

Editor's Note

Race matters. Especially in the United States. At times it seems the country is simply obsessed with race. But there are historical reasons for it. From early on the United States was imagined as a white settler empire. This called for the elimination – comprising economic and political subjugation, removal, killing, and cultural assimilation – of the Native populace. It also involved the exclusion or restriction of non-white settlers like the Chinese, while the whiteness of the Irish, Eastern Europeans, and even Finns was questioned at one time or another. A southern version of the settler colonial project was grounded on cotton economy and African-American slavery. While the slaves were emancipated, race remained at the heart of the discussion not only in the South but throughout the expanding and transforming US Empire. Racial categorizations and meanings have preoccupied journalists, administrators, scholars, authors, and makers of tv-series; as the articles in this issue ably attest. First we head to the 1910s Chicago, as Ulf Jonas Björk portrays the Swedish immigrants press' views of the city's African-American populace and the riots of 1919. Erik Hieta shifts the focus to the racialization of Native Americans and the Sámi peoples in the 1930s and 1940s. He examines transnational circulations among non-indigenous scholars and their formulations of ethnographic representations and native policies in Finland and in the United States. Next Junghyun Hwang explores otherness and Americanness through Maryse Condé's novel, *I, Tituba, Black Witch of Salem*. She argues that the Salem witch-hunts reveal an early case for the formation of the American self-identity and its racialized others. Then Mikkel Jensen investigates the contours of individuality, society, and outsidership in the tv-series *The Wire*. We conclude with Tao Zhang discussing the racialization of Chinese sailors in the 1840s as pitiable and exotic, demonstrating how complicated discourses and hierarchies occupied the American mindset already before masses of Chinese migrants reached California with the gold rush. Do enjoy these excellent readings,

hopefully they enable you to gain insights into American identities, social realities, and discourses on race in their various ramifications.

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