

RACE

THE REALITY OF
HUMAN
DIFFERENCES

VINCENT SARICH + FRANK MIELE

ADVANCE PRAISE FOR *RACE*

“So much tripe has been published and promulgated by the ‘we are all equal and race is an illusion’ crowd, that to find a coherent, cogent, and penetrating analysis and rebuttal of the PBS approach is a delicious repast! *Race: The Reality of Human Differences* by Vincent Sarich and Frank Miele will represent an important milestone in reducing the millstone of the myths that have accumulated denigrating and/or ignoring our genetic diversity. This book will certainly be a must for my students, and it is surely long overdue!”

—DR. RALPH L. HOLLOWAY,
Professor of Anthropology, Columbia University

“There are lots of ideas in the book. You probably won’t agree with all of them, but you will surely be stimulated to think more deeply.”

—JAMES F. CROW, *Professor Emeritus of Genetics,*
University of Wisconsin, Madison

“Where did we come from? How did we get to where we are? Evolutionary theory is the only viable answer and it requires that we think in terms of populations that differ in their gene frequencies—Mendelian populations. As Sarich and Miele so clearly show, human races are simply Mendelian populations and their study, particularly with modern genetic tools, is yielding fascinating clues, many of which are not widely known, about our origins and the origins of our diversity.”

—THOMAS J. BOUCHARD, JR., *Professor of Psychology,*
University of Minnesota

“Science investigates how the world works, so passionate debate about how it should or could work better can be informed by facts. Is race a factually meaningless and irrelevant concept for education, medicine, or life success in the twenty-first century? Sarich and Miele think not, and their book drives at the issues head on with a provocative and, at times, disturbing presentation that, in the end, offers hope for a better appreciation of human variability.”

—RICH HAIER, PH.D., *Professor of Psychology,*
Department of Pediatrics, University of California, Irvine

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Vincent Sarich and Frank Miele

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To the memory of the late Allan C. Wilson, who, more than anyone else, got human evolutionary history straight.

VINCENT SARICH

To Travis Osborne, Lee Peacock, and Roger Thomas, who encouraged my natural inclination to examine dogma in controversial areas skeptically by teaching me the methods with which to do so intelligently. This book is a long-overdue acknowledgment of all they have done for me over the years.

FRANK MIELE



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PREFACE

Why Another Book on Race?

While we were preparing the final draft of this book, the Public Broadcasting System (PBS) in 2003 aired a highly acclaimed documentary, *Race: The Power of an Illusion*. The contemporary scientific and ethical consensus in both the media and the social sciences regarding race was concisely summarized in the ten numbered statements that appear at the beginning of the website that accompanies the documentary (<http://www.pbs.org/race>). The documentary's numbered statements and their elaborations follow; the chapter numbers shown in italics and enclosed in square brackets refer to the chapters of this book that challenge the particular statement.

1. Race is a modern idea. [*Chapters 2 and 3*]

Ancient societies did not divide people according to physical differences but according to religion, status, class, even language.

2. Race has no genetic basis. [*Chapter 5*]

No one characteristic, trait, or gene distinguishes all members of one so-called race from all members of another so-called race.

3. Slavery predates race. [*Chapter 2*]

Throughout history, societies have enslaved others, often as a result of conquest or war, but not because of physical characteristics or a belief in natural inferiority. In America, a unique set of circumstances led to the enslavement of peoples who looked similar [that is, black skin became associated with slave status in America—our explanatory comment].

4. Race and freedom were born together. [*Chapters 2 and 3*]

When the U.S. was founded, equality was a radical new idea. But our early economy was based largely on slavery. The concept of race helped explain why some people could be denied the rights and freedoms that others took for granted.

5. Race justified social inequalities as natural. [*Chapters 2 and 3*]

As the race concept evolved, it justified extermination of Native Americans, exclusion of Asian immigrants, and taking of Mexican lands.

6. Human subspecies don't exist. [*Chapter 6*]

Unlike many animals, modern humans have not been around long enough, nor have populations been isolated enough, to evolve into separate subspecies or races. Despite surface difference, we are among the most similar of species.

7. Skin color is only skin deep. [*Chapters 5–9, esp. Chapter 6*]

Most traits are inherited independently of one another. The genes for skin color have nothing to do with genes for hair texture, eye shape, blood type, musical talent, or athletic ability.

8. Most variation is within, not between “races.” [*Chapter 7*]

Of the small amount of total human genetic variation, 85% exists within any local population, be they Italians, Kurds,

Koreans, or Cherokees. Two random Koreans are likely to be as genetically different as a Korean and an Italian.

9. Race is not biological, but racism is still real. [*Chapter 10*]

Race is still a powerful social idea that gives people different access to opportunities and resources. Our government and society have created advantages to being white. This affects everyone, whether we are aware of it or not.

10. Colorblindness will not end racism. [*Chapter 10*]

Pretending race doesn't exist is not the same as creating equality. Race is more than stereotypes and individual prejudice. To combat racism, we need to identify and remedy social policies that advantage some groups at the expense of others.

The authors of this book, Vincent Sarich, professor emeritus of anthropology at the University of California at Berkeley, and Frank Miele, senior editor of *Skeptic* magazine, disagree with each of these ten points—and that is a remarkable degree of disagreement, given that the first eight points are matters of fact. In *Race: The Reality of Human Differences*, we present the evidence we believe refutes the first eight points and explain why we reject points nine and ten, not only for economic but ethical reasons as well.

We believe the case for the reality of race and of human differences must be presented against the backdrop of time—against the historical time during which the concept developed, against the evolutionary time during which our species developed and racial differences arose, and against the political temper of our times in which the view that race is a mere social construction—that is, a pseudoscientific myth created to justify colonization, slavery, and oppression—has come to be invoked as the justification for public policies based on racial privileges. We present what we believe is compelling evidence to support the propositions that race is a valid biological concept, and that human variations—

that is, the differences among individuals and groups, whether in athletic competition, IQ tests, or the competition to lead a satisfying and successful life, however each individual or group may define it—reflect both genetic and environmental factors.

On matters of social policy, we are both individualists. We oppose any governmentally sanctioned benefits or handicaps being applied *solely* on the basis of group membership. Rather, we argue for policies that help each individual do the best he or she can and wants to do. Both of us benefited from programs that foster and reward talent and performance, and we support making them open to anyone who is qualified—Period! Many issues regarding race are yet to be resolved. Denying the reality of race, however, only delays or prevents their resolution.

Vincent M. Sarich
Albany, CA
Frank Miele
Sunnyvale, CA
January 2004



Acknowledgments

We could not have written this book without the help, encouragement, and patience shown by so many. First, we thank Michael Shermer, publisher and editor-in-chief of *Skeptic* magazine, and its entire staff for inviting us to write and speak freely on so controversial an issue as race, even when our views conflicted with those of others. Thanks also go to Professors Henry Harpending, Richard Lynn, and J. Philippe Rushton for answering our questions and allowing us to summarize those conversations even though, again, there were points of disagreement. We thank Dr. Wilfred T. Gagné, D.V.M., for providing access to the veterinary literature. Ambassador Carl Coon kindly answered our questions about his father's life and work. Our editor, Karl Yambert, project editor Marietta Urban, and the entire staff at Westview Press proved invaluable in making this project a reality.

Any errors or misconceptions in this book, however, are solely ours.

V. M. S.

F. M.



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OPENING STATEMENT

The Case for Race

This book is about what remains America's most taboo four-letter word—R-A-C-E. The link between a biological concept and sociopolitical policy has bedeviled the nation since the Pilgrims landed on Plymouth Rock. For African Americans, the first link was indeed a hard one—the steel chains of slave ships. For blacks, in the words of Malcolm X, “Plymouth Rock landed on us.” In American history, race has assumed the role played by the goddess Discord in classical mythology: Invite her and she brings trouble with her; exclude her and she sends it as a reprisal for the slight. The same Thomas Jefferson who wrote “All men are created equal” in the Declaration of Independence also wrote in his *Notes on Virginia* these much lesser known and lesser quoted lines: “In memory they [blacks] are equal to the whites; in reason much inferior, as I think one could scarcely be found capable of tracing and comprehending the investigations of Euclid; and that in imagination they are dull, tasteless, and anomalous.” In Abraham Lincoln's debates with Stephen Douglas, “Honest Abe,” later to be the Great Emancipator, said, “There is a physical difference between the white and black races which I believe will forever forbid the two races living together on terms of social and political

equality. And inasmuch as they cannot so live, while they do remain together there must be the position of superior and inferior, and I as much as any other man am in favor of having the superior position assigned to the white race.” In 1905, Progressive-era president Teddy Roosevelt made the very unprogressive statement that “A perfectly stupid race can never rise to a very high place. The Negro, for instance, has been kept down as much by his lack of intellectual development as by anything else.” John Ehrlichman has recounted how on two separate occasions Richard Nixon told him that “America’s blacks could only marginally benefit from Federal programs because blacks were *genetically inferior* to whites. All the Federal money and programs we could devise could not change that fact. . . . Blacks could never achieve parity—in intelligence, economic success or social qualities; but, he said, we should still do what we could for them, within reasonable limits, because it was ‘right’ to do so.” (emphasis Ehrlichman’s). Until relatively recently, believers in the literal equality of the races (or the sexes) in either mental or physical ability have been few and far between, even among the ranks of abolitionists and anticolonialists.

THE CONTEMPORARY CONSENSUS ON RACE IN THE MEDIA AND THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

These contradictions and the apparent intractability of America’s “race problem” (or what some would say is more accurately described as “problem with racism”) have led many individuals, perhaps even a majority, in the media and the social sciences to come to the sincere belief that eliminating the word “race,” or downgrading it from a biological concept to merely a social construction, is a necessary if not sufficient condition for eliminating racism as well. Denying the biological reality of race and recog-

nizing it as a pseudoscientific myth created to justify white supremacy, they admonish, will produce what biological anthropologist Alan Goodman in the PBS documentary *Race: The Power of an Illusion* terms “an absolute paradigm shift.” The resulting realization that “race is not based on biology but race is rather an idea that we ascribe to biology” will cause any thought of genetically based group differences to disappear as well, or at least it will set society on the road to their long-overdue remediation through social and economic policy.

THE CASE FOR RACE

We present our case for the reality of race in three parts: first, against the backdrop of the historical time during which the concept developed; then, against the evolutionary time during which our species developed and racial differences arose; and finally, against the political temper of our times in which race is viewed as a mere, but nonetheless malignant, social construction that demands remediation through affirmative action, race norming (in which members of different races are measured against differing race-specific standards), and, some have argued, reparations for past inequities.

Chapter 1, “Race and the Law,” serves as a prologue to the disputes and debates examined in the chapters that follow. We note that the average person has a clear idea of what is meant by “race,” and that even small children more readily classify people on the basis of racial characteristics than on the basis of body build or occupational uniforms. A review of selected court cases demonstrates that such commonsense judgments about race and racial membership are regularly made, without being contested by either party, in the most adversarial aspect of society—the legal system.

For the past fifty years, however, most of the media and the social sciences have rejected the view that race is a biological reality. They have insisted on characterizing “race” as a “social construction,” that is, a classification system, developed and maintained to justify European imperialism and white supremacy and, in the pithy title of the 2003 PBS documentary, as “an illusion,” rather than what geneticist C. D. Darlington called “part of the imperfect but impartial language of common sense.”

The next two chapters review the development of the race concept from its beginning as recorded in the art and literature of ancient civilizations; through the development of anthropology as the science of race, the subsequent reaction against this view, and the individual controversies involved; and the political events that influenced the debate. They conclude by setting the stage for examining research by the senior author, Vincent Sarich, that provided an objective method for dating key events in evolution, including the emergence of our own species.

In Chapter 2, “Race and History,” we refute the argument of race as mere social construction, presenting examples from the art of ancient Egypt, China, India, Greece, and Rome as well as the rock art of hunter-gatherers to show that long before the European Age of Exploration, early civilizations and other societies did indeed recognize distinct races based on physical features, and that these correspond quite well to the races recognized by anthropology as late as the 1960s as well as the commonsense view. Drawing on quotations from the literature of ancient civilizations, we demonstrate that these societies also assigned behavioral characteristics (fairly or unfairly) to other racial groups, and tried to explain the cause(s) of race differences given the knowledge of their day. A particularly strong refutation of the social-construct argument comes from the example of the Bushmen of remote areas of southern Africa, who recently and independently

made similar racial classifications when they first encountered Asian scientists.

Chapter 3, “Anthropology as the Science of Race,” examines how humankind has tried to answer the questions about human origins and human differences from tribal myths, biblical theology, Greek philosophy, and Islamic geography; through to the beginning of anthropology as a science in the Enlightenment; and to the Darwinian revolution, when anthropology emerged as the science of race, and how and why that viewpoint was increasingly marginalized after World War II. Among these questions are

- Monogenesis versus polygenesis: Do the races of humankind have one origin or many?
- Stasis versus change: If the races of humankind had a single origin, how did they come to differ?
- How much time was required for these differences to take place?
- What were the mechanism(s) responsible?
- Do race differences necessarily imply a racial hierarchy?

Chapters 4, 5, and 6 examine race against evolutionary time. Here Vincent Sarich played a seminal role in developing the methodology of comparing the similarities and differences among the proteins and DNA of both living and recently extinct forms, thereby providing us with molecular trees and molecular clocks. This methodology has allowed us to resolve the order in which the branches of the human family tree diverged, calculate their times of divergence, and determine which changes (molecular, morphological, and, to the extent possible, behavioral) took place. These questions could only be debated, without any critically deciding data, in the earlier period of anthropology, described in Chapter 3.

In Chapter 4, “Resolving the Primate (Including Human) Tree,” Sarich takes the witness stand and describes how he came to anthropology from biochemistry, and then with his late colleague, Allan Wilson, developed a “molecular clock” that dated the separation of the human lineage from those which led to the modern African apes (chimps and gorillas) at about 5 million years ago, thereby altering forever our view of the human family tree. Sarich describes the revolutionary use of data from living animals to reorder and reinterpret the fossil record. In particular, *Ramapithecus*, a 14-million-year-old fossil previously considered to be the oldest representative of the hominid (humanlike) lineage, was discovered to be obviously far too old to be a hominid, and paleontologists eventually relegated it to the position of an ancestral orangutan, although Sarich has serious reservations about this attribution as well.

In Chapter 5, “*Homo Sapiens* and Its Races,” Sarich continues the story of the molecular revolution in anthropology, resolving the relationship (1) among modern humans (*Homo sapiens*) and other hominid species and (2) among races within *Homo sapiens*. The lead-in for this chapter is a mystery novel that indicated that the way to solve this problem was to send genetic samples to Sarich at the University of California at Berkeley! This chapter examines the successes of his UC–Berkeley colleagues Allan Wilson, Rebecca Cann, and Mark Stoneking—and many others—with mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA), and, of first Mike Hammer (also a Wilson student), and then later Peter Underhill with Y-chromosome data. Since 2000 these converging lines of evidence have produced a consistent picture that *Homo sapiens* first arose in Africa only about 50,000 years ago and that no racial divergences predate this time. In short, all living races are very recent and appeared only as ancestral humans migrated out of Africa.

In Chapter 6, “The Two ‘Miracles’ That Made Humankind,” we examine the conundrum this scenario has produced. The combined mtDNA and Y-chromosome data indicate that there was a single out-of-Africa exodus some 50,000 years ago that was ancestral to all recent and extant humans. Since the mid-1990s, many thousands of samples of mitochondrial and Y-chromosome DNA of non-African populations have been analyzed. Yet they have produced no evidence that any of the other human populations around at the time of this African exodus—and there clearly were many, the Neanderthals being perhaps the best known—successfully interbred with the out-of-Africa migrants thereby contributing anything to the modern *Homo sapiens* gene pool.

This new scenario requires what appear to be two “miracles.” First, some African population developed a new, genetically based behavioral capability that gave them an advantage over all other human populations—and that none of the other populations could copy. The most popular view is that it involved a quantum leap in linguistic capability, perhaps the augmentation of preexisting gestural language by spoken language. Second, along with this behavioral capability came, directly or indirectly, total reproductive isolation between the new *Homo sapiens* and all other existing hominid species. Matings between them either did not occur or were infertile.

Chapters 7, 8, and 9 examine race against the temper of the times. They form by far the most controversial part of the book. We deny the validity of the contemporary media and social science consensus on the concept of race and reject the need for any race-based policies to right past wrongs. In these three chapters, we discuss how racial variation interacts with the real world, and what cognizance, if any, we should take of that interaction. They present the most important evidence and arguments of the case for race, the gravamen of our countersuit against social-construction theory

and our reasons for rejecting the declarations of three distinguished scientists—the late Stephen Jay Gould (race *cannot* exist), Richard Lewontin (race *does not* exist), and Alan Goodman (even if race can and does exist, it *should not be studied*)—that have come to form the scientific cornerstones on which social-construction theory rests.

As we make clear, we accept none of this. If we did, there would be no need to write this book, and good reasons not to. If either Gould or Lewontin is correct, we are wrong, in the sense of being factually in error. If Goodman is correct, it is far worse. Then we are wrong in the sense of being morally evil. The case for race, and with it our defense against the implied charges of incompetence and/or immorality, will be to show that Gould is simply wrong; that Lewontin is, at best, half right with his numbers, but all wrong in the inferences he draws from them; and Goodman unwittingly provides justification for the very hate crime—racism—he so desperately wants to eradicate.

Simply stated, the case for race hinges on recognition of the fact that genetic variation in traits that affect performance and ultimately survival is the fuel on which the evolutionary process runs. If there is no such functional genetic variation, there can be no adaptive evolution. Thus, variation in every relevant domain is the norm, the null hypothesis, the expected condition, and not, as many would have it, the exception in the case of humans. In the study of *Homo sapiens*, the null hypothesis should be that there is genetic variation underlying the variation in performance that is being observed; it should not be assumed that, as has often been claimed, in a fair society, genetic factors can and should cancel each other out.

Strong evidence in the case for race comes from examining the amount of variation actually present in a proper comparative context. The differences in morphology (cranial and facial features)

between human races are typically around ten times the corresponding differences between the sexes within a given race, larger even than the comparable differences taxonomists use to distinguish the two chimpanzee *species* from each other. To the best of our knowledge, human racial differences exceed those for any other nondomesticated species. One must look to the breeds of dogs to find a comparable degree of within-species differences in morphology. We also point out other aspects in which human diversity in morphology, pharmacogenetics (body chemistry), and behavior more closely parallels our best friends (the dogs) than our nearest relatives (the apes), and what that reveals about the origin of our species.

Also important is the context of how long it took for human racial differences to evolve. The amount of variation that took approximately one million years to evolve in chimpanzees took only 50,000 years to evolve in humans. *This much shorter time for the evolution of comparatively larger racial differences must mean that these differences are more (not less) significant, and that adaptation, not chance, is the only mechanism capable of explaining this.*

We begin Chapter 7, “Race and Physical Differences,” by discussing the nature of variation in our species. Specifically, we address the issues of just how much variation there is and why variation is necessary for evolution to take place.

The most objectively measurable and least culturally bound comparisons involving racial differences can be found in the athletic arena. Just as personal experience confirms that some kids run faster than other kids, so too some groups (women or men; races) contribute disproportionately to one end or the other of the bell curve for any human activity. Just how marked such group differences can be is best illustrated by the fact that over the twelve-year period 1985–1997, one tribe of Kenyans, the Kalenjin, numbering perhaps 3 million people, provided eighteen of the thirty-six medal

winners in the World Cross Country Championships. This is about 2,000-fold more than they would have won if the necessary abilities were evenly distributed among the world's populations. There are, of course, many similar examples available, and we present some from sports with which we are most familiar.

We conclude the chapter by presenting evidence from the emerging field of pharmacogenetics, the study of genetic differences in response to drugs. Again there is a parallel to the situation in domestic breeds of dogs—that is, although it is easy to recognize the physical and behavioral differences among breeds, as in human races, the genetic differences as measured by DNA are small.

Chapter 7, “Race and Physical Differences,” sets the stage for the more controversial issues discussed in Chapter 8, “Race and Behavior.” The two chapters inevitably have some overlap, and similarities to Jon Entine’s *Taboo*, but discussions of differences in mind among individuals and groups (especially sexes and races) are far more tabooed than those about bodies.

We begin by describing a classic study of behavioral differences in four dog breeds—and the difficulties the author encountered in publishing a follow-up study that applied the same experimental design to race differences in human neonates. We also deal with the meaning of “racial” from the evolutionary perspective and address the criticisms that have been made of it. We conclude by examining the conundrums of race, brain size, and intelligence; income inequality and intelligence; and the mean sub-Saharan African IQ of 70.

We argue in Chapter 9, “Learning to Live with Race,” that it is not only appropriate but important to study race, because it helps us to apply the evolutionary perspective to the analysis of human variation generally. The critical concept here is that variation, in both body and behavior, both within races and between, is the norm, not the exception.

We also address the question of whether the recognition of average race differences must inevitably lead to racist attitudes or policies. In our view, the study of race and racial differences is not racist if people realize that everyone can gain on an absolute basis even as differences between individuals and between groups remain the same or even increase.

In terms of public policy, the best path governments can take is to dispense with the illusory quest for equality of results in favor of the achievable path of promoting equality of opportunity by removing all reference to group identity from both statutory and administrative law, and to focus instead on enhancing the potential for achievement by individuals.

We present three scenarios—termed Meritocracy in the Emerging Global Economy, Affirmative Action and Race Norming, and Rising Resegregation and the Emergence of Ethno-States—and describe what we believe are the costs and benefits, and the dangers and opportunities, of each. In the Ethno-State discussion, we also examine the feasibility of ethnically targeted weapons and the threat they pose.

Finally, we explain our preference for the Meritocracy. We recognize its faults and problems, but it is in keeping with the best (though by no means the only) tradition in our nation's history, is most likely to produce the most good for the most people, and offers our species the most effective array of options with which to meet the challenges that lie before us.



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CHAPTER ONE

Race and the Law

In contrast to a recent (2003), highly acclaimed PBS documentary that termed race “an illusion,” a myth constructed by Europeans in the Age of Exploration to justify colonialism and slavery, we argue that race is real.

We begin the case for race by noting how one of the most contentious facets of our society, our legal system, has no trouble in recognizing either the existence of race or the ability of the average citizen to do so. Further, DNA markers have been used to identified the race of perpetrators.

We have an inborn tendency to sort people into groups. The latest evidence shows how this tendency can mirror biological reality.

Some twenty years ago, coauthor Vincent Sarich received a call from a San Francisco attorney who was serving as defense attorney in a racial discrimination case brought by a man who claimed he had been discriminated against because of his American Indian ancestry. As part of their discussion, the question of legal “standing” arose; that is, did the plaintiff actually have the requisite racial ancestry—was he, in fact, an Indian? Vince naively

asked for the legal definition of “race” and was told there wasn’t one. Still, in the spirit of scientific inquiry, he observed the proceedings until the first break, at which point he told the attorney that, in his opinion, the attorney’s client had no chance of arguing successfully that the plaintiff lacked standing. To Vince’s eyes, the plaintiff obviously “looked” Amerindian. End of case.

As we began working on this book, we discussed the issue of the legal definition of “race” and asked the opinion of an attorney who specializes in civil rights law, which touches on this issue. He informed us that there is still no legal definition of “race”; nor, as far as we know, does it appear that the legal system feels the need for one. Thus, it appears that the most adversarial part of our complex society, the legal system, not only continues to accept the existence of “race” but also relies on the ability of the average individual to sort people into races. Our legal system treats “racial identification” as self-evident, whereas an increasing number of anthropologists (the profession, one would think, with the pertinent expertise) have signed on to proclamations that categorically state the term has long ago ceased to have any scientific legitimacy.

Why this clash? To us the answer is simple: The courts have come to accept the commonsense definition of race, and it is this commonsense view that, as we show, best conforms to reality. A look at two recent (2000) cases is illustrative. In both *Rice v. Office of Hawaiian Affairs* and in *Haak v. Rochester School District*, neither side raised any questions about the existence of human races or the ability of the average citizen to make valid judgments as to who belongs to which race (even if the racial categories are euphemistically termed “peoples” or “populations”). No special expertise was assumed or granted in defining or recognizing race other than the everyday commonsense usage, as given in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, that a race is “a group of persons connected