

'Race' & Racism: How an Idea Was Given Destructive Power



'Race' is a **modern idea**, invented in northern Europe by people who had **little knowledge and understanding** of the peoples who they tried to classify.

The **language of race** gained hold in the mind of Europeans & North Americans. By the time **scientists tried to discredit** the idea of 'race' it had already become **popularized at the social level**.

This is why **despite 'race' being found as erroneous**, it **continues being used** to this day.



~Time	A few contributions to the creation of 'race' as a concept?	Key Contributors
12th C	The Crusades were colonial experiments in extraterritoriality, teaching Europe how to colonize using territorial occupation, political domination, economic extraction, ideological reproduction , and spread of colonial mentality .	The Crusades
13th C	Scientific, Medical & Theological Treaties argued that Jewish bodies differed from those of Christians, forced to differentiate themselves by wearing badges. In 1290s, resulted in expulsion, ghettoization , and attempts at extermination .	Christian Science
15th C	The Category of 'Race' was used to identify the historical origins of distinctions between groups (heredity & genealogy) influenced by the Bible.	The Spanish The Bible
16th C	Most knowledge of human variation arose from Christian Theology structured by the anthropology of the Bible. Prevalence of Monogenesis , the idea was that all species were the product of the creator , and variation was attributed to God's design, the climate, or nature.	The English & The French Monogenesis
18th C	Cuvier used 'race' as a synonym for variety and had a massive influence on the beginning of race as a concept in science. Cuvier coined the term 'Caucasian'. Bumblebach founded Craniology and believed diversity was a sign of degeneration . The Declaration of Independence aimed to create a new sense of national identity painting Anglo-Saxon institutions as a source of liberty , this had a major influence on racial thinking.	G.F. Cuvier J.F. Blumenbach The United States
19th C	Typology Theories used to account for human diversity and as "vehicles for political opinion". This originated white-supremacy . ★ Darwin* challenged the work of Typologists. His work showed 'race' was a useless concept that should be discarded, yet 'race' continued to be used at the social level. The combination of Craniology and Social Darwinism was manipulated to support a ' foundational inequality of the races '. Multiple Doctrines of the century perpetuated immense human misery . Galton played a key role in Eugenics and argued about his laws of ancestral heredity and variation .	Typology <i>Against Darwin's opposition*</i> Doctrines & Practices F. Galton R. Knox A. de Gobineau

The Concept of 'Race' is...

- a **made-up** concept and **historically weaponized**.
- **empty** and **elastic**, constantly changed throughout history as a **social marker**.
- NOT about the body, but a **social idea about the body**.

Intersectionality is...

- the simultaneous **overlap of categories**, context is important as **categories are not stable**.

Feminism + Antiracism + Decolonization Efforts...



Are Intersectional, and aim to **oppose** and envision a future in which all persons marginalized by the state can **live equally** and **without fear**.

A movement that lacked Intersectionality: White Feminism...



- focusses **only on the experiences of white women** and fails to acknowledge and include the struggles of non-white women (i.e., essentialist).
- assumes all men are **equivalent oppressors**, and that **all women are dependent** on male counterparts.
- **ignores the systemic issues** of slavery, colonialism, and imperialism.



Examples of Resistant Knowledge Projects...



Liberation Theory

The analysis of **colonialism** and how it can be **resisted through decolonization** of struggles (especially in Africa and Latin America).

Postcolonial Theory



The **deconstructing of colonial literature** as an important step for dismantling the **knowledge base of formal colonialism**. Analyzing how the **imposition of Western knowledge** (through text and storytelling) were **essential to colonialism**, not only through military action.

Decolonization

Consists of **critiquing and dismantling** all aspects of **colonial relationships** (economic, political, cultural) to enable essential **strategies for relieving human suffering**, enabling empowerment, and imagining the **replacement of formal colonialism**.

(Collins, 2019)

Harmful Ideologies that Continue in Society Today...



Essentialism is the assumption that all individuals belonging to a particular group share the same experiences

Racialization is the social process of imposing meaning onto **bodies**.

Epistemic Oppression is the invalidation of **other forms of knowledge** by the academy.

Epistemic Oppression at Play...



The seduction of academic recognition can silence our criticisms so that we can secure our place at the table. This results in others who are not sat at the table being left behind.

(Brah 1992; Collins, 2019)



Incorporating Intersectionality into our Future ...

To achieve social reform we need **mobilized collective action**, and to use **ordinary language**.

We are all **equally different** and must find **strategies to challenge all oppressions** to understand how these oppressions are interconnected and play a role in **language and practices** around the world used today.

Change must emerge from human agency, **collective action** and **assigning accountability** to groups for the **impact of their propagated ideas**. Doing nothing is **equally complicit** as those who propagated the ideas in the first place.

(Banton, 2015; Brah 1992; Collins, 2019)

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