system been intensely rigid and immutable, it effectively affects all groups.

In South Asian antiquity, when the Aryans developed derisive views of dark-skinned aborigines and treated them as inferior peoples, a certain race-consciousness emerged. However, by the time Buddhism ascended in the third century BCE, race-consciousness was replaced with caste-consciousness and the upper caste groups who traced their ancestry to Aryan stock continued to preserve their elite status.<sup>71</sup> In Sri Lanka, the caste system was introduced in the third century BCE when Theri Sangamitha was sent to the island from India with a sapling of the sacred Bo tree in order to fulfill a request of the island's ruler, King Devanampiyatissa.<sup>72</sup> As a predominantly Buddhist nation, caste-based privileges were designed for the benefit of the ruling elite in contrast to the hereditary and mandatory caste services for those at the lower levels of society.<sup>73</sup> Unlike in India, Sri Lanka's caste system was configured with *Kshatriya* (ruling class) at the top and *Brahmana* (advisors to the King) falling next in line.<sup>74</sup> These groups developed into professional classes (i.e., groups that would progress to be defined by their professional

<sup>67</sup> Sharma, "Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and the Aryan Invasion (2004)."

<sup>68</sup> Ibbetson, *Report on the Census*.

<sup>69</sup> Waughray, "Caste Discrimination and Minority Rights": Frykenberg, "The Social Context."

<sup>70</sup> Obeng, *Shaping Membership*, 10; Charles Camara, "The Siddis of Uttara Kannada: History, Identity and Change among African Descendants in Contemporary Karnataka," in *Siddis and Scholars: Essays on African Indians*, eds. Amy Catlin-Jairazbhoy and Edward A. Alpers (Uttar Pradesh: Rainbow Publishers, 2004), 113; Amy Catlin-Jairazbhoy and Edward A. Alpers, "Introduction," in *Siddis and Scholars: Essays on African Indians*, eds. Amy Catlin-Jairazbhoy and Edward A. Alpers (Uttar Pradesh: Rainbow Publishers, 2004), 7.

<sup>71</sup> G.P. Malalasekera and K.N. Jayatilleke, "Buddhism and the Race Question," *UNESCO* (1958).

<sup>72</sup> Chandima S.M. Wickramasinghe, "Coloured Slavery in Ceylon (Sri Lanka)," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Sri Lanka* 54 (2008): 159-178.

<sup>73</sup> Kalinga T. Silva, P.P. Sivapragasam, and Paramasothy Thanges, "Caste Discrimination and Social Justice in Sri Lanka: An Overview," *Indian Institute of Dalit Studies Working Paper Series* 3, no. 6 (2009).

<sup>74</sup> Wickramasinghe, "Coloured Slavery in Ceylon."

skills in these areas). The third group in this caste hierarchy, *Vaisya* (or, *govigama*: farmers), was formed by the majority of the population.<sup>75</sup> Additionally, individuals involved in different crafts and trades are viewed as collectively forming lower castes as a consequence of their trades. In turn, these lower caste groups are constitutive of the minority population.<sup>76</sup> Over the years, these early notions of caste-based difference as determined by skill and occupation have been reinforced well into the present day.

Colorism, or the process of discrimination that privileges light-skinned people over their dark-skinned counterparts, occupies a complex position within South Asian caste systems. The relationship between caste and colorism is also linked to the Aryans whose "...system for ranking castes according to degrees of inherited 'purity' or 'pollution'" [was] based on light and dark skin tones.<sup>77</sup> The skin color aspect of caste appeared to Europeans as a central feature of this system of human differentiation. This was consistent with their own views about skin color vis-à-vis race. Sociologist Eduardo Bonilla-Silva contends, "When race emerged in human history, it formed a social structure (a racialized social system) that awarded systemic privileges to Europeans (the peoples who became 'white') over non-Europeans (the peoples who became 'nonwhite')." <sup>78</sup> Thus, for British colonial officials, the caste systems in South Asia became a race-based hierarchy of skin colors.<sup>79</sup> Many early scholars who studied caste in South Asia avoided referencing how caste was substantialized following European contact, "with roots in colonial strategies of enumeration and arrays of related projects to produce systematic, statistical knowledge about the peoples" of the region.<sup>80</sup> The intersecting factors of caste and colorism produced great implications for governance and social reform such that enumeration and the census played a significant role in setting the stage for actualizing and politicizing caste in this racialized form.

The caste-race ideology was augmented by the manner in which Europeans conceptualized the physical appearance of non-Europeans in contrast to themselves. Parsing out the way in which Europeans understood these physical distinctions is key to uncovering the relationship between caste and race. David Arnold argues that this physical appearance is an important site of the ideology and practice of nineteenth century colonialism.<sup>81</sup> In the European experience of South Asian climates, the combination of moisture and heat led to injurious conditions.<sup>82</sup> For instance, despite its abundant natural resources, Bengal's unsavory climate permitted "little prospect that British men and women could for long

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> This tier of Sri Lanka's caste hierarchy is comparable to the Shudra group in the Brahmanic caste system.

<sup>77</sup> Definition of colorism is based on Margaret Hunter, "The Persistent Problem of Colorism: Skin Tone, Status, and Inequality," *Sociology Compass* 1, no.1 (2007): 237–254. Waughray, "Caste Discrimination and Minority Rights," 28; Frykenberg, "The Social Context." In accordance with Hindu creation mythology, the four broad hierarchical categories, or *varnas*, of social division are traditionally linked to occupation or social functions such as priests (Brahmins), warriors and rulers (Kshatriyas), traders and artisans (Vaisyas), and serfs and laborers (Shudras).

<sup>78</sup> Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, *Racism without Racists: Color-blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in the United States* (Oxford, UK: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2006), 9.

<sup>79</sup> Prashad, *Kung Fu Fighting* (2002).

<sup>80</sup> Reddy, "Ethnicity of Caste," 549.

<sup>81</sup> Arnold, "Race, Place, and Bodily Difference."

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

survive in health, or reproduce themselves beyond one, or at most two, puny generations.”<sup>83</sup> In fact, as a result of this, the British moved further north, where the weather conditions were more favorable and the region more densely populated by lighter skinned and higher caste Indians.<sup>84</sup> British officials’ inability to physically thrive in the southern regions of India as well as Sri Lanka led to beliefs that tied skin color, caste, and region together in their assessment of native peoples and lands. In further substantiating their own conceptualizations of the significance of physical appearance in relation to the Other, Europeans were able to preserve the European racial order in South Asia. Light skinned Europeans achieved this by conquering and controlling the darker-skinned natives.<sup>85</sup> Colonial perceptions of the natives’ physical appearance and bodies not only reified notions of the “Other” already percolating in European thought, but in linking regions, land, cultures, and practices to these ideas about human difference, local systems of classification were naturally impacted.

To elaborate on the role of colorism in contemporary South Asia, examining the thought and practices promulgated by this ideology is important. Although ideals of “whiteness” embedded in South Asian societies predate colonial contact, the West’s increasing global penetration has resulted in the institutionalization of Western models of beauty and values of worthiness in Indian and Sri Lankan societies. This in turn has produced a permeating color consciousness in contemporary South Asia.<sup>86</sup> Some scholars argue that the desire for lighter skin is not indicative of a race-based preference since conceptions of beauty do not necessarily map on to ascriptions for behavioral characteristics in these societies.<sup>87</sup> However, contemporary ideas about lightness in skin color are not purely an association with personal esthetics, but cultural and economic supremacy, success, and progress in life.<sup>88</sup> This perception and function of colorism is

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 256.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 257. Early medical records are also indicative of the discursive instantiations of the racialized Other. These records facilitated “race sentiment” and led to the subsequent intensification in British emphasis on racial difference and perceptions of physical characteristics of race throughout the nineteenth century. The relational nature of orientalism and the Manichean worldview as ideology is further contextualized in the medical discourse of the time that sought to understand the supposed effects of climate not merely in isolation but in terms of what tropical heat and humidity did to the European body... by constant comparison with Indians.” Medical topographers (such as J.R. Martin and James Annesley) investigated the incidence and impact of disease between Europeans and Indians, which led them to document differences in how disease affected the two populations.

<sup>86</sup> Nazia Hussein, “Colour of Life Achievements: Historical and Media Influences of Identity Formation based on Skin Colour in South Asia,” *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 31, no.4 (2010): 403–424; Eric P.H. Li, Hyun Jeong Min, Russell W. Belk, Junko Kimura, and Shalini Bahl, “Skin Lightening and Beauty in Four Asian Cultures,” *Advances in Consumer Research*, 35 (2008): 444–449. Lighter (in contradistinction to darker) complexion is central to beauty standards and status in South Asian societies. “Whiteness,” or the possession of a fair skin tone is an important element in the construction of female beauty standards in some Asian societies. While this may appear to be a superficial esthetic concern with little political import, South Asia, in particular, has a fascination with skin lightening due to deep historical, cultural, and media depictions of lightness as a beauty ideal and prerequisite for achievement. For instance, in Indian society, lighter skin is equated with the revered Brahmin caste, who are also priests and represent religious purity and leadership. Lower castes such as the Shudra, who are common laborers, are expectedly darker skinned.

<sup>87</sup> Vijay Prashad, *The Karma of Brown Folk* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000).

<sup>88</sup> Hussein, “Colour of Life Achievements”; Diop, *Precolonial Black Africa*; Li et al., “Skin Lightening (2008)”; Prashad, *Karma* (2000). Skin color preferences alongside caste consciousness are largely seen in the fairly public searches and criteria for mate selection and specifically, in matrimonial advertising in print media. Over time, among all castes, a preference for lighter skin tones among new brides especially has been the desired norm.

reminiscent of the dualism in Frantz Fanon's discussion of the Manichean worldview fundamental to European thought.<sup>89</sup> This Manichean structure divides the world into two distinct parts: the colonizer and the colonized based on good (lightness) and evil (darkness). Presence of this Manichean worldview is easily identifiable in South Asia as a result of Western colonialism and imperialism and globalization has led to a more consistent and concentrated circulation of European ideals of beauty. South Asian societies are therefore not immune to ideas such as the elevation of fair skin or even anti-Black racism. Constitutive of colonial racist ideology and the ensuing onto-colonial sociality of the present moment, colorism in South Asia is not simply characterized by a yearning for lighter skin, but is far subtler and severe. Skin color is, thus, imbricated in ethnic difference and structured via caste classification. According to this logic, variations from light to dark hues are associated with both high and low caste groupings. Recognition of these nuances within a historical context permits a view of the racialization in South Asian societies and the subtle ways in which race operates via native social structures.

### Locating Blackness in South Asia

Historicizing the linkage between conceptualizations of blackness and attitudes toward dark skin is a necessary step in uncovering how Africana people are affected by these interlocking social signifiers and related systems of oppression. Although the South Asian caste-race-colorism relation is complex, it nevertheless poses a vital set of questions regarding Africana people in the region. Given how native ideas about caste and colorism have been subject to European racialization, an academically unexplored question remains, where do African-descended South Asians fall within this complex social structure? Moreover, how is Africana life impacted by race, caste, and colorism? As the narrative above illustrates, the transmogrifying relationship between caste and race has been forceful in the making and remaking of notions about difference in India and Sri Lanka. This is also apparent in South Asian attitudes toward Africana people. Caste-based attitudes toward the darker-skinned overlap with perceptions of blackness as both a symbol of inferiority and indicator of a particular racialized subjectivity. However, this phenomenon is not novel in

<sup>89</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks: The Experiences of a Black Man in a White World* (Grove Press, 1967). Harrell, *Manichean Psychology*, 15. Drawing on Frantz Fanon, Camara Harrell explains this dualism in the following manner: "The Manicheans conceived of blackness and things associated with it as evil. Whiteness, or light, became associated with good." The effects of this Manichean structure are evident in South Asian history. For example, Crispin Bates notes that in India, by the 1830's, Brahmanical ideas of caste classification were being applied and observed differences based on physical appearance were being recorded. The entanglement between colorism and caste is also found through a linguistic analysis. The literal translation of the Sanskrit term, *varna*, is "color," which has led to the association of caste with skin color even as early as colonial documents charting rudimentary cultural observations among South Asians. See: Hussein, "Colour of Life Achievements"; Said, *Orientalism*; Prashad, *Karma*. For instance, early British colonial administrators held the notion that skin color was an indicator of caste. In examining colonial history, it is clear that 'Whiteness' cohered as opposite and superior to the dark skinned Other. "Images of the other as strange, dirty, feared, animal-like, exotic, child-like, despised yet sometimes also desired" are consistent threads in colonial histories and early race discourse. Moreover, color in this context is a more likely reference to feudal colors, standards, and classes of things than phenotype and skin tone. *Varna* and *jati* are more complex than systems of racial classification found in Western societies. However, South Asian stratification became more visible and significant due to the intricate coalescing of European discourses of fairness (or, light skin) in contradistinction to darkness, combined with Hinduism's paradox of purity and pollution.

South Asia. This too can be traced to European culture. In fact, European perceptions of blackness permeated South Asian societies during the colonial era. For example, in the 1830s, the British often referred to native South Asians as “Blacks” and sometimes even used the pejorative N-word.<sup>90</sup> A distinctly raced language and race sentiment echoed throughout South Asian colonies, regardless of whether Africans were present or not. Europeans distinguished between tribes and aboriginals, the inhabitants of hills and forests in India and Sri Lanka, who they considered the most uncivilized and closely resembling those on the African continent.<sup>91</sup> These sentiments prevail in contemporary South Asian societies and are substantiated by current global trends in anti-Black racism.

Attitudes toward Siddis and Kaffirs resemble many of the common and current negative stereotypes about African Americans. Siddis are generally considered lazy, socially and culturally backward, unintelligent, and sexually promiscuous.<sup>92</sup> In Sri Lanka, Kaffirs are thought of as backward, outsiders, and unequivocally a “forgotten minority.”<sup>93</sup> In an interview with *The Telegraph*, in 2009, Shihan de Silva Jayasuriya explains that current disempowerment among Kaffirs is directly tied to decolonization and the expulsion of European colonialists from the island.<sup>94</sup> While this assertion suggests that under colonial rule, Kaffirs would be subject to better treatment and greater opportunities for socioeconomic advancement, it is important to recall the conditions of capture, enslavement, and displacement which have never been desirable circumstances. Nonetheless, state-led efforts to extricate Kaffirs from their chronic impoverishment and depressed social circumstances are minimal. Evident in these views is the disavowal of deeply entrenched racialization as well as racial discrimination in terms of Africana people in South Asia.

In general, blackness and Africanness are synonymous concepts for South Asians. As previously discussed, South Asians read and understand Africanity through corporeal characteristics. What this also signals is that Whiteness (or, a visible European phenotype) is the marker of that which is Western. African American novelist, Brian Keith Jackson, explains that in Sri Lanka, due to his identifiably “African” physical features, he is considered a continental African and not an American.<sup>95</sup> Glaring examples of racist violence against Africana people are more common in Indian society than in Sri Lanka. For instance, in 2014, the *Hindustan Times* reported an incident which garnered substantial media attention to the racism experienced by continental African university students in India. Burundian and Nigerian students reported their experiences of “everyday racism” that included negative references to their dark skin tone, the proliferation of negative stereotypes that African male students are “dumb” and prone to violence and female students sexually licentious.<sup>96</sup> In another incident in 2013, 21 Congolese students were

<sup>90</sup> Arnold, “Race, Place, and Bodily Difference”; Hussein, “Colour of Life Achievements.”

<sup>91</sup> Hussein, “Colour of Life Achievements.”

<sup>92</sup> Obeng *Shaping Membership*, 38–42. Prita Sandy Meier, “Per/forming African Identities: Sidis Communities in the Transnational Moment” in *Sidis and Scholars: Essays on African Indians 2004*, eds. Amy Catlin-Jairazbhoy and Edward A. Alpers (Uttar Pradesh, India: Rainbow Publishers), 88–89.

<sup>93</sup> de Silva Jayasuriya, *African Identity*.

<sup>94</sup> Mel Gunasekera, “Where ‘kaffir’ is no insult,” *The Telegraph*, November 20, 2009, accessed April 2, 2015. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/expat/expatnews/6613354/Where-kaffir-is-no-insult.html>

<sup>95</sup> Farai Chideya, “Traveling while Black,” *The New York Times*, January 3, 2014, accessed April 2, 2015. <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/05/travel/traveling-while-black.html>

<sup>96</sup> Ravinder Vasudeva, Riddhi Joshi, Sudipto Mondal and Namita Kohli, “Their Indian Horror: Africans Recount Everyday Racism,” *Hindustan Times*, October 12, 2014, accessed April 2, 2015. <http://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/their-indian-horror-africans-recount-everyday-racism/article1-1274437.aspx>

arrested at a bus stop by the police in Punjab under suspicion of “luggage theft.” This incident “angered the black African community in the state of Punjab” who stressed that there was an “intolerably racist atmosphere in the state.”<sup>97</sup> Students told reporters that Indian natives “make monkey noises at [them]” and specifically provoke Africans because they know that “whatever happens, it’s the black man who will be arrested.”<sup>98</sup> These instances of blatant anti-Black racism offer contextualization of common attitudes toward people of African descent in contemporary South Asian societies.

The dark complexion of Siddis and Kaffirs is grounds, at least in part, for the social stigma they face in contemporary India and Sri Lanka. This is in addition to other physical characteristics that portray them as a homogeneous people who are historically, culturally, and socially also outsiders. Hence, the lens through which these societies interpret Siddis’ and Kaffirs’ dark skin conflates the general undesirability of that particular physical feature among South Asians and the association of negative stereotypes with Africana people. As demonstrated by the recent racial violence against continental African students pursuing baccalaureate degrees at Indian universities, the familiar assumptions that Africana people are generally dishonest, criminally inclined, and sexually loose undergirds contemporary anti-Black racism in South Asia. Taken together, the view that incidents of racial violence directed at African students are isolated and exceptional as well as the absence of a constructive discussion about anti-Black sentiment toward Siddis and Kaffirs indicates a deep racialization in South Asia. These interpretations also emphasize the active negation of racial discrimination in these societies as well as in scholarship.

In the present day, race, caste, and colorism and their interlocking nature conceivably have some bearing on the self-definitions and thought of Africana people in these societies. Remarkably, however, Siddi and Kaffir self-perceptions are dramatically different from how the rest of society views them.<sup>99</sup> Their kinship formation and self-perceptions are not entirely independent of the residual effects of these colonial ideas nor are they exempt from the effects of South Asia’s own regional sociopolitical forces and are subject to their collective dynamism. Nonetheless, these communities have carved out Africana identities for themselves and unabashedly assert them. Siddis and Kaffirs have been seen re-creating and extending symbolic and spiritual acts connecting them to their past in both South Asian history and their putative homelands in Africa.<sup>100</sup> They have accomplished this through music, dance, religious rituals, street theater, as well as the rarer instances of athletic pursuits. Siddis in Karnataka have worked endlessly to gain government-sponsored affirmative action programs, appealing to African American scholars, and African political figures including Nelson Mandela.<sup>101</sup> In 2003, the Indian government classified Siddis as a Scheduled Tribe, a status they share with the Dalits (untouchables) and other lower caste groups.<sup>102</sup> It is clear that conflation between lower caste status and blackness further strengthens prejudicial

<sup>97</sup> Keita India and Christophe Okito, “Congolese Nationals Arrested in Punjab, a ‘Real Hell for Black Africans,’” *France 24*, June 19, 2013, accessed April 2, 2015. <http://observers.france24.com/content/20130619-congolese-nationals-arrested-punjab-africans>.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>99</sup> Obeng, *Shaping Membership*; Lionel Mandy, “The Afrikan/African Sri Lankans: A History of the Resilience and Rejuvenation of People called ‘Kapiri’ or ‘Kaffirs’”, April 3, 2015, <http://afrikansrilankans.weebly.com/the-story-of-the-afrikan-sri-lankans.html>; Melissa Schindler (a scholar of Indian Ocean African diaspora) interview with the author, May 2014.

<sup>100</sup> Meier, “Per/forming African Identities”; de Silva Jayasuriya, *African Identity*.

<sup>101</sup> Obeng, *Shaping Membership*.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*

attitudes toward Siddis. Moreover, the tension between the broader external categories of Siddi and Kaffir and administrative categories (such as Scheduled Tribe) versus the more enduring social signifiers like caste labels cannot be ignored.

Africana identity in South Asia transcends and even transgresses the boundaries set by the nation-state and includes an amalgam of self-articulations based on cultural continuities, African pride, diasporic membership, as well as mediated responses to changing social circumstances. Siddis and Kaffirs see across cultural and physical boundaries that allow for a continuous African experience, which they strive to preserve despite the odds.<sup>103</sup> Their small numerical significance has led to lasting effects in terms of political and social outcomes that would otherwise enable improvements of their circumstances. The most pervasive theories about marginalization in South Asia often downplay the depth of cultural expressions and innovative political action of the Siddis and Kaffirs in spite of their destitute economic and social plight. Although access to quality education, gainful employment, and other resources is greatly hampered, Siddis and Kaffirs appear satisfied with their lifestyles and are determined to preserve their cultural heritage.

As established above, the place of blackness in the context of racialization and caste-based discrimination take two distinct forms. First, there are social perceptions of the wider society that understand Africana presence on very specific racialized terms. In effect, Siddis' and Kaffirs' dark skin confirms their position as "others" and "outsiders." The scale of such views registers variously across social, political, national, and international arenas, especially as these groups' cultural expressions gain broad appeal. Second, self-defined and self-articulated assertions of identity that affirm Africana history, culture, and life are central features of Siddi and Kaffir communal longevity. This latter aspect implies a level of agency amidst conditions that sustain marginalized social positionality. Attitudes toward the blackness of Africana people infiltrates South Asian sociality through the effect of colorism, and the manner by which it intersects with their unique religious practices, African linguistic and cultural elements, their assertion of African identity, and the intentional use of ethnonyms (such as Siddi and Kaffir) to distinguish themselves from other ethnic groups.

### Defining Racialized Casteism

The central focus of this theoretical essay has been to delineate how race sentiment has become a familiar and normative dimension of present day India and Sri Lanka to the degree that it determines the experiences of Africana people within these nations in distinct ways. The historical entanglements of race, caste, and colorism within the broader colonial context and the globalization of Western ideas underscore both the treatment of Africana people in India and Sri Lanka and their own processes of identity formation and self-perception. Affirmative Africana identity formations notwithstanding, the real problems of South Asian social exclusion in terms of political and economic disenfranchisement begs the following question: how do the forces of caste-based discrimination and anti-Black

<sup>103</sup> "We're Indian and African": Voices of the Sidis. DVD. Directed and produced by Beheroze Shroff. 2003; Irvine, CA, 2003. Voices of the Sidis: Ancestral Links. DVD. Directed and produced by Beheroze Shroff. 2005; Irvine, CA, 2005. Kannan Arunasalam. "Kaffir Culture," *Vimeo* video, 8:01, October 24, 2009, <https://vimeo.com/7234191>. In these documentary films, Siddis and Kaffirs are interviewed in regards to their African identity, perceptions about being Indian and Sri Lankan nationals, and issues of marginalization, disenfranchisement, and exploitation.

racism come together to produce the racialized socialities of Africana people in South Asia? *Racialized casteism* provides a conceptual device through which to engage such a question.

*Racialized casteism* operates on the assumption that South Asian social marginalization and political disenfranchisement cannot be understood in terms of the mutually exclusive categories of race, caste, and colorism. The dialectical relationship between these three social signifiers is predicated on the particularities of Africana abjection and subjection in South Asia. This conceptual framework situates local social classification systems in synchronism with global flows of ideas and attitudes bringing into stark relief the multifarious processes of Africana subjection and subjectivity. Two conceptual frameworks inform this definition of racialized casteism. Barnor Hesse's notion of onto-coloniality offers a sound analytic through which to highlight the continuing significance of colonialism in the non-White non-Western societies of India and Sri Lanka. Added to this, Avtar Brah and Laura Pulido's theorizations of differential racialization offer a heuristic for apprehending the relational processes of racialization in South Asia vis-à-vis Europe. More straightforwardly, racialized casteism refers to the sociopolitical processes of differentiation that produce particular and coinciding experiences of anti-Black racism and caste-based discrimination in the lives of Africana people in South Asia. It is catalyzed by the course of globalization that not only circulates consumer goods but ideologies and values from the Western world and is structured by native social arrangements in South Asian societies.

## Conclusion

As discussed in this essay, colonial interpretations of Brahmanic ideals of caste through a racial lens effectively racialized firmly held local ideas about human difference. This successfully gave rise to a reasonable politics that made caste the basis for political mobilization on a new scale among South Asians. As a result, caste identification became "a national signifier," "a matter of norms," and in Indian society, "an embodiment of Hindu values."<sup>104</sup> Likewise, the role that colorism plays within these classifications makes it difficult to separate the fascination with and elevation of fair skin vis-à-vis social and political issues affecting those darker hued. Today, as a consequence, race, caste, and colorism form a dialectically interrelated system of oppression that affects Africana people in particularly salient ways. In order to study the cultural constructions of identity and community in the context of disenfranchisement and marginalization in Siddi and Kaffir communities, continuities and fissures can be better understood when examined in conjunction with the development of social signifiers such as race, caste, and colorism.

Historicizing the linkage between race, caste, and colorism in terms of the colonial encounter leads to compelling new insights about the processes of racialization and their racist outcomes especially in relation to Africana people. *Racialized casteism* extends the framework of differential racialization and refers to the interlocking relationship between transmuted race and racist sentiment, caste-based discrimination, and colorism in the distinct experiences of Africana people located in highly stratified South Asian societies.<sup>105</sup> This

<sup>104</sup> Robb, *Concept of Race*, 44.

<sup>105</sup> Laura Pulido, *Black, Brown, Yellow, and Left: Radical Activism in Los Angeles* (University of California Press, 2006), 24; Avtar Brah, *Cartographies of Race: Contesting Identities* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1996), 86, 228.

concept brings into view the relationship between these social signifiers and demands a deliberate focus on Africana racial subjects and their subjection. To acknowledge this relationship is to take seriously the ongoing influences of capitalism, imperialism, and colonialism on Africana lives in South Asia. While this essay has focused analysis at the conceptual level, future scholarship on the western Indian Ocean African diaspora must necessarily empirically investigate how European forms of racialization have been reconfigured and reconstituted in these non-Western non-White societies as a result of colonialism, imperialism, and increasing globalization. Empirical evidence of this phenomenon can further contribute to the development of solutions that are useful to diasporic Africans in South Asia.

### Compliance with Ethical Standards

**Conflict of Interest** The authors declare that they have no conflict of interests.

## References

- Aldrich, R. (2014). *Cultural encounters and homoeroticism in Sri Lanka: sex and serendipity*. New York: Routledge.
- Alpers, E. A. (2000). Recollecting Africa: diasporic memory in the Indian Ocean world. *African Studies Review*, 43(1), 83–99.
- Ambedkar, B. R. (1916). *Castes in India: their mechanism, genesis and development*. India: Patrika Publications.
- Amin, S. (1989). *Eurocentrism*. New York: NYU Press.
- Ani, M. (1994). *Yurugu: an African-centered critique of European cultural thought and behavior*. Maryland: Afrikan World Books.
- Appiah, K. A., & Jr, H. L. G. (Eds.). (1999). *Africana: the encyclopedia of the African and African American experience*. New York: Basic Civitas Books.
- Arnold, D. (2004). Race, place and bodily difference in early nineteenth-century India. *Historical Research*, 77(196), 254–273.
- Arunasalam, K. (2009). *Kaffir culture*. Vimeo video, 8:01. Retrieved from (<https://vimeo.com/7234191>)
- Bandyopadhyay, S. (2004). *Caste, culture and hegemony: social dominance in Colonial Bengal*. New York: Sage.
- Banerjee-Dube, I. (Ed.). (2008). *Caste in History*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Banerjee-Dube, I. (2014). Caste, race and difference: the limits of knowledge and resistance. *Current Sociology*, 62(4), 512–530.
- Barnett, S. (1975). Approaches to changes in caste ideology in South India. In B. Stein (Ed.), *Essays on South Asia* (pp. 149–180). Hawaii: University Press of Hawaii.
- Bates, C. (1995). Race, Caste, and Tribe in Central India: The Early Origins of Indian Anthropometry. In R. Peter (Ed.), *The concept of race in south Asia* (pp. 219–259). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bhattacharyya, H., Sarkar, P., Kar, A. (2010). Introduction. In B. Harihar, S. Partha, & K. Angsuman (Eds.), *The politics of social exclusion in India: democracy at the crossroads* (pp. 1–14). Oxon: Routledge.
- Bonilla-Silva, E. (2006). *Racism without racists: color-blind racism and the persistence of racial inequality in the United States*. Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers Inc.
- Brah, A. (1996). *Cartographies of race: contesting identities*. New York: Routledge.
- Camara, C. (2004). The Siddis of Uttara Kannada: history, identity and change among african descendants in contemporary Karnataka. In C.-J. Amy & E. A. Alpers (Eds.), *Sidis and scholars: essays on African Indians* (pp. 100–114). Uttar Pradesh: Rainbow Publishers.
- Catlin-Jairazbhoy, A., & Alpers, E. A. (2004). Introduction. In C.-J. Amy & E. A. Alpers (Eds.), *Sidis and scholars: essays on African Indians* (pp. 1–25). Uttar Pradesh: Rainbow Publishers.
- Clarke John, H. (2007). Africana studies: a decade of change, challenge and conflict. In N. Norment Jr. (Ed.), *The African American studies reader* (pp. 292–310). Durham: Carolina Academic Press.

- Chakrabarty, D. (2002). *Habitations of modernity: essays in the wake of subaltern studies*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Chatterjee, I. (2005). Abolition by denial: the South Asian example. In C. Gwyn (Ed.), *Abolition and its aftermath in Indian Ocean Africa and Asia* (pp. 150–168). New York: Routledge.
- Chatterjee, P. (1986). *Nationalist thought and the colonial world: a derivative discourse*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Chideya, F. (2014). “Traveling while Black.” *The New York Times*, January 3, 2014, Retrieved April 2, 2015 (<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/05/travel/traveling-while-black.html>)
- Cox, O. C. (1945). Race and caste: a distinction. *American Journal of Sociology*, 50(5), 360–368.
- Cox, O. C. (1948). *Caste, class and race*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Cox, Robert. 1834. *Transactions of the Phrenological Society*, VII(XL): 577–603.
- Department of Census and Statistics Sri Lanka. (2012). “Census of Population and Housing of Sri Lanka,” Retrieved April 12, 2015 (<http://www.statistics.gov.lk/PopHouSat/CPH2012Visualization/htdocs/index.php?usecase=indicator&action=Map&indId=11>)
- de Silva Jayasuriya, S. (2009). *African identity in Asia: cultural effects of forced migration*. Princeton: Marcus Weiner Publications.
- de Silva Jayasuriya, S. (2003). The African Diaspora in Sri Lanka. In S. de Silva Jayasuriya & P. Richard (Eds.), *The African Diaspora in the Indian Ocean* (pp. 251–288). Trenton: Africa World Press.
- Diop, C. A. (1987). *Precolonial Black Africa: a comparative study of the political and social systems of Europe and Black Africa, from antiquity to the formation of modern states*. Westport: Lawrence Hill & Company.
- Dirks, N. B. (2001). *Castes of mind: colonialism and the making of Modern India*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Dumont, L. (1974). *Homo Hierarchicus: the caste system and its implications*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Fanon, F. (1967). *Black Skin, White Masks: The Experiences of a Black Man in a White World*. New York: Grove.
- Frykenberg, R. E. (2005). The social context: Caste and “color.” *Christian History and Biography*, 87, 28.
- Ghurye, G. S. (1969). *Caste and race in India*. Bombay: Popular Prakashan.
- Glissant, E. (1992). *Caribbean discourse: selected essays*. Charlottesville: Caraf Books.
- Gupta, D. (Ed.). (2004). *Caste in question: identity or hierarchy?* India: SAGE Publications.
- Gunasekera, M. (2009). Where ‘Kaffir’ is no insult. *The Telegraph*, November 20. Retrieved April 2, 2015 (<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/expat/expatnews/6613354/Where-kaffir-is-no-insult.html>)
- Hall, S. (1991). The Local and the Global. In A. D. King (Ed.), *Culture, globalization, and the world system: contemporary conditions for the representation of identity* (pp. 19–40). London: Macmillan.
- Harrell, C. J. P. (1999). *Manichean psychology: racism and the minds of people of African descent*. Washington, DC: Howard University Press.
- Harris, J. E. (1971). *The African presence in Asia: consequences of the East African slave trade*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.
- Harris, J. E. (2003). Expanding the scope of African Diaspora studies: the Middle East and India, a research agenda. *Radical History Review*, 87, 157–168.
- Hesse, B. (2007). Racialized modernity: an analytics of White mythologies. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 30(4), 643–663.
- Hunter, M. (2007). The persistent problem of colorism: skin tone, status, and inequality. *Sociology Compass*, 1(1), 237–254.
- Hussein, N. (2010). Colour of life achievements: historical and media influences of identity formation based on skin colour in South Asia. *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 31(4), 403–424.
- Ibbetson, D. (1881). *Report on the census of Punjab I*. Calcutta: Government of India.
- India, K., Akito, C. (2013). “Congoese Nationals Arrested in Punjab, a ‘Real Hell for Black Africans.’” *France 24*, June 19. Retrieved April 2, 2015 (<http://observers.france24.com/content/20130619-congoese-nationals-arrested-punjab-africans>)
- Jaffrelot, C. (2005). *Dr Ambedkar and untouchability: analysing and fighting caste*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Kannabiran, V., & Kalpana, K. (1991). *Caste and gender: understanding dynamics of power and violence* (Economic and Political Weekly, pp. 2130–2133).
- Kotani, H. (Ed.). (1997). *Caste system, untouchability, and the depressed*. India: Manohar Publishers & Distributors.
- Li, E. P. H., Min, H. J., Belk, R. W., Kimura, J., Bahl, S. (2008). Skin lightening and beauty in four Asian cultures. *Advances in Consumer Research*, 35, 444–449.

- Lodhi Abdulaziz, Y. (2008). Linguistic evidence of Bantu origins of the Sidis of India. In P. Kiran Kamal & A. Jean-Pierre (Eds.), *TADIA: the African Diaspora in Asia—explorations on a less known fact* (pp. 301–313). India: Jana Jagrati Prakashana.
- Lodhi Abdulaziz, Y. (1992). African settlements in India. *Nordic Journal of African Studies*, 1, 83–86.
- Malalasekera, G. P., Jayatilleke, K. N. (1958). *Buddhism and the race question*. Paris: UNESCO Publications.
- Meier Prita, S. (2004). Per/forming African identities Sidi communities in the transnational moment. In C.-J. Amy & E. A. Alpers (Eds.), *Sidis and scholars: essays on African Indians* (pp. 86–99). Uttar Pradesh: Rainbow Publishers Inc.
- O'Connor, M. (2008). Getting to know the Kaffirs through music and dance. *The Sunday Times*, November 9. Retrieved April 20, 2015 ([http://www.sundaytimes.lk/081109/Plus/sundaytimesplus\\_10.html](http://www.sundaytimes.lk/081109/Plus/sundaytimesplus_10.html))
- Obeng, P. (2007). *Shaping membership, defining nation: the cultural politics of African Indians in South Asia*. Lanham: Lexington Books.
- Omvedt, G. (1982). *Land, caste, and politics in Indian states*. Columbia: South Asia Books.
- Pankhurst, R. (1961). *An introduction to the economic history of Ethiopia*. London: Lalibela House.
- Parsons, T. (1975). Some theoretical considerations on the nature and trends of change of ethnicity. In G. Nathan & D. P. Moynihan (Eds.), *Ethnicity: theory and experience* (pp. 53–83). Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Pellerin, M. (2012). Benefits of afrocentricity in exploring social phenomena: understanding afrocentricity as a Social Science methodology. *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, 5(4), 149–160.
- Prashad, V. (2002). *Everybody was Kung Fu Fighting: Afro-Asian connections and the myth of cultural purity*. Boston: Beacon.
- Prashad, V. (2000). *The Karma of Brown Folk*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Pulido, L. (2006). *Black, brown, yellow, and left: radical activism in Los Angeles*. Oakland: University of California Press.
- Rana, J. (2011). *Terrifying Muslims: race and labor in the South Asian Diaspora*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Rao, A. (2009). *The caste question: dalits and the politics of modern India*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Reddy, D. S. (2005). The ethnicity of caste. *Anthropological Quarterly*, 78(3), 543–584.
- Robb, P. (1995). *The concept of race in South Asia*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Said, E. W. (1978). *Orientalism: western conceptions of the orient*. London: Routledge.
- Searle-Chatterjee, M., & Sharma, U. (Eds.). (1994). *Contextualising caste: post-Dumontian approaches*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Setlur, S. (2014). Searching for South Asian intelligence: psychometry in British India, 1919-1940. *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences*, 50(4), 359–375.
- Sharma, A. (2004). Dr. B.R. Ambedkar on the Aryan invasion and the emergence of the caste system in India. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 73(3), 843–870.
- Shroff, B. (2005). *Voices of the Sidis: ancestral links*. DVD. Irvine, CA.
- Shroff, B. (2003). *We're Indian and African: voices of the Sidis*. DVD. Irvine, CA.
- Silva, K. T., Sivapragasam, P. P., Thanges, P. (2009). Caste discrimination and social justice in Sri Lanka: an overview. *Indian Institute of Dalit Studies Working Paper Series*, 3(6), 1–24.
- Slate, N. (2011). Translating race and caste. *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 24(1), 62–79.
- Thapar, R. (1996). The theory of Aryan race and India: history and politics. *Social Scientist*, 24(1/3), 3–29.
- Turner Joseph, E. (2007). Africana studies and epistemology: a discourse in the sociology of knowledge. In N. Norment Jr. (Ed.), *The African American studies reader* (pp. 74–87). Durham: Carolina Academic Press.
- Trouillot, M.-R. (1990). *Haiti, state against nation: the origins and legacy of Duvalierism*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Vasudeva, R., Joshi, R., Mondal, S., Kohli, N. (2014). Their Indian horror: Africans recount everyday racism. *Hindustan Times*, October 12, Retrieved April 2, 2015 (<http://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/their-indian-horror-africans-recount-everyday-racism/article1-1274437.aspx>)
- Visvanathan, S. (2001). The race for caste: prolegomena to the Durban conference. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 36(27), 2512–2516
- Washbrook, D. (1989). Ethnicity in contemporary Indian politics. In H. Alavi & J. Harriss (Eds.), *South Asia* (pp. 174–185). New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Waughray, A. (2010). Caste discrimination and minority rights: the case of India's Dalits. *International Journal on Minority and Group Rights*, 17, 327–353.
- Wickramasinghe, C. S. M. (2008). Coloured slavery in Ceylon (Sri Lanka). *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Sri Lanka*, 54, 19–178.