

## Regarding Race



**Figure 1.1** "Seward Montessori Graduation" (part of Lake Street USA series, 1997-2000). Photograph by Wing Young Huie.

*Race: Are We So Different?*, First Edition, Alan H. Goodman, Yolanda T. Moses, and Joseph L. Jones.  
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Is race real? Sometimes, it depends — obviously?

Talking about race or afraid to talk about race; talking too much or too little. It does not matter. We never seem to get very far.

How do we get out of this gridlock?

Our answer: start asking and resolving different questions about race. Most people think race is real, and they are obviously right. *Race is real*. But race is not real in the way we think of it: as deep, primordial, and biological. Rather, race is a foundational idea with devastating consequences because we, through our history and culture, made it so.

The purpose of this book is to lead readers to understand how race is and is not real. Simply focusing on diversity and acceptance, as is common today, misses the deeper roots of race, racial thinking, and overt racism. On the other hand, a purely scientific and objective approach fails to tell the full story of how race has shaped historical events and continues to be a powerful influence on individual lives. It certainly does not tell all about the variation in how race is experienced among individuals and over time and place.

In this book we aim to bring together a combination of science, history, and personal experiences. The result we are hoping for is surprisingly liberating. Race has come to be a knotted ball of history, culture, identity, and biology. We aim to untangle that ball. Once unraveled, one understands much more about the physical differences among us, and how race became such a powerful force.

We know that race seems obviously real to anyone immersed in North America's dominant culture. Race seems visually real. Every day, one can observe difference in outward form between individuals. Interestingly, rather than biology, race is real because of the everyday ways in which we interpret differences and invest *meaning* into those biological differences. It might seem counterintuitive, but race is also biological in that the idea of race, and specifically living in a racial society with differential access to resources, has effects on the body that are manifest in infant and adult mortality. If race is an illusion, then it is an unusually powerful one.

Yet, what we have internalized as evidence that we have seen with our own eyes of the "facts" of race such as differences in skin color and other so-called

markers of race, simply have no inherent or deeper sociopolitical significance other than what our culture attaches to them. There is human linguistic, cultural, biological, and genetic variation. But these variations are not racial in that they do not "naturally" partition individuals into races.

A key insight from anthropology is that what we see as real is often due to what our worldviews predispose our minds to see. In much the same way that we used to think the sun revolved around the earth, we see variation as race only because the idea is all around us and is unquestioned. As Spellman president Beverly Tatum says, race is like smog. If we are in it, it is all we see. Moreover, it obstructs clear vision of the true nature of difference. It is time to lift the smog.

In this book, the companion to an award-winning website and museum exhibit, we hope to show how the idea of race continues to have consequences, every day, for all of our lives. Race is not only a *social construct*, it is a powerful *social contract*. The Constitution of the United States listed enslaved Africans as three-fifths of a person. While the Thirteenth Amendment changed this formulation,<sup>1</sup> the racial contract is much deeper than laws and "official" statements. It is particularly enduring because the idea of race is deeply etched into our minds and institutions. We want to expose the social contract and thereby expose the deep roots of racial thinking. Just as weeds will return if they are not pulled out by the roots, we will not get beyond racism unless we pay attention to the roots — to its foundational ideas.

As fundamentally woven into our minds and institutions as the idea of race became and is still, we can change the way that we understand race, and even how race is embedded in institutions. We will not do so by avoiding race or pretending that it is not salient. Rather, we do so by engaging with the science of human variation, the history, culture, and politics of race and the everyday lived experiences of race and racism.

Our students and those who visit the exhibit often have "ah ha" moments in which they come to forever see race differently. Suddenly, race is seen to not be natural but an idea and product of culture. Amazing!

<sup>1</sup> Additional laws were also passed by most states against miscegenation (interracial marriage).

Fortunately, too, those insightful moments do not require advanced training in genomics, anthropology, philosophy, or any other discipline. Rather, the only requirement is openness to questioning assumptions that we thought were obviously true.

Imagine that you have lived your life in a landscape that has never led you or those around you to question that the earth is anything but flat. You go to a mountaintop and you look into the clear distance and notice that the horizon appears to bend down. That bend is a sign that the earth is round. It is time to pay attention to signs like that. However, be forewarned. The results are mind bending. Changes from seeing the earth as flat to round are what scientists call paradigm shifts. A paradigm shift, or a change in worldview, can be disorienting, and it takes a while to readjust.

In addition to making a novel argument, this book has another unique feature: it is a companion to the hugely successful national public education project, RACE: Are We So Different? Developed by the AAA, this project consists of a set of traveling exhibits,<sup>2</sup> a website, and additional educational materials. The project is organized around three powerful themes: (1) race is a recent human invention, (2) race is about culture and not about biology,<sup>3</sup> and (3) race and racism are imbedded in institutions and in everyday life. The book is similarly organized with a section on history, followed by one on science and another on lived experience.

We hope that this book will be engaging to those who have visited the website or exhibit as well as to those new readers. For those who have visited the website and exhibit, here you will find more detailed explanations and the back stories that could not be explained in a walkthrough of an exhibit. With over one hundred images and photographs, we aim to capture the sense that images explain and illustrate and also enhance what can best be explained by succinct writing.

The book in your hands aims to be a fundamental primer on the idea and reality of race and how the idea connects to institutional and everyday racism.

<sup>2</sup> Currently, there are two 5000 square foot exhibit traveling around the country and a smaller exhibit of nearly 1500 square feet.

<sup>3</sup> Paradoxically, race is not a biological or genetic construct, but it does have biological consequences. Some of these consequences of race, especially for health and wealth, will be highlighted in this book.

Human races, we argue, are not "out there in nature." Rather, humans invented race.

Combining insights and examples from the realms of science, history, and individual stories, our aim was to write and assemble a book that is serious yet engaging and lively. Our main goal is to move readers beyond the false dichotomy of human races as being real or not. We want readers to appreciate *how* contemporary social and biological analyses show that race is real and ways that they show that race is surprisingly outmoded (chiefly as a way to think about genetic differences among us). We want this to be a book that deeply transforms its readers. We want everyone to have an "ah ha" moment.

Five central arguments of this book are as follows:

1 *The idea of race was invented.* Race was invented as a way to categorize and rank groups and by extension, individuals. The invention did not happen in an isolated laboratory or at one place in time. Rather, this scientific and social idea slowly took hold and became more and more real through European exploration and colonization and slavery in the Americas. In the 18th century race might have made sense because the physical (or phenotypic) differences between Europeans and others seemed to be great.

While just a human invention that is explored in the first section of this book, the idea was politically powerful because the belief in separate and unequal races was the only potentially moral and ethical justification for the inhumanities of colonization and slavery. In the first section of this book we will tell the gripping story of the interlinked social, religious, political, and scientific histories of race. Closely following the exhibit, the story is outlined in four parts.

2 *Human biological variation is real, obvious, tremendous, and necessary.* We do vary. The second section of this book provides a primer of human genetic variation; that is, how variation is patterned within individuals and among individuals and groups. Evolutionarily speaking, even if it is not the spice of life, variety is certainly a required ingredient for the survival of our species.

3 *The idea of race does not explain human variation.* The biggest myth of race is that we humans have biological races and that on a biological or, more precisely,

on a genetic level our race determines a good deal about how we differ from each other and our potentialities. The science of human variation, however, tells us otherwise. Race-as-genetic-variation is a myth. Race neither explains variation nor is a useful genetic construct. In this book, we will use a number of inter-related examples to show why this is so.

4 *Race is both stable and protean.* The idea of race is something we all share — to a degree. We argue that race today is much the same, on a fundamental level, as it was a hundred or even three hundred years ago. But the realities of race — how the ideas get into lived experiences — morph from place to place and time to time. Here, we have the opportunity to share how some of those diverse lives were lived racially. What was it like to be a Native American and to see

Europeans for the first time? What was it like to be a Japanese American during World War II? It is our expectation that understanding how race differs among diverse groups provides a deeper understanding of each group and about race itself.

5 *We own the future of race.* How we continue to understand and use race is up to us. We hold the core belief that our book will contribute to a fundamental overhaul of how various publics think and talk about race. By explaining how the power of race was used in the past to divide us, in this book we will show how this new knowledge is power to understand and reunite. Once we understand what race is and is not, race ceases to become a ready excuse for the intolerable differences in our wealth, health, and other core indicators of equality and experiences of life.

Race is a recent human invention.

It's only a few hundred years old, in comparison to the lengthy span of human history. Although not scientific, the idea of race proposed that there were significant differences among people that allowed them to be grouped into a limited number of categories or races. Yet, are we so different? All humans share a common ancestry and, because each of us represents a unique combination of ancestral traits, all humans exhibit biological variation.

From the beginning, the idea of race was tied to power and hierarchy among people, with one group being viewed as superior and others as

inferior. Despite disproving notions of hierarchy and removing social, economic and political barriers, the legacy of race continues to shape the lives and relationships of people in the U.S. and around the world.

This book may challenge popular understandings about race, raise questions, and spark critical thinking. We hope the exhibition, public website and educational materials produced by the RACE Project will foster dialogue in families and communities around the U.S. and help better relations among us all.

**American Anthropological Association**

## RACE Exhibit Introductory Video Transcript

Race.

What is race?

What do we really know about race?

Here's what we do know: Race is a short word with a long history in the United States of America. Think of the history of America and our ideas of race together, mixed-up, and ever-changing. Just like this painting, race was created. It is a powerful idea that was invented by society.

Race is an enduring concept that has molded our nation's economy, laws, and social institutions. It is a complex notion that has shaped each of our destinies. Many of the ideas we now associate with race originated during the European era of exploration.

Europeans like Christopher Columbus traveled overseas and encountered, and then colonized or conquered peoples in Africa, Asia, and the Americas who looked, talked, and acted much differently from them. Naturalists and scientists then classified these differences into systems that became the foundation for the notion of race as we know it today.

In the American colonies, the first laborers were European indentured servants.

When African laborers were forcibly brought to Virginia beginning in 1619, status was defined by wealth and religion, not by physical characteristics such as skin color.

But this would change.

Over time, physical difference mattered, and with the development of the transatlantic slave trade, landowners began replacing their temporary European laborers with enslaved Africans who were held in permanent bondage. Soon a new social structure emerged based primarily on skin color, with those of English ancestry at the top and African slaves and American Indians at the bottom.

By 1776, when "all men are created equal" was written into the Declaration of Independence by a slaveholder named Thomas Jefferson, a democratic nation was born with a major contradiction

about race at its core. As our new nation asserted its independence from European tyranny, blacks and American Indians were viewed as less than human and not deserving of the same liberties as whites.

In the 19th and 20th centuries, the notion of race continued to shape life in the United States. The rise of "race science" supported the common belief that people who were not white were biologically inferior. The removal of Native Americans from their lands, legalized segregation, and the Interment of Japanese Americans during World War II are legacies of where this thinking led.

Today, science tells us that all humans share a common ancestry. And while there are differences among us, we're also very much alike.

Changing demographics in the United States and across the globe are resulting in new patterns of marriage, housing, education, employment, and new thinking about race.

Despite these advances, the legacy of race continues to affect us in a variety of ways.

Deeply held assumptions about race and enduring stereotypes make us think that gaps in wealth, health, housing, education, employment, or physical ability in sports are natural. And we fail to see the privileges that some have been granted and others denied because of skin color.

This creation, called race, has fostered inequality and discrimination for centuries.

It has influenced how we relate to each other as human beings. The American Anthropological Association has developed this exhibit to share the complicated story of race, to unravel fiction from fact, and to encourage meaningful discussions about race in schools, in the workplace, within families and communities.

Consider how your view of a painting can change as you examine it more closely.

We invite you to do the same with race. Examine and re-examine your thoughts and beliefs about race.

## Introducing Race

*The world got along without race for the overwhelming majority of its history. The U.S. has never been without it.*

David Roediger, *How Race Survived U.S. History: From Settlement and Slavery to the Obama Phenomenon*

### Realizing Race

A social contract ... cognitive smog ... a dangerous myth ... a powerful illusion ... Race metaphors abound, and these examples express as well as any the reality of race in contemporary society in the United States. Race, today, is everywhere. Whatever confusion and disagreements exist around its definitions or delineations, few would argue this point. And understandably so! We live in a society saturated with race. Racial thinking has infiltrated and now influences in some way or another everyone's experiences of health, education, romance, friendship, work, religion, politics – virtually every arena and aspect of our lives. These influences can be painfully obvious or virtually imperceptible, but they are ever present. As a result, over time most of us develop strongly held racial beliefs based on these accumulated experiences and a steady stream of images and other forms of information that reinforce confidence in our ability to see race. Eventually, we become race experts, or at least experts on how we see and experience “the races” – their physical characteristics, their behaviors, and especially their inherent or *essential* differences.

We debate the nature and extent of contemporary racism among family and friends, in online forums, and even through intermittent “national conversations,” usually prompted by current events and plagued by predictable sound bites. Occasionally, the shared experiences and beliefs of others may cause us to revisit and rethink our own. Yet, rarely do these exchanges reveal or probe the powerful cultural underpinnings of our collective commitments to race and racism. Think about it. How often do the second glances required to guess someone’s “proper” race lead us to second-guess the premise of race-as-biology or the notion of racial *phenotypes* – or to question our desire to “race” them in the first place? We are much more likely to puzzle over such individuals’ nonconformity to racial criteria disproven long ago. Sure, those of us still counting may quibble over whether humanity divides into three, four, five, or more races. However, few take the logical leap of allowing this apparently minor detail to challenge our belief in race as a way of defining, categorizing, and inevitably ranking human difference. Taking this step can prove challenging even for those of us who struggle to void the “racial contract” (Mills 1997) and reject notions of

racial supremacy. In failing to engage such basic questions and issues, or in doing so only superficially, we undermine our ability to understand race and unlearn racism.

Coming to terms with our varied and shared histories of race and racism is a good starting point for those who would reverse this trend. There is more at stake in our collective ability or failure to face our racial pasts squarely than the repetition of past mistakes or misdeeds because these are living histories. They live with and within us, and keep us from moving forward together as equals. At times, historic episodes of race and racism resurface, quite literally, to reshape both past and present. This was the case in the early 1990s when construction workers “rediscovered” Lower Manhattan’s 17th- and 18th-century New York African Burial Ground. The subsequent unearthing of artifacts and skeletal remains of over four hundred individuals from this early African American cemetery helped to spur broad interest in the under-explored and underappreciated history of northern slavery (Blakey 2010).

More often, our racial legacies persist in classrooms, workplaces, banks, courtrooms, and a host of other institutional spaces where life chances and material realities are significantly enhanced or diminished. In such settings, the seemingly impersonal nature of procedures and interactions may easily conceal underlying race-infused assumptions, biases, and power relations. Especially through the enactment of “race neutral” and “colorblind” policies, these routine interactions can invoke and reinforce racial stereotypes and power relations in subtle but potent ways (Haneý López, chapter 6 this volume). We embody our racial pasts most profoundly through contemporary identity formations and classifications and associated health, wealth, and educational opportunity disparities discussed in part 3 of this book. Thus, while some today are eager to declare the United States a “post-racial” society, this refrain rings untrue and problematic for many, especially those targeted by and dedicated to eradicating racism (Harrison 2005; chapter 17 this volume). Indeed, perhaps for better and worse, most find it difficult to imagine a time before race or to envision life without it. Instead, we tend to extrapolate from its current pervasiveness and power – in institutions, popular culture, language, etc. – that race always

has been and always will be with us. Race, it appears, is an inevitable part of our own past and destiny.

Is this truly the case? Just how deep into human history do the roots of race run?

## A Recent Human Invention

As the epigraph suggests, and as impossible as it now seems, there was a time before race colored perceptions of human diversity. In fact, most anthropologists, historians, and others who study and compare cultural and societal systems agree that time was not so long ago (Smedley 2007). They do not recognize race among humans as the product of biological evolution or divine design. Instead, scholars have produced a vast and growing literature that documents race as a social/historical/cultural construct: a system of ideas, identities, and material relations that emerged slowly in the context of Western European imperialism and colonial expansion beginning in the 15th century. In contrast to the popular belief in race as an empirically validated, innate, and defining human quality, they point out that the first laws designed to establish and patrol racial boundaries and hierarchy did not appear until the middle of the 17th century, when the “racial worldview” was a new thing under the sun (Smedley 2007). From this perspective, human races are not biological units. Although referenced through presumably shared physical (and, increasingly, cultural) attributes, races are in fact political entities resulting from our social actions (Blakey 1999; Mukhopadhyay et al. 2007; Harrison 1995).

We concur. The information in the chapters and sections that follow clearly supports this view of race as a recent human invention. Current scholarship suggests that *human races exist solely because we created them and only in the forms that we perpetuate them*. Furthermore, echoing historian Barbara Fields (1990; 2003), we emphasize that recognizing race and racism as sociocultural rather than biological facts is only the tip of the analytical iceberg. What academics call the “constructivist” approach affords a perspective from which to investigate critically the ideological and material manifestations, connections, and consequences of race, racism, and related phenomena (Smedley 2007; Harrison 2005). Simply put, this

approach represents the means, not an end, to understanding race. Thus, it is not our intention simply to convince the reader *that* human races are sociocultural constructs; rather, our goal in this section of the book is to show precisely *how* and *why* race – like class, gender, and other “axes of oppression” (Farmer 2003) – came to be and continues to be such a durable and dynamic stratifying element in US society and culture. As the title of this section implies, the difficult history of race in this country is in actuality a set of stories or interwoven narratives illustrating how forces of tradition, religion, law, and science conspired, and at times competed, to define and influence human diversity (e.g. through miscegenation laws). Realizing its “unnatural” political origins and ongoing development as the product of human activity is the vital *first* step towards a comprehensive understanding of race: what it has been, what it is today, and what we might make of it in years to come.

In this book, we chart our journey through the historical origins and evolution of the very idea of human races. First, however, a brief excursion into that “time before race” is in order. Surely, the claim that race enters the scene so late in human history, perhaps just several hundred years ago, leaves wide open the question of how earlier peoples processed human difference. How *did* our ancestors understand cultural and biological diversity until then? If race is recent in human experience, what preceded racial thinking?

To be sure, past peoples were *ethnocentric*. They frequently believed themselves culturally superior to others and sometimes exhibited the nasty habit of painting others as uncultured and brutish or savage, even to the point of justifying enslavement and killing on this basis. Yet, as any introductory cultural anthropology text will illustrate, ethnocentric and later racial logics differed significantly. These differences are most obvious with respect to characterization of human potential and the perceived connection, or lack thereof, of cultural and physical traits. Prior to the inception of race, people were much less likely to link cultural practices instinctively and irrevocably to physical differences, which were often attributed to distinct environmental conditions (Brace 2005). Nor were people necessarily inclined to believe that phenotypic diver-

sity across groups represented inherent or essential – i.e., unbridgeable – differences in ability or character. Indeed, before race, people more readily saw through phenotypes to find deeper, behavioral similarities if not common ground. Moreover, where they deemed others to be culturally backwards in language, religion, food, adornment, or other behaviors, they tended to view these deficits as correctable. With time, learned behavioral deficiencies could be overwritten through “proper” *enculturation*, while inherent racial inferiority, by definition, could not.

Again, cultural biases are far from benign and it is not our intent to rank stratification systems according to their perniciousness. In fact, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between ethnocentrism and racism because of the increasing conflation of culture and race (Harrison, chapter 17 this volume). The point here is to show the critical shift that race represents in the nature of human relations; an unfortunate shift in primary focus from learned practices and traditions toward static or fixed notions of physical and essential characteristics. In general, pre-racial conceptions of diversity did not inhibit one from recognizing and acknowledging the shared human capacity to learn and participate fully in *any* culture or society – irrespective of phenotypic characteristics later used to distinguish races.

Classicist Frank Snowden (1983) clearly illustrates this fact in *Before Color Prejudice*, his seminal study of “the black image” in Egyptian, Greek, Roman, and early Christian art and literature. Warning against the temptation to read contemporary social issues into the historical record, Snowden observes that interactions in the ancient Mediterranean between peoples today classified as black or white – even among political and military rivals – were devoid of “acute” color consciousness and any type of racial discrimination. He points out that these societies never observed blackness as the basis of slave status.

Nor is ancient history white race history (Painter 2010). Not surprisingly, the argument against race and racism as fixed or ancient elements of human relations permeates the writings of W. E. B. Du Bois (1939), Anna Julia Cooper (1988), Saint Clair Drake (1987; 1990), and others who sought to defend and “vindicate” African Americans and others against claims of their inherent and immutable inferiority.

Their careful historical and anthropological treatments of the race concept and related phenomena of skin color prejudice and sexism help form the intellectual basis for current constructivist interpretations. As noted above, however, one need not visit antiquity to appreciate a time when correctable culture trumped intractable race as the accident of birth in the view of those with the power to decide such things. From the 18th through the early 20th centuries, for example, white Americans were fascinated with the idea of "civilizing" and "elevating" Native Americans by wiping out indigenous cultural practices.

Our historical examination of race unfolds over four chapters, each of which mirrors in focus and content one of the core history components of the RACE: *Are We So Different?* traveling museum exhibit. The topics we cover include origins of the human race concept; race and racism in science; history and meaning of the "white" racial category and whiteness; and the role of legal racialization/racism in creating and maintaining social inequality and privilege. Each chapter includes a time line of key concepts, events, and individuals as well as essays and other supporting features that yield deeper insights into these topics. These histories help to reveal race as both social reality and one of science's greatest fictions, subjects we explore in detail in later sections of the book. To convey them, we enlist numerous voices representing multiple perspectives. We hear from historical figures, some of today's leading scholars, and others whose personal experiences and insights illustrate the contradictions and flexibility that have made both race and racism so very compelling over time. Some individuals, like Pocahontas, Thomas Jefferson, and Frederick Douglass, are no doubt familiar to readers. Others such as Takao Ozawa, John Punch, and Franz Boas may prove less so outside academic circles.

In chapter 3, "Creating Race," we reconstruct the unique social and economic circumstances that gave rise to the beginnings of race "as we know it" in colonial North America. In an essay on the origins of racial ideology, Smedley observes that the advent of race was not an automatic process upon the arrival of Europeans and Africans to American shores. Rather, what we typically find in the early colonies are distinctive medleys of "Old" and "New" World

ethnicities fighting, loving, and living together without resort to race or racism (Berlin 2003). Differences of religion (Christians versus heathens) and nationality initially weighed more heavily on the minds of the first colonists than did those of skin color. Smedley describes how all of this changed when wealthy landowners created race for the purposes of justifying chattel slavery, claiming indigenous peoples' land, and promoting division among an increasingly rebellious class of Native American, European, and African laborers. The development of a heritable and permanent slave status for blacks contrasted starkly with slavery as practiced in other societies and the nation's founding principles, including the burgeoning notion of freedom and liberty as inalienable human rights.

Chapter 4, "Human Mismatch," is an historical primer for our discussion of the science of human variation (part 2), in which we rule out the possibility that human races *ever* existed from an evolutionary perspective. The chapter takes its name from evolutionary biologist Stephen Jay Gould's *The Mismeasure of Man*, a classic refutation of race-based intelligence studies. Here, we examine how scientists and others nonetheless reverse-engineered the myth of biological race from human variation. We recount the rise, fall, and return of race science and scientific racism as scientists predisposed to look for racial differences either found or manufactured them. Meanwhile, other scientists contested racial studies by redirecting their foci from deterministic ends (sometimes leaving unchallenged the biological race concept) or developing nonracial means of studying human variation (e.g. Livingstone 1962; Brace 2005). Consequently, there exists within most sciences a triple legacy of racialism/racism/antiracism evident as one follows the time line for this chapter (Mukhopadhyay and Moses 1997; Armelagos and Goodman 1998; Mullings 2005; Marks 2010). In this chapter, archaeologist Joe Watkins tackles an important dimension of anthropology's conflicted racial legacy in an essay on the traditionally contentious relationship between Native Americans and the practice of archaeology in the United States of America.

Chapter 5 is an exploration of the origins and expansion of racial whiteness throughout the history of the United States. Over the past several decades,

some historians, sociologists, and cultural analysts have developed whiteness studies as a rich field of inquiry into the historical and cultural construction and maintenance of the racial category "white." These scholars detail the early political and economic difficulties faced by European immigrants along their various paths to "becoming white," as well as the social and material privileges ultimately afforded them, and denied racial others, through these processes (Brodtkin 1998; Jacobson 1998; Dominguez 1986; Roediger 1999; 2008; Hance López 1996). We approach the topic of personal whiteness from several perspectives. Historian Nell Painter compares the views of Thomas Jefferson and contemporary Michel-Guillaume-Jean de Crèvecoeur, a French soldier-diplomat and writer, regarding racial (Anglo-Saxon) purity as the basis of early American whiteness. Linking past and present, anthropologist Carol Mukhopadhyay contributes to this chapter an enlightening essay on the persistence of the term "Caucasian" in U.S. culture. Mukhopadhyay argues compellingly that retirement of this relic of racial typology is long overdue. Indeed, shifting boundaries of whiteness remind us that racial identities and categories, as products of historical and social tensions, are at once salient and perhaps less stable than they seem.

In chapter 6, "Separate and Unequal," the final chapter of part 1, we consider how those with the power to do so legislated race, racism, and racial privilege. This is a topic explored in our discussion of whiteness and expanded here to include the experiences of various nonwhites. We recount key aspects of our shared histories of Native American land dispossession, race-based slavery, anti-immigration efforts, anti-Semitism, segregation, Japanese American internment, redlining, and other legal forms of discrimination and oppression. Of course, such measures never went unanswered, and we illustrate how proponents of racial justice resisted, modified and/or appropriated them. Therefore, we also present milestones in the painstaking and ongoing expansion of human and civil rights that inform racial identities that many today justifiably celebrate. Author Jonathan Odell provides an honest and moving account of his indoctrination as a young boy into 1950s' Jim Crow culture and white privilege. Along with the discussion of contemporary experiences of race and racism

found in part 3, this chapter reminds us how far we as a nation have come, and how far we must go in order to establish full racial equality.

In a short book, the histories presented in this section are necessarily scanty. Fortunately, excellent historical treatments of many aspects of the race concept are readily available — some written by contributors to this volume. However, connecting dots across time and space in order to understand human experiences and problems as fully as possible is what anthropologists do best. We believe the many and deep connections between culture, science, and society that we begin to explore in this section provide a novel conceptual framework for appreciating human diversity or variation within the greater context of our shared humanity. Furthermore, the information presented here is indispensable for anyone willing to rethink race and unlearn racism. It is our hope that as you read you will gain a greater appreciation for race and history as living forces that drive contemporary inequalities and identities. Let's begin ...

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## Creating Race

*Race was not found in nature but made by people in power.*  
RACE exhibit, SMM

Today, most scholars recognize race as an idea or set of ideas about human difference. Often, these ideas are inaccurate and woefully inadequate for understanding or explaining the nature and various mechanisms of human diversity. Nonetheless, they play a major role in shaping our interpretations of individual and group differences as well as our social networks and material relations. In other words, we do not identify human races – at least not through any objective means. We create them. Human races did not evolve in nature but from folk beliefs through cultural and social practices.

How did the idea of race begin? The answer resides in the complex interplay of science, government, and culture within the history of Spanish colonial expansion into the Americas. When European colonists first arrived on North American shores beginning in the 1500s, Native Americans already inhabited the land. The Spanish, French, and English frequently clashed with indigenous peoples as they established settlements in Florida, the northeast area bordering Canada, the Virginia colony, and the southwest. Initially, Europeans viewed various indigenous tribes as separate "nations," not as "races." Nor did the earliest English colonists describe blacks in racial terms when they established a labor system of indentured servitude that included both Europeans and Africans. However, by the mid-1600s, the status of Africans began to

change dramatically. They were no longer servants with the prospect of freedom following a period of servitude, like their European counterparts. Instead, colonial leaders relegated Africans to a status of permanent slavery. For a time, enslaved Africans and Native Americans labored side by side (with indentured European servants) to produce rice, cotton, indigo, and other cash crops, but eventually slavery was limited to blacks. It was only with their increased reliance upon slavery and ambitions for Native American lands that English colonists began to develop a racial hierarchy. Slavery and Native American land dispossession did not begin, but *because*, racial or race-based projects.

By now, you may be wondering why slavery and military campaigns against indigenous peoples required rationalization in the first place. Sure, we now see slavery as a moral stain, our nation's "original sin," yet societies change and today's moral bearings differ markedly from those of yesterday. Didn't colonization and slavery align with the majority values of that time? Wasn't slavery practiced the world over – including in Africa and the Americas – prior to and during the colonial era? Why, then, were English colonists compelled to justify these millennia-old practices, whether through race or any other means?

While one may be inclined to view slavery as the same institution whether practiced in ancient Rome, the 17th-century Gold Coast (Ghana), or 19th-century Virginia, this, in fact, was not the case. Race-based slavery in the Americas was without historical precedent, the