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978-0-521-74043-2 - Race, Empire, and the Idea of Human Development

Thomas McCarthy

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*Race, Empire, and  
the Idea of  
Human Development*

In an exciting new study of ideas accompanying the rise of the West, Thomas McCarthy analyzes the ideologies of race and empire that were integral to European–American expansion. He highlights the central role that conceptions of human development (civilization, progress, modernization, and the like) played in answering challenges to legitimacy through a hierarchical ordering of difference. Focusing on Kant and natural history in the eighteenth century, Mill and social Darwinism in the nineteenth, and theories of development and modernization in the twentieth, he proposes a critical theory of development which can counter contemporary neoracism and neoimperialism, and can accommodate the multiple modernities now taking shape. Offering an unusual perspective on the past and present of our globalizing world, this book will appeal to scholars and advanced students of philosophy, political theory, the history of ideas, racial and ethnic studies, social theory, and cultural studies.

THOMAS MCCARTHY is William H. Orrick Visiting Professor at Yale University and Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at Northwestern University.

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS  
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi  
Cambridge University Press  
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)  
Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9780521740432](http://www.cambridge.org/9780521740432)

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First published 2009

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library*

*Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data*

McCarthy, Thomas, 1940–

Race, empire, and the idea of human development / Thomas McCarthy.  
p. cm.

ISBN 978-0-521-51971-7 (hardback) – ISBN 978-0-521-74043-2 (pbk.)

1. Social evolution – Philosophy. 2. Race. 3. Imperialism. I. Title.  
HM626.M43 2009

305.8009'04–dc22

2009006834

ISBN 978-0-521-51971-7 hardback

ISBN 978-0-521-74043-2 paperback

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*To the memory of my friend*

*Karl Ballestrem*

*1939–2007*

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## Acknowledgments

The names of those who contributed to this book by way of discussion, comment, and criticism are far too numerous to record. They include many of my colleagues and students at Northwestern and Yale Universities, and many participants in conferences and colloquia in which parts of it were presented. I do want to acknowledge my special debts to Robert Gooding-Williams and Jürgen Habermas who, in addition to being irreplaceable friends and interlocutors, commented on drafts of all the chapters. I want also to thank a number of friends and colleagues who provided helpful comments on large parts of the manuscript: Bill Barnes, Seyla Benhabib, Derrick Darby, Dilip Gaonkar, Maria Herrera, and Charles Taylor; or on particular chapters: Ken Baynes, Martha Biondi, Jim Bohman, Simone Chambers, Pablo De Greiff, Nils Gilman, Axel Honneth, Cristina Lafont, Karuna Mantena, Moishe Postone, Bill Rehg, Jim Sleeper, Carlos Thiebaut, Georgia Warnke, and Chris Zurn, who also doubled as a technical advisor. I have indicated some further debts in footnotes.

Earlier versions of parts of this book have appeared in print as follows: chapter 1 in S. Benhabib and N. Fraser (eds.), *Pragmatism, Critique, Judgment* (MIT Press, 2004); chapter 3 in *Contemporary Pragmatism* 4 (2007); chapter 4 in *Political Theory* 30 (2002); and chapter 7 in *Constellations* 14 (2007). They have all been revised and expanded.

I am greatly indebted to the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation for a Prize, to the National Endowment for the Humanities for a Fellowship, and to Northwestern University for a sabbatical, which afforded me the time free of teaching needed to complete the bulk of the work on this book.

Most of all, I am grateful to my wife, Pat, who, in addition to so much else, was always willing to discuss with me the topics on which I was writing.

In an exciting study of ideas accompanying the rise of the West, Thomas McCarthy analyzes the ideologies of race and empire that were integral to European-American expansion. He highlights the central role that conceptions of human development (civilization, progress, modernization, and the like) played in answering challenges to legitimacy through a hierarchical ordering of difference. Focusing on Kant and natural history in the eighteenth century, Mill and social Darwinism in the nineteenth, and theories of development and modernization in the twentieth, he proposes a critical theory of deve... In an exciting new study of ideas accompanying the rise of the West, Thomas McCarthy analyzes the ideologies of race and empire that were integral to European-American expansion. He highlights the central role that conceptions of human development (civilization, progress, modernization, and the like) played in answering challenges to legitimacy through a hierarchical ordering of difference. Focusing on Kant and natural history in the eighteenth century, Mill and social Darwinism in the nineteenth, and theories of development and modernization in the twentieth, he proposes a critical theory of development

Ficha Thomas McCarthy Race Empire.Â McCarthy Developmental thinking has proved to be rather adaptable and thus quite serviceable in rationalizing the various truncations of universal Rights and obligations thatt colonial domination and exploitation required. Moreover, the putatively scientific status of theories of development has lent a naturalistic aura to socially constructed hierarchies, thus deflecting moral assessment and political critique. In this and other ways, the refraction of liberal ideals in the medium of developmental theory has made in rhetorically possible to combine universalism in the principle with Eurocentri