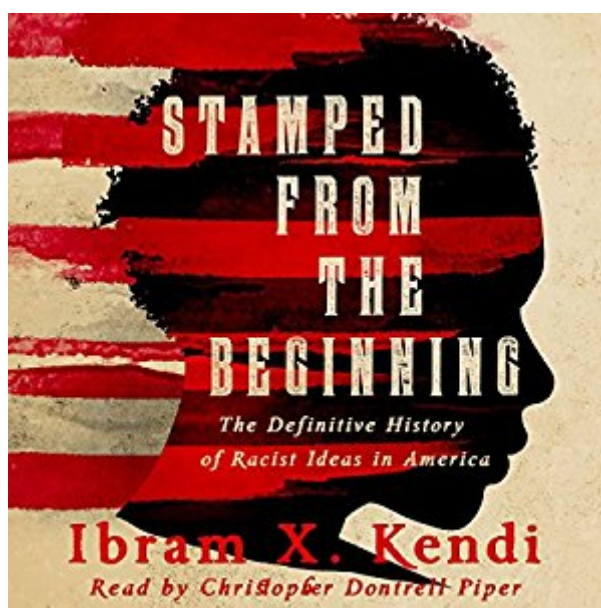


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Stamped From The Beginning: The Definitive History Of Racist Ideas In America



Synopsis

Winner of the 2016 National Book Award for Nonfiction
A New York Times best-seller in race and civil rights
Finalist for the 2016 National Book Critics Circle Award for Nonfiction
"The most ambitious book of 2016" (Washington Post)
A Boston Globe Best Book of 2016
A Washington Post Notable Book of 2016
A Chicago Review of Books Best Nonfiction Book of 2016
A Root Best Book of 2016
A BuzzFeed Best Nonfiction Book of 2016
A Bustle Best Book of 2016
Nominated for 2016 NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Literary Work of Nonfiction
Finalist for the 2017 Hurston/Wright Legacy Award in Nonfiction
A Kirkus Best History Book of 2016
A Kirkus Best Book of 2016 to explain current politics
A Kirkus Best Heartrending Nonfiction Book of 2016
An Entropy Best Nonfiction Book of 2016
The Washington Post 2016 summer reading list
Some Americans cling desperately to the myth that we are living in a post-racial society, that the election of the first Black president spelled the doom of racism. In fact, racist thought is alive and well in America - more sophisticated and more insidious than ever. And as award-winning historian Ibram X. Kendi argues in *Stamped from the Beginning*, if we have any hope of grappling with this stark reality, we must first understand how racist ideas were developed, disseminated, and enshrined in American society. In this deeply researched and fast-moving narrative, Kendi chronicles the entire story of anti-Black racist ideas and their staggering power over the course of American history. *Stamped from the Beginning* uses the life stories of five major American intellectuals to offer a window into the contentious debates between assimilationists and segregationists and between racists and antiracists.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The author posits that there are really 3 sides to the debate of racial disparities existing and persisting. The three sides are segregationists, assimilationists and antiracists. His definition of racism, i.e., the adoption of racist ideas is a simple one, and as such you will see some famous people that will surprise you to be labeled as racist at points in their career. W.E.B. DuBois is certainly a name most readers would never associate with being a "racist" during his long illustrious career. One thing that is most important in these kinds of arguments, is for everyone to be operating from the same definition. So to the author's credit he states his explanation of racist ideas early. Keep in mind, we are not talking about racism, but racist ideas and how these ideas have affected and infected not only Americans but world citizens. "My definition of a racist idea is a simple one: it is any concept that regards one racial group as inferior or superior to another racial group in any way. I define anti-Black racist ideas as the subject of this book as any idea suggesting that Black people, or any group of Black people, are inferior in any way to another racial group." With that in mind, author Ibram Kendi compiles a comprehensive history of racist ideas, using historical "tour guides" to traffic readers through a landscape beginning in mid 1600 to present day. Kendi here makes a powerful statement with this book about how these racist ideas have led to continuing racist discrimination. "I held racist notions of Black inferiority before researching and writing this book. Racist ideas are ideas. Anyone can produce them or consume them, as *Stamped from the Beginning* shows, as interracial cast of producers and consumers show... Fooled by racist ideas, I did not fully realize that the only thing wrong with Black people is that we think something is wrong with Black people. I did not fully realize that the only thing extraordinary about White people is that they think something is extraordinary about White people." That's a potent admission for someone writing the "definitive" history of racist ideas. But I think it is important to this wonderful work by Kendi. As he goes about exposing these ideas, readers may be surprised to find themselves subscribing to ideas that, by Kendi's definition are clearly racist. As we move through the five eras, with our guides, you will be fascinated as these ideas and the consequences of them are brought to light. Thoughts that you have given little attention to, and have become part of your consciousness will hopefully be liberated. Something that black people generally do when they hear some terrible news item, one of the initial thoughts is hoping the perpetrators are not Black. Does that hope spring from our buying into the racist idea that Black people are pathological? And we will be judged by the actions of the perpetrators and

therefore be seen as defective? Is this a racist idea?"Already, the American mind was accomplishing that indispensable intellectual activity of someone consumed with racist ideas: individualizing White negativity and generalizing Black negativity. Negative behavior by any Black person became proof of what was wrong with Black people, while negative behavior by any White person only proved what was wrong with that person."All the ways that racist ideas have worked hand in hand with discrimination are unearthed here. And it may come as a surprise to some that prominent Black leaders of their day held tightly to racist ideas, like uplift suasion. The concept that "was based on the idea that White people could be persuaded away from their racist ideas if they saw Black people improving their behavior, uplifting themselves from their low station in American society. The burden of race relations was placed squarely on the shoulders of Black Americans. Positive Black behavior, abolitionist strategists held, undermined racist ideas, and negative Black behavior confirmed them."Sounds a lot like today's concept of respectability politics, if we would just pull our pants up, stop listening to that damn music, not be so loud, etc. etc. If we would just present ourselves in a more respectable manner, we could then usher in that post-racial epoch that some say is already here.The journey through the racist idea history has to include the players and events of the time periods covered and Kendi does a good job of incorporating that history and integrating the ideas that girded those times. The book clocks in at 500 pages, but it is well worth your time and investment.

This wonderful book provide a clear and readable history of racism that everyone and especially Americans should read. As a white immigrant Christian of moderate means, I am among those who conveniently succumbed to the implicit racism of America, and was repeatedly shocked by the rapier insights Kendi offers in this critical review of racism in America from early slavers to the Constitution, segregationists, abolitionists, assimilationists, and modern white supremacists. No one is safe from his bright light on the blatant and subtle forms of racism, from Jefferson, to Du Bois, to MLK, and Angela Davis, and now to the racism of Trump, who hides his otherwise ebullient racism by calling blacks "Thugs". What shocks me most is how naïve I am in believing I hold antiracist positions, only to discover that Kendi's critique blows holes into some of my beliefs. If I can be so naïve, perhaps so can you. This is a thoughtful and detailed historical summary that helps explain so many of America's current trends and ideologies.

Well researched, well written, and timely. Even the Greeks' felt a difference in color from them (white and black alike) meant that the others were inferior. Darwin's theories were used, the Bible

was used, and any other outlandish theory was used to keep slavery and racist ideals in play. This book is worth more than 5 stars, but I felt that too much information was condensed - this could easily have been 2 or more volumes. This would be an excellent introduction to the history of both slavery and racism for high school or college students.

This book is amazing. It helped me understand where all of the racist ideas came from in our society and how deeply entrenched they are and how we all need a redo of our school curriculum, because our lack of understanding of each other is resulting in crisis as it always has. Thanks for your amazing work.

Borrowed it from the library then decided it was a keeper. Have not finished it yet, but very informative, easy reading. Thank you.

This is an excellent depiction of racism through time.

Incredible overview of the history of racist ideas in America. I'm looking forward to hearing the author in person next week.

Loved, loved loved this book. I feel armed with so much insight! Thank you Dr. Kendi for this fantastic research.

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