

Race in America: How We Got Here and How We Move Forward

"Our ability to reach unity in diversity will be the beauty and the test of our civilization."

--Mahatma Gandhi

Ah, **racism**, that foggy ugly feeling that everyone feels but hardly anyone wants to admit to or talk about. Hence while I have your attention for at least a little while, let's talk about it. And it all begins with accessing the retrograde memory of history.

"Historical scholarship has become Balkanized into dozens of subfields...many of them virtually inaccessible to lay readers..." I so very much concur with this assertion from James M. McPherson of the New York Times book review that I resolved to use it as the starting point of my attempt at writing about history; which I will attempt to make "accessible" to "lay readers" like myself. So bear with me...we'll navigate this often complex and oversaturated field together.

But before I even begin to address the history of humanity during and post enslavement of Africans, I MUST mention the history of African countries pre-colonial slavery as thriving empires that produced some of the wealthiest Africans in history, particularly the wealthiest of them all, Musa I of Mali or Mansa Musa during the middle ages (circa. 1280 – c. 1337), the tenth emperor of the Mali Empire—who was said to be worth an estimated 400 billion dollars—and of whom prominent Harvard University academician Henry Louis Gates said on the ABC TV show The View, made American computer mogul and philanthropist Bill Gates look like he's on welfare with an estimated net worth of \$103.7 billion as of August 2019.

Several other pre-colonial states and societies in Africa include the Ajuran Empire, D'mt, Adal Sultanate, Alodia, Warsangali Sultanate, Kingdom of Nri, Nok culture, Mali Empire, Songhai Empire, Benin Empire, Oyo Empire, Ashanti Empire, Ghana Empire, Mossi Kingdoms, Mutapa Empire, Kingdom of Mapungubwe, Kingdom of Sine, Kingdom of Sennar, Kingdom of Saloum, Kingdom of Baol, Kingdom of Cayor, Kingdom of Zimbabwe, Kingdom of Kongo, Empire of Kaabu, Kingdom of Ile Ife, Ancient Carthage, Numidia, Mauretania, and the Aksumite Empire. At its highest point, and preceding European colonialism, it is projected that Africa safeguarded up to 10,000 diverse states and self-governing clusters with unique languages and customs. But why just take my word for it, for more information, visit:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Africa#cite_note-
<http://newswatch.nationalgeographic.com/2013/10/31/getting-to-know-africa-50-facts/-2>

Now that I have established at least a modicum of Africa's history pre-colonial slavery, let us now delve into its peoples' preeminent entombment brought on by the transatlantic slave trade mostly during the 17th and 18th centuries by European powers competing with one another for overseas Empires.

It was 400 years ago on August 23, 1619 that the austere **slave** ship aptly called *White Lion* landed at Point *Comfort* (yes, I'm aware of the irony), Hampton, Virginia. On that ship were the very first registered inception of subdued and enslaved Africans during colonial era America. Presently, this site is now known as Fort Monroe National Monument, and the year 2019 marks its 400th centennial. It is at this very site that this historic event will be venerated as a restorative day of reckoning and understanding. But, before we can address the inexorable consequences of slavery and racism (e.g. discriminatory practice such as Jim Crow segregation, economic inequality, gerrymandering or voting district manipulation to favor one party or class, redlining or denials of loans, insurance or other services to certain racialized groups in targeted areas. —which, like it or not, has become part of America's integrated identity—we must first regress back to re-examine how we got to where we are in twenty-first century, 400 hundred years later. “You can't talk about slavery as a relic of the past” said Price Thomas, Director of Marketing and Communications at the Montpelier Foundation in Charlottesville, Virginia, in a PBS News interview. Which I am in utter concurrence with, for slavery is arguably singlehandedly responsible for today's racialized classifications of “white”, “brown”, “yellow” and “black”—which I will elaborate on further later—and, as a perpetual force, has systematically affected and permeated all our lives often for the best, if you're labeled white and most likely for the worst, if you're labeled as anything other than white.

Although some historians has traced the inception of slavery in the south as far back as 1526. In a Washington Post article on September 7, 2019 titled “Before 1619, there was 1526: The mystery of the first enslaved Africans in what became the United States”, Gillian Brockell wrote of the very first known instance of slavery in North America. She went on to say, “Spanish explorers brought 100 slaves to a doomed settlement in South Carolina or Georgia. Within weeks, the subjugated revolted, then vanished.” With the advent of our current political climate of sectionalism in Trump era America, the jarring matter of slavery and its inherent odious connection to racism based on skin color has never been more important in the post new millennium.

Nonetheless, before we begin, we must define what it means to be an American. In his book, *American Character: A History of the Epic Struggle Between Individual Liberty and the Common Good*, Colin Woodard defines what it means to be an American. He states that in America lies a balance of forces of individuality and collectivism, despite our balkanized culture and geography. More specifically, he says that in America, “We are in aggregate one of the most individualistic...cultures on [the planet]...we put great faith in human capacity, innovation and virtue and remain vigilant against...an overreaching government.” Colonial America was mostly a self-governing agrarian wilderness society who lived by the credo of “rugged individualism” which has, throughout history, formed the basis of American thought. Back then, having landed on a mostly uncultivated land and sparsely populated areas—partly due to European diseases that reduced the natives—people fended for themselves. However, the onslaught of slavery brought another form of “thought” connecting our human potential to class and racial boundaries; which, essentially, are just lies we are taught in order to justify and preserve our assigned and inherited positions in the hierarchical echelons of society, although precarious as they maybe. From this phenomenon, evolves the top one percent and then the rest of humanity. How is this acceptable in a country birthed in the doctrines of equality? Hence “individualistic” thinking eventually led to “collectivist” ideologies of inferior versus superior

groups of races, classes and growing self-aggrandizing sentiments that necessitated instituting boundaries based on skin color.

Howard Zinn, in his seminal and indispensable book: *A People's History of the United States*, starts off chapter two on slavery and racism with the subtitle: “**Drawing the Color Line.**” In it, he juxtaposes slavery and racism as coexisting evils in colonial era America, stemming from European colonization and calculated malfeasance all in the name of profit proliferation for a budding capitalist economy and confounding racial hatred of anybody not *prima facie* “white.” He begins his riveting narration by starting off—rightfully—with a quotation from a *black* American writer named J. Saunders Redding, who renders an eerie and ominous description of the advent of the first known “slave ship” to North America in 1619, which must be quoted fully to manifest its foreboding effect:

Sails furlled, flag drooping at her rounded stern, she rode the tide in from the sea. She was a strange ship, indeed, by all accounts, a frightening ship, a ship of mystery. Whether she was trader, privateer, or man-of-war no one knows. Through her bulwarks black-mouthed cannon yawned. The flag she flew was Dutch; her crew a motley. Her port of call, an English settlement, Jamestown, in the colony of Virginia. She came, she traded, and shortly afterwards was gone. Probably no ship in modern history had carried a more portentous freight. Her cargo? Twenty slaves.”

In relation to the racist ideations the English settlers utilized to partly justify the enslavement of the African people, Zinn unambiguously spotlights the conception that there is nowhere else in the world where “...racism has been more important, for so long a time, as the United States.” And posits the obvious question: Will blacks and whites ever rid themselves of mutual hostility and ultimately live together in mutual peace and harmony?”

Among the justifications Europeans used to justify their participation in the slave trade was that Africans had been enslaving each other hence the axiom “What’s good for the goose, is good for the gander.” Which naturally leads to the other question, “If the Africans all decided to jump off the Proverbial Bridge, would the Europeans follow suit? But in any case, Zinn elaborates when he applied a probable explanation from the research of Basil Davidson in his book, *The African Slave Trade* where Davidson contrasted African slaves vs. English slaves when he elucidated that “the ‘slaves’ of Africa were more like the serfs [or the working class] of Europe. It was a harsh servitude, but they had rights which slaves brought to America did *not* have, and they were ‘altogether different from the human cattle of the slave ships and the American plantations.’ ” Zinn continued with a substantive example from Davidson by describing a scenario in the Ashanti Kingdom of West Africa for example, that “a slave might marry; own property; himself own a slave; swear an oath; be a competent witness and ultimately become heir to his master...” and further more... “An Ashanti slave, nine out of ten, possibly become an adopted member of the family, and in time his descendants so merged and intermarried with the owner’s kinsmen that only a few would know their origin.” To further substantiate this narrative, Zinn offers the following quotation from slave trader turned antislavery pioneer John

Newton who spoke of the stark differences between African and European slavery as a testament to what he witnessed in what is now known as Sierra Leone:

The state of slavery, among these wild barbarous people, as we esteem them, is much milder than in our colonies. For as, on the one hand, they have no land in high cultivation, like our West India plantations, and therefore no call for that excessive, unintermitted labor, which exhausts our slaves... [and] no man is permitted to draw blood, even from a slave [unlike in the colonies where slave beatings were quite common.]”

In addition to describing the markedly apparent dissimilarities between the “mild” conditions of the African slaves and the demoralizing harsh conditions of the slaves on the English colonies in North America, he acknowledges that he is *not* endorsing African slavery, however he was sure to point out *how* it differed vastly from the involuntary servitude in the American colonies; “which” he said, “was lifelong, morally crippling, and destructive of family ties without hope of any future.” He further elaborates on this distinguishable difference stating that, “African slavery lacked two elements that made American slavery the most cruel form of slavery in history: [a] the frenzy for limitless profit that comes from capitalist agriculture; [b] the reduction of the slave to less than human status by the use of racial hatred...where white was master, black was slave... [and] with it developed that special racial feeling—whether hatred, or contempt, or pity or patronization—that accompanied the inferior position of blacks in America for the next [400] years.” He concluded.

The New York Times Magazine, on the 400th anniversary of the arrival of the first slave ship in North America, sat around the news room and brainstormed a brilliant idea to devote an *entire* issue—to be written mostly by people of color—of the celebrated (yet at times controversial especially with issues relating to black people), magazine to understanding the sociopolitical and economic impact of slavery in America’s past whose influence can still be felt in the present. The article is called “The 1619 Project”, which studies both the subtle and observable influences and bequests of slavery in modern day America. Much like Zinn’s introduction to slavery in *A People’s History*... it begins with a jarring verbatim quotation:

Sometime in 1619, a Portuguese slave ship, the Sao Joao Bautista, traveled across the Atlantic Ocean with a hull filled with human cargo. Captive Africans from Angola, in South Western Africa....”

Hence begins the “1619 Project”, an ambitious, revealing, acerbic, and didactic article by New York Times Magazine writer Mary Elliot; in which she recounts the harrowing story of race in the Americas but more specifically in North America. According to Elliot, as the slave ship traversed to Mexico, a demi number of its “cargo” had died before the ship was usurped by the English pirate vessels. The rest was boated off to Point Comfort, a port contiguous to

Jamestown, then the capitol of the British settlement of Virginia. A settler by the name of John Rolfe penned a letter to the Virginia Company's Sir Edwin Sandys claiming that in August 1619, a "Dutch-man-of war" (The Man-O-War is a British expression for a powerful naval warship that was intended for battle and not for mercantile purposes) landed on the settlement and "Brought not anything less than 20 negroes,.. Which the governor and cape merchant bought for victuals." The antiquated word "victuals" meaning a stock or food supplies.

"The African were most likely put to work in the tobacco fields that had recently been established in the area..." Elliot surmised. She goes on to describe a nascent system whereby both African and Europeans were accustomed to trading merchandise and persons through the Mediterranean for hundreds of years. But she emphasized the notion that bondage was not then determined by race. She described the trans-Atlantic slave trade, a system that was inceptioned in the 15th century, inaugurated an entity of involuntary servitude that was made profitable, ethicized and treated like one would treat an heirloom: passed on from one generation to the next.

She echoes Howard Zinn's sentiment of "...the reduction of the slave to less than human status" when she *too* pontificates that the "enslaved were not seen as people but as commodities to be bought, sold and exploited." Human beings as means to an end amidst that demoralizing period of human subjugation through white majority colonial suppression.

The following is a direct statement quoted verbatim from the Times regarding the 1619 Project which helps illuminates the project's most fundamental objective:

By The New York Times
Aug. 13, 2019

The Fourth of July in 1776 is regarded by most Americans as the country's birthday. But what if we were to tell you that the country's true birth date, the moment that its defining contradictions first came into the world, was in late August 1619?

That was when a ship arrived at Point Comfort in the British colony of Virginia, bearing a cargo of 20 to 30 enslaved Africans. Their arrival inaugurated a barbaric system of chattel slavery that would last for the next 250 years and form the basis for almost every aspect of American life. The 1619 Project is a major initiative from The New York Times memorializing that event on its 400th anniversary. The goal of the project is to deepen understanding of American history (and the American present) by proposing a new point of origin for our national story. In the days and weeks to come, we will publish essays demonstrating that nearly everything that has made America exceptional grew out of slavery.

[For access to the "essays" as well as link to live stream presentations published as "The 1619 Project" issue of the New York Times Magazine, please see the bibliography]

Even as the August 18th, 2019 issue of the New York Times's "The 1619 Project" became an international sensation in the media, sold out on newsstands (twice), snatched by curious readers who hitherto had not realized the "impact of slavery in America and more specifically on African Americans", sociopolitical, religious and racial divisions rages on and are currently rancid and rampant in Trump era America and presumably with no end in sight. Although America was founded on the racist principals of the destruction and displacement of indigenous Native Americans and the enslavement and oppression of African Americans, it appears that most have self-servingly forgotten or consciously or subconsciously ignored the gritty teeth of history in this country. Thankfully, academic feats like The 1619 Project and others like it to come, will be there to remind them.

Ray Raphael, in his absorbing book: *Founding Myths: Stories That Hide Our Patriotic Past* which aims to expose the often audaciously extolled falsities and deliberately hidden truths of American History. He presented an in depth analysis of the movie "The Patriot" starring Mel Gibson. But as often happens with Hollywood's attempts at historical cinema, the truth gets lost in special effects.

This notion of constructing American history centered on fallacies is a typical one, and it can materialize in books as well as films, which tend to portray mythical narratives, romanticizing America's perplexing and byzantine past as happy slaves and benevolent masters living together in perfect harmony which, essentially, is a blatant incongruity.

If the past informs the present, then the present has to inform the future, and that's where the need for truth, not falsities comes in. When it comes to our historical past, if everyone share a general knowledge of it, than no one has to repeat it. But if you don't *want* to see it repeated, then *protest* it when you see it happening around you, *to* you, to your loved ones and within your communities.

Even pop icon Beyoncé Knowles chimed into the racial dialogue when she affirmed the perception that "Racism is so American that when we protest racism, some assume we're protesting America." This was relatively evident in what President Donald Trump tweeted about "the squad": the four U.S. democratic state representatives who happen to be women of color and who vehemently protest the Trump administration's often racist policies and rhetoric, of them he said, "They hate America!" and since that is so then, "why don't they go back to the crime infested countries they came from..." All because they are exercising their freedom of speech, which was ironically written by those whom I surmise "*loved* America" and for those "*who loves* America also." Freedom to express dissatisfaction with government is among the ideologies written in the Bill of Rights that make us all unambiguously love America so much...am I right? But Trump, as usual, changes the narrative to create division rather than understanding. And when he is asked plainly, "Are you a racist?" His steadfast answer is usually, "I am the least racist person anywhere in the world" which can be seen on a video posted in The Guardian, see the bibliography for the link to the video.

In Trump becoming so defensive about anything having to do with race and racism is clearly categorized and thoroughly explained in the book: *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White*

People to Talk About Racism by antiracist educator Robin DiAngelo and with a forward by Michael Eric Dyson.

DiAngelo describes “white fragility” not necessarily as a personal weakness but as a means of deflecting having any type of dialogue on race in order to maintain the status quo of a country where the white majority benefit vastly from the plague of systemic racism. It’s the inefficacious rejoinders white people have when their ill-conceived racial ideologies and stereotypes are confronted and the way in which those types of reactions uphold racial inequity. Deny, deny, deny to put it more bluntly. She elaborated that “white fragility” is not limited to “bad people”. It alludes to the self-protective actions that some white people take when faced with a racially charged encounter; white fragility is categorized by emotions such as anger, fear, and guilt, and by conducts comprising argumentation and silence. These behaviors, in turn, function to restore white tribal equipoise and inhibit any significant racially nonsectarian dialogue.

“The loveliest trick of the devil is to persuade you that it doesn’t exist.” As said by the prominent French literary figure Charles Baudelaire in his 1864 tale, “Le Joueur Généreux” (“The Generous Gambler”) in which the main character meets and converses with a manifestation of the Devil. In this instance “racism” is the “manifestation of the devil” and its demonstrated existence needs to be addressed and not concealed but if it can “convince” you and I that it does not exist, than it can continue to insidiously dominate and wreak havoc on our reality in the most surprising ways and tethered with the most devastating affects like we’re seeing now in Trump era America—with professed racial cleansings by avowed white supremacists—in the form of rampant mass shootings causing people to run pell-mell in every direction—killing races all across the hateful spectrum, white, black, yellow and brown alike.

An edition of the Boston Metro dated August 26, 2019, the article titled “Joe Walsh becomes second Republican to Challenge Trump in 2020 GOP Primary”, describes Walsh as a “conservative former U.S. congressman turned talk show host...who criticized Trump... [and] has strong support among Republicans, as a bully...unfit for office.” But in his anticipation of “criticism” for “his past affiliation with the Tea Party, a confrontational populist splinter group of the Republican Party... Walsh recalls his past criticisms of President Obama that went beyond policy variances, “There were plenty of times I went beyond the policy...differences...and got personal...and hateful.” Seeking to make amends to undoubtedly help his own bid for the presidency and to show unlike Trump he can admit when he’s wrong, he brazenly declared, “I helped create Trump. There’s no doubt about that: the personal ugly politics. I regret that. And I’m sorry for that. And now we’ve got a guy in the white house... [and] that’s all he does.”

“Throughout history, it has been the inaction of those who could have acted; the indifference of those who should have known better; the silence of the voice of justice when it mattered most; that has made it possible for evil to triumph.” Declared Haile Selassie, Ethiopian regent from 1916 to 1930 and emperor from 1930 to 1974. He is an essential figure in contemporary Ethiopian history. For evil to triumph, the good must be silenced. If you ignore your history, you become akin to a tree without roots. The lessons of history’s past can better inform and prepare us to make a more “just” history in the present and for our posterity.

Those of us who are relatively in parlance with American history are somewhat cognizant of these types of racial tensions that lead to racial violence throughout America's antiquity. First with the usurpation of African slaves from their homeland and brought to the America's bound in chains, then in Nat Turner's slave revolt inducing bloodshed on all sides, then in the civil war that would end slavery in the United States, the retaliatory formations and actions of white nationalist groups like the Ku Klux Klan, who terrorized and murdered innumerable numbers of African Americans, then in the civil rights movement spearheaded most prominently by Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King among others where the world got to see on television black nonviolent protesters firehosed, beaten with clubs and attacked by vicious dogs and even sometimes killed, now in the 21st century, between the election of President Barack Obama and the administration of Donald Trump, we're seeing the protests reappearing as the Black Lives Matter movement, which is once again being meant with rancor and vehement violence. In the wise words of literary iconoclast Maya Angelou, "History, despite its wrenching pain, cannot be unlived, but if faced with courage, need not be lived again."

Speaking to my own experience specifically in the public school system, what *I* was taught of black history in America did not venture too far beyond "Oh, yeah, we had slaves" and "Oh, yeah, we also had Martin Luther King...any questions?" And of course, we all had one burning question: "Is that going to be on the test?!" As high schoolers, our interest in history then often never went beyond *are we going to be tested on this?* Another notion that always seems to irk me is the idea of the sectionalism of black history—that black history is somehow separate from the rest of the country as opposed to being *part* of the country. However, the truth of the matter is if it happened in America then it is *American* history; whether or not it happened to a black American or a white American. Just as America became sectionalized during the civil war as southerners and northerners, history is seemingly sectionalized as black history and white history.

Back in high school, I remember having a white history teacher—that is a white man who taught history but can also be re-defined as a *white* man who taught "white" history—named Mr. Wynn and all he did was blow a lot of wind as he sleepwalked through his lectures and at times even blatantly and audaciously yawning! He did not seem "excited" or "passionate" about his subject and to his credit, he did not convey the message that he wanted *us* to be "excited" or "passionate" about it either. It wasn't until I had a *black* history teacher—that is a black woman who mostly taught black history—that I began to feel any pangs of interest and excitement for the subject matter. Her name was Mrs. Robinson, (and yes I am aware of the Paul Simon song of the same name...which I coincidentally used to listen to quite often on my headphones) and she was a no nonsense teacher who was determined to have us "learn" something. The only magnanimous and indelible memory I have of her was when she gave the class a research paper assignment on two protuberant figures in black history: Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Dubois. Finally, I thought, someone other than Martin Luther King, who hitherto was my only point of reference when it came to black history. After I wrote the paper, I concluded that these post slavery civil rights iconoclasts has two very distinctive characteristics: on the one hand you have Booker T. who wanted blacks to stay in their place, cooperate with white political rule as long as they could have access to technical training in order to secure employment. Dubois on the other hand, hailed hell with that! He wanted FULL equality for black people **period!** He held

America's feet to the fire by flailing in its face its constitutional decree that all man are created equal and therefore all are entitled to the same baseline decree of equality. It was this momentous moment in my entire four years of high school that I became "excited" and "passionate" about history. I became more interested in college, but the experience was lack luster due to the usual surplus of college "distractions" and an overabundance of course choices. However, after, college, I started writing for local newspapers and literary magazines, just as I had done in high school and it was through writing about the history of Haiti, black history month and the history of the American civil war that I inexorably learned far more than I ever did before.

Over the last decade or so leading up to our current inimical political climate, I have found myself wondering about the evolution of race and racism and consequently I did some curious reconnoitering. I discovered that the concept of race and the standardization of racism was preeminently introduced by a French aristocrat by the name of Joseph Arthur De Gobineau in the mid-19th century in his 1400-page (someone had a lot of time on his hands) book entitled *An Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races* in 1848 in which he utilized the now defunct pseudo-scientific theories of *race biology* otherwise known as "scientific" racist theory: which propagated the belief that experiential proof exists to reify or justify racism, racial inferiority or racial superiority. He also developed the concept of the Aryan Master Race, a farfetched concept that bestowed power and privilege to the Caucasians but predominantly among Germans and those from northern and north western Europe from putative or supposed Nordic or Aryan races which were mostly found in Scandinavia, Northwestern Europe and countries neighboring the Baltic Sea, for instance the Germans and Finnic peoples, who resided in the independent states of Finland and Estonia.

The precept of the sovereignty of the "Nordic race" and the Northwestern European nations that were concomitant with this hypothetical race predisposed the United States' Immigration Act of 1924 (which efficiently barred or harshly restricted the immigration of Italians, Jews, and other Southern and Eastern Europeans) and the later Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 which included restrictive measures such as increased review of prospective immigrants, increased deportations, and more rigorous naturalization measures and it was also present in other countries outside Northwestern Europe such as Australia, Canada, and South Africa. By the 1930s, the Nazis determined that the Nordic race was the most superior branch of the "Aryan race" and constituted a master race. Gobineau's writings were quickly extolled by white supremacist, pro-slavery Americans like Josiah C. Nott and Henry Hotze, who interpreted his book into English but omitted nearly 1,000 pages of the original book, particularly those parts that negatively described Americans as a racially mixed people. Rousing a social movement in Germany named Gobinism.

But why do we refer to "white" people as Caucasians? Well, according to Wikipedia, the term was popularized by the German scientist, naturalist and anthropologist Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, who was among the premiere pioneers to reconnoiter humans as a facet of natural history. In 1795, he separated the human races into five categories listed verbatim from the site:

- The Caucasian or white race. European, Middle Eastern, and North African origins.
- The Mongolian or yellow race, including all East Asians and some Central Asians.
- The Malayan or brown race, including Southeast Asian and Pacific Islanders.

- The Ethiopian or black race, including sub-Saharan Africans.
- The American or red race, including American Indians.

For more information, visit: https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johann_Friedrich_Blumenbach

Caucasians literally refers to people native to “The Caucasus /'kɔ:kəsəs/ or Caucasia /kɔ:'keɪzə/...an area sandwiched between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea and once primarily recognized domiciles for the people of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Russia. It is home to the Caucasus Mountains, comprising the Greater Caucasus mountain range, which has archeologically been measured as a natural barrier between Eastern Europe and Western Asia.

For more information, visit: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caucasus>

In Russian, the word “Caucasian” is a collective term referring to anyone descended from the native ethnic groups of the Caucasus. In Russian slang, people of the Caucasus are (ironically) called “black” despite their fair skin, this name calling comes from their relatively darker features.

Ironically Armenians, who are considered Caucasian because they originate from the Caucasus, were denied the status of being considered "white" when they came to America. They had to petition for "white privilege." During 18th and 19th century America, the status of "whiteness" had to do with more than just your skin color, it also encompassed your social economic status, things like whether or not you were a property (possessing a slave for example) or business owner (trader for example) could make or break your entitlement to "white privilege"; even if you were visibly "white" by appearances alone.

However, the ideology of the white race as a superior race and the black race an inferior one is non sequitur to the genetic scientific evidence that has traced the very first known civilization in the deserts of Sub-Saharan Africa 50,000 years ago. Subsequently, there was a migration to Asia due to a severe drought and then the return of some back to Africa, which partly explains why some modern day Africans bear Asian facial features and characteristics. The 2003 PBS miniseries “*Journey of Man*” extrapolates further on this significant but mostly largely overlooked part of our history. The ideology of white supremacy is bequeathed the mistaken notion that people of African descent are somehow inferior to every other race on the planet. This was largely based on polygenesis and eugenics, among other archaic pseudoscientific racist theories of yesteryear.

According to Lobban C. Fluehr, **polygenesis** is “a theory of human origins which posits the view that the human races are of different origins (polygenesis). This view is opposite to the idea of monogenism, which posits a single origin of humanity. Modern scientific views no longer favor the polygenic model, [which has been replaced] with the monogenic "Out of Africa" theory and its variants being the most widely accepted models for human origins....”

End of Sample

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