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Curating Racism: Understanding Field Museum Physical Anthropology from 1893 to 1969

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Keywords Anthropology; Scientific Racism; Field Museum

Abstract Early anthropological study has often been credited with advancing both existing and new racist ideologies. As major research institutions, nineteenth and twentieth-century museums were often complicit in this process. This paper uses the Field Museum as a case study to explore how natural history museums of this period developed and propagated scientific racism. While previous research has examined the 1933 *The Races of Mankind* exhibition, this paper will present a broader understanding of the ways in which the Field Museum perpetuated racist worldviews. Additionally, it will take a unique focus on the impact these ideas had outside of academic circles. Through analysis of the Field Museum's collection, exhibition, and publication practices from the 1893 Chicago World's Columbian Exposition through the 1969 deinstallation of *The Races of Mankind* exhibition, this research demonstrates how the Field Museum developed and promulgated concepts of racial hierarchy and race as biology, masquerading these theories as scientific fact. Additionally, it reveals that the Field's message of scientific racism was successful in reaching large audiences and gave scientific credence to racist ideologies beyond academia. To reach this conclusion, the study employs analysis of archival material from the Field Museum, the Chicago History Museum, and the Getty Research Institute collections, in addition to newspaper archives and other primary and secondary sources. In the twenty-first century that continues to be plagued by racism, it is crucial to look back on the past and understand museum anthropology's complicity in developing hierarchies that still exist today and remain conscious of its legacies moving forward.

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Introduction: Scientific Racism in the Origins of Anthropology

Anthropology of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries often focused on the subject of race. The discipline developed a multitude of racial theories and ideologies, many of which have come to be understood as racist and have been discredited. However, one area of the discipline in which legacies of racism are still felt into the twenty-first century is natural history museum anthropology. By investigating the role of natural history museums in the creation

and expansion of scientific racism, we can gain insight into issues in modern anthropological practice.

Although ideas similar to racial prejudice have existed in many forms preceding the late modern period, it is in the eighteenth century that a biological categorization of racial groups emerged.¹ As Europeans explored, conquered, and colonized vast areas of the globe, European biologists began to classify non-Western animals, plants, and people. With the publication of Darwin's *On the Origin of the Species*, scientists and anthropologists gained a mechanism by which they could understand and explain human variation.

As race science developed, scientists and anthropologists used increasingly elaborate schema involving skin color, skull size, hair color and texture, eye shape and color, nose shape, and other features to classify and rank different peoples. In his treatises *Social Selection* (1896) and *The Aryan and His Social Role* (1899), French scientist Valcher de Lapouge synthesized many of these preceding ideas, declaring that through Darwinian evolution different races of man had developed (of which the Aryans were best). He claimed that these races could be distinguished through physical traits and inherent social characteristics.² By the late 1800s, many within and outside academia believed in a theory now described as scientific racism: that immutable and innate physical, psychological, and often cultural characteristics can be used to group and arrange peoples in a hierarchy with whites at the top.³ Although today it is generally understood within anthropology and related disciplines that race is socially constructed and not based in any biological reality, scientific racism continues to plague many social and scientific realms.

As an internationally renowned education and research institution, the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago functions as an excellent case study for investigating how scientific racism was developed in, and spread from, anthropology departments of natural history museums in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. From the museum's inception in 1893 with the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition through the close of *The Races of Mankind* in 1969, the Field Museum participated in collections, exhibitions, and publication practices that developed and propagated the concepts of racial hierarchy and race as biology, masquerading these ideas as scientific fact. The Field's message of scientific racism was successful in reaching large audiences and gave scientific credence to racist ideologies well beyond academia.

A Race Towards Racism: Early Field Museum Collections Practices

Scientific racism, early American anthropology, and natural history museums developed a symbiotic relationship in which scientific racism fueled collection and curation, and these practices, in turn, supported and exported the precepts of scientific racism through exhibition and publication. During the period in which museums collected many of the artifacts and specimens we can still see today, understandings of scientific racism and white superiority led many to believe that non-whites were more primitive and animalistic. Their bodies and their property were understood to belong in museums of natural history alongside zoological, botanical, and geological materials, marking them as inferior to whites. Additionally, the belief that non-white peoples were inherently biologically and culturally inferior to whites led many European and American museum anthropologists to assume that so-called primitive peoples were "in danger of extinction in the near future under the advance of white man's civilization,

to the most highly cultured peoples of the world.”⁴ This widely accepted belief incited a collecting frenzy, with anthropologists of every focus rushing to amass and document aspects of native bodies and cultures before they disappeared.⁵

Modeling their collections on those of zoological and botanical departments, museum anthropologists attempted to create comprehensive archives of human remains, such that researchers could conduct observational and statistical analyses, drawing conclusions about racial groups and their ancestors. Anthropologists postulated that anything from intelligence, to racial ancestry, to individual character, would be divulged by the skeletons given enough dedicated study. These collections became anthropological “laboratories,” in which racial theories were developed, racial hierarchies were advanced, and cultural stereotypes were reinforced.

The scurry to acquire scientifically valuable specimens before non-white groups became extinct spurred illegal and unethical practices that reinforced racial hierarchies and colonialist attitudes. Museums sponsored expeditions for their curators to collect specimens for research and exhibitions. In the United States, these enterprises often focused on Native Americans. The prevailing discourses of racial hierarchy and the debasement of Native personhood allowed anthropologists to violate Native customs and laws without question. Expeditions often exhumed the bodies of Native people in secret, without the permission of the deceased’s descendants. The treatment of ancestral remains akin to zoological or botanical specimens disregarded the personhood of Native peoples and perpetuated their dehumanization by whites. Even before research was conducted on the remains, these collection practices reinforced racial hierarchy.

The Field Museum was no exception in this regard. Beginning with the collection’s origins as part of the 1893 World’s Columbian Exhibition, the Field joined in the rush to catalog and study all of humanity, hoping to house a collection that would be representative of the world’s racial diversity.⁶ By 1933, the Field had amassed an impressive physical anthropology collection including approximately 3,600 total skeletons and whole crania, 1,170 skullcaps, and 616 bone fragments.⁷ Specimens were procured based upon whether accession into the collection would illustrate the physical characteristics of important ethnic or racial groups.⁸ This practice of collecting human remains for the purpose of studying race reinforced theories of non-white racial inferiority. Instead of representing individuals with rich histories and cultures, the Field’s nameless human remains, often collected without permission, were perceived as biological specimens like the many animals and plants in the museum’s archives: to be collected, cataloged, and researched without acknowledgment of culture, individuality, or humanity.

The Field Museum also followed the anthropological trends of the period in utilizing collections methodologies that expressed implicit theories of racial hierarchy. Early in his career, the museum’s first anthropology curator Franz Boas took an active role in promoting the scientific and educational value of collecting human specimens, especially for learning and teaching about race.⁹ Boas, like many of his contemporaries, often acquired skeletal material through illicit methods. For him, scientific prerogative overrode any moral obstacles: “it is most unpleasant work to steal bones from a grave, but what is the use, someone has to do it.”¹⁰ Field Museum curator George Amos Dorsey followed a similar methodology, stating in a letter

to an assistant curator that he had stolen objects from Native American homes.¹¹ In this letter, Dorsey advocates practices that violated the sovereignty of the people who were the subject of study and trivialized crimes against them. Immoral acts against “primitive” peoples were understood to be permissible in the name of science due to their perceived inferior nature.

Not only did these collections practices reinforce hierarchical ideologies about race and colonialism, but the resulting collections themselves set the stage for research, exhibitions, and publications that would develop and propagate scientific racism. Curators would conduct research on the Field’s human remains and create exhibitions and publications that broadcast their ideas. With one of the largest collections of human remains in the world, the Field Museum was primed to use its scientific authority to shape public opinion on race.¹²

Exhibiting Race: 1933 *The Races of Mankind*

From the earliest days of the Field Museum’s history in the 1893 World Columbian Exposition, anthropological displays presented race as a principal “lens for understanding humanity.”¹³ Anthropology exhibits mounted in the early 1930s were no exception to this rule. Upon consultation with several of the leading anthropologists of the day, curator Henry Field and other Field Museum anthropologists and administrators concluded that to balance scientific content with visitor interest, they would commission an artist to create an exhibition of busts and full body bronze sculptures of the world’s races. In 1933, the Field Museum opened *The Races of Mankind*.

Just as earlier curators plundered graves to preserve races for posterity, *The Races of Mankind* was intended to “facilitate study of their characteristic features and preserve them permanently” before these races too disappeared.¹⁴ This exhibition was rooted in the racist ideas gleaned from decades of collecting and studying human remains and marked one of the last grand efforts to exhibit the concept of biological race before physical anthropology turned its focus to prehistory.¹⁵ What would come to be the Field Museum’s most famous exhibition, combined art and science to legitimize ideas of race as biology, spread these notions to the public, and coached viewers on how to recognize different races, which resulted in the active reification of racial divisions.¹⁶

Henry Field was determined that visitors should be able to walk away from the new anthropology exhibit with the ability to distinguish various races on sight. Exhibit consultant Sir Arthur Keith believed that people were natural anthropologists and could easily be trained to see these racial differences. Keith recommended *The Races of Mankind* exhibition be constructed as a tool by which visitors could study and compare the anatomical differences between races. Field Museum anthropologists planned to accomplish this through the selection of models that embodied the most representative characteristics of each race. In this way, they believed that the commissioned individual sculptures would depict accurate representations of entire groups of people.

The sculptures were intended to be, and were framed as, scientific.¹⁷ When artist Malvina Hoffman was commissioned, she vowed that she would produce “exact reproductions” to ensure authenticity.¹⁸ In addition to using live models, Hoffman was provided with photographs, measurements, and skulls.¹⁹ She was also requested to “make plaster casts of hands and feet to show racial difference” as well as collect hair samples, take photographs,

and note skin, hair, and eye color.²⁰ The Field Museum took particular care to emphasize the scientific nature of the exhibition to the public. In 1931, Sir Arthur Keith agreed to write a “popular science article dealing with [Hoffman’s] work and laying stress on the scientific accuracy that it possesses.”²¹ Indeed, the Field was successful in having the public understand Hoffman’s works as scientific. In a letter to the artist, a fan laments that she is “neither a scientist nor an artist enough to appreciate them.”²² By convincing the public of the scientific and accurate nature of Hoffman’s work, race was also framed as a legitimate scientific lens through which to understand humanity.

Physiognomy and Iconography

Through the use of racial iconography, Malvina Hoffman’s race sculptures imparted distinct ideas about race and character. Although the sculptures were faithfully modeled on individuals and a far cry from racial caricatures, the ways in which Hoffman posed and arranged her sculptures utilized iconographic imagery and narratives that evoked racist stereotypes.



Figures 1 and 2 (left to right): Malvina Hoffman's sculptures "Chinese Jinriksha Coolie" and "Kashmiri Man."

In choosing her model’s poses, Hoffman waited until “the moment at which [she] felt each one represented something characteristic of his race and of no other.”²³ Although the curators intended the exhibition to focus on biological difference, Hoffman wanted the narrative structure of her sculptures to evoke ethnic character through poses and actions associated with their cultures. Examples of these stereotyped poses can be found in Hoffman’s “Chinese Jinriksha Coolie,” “Australian,” and “Kashmiri Man.”²⁴ The first of these appears to be walking, straining to hold two long shafts. However, the composition ends before the viewer can spy what the shafts are attached to. Even though it is not visible, the narrative and label imply that

the man is pulling a rickshaw. Similarly, the “Australian” holds his hands aloft in a pose that suggests he is about to throw a spear. Despite the lack of these ethnographic elements in the sculpture, they are implied through the narrative structure of the pieces. Finally, the “Kashmiri Man” sits half nude in a meditative pose, despite the fact that preparatory photographs of the model show him sitting in a suit.²⁵ These iconographic poses reinforce stereotypes of the laboring Asian rickshaw puller, the primitive, warlike Australian, and the spiritual Indian.

Section D: (Pseudo) Scientific Displays

In addition to the sculptures, the exhibition also included Section D, which was devoted to scientific displays on physical anthropology that gave visitors an interpretive framework through which to view the sculptural pieces, firmly situating them in the realm of science. Section D included a display on the instruments used to take anthropometric measurements, grounding the exhibits and Hoffman’s methodology in the objective sciences and encouraging viewers to understand the exhibition as a scientific, rather than an artistic or humanist, enterprise.²⁶ Importantly, Section D also explicitly promoted the ideas of biological race and racial hierarchy.

Osteological and evolutionary components of Section D created a biologically based hierarchy of racial groups. The displays included a phylogenetic tree with a photograph representative of a race upon each branch. This use of the phylogenetic tree emphasized the idea that racial distinction stemmed from evolution and biological difference. Additionally, the white races were located at the highest point in the tree, a gesture implying evolutionary superiority.²⁷ Another display included an explanation of the cephalic index and an arrangement of skulls of different races in a phylogenetic tree and explicitly stated that non-white groups were more closely related to apes and hominin ancestors.²⁸ These displays drew overt connections between race, biology, and hierarchy, making scientific racism a primary framework for the exhibition.

Section D also contextualized scientific racism in contemporary social and economic dynamics. Inspired by eugenicists, Henry Field included a segment on racial demography in the United States, including discussion of demographic information, birth rates, population growth, “racial problems,” “immigration questions,” and “longevity of the races.”²⁹ In these displays, visitors were encouraged to shift their new knowledge of biological race and racial hierarchy from the museum to the outside world. In Section D, race as biology was transformed from an academic curiosity to a perhaps threatening sociopolitical issue.

Beyond the Museum

The exhibit’s popularity and longevity ensured that its messages would reach large swaths of the Chicagoan, American, and global populations. During its thirty-six-year run, *The Races of Mankind* was incredibly successful. Within its first two years, nearly four million people had visited the exhibition, peaking at 21,000 people per day in August 1933.³⁰ By 1969, over twenty million people had seen *The Races of Mankind*.³¹ Evidence for the influence of the exhibition is widespread. Programs, including tours and lecture series, were extremely successful, with several repeated due to popular demand.³² Lectures from Malvina Hoffman were both requested by and given to numerous individuals and organizations across the United States.³³

Dissemination of the exhibition's ideas was not confined to its physical space; rather, the Field Museum programs, merchandise, and publications spread *The Races of Mankind* exhibition far beyond museum walls. The Field published radio programs, movies, books, pamphlets, exhibition catalogs, and postcards to accompany the exhibition.³⁴ Reproduction statuettes were created and purchased by individuals and multiple prestigious museums.³⁵ Students visited the exhibition and its traveling offshoots as part of school trips and tours.³⁶ Schools and universities from across the country wrote to Malvina Hoffman asking for advice on which to base curriculums and programs on race.³⁷ Atlases, encyclopedias, and other popular educational tools featured the Hoffman bronzes.³⁸ Additionally, traveling versions of the exhibition served to both legitimize the museum's scientific racism and share ideas of biological race with wider national and international audiences.

Coverage of the exhibition in newspapers simultaneously demonstrated the exhibit's popularity and suggested the extent to which the American public would have been aware of the exhibition and its ideas. Hoffman's sculptures, the exhibition, and the exhibition's traveling components were covered in newspapers across the United States.³⁹ These newspapers had an enormous readership even during the Great Depression, ensuring that millions of Americans were reading about *The Races of Mankind* and being exposed to its ideologies.

Importantly, most of the articles on the exhibition focused on how Hoffman's efforts were a unique combination of art and science.⁴⁰ Hoffman's world tour was described as a "scientific expedition," to accurately document races "on the verge of disappearing before the march of civilization."⁴¹ The articles often include quotes attributed to Field Museum staff about the scientific accuracy of the works. Sir Arthur Keith, who himself wrote an article about the scientific basis of the exhibition for the *New York Times*, also claimed that the bronzes were "priceless registers of anthropological fact and in the full sense of the term are scientific documents as well as works of art."⁴² These types of statements from Field Museum staff and affiliates granted scientific legitimacy to the exhibition and racist ideas described in the articles.

Publicizing Prejudice: Academic and Popular Publications

As a major scientific research and education institution that catered to a wide segment of the public, the Field Museum participated in the creation and distribution of a variety of publications. Scholarly publications from curators Henry Field, Wilfrid D. Hambly, and George Amos Dorsey promoted the idea of distinct racial categories identifiable through phenotypic traits. Some of these works also explicitly identified some races as inherently inferior to others.

Curator Henry Field's publications on his fieldwork in Iraq lent credence to the idea of race as biological fact. During his expedition, he conducted anthropometric surveys of different populations despite the fact that these types of racial surveys had fallen into disrepute by the time of his 1934 visit.⁴³ He published two volumes upon his return, entitled *The Arabs of Iraq* and *Arabs of Central Iraq, their History, Ethnology, and Physical Characters*.⁴⁴ Both volumes contained hundreds of pages of anthropometric data, aimed at determining the racial composition of peoples in the Near East and what physical features differentiate groups.⁴⁵ Throughout much of Field's research, race was framed as a biological fact, about which objective truths may be uncovered through scientific inquiry.

In 1947, Assistant Curator for African Ethnology Wilfrid Dyson Hambly published a *Fieldiana* article entitled “Cranial Capacities; a study in methods,” focusing on the methodology of calculating the titular measurements. Hambly studied 429 Melanesian skulls housed in the Field Museum’s collection, comparing measurements by race.⁴⁶ After conducting his own research and duplicating the work of others, Hambly determined that methodology for measuring different racial groups should be different.⁴⁷ However, he claimed that the same methods for measuring “Negro” skulls could be applied to the Melanesian specimens, as they were “Negroid in appearance.”⁴⁸ In evaluating anthropologist Wingate Todd’s methodologies, Hambly stated that Todd’s techniques must be incorrect since his data showed the cranial capacities of black Americans to be just below that of white Americans. In reality, he claimed, the former’s cranial capacities really should be lower and the only explanation for Todd’s results must be mixed racial ancestry.⁴⁹ That some formulas for cranial capacity did not render “acceptable” results demonstrates that Hambly was working to find results that would fall within ideologically based expectations about racial intelligence and superiority.⁵⁰ In this way, his work reinforced and promoted anthropological theories shaped and driven by racial bias.

In the early twentieth century, Field Museum Curator of Anthropology George Amos Dorsey’s racial science was able to reach a large portion of the public through a Field Museum supported media role.⁵¹ In 1909, Dorsey embarked on a research mission to Europe funded by the *Chicago Daily Tribune*. In exchange, he produced articles about the expedition for the newspaper.⁵² Framed as a scientific mission, the trip forged a direct link between the Field Museum’s scientific authority and the significant *Chicago Daily Tribune* readership.⁵³

In Dorsey’s publications for the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, he espoused a eugenics-based claim that racial mixing and immigration had negative biological influences on the American population.⁵⁴ In one article entitled “American Race Type May Become Mongrel,” Dorsey tackled what he perceived to be a grave problem: interracial mixing between whites and blacks in America.⁵⁵ This was framed as a problem imposed by blacks onto the future of the American (*vis.* white) race, framing black people as non-American outsiders. Dorsey claimed that the main differences between these groups were that black people’s physical features were more primitive and anatomically closer to that of human ancestors. Dorsey described the supposed characteristics of black people as primitive and ape like, with simplified characteristics and smaller brain capacities. Later in the article, he stated that the physical differences between black and white people were “so great that it seems more than likely that mental differences of a corresponding nature must exist.”⁵⁶ In this and several other *Tribune* articles, Dorsey presented racist ideology as scientific fact, supported by supposedly objective anatomical data.

Rather than being innocuous or theoretical, Field curators’ research and publications promoted the social and political climate that supported the denial of rights and privileges based exclusively on race. The most salient example of this is curator Henry Field’s involvement in Theodore Roosevelt’s “Committee M.” In response to anti-Semitic and xenophobic notions rampant in the United States during World War II, one of Roosevelt’s main goals was to find an alternative location for the thousands of Jews fleeing persecution.⁵⁷ As part of this project, Roosevelt established Committee M (for Migration), consisting of three prominent anthropologists, one of whom was Henry Field.⁵⁸ Roosevelt tasked the Committee with answering several questions: What places would be suitable for settling refugees? What

types of people could live in those places? What would happen when Europeans were mixed with South American “stock?”⁵⁹ In asking these questions, Roosevelt reveals that he believed some races could not survive in different environments because they were fundamentally, biologically different. Additionally, he was concerned with the racial “degeneration” of receiving populations. Wartime immigration policies were to be based upon scientific racism that had been developed and promoted from within natural history institutions like the Field. Roosevelt turned to Henry Field and other anthropologists as race experts, tasked with maintaining the white racial integrity of the United States. In this way, the Field Museum’s practices developed and propagated scientific racism in ways that had an incredible impact on American society.

Conclusion

The Field Museum has been active in both publicly and privately addressing issues in its historical practices. Currently, the Field houses a Repatriation Department that is working to return some of its thousands of human remains and sacred objects to groups of people from whom they were unethically taken. According to Repatriation Director Helen Robbins, the Field has returned more than 300 human remains and over 500 objects.⁶⁰

In the 2016 exhibition entitled *Looking at Ourselves: Rethinking the Sculptures of Malvina Hoffman*, the Field Museum directly confronts its history of racist exhibition practices. Aptly titled, the exhibition encourages the visitor to look critically at the Field Museum’s history, the nature of humanity, and the visitor’s own understanding of race. *Looking at Ourselves* explains the explicitly racist context of the 1933 exhibition and the legacy of racism today. Anthropology curator Alaka Wali and the Field’s exhibition department worked to restore personhood and dignity to the people the bronzes were modeled on by presenting identifying information, original photographs, and ethnographic stories.⁶¹ Through this exhibit, the museum tackles its history head-on while addressing issues of culture, diversity, and racism today.

The Field Museum has also made efforts against racism and in favor of cultural understanding through programming. In 1995, the Field founded the Center for Cultural Understanding and Change to head research and education on culture. In 1996, this department hosted the Nuveen Forum on “Conversations on Pluralism and Identity in America.”⁶² The Forum created space for collaboration between anthropologists, academics in other disciplines, community members, activists, religious leaders, and teachers.⁶³ The Field has also participated in smaller scale programming, including an educator workshop entitled “Deepening Our Understanding: Race and Racism in American Life.”⁶⁴ In this way, the Field Museum continues to shape the next generation’s thinking on race.

While the Field Museum has worked to bring attention to, and in some ways make up for, its racist histories of collection, publication, and exhibition practices, there is still significant room for further effort both within the Field Museum and at other institutions. Although the Field Museum has repatriated several hundred objects and sets of human remains, numerous objects collected by ethically questionable methods still reside in its collections, with hundreds of thousands more in other museums across the globe. Janet Hong, an Exhibitions Project Manager at the museum, was quoted as saying “many people say the tide hasn’t turned enough.”⁶⁵

Although the Field Museum has moved away from scientific racism as a guiding ideology, new ways of presenting the Hoffman bronzes continue to be precarious. As social understandings of race changed during and after World War II, discussion of the exhibition in labels, pamphlets, and other related media was shifted to reflect a new humanist stance. Over time, exhibit text and sculpture labels were changed to reflect more exact geography, framing the bronzes as individuals or representations of ethnicities rather than races.⁶⁶ Upon the dissolution of the exhibit in 1969, individual sculptures were placed in various parts of the museum, where they remained until 2014.⁶⁷ It was believed that as “Portraits of Man,” separated from anthropological exhibitions, the sculptures would be viewed as glorifying diversity rather than cataloging race.⁶⁸ However, by displaying them out of context and without explanatory labels, the sculptures became iconographic images of the “Other,” nameless and without history.

Studying grave looting, publications espousing racial hierarchy, and exhibitions promoting biological race may seem outdated to twenty-first-century anthropologists. Why should anthropologists take the time to research ideas already known to be unequivocally wrong? First, it can help us understand the potential impact of anthropology - for good and for ill. The public influence of the Field Museum anthropology has been demonstrated in this research. Field Museum collections, exhibitions, and publications practices were extremely successful in propagating ideas of race as biology to museum visitors, academics, students, newspaper readers, and countless others. In this case, the ideas propagated by the museum contributed to an American ethos of racism, white supremacy, and xenophobia that continues to the present day. With this knowledge, anthropologists can glean two things. First, anthropology can be detrimental to society if guided by ideology rather than rigorous research and empathy. Anthropologists must be extremely conscientious of the potential impacts of their work. Second, the Field Museum as an institution was able to reach an extraordinary number of people through anthropology. This knowledge provides the prospect of incredible positive impact.

This research has not been a one-to-one cautionary tale, as I am confident that contemporary anthropologists will avoid repeating the pitfalls of George Amos Dorsey or Henry Field. However, it is a reminder that racism is insidious. The Field Museum’s racist practices were widely accepted because of how they fit into social norms and common practices of other museum institutions and American society. It is because of how ingrained and second nature these ideas were to so many that they were not questioned.

As anthropologists, we must actively search for these problematic norms and look for areas in which we can improve. It is widely accepted by many anthropologists that museums are often racist, colonialist enterprises, with histories of taking from other cultures without permission. Some museums, like the Field Museum, have worked in small increments to push back against this history. However, study of scientific racism suggests a paradigm shift may be necessary. The very fact that natural history museums across the globe, including the Field Museum, house anthropology collections is itself a legacy of colonialism and scientific racism. The fact that “primitive” cultures could be displayed alongside zoological, botanical, and geological collections while white culture is housed in art or history museums, is indicative of colonialist conceptions of non-white peoples as inherently and immutably uncivilized and animalistic. It is this and these types of widely unquestioned norms that anthropologists must

challenge if we do not wish our work to be the subject of historiographies of racism in the next century.

List of Figures

Figure 1: Malvina Hoffman's sculpture "Chinese Jinriksha Coolie." Image courtesy of the Didi Hoffman Blog, last modified September 27, 2018.

Figure 2: Malvina Hoffman's sculpture, "Kashmiri Man." Image courtesy of David Kasnic, *The New York Times*.

Notes

¹ See scholarship on The Great Chain of being and Biblical Ham. Nancy Stepan, *Idea of Race in Science: Great Britain, 1800-1960* (London: The MacMillan Press, 1982), 6.

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⁵ Susan Belovari, "Professional minutia and their consequences: provenance, context, original identification, and anthropology at the Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, Illinois," *Journal of Archival Science* 13, no. 2 (2013): 148.

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⁹ Redman, *Bone Rooms*, 45.

¹⁰ Ibid, 47.

¹¹ Almazan and Coleman, "George Amos Dorsey," 88.

¹² Belovari, "Professional minutia and their consequences," 157.

¹³ Redman, *Bone Rooms*, 45.

¹⁴ "The Projected Hall of The Races of Mankind," *Field Museum News* 2, no. 12 (1931): 3.

¹⁵ Redman, *Bone Rooms*, 229.

¹⁶ "The Legacy of Malvina Hoffman," *The Field Museum Bulletin* 37, no. 9 (1966): 3.

¹⁷ Ed Yastrow and Stephen E. Nash, "Henry Field, Collections, and Exhibit Development 1926-1941," in *Curators, Collections, and Contexts: Anthropology at the Field Museum, 1893-2002*, ed. by Stephen E. Nash and Gary M. Feinman (Chicago: The Field Museum of Natural History, 2003), 129-130.

¹⁸ Marianne Kinkel, *The Races of Mankind: The Sculptures of Malvina Hoffman* (Chicago: The University of Illinois, 2011), 56.

¹⁹ Unsigned note to Malvina Hoffman, "Research Problems for Miss Hoffman," n.d., The Races of Mankind Correspondence, Henry Field Vol. 12 1920-50, The Field Museum of Natural History Library.

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- ²⁰ Stanley Field, letter to Malvina Hoffman, December 22, 1930, Malvina Hoffman Papers Box 3 Folder 6 Stanley Field 1930-31, The Getty Research Institute Special Collections.
- ²¹ Stanley Field, letter to Arthur Keith, April 25, 1931, Stanley Field Correspondence, The Field Museum of Natural History Library.
- ²² Minnie Drumwell, letter to Malvina Hoffman, March 6, 1937, Malvina Hoffman Papers Box 12 Folder 9 1936-41, The Getty Research Institute Special Collections.
- ²³ Kinkel, *The Races of Mankind*, 3.
- ²⁴ "A Reunion of Sorts," *The Field Museum Bulletin* 54, no. 2 (February 1983): 7.
- ²⁵ Ibid.
- ²⁶ Henry Field, "The Races of Mankind," *Science* 78, No. 2016 (1933): 146-147.
- ²⁷ Belovari, "Professional minutia and their consequences," 180.
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- ²⁹ Field, "The Races of Mankind," 147.
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⁶⁰ Helen Robbins (Field Museum Repatriation Director) in discussion with the author, August 1, 2017.

⁶¹ Alaka Wali, (Field Museum Curator of North American Anthropology) in discussion with the author, August 1, 2017.

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