### Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preface</th>
<th>vii</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction: “Caucasians” and the Political History of Racial Identities</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Before the “Caucasian Race”: Antecedents of European Racialism, ca. 1000–1684</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Enlightenment Science and the Invention of the “Caucasian Race,” 1684–1795</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Passage into “Our Ordinary Forms of Expression”: The “Caucasian Race,” ca. 1795–1850</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Racialized Nationalism and the Partial Eclipse of the “Caucasian Race,” ca. 1840–1935</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 The Color Line and the “Caucasian Race” Revival, 1935–51</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Not-so-Benign Racialism: The “Caucasian Race” after Decolonization, 1952–2005</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 “Where Caucasian Means Black”: “Race,” Nation, and the Chechen Wars</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion: Deconstructing “Caucasia,” Dismantling Racism</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index</td>
<td>327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About the Author</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Questia, a part of Gale, Cengage Learning. www.questia.com

Preface

One of the better answers I have heard regarding the question of “race” came from my uncle, David Widrow. Several years ago, as I began thinking about this study, I asked him if he thought there were different “human races.” He smiled and said, “Sure. There are running races, auto races, boat races.” I thought it was a great answer, but at other times my uncle, like most people in the United States, has accepted the current “common sense” view that there are also distinct human races in the biological sense.

Part of my argument is that this commonsense view is a historical artifact of the social and political history of the modern world. All ideas about “race,” like many other beliefs and theories, need to be understood in relation to their historical contexts, including the view of “race” that I advance here. (Yet, as I will explain, this does not mean that all accounts of “race” are equally valid or invalid.) In the present case, my examination of the “Caucasian race” idea has been motivated by my time and place, as a U.S. citizen, born during the Civil Rights movement. (One of my early memories is of an assembly at my Stamford, Connecticut elementary school in 1968, right after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr.)

This book joins many related efforts in the post–Civil Rights movement era to understand how much and in what way we—citizens of the United States and members of a would-be global community—need to take account of “race” to move beyond to nefarious legacy of racism. It is largely a history of the Caucasian-race idea written by a scholar of politics. It is also a political theorist’s inquiry into the meaning of race, and therefore a few sections are theoretically dense.

I wish to thank several people who helped me complete this book. Sandy Schram read most of the manuscript, provided ongoing encouragement, and pointed me to New York University Press. David Roediger offered important feedback when I began the project. Charles Mills and Joel

-ix-
Olson provided valuable comments on the introduction and chapter 4, and I’m also indebted to Joel in other ways. My University of British Columbia colleague Alan Jacobs gave pointed comments on a draft of chapter 7. Several former colleagues at Macalester College provided constructive early comments: Duchess Harris, Sal Salemo, Karin Aguilar–San Juan, Andrew Latham, Kiarini Kordela, Michele Edwards, Ruthann Godolli, Leola Johnson, Michal McCall, David Moore, Clay Steinman, Joëlle Vitiello, and Matthew Weinstein. I’m especially thankful to Duchess, Sal, Karin, Andrew, and Kiarini for their encouragement. Patrick Guarasci, a former student, provided early research help. At NYU Press, Stephen Magro, who began this project, and Ilene Kalish, who saw it to completion, were great to work with, and I have also benefited from comments by the reviewers for the press. Taiwo Adetunji Osinubi and Anna Karlen translated some key German texts, and the UBC Political Science Department provided financial support for these translations. Kristin Cavoukian did great work on the index. I owe Sele Nadel-Hayes special thanks for sharing her family history with me. Two friends, David Rafferty and Paul Soper, patiently listened to lots of “Caucasian” talk over the last several years, and my parents, Charles and Rosalyn, and extended family have been continually supportive. Special thanks to my sister, Andrea Stuart, for designing great art for the book’s cover, which (sadly) was not used.

Finally, I owe the biggest thanks to Laura Janara. Laura read and commented insightfully on the introduction and chapter 2. More than that, she has been a wonderful, loving partner in the life of the mind and in the joys and trials of daily living.

-X-

Questia, a part of Gale, Cengage Learning. www.questia.com

**Introduction**

"**Caucasians**" and the Political History of Racial Identities

"[T]he Light of human minds is Perspicuous Words, but by exact definitions first snuffed, and purged from ambiguity; *Reason* is the *pace*; Encrease of *Science*, the *way*; and the Benefit of man-kind, the *end*. And on the contrary, Metaphors, and senselesse and ambiguous words, are like ignes fatui; and reasoning upon them, is wandering amongst innumerable absurdities."

—Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (1651)

The classificatory thinking of each individual is one of the ways by which [human beings] try to adapt to reality in a way that best meets their needs. But ... [t]he world which is given to the individual and which he [*sic*] must accept and take into account is, in its present and continuing form, a product of the activity of society as a whole. ... The facts which our senses present to us are socially performed in two ways: through the historical character of the object perceived and through the historical character of the perceiving organ. Both are not simply natural; they are shaped by human activity.

—Max Horkheimer, "Traditional and Critical Theory" (1937)

How shall we think about the status of our social identities? By social identity I mean the identities we have as blacks, Caucasians, women, Latinos, gays, and so on.

—Georgia Warnke, "Social Identity as Interpretation" (2002)

One of the many telling artifacts of the modern world is the fact that there are Caucasians and then there are "Caucasians." That is, there are the various Caucasian peoples of the Caucasus Mountain region.
—for example, Georgians, Dagestani, Circassians, Chechens, Ossetians, and others—and there are the presumed members of the “Caucasian race.” The latter is a curious invention of the modern age; it has been a basic component of numerous influential racial classifications from the late eighteenth century through the dawn of the twenty-first.

This book is primarily concerned with the peculiar career of the idea of a Caucasian race. Yet the histories of the two concepts of Caucasians—peoples of the Caucasus and the Caucasian race—are intertwined. Consider the following:

**Caucasian Slaves in the Middle Ages**

Between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries CE, before there was any notion of a Caucasian race, Caucasian peoples were bought and sold as slaves by Venetian and Genoese merchants. This was part of a long history of enslavement of Christians by Muslims and of Muslims by Christians in the Middle Ages that “prepared the way for the vast Atlantic slave system” in which Europeans subjugated sub-Saharan Africans. David Brion Davis reports that the Venetian and Genoese merchants, also involved in the ongoing enslavement of the Moors, established a booming slave trade from Black Sea ports, purchasing thousands of Georgians, Armenians, Circassians, Mingrelians, and other Caucasian peoples who were classified as infidels even if they were eventually baptized.

This source of slaves was mostly abandoned in the latter half of the fifteenth century. By that time the Portuguese sold increasing numbers of “black” African slaves, especially after the Ottoman Turks’ conquest of Constantinople in 1453, which redirected slave traders to sub-Saharan Africa.

**“Goddess with Caucasian Face”**

In late May 1989, students of the Central Academy of Fine Arts in China built a statue for the planned pro-democracy demonstration that began May 30 in Tiananmen Square, in the heart of Beijing. The ten-meter-tall statue came to be known as the Goddess of Democracy. Journalists and commentators from the United States quickly concluded that the statue was intentionally modeled after the Statue of Liberty in New York City. In the words of Neil Kottler, a program officer of the Smithsonian Institution in the United States who coedited a book on the “universal” significance of the Statue of Liberty, “The statue symbolized the
yearning for freedom among ordinary Chinese people; its resemblance to the Statue of Liberty was intentional, not accidental.\footnote{8}

Political theorist Linda Zerilli observes that it was not clear that the Goddess of Democracy was "nothing but a replica of that all-American icon, Lady Liberty."\footnote{9} Nonetheless, this perceived similarity was expressed in the New York Times by reporter Nicholas Kristoff: "[T]he Goddess closely resembles the Statue of Liberty, to the point of having Caucasian features and a large Western nose." Kristoff added: "A few spectators said they thought it might have been more appropriate for her to have Chinese features, but nobody seemed too concerned about such particulars.\footnote{10}"

"Caucasians" by U.S. Law

In U.S. Census counts of 1930 and 1940, "Hindoo" was included as a racial category.\footnote{11} This convention followed a series of legal cases between 1878 and 1923 in which U.S. federal courts were called upon to interpret the phrase "free white person" in U.S. naturalization law, which privileged "white persons.\footnote{12} The courts adjudicated the claims of a number of prospective U.S. citizens of non-European backgrounds to be counted as "white." Ian Haney López notes that applicants from Hawaii, China, Japan, Burma, and the Philippines and "mixed-race" applicants all failed in their arguments. Meanwhile, the courts declared Mexican and Armenian applicants "white" but "vacillated over the Whiteness of petitioners from Syria, India, and Arabia.\footnote{13} In a few cases, judges appealed to English anthropologist A. H. Keane's scholarly analyses of the "Caucasian race" category to determine who was and who was not "white." Then, in United States v. Bhagat Sigh Thind (1923), the Supreme Court, while also citing Keane, rejected the claim to "whiteness" of a high-caste Hindu. The Court now declared that the term Caucasian "is at best a conventional term, ... which, under scientific manipulation, has come to include far more than the unscientific suspects.\footnote{14}"

These U.S. cases did not resolve the "racial" and legal status of South Asians in general or South Asian Hindus in particular vis-à-vis the "Caucasian race." Even recently, a California Superior Court judge ruled that Dale Sandhu, a person of East Indian origin, was ineligible to bring a discrimination claim against his former employer, the Lockheed corporation. Sandhu had claimed that his layoff by Lockheed had been racially motivated. The judge accepted Lockheed's view that Sandhu was "Caucasian" by law and therefore had no legal standing under the California Fair Em-
ployment and Housing Act. Subsequently, the Sixth District Court of Appeal reversed the Superior Court’s ruling in Sandhu’s favor. The appeals court, citing the appearance of the “Asian Indian” category in the 1980 census, ruled that Sandhu was “subject to a discriminatory animus based on his membership in a group perceived as distinct.”

“Kennewick Man”

In July 1996, two college students found a human skull at the edge of the Columbia River in Kennewick, Washington. After they reported their find to the police, the county coroner called on James Chatters, a forensic anthropologist, to look at the skull. Chatters said that the skull and its skeleton were from a male “Caucasoid” individual, approximately forty to fifty-five years old. Yet Chatters also noticed the crowns of teeth worn flat in a manner characteristic of prehistoric Native American skulls, and a large projectile lodged in the right hip that proved to be a stone spear point. The spear point resembled those used by hunters of the region between forty-five hundred and nine thousand years ago. A second anthropologist concurred with Chatters, describing the skeleton as that of a “Caucasian male.” Soon thereafter, carbon dating established that “Kennewick Man” was between ninety-two hundred and ninety-five hundred years old. Even so, “Caucasoid” and “Caucasian” designations for Kennewick Man were circulated widely in articles in the Washington Post and the New York Times.

The Kennewick Man generated considerable speculation about its “racial” character and the origins of the first inhabitants of the Americas. Some scientists asked, “If this Kennewick Man indeed has many Caucasoid traits, how [as was the case] can an Indian tribe claim his remains?” A number of scientists regarded the Kennewick skeleton as “evidence that the earliest inhabitants of the New World may have been a Caucasian people”; and a headline that introduced the story in Discover magazine declared, “Europeans invade America: 20,000 BC.”

Recent scholarly reassessments suggest that attempts to fit Kennewick Man into modern “racial” categories were dubious and misleading.

“Dark-skinned” Caucasians

The current war in the Caucasus between Russia and Chechen rebels has sometimes been construed, especially by Russians, in racial terms. This
racialization recalls not only a history of Russian imperialism in central Asia and the Caucasus but also one of disputes concerning the "Europeanness"—and, implicitly, the "whiteness"—of Russians compared to the supposed "Asiatic" character of Muslim nationalities within Russia and in the Caucasus. One legacy of this history is the recent upsurge of racial epithets that Russians have directed against "dark-skinned" people of the Caucasus, including "Kill the blacks."

These episodes indicate the convoluted history of the "Caucasian race" category. The Chinese Goddess of Democracy and the Kennewick Man have been associated with the idea of the Caucasian race while an actual Caucasian people, the Chechens, have been excluded—at least sometimes—from this designation. Given prevalent ideas about "race," these stories might lead some to wonder whether the Goddess of Democracy or Kennewick Man were really Caucasian, or whether the Chechens really are dark-skinned compared to the "typical" Russian. Yet such questions obscure the more basic one: How have racialized tropes involving the Chechens and the notion of a distinct Caucasian race come to be readily employed by people to describe these events? My immediate objective, therefore, is to explore what the history of the "Caucasian race" category can teach us about the politics of "race" and racism.

To be clear, this study in no way tracks the history of an actually existing Caucasian race. Rather, it critically examines the changing fortunes of an intellectual conceit: the rise and fall in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the twentieth-century revival, and the possible final fall in twenty-first century of the notion, manifest in a variety of scientific and popular theories and social practices, that certain people constitute a distinct Caucasian race. Tracing the historical vicissitudes of the "Caucasian race" category demonstrates that race itself is a social and political construction rather than a biologically meaningful concept.

In 1785, German popular philosopher Christoph Meiners posited two great branches of human beings—Caucasian and Mongolian—in his Outline of the History of Humanity. Then, in 1795, German physician and anatomist Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, counted among the founders of modern anthropology, adopted the term Caucasian in the third edition of his book On the Natural Variety of Mankind. Referring to Mount Caucasus, Blumenbach said that he chose Caucasian as a name for what were then called the "white" peoples of Europe and contiguous regions "both because its neighborhood, and especially its southern slope, produces the..."
most beautiful race of men, I mean the Georgian; and because all physiological reasons converge to this, that in
that region, if anywhere, it seems we ought with the greatest probability to place the autochthones of
mankind."23 Significantly, as a "racial" designation for the "white" peoples of Europe and contiguous regions, the
notion of a Caucasian race was not completely unprecedented.

Blumenbach’s innovation is part of a much larger story in which the complex interplay between politics (broadly
understood) and science has shaped the development of “race science,” the still-prevalent use of “race ideas” to
interpret human diversity, and the production and reproduction of racialized social and political inequalities. Within
a generation after Blumenbach delineated a “Caucasian variety” of human beings, this “race” idea was widely
adopted in Europe and North America. It was partially eclipsed, however, from the second half of the nineteenth
century to the start of the twentieth. During this era an upsurge of European nationalism led European race
scientists to posit “racial” differences among European peoples who had previously been grouped together as
“Caucasians.” The fortunes of the “Caucasian race” category shifted again in the 1930s. The Nazi movement in
Germany generated a new scrutiny of the “race” concept generally and of existing racial classifications in
particular. This gave rise to a more benign—and sometimes explicitly anti-racist—racialism.24 Anthropologists now
reclaimed the notion of a Caucasian race as one of the three great “races of man,” alongside “Negroes” and
“Mongolians” (sometimes called “Caucasoids,” “Negroids,” and “Mongoloids”).

According to this new view of race, the differences among Europeans were merely “ethnic,” while those
distinguishing Caucasians, Negroes, and Mongolians were racial. Since 1952, the “Caucasian race” category has
retained a prominent place in everyday discourse about race, particularly in the United States, but it has
increasingly been called into question by anthropologists and biologists, along with the “race” concept itself, in
relation to the changing race politics of this era.

One revealing indicator of the extent to which the career of the “Caucasian race” category is both strange and
instructive is how its fate has differed from that of the “Aryan race” idea during the nineteenth and twentieth
centuries. Leaving aside the views of certain white supremacists, it now generally goes without saying that there
is no such thing as an Aryan race.25 The “Aryan race” myth was cobbled together from various sources in the
mid-nineteenth century—notably, from evidence of an Indo-European language group — and championed by such
nineteenth-century
racialists such as Comte Joseph-Arthur de Gobineau, the German-born English philologist Friedrich Max Müller (for a time), and Houston Stewart Chamberlain, before it became a linchpin of Nazism. Eventually, critical reflection on the horrific legacy of Hitler's Third Reich, ideologically based on the doctrine of Aryan supremacy, thoroughly discredited the Aryan myth—along with related ideas of "Nordic" racial supremacy—among post–World War II raciologists and intellectuals, and then in popular understanding. Not surprisingly, historians of the "race" concept and of European racism have subjected the "Aryan race" myth to much more sustained critical scrutiny than they have given to the "Caucasian race" myth.26

By contrast, the notion of a Caucasian race has gone in and out of vogue, and then back into vogue, among raciologists and in popular usage since it was invented in the late eighteenth century.27 Moreover, as I explain in chapter 4, the decisive refutation of the "Aryan race" idea after World War II coincided with a recovery of the "Caucasian race" category, which had been out of fashion in Europe for most of the previous century. In effect, then, raciologists brought about a dramatic shift in race thinking between the 1930s and 1950s in part by reviving the "Caucasian race" category. Yet the status of Caucasian (or Caucasic) as a scientifically credible racial category (along with Mongoloid and Negroid) is arguably no better than that of an Aryan race—a point that will become clear through the course of this study.

The contrasting fates of these two race ideas raise several important questions that this study seeks to answer, if only indirectly: Why the difference? Why has the idea of a Caucasian race stubbornly persisted if, ultimately, it has no greater scientific validity than the idea of an Aryan race? Is the difference due solely (or at least largely) to the unique association of "Aryan race" ideas with the Nazis' enormous crime against humanity? If so, how can the difference be squared with the fact that the career of the "Caucasian race" category is also bound up with various crimes against humanity during the past two centuries, even if it has not yet been called into account for its role in these crimes? Or, alternatively, is any comparison with the "Aryan race" myth itself questionable because, quite apart from politics, the revival of the "Caucasian race" category actually marks a scientific advance in our understanding of race?

My thesis is that the changing fortunes of the "Caucasian race" category are the result not of progressive refinements in "race" science but of the subtle and not-so-subtle ways that social and political forces have shaped...
Scientific knowledge of race. Race, in short, is an effect of power. Consequently, this study of the Caucasian race is fundamentally a study of power: how social and political power have produced scientific knowledge of race and what the history of racial knowledge reveals about modern power. It is not that political actors merely exploited the findings of modern race science; instead, the science itself was thoroughly political, with its guiding assumptions and questions informed by prevailing relations of power in society. Thus, the history of the "Caucasian race" idea bears out Stephen Jay Gould's observation that in such matters there is often great value in "treating generalities by particulars." 

My broader aim is to contribute to a critical theory of social identities. Social identities, as Georgia Warnke says, are "the identities we have as blacks, Caucasians, women, Latinos, gays, and so on, identities that we grow up as, assert in struggles for recognition, or try to eliminate and avoid." These identities are sources of meaning and affiliation, but they are also bound up with social relations of power and domination. Racial identities in particular have provided people with a way to interpret their place in modern societies; but they have been used to justify oppression and social stratification as well as forms of anti-racist politics. The emergence of race and racism in modern Western societies during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries coincided with the gradual diffusion of modern egalitarian ideals. Equality has always been difficult for modern nation-states to manage, especially in relation to the dislocations and class-based inequality generated by capitalism. In conjunction with class stratification, race has served as means for nation-states to govern and apportion claims of equality (i.e., who is entitled to equality of what) by providing an ideological justification for selective inequality. For instance, race ideas and categories have been used to limit the workings of competitive labor markets through slavery, colonialism, immigration restriction, and labor market discrimination.

A critical theory of social identity will identify and support a cultural politics of group differentiation—of public recognition for social identities—only insofar as this "can be coherently combined with the social politics of equality." Accordingly, such a theory will illuminate what kinds of public recognition of racial identities, if any, will best support a politics of human equality.
The Political History of “Race”

It is clear that racial categories and identities have played an enormous and ignominious role in modern politics. The development of a socially and politically influenced scientific racialism buttressed racist social and political practices by insisting on a supposedly natural hierarchy of cognitive capabilities among the so-called races of man (see chapter 2). Meanwhile, there is ongoing debate among scholars over whether or not racism, as distinct from other forms of intergroup prejudice and ethnocentrism, is distinctly modern and Western in its origins.

As George Fredrickson explains, forms of rigid "othering" and ethnocentrism roughly analogous to the racism existed in Western societies in the Middle Ages and in non-Western societies before the modern Western invention of the "race" concept. Some commentators maintain that racism as race-ism is a distinctive product of the modern West that subsequently spread—along with “race consciousness”—to other parts of the world as an effect of Europe-centered capitalist development, the rise of the Atlantic slave trade, and European colonialism and imperialism. An alternative view is that the forms of prejudice and ethnocentrism that existed in parts of the premodern West and in non-Western prior to "Western" influence were sufficiently similar to the racism of the modern West (where the term racism first came into usage in the 1930s) to be counted as racism as well. Thomas Gossett asserts, with reference to ancient India, China, Egypt, Greece, Rome, and the Jews, "The racism of ancient history, even though it had no science of biology or anthropology behind it, was real, however difficult it may be to judge the extent of its power."

This book will not resolve this controversy, but it will shed light on it. As I explain in chapter 1, there is good reason to conclude that racism, as a specific set of beliefs about human "races" that is used to justify exclusionary practices, institutions, and social structures, is a distinctive product of the development of race thinking in the modern West. From this perspective it is important to recognize that racism in this sense can now be found within many (if not most) societies around the globe; yet it would be misleading to equate other traditions and practices of ethnocentrism, which lack any clear analog to the modern concept of race, with racism per se.

The development of the modern Western scientific project of racially classifying people was shaped by a number of epochal events: the consolidation during the late Middle Ages of the idea of Europe as a geographically distinguishable region within the larger Eurasian land mass; the rise...
in the early modern period of Europeans' assumptions of their innate physical, intellectual, cultural, religious and moral superiority—assumptions that European elites reinforced and refined in relation to European "discoveries" of the indigenous peoples of the Americas, the development of modern "Negro" slavery, and increasing European colonization of the Americas, Africa, and Asia; and the gradual growth and diffusion of a world capitalist economy, based in Europe and linked to the European "voyages of discovery" and conquest in the fifteenth century.

During the course of the twentieth century a number of insightful social commentators and scientists noted the problematic character of race. In the words of anthropologist Ashley Montagu, an early proponent of the "social constructionist" view of race: "It is a common human failing to believe that if a word exists then there must be something in reality which corresponds to it. Do 'devils' exist, or 'succubi' or 'incubi' or 'dragons' or a thousand and one other figments of our imagination? 'Race' belongs in the same category with these words. It is an invented category, not a discovered one." The claim that race is a political construction and not a biologically meaningful concept is often countered with the claim that there are obvious, observable "racial differences" among people. That is, there are significant phenotypic or morphological differences between groups of people from distinct geographic origins, and the "race" concept denotes precisely these differences.

Yet this seemingly commonsense view begs fundamental questions about race. Given the historical meanings of "race," why should we persist in calling such differences "racial?" What of the fact that there is greater genetic variation among people within each of the various groupings of people that are typically classified as distinct races than there is between these so-called races? Moreover, what should we make of the fact that people are now, in our historical moment, likely to assume that certain superficial differences—particularly, differences in skin tone, hair texture, and facial features—truly distinguish distinct human races, while other comparable differences among people—for example, differences in eye color, the shape of people's skulls (or cranial forms), and blood type—are discounted as indexes of race difference? And what of the fact that the traits taken to be the defining criteria of racial difference have varied widely at different times and places?

The suggestion here is that the "race" concept is best understood in terms of social and political processes of racialization, or race-making. To speak of processes of racialization is to call attention to the ideological
representational processes whereby "social significance is attached to certain (usually phenotypic) human features, on the basis of which those people possessing those characteristics are designated as a distinct [racial] collectivity." There is no "discovery" of true racial differences among groups of people. Rather, racialization emerges from processes by which socially and politically dominant ethnic groups use certain superficial physiognomic differences between themselves and other groups to create a naturalized "sense of group solidarity or peoplehood that can provide the basis for a claim of dominance or privilege over those considered outside the group." One crucial implication of this view is that any talk of "race relations" as a subject for scholarly analysis or public policy making, as if at stake are the relationships among actually existing, biologically distinct races of people, is a misnomer; actually, it is racialized relations and racialized identities that are at issue—that is, relationships between various groups of people that have been socially and politically constructed as "racially" distinct. Therefore, to address the distinctive politics of racialized identities (as distinct from ethnic or cultural identities) requires a somewhat different approach from efforts to address problems of cultural diversity or multiculturalism (sometimes addressed under the heading of "cultural pluralism"). Racialized identities have notable cultural dimensions, but they are primarily a manifestation of unequal power between groups and only secondarily about cultural diversity. The injustice produced by systemic racism is not primarily a matter of cultural misunderstanding or disrespect for certain cultures. Instead, racism involves exclusionary practices that establish and perpetuate unequal distributions of social status, opportunity, income, wealth, and power among racialized groups.

The racialization approach to "race" enables us to steer a path between two pitfalls that haunt much popular and scientific thinking about race, historically and still today. The first pitfall is the resort to racial explanations to account for social and political inequalities and cultural differences between groups (e.g., in income, wealth, social status, educational achievement, cultural practices), which mistake the effects of racialization processes for the cause. For instance, since the seventeenth century there have been scholars who have claimed that racial (i.e., innate, irremovable) differences between the groups we now call Whites, Asian Americans, Native Americans, African Americans, and Latinos/as are the chief cause of social, political, and economic inequalities between these groups (on average). Yet this view conveniently ignores the theoretical difficulties of race.
as a biologically meaningful concept and discounts the effects of the different and unequal treatment accorded to the different groups historically, which has been rationalized by dominant groups in racist terms.

The second pitfall is the temptation to move too quickly from the observation that there are no races of human beings in the old biological and ethnological sense to the conclusion that we should now renounce any use of racial categories in efforts to overcome racism and its effects. According to social theorist Paul Gilroy, to continue to use “racial” categories, even in efforts to combat racism, is to be complicit “in the reification of racial difference.” Gilroy’s view, while motivated by commendable goals, fails to address adequately the powerful continuing effects of processes of racialization in shaping the social structures of many modern societies and the lived experience of members of these societies. Understanding race in terms of racialization avoids any reification of racial difference because it emphasizes the historically changing and politically contingent character of processes of racialization; at the same time, it points to the enormous social and political impact of processes of racialization and to the current reality and changeability of racialized identities.

Power, Knowledge, and “Race”: Notes on Method

To understand race as a political construction poses challenging epistemological and methodological issues for students of race and racism. We are confronted with difficult questions concerning the status as knowledge of historically changing scientific discourses about race. My approach to this issue principally involves a historical genealogy of the career of the “Caucasian race” category. Michel Foucault defines genealogy as a “political history of truth”: it explores how the production of criteria for what counts as true or false in various fields of knowledge in different historical contexts—what Foucault calls “regimes of truth”—is thoroughly imbued with relations of power. Taking a genealogical approach to race requires that we go beyond an analysis of how shifting social and political struggles and power relationships (e.g., European colonialism; the Atlantic slave trade; emergent nationalisms; and struggles over immigration, citizenship, and labor market regulation) have shaped the relations between so-called races of people. It simultaneously demands that we explore historically how such power dynamics have shaped the production of scientific and popular knowledge about race.
My point of entry into this vast history is an examination of the changing place of the "Caucasian" category within the "sciences of race" and in prevailing modes of racial classification in the period that stretches from the late eighteenth century to the present. My account focuses on how these shifts are exemplified in the work of key historical figures in the development of the sciences of racial classification, including Carolus Linnaeus (1707 –78), Johann Blumenbach (1752 –1840), James Cowles Prichard (1786–1848), Samuel George Morton (1799– 1851), Anders Retzius (1796–1860), Thomas Henry Huxley (1825–95), Joseph Deniker (1852–1918), Ruth Benedict (1887–1948), and Ashley Montagu (1905–99). Through their varied writings, rooted in botany, zoology, anatomy, ethnology, and anthropology, we can trace the major trends in the dominant modes of scientific racial classifications. These trends include major shifts in the scientific discourses through which the "Caucasian race" category has been authoritatively invented, embraced, displaced, and recovered. It is worth noting that each of these thinkers was a member of the group racialized as dominant in his or her society.50 Indeed, prior to the twentieth century this was true of almost all the scientists of race whose work introduced significant changes to prevailing racial classifications.51 I also consider the race ideas of a number of intellectuals from subordinated racialized groups, such as African American physician Martin R. Delany (1812–85), Russian Jewish physical anthropologist Samuel Weissenberg (1867–1928), and African American historian and sociologist W. E. B. Du Bois (1868–1963). These thinkers offer us some insight into how the prevailing modes of race science and racial classification were perceived, reinforced, and resisted by intellectuals who were considered members of "lesser races" in the predominant racial schemes.

As K. Anthony Appiah points out, "throughout the nineteenth century the term 'race' came increasingly to be regarded, even in ordinary usage, as a scientific term." In other words, the concept "race" came to be understood as a way to make true generalizations about the way the world is— specifically, a way to comprehend the true natures of the various peoples who make up the world. As such, scientists and scholars have had a special claim to be considered "experts on how the term worked."52 Moreover, while it hardly needs to be said that how nonscientists speak about race is influenced by social and political forces that escape their immediate awareness, we might be tempted to think that this has not been the case with scientists. The latter are presumably impelled by the pursuit of knowledge. The history of science is not so pure, however.53

-13-
This difficulty is strikingly evident in the history of the sciences concerned with race, notably comparative anatomy, ethnology, craniology, anthropology, eugenics, and biology. Gould observes that the scientists of race did not discover and describe an objective reality of naturally occurring human races; instead, their conceptions and perceptions of race and races were deeply shaped by the social, political, and cultural influences of their time. In effect, the anatomists, ethnologists, and anthropologists who developed various schemes of racial classification helped produce our racialized world.

At the same time, despite manifest “impurity” of the scientific study of race over the past two hundred-plus years, it would be a mistake, as Adam Lively warns, “simply to dismiss the anthropology of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as ‘bad science.’ Its significance goes beyond that, both because of the support it gave to racial[ized] oppression in the real world, and because it was one aspect of a broader ‘naturalisation’ of European thought that occurred in the eighteenth century. This process of naturalisation was fundamental to the invention of the modern European idea of race.” In short, to learn well the myriad lessons that the history of race science can teach us about our present racialized world, we need to develop a historically informed understanding of both how race science was shaped by surrounding social, political, and cultural forces and how it progressed as science—that is, as the activity of scientists who typically understood themselves as objectively describing and classifying naturally occurring human races.

For this reason, strict adherence to Foucault’s genealogical approach to power and knowledge would be troublesome. If all claims of knowledge are corrupted by relations of power, and if all types of power relationships—from totalitarian regimes to democratic forms of intellectual inquiry—are comparable in how they generate “regimes of truth,” then we are left in a distressing predicament: we would have no credible way to adjudicate between the truth claims of racist and anti-racist discourses. In other words, we would have no critical standpoint from which we could “assess the relative adequacy of different accounts of the world, of different regimes of truth.” Foucault also leaves us without a way to specify key agents in the development of scientific and popular ideas about race—especially who has done “what to whom, under what circumstances, and why.”

Therefore, to move beyond Foucault’s important point about the pursuit of truth being enmeshed with relations of power, we need to address this difficulty through a historically informed approach to the history of race science.
the concrete interrelationship of a given society's cultural system, its social structure, and human agency (i.e., people acting to shape their circumstances in relation to inherited ideas and social structures). Within this framework, a society's cultural system consists of the existing stock of ideas and beliefs concerning its practices and institutions at any given time. The social-structural components of a society include relatively enduring (but changeable) social relationships and institutions: the prevailing mode of production and class relations, gender relations, ethnic and racialized hierarchies, government institutions, educational institutions, religious institutions, and prevailing forms of sexual practice. The agents of social change in this scheme are primarily collectivities of persons, such as classes, nations, ethnic groups, or people organized around gender or sexual identities or in social movements or political parties; they are not abstract individuals who somehow stand above or outside prevailing social structures and cultures.

The agents bring about social change (or "make history") through social and political interaction with other agents under conditions established by the inherited social structures and cultural systems that define their society at that time. The society's cultural system determines the range of ideas, norms, values, and theories with which different social groups or agents interpret and respond to their world, while the existing social structure determines the allocation of material resources that different groups (e.g., social classes and racialized groups in a racialized capitalist society) bring to their interaction and competition with each other.

This framework yields a fruitful way to make sense of how social and political forces have shaped the changing fortunes of the "Caucasian race" category through its history. This history involves three kinds of conceptual transformation: the genesis of "race" as a scientific concept and a historically novel way for people to describe and interpret human diversity; several distinct shifts in modes of racial classification across time, which determined the changing status of the "Caucasian race" notion; and the recent rise—mostly during the last seventy years—of deep skepticism about the credibility of "race" as a scientific concept. Regarding these conceptual shifts, the existing social structure in a society at any given time, by making certain groups socially and politically dominant, enables some social groups (or agents) to be more influential than others in shaping the prevailing ideas about race and schemes of racial classification. For example, until recently members of dominant ethnic and racialized groups (especially race scientists from these groups) were consistently more influen-
tial in the determination of prevailing schemes of racial classification than were the members of subordinate ethnic and racialized groups.

When a change in race ideas is effectively incorporated into a society's scientific, political, and popular discourse, this brings to an end one cycle of social and cultural change and begins another one. Thus, the introduction and diffusion of the "race" concept in a society that previously had racelike ideas but no "race" concept per se would constitute the completion of one cycle. In this way, as I explain later, we can grasp how changing social and political circumstances in the mid-twentieth century helped pave the way for the now prevailing anti-racist science of race (see chapters 5 and 6). In the same breath, because of the complex constellation of factors involved in such conceptual changes—including historical shifts in the place of science in society—a genealogy or conceptual history of this sort cannot hope to be definitive. Sometimes it will only be able to intimate the likely explanations for particular shifts in race thinking.61

One crucial factor in the transformations of racial thought has been the history of the human migrations in the modern world—between regions of Europe; from Europe to the Americas, Africa, Asia, New Zealand, and Australia; from Africa to the Americas and to Europe; from Asia to the Americas, Europe, and Africa—along with struggles to regulate immigration in receiving countries. It is not that these migrations have merely spurred "racial conflicts" among actually existing races of people. Rather, migrations, which have been "determined by the interrelation of production, trade and warfare," have been a key factor in shaping and reshaping racial thought in general and racial categories in particular.62

In addition, we must not abandon the scientific enterprise entirely if we hope to move constructively beyond Foucault's insight that power relationships shape prevailing forms of knowledge historically. As Tom Nairn observes, a critique of racist pseudo-science that involves a blanket rejection of science undermines "the very foundation of non-racial (and antiracist) development."63 In this spirit, critical realist social theory points beyond the relativism implied by Foucault's genealogy—namely, that all discourses of truth are equally contaminated by power relationships—by insisting that there is an external reality, independent of human descriptions of it, against which competing claims of truth can ultimately be assessed. For example, the existence or nonexistence of human races (in the biological sense) is an empirical question about the true nature of human beings. Insofar as the idea of biologically distinct human races is illusory, it is crucial to recognize that "this illusoriness can only be demonstrated..."
within scientific discourse. Simultaneously, we need to understand that this claim about the nonexistence of races is distinct from the claim that there are still racialized identities and inequalities.

Foucault rightly insists that all human access to reality is mediated by existing languages, concepts, and theories. This means that we always struggle to interpret the world in better and worse ways, with fallible conceptual frameworks and theories. Yet different forms of power do not have the same corrupting effect on the pursuit of truth. All other things being equal, forms of power that are relatively inclusive, democratic, and egalitarian are more likely to generate true knowledge about such things as race, gender, and sexuality than are forms of power that are undemocratic, exclusionary, and asymmetrical. This point applies, for example, to modes of intellectual inquiry that are conditioned by relatively democratic social contexts and marked by relatively democratic, nonhierarchical, and inclusive relations of cooperation as opposed to those conditioned and characterized by authoritarian tendencies and social exclusivity. Consequently, democratizing social and political movements such as movements for political democratization, feminist movements, post–World War II decolonization, and the U.S. Civil Rights movement, have often revealed limitations of existing theories about the world and generated advances in human knowledge. Indeed, democratizing movements of the twentieth century arguably helped establish social conditions that fostered a more truthful science of “race.”

“Race,” Political Theory, and Planetary Humanism

What follows is a work of historical synthesis written by a political theorist and guided by contemporary ethical and political concerns. My genealogy of the “Caucasian race” category relies on the work of many historians and social scientists concerning various dimensions of the histories of race, racism, and related issues. For a political theorist, the histories of race and racism raise a number of fundamental political questions: How have these notions shaped the character and uses of power in various historical contexts? How has power been related to the production of knowledge in the modern world? How has the “race” concept, a notion rooted in natural history and biology, figured in the construction of transformations of modern political communities? And what does this teach us about the various ways in which political communities and citizenship have been es-
tablished, defined, and regulated? To what extent and in what ways has modern liberal theory and policy melded an avowed commitment to basic human equality with significant qualifications to that commitment?

Other scholars in the field of political studies have recently explored related themes. Rogers Smith examines how lawmakers throughout U.S. history have "pervasively ... structured U.S. citizenship in terms of illiberal and undemocratic racial, ethnic and gender hierarchies." Michael Goldfield traces how racialized politics in the United States is "the product of a long process of American social and political development," while Anthony Marx compares the historical role of state and nation building in constructing the "boundaries of race" in the United States, Brazil, and South Africa. Closer in spirit to the current work, political theorists Charles Mills, Joel Olson, and Jacqueline Stevens contribute to what Olson calls a "political theory of race." Mills contends that global white supremacy "is itself a political system"; Olson, focusing on democratic citizenship in the United States, notes that "white" or "Caucasian" "is not a neutral physical description of certain persons but a political project of securing and protecting privileges"; Stevens looks at how "races are constituted and sustained ... through explicit and implicit invocations of the state."

The present study approaches the theory and politics of race and racism from a different but complementary angle. By exploring the career of the "Caucasian race" category, it illuminates how various modern forms of power have shaped prevailing scientific and "commonsense" knowledge of race. In doing so, this study offers a unique perspective on how the history of racial domination is bound up with and also reaches beyond the history of racialized "whiteness." The history of the Caucasian race is part of the larger histories of white racialized identity and white supremacy, which emerged in tandem with race theories and racial domination. The idea of a white race preceded the development of the Caucasian race idea by more than a century. Yet during its years of prominence the "Caucasian race" category has represented racial "whiteness ratcheted up to a new epistemological realm of certainty." At the same time, the "Caucasian race" category experienced a partial eclipse among race scientists between 1840 and 1940, when European nationalism surged and ("white") Europeans sought to dominate each other racially. Historian Matthew Jacobson has already discussed some of this history with respect to changing immigration policies and transformations of racialized whiteness in the United States. Yet he leaves much of the larger story un-
told, particularly its European and global aspects, including the history that produced the Caucasian race idea.

To redress this history of racism, this study highlights the vital need for what Paul Gilroy calls a pragmatic, planetary humanism. Against all forms of racialism and racism, planetary humanism insists on the fundamental equality of all human beings as human beings. To actualize a planetary humanist ethic requires, among other things, an understanding of the ways in which the "race" concept has been employed historically to establish hierarchies of "humanness" and human rights and to reinforce other forms of inequality, such as class and gender inequalities.

This legacy has led Gilroy to call for the "renunciation of 'race' as a critical concept." Here my approach to planetary humanism departs from his. Gilroy rightly warns us of the risk involved in using racial categories in efforts to overcome racism—that this practice may perpetuate racist thinking about human diversity despite the most vigilant efforts to deconstruct race. Yet his call to renounce any use of race as a critical concept is problematic in a world of persistent racialized social and political inequalities. If we hope to achieve an egalitarian planetary humanism in a world structured by deep racialized inequalities of opportunities, income, wealth, and power, then we must not forget or evade the ethical, social, and political damage that has been and continues to be done by racist and racist thought and action.

The consequent ethical and political imperative is, as Richard Lewontin says, to "abolish the conditions that require ... the illusion of race." Yet to achieve this objective may sometimes require policies that use existing racialized categories and identities in a self-critical and historically contingent way as a means to dismantle racialized inequalities—for instance, through affirmative action policies to redress inequities produced by systemic racism. With regard to the "Caucasian race" category in particular, Lewontin's proposition implies a corresponding imperative: that those persons who have, in different ways in different contexts, gained material, psychological, and social status benefits from being racialized as members of dominant races (e.g., as "Caucasian" or "Nordic" or "white") acknowledge and take responsibility for these advantages. People who have been racialized as Caucasians must acknowledge our historically racialized identities as Caucasian—along with the social and material advantages it entails—even as we work with others to end the myth of a "Caucasian race." This is ultimately an ethical and political challenge that must be faced to realize a planetary humanism. It demands concerted collective
political action. Among other things, this project demands an understanding of the distinct history and struggles of the actual Caucasian peoples in the Caucasus region.

Outline of a History

With regard to my title, I have been asked if the history of the "Caucasian race" notion is really a "rise and fall" story. My tentative answer is that it is a rise and fall and rise … and possible fall story. In chapter 1, on the period from roughly 1000 to 1684, I survey beliefs about physical, social, religious, and cultural differences among peoples within and beyond medieval and early modern Europe that prefigured later race thinking and subsequently influenced the contours of modern racial categories. I also examine the rise of the "race" concept and the development of modern racial thought in the seventeenth century.

Chapter 2 examines the social and political forces and scientific developments between the late 1600s and late 1700s that help to explain Johann Blumenbach's fateful use of the "Caucasian race" category in 1795. This time period saw a maturation of natural history along with systematic schemes to classify nature, including human beings. European race scientists in this era were generally inclined to propose racial classifications that scientifically and hierarchically distinguished white people such as themselves from nonwhite peoples.

Chapter 3 examines the period between the end of the eighteenth century and the mid–nineteenth century. During these years Blumenbach's "Caucasian race" notion passed quickly into scientific discourse and ordinary usage in Europe and in the United States. Yet, where Blumenbach used the "Caucasian race" category to refer to one of five principal "varieties" of human beings that "run into one another by insensible degrees," it was now adapted to more explicitly racist modes of racial classification. Raciologists such as Georges Cuvier, William Lawrence, and Samuel George Morton asserted the superiority of the Caucasian race. At the end of this era, English ethnologists James Cowles Prichard and Robert Gordon Latham persuasively pointed out the dubious character of the "Caucasian race" category. Nonetheless, the Caucasian race had already become well established in both scientific and ordinary discourses.

Chapter 4 follows the partial displacement of the "Caucasian race" in race science from about 1840 to about 1940. Between the 1840s and 1870s,
a complex set of developments in physical anthropology and European politics and demographics combined to radically alter the prevailing discourse of racial classification, including major migrations of European peoples, the rise of European nationalism, the invention of the “cephalic index” (an index of relative “long-headedness” or “short-headedness”), and the rise of “Aryan race” theory. European raciologists now directed their energies toward identifying the so-called races of Europe—a proliferation of “white races.” This trend yielded the racially restrictive JohnsonReed Act of 1924 in the United States and the German Nazis’ doctrine of Aryan supremacy. Meanwhile, the “Caucasian race” category remained useful to those Europeans and Euro-Americans (also Euro-Australians and Euro-New Zealanders) who were preoccupied with uniting their fellow Europeans against what they saw as a “rising tide” of “colored” peoples.

In chapter 5, I turn to the social and political forces behind the recovery of the “Caucasian race” category between roughly 1935 and 1952. The horrors of Nazism along with significant shifts in global geopolitics provoked European and North American anthropologists to rethink prevailing race ideas and racial classifications. This new racial reasoning culminated in two major United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Statements on Race in 1950 and 1951.

Chapter 6 explores the gradual decline of the “Caucasian race” category, at least among scientists, from 1952 to the present. Once again, momentous social, political, and cultural shifts around the world spurred changes in race science. Especially notable events were the post–World War II decolonization struggles of people of color in Africa and Asia and the Civil Rights movement in the United States (1954–65).

In chapter 7 I briefly consider the history of Russian expansion into the Caucasus region to make sense of the Russians’ racialization of the “darkskinned” Chechens and other Caucasian peoples, particularly during the ongoing Russian–Chechen wars. The Chechens’ struggle highlights the historically contingent and paradoxical relationship between peoples of the Caucasus region and the history of the “Caucasian race” category. It also demonstrates that, as Étienne Balibar says, “the discourses of race and nation are never very far apart.”

-21-

Questia, a part of Gale, Cengage Learning. www.questia.com

"Where Caucasian Means Black"

"Race," Nation, and the Chechen Wars

7

Every manufacturer lives in his factory like the colonial and the sub-
version of Lyons is a sort of insurrection of San Domingo.... The
barbarians who menace society are neither in the Caucasus nor in
the Steppes of Tartary; they are in the suburbs of our industrial
cities.

—Saint-Marc Girardin (1831)

As we have seen, the history of the Caucasus region is both intertwined with and distinct from the history of the
"Caucasian race" myth. As I discussed in chapter 2, German philosopher Christoph Meiners and German physician
and anthropologist Johann Blumenbach coined the "Caucasian race" idea was with reference to the Caucasus
region and mountains. Blumenbach in particular aligned scientific authority behind myths about the Caucasian
origins of humanity and tales of the unique beauty of the Caucasian peoples, especially Circassians and
Georgians.

Yet, while Blumenbach famously cast Georgians as prototypical members of a Caucasian race in an eighteenth-
century context that encouraged such an expansive view of Europeans' racial affinities, Caucasian peoples have
been racially identified in various ways, and not always as "white" and "European." Nineteenth-century
raciologists such Robert Gordon Latham, William Ripley, and Joseph Deniker rejected the notion of a widespread
Caucasian race that encompassed northern and western Europeans as well as Georgians, Chechens, Dagestanis,
and Armenians and peoples from North Africa, India, and the Middle East. At the same time, they considered the
Caucasian peoples to be racially distinct from various "races of Europe." The revival of Georges Cuvier's old three-
race theory (of "Caucasian," "Negro," and "Mongolian" races) between 1935 and the 1950s repositioned the
Caucasian peoples within the "Caucasian race" category.
In Russia, however, popular racial discourse has gone in a different direction. In recent decades, Russians have taken to referring to the peoples of the Caucasus as “black” (chernyi), especially during the recent RussianChechen wars.

Such shifting racial classifications in the sciences of race, as we have seen, have been impelled by social and political developments more than by autonomous advances in science. Changing ideas about the “racial” identity of peoples of the Caucasus have expressed myths of human and European origins, changing ideas about Europe’s boundaries, and Russia’s debates and anxieties concerning its “Europeanness”—and racial “whiteness”—compared to “Asiatic” Caucasians. The Russians’ labeling of Caucasians as “blacks,” then, follows a typical pattern of race-making, or racialization. It recalls how Europe itself was given racial meaning in the eighteenth century, and how this is happening again today, how medieval ethnic divisions within “Christendom” were given racial meanings in the nineteenth century, and how, as Étienne Balibar says, “the discourses of race and nation are never very far apart.”

So far, I have examined processes of race-making largely through the history of race science. This chapter, by exploring the emergence of Russia’s racial discourse of “black” Caucasians, highlights another facet of the history the “Caucasian race” idea: how people once regarded as exemplary “whites” could, in another time and place, be regarded racially as “blacks.” This racialization process has its roots in four sets of historical events: the long-running confrontation of Christianity and Islam on the Eurasian landmass; more than two centuries of struggles by Caucasian peoples against Russian (and Soviet) imperial domination; political struggles concerning the place of Russia and Caucasia within Europe and Asia; and conflicts within post-Soviet Russia concerning global status, economic well-being, and Russian identity. This case of race-making also sheds light on the various ways in which notions of racial “whiteness” and “blackness” still serve political projects of racialized domination and exclusion. It clarifies how notions of a “white race,” or racial whiteness, have a broader reach than the history of the “Caucasian race” category, which has been a specific permutation of the history of racial whiteness. Whiteness, as Vron Ware says, “is not reducible to skin color but refers to ways of thinking and behaving ‘steeped’ in histories of raciology.”
Russia and Caucasia

Basic to this story is the character of the Caucasus region as a crossroads for Muslim, Orthodox Christian, and Persian peoples and cultures and the history of Russian imperialism in the region. Caucasia, the region that encompasses the great Caucasus Mountains, comprises northern Caucasus (or Ciscaucasia), which includes Chechnya and Dagestan, and Transcaucasia (or southern Caucasus), south of the mountains. Transcaucasia now comprises the independent states of "Georgia in the northwest, Azerbaijan in the east, and Armenia, situated largely on the high mountainous plateau south of Georgia and west of Azerbaijan" (see figure 13). Between antiquity and the fourteenth century CE, Caucasia experienced invasions by Scythians, Alani, Huns, Khazars, Arabs, Seljuq Turks, and Mongols. Its later history began with prolonged rivalry between Ottoman Turkey and Persia (now Iran) and has been marked by Russian power and "culture, which penetrated farther and farther into Caucasia from the sixteenth century onward." 

The region contains enormous ethnic and linguistic diversity. More than fifty different peoples inhabit Transcaucasia alone, with several language families. The Georgian language, which is part of a larger Kartvelian (or South Caucasian) language group, is the most widely spoken Caucasian language, and it is represented by a literary tradition that dates back to the fifth century. In light of Europe's emergence from the earlier religious and geographical idea of Christendom, it is significant that Christianity reached Armenia in 314 and Georgia in 330, before it came to most of Europe. Persian influences came to the region in the fifth and sixth centuries, and Islam followed in the seventh century. The Ottomans cut Georgia off from western Christendom when they conquered Constantinople in 1453, and during the next three centuries the region became a site of Turkish and Persian domination and competition. While Orthodox Christianity, with affinities to Russian Orthodoxy, has remained the dominant religion in Georgia and Armenia (in Transcaucasia), Christianity lost ground in the western and central North Caucasus in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and Islam became the dominant religion there. The Chechens converted to (Sunni) Islam, which Dagestanis had brought to the North Caucasus in 1650. Moreover, as I will explain shortly, the Muslim faith of the Chechens and Dagestanis has been central to their resistance to Russian expansion.
Russian imperial expansion into the Caucasus, which began with Cossack incursions into the region in the sixteenth century, has been a central part of subsequent Caucasian history. Russia's empire differed from the empires of the great Western imperial powers. Russia colonized contiguous borderlands rather than distant colonies, "and its enduring ancien régime social order and its 'emperor of all Russian (rossiiskoe) lands' pose a series of contrasts to the European experience." The Russian Empire created a distinction between those people who were within Russia's imperial orbit (rossiiskii) and those who ethnically Russian (russkii).

Russia's first systematic advance into the region occurred during 1783–1824. In 1783, Georgia's king entered into an alliance with Catherine II of Russia for protection against Islamic expansion with the Treaty of Georgievsk, in which Russia guaranteed Georgia's independence and territorial integrity. Yet Georgia was overrun by Persian forces in 1795, and in 1801, Russian czar Alexander I incorporated the Georgian kingdom of Kartli-Kakheti into the Russian Empire. Russia annexed the western Georgian kingdom of Imereti in 1810, followed by Guria, Mingrelia, Svaneti, and Abkhazia between 1829 and 1864. Georgia retained a distinct national identity and experienced a national revival—economically and culturally—in the nineteenth century. After the Russian Revolution of 1917, the Bolsheviks established a short-lived Transcaucasian federation, encompassing Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan. Georgians briefly set up an independent Georgian state in 1918, but in February 1921, Stalin installed a Soviet regime in Georgia's capital, Tbilisi.

During the Stalinist era (1928–53), Georgia suffered forced collectivization of peasant agriculture, repression of all expressions of nationalism, and political purges. It was transformed from an agrarian country to a largely urban, industrial one. With Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's reforms in the late 1980s, Georgians began to organize for independence, and Georgia gained independence on April 9, 1991. Conflicts soon emerged with "breakaway elements" in South Ossetia and Abkhazia that remain unresolved; and after eleven years of rule by Eduard Shevardnadze, the former Soviet politician, Georgia had what one observer has called "the second birth of Georgian independence": a peaceful "revolution of roses" in November 2003 that brought Mikheil Saakashvili to power.

Georgia's relationship to Russia has always been different from that of the North Caucasians. As Austin Jersild says, "Eastern Orthodoxy obviously created some natural affinities between Russia and Georgia, but the cooperation extended beyond matters of faith and the church."
Gians also shared many other ideas and assumptions with Russians. In the late nineteenth century, educated
“Georgians viewed Russia as their bridge to Europe, and themselves as the chief representative of the ‘West’ on
the ‘Eastern’ frontier of the Caucasus.” Although they tended to regard the mountain peoples of the north as “the
savage ‘other,’” they thought of Georgia’s mountain people as providing “a glimpse into the past of a hardy and
enduring Georgian identity.”

Russia’s encounter with the North Caucasus has been substantially different. Russia conquered Transcaucasia
first, while in the North Caucasus “the vast mountain range shielded its inhabitants from Russian rule.”22 The
region was linguistically and socially disunited when Russia pushed into it in the 1780s, but most of the North
Caucasus from 1785 to 1791, including Chechnya and Dagestan, united behind Sheikh Mansur Ushurma, a
Chechen Muslim sheikh of the Naqshbandiya Sufi order, in a “holy war against the Russians.”23 The Russians were
able to defeat the North Caucasians by 1791, but the jihad “left the memory that resistance as well as unity
around Islam were possible.”24

Between 1824 and 1922, North Caucasus experienced recurring holy wars. The feudal system was replaced by an
economic order of clans and free peasant societies, “and the tariqat (the Sufi orders) provided a new ideology and
became deeply implanted among the population.”25 Unity developed in the region around Islamic shariat law, and
“Arabic language and culture spread from Dagesthan to the Adyghe [Circassian] territories.”26 Between 1834 and
1859, the Chechens and other North Caucasians fought an aggressive but ultimately unsuccessful guerrilla war
against the Russians behind the leadership of Imam Shamil. In 1865, “the Russians deported 39,000 Chechens to
Ottoman Turkish territory,” and North Caucasians rose up again against the Russians in 1877–78 and 1921–22.27
After 1922, North Caucasians revolted sporadically, and the USSR added to earlier Russian efforts to pacify the
North Caucasians—which had included settlement of Russian peasants, assimilation, co-optation of Caucasian
elites, and efforts to uproot Islam — by attempting “genocide through the deportation of entire North Caucasian
nations.”28

With the end of the Soviet Union, much of the Caucasus entered a period of turmoil. While most of the
autonomous republics of the North Caucasus remained part of the new Russian Federation, Chechnya quickly
moved toward independence. The first Chechen war broke out in 1994 when Russia invaded Chechnya, allying
itself with Chechen opponents of the government of General Djokar Dudayev, who took control of the

Questia, a part of Gale, Cengage Learning. www.questia.com

Publication Information: Book Title: The Rise and Fall of the Caucasian Race: A Political History of Racial Identity. Contributors: Bruce Baum
Chechen government in 1991 and proclaimed Chechen independence. Russian leaders have been motivated by a long-standing Russian aim to dominate the region between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea. They have sought to secure Russian trade routes and southern borderlands, as well as to control trade to central Asia. The stakes of this imperial project have been raised recently by the development of oil and gas fields around the Caspian Sea. These energy resources have also attracted the interest of the world’s leading industrial powers, particularly the United States, which has extended economic and military aid to Georgia and established a military presence there.

**Russian Images of Caucasians**

This history plays a complex role in the present. Christian Caryl explains, "Islam remains a source of identity and even militancy for many Caucasians; yet this fails to explain why so many Muslim Caucasians, in contrast to the Chechens, seem to have made their peace with the modern Russian state, and why so many Christian Caucasians, most notably the Georgians, have since become intensely anti-Russian." Still, the history of Russian-Caucasian relations, including historical Russian images of Caucasian peoples, has informed contemporary Russian beliefs and prejudices about Caucasians.

During the nineteenth century, Russian writers tended to refer to Caucasians, especially North Caucasian mountaineers, as "savages" (dikie). Russian civil servant Platon Zubov wrote in 1834 that the Chechens "stand out among all other mountain tribes by their particular propensity for robbery and predatoriness, their avidity for pillage and murder, their perfidy, bellicose spirit, audacity pigheadedness, savageness, fearlessness and unbridled insolence." Zubov expressed similar views of the Lezgins in Dagestan and the Abkhazians, and he called the population of Transcaucasia "excessively lazy" and "Intellectually limited." He contended that Russian conquest of the Caucasus would serve "the greater benefit of the Empire and of the Caucasians." General A. P. Yermolov (1777–1861) declared, "There is not under the sun a people more vile, perfidious and criminal than [the Chechens]."

Yet Russia’s Orthodox Christian heritage has led Russians to regard Muslim and Christian Caucasians in different ways. Russians have tended to regard Muslim adversaries as "stupid, primitive, sly, treacherous,” and to
treat them "as 'rebels' and 'bandits.'" In contrast, they often considered the peoples of the Christian Transcaucasian nations, Georgia and Armenia, as culturally and morally superior to the Muslims "in the Russian hierarchy of ethnic prejudices." Zubov, for instance, said that the Armenians, who dominated regional trade, "in many respects deserve esteem and attention." The Georgians "always distinguished themselves by a spirit of bravery, courage and martial prowess," although they "have not taken an interest in the sciences, in commerce and other peaceful occupations."

Russian anti-Muslim prejudices have been reinforced by recent wars with Muslims in Tadjikistan and Chechnya. Among the ethnic non-Russians that make up the population of contemporary Russia, about 18 to 20 million are Sunni Muslims. Most of them are concentrated in the North Caucasus and the Volga-Ural region (conquered by Russia in the sixteenth century). Some Russian nationalists present Russian "as a noble 'crusader' in [this] contact zone between Christianity and Islam in the border area between Europe and Asia." In addition, Russians' awareness of the Chechen Mafia operating in Russia has fueled Russian popular images of Chechen criminality, even though Caucasians in general and Chechens in particular are responsible for only a small proportion of the crime in Russia.

**Nineteenth-Century European Images of Caucasus and Russia**

The historical Russian images of Caucasians were closely related to nineteenth-century European racialized discourses about Caucasians and Russians. Consider a couple representative examples of this tradition. An article on the Caucasus in the 1853 *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (Edinburgh), which was published at the start of the Crimean War and in the wake of several decades of Russian advances into the North Caucasus, reiterated old European assessments of the distinctive beauty of some of the Caucasian peoples: "Several of the tribes [of the Caucasus], particularly the Circassians, Georgians, and Imeretians, are accounted the handsomest people in the world, the men being tall and powerful, the women slender and graceful, and both having regular features and expressive eyes." The remark about "regular features" repeats earlier Eurocentric notions of beauty among these "exotic" Asiatic peoples. In this account, the "Abasians and Ossetes are described as the rudest of the mountain tribes. With dark complexions and irregular features, the former have generally a very re-
pulsive expression of countenance, emblematic of their moral and social inferiority." The article also included a harsh judgment of Russia’s actions in the region:

With that indomitable spirit of independence which most of the Caucasian tribes have displayed, it is scarce to be expected that they will ever cultivate the arts of peace under the domination of the Russians. Many of the inhabitants are inclined to commercial pursuits; and if they were not disturbed by the alarms of hostile invaders, commerce would do more to advance the general cultivation of the people than its conquest by a nation which is itself only half civilized.

This survey of the Caucasus was published at a time when European commentators melded together ideas of “race” and “nation.” Accordingly, it ended with population estimates for the “various principal races” in the region: “tribes of the race of Kartvel” (i.e., Georgians), Armenians, Turkish and Persian tribes, Lesghians, Abasians, and Circassians.

French geographer Élisée Reclus (1830–1905) offered another characteristic European account of Caucasia in his multivolume work The Universal Geography (1876): “The Caucasian mountain system is often regarded as belonging to Europe.” Noting the Promethean myth of the ancient Greeks, he said:

A sort of superstition ... formerly induced savants to apply the term Caucasian to all the fair European and Asiatic races, thus testifying to the instinctive reverence with which the nations have ever regarded these mountains forming the barrier between the two worlds. This border-land was supposed to be still inhabited by the purest representatives of the race, whose beauty, symmetry, and graceful carriage were spoken of as physical advantages peculiar to all white peoples. Nor has this term Caucasian yet quite disappeared from ordinary language as the synonym of the White, Aryan, or Indo-European stock.

For Reclus, there was no longer any question “that the Caucasus belongs to Asia.” Concerning the Caucasian peoples, he added:

Historically, also, the inhabitants of the Caucasus belong to the Asiatic world. Before the intervention of Russia the Georgians, Mingrelians, Armenians, Kurds, Tatars, and other Transcaucasian peoples maintained re-
lations ... chiefly with the inhabitants of Anatolia and Persia. The southern slopes facing the sun are also much more densely peopled than those turned towards the arid steppes of Europe. Hence, even after their annexation to Russia, the centre of gravity of these Asiatic lands was naturally found at the southern foot of the Caucasus, where is concentrated the aggressive force of the empire against the other regions of Western Asia.47

Reclus's geographical view of the Caucasus and Caucasians basically corresponded to the racial classification of Caucasians that Deniker and Ripley put forward in their "races of Europe" schemes (see chapter 4).48

"Black" Caucasians

Like these European images of Russia and the Caucasus, Russians' ideas about themselves and Caucasians have also been influenced by the history of racial thought. Between about 1930 and 1950, as European and U.S. scientists recovered the notion of a "Caucasian race," Victor Bunak and other Soviet anthropologists posited a separate "Caucasian race in Georgia and the central Terek region of the northern Caucasus."49 Given the long-standing disputes about the European or Asian pedigree of Russians and Caucasians, it is also significant that Soviet anthropologists carried forward certain "races of Europe" notions at least through the 1970s. Writing on the "Races of Man" in the Great Soviet Encyclopedia for 1978, Soviet anthropologist N. N. Cheboksarov named three "basic racial groups: the Negroid, Europeoid, and Mongoloid race."50 (Note that Cheboksarov used "Europeoid" rather than "Caucasian" or "Caucasoid.") Anthropologists, Cheboksarov said, distinguished various "local" or "second order races" among the Europeoids, including three "short-headed (brachycephalic) southern Europeoids": the Adriatic (or Dinaric) race, the Armenoid race, and the Pamiro-Ferganian race.51 These categories, which went back to Deniker and Ripley at the turn of the twentieth century, placed Caucasian peoples in the "Armenoid race." Russians, by contrast, were either "Alpine" and "Middle European" or members of a "Baltic" (or "White Sea-Baltic") race.52

Russian popular racial discourse moved in a different but related direction. Russians have used the term chernyi (black) since the nineteenth century to refer to people with dark complexion or dark eyes and hair.53 But

\[\text{-228-}\]
in recent years they have taken to referring more pointedly to people from the Caucasus as “blacks.” Against the backdrop of the ongoing Russian-Chechen wars (1994–96 and 1999–), Russians have aimed this epithet especially at Chechens. In 1994, after more than two hundred former paratroopers in Moscow beat up several dark-skinned Caucasian bystanders at the annual August pogrom on Russia’s airborne forces day, a traffic police officer said, “When these blacks rape your daughters, you’ll be complaining. Let these guys sort them out.” Reflecting on the rising tensions in Russia between Slavic and non-Slavic citizens due to the first Russian-Chechen war, Abdul-Vakhed Niyazov, head of the Islamic Cultural Center of Russia in Moscow, commented, “It’s natural that a country going through difficult times finds itself with various movements and parties who try to exploit the dark image of ethnic and religious minorities.”

Five years later, in 1999, after two Moscow apartment buildings were leveled by explosions, thousands of dark-skinned natives of Dagestan, Chechnya, Ingushetia, and other areas in the Caucasus found themselves “suspects—and potential scapegoats—in Russia’s reaction to the suspected bombings.” They faced calls for Caucasians to be deported from Russia and graffiti urging Russians to “Kill the Blacks.”

The label “blacks,” Alf Grannes explains, has been based on the fact that many Caucasian peoples “have a somewhat darker complexion than the typical Slavs” of Russia. But the Caucasians’ darker complexes alone do not explain why Russians call them blacks. Rather, the use of “black” (chernyi) enables Russians to assert a deep “racial” difference between themselves and Caucasians. In a manner reminiscent of how Caribbean and South Asian immigrants to England were named “blacks” in the 1980s, Russians have taken up old and widely traveled aesthetic and moral connotations of racial “blackness” and projected them onto Caucasians. Simultaneously, they have implicitly claimed for themselves old aesthetic and moral connotations of “whiteness.” Grannes notes that while in recent years a cultural racism has become prominent in the West, emphasizing “insurmountable cultural differences” rather than biological differences, “Russian racism has more in common with the biological racism of the 1920s and 1930s.” Notions of “racial hygiene” still circulate in Russia beyond the ranks of avowed racists, along with concerns that “real Russians” are disappearing due to the misfortune of the Russian people having been “so ‘miscegenated’ by non-Russians (Jews, Tatars, Finno-Ugric peoples, etc.).” In the pseudoscientific remarks on race of many contemporary Russians, geny (genes) is a key word, along with...
the nation’s gene pool or gene bank. ... Since genes, and not primarily social environment, are seen as the prime clues to human behavior, one must be aware of “bad genes”! Thus the important [but popularly overestimated] role played by Caucasians in organized crime in Russia is often explained as a genetic phenomenon: “это у них в генах сидит!” “It sits in their genes!”

In sum, Russians exhibit a widespread tendency to explain the behavior of Caucasian peoples, particularly Chechens, Azerbaijanis, Georgians, and sometimes Armenians, in terms of “inherent features.”

How Caucasians Became “Blacks”

It is not surprising that, as Niyazov says, “a country going through difficult times” would find “itself with various movements and parties who try to exploit the dark image of ethnic and religious minorities.” Yet two aspects of this situation are far from “natural” (Niyazov’s term): accumulated Russian anti-Caucasian prejudices that have fed the Caucasians’ “dark image,” and the way in which this image has been put to use in a process of distinctly racial “othering,” or racialization. This situation demands further analysis, but this much can be said with confidence: the Caucasians became “blacks” as Russians refashioned well-established negative stereotypes of “dark-skinned” Caucasians in light of modern race ideas. As I noted earlier, Soviet raciologists from the 1930 through (at least) the 1970s considered Caucasians racially distinct from Slavic Russians, but without any necessary connotations of racial superiority and inferiority. The demeaning Russian popular characterization of “black” Caucasians, however, is decidedly different from the Soviet raciologists’ views, incorporating widely traveled connotations of abject racial “blackness” into older anti-Caucasian prejudices.

This development needs to be understood in relation to Russia’s domestic political and economic struggles in the post-Soviet era. Ronald Grigor Suny observed in 1996, “Almost five years after the end of the Soviet Union, Russia has not consolidated its own identity, has not settled on what kind of state it will become or what form the nation [or nations] within it will take.” This remains true today. “Since 1992,” Catherine Danks observes,
the Russian Federation has been described as being "in transition" from Soviet socialism to a liberal-democratic market economy. This has been a disorienting time which has led to the pauperization of the majority of the population. Little wonder then that the Russians describe themselves as "humiliated and degraded" and that there is widespread belief that outside forces have both promoted and are taking advantage of Russia's weakened condition.62

These struggles, which have been strongly felt by ordinary Russians, are just the sorts of social and political dynamics that often spur people to construct racial others or inferiors. Russia's difficulties have been compounded, moreover, by its loss of "superpower" status, its fragile (and internally contested) sense of "Europeanness"—exacerbated by the inclusion of former "Soviet Bloc" states in the European Union—and its "inferiority complex" in relation to the Europe and the West. Russians may find some compensation for these material and psychological burdens by casting themselves as racially superior to Caucasians, especially in the context of the ongoing Chechen wars.63

One aspect of this racialization process is curious, however. Russians call all Caucasians "blacks," including the largely Christian Georgians and Armenians as well as Muslim Chechens and Dagestanis.64 Yet, as I said earlier, Russians also tend to hold Georgians and Armenians in somewhat higher regard. The history of racialization processes that I have traced throughout this book suggests this inconsistency in Russian ethno-racial thought may not hold up indefinitely. For now, the history of Russian colonialism and Russians' sense of all Caucasians as "Asiatic" seem to have overriding significance. Keep in mind that North Caucasians, including Chechens and Dagestanians, are geographically closer to Russia than the Transcaucasian states of Georgia and Armenia.65 The latter, while largely Orthodox Christian, are located closer to Asia and the Middle East. Geographic proximity, however, has never been the sole (or even the most important) determinant of how dominant groups or peoples have mapped racialized affinities and differences, and religion and politics may soon trump geography. The Muslim Chechens remain at war with Russia, with Russians readily labeling Chechen fighters Islamic "terrorists." At the same time, the United States has begun to befriend Georgia and some Georgians are seeking links to Europe. These developments could lead to the end of "black Caucasians." Time will tell, but Russians (perhaps at the urg-
Conclusion

In the meantime, a recent scientific discovery has given further impetus to voices of Georgian exceptionalism. In the summer of 1999, scientists found two fossil human skulls, estimated to be 1.7 million years old, near Dmanisi, "on a slope of the Caucasus Mountains 55 miles southwest of Tbilisi, the Georgian capital.\textsuperscript{66} The skulls are thought to be the oldest human fossils found outside Africa. Scientists who have studied them have concluded (in an article published in \textit{Science} in 2000) that \textit{Homo sapiens} appears to have migrated out of Africa earlier than previously thought. The site, they said, indicates "a rapid dispersal from Africa into the Caucasus via the Levantine corridor, apparently followed by a much later colonization of adjacent European areas."\textsuperscript{67}

This theory is unlikely to be the final word on the migration of \textit{Homo sapiens} out of Africa. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy in the present context for a couple reasons. First, it provides a curious secular and evolutionary parallel to the story of Noah's ark, which informed the beliefs of Blumenbach, Meiners, and many other scholars from the Middle Ages through the eighteenth century that humankind originated in the Caucasus region (see chapter 2). Where the biblical story tells of the ark landing in the mountains of Ararat, from where Noah's three sons dispersed to Europe, Asia, and Africa, the new scientific theory suggests that some human beings left Africa and migrated through the region now known as Georgia before dispersing into Asia, Europe, and the Americas. While some orthodox Jews and Christians might find special solace in this parallel, it seems to me to be either an interesting coincidence or confirmation that myths and folktales are sometimes valuable sources of knowledge.

Second, and perhaps more instructive, is the way that Georgian archeologist David Lordkipanidze has appropriated the Dmanisi discovery for political purposes. Neal Ascherson reports Lordkipanidze's proposition that the Dmanisi might be considered "the cradle of Europe," which fits nicely with the aims of those Georgians (such as President Saakashvili) who wish to "Westernize Georgia and set it on a track which leads towards the European Union.\textsuperscript{68} "Dmanisi," Lordkipanidze says, "has given Europe
a chance to claim a part in human beginnings: before, they were set only in Africa. And this is also a big chance for Georgia, a stroke of luck. Other Georgians strongly dispute this vision of "Georgia in Europe," however. Georgian novelist Dato Turashvili says, "What I dread is Georgia signing up to an American-ruled West whose creed is anti-Islamic and built on the idea of inevitable culture-clash. This would be utterly wrong for Georgia. Our identity is intimate with the Muslim world, and especially with Iran and Persian civilization."

None of this is necessarily "racial." In fact, as I suggested in chapter 2, it indicates the advantages of eighteenth-century German philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder's physical-geographical approach to human diversity—a missed path that Herder put forward when Meiners and Blumenbach invented the Caucasian race. Herder explicitly challenged the "race" concept and said that "each people is a people: it has its national culture and its language; the zone in which each of them is placed has sometimes put its stamp, sometimes only a thin veil, on each of them." Human diversity "belongs less to the systematic history of nature than to the physicalgeographical history of humanity." Herder's views were not unproblematic. He overstated the cultural distinctiveness of nations and peoples, imagining that each nation, due to geography, has an "original ancestral core." Still, his emphasis on nation over race is compelling. From Herder's perspective, the ideas of a "Caucasian race" and "black" Caucasians are deeply muddled. We can speak meaningfully of Russian nationality and nationalism and of Caucasian nations, such as Georgians, Armenians, Circassians, and Chechens (which is not to say that these notions are uncontentious). While we should avoid Herder's mistake of thinking that each nation has an "ancestral core," his emphasis on nations enables us to address appropriately the historical nationalist struggles in the Caucasus.

There are no "races" at war in the Caucasus. That said, it is clear that many Russians (and probably others) have brought race thinking into these conflicts—that is, have interpreted them, at least in part, in racial terms. Not only was the Caucasus region the site of the invention of the idea of a "Caucasian race," but the Caucasus today is marked by a new processes of racialization: the making of "black" Caucasians. Moreover, this is another chapter in the history of how Europe—as both idea and actuality—has been bound up with racism and racialization projects for more than 350 years. It also shows how the histories of racism and racial whiteness and blackness have diverged from the more specific history of the idea of a Caucasian race.