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# Introduction

We have seen students read and learn about different cultures and races in textbooks. They often do not internalise the information. They don't apply it to their situation and to their culture. This book allows teachers and students to immerse themselves in the history and nature of culture and cultural diversity in Australia, instead of merely reading about it.

## **The objectives of the book are:-**

- to expand students' awareness of the racial historical perspective;
- to increase students' base of knowledge about their racial identities and about the range of attitudes prevalent today;
- to deepen students' understanding of ethnic groups other than their own, especially those present in their classrooms;
- to help students develop the skills necessary for critical thinking about race & culture, including their own, without equating critical thinking to personal attack;
- to help students to recognise racial groups' differences from their own as learning opportunities instead of threats;
- to encourage students to recognise the contribution they make in the misunderstanding and conflict within groups;
- to help students to develop skills necessary to resolve cultural disagreements without resorting to insults or violence.

# 1. Racism: Towards Understanding

• Some definitions • Biological theories • Cultural differences • Racism and nationalism • The concept of 'the other' • Characteristics of racists • How racism is activated • Anxieties and fears • 'Us versus Them' • Racism and politics • Prejudice and stereotyping • Xenophobia • Ethnocentrism • Group exclusiveness • Institutional racism • Analysis of overt and covert racism

## INTRODUCTION

There exists a deep consciousness about difference amongst animals as well as humans. Both have lived as families and tribes and have been supportive of each other against those from outside the family, outside the tribe.

Primal or herd instinct is based on survival-particularly where there is food scarcity or territorial threats to existence. Anxiety-fear of possible danger threatening human or animal family groups - resulted in psychological bonding which took on varied forms. Bonding was shown by the creation of territorial boundaries - (Enter the lion's den at your peril or enter a human tribal domain against its wishes and conflict will result.) Tribal instinct for survival has been a feature of all living creatures on planet earth.

Written history over the past 5,000 years demonstrates the fear of tribe against tribe, of nation against nation leading to aggression. As time marches on, new technologies have produced deadly weapons, the use of which threatens the very existence of warring tribes and nations.

Over thousands of years, biological, physiognomic, religious and cultural beliefs have set homo-sapiens apart from each other. Human reaction to differences is based on emotion rather than reason. The inability to allow reason to conquer base emotions threatens the existence of our world. During this 20th century two world wars brought untold suffering across territorial boundaries - between those wars and since those wars horrible carnage and slaughter has continued in numerous other wars.

Since the last world war vast global economic changes resulted in the migration of millions seeking a livelihood away from their lands of birth, culture and traditions. Large ethnic nationalities inhabit foreign lands and at certain times of distress, for example, in periods of economic uncertainty and unemployment they become the victims of the majority herd instinct. They are targeted as the cause of the nation's ills.

Difference amongst people has been equated as difference of race. Race has been variously defined. This chapter gives you the opportunity to work out the meaning of

## RACE

/reis/ n. 1 each of the major divisions of humankind, having distinct physical characteristics. 2. a tribe, nation, etc., regarded as of a distinct ethnic stock. 3. the fact or concept of division into races (discrimination based on race). 4 a genus, species, breed, or variety of animals, plants, or microorganisms. 5 a group of persons, animals, or plants connected by common descent. 6 any great division of living creatures (the feathered race; the four-footed race). 7 descent; kindred (of noble race; separate in language and race). 8 a class of persons etc. with some common feature (the race of poets). • race relations-relations between members of different races usu. in the same country. race riot - an outbreak of violence due to racial antagonism. (F f. It. razza, of unkn. orig)  
Source: The Concise Oxford Dictionary

## RACISM

- (a) a belief in the superiority of a particular race, prejudice based on this.  
(b) Antagonism toward other races especially as a result of this.
- The theory that human abilities etc. are determined by race.

### 3. Read the poem on the Buckland riot

July 16, 1857 THE BUCKLAND RIOT

Five hundred sturdy stalwart men  
Rose up in heat and haste,  
To drive the mongols off the Creek  
And lay their dwellings waste.

Five hundred sturdy stalwart men  
Rose up in haste and heat,  
The wretched, starveling Chinamen  
To harry, rob and beat.

To drive the long-tailed devils off,  
Each gallant white was bent;  
To raise their joss-house to the ground,  
And fire each fragile tent.

With whoop, and yell, and wild halloo,  
inflamed with rum and rage,  
The followers of "Yankee Tom"  
A brutal warfare wage.

They scour the creek, and rush the camp,  
And fire the tented town;  
Before the nimble march of flame,  
Storehouse and hut go down:

While, white with fear, the fugitives  
in grief and awe look back  
on volumed smoke and lurid blaze,  
And tent-poles charr'd and black.

But in that woeful waste and wreck  
One wan and wretched wight  
With wither'd face and wistful look  
Forebore to join the flight.

And stood with folded arms amidst  
The ruins of his home,  
As one to whom no greater ill Thenceforth could  
ever come.

A moment's thought, some passing aid,  
They gave that spectral man,  
Then through the fierce and restless throng  
The cry of "Forward" ran.

As sheep before the dingoes fly,  
As leaves before the blast,  
The feeble fearful fugitives  
Flee from their foemen fast.

And on their track, like yelling  
hounds, pursuers closely press,  
The flying hordes to spoliates  
As well as dispossess.

Camp after camp the roaring flame  
Consumed with eager speed;  
While merchandise and gold were filch'd  
With foul rapacious greed.  
And onward press the fugitives,  
In terror and dismay;  
Woe worth the raid of Buckland's Creek!  
Woe worth this evil day!

They cross the Flat, they reach the Ford,  
The swollen winter stream -  
Its waters rudely traversed by  
A narrow rugged beam.

They throng the creaking log that bends  
Beneath the pressing crowd,  
When from the shore a warning voice  
Rings forth in accents loud:

"You rush to certain death, and on Destruction  
wildly run;-  
Arrest your headlong flight awhile -  
pass over one by one".

Humane the voice, humane the act,  
For in the stream beneath  
A score of hunted men had else Encounter'd cer-  
tain death.

The river cross'd, the fugitives  
Pursue their rapid flight;  
Nor pause till thirty miles remov'd  
From where they camp'd last night;

From where the ruin'd joss house lifts  
Its charred and shattered frame,  
And household gear, and food and tools, Were  
given to the flame.

From where the ground is thickly strewn  
With all their worldly store,  
To ruthless rapine's red right hand  
Entirely given oer.

The hunted men encamp in fear,  
And, faint and famish'd creep  
Beneath their half-burnt blankets,  
where they woo unwilling sleep.

Five hundred sturdy stalwart men,  
The wretched starvelings chased;  
Five hundred sturdy stalwart men  
Those starvelings homes laid waste.

Now, shame on craven fugitives,  
But greater shame befall  
Each man who drove them forth by fire, And  
robb'd them of their all.

Shame on such Christian brigandage,-  
The sack of pagan tents;-  
Shame on the strength that's pitiless,  
The wrath that ne'er relents.

And honour to the few who dared  
To shield the hunted mob  
From men with hands as prone to smite,  
As they were apt to rob.

And honour to the kindly Scott,  
Who lent a willing hand,  
And food and shelter gave to some  
Of that fear-stricken band.

But infamy, and deep disgrace,  
And endless shame alight  
on those who drove, by fire and force,  
These Chinamen to flight.

Melbourne Punch, (July 16 1857)