



## **Unpacking race and racism – lessons we learned** *August 2023*

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### **Introduction**

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Author: Antonia Park

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Eugenics. Mass incarceration. The Ku Klux Klan. Throughout American history, black people have been oppressed and subjected to cruelty due to the color of their skin. Despite the passage of the United States Constitution’s 13th Amendment, racial injustice continues to create devastating impacts by virtue of modern structures of oppression like the prison-industrial complex and police brutality. It is easy to dismiss modern racism as a product of pure bigotry, but what has become apparent to those of us who worked on the Pseudoscience of Race and Ethnicity is that renowned experts from the past laid a foundation of research and publications that both conceived and enabled generations of prejudice against people of color. Scholars of the Antebellum period

used construed "empirical" findings based on stereotypes to portray black people as biologically distinct from whites (Washington, Harriet A, 2006; Eberhardt, Jennifer Lynn, and Jennifer Lynn Randall, 1997). Some scholars asserted that black people had an additional layer of fat and genetically inferior hair strength, leading to black bodies' susceptibility to "burning" of the skin and burnt and, therefore, curly hair (Smith, S. S., 1965).

The notion that the environmental conditions cause a "degeneration" is blatantly racist and demonstrates the anti-black sentiment held by scholars during the Antebellum period, regardless of their claim that these findings are entirely empirical and scientific in nature. Biblical references were commonly used to stipulate that black people had dark skin due to the Curse of Ham (Goldenberg, D. M., 2017).

According to the Book of Genesis, Noah cursed the descendants of his son, Ham, to be enslaved. While there is no biblical evidence that Noah was the father of African people, the story was misconstrued by various Jewish, Christian, and Islamic writers to believe that he was. This confusion was misused to justify the eternal enslavement of African people for many years in Antebellum America.

Interestingly, the Curse of Cain from the Book of Genesis was also used to support the social structure that maintained the enslavement of black bodies, even though the most developed research pertaining to biblical translations fails to support it.<sup>1</sup> In this group paper, we examine the pseudoscience that has been used to justify centuries of racism, including Social Darwinism, race science, and the eugenics movement. In addition, by examining related contributing factors of racial prejudice, such as implicit bias and the media's portrayal of black people, we analyze how racism has been exacerbated in the contemporary world.

## **1. A new generation's understanding of race**

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Author: Syona McEligot

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For centuries, race has acquired different meanings. Over time, we have accumulated a significant amount of historical context that has provided insightful evidence for our generation. This evidence ultimately contributed to our understanding of "race."

The European Enlightenment of the 17th century paved the way for new ideas as European philosophers and scientists started using concepts and methods of science to examine humans and human societies. Although these great thinkers supported equality for humankind, they also created the belief that humanity is divided into separate and unequal races. This resulted in the birth of scientific racism or pseudoscience of race, the idea that humankind is divided into separate and unequal races. This was a false justification created by white philosophers that removed the contradiction of their dramatically different beliefs. Brain size was often used to justify the mistreatment of different races, containing false facts such as the belief that beauty and smarts are based upon the orientation of one's head (Tucker, W. H., 1994). This piece of information consistently supported the suppression of African Americans and backed the white supremacy of that time.

Charles Darwin was one of the most significant scientists and evolutionary biologists of this time. Darwin initiated and developed the concept that "As many more individuals of each species are born than can possibly survive; and as, consequently, there is a frequently recurring struggle for existence, it follows that any being, if it varies however slightly in any manner profitable to itself, under the complex and sometimes varying conditions of life, will have a better chance of surviving, and thus be naturally selected" (Darwin, C., 1860). This theory fiercely enshrined European superiority and was often used to justify the mistreatment of people of color.

Over time, racism has been reborn and interwoven into our society, creating a deeply rooted set of beliefs that individuals may not even realize they have. After the ratification of the 13th Amendment, racism was intended to be minimized. However, it was still pervasive and hidden in every crack of society and not entirely hidden from the naked eye. The 13th Amendment states, "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction" (Goodwin, Michelle, 2002). Although this Amendment removed racism and involuntary servitude, loopholes, and intentional structural racist mechanisms were set in motion to keep racism alive and white supremacists on top. The second half of the 13th Amendment was twisted and weaponized throughout history: "Except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction" (Hammad, Neveen, 2019). This ideology was used to imprison large masses of African Americans -ripping them away from their families and their rights due to them being targeted via acts of injustice and racism. African Americans were often stereotyped and villainized

in the media as dangerous. This created a preconceived notion or implicit bias for the easily influenced generation of this time.

The United States is home to 5% of the world's population but 25% of the world's prisoners, and the United States still calls itself "The Land of the Free?" (Pfaff, John F, 2015). In the mid-1980s, a new drug called crack cocaine was introduced to society, taking over African-American communities. In record time, Reagan established a penalty for crack far harsher than powdered cocaine, which many affluent, non-Hispanic whites used. The exact amount of time was spent for one ounce of crack that you get for 100 ounces of powder cocaine in prison. Usually, black Hispanics or Latinos were receiving long sentences for possession of crack. If you're white you would simply get a slap on the wrist because cocaine was more "sophisticated" because powder was deemed as worse. A scythe went through the black community removing men from families where huge chunks of black males disappeared for a long time - eradicating their rights to vote, belong and participate in their families and communities, and improve their life situation. The problem of economic inequality, hyper-segregation, and abusive drug use was criminalized in the form of the War on Drugs.

To me, race involves many unavoidable issues. The implicit bias we all are subjected to from the media causes much pain, but only if it goes without being said or discussed. The change we need will not transpire if we stay silent and ignore our faults. If we acknowledge our implicit bias, we can ultimately work to understand and address it before we spread any false stereotypes. Differences are beautiful yet frightening. This is an inevitable experience that most feel, but to acknowledge that the unknown is uncomfortable is ultimately freeing. The world is full of differences. If we see differences as a threat, how are we supposed to step out of our comfort zones to grow? The want for power and superiority is our enemy. Acceptance and acknowledgment are one step to peace and finally freeing The Land of the Free.

## 2. Remembering race science

### 2.1. *The story of the scientific craft of the race concept*

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Author: Monty Oxman

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The beginnings of race science are rooted in the scientific revolution. The scientific revolution lasted from around 1500 to the 1700s. New ideas about experimentation, mathematical explanation, and the scientific method completely changed the foundation of European and American society and, soon after, the world at large. The interest in social categorization, scientific reasoning, and classification intersected in a way that would alter society and its views on race for centuries to come.

There were many different hypotheses for how people should consider and think about race scientifically. Academic thinkers like Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon, and Johann Blumenbach believed in monogenism (Vartija, D. (2021). This was the idea that all people came from a common Caucasian ancestor. However, as time passed, factors like weather, disease, and geographic location changed people's skin color and features and created the racial denominations we see today. Alternatively, German scientist Christoph Meiners proposed polygenism (Carhart, M. C., 2009), or the idea that each race has separate and distinct origins. Benjamin Rush, one of the Founding Fathers of the United States, even believed that being Black was caused by a genetic skin condition (Rush, B., 1805). However, as time went on, these theories of the origin of race have been steadily disproven. Buffon and Blumenbach's monogenism theory was based on the incorrect idea that the Earth had only existed for 6,000 years. The idea that all humans could have evolved from an original "Adam and Eve" ancestor into the hundreds of racial categories we see today within that small timespan has proven impossible. Meiner's polygenism theory is incorrect and incredibly racist and dehumanizing to non-white people, especially Black people, by considering them a different species altogether. Because of their own internalized biases and the relative infancy of the scientific method, these European and American scientists constructed unsupported and illogical scientific explanations for race that incorrectly rationalized white supremacy and gave

their successors an unfortunate pseudoscientific backing that set the stage for the oppression of people of color.

One of the most straightforward ways scientific racism was weaponized against non-white people was with slavery in the Americas. Europeans and white Americans needed a way to justify the horrific atrocity of the Atlantic Slave Trade, and they turned to science. Polygenism was one way that people claimed science supported the oppression of enslaved Africans. Asserting that a group of people are an entirely different species with different traits perpetuated ideas like Black people having higher pain tolerance and less emotional capacity. This was utterly false, but at the time, this so-called scientific explanation was enough to justify or water down the effects and damages of slavery. These ideas also led to years of medical exploitation and mistreatment under the assumption that Black people did not have as much pain awareness or capacity for physical feeling. The Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment of 1972 is one such example of how this scientific racism has crept into the medical field in horrifying ways (Brandt, A. M., 1978).

Craniometry was another idea that stemmed from the polygenism point of view. American physician Samuel George Morton attempted to prove polygenism as well as his theory of skull size and intellectual capacity through skull measurements or craniometry (Menand, L., 2001). Through measuring skulls from around the world, he hypothesized that Caucasians had the largest skulls and, therefore, they were the most intelligent because their brains were larger. Although there was no concrete scientific backing for the idea that a larger skull means higher intelligence and the fact that skull size varies from person to person, not from race to race, these ideas were quickly picked up by physicians and anatomists and were used as more false scientific "evidence" for white supremacy and the mistreatment of people of color.

Physician Samuel A. Cartwright also coined the term Drapetomania to explain a mental illness that caused slaves to attempt to escape and gain freedom. This idea did not make sense, but it was accepted because of how white people of the time viewed Black people. Cartwright believed enslaved Black people were so far from human that an innate desire for freedom could only be explained by disease rather than human nature. Cartwright also claimed that Black people had a different kind of blood than white people and had more acute hearing and sight senses. These ideas further classified Black people as inhuman and continued the spread of incorrect justification for oppression. By classifying people of color as "animalistic" through false science and racist ideals, white Americans and Europeans separated themselves from the humans they were subjugating.

After the invention of scientific race classification in the 1600s, the world's perspective on race and racism was deeply shifted for the worse. For centuries, science that was not backed by proper evidence and based on lies and white supremacist bias was taken at face value. False science was used as evidence for hate, violence, and oppression for centuries and still has left a lasting impact on our world today.

## *2.2. Is 'race science' making a comeback? Code Switch*

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Author: Antonia Park

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Race Science, otherwise known as scientific racism, stems from the belief that the human species can be divided into genetically distinct taxa. This genre of eugenics has been supported by scholarly research that uses empirical evidence to depict people of color, especially black people, as genetically inferior to whites. It is important to note that regardless of the empirical content, all publications classified as scientific racism were conceived from the notion that races are genetic categories of the human race, which make individual races genetically distinct from the other. In this segment, I will first examine traditional publications of race science from the Antebellum period and define their most distinctive characteristics. Then, referencing Angela Saini's "Superior: The Return of Race Science," we will analyze the implications of race science on modern research and academia (Saini, A., 2019). Ultimately, we will discover the remains of scientific racism in contemporary publications and answer this question: Is Race Science Making a Comeback?

One of history's most important scientific developments was the publication of Charles Darwin's theory of the Evolution of Species in his groundbreaking work *On the Origin of Species* in 1859 (Darwin's, C., 1859). This text was a significant example of purely scientific findings misconstrued to support discriminatory practices like segregation and racial prejudice. In *Social Darwinism, Scientific Racism, and the Metaphysics of Race*, Rutledge M. Dennis explores various motives and tools white scientists employed to enforce oppressive measures within American and English society (Dennis, R. M., 1995). While some figures like Spencer and Sumner championed the idea of "survival of the fittest," meaning that white people were chosen by Nature and colored folks inherently not, they were anti-colonial and anti-imperialism, therefore likely motivated by economics. Both were capitalists, supporting laissez-faire economic policies. Others applied

Darwin's theory to society to justify imperialism, like Benjamin Kidd and Karl Pearson, who believed that the superior “fitness” of white men in society rationalized the abuse of “inferior” people of color and their natural resources. Finally, Social Darwinism took shape in the eugenics movement, in which Francis Galton weaponized IQ testing (Stanford-Binet Test) to assert the mental inferiority of black men to support his vision of slowly eradicating black skin from English society. The IQ testing movement compelled others like Arthur Jensen to contend that a 15-point intelligence disparity between black and white men was unamendable due to their inherent, unchangeable differences. Social Darwinism manifested itself in many movements. However, they all share a common characteristic: an emphasis on science to contend that empirical findings supported the physical inferiority of black people.

In 2022, the Harvard University Press published a collection of chapters that were released as scientific findings on race in *Who's Black and Why* (Gates, H. L., & Curran, A. S., 2022). This collection of sixteen papers was written as submissions to the contest for the best essay on the source of "blackness" by Bordeaux's Royal Academy of Sciences in 1739. “Blackness as a Result of the Torrid Zone” was submitted to the contest. Its author contends that black bodies have a fifth layer of fat that white people do not, and the extra sunburn in Africa's Torrid Zone causes their pores to open more, increasing sun permeation. The author also contends that the same excessive heat exposure causes the curliness of black people's hair and that kinky hair is inferior to straight hair. The notion that the environmental conditions cause a “degeneration” is blatantly racist and demonstrates the anti-black sentiment held by scholars during the Antebellum period, regardless of their claim that these findings are entirely empirical and scientific in nature.

Angela Saini is an award-winning science journalist who recently wrote *Superior: The Return of Race Science* (Saini, A. ,2019). In her interview with [the NPR Code Switch](#) podcast, Saini points out that the bigotry that inspired the original forms of race science is not entirely gone from society,



Instead, "race is real in society. It is real in politics. It is real in the ways that we treat each other. It is visceral because we have made it visceral in our everyday lives, and it has a biological impact because of that," (Kung, Jess, Gene Demby, and Shereen Marisol Meraji, 2019).

A mainstream example of what can be interpreted as modern race science is the surge in the popularity of genetic testing. In 2003, scientists from the National Human Genome Research Institute completed the [Human Genome Project](#), which combined decades of genetics research and finally made it possible to track human ancestry. Since then, companies like 23andMe, Ancestry, and Family Tree DNA have created at-home kits that yield the percentages of one's ancestry to users. The issue with ancestry tests that sort people into categories of five races (African, Asian, European, Native American, and Oceanian) is that "race" cannot be biologically defined solely from genetic variation among human individuals.

The 5-race theory originates from German physician and naturalist Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, who assumed that all morphological varieties between the five races resulted from climate and way of living (Blumenbach, J. F., & Bendyshe, T. T., 1865). Blumenbach's theory suggests that the differences between the genetics of the five races are significant enough to be categorized into distinct races, which aligns with the principal ideology of race science. Modern science disproves this view of genetics. Today, we know that separate racial groups in terms of genetic taxonomy, which race scientists and Blumenbach theorized, are not real. [A landmark 2022 study](#) conducted by Stanford University researchers showed that among the distribution of 4,000 alleles in all seven major geographical regions, over 92% of them were found in two or more regions, and almost half of the alleles were present in *all* regions (Rosenberg, N. A., Pritchard, J. K., Weber, J. L., Cann, H. M., Kidd, K. K., Zhivotovsky, L. A., & Feldman, M. W., 2002). Only 7.4% of the 4,000 alleles were specific to one geographical region, disproving that specific genetics define distinct racial groups.

Saini concludes her interview with NPR by highlighting the common behaviors of ethnic nationalists. "[Race Scientists] play on your sense of ethnicity or sense of origin story. They

build up this image of you as being a biologically essential person, and that this ties you to this identity, and it becomes embedded in who you are. They play on these assumptions and stereotypes and the lack of education that we have around these issues, and they make us believe that identity is biological when identity is cultural." Ancestry tests serve as a contemporary example of the remnants of Antebellum race science, and its popularity in the media has veiled a sobering truth about the Pseudoscience of Race: the principles of race science are still present in modern science research and journalism. Saini warns that scientists need to be intentional and responsible with what they publish, especially if their findings involve race. It is critical that researchers, students, and journalists alike understand what "race" truly means, and Saini advises that such individuals proceed with immense caution before using race as a biological entity in itself.

### 3. Eugenics

#### 3.1. *How did it all start?*

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Author: Anna Cho, Ryan Aminloo

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One avenue of Eugenics is hinged on the presumption that genius is hereditary, an idea rooted in Greek theory. Plato's *Republic* was the original blueprint for a society reliant on eugenics policy in which selective mating was outlined between those of similar "capacity." Even some considered in an elite guardian class would be barred from reproduction despite their standing in the Athenian hierarchy ([Galton, 1998](#)),

The notion that intelligence is genetic and may be heritable resurfaces repeatedly throughout history. It makes its breakthrough with Francis Galton's *Hereditary Genius*. Galton was an empiricist but also an experimenter. He collected most of his data on plants but failed to realize that human mental characteristics do not transmit in a similar manner ([Hall, 2023](#)). However, his preconceived belief in the heritability of positive human attributes is streamlined in other findings. Alfred Binet was a French psychologist who dedicated himself to predicting school achievement and helping struggling students get individualized attention. Unlike Galton, he leaned toward an environmental explanation of why students perform the way they do. Although formative and needing surgery, Binet and his student Theodore Simon created the first IQ test known as the

Binet-Simon Scale. Lewis Terman, a psychologist at Stanford, decided to revisit this scale and standardize it in an American context (Miller, 1984). Terman sympathized with Galton's eugenics theories, and so Terman displayed the abuse of intelligence that Binet feared. Terman unapologetically justified his meritocratic and race-based stances through discrepancies in IQ scores between ethnic groups (Warne, 2018).

Although the term 'Eugenics' often has a negative connotation, its origins were not all negative. 'Eugenics,' coined by Francis Galton in 1883, is the study of or belief in the possibility of improving the qualities of the human species or human population, especially by such means as discouraging reproduction by persons having genetic defects or presumed to have inheritable undesirable traits or encouraging reproduction by persons presumed to have inheritable desirable traits (Huidu, 2019). The history of Eugenics stems from scientists who advocated that absolute racial purification was possible by emphasizing race hygiene, which is the idea that a race of people can be kept pure by not allowing people who are considered inferior to have children (Cambridge Dictionary). However, the process behind this idea resulted in one of the most tragic, cruel incidents in human history.

Eugenics was rooted in the social Darwinism of the late 19th century, a period in which notions of fitness, competition, and biological rationalizations of inequality were popular. At the time, many theorists introduced Darwinian analogies of "survival of the fittest" into the social argument. In this, there were two types of Eugenics— positive and negative Eugenics. Positive Eugenics aims to improve the human race by encouraging reproduction with those with desirable traits. An example of positive Eugenics was the government's encouragement of the reproduction of those with high IQs. On the other hand, negative Eugenics, often disregarded by society, discouraged the birth of those with undesirable traits. This usually used sterilization or discouragement for reproduction, causing the loss of thousands of lives solely because they were "inferior" and were called to have 'genetic defects.'

Stemming from this, Galton, often regarded as the father of Eugenics, began Eugenics as a program to artificially produce a better human race by regulating marriage and, thus, procreation. Galton put particular emphasis on positive Eugenics and aimed at encouraging the physically and mentally superior members of the population to choose partners with similar traits. In 1904, he presented his ideas in front of a vast audience of physicians and scientists in London. His widely publicized lecture served as the starting point for the development of eugenics groups in Europe and the United States during the first half of the 20th century.

In 1920, Eugenics took off and became widely accepted globally in countries including the US and Britain, Mexico, Canada, and Italy. Nazi persecutory policies originated from theories of Eugenics. These ideas of Eugenics were later adapted to Germany in 1933, where the government intended to 'cleanse' the German population. Nazis claimed that Hereditarily ill people placed a genetic and financial burden upon society. They intervened by mandating sterilization for nine disabilities that they considered "hereditarily ill." From this law, 400,000 Germans were sterilized in Nazi Germany to maintain "racial hygiene." The 1933 Sterilization Law did not specifically target a particular race. It was primarily aimed at "defective" Germans, not Jews. However, In 1935, laws were passed to forbid marriage between Jews and Germans. Any Jew who violated the laws was sent to concentration camps. It then escalated in 1938 when Jews were banned from having any occupation.

The Nazi government diagnosed Jewish people as Hereditarily ill— people with mental, physical, or social disabilities. Medical professionals implemented Germany's racial policies and targeted the individuals that Nazis defined as "hereditarily ill" (Grodin, M; Miller, E; Kelly, J, 2018).

Hitler believed that he was "improving" the human race by trying to eliminate what he thought was the inferior race— the Jewish people. This produced 400,000 victims of forced sterilization in Germany, widely known as the Jewish Holocaust; Nazis began to target Jewish people and 'non-aryan white' people, causing mass genocide and "ethnic cleansing" in concentration camps (Kevles, 1999). A period of systemic annihilation continued for 12 years under Nazi rule, where over six million Jewish men, women, and children were murdered.

The eugenics movement lost its momentum with the end of the Holocaust and the Nazi atrocities of World War II but forced sterilization and racial discrimination on the basis of intelligence persisted.

### 3.2. *New Eugenics?*

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Authors: Daniel Cho

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New Eugenics, or modern-day Eugenics, is often defined as genetic engineering. With modern-day technology such as CRISPR-Cas9 further advancing, genetic modification is no longer an idea of the far future. Eugenics has historically been used for racial and ethnic cleansing and sterilization purposes, for example, with the Eugenics-related ideologies Nazis spread during WWII. However, modern-day Eugenics focuses on genetic modification and selection with seemingly clean motives, as such research is being used to improve human welfare or improve certain subjects. For example, genetic modification has been used on food products and crops to improve the nutritional value of certain products, improving food quality.

Regarding gene modification, CRISPR is one of the, if not the most, prominent gene modification technologies today, and it is used for genetic editing by cutting certain strands of DNA and letting repair processes replace the cut strands with new ones (Broad Institute, Questions and Answers about CRISPR). Despite still being relatively early in its research, CRISPR has already been used to improve the health of babies, with Chinese scientist He Jiankui who edited the genes of three babies to successfully immunize them against HIV, which their father had and could have passed on to them, in China. While one of the few occasions in which gene modification has been used on humans, the fact that such technology was used to immunize the three babies from the HIV disease, support for CRISPR only increased, with the argument that it could prevent and even potentially heal disease in humans. When used for ethical research to improve overall human health, the support CRISPR has received is arguably deserved. Still, CRISPR and other genetic engineering practices are being researched for other purposes as well, with one of the most prominent being the idea of designer babies.

A relatively new topic today, the term "designer babies" refers to the idea of using gene modification to create the "perfect" or "ideal" baby by modifying their genetics, whether it be their height, athleticism, hair and eye color, life expectancy, and even gender (The Guardian, 2017). This concept might seem revolutionary, but designer babies lie in the gray zone of genetic modification research, as gene editing for this purpose can potentially lead to a lack of diversity in future generations and widen social and racial gaps in society, with gene modification theoretically being able to change skin color, despite uncertainty around the idea, and even lead to economic

disparities, as designer babies will likely be costly if the idea is successful. The potential risks arguably outweigh the pros of designer babies, and these risks pose ethical threats as well because such modifications can lead to the use of modern-day Eugenics for racial purposes, with the theory that skin color can be altered with DNA modification. Not only this but because genetic modification is permanent and modified traits are passed on to a modified person's children, even more ethical issues emerge since parents will have full decision of genetic modifications, with babies being unable to consent or choose to modify their genes. Even though issues and controversy regarding the ethics of gene modification can be somewhat eliminated with ethics' role in the idea and with ethical guidelines putting some restrictions and supervision on DNA editing, history shows that Eugenics can quickly become dangerous when used for even the slightest racial purposes.

While not completely related to modern-day Eugenics, researchers have also been conducting studies on reproductive technologies, including artificial reproduction and even cloning. Reproductive technology includes several other aspects, but artificial reproduction technology (ART) and human and animal cloning are two of the most popular topics today. ART is used to surgically remove eggs, which are used to create babies in a lab. While tied to less ethical issues than designer babies and modern-day Eugenics, ART still faces controversy, whether it be regarding the ethics of patients' privacy or the morals regarding reproduction and human life (CDC.gov, "What is Assisted Reproductive Technology?", 2019). As well as this, but with reproduction being an already controversial issue with *Roe v. Wade* and laws on abortion, ART is only further limited because of such concerns.

Regarding cloning, no humans have been cloned, but research has been conducted to clone animals. Dolly the sheep, a sheep cloned in 1996, is known as the first cloned animal, and research has only advanced cloning technology since, with 22 species of animals being reportedly cloned. (National Human Genome Research Institute, "Cloning Fact Sheet", 2020).

Despite also being revolutionary, like other forms of modern-day Eugenics, ethical concerns surrounding cloning, both specific to animals and in general, are prevalent, as issues regarding the safety of cloning, with cloning having the potential to cause mutations, diversity, and effects of cloning all being controversial topics. Even though new topics, meaning that they are bound to have controversy tied to them, reproductive technologies can also pose several ethical threats when regarding new Eugenics.

As modern Eugenics and new technologies only continue to advance, the history of Eugenics only becomes more critical. Commonly used for racial sterilization and linked to racial discrimination in history, ethics should always be prioritized regarding new Eugenics. Whether it be for gene engineering, crop, food modification, or reproductive technologies, eugenics' history should serve as a reminder of the dangers of Eugenics but also the changes the eugenics movement has faced over time.

## 4. Implicit bias

### 4.1. *Is implicit bias personal?*

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Author: Ella Wong, Meilin Shen

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Implicit bias, an unconscious bias affecting human behavior, decision-making, and societal interactions, has recently gained recognition and interest among social psychologists. It has been uncovered that implicit bias immensely impacts perceptions and judgments while further determining one's actions in everyday activities. Recently, communities have begun to analyze whether implicit bias is personal or a product of external influences (Krieger, L. H., & Fiske, S. T. ,2006).

Implicit bias represents the automatic and often involuntary mental associations that individuals form about various social groups, such as those defined by race, gender, age, and more. These associations are not deliberate beliefs but result from the brain's inherent tendency to categorize information quickly and efficiently (Washington, N., & Kelly, D. ,2016). Implicit biases can influence decisions and behaviors without the individual's conscious awareness. A common implicit bias is the assumption of a person's ethnicity based purely on their name.

Psychological research has provided significant insights into the nature of implicit bias. In the Implicit Associations Test practiced at schools such as Harvard University, students evaluate words, such as "fat" and "thin," and the assumptions they correlate to. It has been found that "fat" is usually associated with "bad" as "thin" is with "good". This test "measure[s] the strength concepts and evaluation of stereotypes" to display an implicit bias, demonstrating that implicit biases operate subconsciously, impacting various aspects of life, from hiring decisions to interactions with others.

The question of "Is Implicit Bias Personal" or if it is a product of external influences is constantly debated regarding science and ethics. However, societal, cultural, cognitive, and personal influences play significant roles in creation. Firstly, portrayals in the media, societal norms, and historical narratives encourage stereotypes and prejudices, ultimately forming implicit biases. With social media and film becoming increasingly more widespread, these inaccurate perceptions of people and groups of people can reinforce people's associations between social groups and particular attributes. Cognitively, people tend to categorize information and form associations based naturally (D'Andrade, R. G., 1981). These associations can persist even when an individual contradicts held beliefs, another reason implicit bias has become so prevalent. Finally, based on personal experiences, people subconsciously add information to implicit biases. However, interactions with people from diverse social groups can help to modify these biases. Although people do not consciously create implicit biases, they still hold responsibility for recognizing and addressing them. Recent research shows that when there is awareness of implicit bias, it can lead to the mitigation of its impact (FitzGerald, C., Martin, A., Berner, D., & Hurst, S., 2019). Furthermore, educational programs and interventions have been developed to help individuals recognize and manage their implicit biases. This suggests that, although implicit bias may not be a conscious choice, individuals have a role in addressing and reducing its effects.

As implicit bias is a complex psychological phenomenon rooted in automatic cognitive processes, individuals may not consciously choose to harbor these biases but do bear a level of responsibility for recognizing and mitigating their influence. Arguments display that implicit biases stem from personal experiences and beliefs, making it our commitment to acknowledge them. Research across various disciplines has illuminated the nature and origins of implicit bias, underscoring the need for ongoing efforts to reduce its impact and promote fairness, equity, and inclusivity in society. Addressing implicit bias necessitates individual awareness and systemic changes to foster a more just and equitable society.



## 4.2. Biases and cultures

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Author: Charles Lee

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Implicit Bias can be defined as the unconscious phenomenon that profoundly affects how we perceive life, our reactions to differing situations and our opinions on varying topics. These subconscious prejudices that perpetuate our lives shape all of our interactions and judgments in various aspects of our lives. No matter how hard we try to overcome implicit biases, unconscious prejudice will always remain within us to some extent. Since these biases are part of our human nature, implicit prejudice will naturally permeate into society's cultures. Especially with the recent increase in racial and gender inequalities awareness, implicit bias has become a major interest to many.

Culture is never static. The world's culture is constantly changing as humans evolve and ultimately it serves as our society's current identity. However, for how much we influence culture, it affects our beliefs just as much. After all, people aren't born with or taught to have prejudice. Our opinions stem from exposure to cultural norms, stereotypes, and morals from a young, impressionable age. As children, we begin to form beliefs about certain groups of people due to the constant reinforcement of our adolescent environments. As we grow more aware of the world, we become susceptible to socialization from our communities or even from the media we consume. Both of these influences are some of the biggest cultures in our lives that ultimately make up a majority of who we become. This often takes the form of positive characteristics, such as playing a sport because your friend does or wanting to help others after watching philanthropist videos. But we are equally vulnerable to picking up prejudiced or other negative traits. Finally, as adults, our socialized beliefs are reflected through our actions, which can be unconsciously prejudiced due to the implicit biases we've formed. As we grow up, the culture evolves to represent the newer generation. However, as we were shaped by previous cultures and their prejudices, we end up reinforcing implicit biases. Thus, implicit biases will continuously loop and almost indefinitely be intertwined into the culture.

Implicit bias's prevalence has manifested in culture in many ways. Prejudice shapes the way we weigh decisions and socially interact with others because of our cultural backgrounds. All of these can be represented through small actions but lead to the proliferation of inequality in our

society. Microaggressions in the form of derogatory remarks or negative thoughts negatively affect groups of people. Stereotypes associated with different cultures have led to minority groups being discriminated against. It's significantly harder for minorities to have access to equal housing, education, or other resources. For example, women have constantly made noticeably less money than men over the past two decades. According to the Pew Research Center, in 2022, women make roughly 82% of what men make on average. Back in 2002, women made roughly 80% of average men's salaries, barely any different from the present wage gap (Aragao 2023). Equality in the workplace has not made any significant advancements in the past few decades, which can likely be attributed to implicit bias. Work culture has developed to generally consider women less competent and therefore deserving less pay. This in-group mentality creates the "glass ceiling" that women have been restricted by. Outside of the workplace, minorities also face constant discrimination across all social institutions such as the American legal system. The United States Sentencing Commission found that African Americans were given on average nearly 20% longer sentences compared to white offenders for similar crimes (USSC 2017). The constant reinforcement within culture has led to an extreme amount of everyday inequalities that are seemingly insignificant to the overall culture. However, these smaller-scale inequalities have ultimately contributed to great disadvantages within society.

The hindering nature of our culture has spawned many detrimental repercussions. The consequences of implicit bias create a social division amongst different groups of people. It's difficult for social collaboration or to facilitate change with the intense lack of unity amongst a diverse population. Implicit biases obstruct our empathy, thus resulting in people being unable to see eye to eye with one another. The loss of understanding leads to cases such as George Floyd's death or even affirmative action being removed. So many issues are uncompromisable due to the extreme passion for topics because all groups of people have been socialized to believe in subjects. This not only has resulted in a loss of social reform but also a loss of potential among individuals. From a physical standpoint, many oppressed people don't have the resources or the funds to support things they are good at. Scholars might be economically disadvantaged due to the effects of implicit bias. These people might have ambitions for further education, but the collegiate culture doesn't provide enough financial support to them and they cannot attend college. Like the women's glass ceiling, other groups facing prejudice might face barriers preventing them from achieving their goals and ultimately wasting talent.

Though we are all susceptible to cultural influences and implicit bias, we can work towards mitigating its effects. It's crucial to accept that we all have prejudice. Reflecting on our actions and consciously opposing our tendencies can reduce our bias. Educating ourselves on cases of inequality and psychology is necessary to be aware of to gain a greater perspective. Implementing inclusive policies and electing diverse representation would contribute all perspectives to ensure all people are heard. While of course, implicit bias in culture will always exist, we can break down these barriers and forge a more inclusive cultural landscape for all.

### *4.3. Implicit biases from our personal experiences*

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Authors: Jane Kim and Elizabeth Tak

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#### **Jane:**

Despite our best efforts, implicit biases are difficult to stifle. After all, we create them through categorical thinking to make it easier for our brain to quickly comprehend people and situations, simplifying the world and people around us into social categories. We face these biases every day, regardless of our social identity; we seem to have a way of "judging a book by its cover" ingrained in us, even if we might not initially notice it in ourselves.

Ever since I was little, kids at school always described me as that smart Asian girl who never talked much. Teachers expected me to be more attentive and obedient in class than my peers, and I acutely felt the distinction. Within my predominantly White town, I could feel eyes on me everywhere I went: the mall with my friends, the grocery store with my mom, the suffocating classroom. Even if it was all in my imagination, I became self-conscious of my ethnic background because I knew I was different and would be perceived differently. Nevertheless, I knew the biases people had about me were not explicitly meant to be offensive or debilitating, and I came not to mind it. Society has a deceptive way of convincing people to conform and accept the way things are.

But, of course, it was not only they who performed their part encouraged upon them by society's brutally efficient cycle of reinforcing biases. You and I, whether we like it or not, are a part of the system just like everyone else, a cog in the machinery that prompts the next cog to turn,

then the one after that, and the one after that. I constantly catch myself categorizing the White students at school just like they did to me, or dismissing a specific group of students because society has told me to. In our globalized world, where we interact with so many people from varying geographical backgrounds and cultures, it is overwhelmingly easier to generalize: to look at particular groups of people through a specific lens in a certain light.

While some biases may appear harmless or even positive from the surface, generalized biases are harmful because, in every case, they reduce a group of people to a single identity. There lies the hidden potency of implicit biases: pruning the unique individual down to a simple label based solely upon race, gender, age, appearance, financial status, or some other equally restrictive category.

In response to the harmful effects of implicit biases, we should all take a moment to identify the biases within ourselves and analyze whether we would want to be subjected to them. Then, we should consider each individual as their own person and not another whole, a crucial component to preventing judgments and interactions based upon categorical thinking. Perhaps our world will be a more equal and open-minded place for everyone.

### **Elizabeth:**

I remember this vividly: my family was making the long trek back to our car after a lovely evening in Santa Monica. The night was filled with experiencing tasty oysters and sweet ice cream and exploring the nearby plaza, lively with music and brightly lit stores. We had parked in a parking structure a few blocks from the downtown hub, meaning we had to walk back near dusk.

As we neared the entrance to the parking structure through a dark alleyway, my mom noticed a man dressed in dark clothing, walking with his hands in his pockets in our general direction. "Let us walk faster; there is a strange man following us," my mom whispered in Korean with a trace of fear in her voice. When I looked back, I noticed that it was a Latino man who was walking in our general direction. I was confused: Why would she automatically assume that he was suspicious? As the man approached us, I realized that my mom had automatically paired his race with his suspicious appearance and classified him as a threat.

Implicit biases are present everywhere in our lives. They often go hand in hand with stereotypes. For example, many believe that women tend to be more humanities based while men tend to be more interested in STEM. This is a belief that has been set in stone throughout history since men tended to fill the more "respected" professions. Nevertheless, even in my high school,

our Honors Physics class has only five girls; the rest are boys. Circumstances like these feed into our implicit biases and cumulate to form a certain mindset in our heads.

Though implicit biases are unconsciously made, they are reinforced in our daily lives. The news we watch, the articles we read, awards shows, and sports stats all contribute to our own implicit biases that are difficult to change. Because our media and social environment constantly expose us to "breaking news" stories or pieces of information that we push to the back of our minds, this information is still processed and stored in our minds. It is essential to keep an open mind to combat implicit biases. Implicit biases form because we are aware of different stereotypes portrayed in the media, so we already form an opinion unconsciously. However, if we all keep an open mind to different portrayals of people and events, regardless of how the news or media portrays them, then we can truly decrease our implicit biases once and for all.

## **5. Implications of Mass Media on the Pseudoscience of Race & and Ethnicity**

### *5.1. Media portrayal*

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Authors: Sophie Kim

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According to a study by Ana Petrosyan, over five million people use the internet daily in 2023(Statista, 2023). With this unparalleled access to the internet and information services also comes the dangerous threat of manipulation in the hands of the outlets that control it. This has created a double-edged sword: We live in an age of unprecedented access to information, yet we are also more vulnerable to misinformation than ever.

We saw the dangers of media manipulation firsthand on January 6, 2021, when a group of protestors stormed the Capitol building in Washington, D.C. Months of election lies perpetrated by fringe groups, Fox News, and the former President directly led to the deaths of five people, while indirectly contributing to the suicides of two more. On a larger scale, North Korea has tightly controlled access to information for decades; though it is difficult to pinpoint an exact start date, the establishment of the Korean Central News Agency – the state news agency of North Korea – in 1946 demonstrates many years of concerted effort by multiple rulers to eventually arrive at the state of affairs seen today.

Though these are likely the most striking and prominent examples of harmful media manipulation tactics in our lifetimes, they are far from the first – or only – times media has been leveraged for personal or political gain. A particularly harmful area in which the powerful omnipresence of media has been exploited is within racial relations. This has been apparent in four main case studies: the film "The Birth of a Nation," the Jewish and Rwandan genocides, the events leading up to Japanese internment during World War II, and the war in Ukraine.

### **The Birth of a Nation**

In the vast realm of American cinema, few films have left as indelible and troubling a mark on the pseudoscientific perceptions of race and ethnicity as D.W. Griffith's cinematic masterpiece, "The Birth of a Nation." The silent film was released on February 8, 1915, and was largely based upon *The Clansman*, a novel and play written by Thomas Dixon Jr. Featuring blackface, racist ideologies, and depictions of the Ku Klux Klan, "The Birth of a Nation" would go on to be named as "the most controversial film ever made in the United States."

Through its portrayal of African Americans as menacing and intellectually inferior, "The Birth of a Nation" aligned itself with the pseudoscientific notions of its time, including eugenics and scientific racism, which purported to provide a sliver of legitimacy to the concept of racial hierarchy and discrimination. Utilizing the burgeoning medium of cinema, the film presented these ideas to a mass audience, thus amplifying pseudoscientific convictions about racial superiority and inferiority.

However, if the film was truly racist and detrimental to a national extent, why would it be referred to as a "cinematic masterpiece"? Technologically speaking, the film was cutting-edge, produced using the latest technology of the time – so much so that it became the first ever film screened in the White House. President Woodrow Wilson, members of his cabinet, and his family viewed the film together. "The Birth of a Nation" reshaped the course of filmmaking and played a pivotal role in perpetuating harmful racial stereotypes and pseudoscientific ideologies that continue to resonate within our contemporary society.

### **Genocide**

Identifying the most severe and troubling case of blatant brainwashing through media manipulation invariably leads to the question of the number of lives lost due to such manipulation.

The Holocaust, then, emerges as a clear winner: it claimed the lives of upwards of six million Jewish people and millions of other prisoners of war. Defined by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum as "the systematic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of six million Jews by the Nazi regime and its collaborators," the Holocaust is a prime example of the power of media manipulation – a power so great, the killing of millions of people can be brought about (*Holocaust misconceptions - Illinois Holocaust Museum*). Nazi propaganda and censorship played a crucial role in making the genocide possible; authors were blacklisted, book burnings were conducted, and at the beginning of the Holocaust in 1933, the Nazis established the Reich Music Chamber to promote Aryan (traditional) music while also taking calculated steps to suppress music composed by Jews.

Three years into the quest to exterminate the Jewish population, German officials doubled down on their efforts and conducted a wide-scale review of all art galleries in Germany, which resulted in the removal of around 13,000 paintings they deemed as “degenerate.” Throughout the horrific period, Nazi Germany used the media as a mechanism by which to justify their actions and sway public opinions in favor of their viewpoint and against Jewish populations.

Just half a decade following the end of the Holocaust, another genocide – equally as appalling – began in Rwanda. Two populations, Hutu and Tutsi, had resided in Rwanda since colonial times. Yet, class divides, and discrimination led to myriad ethnic tensions that ultimately culminated in the unspeakable tragedy. In the space of just 100 days, an estimated 800,000 Rwandans were murdered immediately following the assassination of the Hutu president. To this day, it is unclear who was responsible for the rocket attack that downed Rwandan President Juvenal Habyarimana's airplane. Some say it was Paul Kagame, who was the leader of a Tutsi rebel group at the time of Habyarimana's demise and later ascended to the presidency; others state that it was Hutu extremists who wanted to frame Tutsi rebels and use the killing as a pretext to spark the mass executions of Tutsis (BBC News., 2011, Rwanda: How the genocide happened).

Whatever the case, a driving force in inspiring and mobilizing extremist Hutus was the Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines. It was one of the leading radio stations responsible for “inciting ordinary citizens to take part” in the massacre, as well as the first channel to do so; their activities inspired other radio stations to perpetuate such ideologies, according to research by Concordia University (*Rwanda radio transcripts*). Hutu extremists took the mic to “[issue] directives on how and where to kill Tutsis, and [congratulate] those who had already taken part,” among other atrocities.

## **Japanese Internment**

Though it did not result in nearly as many deaths, Japanese internment during World War II was a serious violation of constitutional rights. It caused irreparable damage to the Japanese-American communities of the 1940s. Throughout the war, racist propaganda targeting Japanese populations was widely distributed, labeling them as "spies" and "traitors" even while some served as troops on the American side. A variety of newspapers owned by William Randolph Hearst – at the time, some of the most influential in the country – called them "yellow," "Mongolian," and "Jap", all derogatory slurs that intentionally colored public perceptions of a majority-white society afraid of immigration and the so-called "Yellow Peril." There were even pamphlets instructing people how to tell the difference between Japanese and Chinese based on facial features, clearly demonstrating an overt threat to personal safety (American Experience, PBS., 2021). In essence, anti-Japanese sentiments and opinions were severely exacerbated during the war, and the media amplified their reach to a scale never seen before.

A wave of hate ensued; Japanese people were the subject of hate crimes, ridicule, verbal abuse, and even property theft. Additionally, many were fired or forced to abandon their jobs. Furthermore, when President Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066 – which later became infamous for violating the rights of American citizens – some 120,000 of them were uprooted and forced to relocate to internment camps. Echoing the concentration camps of the Holocaust, structures unfit for human residency (typically racetracks and fairgrounds) were converted into makeshift prisons; Roosevelt used the bombing of Pearl Harbor as demonstrative of the need for upgraded security. Roosevelt eventually formally apologized for his actions, but the damage had already been done.

Years later, the justification of the order was challenged in court in *Korematsu vs. the United States*, where the Supreme Court upheld Executive Order 9066 in a split 6-3 decision, labeling it as a “military necessity” rather than an example of racial targeting. Even today, *Korematsu vs. the United States* has never technically been overturned, setting a dangerous precedent that perceived racial ancestry can be used to destroy communities and target innocent civilians for actions the country of their long-ago ancestors may take.



## The War in Ukraine

Being the most recent war in modern times, the conflict in Ukraine has inevitably become the most heavily publicized. Due to the advent of the internet, social media, and advanced technology, the world can watch events unfold from the other side of the globe in real-time. We hear the sound of the bombs from across the ocean, we see the death and destruction broadcast on live television, and we feel the pain and suffering of the Ukrainian people through the millions of news articles, photos, and interviews available online.

However, this also means that the war in Ukraine has been specially targeted by state actors wishing to push their own false narratives about the events unfolding – narratives that serve their interests and purposes rather than adhering to the truth (Bergengruen, V., 2023). In fact, researchers state there has been a “barrage of disinformation, manipulated imagery, forged documents, and targeted propaganda unleashed by Russia and pro-Kremlin activists,” according to a report by *Time*. The report further states that Russia has been using the media to "defend its actions, seed doubt about news from the ground, and push misleading or false narratives to undercut support for Ukraine." A separate article from *NPR* points out that R.T., a state-backed media outlet, published a startling 50 documentaries in the span of a year regarding rumors about the war effort, including some claims that Ukraine is run by Nazis – in cahoots with the United States government, of course – and that the country is selling donated weapons on the dark web (Bond, S., 2023).

All of this has meant that despite having more access to information about the war than ever, it is easier to confuse and distract people by leveraging the power of the media. The conflict in Ukraine ties into the pseudoscience of race and ethnicity in a different way than we have typically seen, however: rather than negatively covering Ukrainians, it has shed light on “deeply rooted racism against non-European refugees” through the exceptional treatment of Ukrainian refugees, who are immediately greeted with compassion and caring. In contrast, refugees of African descent are often asked to wait or use different, more dangerous routes to escape Ukraine and enter neighboring countries. There have also been numerous comparisons between Ukrainian refugees and refugees from countries like Iraq, Syria, and Afghanistan, which reflect

discriminatory beliefs and prejudices in our modern-day society by demonstrating the existence of a rift in public perception of refugees of different ethnic or racial origins.

### *5.2. Effect of diversity in the film industry*

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Authors: Sydney Huynh, Naomi Kim, Malaika Nyende

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The media landscape has undergone significant transformation in recent years, with a growing emphasis on diversity and inclusion. This research paper delves into the effects of diversity in films, movies, and TV shows, highlighting its impact on representation and societal perceptions. By analyzing current famous film mediums alongside broader trends in media, this paper aims to illustrate the importance of diversity and its role in shaping a more inclusive media environment.

#### **Diversified Casting and Representation in Film**

Diversity in media has far-reaching implications, from challenging stereotypes to fostering inclusivity. Research has consistently shown that diverse representation on screen positively affects real-world attitudes and perceptions. A study conducted by the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media found that exposure to diverse characters in media can significantly reduce biases and increase empathy among viewers (Geena Davis Institute).

Accurate media representation can be a powerful tool for underrepresented groups and minorities. Films and TV shows featuring diverse characters allow individuals from various backgrounds to see themselves reflected on screen, fostering a sense of belonging and self-worth. Moreover, such portrayals provide role models, inspiring individuals to pursue their aspirations regardless of societal barriers. The success of "Crazy Rich Asians" is a testament to the demand for diverse narratives, as it not only resonated with Asian audiences but also attracted global acclaim.

Diverse narratives have the potential to broaden cultural horizons and challenge preconceived notions. When creators infuse their work with perspectives from different backgrounds, it leads to more intricate and authentic storytelling. Disney's announcement of Halle Bailey, an African-American actress, as the new Ariel in the live-action adaptation of "The Little Mermaid" sparked discussions about reimagining classic tales through a modern lens. Such adaptations help break the mold of conventional storytelling, fostering engagement and interest among audiences.

Diversity is not just a moral imperative but also an intelligent business decision. Movies and TV shows with diverse casts have consistently performed well at the box office, dispelling the notion that diversity does not sell. "Black Panther," for instance, shattered records and became a cultural phenomenon by celebrating African culture and providing an authentic representation of black characters. This success highlights the economic viability of diverse content and encourages the industry to invest in more inclusive projects.

Diversity and inclusion in media profoundly influence societal perceptions, individual empowerment, and economic success. The examples of "Crazy Rich Asians," "The Little Mermaid," and "Black Panther" demonstrate the power of representation in reshaping narratives and challenging stereotypes. As the media landscape continues to evolve, embracing diversity is not just a trend but a necessary step toward creating a more equitable and inclusive world.

### **A Timeline of Racial Stereotypes in American Film**

American films between the early twentieth and the twenty-first centuries have experienced a shift in portraying racial stereotypes. Though the film medium has progressed significantly from the blatant racism of the early 1900s, racial and ethnic stereotypes persist in modern movies. This chapter outlines a timeline of significant films featuring or breaking these stereotypes, comprising a more remarkable societal advancement away from ignorance.

Racial stereotypes begin with one of America's founding films, *The Birth of a Nation*, directed by DW Griffin and released in 1915. According to Professor Alan Rice for Black Atlantic Research at the University of Central Lancashire, this film is still considered a "revolutionary" piece due to its pivotal role in advancing film technology and viewership. However, transforming the conflict of the Civil War into a narrative, the piece glorifies advocates of slavery, including the Ku Klux Klan, while dehumanizing enslaved African Americans—depicting them as violent and savage (Brook, 215). The stereotype of dangerous and violent African Americans persists today. As Rice states, the film became a "building block film," not only for its cinematography but also for its initiation of racial stereotypes in film (Brook, 2015).

Similar racist stereotypes continued throughout various 1900s films, including the classic *Breakfast at Tiffany's* in 1961, which features minor character I.Y. Yunioshi as an element of racist comedy. In addition to being portrayed as angry, irrational, and clumsy, Yunioshi is acted by white actor Mickey Rooney. The film perpetuates the stereotype of the Asian American as incompetent and intellectually inferior to the White.

Though arguably not as blatant, harmful stereotypes continued to appear in the 1980s and 90s. While *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* (1984), and its feature of a fictional, barbaric Indian religion involving child sacrifice and voodoo dolls, appears a more obvious example, racism in a film like *Aladdin* (1992) is less apparent. Though it does mark an essential start to Disney's burgeoning diversity, being the first of their movies without a White protagonist, it still features Arab culture and society as brutal and violent, especially to women, as pointed out by the film *Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Villifies a People* (Jhally, 2016). When the film is introduced, the song "Arabian Nights" is played, featuring a line that states, "Where they cut off your ear if they do not like your face, it is barbaric but, hey, it is home" (Clement & Musker, 1992). Additionally, Princess Jasmine, disguised at the marketplace, is threatened with a brutal law when she hands an apple to a beggar child. Both examples enforce the stereotype of brutish and cruel Arabs.

However, The twenty-first century marked an important transition away from these harmful archetypes, instead featuring narratives and stories that went against them. The 2016 film *Hidden Figures* centers around the struggles of three African-American women scientists at NASA, breaking the stereotype of uneducated and lazy African Americans. Moreover, the 2021 Marvel film *Shang-Chi* marked another significant turn, not only as the first Marvel film with an Asian protagonist but by having the protagonist be a car-valet and a superhero, breaking the model-minority myth of the passive but super-successful Asian American. These are not the only examples and media, including Disney's *Andi Mack* and more.

While stereotypes still appear in certain modern movies, the American film industry has made significant progress away from the norms previously established by *The Birth of a Nation*, a progress that will hopefully continue.

### **Case Study: The Role of Race in Storylines**

The storyline of a film is directly linked to its overall success. The plot directly and indirectly determines not only the casting and representation criteria but also the characteristics, beliefs, and mindset that will be exemplified by the main and supporting characters. Due to the level at which we consume visual productions, racial stereotypes and prejudices can be easily spread or countered. Though film industries have come a long way in terms of casting and general representation, content representation desperately needs improvement.

A growing concern within the black community is the proliferation of "black struggle" entertainment. This genre entails popular blockbusters such as "The Hate U Give" and "I am Not

"Your Negro", which highlight ordinary circumstances brought by systemic racism. While films like these are a necessity for paving the way towards spreading awareness, embracing perspective, and eliminating race-biased policies, this should not be all that black representation consists of. It is imperative that films display positive black experiences and roles that are equally, if not more, valued and produced. These productions would allow for a more diverse range of roles and audiences, embrace different characteristics, and reduce the popularity of negative stereotypes about race.

Popular 90s sitcoms such as "Moesha" and "Family Matters" did just this. These films followed the lives of upper-middle-class families living in big cities, Los Angeles and Chicago, shedding light on the ups and downs of healthy family life and coming-of-age dilemmas. Though not every character was likable or as noticed as the next, these shows provided a new outlook on holistic black experiences, starting with an emphasis on education, loving father figures, and connected family dynamics.

Reversing demeaning stereotypes and generational prejudice will not happen immediately. However, a great place to start is within the media.

## **6. Aggregate racial behavior**

### *6.1. What is aggregated racial behavior?*

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Author: Namrata Motwani

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Aggregated racial behavior is the collective action or group behavior of people within a particular racial or ethnic group rather than the actions of individual members in each racial or ethnic group. This practice ignores that a specific behavior demonstrated by people of a certain race or ethnicity results from many other factors, such as socioeconomic conditions, culture, and individual choices. The ignorance of diversity and individuality within those groups, along with general assumptions about any racial and ethnic group, perpetuates societal stereotypes.

Historical injustices have left lasting scars on racial and ethnic groups, limiting their access to opportunities and resources. A significant factor contributing to aggregated racial behavior is the historical legacy of discrimination, colonization, and slavery. Systemic racism is deeply ingrained in societal structures (Melaku, T. M., 2022; Banaji, M. R., Fiske, S. T., & Massey, D. S., 2021). It

perpetuates aggregated racial behavior through discriminatory policies and practices in areas like education, housing, criminal justice, and employment that impact marginalized groups disproportionately. Eventually, this affects implicit biases, often subconscious thoughts that can shape the behavior of individuals and institutions. These biases can influence decision-making processes, leading to hiring, lending, and criminal sentencing disparities. All of these factors lead to compounding impacts on marginalized individuals and communities that can manifest in various ways. These inequalities often result in generational poverty and hinder the ability of marginalized racial groups to amass wealth and improve their socioeconomic status.

### *6.2. The importance of disaggregation of data to solve the racial equity problem*

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Authors: Namrata Motwani

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Disaggregating racial or ethnic information can help solve problems masked by aggregate racial data. According to the 2010 U.S. Census Bureau statistics, 50% of Asian Americans had a bachelor's degree or higher by age 25, the highest proportion among racial categories (US Census Bureau, 2010). A completely different scenario emerges when the data is disaggregated to focus specifically on Southeast Asian Americans. There was a noticeable gap within the Southeast Asian Americans group, mainly between the Asian Indian, Taiwanese, and Chinese versus the Cambodian American, Laotian American, and Vietnamese American. The census reported only 14.5% of Cambodian Americans, 14.4% of Hmong Americans, and 12.1% of Laotian Americans.

Twenty-five had a bachelor's degree. The rates for Cambodian Americans, Hmong Americans, and Laotian Americans were lower than the 17.7% rate reported for African Americans, and the rate for Laotian Americans fell below the 13% rate reported for Latinos. These statistics abundantly make it clear that Southeast Asian Americans experience barriers to educational attainment at the same level as their African-American and Latino peers. This crucial information could easily have been overlooked with aggregate racial data. By utilizing the data, essential patterns can be revealed in the subgroups that can help reframe race and ethnicity equity issues and prompt targeted interventions in groups with limited resources. The government can allocate funds for educational attainment by reviewing and reforming public policies that impact marginalized communities. As the U.S. population grows more ethnically

and racially diverse, it becomes more important to disaggregate the data into subgroups to successfully implement programs to help the communities that need the most help. To conclude, the data on subsets of

Race and ethnicity groups can help distribute resources efficiently and achieve the full potential of people in an inclusive economy.

## **7. Lessons we learned**

### *7.1. Personal connection*

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Author: Aiden Bergey

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During the summer of 2023, I had the privilege of participating in a thought-provoking and eye-opening summer program titled "The Pseudo-Science of Race and Ethnicity: The Impact of Social Categorization in Perpetuating Systemic Racism." This program delved into the intricate and often misunderstood concepts surrounding race, ethnicity, and their far-reaching societal implications. Over the course of several weeks, I had the opportunity to explore the scientific, social, and political aspects of race, leading to a profound personal awakening.

The program commenced with an exploration of the scientific construction of race, unraveling the intricate web of human genetic diversity and its historical misconceptions. We delved into the history of scientific thought about human genetic diversity, which had once been misused to perpetuate discrimination and inequality. The lessons on social Darwinism and the eugenics movement were particularly enlightening, as they shed light on how these pseudoscientific ideas were used to justify oppressive practices.

These early sessions of the program shattered the notion that race was a biological construct. Learning that it was primarily a social construct challenged my preconceived notions and compelled me to reevaluate my understanding of racial identities.

The program seamlessly transitioned into a discussion about the social construction of race. We explored implicit bias and how humans categorize and stereotype based on race. This portion of the program was deeply introspective, forcing me to confront my own biases and prejudices. The lessons on implicit social cognition highlighted the subtle ways in which systemic racism is perpetuated through everyday interactions and institutions.

As I became more aware of my own biases and the biases present in society, I felt a growing sense of responsibility to work towards change, both within myself and in my community.

The concluding week of the program was dedicated to a comprehensive examination of social inequalities and the role of public policy in either perpetuating or mitigating systemic racism. We analyzed historical and contemporary policies that have disproportionately impacted marginalized communities, from housing and education to criminal justice.

The most impactful aspect of this portion of the program was our discussions on how individuals and communities could actively engage in combatting discrimination and prejudice. It was here that the theoretical knowledge gained in the earlier sessions transformed into practical strategies for change. The program encouraged us to become advocates for social justice in our own communities and to scrutinize policies that may perpetuate systemic racism.

My participation in this summer program was a transformative experience. It challenged my beliefs, expanded my understanding of race, and instilled in me a deep sense of responsibility to fight prejudice and discrimination. I left the program with a renewed commitment to promoting equity and justice in my own community.

Since the program's conclusion, I have actively engaged in local initiatives aimed at addressing racial disparities in education, healthcare, and criminal justice. I have also continued to educate myself on these critical issues, seeking out books, documentaries, and seminars to deepen my knowledge and understanding further.

In conclusion, participating in Module 1 was a profound and enlightening experience. It provided me with the tools and knowledge necessary to critically analyze the complex issues surrounding race and ethnicity, as well as the motivation to be an advocate for change. This program has had a lasting impact on my perspective and my commitment to working towards a more just and equitable society.

## *7.2. Spreading awareness*

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Authors: Jihoo Han

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Human beings throughout history have changed. We have been asking ourselves why controversial topics emerge and how people have viewed these questions. From understanding the different perspectives of race from people in different parts of the world to eugenic ideologies



and racially motivated societal changes, we have dissected and delved into why these occurred and what future generations must do to undertake the historical wrongs.

Throughout the several weeks of lectures, discussion, and group activities, the module deeply showed the transparent racial motives, especially toward African Americans. One of the movies we watched and discussed was *42: The Jackie Robinson Story*. Because of the movie, we gained profound insight into the daily lives of African Americans, a portrayal of systemic racial discrimination.

The United States of America, the mighty country of freedom and dreams come true, also partook in the racial institutes of injustice. Black men incarcerated in the U.S. prison system were growing more rapidly than ever. Black men incarcerated have experienced systemic injustice due to their race, receiving harsher sentences than their white “superior” race, who often received more lenient punishments. Systemic racism encompassing racial stereotyping has targeted and negatively harmed individuals within African-American communities. The racial stereotypes have motivated many Black individuals to unite with their brothers and sisters to partake in social protests. One of the most notable movements to better the lives of African Americans is the Black Lives Matter movement. The Black Lives Matter movement has illuminated the profound idea that every individual has the capability to model change.

Aside from systemic racial injustice, eugenics has been a harm-inducing ideology since the 1800s. Society has, at various points in history, adapted to change, whether through theories about evolution or radical ideas regarding racial superiority. An atrocious and chilling event many of us know is the Holocaust.

In the mid-1930s, the Nazi regime, driven by extremists, orchestrated experiments and genocide toward Jews, gypsies, and anyone else seen as “inferior to the Aryan Race.” The Nazis firmly believed they were the Aryan Race; they were sure that their racial heritage gave them racial superiority over others.

The dark chapters in history not only showed what ideology could lead to, but it has also shed light into invaluable insights into how we can prevent such horrors from recurring. History is to be learned not to repeat the tragedies but to grow from the victories. A practical approach is to improve our education system and teach younger generations about the detrimental impact of systemic racial injustice. We can also harness the power of social media and our personal resources to raise awareness about these issues. The goal is not to make comparisons or judgments based on people's backgrounds but rather to see everyone as equal and appreciate their uniqueness.

### **Conclusion: Race-Conscious Policy Education In an Increasingly Diverse US**

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The United States is yet to experience its pinnacle state of racial diversity—projections estimate that the proportion of Americans who are not white or black will continue to increase, leading to steady differences nationwide and dramatic changes in some regions. Presently, with a population of over 333 million, 59 percent of United States residents are white, 19 percent Latino, 13.6 black, and 6.3 percent Asian or Pacific Islander. By 2060, when the United State's population is likely to grow to over 404 million people, only 44.3 percent of its residents are predicted to be white; 27.5 percent will be Latino, 15 percent black, and 9.1 percent Asian or Pacific Islander (US Census, 2020). Nevertheless, despite past claims, an increasingly racially diverse United States does not have to mean an increasingly divided United States. On the contrary, as a growing body of academic research suggests, racial diversity can yield enhanced individual and collective quality of life for people across socioeconomic and racial lines, both in the short and long term (Son Holoien, 2013).

However, despite its plethora of benefits, to ignore the considerations an increasingly racially diverse United States will bring forth, especially in the policy sphere, is an approach destined for turmoil. While more than half of Americans voice their support for increased racial and ethnic heterogeneity, a sizable portion of the nation (47%) believe it will complicate policy on local, state, and federal levels, rendering it more difficult for governmental leaders to enact

sweeping social measures over a diverse population (Pew Research, 2019). However, despite these worries, the more significant dilemma is not how to create legislation in a diverse United States, for the effective training of policymakers will undoubtedly ease such an issue, but rather how to avoid the allure of "race-neutral policy." Such legislation deceptively hides under the guise of equality while, in reality, embarking on a color-blind ideology that inadvertently serves to exacerbate disparity (Apfelbaum, 2012). In a nation shrouded by a history of racist policy, where resulting socioeconomic discrepancies are inseparable from race, ethnic differences undoubtedly impact policy creation and thus must correspondingly be considered. As Economic Policy Institute Analyst Adewale Maye argues, "We must acknowledge and tackle the barriers posed by systemic racism with race-conscious policies" (Maye, 2022). Therefore, as racial diversity continues to touch almost every sphere of the United States, the road to a harmonious society that reaps the benefits of the aforementioned diversity lies not solely in the acceptance of diversity but also in the understanding and sensitivity necessary to consider it in the creation of equitable and effective legislation.

From this perspective, the next generation of civic leaders must not only be trained in the pre-accepted building blocks of what makes effective policy—adequate statistical analyses, constituent feedback, and economic mindfulness—but also the two factors effective policymakers in an increasingly diverse United States require: the history of race-based legislation, and how to apply its lesson to contemporary race-related challenges in an equitable fashion. In this context of an increasingly diverse United States, "The Pseudoscience of Race and Ethnicity" is both a necessary and innovative project—employing a creative combination of film, research, and historical case study to bring together a group of motivated young people interested in disentangling the construct of race and its increasingly pertinent policy implications.

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