



Race: A History Beyond Black and White by Marc Aronson
(Reviewed by Dotty Burstein)

Having participated in the recent series, "Race and Place," based on the PBS documentary, *Race, the Power of an Illusion*, I found I was prepared for much of the history the author writes about in his new book.

Marc Aronson, award-winning author of several young adult histories, explores powerful questions about race in this history of racial prejudice in Western culture. Why have people been enslaved, murdered, and denied rights because of the color of their skin or a particular facial feature? Why are people so prone to make judgments about races not their own?

Aronson's readers learn that slavery was not linked to race throughout most of human history. In the West, for example, the notion of race did not exist until the 1600s. In that century, Europeans began exploring the entire planet; they were

looking for opportunities to trade, spread Christianity, and conquer new territory. In reports home, these explorers noted the diversity among the human beings they encountered. By the 18th century, with the Enlightenment in full swing, scholars began trying to make sense of a huge body of information about the diversity of human beings.

To Enlightenment thinkers, ironically, one explanation for the diversity was that human beings were not all, in fact, fully human. Aronson notes what some Enlightenment thinkers believed: "Dark-skinned men and women might resemble whites, but they were actually created at a different time, with different capacities, for other reasons."

In America, there was a problem of classifying people as either black or white. American Indians, already here, were neither! In order to conquer the land for

themselves, it became 'politically expedient' for government officials to characterize these Native Americans as inferior, without knowledge of how to live among civilized people. Because of these ascribed characteristics, the officials could somehow justify driving Native Americans off their own land.

There followed other, devastating consequences of this inequality based on skin color. In the American South, the slavery of Africans precipitated a war of immense loss and unresolved emotional conflict that lasts to this day. However, an understanding of the history of racism as presented by Aronson and seen in *Race, the Power of an Illusion* helps in addressing racism in constructive, non-violent ways. Clearly, this will take work on many levels. Understanding what those of us who are white have been taught is the first step.

The Journey

THE WINCHESTER MULTICULTURAL NETWORK NEWSLETTER

***"Justice will only be achieved
when those who do not suffer injustice feel the same outrage as those who do."***

Plato



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NETWORK

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Race and Place Series in Winchester

For possibly the first time in Winchester's history, a group of Town officials, including several selectmen, the town manager, the police chief, clergy, the middle school principal, members of the Housing Authority and other town boards, representatives from the banking community, and members of various organizations and faith communities came together for four Sunday afternoons in March and April to view the PBS film series, *Race: The Power of an Illusion* and grapple with issues of race in our community. Sponsored by the Winchester Multicultural Network, the Winchester League of Women Voters, and the Winchester Public Library, the series was suggested by the Fair Housing Center of Greater Boston and brought a historical perspective to our thinking about the biology of human variation, immigration, and the development of prejudice and stereotyping around race.

The working group of approximately 30 people explored various ways to bring forward learning from both the documentary and the discussions that followed each segment. At the last session, members of the group suggested a list of issues and concerns they wanted to focus on. They then brainstormed ideas for strategies and forums that would bring issues of race and class to the public forefront. In this way, it is possible to create a community whose diversity is appreciated and valued.

During the last session on April 13th, the entire group voted to continue discussions about how to implement its goals by holding another meeting in May. The sponsoring organizations, working with the business community and town and school officials, will continue efforts to create a safe and welcoming community. In our next issue of *The Journey*, we shall provide an update and an invitation for readers and supporters to join in our efforts.

Thanks to the John and Mary Murphy Foundation for support for this series.

ENKA PARADE May 17

Join with us from 9:00-10:00 a.m. for our annual participation in the EnKa parade. Look for the Multicultural Network banner and enjoy a walk around town with others who think multiculturalism is important. This is one wonderful way to involve your children and volunteer for the Network if you are too busy to come to meetings or programs!

TOWN DAY June 7

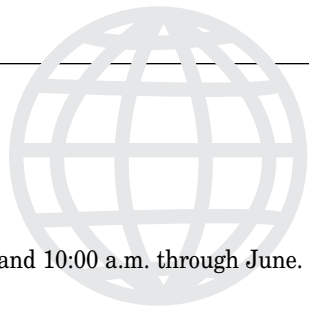
Stop by the Multicultural Network's table on Town Day, put a pin on the map to show where you or your ancestors originated, and chat with one of our volunteers. We'll have our handsome coffee mugs for sale at \$5 each. If you have friends or neighbors who don't know about the Network, encourage them to stop by.

Looking Ahead

International Connections

DROP-IN COFFEE Thursday mornings

Stop in at Café Dolce, 831 Main St., for coffee and conversation any time between 8:30 and 10:00 a.m. through June. Our gatherings will resume again in September.



Third Culture Kids by Tina Quick

This past January the Winchester Multicultural Network hosted an evening program at the Winchester Public Library where some Boston area professionals, university students, and Winchester residents had a close look at what it means to be a Third Culture Kid (TCK), or global nomad. For TCKs, the presentation was a reflection of the childhoods they had lived out on far-away continents. Parents acquired a better understanding of the complicated lives of their internationally mobile children. Others received an insight into the lives of their clients, neighbors, colleagues, or friends. They learned that TCKs belong to a tribe of their own, have a unique set of skills resulting from their highly mobile and cross-cultural upbringing, and face challenges their mono-cultural peers could not begin to understand.

Tina Quick, Winchester resident and founder of International Family Transitions, a consultancy focused on meeting the needs of internationally mobile families, spoke from her own experience as a “military brat” who moved a total of 18 times, nine of them before her 10th birthday. Quick herself has raised three TCK daughters across four continents and cultures. She noted that the number of international families in Winchester is rising all the time and wondered how we can help them to thrive here in our little New England town.

What makes TCKs so special, so different from their mono-cultural peers? Dave Pollock and Ruth Van Reken, authors of *Third Culture Kids: The Experience of Growing Up Among Worlds*, describes a Third Culture Kid as a person who has spent a significant part of his or her developmental years outside the parents’ culture. The TCK builds relationships to all of the cultures, while not having full ownership in any. Although elements from each culture are assimilated into the TCK’s life experience, the sense of belonging is in relationship to others of similar background.

The authors pose two realities that shape a TCK’s life: (1) being raised in a genuinely cross-cultural setting and (2) being raised in a highly mobile setting. Even if children are born and remain in a country that is outside their parents’ passport country, either they or the people around them are continually coming and going. Saying good-bye to friends for the summer to visit Grandma and Grandpa back “home” and then saying farewell to grandparents to return to overseas life translates into high mobility.

Pollock and Van Reken define the first culture as the passport culture, the second culture as all the places one has ever lived, and the third culture as the community of people who have done the same thing. Put five TCKs in a room with 200 other people and they will manage to find each other! This shared experience creates extraordinary bonds.

The authors describe some of the challenges that come from living an international lifestyle. One of the most important developmental tasks that help us form our sense of identity and belonging is to learn the basic cultural rules of our society as children and use them as the basis by which we live and act as adults. When they or others that are special to them are constantly coming and going, how can these basic human needs be met? This issue is at the heart of two of the greatest challenges TCKs face.

TCKs struggle with “Who am I?” Unlike adults who move to foreign cultures, TCKs don’t understand that they are German, Indian, Chinese or British who just happen to be living in this particular place. They haven’t formed their core relationships and the social behaviors that identify them. Unlike other highly mobile children who never leave their country, they have to relearn the basic cultural rules each time they open their suitcases. This creates a sense of rootlessness that can lead to restlessness. Children who are constantly relocating can develop a

migratory instinct that controls their lives. In adult TCKs, this instinct sometimes results in moving from job to job or, sometimes from relationship to relationship in search of the ideal job or relationship that will finally allow them to settle down.

High mobility means dealing with loss. Losing people, places, pets, and possessions that are dear to us brings grief. Children who must say good-bye continually may not have time to deal with the grief that comes with a move. The second greatest challenge of the global nomad is unresolved grief. With one plane ride, everything is gone and there is no time to grieve before the next “adventure” begins. Good grief happens when one can identify the loss, deal with it, come to closure, and move on. Good grief teaches us something and takes us to a better place. Bad grief can have destructive results in the form of rebellion, anger, depression and delayed grieving.

TCKs also can benefit from their cross-cultural, highly mobile childhood. Among other things, they develop incredible cross-cultural skills that, when taken into adulthood, can lead to exciting inter-cultural or international careers. Because TCKs are very careful observers of social customs and behaviors, they often refer to themselves as social or cultural chameleons. Socially TCKs seem to develop a sense of inner confidence and self-reliance. They have survived transition before, they can do it again. Many develop fluency in more than one language, a most useful skill that a cross-cultural upbringing fosters.

Maybe the question isn’t how we can help TCKs thrive in our little New England town, but how global nomads can teach us something about the greater world that they call “home.” How can we open doors to the beliefs, assumptions, and values that form other cultures in order to understand ourselves and others? Is it possible that we could think outside the box in order to cultivate relationships and appreciate customs and traditions that may not be rooted in our own cultural history?

Winchester as a Multicultural Community—a Sampling

(We welcome contributions to this column. Send a line or two to office@wmcn.org)

- The Jenks Learning Connection offered both Spanish and Italian language classes this spring.
- The Winchester Seniors Association hosted author Stephen Puleo who spoke about his new book, *The Boston Italians: A Story of Pride, Perseverance, and Paesani, from the Years of the Great Immigration to the Present Day*.
- On the World Day of Prayer in March, members of Church Women United from various faith communities gathered to participate in a service written by women in Guyana.
- The Winchester Community Music School held a workshop on Asian Indian music.
- Two English classes from Winchester High School participated in a suburban/urban exchange with classes from English High School in Boston. The exchange was a service learning collaboration among Connect and Commit, Teen Empowerment, and teachers from the two schools.
- Many Winchester Savings Bank staff are bi- or multilingual. Languages spoken by employees include English, Portuguese, Spanish, French, Italian, Polish, Russian, German, Hindi, Tagalog, Tamil, Sinhala, Marathi. Many employees have an interest in Multicultural/Diversity issues.

Recommended Multicultural Films by Mindy Arbo

Email filmophile@comcast.net for more suggestions or to add your own. These films are available through the Winchester Public Library and its Minuteman Library Inter-library loans, and/or Video Horizons. Ratings are provided when they exist. Family-friendly films are noted with an **F**.

Golden Door **F**

The single best immigration film I have ever seen. This wondrous period romance/drama follows a small family of impoverished, illiterate, superstitious peasants from the barren moonscape of Sicily to the boat that will take them to America. Amongst the all-Italian passengers is a mysterious upper class Englishwoman who ultimately becomes the romantic desire of many. The final segment on Ellis Island is a revelation, and the entire film will likely stay with you a very long time.

Akeelah and the Bee **F**

Smart and spunky eleven-year-old Akeelah Anderson lives in the violent world of South Central L.A. with an overworked mother who is too tired to notice her and a brother who is running with the local gang. Her scholarly father was killed a few years ago. With the prodding of her concerned principal, she enters and wins the school spelling bee. Thus begins a change in her life, which is the subject of the film. Akeelah acquires her first serious commitment—to train for the National Spelling Bee—with a no-nonsense mentor and

a rigorous course ahead. The complex human relations, story, and screenplay are terrific, and the acting is spot on. One of the few great family films.

The Namesake

Adapted from the recent novel by Jhumpa Lahiri, this is the true story of two generations of an Indian American family and the sacrifices, joys, and cultural identities that divide and unite them. A near perfect portal into the world of the contemporary American immigrant experience.

Walk on Water

A thoroughly engrossing story of an Israeli Mossad agent assigned to track down an aged Nazi-in-hiding. When the war criminal’s adult grandson leaves Germany and visits his sister in an Israeli kibbutz, the agent serves as his driver. Of the same age, the three find themselves becoming more and more simpatico. Friendship and ethics are the subjects here as much as revenge and changing generations.

Mad Hot Ballroom **F**

What a fun, juicy, family film! A great documentary that follows a yearly ballroom dance competition in the NYC public junior high schools. Many underprivileged Latino, Asian, Black, and White students become hardworking teammates as they turn away from the drugs and deviant behavior common amongst their peers to focus on the new, challenging, and satisfying thing that is Ballroom Dancing.

Everything is Illuminated **F**

Elijah Wood leaves Hobbitland far behind as the eccentric New York grandson of Holocaust survivors. Wood’s character sets himself on a kooky course to find the Ukrainian woman who saved the life of his grandfather. Long-held secrets are revealed, with experiences of humanity growing out of horror.

El Faro

In this wondrous film, two Argentinean sisters lose their family in a car accident. Glued together by their mutual love and fierce devotion, the mid-teenager, Meme, and her 10-year-old sister, Anete, embark on a lifelong journey of nomadic non-conformist choices. The lead performance by the utterly rapturous Ingrid Rubio will dazzle you and make you commit yourself wholly to this glorious experience.

Home and the World

A mid-career masterpiece of Satyajit Ray, one of the 20th century’s most important filmmakers. This film chronicles the inner struggles of a traditional upper class Indian housewife as the outside world comes into her sheltered life and stirs up intense new feelings and conflicts.

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Third Annual Winchester High School/English High School Exchange

by Evelyn LaMuraglia

Have you ever visited a school outside of Winchester? What are the differences between urban and suburban schools? This semester, Ms. Hillstrom's ninth grade English class met students from English High School in Boston through an e-pal and exchange program. Each student in Ms. Hillstrom's class was matched with a student at English High. During the semester, students exchanged emails about specific topics to get to know each other. They introduced themselves and described their school, classes, and teachers. They also learned about each other's families and lifestyle.

Finally, each school group visited the other and attended classes with their e-pals. Winchester students visited English High (EHS) on a cold, but sunny day in February. In the entryway, flags representing the various nationalities of EHS students were hanging from the ceiling. Murals covered the walls and the environment seemed creative and colorful. Students were friendly and helpful, and everyone seemed to know each other.

One English High student said, "No cliques. Mingle with everyone." Once lunch time came, though, the black students sat on one side of the cafeteria and the Latino students sat on the other side.

Class size was smaller than that in Winchester, with an average of 12 students in each class. However, EHS students described cutting classes as a big issue in their school. Classes would be bigger if all students attended regularly. The teachers at EHS interact more with their students and some of them even hug their students. Students don't raise their hands; they just speak out and say what they want. Classes are mostly conversational and relaxed. By comparison, Winchester's classroom environment is more formal and orderly.

One may wonder whether students learn the same things in both schools. For example, Winchester students are required to take a health class that describes the possible consequences of sex, drinking, and drugs.

According to interviews, EHS students are not taught the possible consequences of these activities since they are not offered a similar kind of class in health. In discussions, both groups agreed that these topics should be included in the curriculum so that students know how to avoid pregnancy and bad choices around drinking and drug use. Several students at English High said they had friends their age who already had babies. This is not as common at Winchester High School.

Winchester students learned that it's more difficult financially for English High students. Since they struggle with money issues, more EHS students have part-time jobs after school. In Winchester, most kids join sports or extra-curricular programs after school and have jobs only in the summertime.

Overall, the visit to English High was a big success. Winchester students felt that it broke down stereotypes, and they enjoyed meeting their neighbors in Boston and learning about urban vs. suburban school life.

Spectrum at Winchester High School

by Lindsay Anderson

Spectrum is the Gay-Straight Alliance group at Winchester High School whose **mission** is to provide safety, equality, and support to those in the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) community and its supporters. The group's main objective is keeping the message of acceptance and equality alive within the student body. In the past few years, Spectrum has done much to achieve its goals of creating an accepting environment within WHS by hosting a number of events, activities, and meetings. Club meetings are held every other Tuesday, and the organization has raised money by holding bake sales and informing the community about its purpose at the fall WHS open house.

Each year Spectrum puts on a Day of Dialogue for 9th graders, bringing in speakers from the LGBT community who provide different perspectives about living as a gay, bisexual, lesbian, or transgendered person, as well as being a family member, friend, or supporter of the LGBT community. Following the assembly, students from Spectrum lead class discussions, fostering dialogue created within a comfortable and relaxed classroom setting. The day is designed to get freshman students to talk about what they know, what they want to know, and the beliefs and feelings they hold about the LGBT community. Day of Dialogue is an important part of Spectrum's connection with students outside the GSA, and continues to play an important role in providing the school with a message of equality.

Another of Spectrum's annual events is the Day of Silence. Usually held right before or right after April vacation, the day is based on a national event by the same name. During Day of Silence, students show the struggle of those whose feelings and beliefs are repressed by the fear of persecution or prejudice by staying silent for the day. It is also a day to show what it would look like if no one was allowed to share his/her feelings, values, or way of life in the community.

Overall, Spectrum is a club with a clear purpose. It is an important group with an even more important objective: to show students' beliefs in equality and acceptance and to maintain a safe environment at Winchester High School.

On the Topic of Race...

There is a wealth of material on the website pbs.org/race. The Ten Facts below are just a sampling.

TEN FACTS ABOUT RACE

1. Race is a modern idea. Ancient societies, like the Greeks, did not divide people according to physical differences, but according to religion, status, class or even language. The English word "race" turns up for the first time in a 1508 poem by William Dunbar referring to a line of kings.
2. Race has no genetic basis. Not one characteristic, trait or even gene distinguishes all the members of one so-called race from all the members of another so-called race.
3. Human subspecies don't exist. Unlike many animals, modern humans simply haven't been around long enough, nor have populations been isolated enough, to evolve into separate subspecies or races. On average, only one of every thousand of the nucleotides that make up our DNA differ one human from another. We are one of the most genetically similar of all species.
4. Skin color really is only skin deep. The genes for skin color have nothing to do with genes for hair form, eye shape, blood type, musical talent, athletic ability or forms of intelligence. Knowing someone's skin color doesn't necessarily tell you anything else about them.
5. Most variation is within, not between, "races." Of the small amount of total human variation, 85% exists within any local population. About 94% can be found within any continent. That means, for example, that two random Koreans may be as genetically different as a Korean and an Italian.
6. Slavery predates race. Throughout much of human history, societies have enslaved others, often as a result of conquest or debt, but not because of physical characteristics or a belief in natural inferiority. Due to a unique set of historical circumstances, North America has the first slave system where all slaves shared a common appearance and ancestry.
7. Race and freedom were born together. The U.S. was founded on the principle that "All men are created equal," but the country's early economy was based largely on slavery. The new idea of race helped explain why some people could be denied the rights and freedoms that others took for granted.
8. Race justified social inequalities as natural. The "common sense" belief in white superiority justified anti-democratic action and policies like slavery, the extermination of American Indians, the exclusion of Asian immigrants, the taking of Mexican lands, and the institutionalization of racial practices within American government, laws, and society.
9. Race isn't biological, but racism is still real. Race is a powerful social idea that gives people different access to opportunities and resources. The government and social institutions of the United States have created advantages that disproportionately channel wealth, power and resources to white people.
10. Colorblindness will not end racism. Pretending race doesn't exist is not the same as creating equality.

COMMON THREADS

The Multicultural Network, Winchester Community Music School, Winchester Public Library, Winchester Seniors Association, and Griffin Museum of Photography collaborated on a wonderful event in March called "Common Threads." The event celebrated the diversity that immigration has brought to our country and our town. Attendees started the evening at the Music School with Celtic and Klezmer music, moved to the Jenks Center for a buffet of Asian-influenced foods, and concluded the evening with dessert at the Griffin Museum where they enjoyed the moving photographs of Ellis Island taken by photographer Stephen Wilkes. More than 25 different nationalities were represented!

WORKSHOP

Angela Giudice facilitated our annual community workshop in March which brought together members of our community interested in deepening their multicultural understanding. Participants learned guidelines for constructive discussion, participated in interactive exercises, and shared their cultural backgrounds. Many wished for more opportunities to continue this work, and suggestions were made to focus on class issues in a future workshop. Let us know if you are interested in this topic and we'll work to schedule a program or workshop.

Thanks to the EnKa Society for support for this workshop.

Looking Back

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or other filler?

Brief Bibliography on the Subject of Race

provided by the Winchester Public Library

All items are owned by the WPL; if our copies are out, they may be requested from another library in the network.

Malcomson, Scott. L. *One Drop of Blood: The American Misadventure of Race*. "Malcomson argues that Americans, in their mania for self-invention, pioneered an idea of race that gave it unprecedented moral and social importance. From Puritan enslavement of Indians to the separatism we enact daily in our schools and neighborhoods, Americans have perpetually engaged with and fled from other Americans along racial lines."

Marks, Jonathan. *What It Means to Be 98% Chimpanzee*. "Full of interesting facts, fascinating personalities, and vivid examples that capture times, places, and controversies, this book explains and demystifies human genetic science, showing ultimately how it has always been subject to social and political influences and teaching us how to think critically about its modern findings."

Olson, Steve. *Mapping Human History: Discovering the Past Through Our Genes*. "In this sweeping narrative of the past 150,000 years of human history, this book draws on new understandings in genetics to reveal how the people of the world came to be. The author...shows how groups of people differ and yet are the same, exploding the myth that human races are a biological reality while demonstrating how the accidents of history have resulted in the rich diversity of people today."

Race: The Power of an Illusion. This PBS documentary was the basis for the recent MCN seminar "Race and Place." "Episode one explores how recent scientific discoveries have toppled the concept of biological race. Episode two questions the belief that race has always been with us; it traces the race concept to the European conquest of the Americas. Episode three focuses on how our institutions shape and create race."

Shapiro, Thomas. *The Hidden Cost of Being African American: How Wealth Perpetuates Inequality*. "Shapiro demonstrates how [growing] wealth disparities [between white and black households] accumulate from generation to generation thanks in large part to segregated housing patterns and inheritance,...combined with continuing racial discrimination...He looks at how federal policies contribute to these inequalities, and suggests several asset-building solutions aimed at addressing these disparities."

Annotations taken from the Resources section of the *Race: The Power of an Illusion* website, available at www.pbs.org/race/, along with background readings, discussion guides, and lesson plans for teachers.



What If All the Kids Are White? by Louise Derman-Sparks and Patricia G. Ramsey (Reviewed by Dotty Burstein)

As teachers and parents, we often wonder how we can teach our children about racial and cultural diversity if everyone in the community or classroom is white. In this helpful volume, the authors have included strategies, resources, and classroom examples for implementing learning themes around diversity. These themes are designed to help young white children resist messages of racism and build identity and skills that will equip them to live in a multicultural world.

Throughout the book, Ramsey and Derman-Sparks introduce seven learning themes. The first three highlight white identity, in order to begin with children's sense of self, or what children know best and what is familiar to them. For example, the first theme involves developing "authentic identities based on personal abilities and interests...rather than on internalized racial superiority."

The next theme emphasizes the range of similarities and differences among white people; here, the intent is to respect the differences within one's own group as a bridge to awareness and respect for differences in less familiar groups. In a similar way, theme three seeks to "Build the capacity for caring, cooperative, and equitable interactions with others." Success in reaching interactions on this level should also carry over to less familiar groups.

Each of the next three themes takes children a little further from their immediate family and surroundings until, by the seventh theme, children are in a position to embrace anti-bias ideals and can begin to work for justice beyond the classroom and in the broader society. Themes and goals work only when there are clear ways to implement them, however. Here is where the book becomes really useful. For example, suggestions for implementing the theme of

building a capacity for caring interactions with others include activities such as working together to create a winter holiday celebration that reflects the range of traditions within the group or improving the environment around the school building by picking up trash and sharing tools to plant a garden. Each of these activities may involve only white children, but within the group there may be differences of class, religion, and ethnicity. These differences require the respect and caring that will carry over to groups that are racially different as well.

Education around these learning themes in early childhood settings can be tricky. The authors have provided practical strategies for doing this kind of work and have supplemented this hands-on, accessible text with lists of suggested children's books, web-site resources, and organizations that do anti-bias and multicultural education.