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Author(s): Vijay Prashad

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Afro-Dalits of the Earth, Unite!

Vijay Prashad

Abstract: A group of African American and Dalit scholars are at work on a project on the similarities in the histories and lives of African and Dalit peoples. Scholars such as Ivan van Sertima, Runoko Rashidi, V. T. Rajshekar, and others form this submerged network of Afro-Dalit literature. The Afro-Dalit project seeks to posit a common origin for Africans and Dalits as a means to call for political solidarity in the present. "Afro-Dalits of the Earth, Unite!" explores the framework of Afro-Dalit scholarship, critiques it, and then offers an alternative approach to the interconnections in African and Indian life. Rather than endorsing epidermal determinism, this article calls for a polycultural approach to the cosmopolitanism of our lives.

Résumé: Un groupe de chercheurs africains américains et dalits travaillent actuellement sur un projet portant sur les similarités dans l'histoire et la vie des peuples africains et dalits. Des chercheurs tels que Ivan van Sertima, Runoko Rashidi, V. T. Rajshekar et d'autres forment ce réseau occulte de littérature afro-dalite. Le Projet afro-dalit cherche à avancer une origine commune pour les africains et les dalits dans le but d'appeler à la solidarité politique dans le présent. 'Afro-Dalits of the Earth, Unite!' ('Afro-dalits de la terre, unissez-vous!') examine la structure du savoir universitaire afro-dalit, en fait une critique puis offre une approche alternative aux interconnexions présentes dans la vie africaine et indienne. Plutôt qu'à un déterminisme épidermique, cet article appelle à une approche polyculturelle du caractère cosmopolite de notre vie.

In April 1999, the noted Afrocentric scholar Runoko Rashidi traveled to India as a guide to a group of African Americans who wished to see "India

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Vijay Prashad is an assistant professor of international studies at Trinity College. He is the author of *Untouchable Freedom: A Social History of a Dalit Community* (2000) and *Karma of Brown Folk* (2000). With Biju Mathew, he edited *Satyagraha in America: The Political Culture of South Asians* (special issue of *Amerasia Journal*, winter 1999–2000). He is currently at work on a book entitled "A Bandung Book: On Afro-Asian Traffic" and (with Luis Figueroa) on an edited book entitled *To Shelter Hope: The State of the Left in the Americas* (forthcoming).

Through African Eyes.”¹ At Trivandrum (Kerala) airport, shouts of “Free Mumia Abu-Jamal” greeted the tourists, and at a program at Bhubaneswar (Orissa), the Indian moderator read from Claude McKay’s “If We Must Die” (Rashidi 1999). The year before, Rashidi told an Indian audience that he travels to India “to help establish a bond between the Black people of America and the Dalits, the Black Untouchables of India,” a tie that “will never be broken.” *Dalits* (literally, “broken-men” or the oppressed) are those people who Hindu supremacy once called “untouchables” (*achut*) and who now call themselves Dalits to underscore the social relations of their oppression. Rashidi’s use of the translation “Black Untouchables of India” refers to a book published in 1979 in India but subsequently reprinted by Clarity Press (Atlanta) in 1995 as *Dalit: The Black Untouchables of India*. The author of this book, V. T. Rajshekar, was one of Rashidi’s hosts during the 1999 trip and is the editor of *Dalit Voice*, whose pages have welcomed African American scholars for at least a decade. “Dalits were the original inhabitants of India and resemble Africans in physical features,” Rajshekar wrote in his book (1995:35,43). “It is said that India and Africa was one land mass until separated by the ocean. So both the Africans and the Indian Untouchables and tribals had common ancestors.” The search for a primordial unity toward social struggle against racism is not uncommon these days, for even the U.N. speaks of “indigenous people” and their special role in the project of freedom. Scholars like Rajshekar and Rashidi offer a variant of the “indigenous people” argument, one that has both historiographical and political import.

This essay reflects on the submerged networks of Afro-Dalit scholarship, itself the intellectual arm of various forms of African American and Dalit subnationalisms. In the aftermath of Martin Bernal’s *Black Athena* (1987), Molefi K. Asante’s *The Afrocentric Idea* (1987), and Leonard Jeffries’s extravagant statements, the phenomenon of black nationalism has come under severe, but largely untutored, attack (Howe 1998). In 1997, Louis Farrakhan of the Nation of Islam addressed the thirteenth annual Republican executives meeting at Boca Raton, Florida, a move that earned some criticism for black nationalism (Chait 1997). In India, the exuberance at the formation in 1984 of a Dalit political force, the Bahujan Samaj Party, was dampened when the party went into a momentary alliance with the main formation of Hindu supremacy, the Bharatiya Janata Party, in 1995 (Prashad 1995). In evidence, then, are two forms of nationalism—one, the assertion of the oppressed, and two, what Fanon (1963:164) so cannily called “vulgar tribalism,” the urge for an imitative bourgeoisie to dominate its own nationality (what Randall Robinson called the “Vernon Jordon Disease”). For the prejudice of others and for the faults of “vulgar tribalism,” black and Dalit nationalism suffer disapprobation. In the rush to condemn Farrakhan and Mayawati, politicians and scholars failed to see the ambiguity of nationalism, to see it as “a utopian narrative—a rallying cry, an expression of desire” and as “an articulation explaining what is good and beauti-

ful, as style" (Lubiano 1998:233). In the context of Indian nationalism's ideological constitution, nationalists rejected colonialism's condescension at the same time that they drew from the past to answer colonialism. The Indian Marxist D. D. Kosambi (1962) called this complex process "creative introspection," a process that was neither purely indigenous nor assimilatory, but was a way to create traditions in a colonial setting. Critics of black and Dalit nationalism fail to see the "creative introspection" which produces, to borrow from Wilson Moses, an "Afrotopia," a vision of the past that draws from the materials at hand to generate texts that vindicate or monumentalize an oppressed people (Moses 1998).

One of the most serious scholarly failings of the texts of black and Dalit nationalism is its reversion to epidermal determinism. Certainly, white and Hindu supremacy classify people into the categories of black and Dalit respectively and then condemn them to lives of toil and reproach (of course, those who are so condemned do create some means to make life as happy and filled with pleasure as possible). Given the racism of these forms of supremacy, black and Dalit nationalisms adopt their classifications, invert their moral judgments, and call for some form of political secessionism. During his 1999 trip, Rashidi reports that "in Orissa I saw and photographed the blackest human beings I've ever seen. In fact, it was my impression that the blackest people were here most highly esteemed and considered better than the others who were not so dark!" Darkness of skin provided the basis for Atlantic servitude and colonialism, but it does not itself provide any indication of political solidarity. There are many people dark of skin whose ancestors worked to promote slavery and who remain complicitous with the bondage of multinational capitalism. To celebrate skin color ("Black is Beautiful") is one thing; to make political and historical claims on the basis of skin color is another. I will have cause, in this essay, to argue against such a judgment.² However, arguing with Afro-Dalit scholars in a one-dimensional way is not productive at all. Rather, I will parse the main points of the Afro-Dalit argument and then reconstruct an approach more akin to the spirit of Bandung than of the Balkanization promoted by the G-8 States. This essay, then, will end with a polycultural model that will explain the extent of Afro-Asian traffic.

Epidermal Maladies

Modern historiography, like modernity itself, is deeply contradictory. For example, Leopold von Ranke was scrupulous in his insistence that individual facts be treated with wise skepticism and the tools of positivism. On the other hand, Ranke himself wrote within the framework of the mononational state in which he, like others, promoted the idea of the state as the ideal form in which a discrete people find their destiny. Marx, in response to this tradition, argued that the idea of a "people" was idealistic and that

it discounted the multiple axes of oppression sustained within the collectivity. Marx argued that the subject of history was not the nation, but the story of class struggle. Since the 1970s, a tacit alliance between the World Bank–IMF and several oppressed peoples has led to the adoption of the term “indigenous people” as an alternative (anti-Marxist) way to approach historical change and nationhood. By the time the 1993 U.N. Year of the Indigenous People arrived, the USSR had been dissolved and Marxism had lost some of its shine among intellectuals. If these intellectuals once looked to the working class for the liberation of humanity, many now turned opportunistically to the so-called indigenous people, and several began to write histories with the “indigenous” as subject (Prashad 1999a:77–78).

For Afrocentric and Dalitcentric scholars, there was nothing new in this approach, although the turn to the “indigenous” did allow many of them to find wider audiences for their work.³ However, much of the literature on the “indigenous,” with its “primordialist thesis,” did not consider whether a “people” are forged by historical struggle or by genetic ties (Appadurai 1996:140). The Dalit leader B. R. Ambedkar has argued against the claim of primordialism and urged Dalits to seek political communion in opposition to “the legal system of pains and penalties to which they have been subjected” (Ambedkar 1946:ii). But since the 1990s, the idea of the “indigenous” has taken hold. An American dilemma (of the *conquista* of Amerindians) is now a global movement against nonindigenous oppressors (despite the fact that there is no attempt to account for the emergence of these “nonindigenous” people). Until the 1980s, “black” was a decidedly political category, illustrated by Stokely Carmichael’s remark that Fidel Castro is “one of the Blackest men in America” (Rodney 1969:31). During the long night of Thatcherism, “black” (which once meant those whom the state did not see as “English” and who felt the knife edge of racism) reverted to its earlier referent—to indicate people of Africa, whom a racist science once called “Negroes.” “Asian” emerged to indicate those from the Indian subcontinent as opposed to those who come from the African continent (despite the fact that many Asians in the U.K. come from Kenya and Uganda). “Black” is now not so much a term of solidarity with those subjugated by imperialism as a term to unite those of “African ancestry” (and, perhaps, those who claim aboriginality or indigeness).⁴ When African American scholars like Rashidi look toward India for “blacks,” they use archaeological and anthropological records to find “Africans” (as defined in epidermal or cranial terms by European ethnologists).

To write an “African” history, for these scholars, is to find “Africans” (in body) around the world. Recorded Indian history begins with the Harappa Civilization (dated at 3000 B.C.E.), a set of highly developed cities in the Indus plains in the Punjab. “The founders of the Harappan civilization,” Rashidi wrote, “were Black. This is verifiable through the available physical evidence, including skeletal remains [and] eyewitness accounts preserved in the Rig-Veda.”⁵ The immense disputes over the evidence at Harappa and

of the use of the *Rig-Veda* (c.1500 B.C.E.) as the text of those cities is not assessed in this literature, which draws from it without doubt and without any reference to the disputes in the scholarship.⁶ Despite the tenuous evidence, Chandler (1985:88–104) claims that all originality in Indian philosophy can be attributed to Ethiopia, and Winters (1990) borrows linguistics to make racial claims (“the first inhabitants of India were Black”). What is the *racial* value of the category “black” if we acknowledge that all people are of African origin (as most physical anthropologists argue)? The Afro-Dalit scholars are not interested in the argument of monogenesis, since Chandler calls the “blacks” in ancient India “Negritos” and Rashidi weighs in with “Africoid Dravidians.” The enthusiasm for epidermal determinism occurs despite Rajshekhar’s warning (1995:52) that “in India, it is no longer easy to distinguish a touchable from an Untouchable, especially for foreigners (unlike in the U.S. where the difference between skin colors is more pronounced).” The need to claim Harappans and Dalits as “black” is to constitute a political solidarity against the “Aryans” (Winters 1985).⁷ Certain people (Afro-Dalits) are seen as primordial in order to make claims on the soil and for autonomy. This political claim against the sedimentation of power and privilege is enacted in racial terms without much consideration of the intersections of class, gender, and the national (or diasporic) consciousness. There are indeed connections across the Indian Ocean (between Africa and India), but these are far too complex to be reduced into epidermal categories. A detour into the literature on the Indian Ocean may help us reconstruct the interconnections between the continents without capitulation to the framework of racism.

The Cosmos of the Indian Ocean

A sociology of the Afrocentric interest in India (and Asia, more generally) begins within the context of a debate over slavery. In 1966, David Brion Davis published his monumental study, *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture*, in which he distinguished between a slave system predicated on white supremacy and other systems of bondage. The debate over the uniqueness of Atlantic slavery and the special moral culpability of Europe in this trade was joined. Bernard Lewis’s *Race and Color in Islam* came out in 1971 alongside a remarkable book by Joseph E. Harris (1971) entitled *The African Presence in Asia: Consequences of the East African Slave Trade*. Lewis’s book received an enormous amount of publicity, since he focused attention on the Arab role in the slave trade. In fact, in the aftermath of Israel’s victory in the Six-Day War (1967), an additional ideological blow against the Arabs was heralded in the media. To the chagrin of careful historians of slavery, Lewis placed almost all responsibility for the slave trade on the Arabs. He did not care for the distinctions between domestic servitude and plantation slavery, nor with the relationships forged between slaves and owners in the Indian

Ocean as opposed to the chattel relationships in the Caribbean and U.S. South. Nor was Lewis keen on the transformation wrought in the slave sector in East Africa, a dynamic well studied in a Ph.D. defended in 1971 at the University of London and much later turned into a book that deserves wide study (Sheriff 1987). Harris, unlike Lewis, was far more modest in his claims. A professor at Howard University, Harris pointed out that "slavery" as a system is not singular, but that there are many forms of slavery which need to be analyzed separately. While Harris found that the premodern Indian Ocean trade in human bodies was not identical to that of the modern Atlantic Ocean trade, he nevertheless did not romanticize the former. While the Indian Ocean trade "did not even begin to approach the volume of the Atlantic slave trade," he wrote in 1972, "it was nonetheless a brutal enterprise, with skeletons of Africans strewn across the Sahara" (Harris 1972:55). When Graham Irwin sought to write of enslaved Africans in the Indian subcontinent, the record did not help him. "One of the sad things one has to note about Asian history," he wrote, "is that, where there was prejudice, the racial origin of a person will be mentioned. But where there was no prejudice, the ethnic origin of individuals may not be mentioned at all" (1977:151). Given this, Irwin surmises, one cannot find indications in the Indian records of the ancestry of the slaves, perhaps because there was little of the kind of ontological racism prevalent in the Atlantic trade.

The scholarship on slavery in the Indian Ocean zone drew attention to the long-standing contact between the Indian subcontinent and East Africa. Harris's 1971 survey offered a view of Asian participation in the slave trade as well as of African participation in the history of Asia. We read of the role of the Gujarati merchants in the traffic in slaves, free Africans in the "provinces of freedom" of Nasik and Bombay (in the Indian subcontinent), and of powerful people of African descent like Jalal-ud-din Yaqut (consort of Queen Raziya) and the famous Malik Ambar of Ahmadnagar. In the aftermath of Harris's book, Graham Irwin produced a collection of primary documents that cataloged the history of notable Africans in the history of the globe, including Asia (Irwin 1977). While there is ample evidence of the links across the Indian Ocean from antiquity, the history of the transactions across that body of water is best available from early modern times. K. N. Chaudhuri (1990), Amitav Ghosh (1992), Janet Abu-Lughod (1989), and Kenneth McPherson (1998) offer us valuable accounts of the vibrant trade of the Indian Ocean, before European hegemony and betwixt the complexities of language and ritual.⁸ To suit the voyagers across the seas, merchants devised clever languages whose descendants may be heard in Swahili (comprised of Bantu, Arabic, and Gujarati) or in the several coastal languages like Goan Konkani, Sri Lankan Moorish Arabic, and the tongues of the fisherfolk in Gujarat. This constitutive history of the Indian Ocean makes it relatively hard, therefore, to deliver some part of it to India and another part to Africa. Further, this history

reveals for us that there was a constant movement of populations (however small) back and forth across the waters. African sailors and traders settled in various enclaves of India, such as in Janjira Island (south of Bombay) and in Hyderabad. Since the captains of the African and Arab vessels bore the title "Sidi" (from *Sayyid*), the settlers on the Indian mainland came to be called "Siddis" (or "habshis," from *Al Habish*, for Abyssinia). Today in Janjira and in Habshiguda in Hyderabad, the descendants of the migrants consider themselves to be Siddis, but have little sense of being African (Ali 1996; Chauhan 1994; Khalidi 1988; Rao 1973; Bhattacharya 1970).

In Sudan, Egypt, and in the interior of East Africa, Indian merchants made their homes from early modern times.⁹ When the Kenyan and Ugandan governments decided to expel their citizens of Asian (mainly, Indian) descent in the late 1960s and early 1970s, this fueled some interest among Indian scholars of the Asian people in Africa. A set of scholars provided a rather tired assessment of Indian life in Africa around the framework of the Indians' ability to "assimilate" into African society (Bharati 1972; Don Nanjira 1976). Such work went along the grain of the expulsions, since they assumed a binary divide between "African" and "Indian," with the former seen as native to the soil of Africa, while the latter was deemed to be foreign. In southern Africa, for instance, are the Gujarati traders and Tamil laborers foreign, while the Moçambiqan Thonga (Harris 1966) and the eastern African Tswana (Colson 1966) are native? The answers are not self-evident, since the Ugandan government did not expel only those of Asian descent, but also the Kenyan workers. No one cared to notice the plight of the latter, however, since not only were they "few in number and . . . from a neighbouring African country, but . . . they were solely working-class" (Mamdani 1973:39). The Ugandan government's logic, as Mahmood Mamdani showed, is entirely along the grain of colonial policy—that the Asians are outsiders who have come to Africa to do a service to the empire and not to settle. A similar logic was enunciated on the plantations of the Caribbean, wherein the British divided the Africans and Asians and scrupulously maintained the lines of demarcation each time the two communities came together in struggle (Rodney 1981:151–60). Against the grain of this logic, Mamdani describes a student meeting at Makerere University (Kampala) at which several students argued that "exploitation bears no particular colour" and that some "African" businessmen might be quite easily labeled as "black Asians" (1973:52). Since the lineage of many of Asian origin in East Africa could be traced to ancient times, would one then look more closely at their role in exploitation rather than the color of their skin (which in many cases was as black as that of any other Ugandan)? To negate this history of linkage in favor of an epidermal or cranial sense of identity is to play firmly into the hands of the very racism that set such a historiography on its tracks in the first place.

Afro-Asian Traffic

In 1965, John Killens wrote that African Americans “can be the bridge between the West and Africa-Asia” because “the one thing we black Americans have in common with the other colored people in the world is that we have all felt the cruel and ruthless heel of white supremacy. We have all been ‘niggerized’ on one level or another. And all of us are determined to ‘deniggerize’ the earth. To rid the world of ‘niggers’ is the Black Man’s Burden, human reconstruction is the grand objective” (176). In India, a Dalit intellectual wrote that “African American liberation is not possible until Dalits are free.”¹⁰ In her useful analysis of black nationalism, Lubiano (1998:237) suggests that it can function as a “bridge discourse” which can offer African Americans the means toward radicalism, to provide them with a “‘a jolt of recognition’ of the exploitative nature of global capitalism’s effect on Third World labor.” Indeed, there is an alternative tradition that links Dalits to African Americans, one that is ignored by the Afro-Dalit scholars and which I call “Afro-Asian Traffic.”

The connection between Dalits and African Americans has been made in terms of the struggles of both peoples against chattel slavery and debt peonage. Faced with the rising of the Dalits in the Punjab, an American missionary wrote that the landowners “dread the loss of their own power and influence over [the Dalit landless workers], they have very much the same feeling as that which one may suppose animated the slave holder in America at the prospect of the liberation of the negro” (Prashad 2000:chap.2). A few years after this obscure report, the oppressed caste leader Jyotibai Phule dedicated his 1873 treatise *Gulamgiri* (Slavery) to the “good people of the United States. As a token of admiration for their sublime disinterested and self-sacrificing devotion. In the course of Negro slavery; and with an earnest desire that my countrymen may take their noble example as their guide in the emancipation of their Sudra Brethren from the trammels of Brahmin thralldom” (Phule 1991:xxix).

In the U.S., the connections between Dalits and African Americans came much later from two sources. The first was reviews of Gandhi’s autobiography in the black press that emphasized a section in which Gandhi writes of the oppression of the Dalits (“The Far Horizons” 1928: 34). Second, Lajpat Rai’s *Unhappy India* (1928) wrote extensively about Jim Crow in order to counter the discussion of untouchability in Katherine Mayo’s imperialist *Mother India* of the same year. A friend of Du Bois and Marcus Garvey, as well as a resident in the U.S. during his time of exile, Lajpat Rai knew the terrain of U.S. racism very well. He argued that the U.S. had a “severer form of untouchability than in India,” since “even today the untouchables of India are neither lynched nor treated so brutally as the Negroes in the United States are” (Rai 1928:104). Despite Lajpat Rai’s unnecessary denial of all violence against Dalits in India, the provocative statements drew a slew of commentary in the African American press, writ-

ings that would continue through the Gandhi-Ambedkar controversy of 1932 (Kapur 1992). The conservative African American columnist George Schuyler pointed out that “the social and economic position [of African Americans] are somewhat similar and in some respects identical” to those of the Dalits (Kapur 1992:64). In 1935, Howard Thurman wrote that as an African American, he can “enter directly into informal understanding of the psychological climate” of the Dalits and that African Americans and Dalits “do not differ in principle and in inner pain” (Kapur 1992:82). When Martin Luther King Jr. went to India in 1959, he investigated the exploitation of Dalits as well as the means taken by the Indian Republic to ameliorate the effects of *Suvarna* or Brahmin supremacy.

We were surprised and delighted to see that India has made greater progress in the fight against caste “untouchability” than we have made here in our country against race segregation. Both nations have federal laws against discrimination (acknowledging, of course, that the decision of our Supreme Court is the law of our land). But after this has been said, we must recognize that there are great differences between what India has done and what we have done on a problem that is very similar. The leaders of India have placed their moral power behind their law. From the Prime Minister down to the village councilmen, everybody declares publicly that untouchability is wrong. But in the United States some of our highest officials decline to render a moral judgement on segregation and some from the South publicly boast of their determination to maintain segregation. This would be unthinkable in India. (King 1986:27–28)

While King clearly exaggerates, he draws upon the commonality of condition to seek a solidarity of ideology.

Solidarity, the watchword of the 1960s, enabled some Dalit activists in June of 1972 to form the Dalit Panthers (named in honor of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense and for the ethic of the Panther, who, as they argued, *fights without retreat*). In 1973, the Panthers (who have since degenerated into bourgeois nationalists) released their Manifesto in which one finds an immense sense of political comradeship that continues to resonate in some locales.

Due to the hideous plot of American imperialism, the Third Dalit World, that is, oppressed nations, and Dalit people are suffering. Even in America, a handful of reactionary whites are exploiting blacks. To meet the force of reaction and remove this exploitation, the Black Panther movement grew. From the Black Panthers, Black Power emerged. The fire of the struggles has thrown out sparks into the country. We claim a close relationship with this struggle. We have before our eyes the examples of Vietnam, Cambodia, Africa and the like.

When representatives of the Black Panther Party met the representatives of

the National Liberation Front of Vietnam, the Vietnamese said when confronted by Elbert Howard that "He Black Panther, we Yellow Panther!" and the Panthers replied, "Yeah, you're Yellow Panthers, we're Black Panthers. All power to the people!" (Hillard & Cole 1993:247). That Ho Chi Minh once hung out in Garveyite halls in Harlem should perhaps be part of this story, as should the Maoist inflections in both NLF and Black Panther politics. David Chioni Moore, in a fine analysis of Langston Hughes's trip to Soviet Central Asia, notes that Hughes developed an "afro-planetary vision." This vision seeks linkage "based not on biology but on 'experience,' experience that is not internal but rather contrapuntal, and that does not *result* from an a priori colored skin but that rather *causes* color 'consciousness'" (Moore 1996:64). Can we put Hughes's vision at the center of our work and take up the challenge to think on the *experience* of race in a dialectical fashion rather than in the one-dimensional way of Afro-Dalit theory?

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Notes

1. An early version of this paper was presented as "For I Am Also Jim Crowed': India in the Heart of Black America" at the symposium "Affirmative Action in Comparative Contexts: India and the United States," University of Texas, Austin, April 10, 1998. Salaams to Elisabeth B. Armstrong, Robin D. G. Kelley, Kamala Visweswaran, Sudhir Venkatesh, C. M. Naim, Mir Ali Raza, Sheila Walker, and Judi Byfield.
2. In an interview with me (Dec. 22, 1999), Runoko Rashidi conceded that "I feel bad about it. I think I oversimplified the situation of Dalits to make it palatable to a black constituency. I gave the impression that Dalits are black people." Nevertheless, later in the same interview he reiterated that "I think large sections of Dalits would be seen as black people if they lived anywhere else." (For more on the interview, see Prashad 2000). That non-Dalit Indians may also be seen as black (as they were in England and elsewhere) is important. So, too, is the fraught nature of the debate in Dalit studies on the relations between Dalits and non-Dalits (Deliège 1999).
3. The promotion of the idiosyncratic work of Kancha Ilaiah (1996a, 1996b) within the project of subaltern studies is one such example.
4. For a people as subjugated in modern times as the Africans, the question of the subject of history has been fraught with controversy. Is the subject of the continent's history the "African"? Are the Egyptians Africans? What makes an African? Is it a continental matter? If so, do those of "African descent" in the Americas count as part of African history? What then is the meaning of the African diaspora? Are those of "Indian descent" in Africa part of African history? Or are they part of the history of Africa, of the continent, which itself is different from African history, the history of a distinct people? How do we

determine who is "African"? Must we follow the protocols of racial science? However, were there "Africans" only after racism? Was there no notion of Africa prior to race science? There are, of course, no easy answers to these questions. I recommend, as a start, Mudimbe (1994). The problem here is similar to that of Levinas's perceptive statement that the "Jews" preexisted anti-Semitism (this in response to Sartre's *Réflexions sur la question juive*, 1943) (see Lyotard 1977). Thanks to Tsenay Serequeberhan for leading me to this.

5. See Runoko Rashidi, "Blacks as a Global Community" (collected in Rajshekar 1995:86), and Chandler (1985).
6. The details of this will be available in "The Strange Case of Aryan Man," a chapter in my book, in preparation, "A Bandung Book: On Afro-Asian Traffic."
7. This is clearly illustrated by Ma Tomah Alesha (1992).
8. For an account of the European disregard for the ocean, see Jacque Le Goff (1980).
9. When John Speke (1906:216) went in search of the Nile in 1859, he was led by ancient Indian and Egyptian texts as well as by the advice of "the Hindu traders" who "had a firm basis to stand upon from their intercourse with the Abyssinians" about the geography of eastern Africa.
10. *Dalit Voice*, April 1, 1993.