

What's the Use of Race?

Modern Governance and the Biology of Difference

edited by Ian Whitmarsh and David S. Jones

The MIT Press
Cambridge, Massachusetts
London, England

© 2010 Massachusetts Institute of Technology

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form by any electronic or mechanical means (including photocopying, recording, or information storage and retrieval) without permission in writing from the publisher.

For information about special quantity discounts, please email special_sales@mitpress.mit.edu

This book was set in Stone Sans and Stone Serif by Toppan Best-set Premedia Limited. Printed and bound in the United States of America.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

What's the use of race? : modern governance and the biology of difference / edited by Ian Whitmarsh and David S. Jones.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-262-51424-8 (pbk. : alk. paper)

1. Genetics—Social aspects. 2. Racism. I. Whitmarsh, Ian, 1975– II. Jones, David S. (David Shumway), 1970–

QH438.7.W53 2010

323.11—dc22

2009037118

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Acknowledgments

This book is the final product of a series of conversations begun at a conference hosted by the Center for the Study of Diversity in Science, Technology, and Medicine (CSD) in April 2008. The CSD was founded at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in June 2000 by a generous grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Professor Evelyn M. Hammonds envisioned a center that would pursue two primary goals. Scholars would examine the impact of diversity on the theory and practice of science, medicine, and technology, as well as the contributions of racial and ethnic minorities to those fields.

Starting in 2006, the CSD organized a series of three conferences that explored questions of race and technology. The first, "Race, Pharmaceuticals, and Medical Technology," focused on BiDil, the first (and still only) medication approved by the Food and Drug Administration for use in a specific racial or ethnic group, people who self-identify as black. Many of the papers from this conference were published as a special symposium in the *Journal of Law, Medicine & Ethics* in the fall of 2008. Generalizing beyond pharmaceuticals, the 2007 conference, "The Business of Race and Science," examined how the modern sciences of race have been used to justify a series of race-specific products and policies, from cosmetics, vitamins, and jogging shoes to tests of genetic ancestry. The final conference, "What's the Use of Race," broadened the conversation still further, asking how race has been, and should be, used in governance, with examples drawn from law, science and medicine. A subset of the papers presented were expanded into full length essays and then revised substantially to produce the essays found in this volume.

The conference and this resulting volume would not have been possible without the assistance of many people. Rosalind Williams and David Mindell, the chairs of the Program in Science, Technology, and Society (STS) at MIT, and Philip Khoury and Deborah Fitzgerald, the deans of the School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences, provided an institutional home and much needed support for the CSD. Debbie Meibres, who orchestrated public programs for STS, handled most of the planning and logistical details that made each of the three conferences a seemingly effortless success.

The conferences themselves would not have been possible without the thoughtful contributions of all of the speakers, as well as the active participation of a surprisingly dynamic and challenging audience. Many of our colleagues at MIT, especially Stefan Helmreich, Erica James, Heather Paxson, Susan Silbey, Mike Fischer, David Kaiser, Beth Coleman, Melissa Nobles, and Abha Sur provided useful advice as well. Evelyn Hammonds, despite her new roles at Harvard University, always remained a valuable source of wisdom.

At MIT Press, Marguerite Avery has been an exceedingly encouraging and productive editor. Erin Shoudy, Marcy Ross, and Deborah Cantor-Adams guided us through the maze of details of the publishing process. Continued support from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation allowed us to see this project through to completion.

None of these essays are expected to provide the last word on these subjects. We hope, however, that they will stimulate on-going dialog on these vital issues for science and society.