



March 20-24, 2023  
San Francisco, CA

# What Frederick Douglass Knew and now you do too.

Rigs of Color and what you can do with what you know.

#GDC23

# Before we start let's get on the same page

*Systematic Racism*= Institutional racism, also known as systemic racism, is a form of racism that is embedded in the laws and regulations of a society or an organization.

## Terminology for Media:

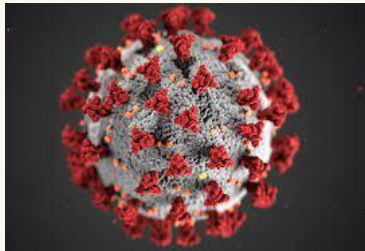


Meme = an element of a culture or system of behavior passed from one individual to another by imitation or other non-genetic means.

**Memetic** = relating to or constituting an element of a culture or system of behavior that is passed from one individual to another by imitation or other non-genetic means.

Infect = (of a negative feeling or idea) take hold of or be communicated to (someone)

**Infection** = the process of infecting or the state of being infected



# Andromeda (mythology)

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Aethiopian

"Perseus and Andromeda" redirects here. For other uses, see Perseus and Andromeda (disambiguation).

In Greek mythology, **Andromeda** is the daughter of the Ethiopian king Cepheus and his wife Cassiopeia. When Cassiopeia's hubris leads her to boast that Andromeda is more beautiful than the Nereids, Poseidon sends the sea monster Cetus to ravage Andromeda as divine punishment.<sup>[1]</sup> Andromeda is stripped and chained naked to a rock as a sacrifice to sate the monster, but is saved from death by Perseus.

Her name is the Latinized form of the Greek Ἀνδρομέδα (*Androméda*) or Ἀνδρομέδη (*Andromédē*): "ruler of men",<sup>[2]</sup> from ἀνήρ, ἀνδρός (*anēr, andrós*) "man", and *medon*, "ruler".

As a subject, Andromeda has been popular in art since classical times; it is one of several Greek myths of a Greek hero's rescue of the intended victim of an archaic *hieros gamos* (sacred marriage), giving rise to the "princess and dragon" motif. From the Renaissance, interest revived in the original story, typically as derived from Ovid's account.

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The Princess in another castle was always supposed to be "black"

Not Ethiopian



Not Ethiopian



Perseus and Andromeda  
(Andromeda tied to the rock while

# How deep is the memetic infection?>

“It’s a lot harder to fight back against an adversary, when your adversary bears the face of the oppressed.” **Quote from anonymous, trans, furry, former neo-nazi**

White people claiming minority rights as a defense has always been dangerous in the fight to stop anti-black and anti-ethnic behaviors.

<https://slate.com/human-interest/2021/11/nazi-furries-deradicalization-efforts.html>

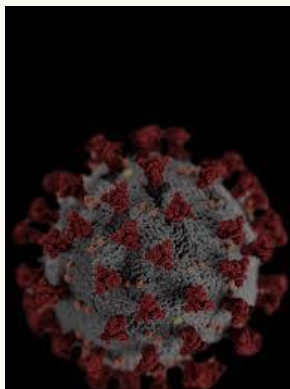
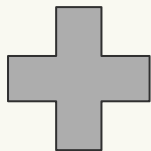




# We've been living in a pandemic the whole time

**It started by** Gomes de Zurara, the Portuguese **inventor** of blackness (and whiteness) in the 1450's, It was literally a marketing campaign to support his rich Patron avoid paying peasants

It infects you



Affects others

[https://www.pbs.org/race/000\\_About/002\\_03\\_a-godeeper.htm](https://www.pbs.org/race/000_About/002_03_a-godeeper.htm)

<https://lithub.com/ibram-x-kendi-how-racism-relies-on-arbitrary-hierarchies/>

# This is usually where racist depictions go, but not this time

Search results for black european paintings in the middle ages



<https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2013/12/13/250184740/taking-a-magnifying-glass-to-the-brown-faces-in-medieval-art>

It infects you

Affects others

# Who wore it best? Give us back our princess



With over 46 million mostly living in the Urban and suburban communities and a higher likelihood to be “gamers” demographically... Seriously, Lift us up and Hold us down... Nintendo and see the marketing campaign.





# Frederick Douglas a statesman and abolitionist.



**“Pictures and Progress”**  
Douglass remarked: “The humbled servant girl whose income is but a few shillings per week may now possess a more perfect likeness of herself than noble ladies and court royalty...” He noted that photo studios could be found in even the smallest towns.



Pictures... moving pictures is the only reason, this talk was accepted.  
It's the only reason the America listened to 40 million of its citizens.



Seeing pictures of what could be, is just as powerful as showing what is. The key question for creatives is how are you participating in the story? There is no sideline.



# He was an American Meme

His image as a black man refuted the characters created by racist to dehumanize black people.

When confronted with this the obvious response is to speak of exceptionalism and to academically dismiss what your eyes see. Which you will see soon...



He also knew that all people should be treated equally and when he ran away to England, he spoke out against their treatment of the Irish, the Irish Americans paid back his kindness by founding the Ku KLux Klan.



Not to be outdone when Black culture met Chinese Culture they created



# Then What happened, rinse

A second erasure and new Narrative occurred after Douglas' passing. (New Media and technology grew more popular emphasizing Gomes De Zurara's Racist Ideologies)

1. **Columbia University** - William Archibald Dunning and the racist organization **Daughters of the Confederacy**, created and romanticized Lost Cause Narrative.
2. President Ulysses S. Grant killed the Klan but **DW Griffith's** movie the klansmen aka Birth of a nation **revived KKK**, because Griffith was a racist.
3. The Jazz Singer with Al Jolson in Blackface made talking films popular. He was also a racist
4. Lost Cause movie "Gone with the Wind" had a Black oscar win "**couldn't give her own speech**"
5. Disney... Crows, Song of the South and Princess and the Frog.
6. Super Mario Brothers not using Riri as a Princess... (Yes it's a tragedy)

# Rigs of Color, lessons learned, rinse, repeat

## What we learned

1. It's a good idea, but everyone has an excuse to avoid funding the project.
2. Game programs can't live up to their potential without industry support.
3. The hardest part is building up what current studios already have.
5. Traditional academic grants fund questions, not solutions.
6. People want it to succeed. People want these rigs. Your employees want to help.
7. Lack of will is the only reason why no one else has done this.
8. Brad Clarke and the team at **Rigging Dojo** donated their time, tutelage, and efforts. They had a plan on how they could help us develop and evaluate our rigs and executed.






# Rigs of Color may fail...

(Help me out here, follow the directions below) How to Kill rigs of color

1. If any company cared about this issue, they could easily surpass rigs of color in a year. In fact if there were four competitors in this space next year I'd consider it a blessing.
2. Any large studio could use their training to create diverse characters using their pipeline and put them on the internet.
3. Large popular Studios (with mouse ears, maybe...) could create an art contest and to honor the winners by rigging up the diverse characters that they created and release them to the community.
4. Any of these steps with below paths all over its of colors achievements in a heartbeat.
5. (Don't follow this line) Lack of investment. Here is a quote from a grant writing organization.

Articulates the lack of diversity in current animation characters and available rigs very well.	A centralized content library for Maya is helpful-could this library be easily integrated/ used with other popular software packages?	Talks about a model of licensing to colleges that can then utilize the models in their coursework. The scale, interest and ability of colleges to do this has not been well documented.	Can having diverse characters in animation provide the value of eliminating negative effectiveness on people of color through mainstream media? Some research/ data to point to would be helpful.	Good job with talking about similar effort that was 5 years in development. What's stopping Disney or another major player from diving into this if the interest seems high enough?
The team needs to show why people really care about this.	The team needs to explain the values of their offering.	The team identified colleges as customers, but didn't explain why colleges were going to buy the rigs of color.	The team didn't point out the risks involved in the project.	The team did a good job to explain the alternatives. From the way it has been presented, it appears more of a movement than a business.

# Before you can help, you should also know...

1. Stereotypes aren't true, they are socially engineered serve a narrative. Like the first 20 years of D&D.
2. Talking about race isn't racist, wanting diversity isn't racist saying you are color blind **is** racist.
3. Yes , you, you reading this you are infected with this **memetic virus**. 
4. And so am I.
5. A black government runs South Africa now, and the white people there are still happy, The Nazi thing didn't workout for anybody.
6. **World History provides clear concrete evidence that Blacks have more reason to fear white people then white people to fear and/or hate black people.**
7. White women are guilty too, their tears have killed, in modern times (Why aren't they weapons in Call of Duty)
8. That was tough... but I'm cool I still have love for you! (trust... refer to #6)

# What can you do at home? Take your booster shots:

Instead of reading about all the ways the world is terrible, from brilliant people who will bore you to death, look at the stories you can incorporate from people of your tribe, the creatives.

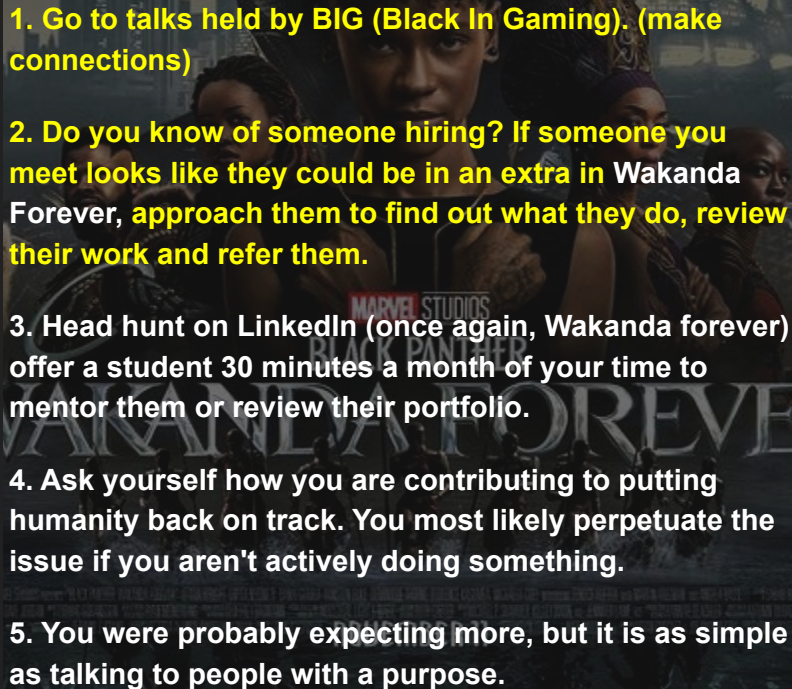
1. Lovecraft Country
2. The Watchmen
3. Dear White People
4. Hot Skull
5. The expanse
6. The man who fell to earth
7. Get OUT
8. Vampires vs. the Bronx
9. Korean Dramas (Mr. Sunshine is epically Beautiful eye candy)
10. Arcane
11. The Last of us

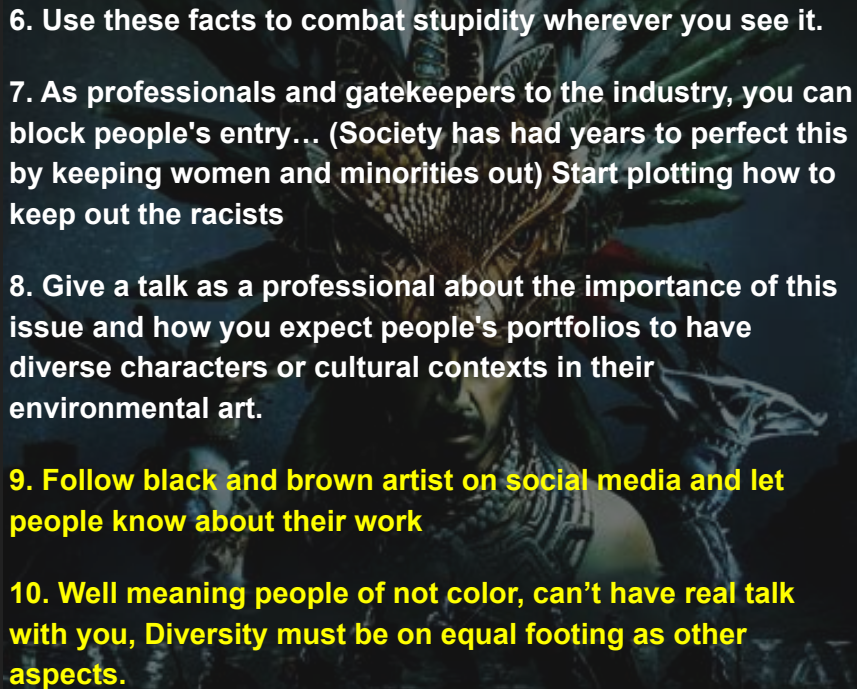


12. Youtube American Gods' Mr. Nancy... just Mr. Nancy
13. The Woman King
14. Everything Everywhere, at the same time??? (checking to see if you were paying attention)
15. Pose



# As soon as this presentation is over and here on this conference floor:

- 
- A movie poster for 'Wakanda Forever' featuring the main cast members. The text 'MARVEL STUDIOS' and 'WAKANDA FOREVER' are visible.
1. Go to talks held by BIG (Black In Gaming). (make connections)
  2. Do you know of someone hiring? If someone you meet looks like they could be in an extra in Wakanda Forever, approach them to find out what they do, review their work and refer them.
  3. Head hunt on LinkedIn (once again, Wakanda forever) offer a student 30 minutes a month of your time to mentor them or review their portfolio.
  4. Ask yourself how you are contributing to putting humanity back on track. You most likely perpetuate the issue if you aren't actively doing something.
  5. You were probably expecting more, but it is as simple as talking to people with a purpose.

- 
- A movie poster for 'Wakanda Forever' featuring the main cast members. The text 'MARVEL STUDIOS' and 'WAKANDA FOREVER' are visible.
6. Use these facts to combat stupidity wherever you see it.
  7. As professionals and gatekeepers to the industry, you can block people's entry... (Society has had years to perfect this by keeping women and minorities out) Start plotting how to keep out the racists
  8. Give a talk as a professional about the importance of this issue and how you expect people's portfolios to have diverse characters or cultural contexts in their environmental art.
  9. Follow black and brown artist on social media and let people know about their work
  10. Well meaning people of not color, can't have real talk with you, Diversity must be on equal footing as other aspects.

# What can you do at work?

1. Eliminate the idea of cultural fit. The diverse candidate doesn't fit your culture. Your culture is problem you are trying to solve. [\(Valve\)](#) <--- this is a link
2. **Share techniques** that you've nailed down! I'm looking at **Naughty Dog**, what they did for **black hair** in uncharted that should have been a step by step tutorial.
3. Talk to your executive boards about working with colleges and universities and have a plan. Don't just say we'd like to work with you; come up with something you could do for them and ask what they could do for you.
4. Know that it will play in the Midwest.
5. Challenge who the lead character is. How would someone of this background go through this scenario? Is it more interesting than your brunette white guy probably named shepherd?
6. Ask for diversity, not one person of a background, 3-4, and support their stances on pushing against the white default.
7. Bring Black visual media into the common language! Hire some Afro-futurists.
8. Reach out to people of color on Linkedin when there is a job posting. You are already following them on social media, after all.
9. At the least Steal haircuts from EA, I know **25 people who didn't buy Elden rings** because they it lacked black hairstyles.

# What can hiring managers and recruiters do?

1. **Post the salary range.** Getting 60 to 80 percent on the dollar is racist and sexist. And as soon as someone finds out they leave.
2. Require portfolios to have diverse characters / cultural environments.
3. Work with colleges and let them know your company won't look at recent grads without diverse human characters.
4. Post links or portfolios of your recent hires, especially at the junior and entry-level positions.
5. Use that connect you have at BIG. Or ask that the position can serve as an internal cultural advisor (that'll weed out the incels)
6. Lastly, make connections with colleges, and online training programs. Present to their programs once a year. Make them do the work, have them sort out their top 10 student portfolios for you to review.
7. When bringing on minority candidates, especially for cultural expertise, **hire at least three**, make sure they speak for the majority of the group they represent, **and listen to them**.
8. Work with colleges to find trained anthropologists and cultural experts; undergrad students will critique for pizza, college credit and gae credit.
8. Understand that hiring people who fit these criteria is less likely to become the managers who make the wrong type of headlines later.
10. Forget about people fitting your work culture. We've read headlines... **toxic** occurs too often in front of words relating to your Work culture.



# What can writers and designers do?

1. When lifting other peoples voices, raise the ones that align with most of that group's views.
2. Know when it's not your story to tell, and promote the person who has a right to it.
3. Make minorities a part of your character's world.
4. Ensemble storytelling allows for many characters' points of view, with a diverse cast frees us from the white protagonist. (also lets you keep them)
5. Make your heroes have progressive views on race and multiculturalism. It's okay if they disparage people who disagree.
6. Know the difference between Race and culture; a cultural evil makes sense. Look at history. An evil race though we've never encountered one.
7. Watch stories created by a variety of storytellers.
8. Does your protagonist fit news coverage which criminalizes people who look like the people in Wakanda forever? If so, stop it. I am looking at GTA San Andreas and Mafia.

**The Bechdel test is so 2007, try the Alien test? If the media you created were seen by Aliens with all other portrayals, what would they think of the group of people you portrayed?**

# What can Corporations and your company do?

1. Stop spending money on PR "celebrating" this or that group, and support a group like **BIG Foundation + LatinX in games** or projects like the **Open Hair Project** and **Rigs of Color**.

2. If you give money to groups for good PR, spend it on improving your community. Creating media is as important as curing cancer.

3. Customizable characters don't start with a default. Hire a second set of voice actors or a diverse cast.

4. Listen to Marginalized employees when they speak; At WPI, we lost four irreplaceable people in 5 months. People stepped up, and we are functioning at the same level. There is no perfect fit for the job; you can substitute a toxic personality before they rise up the ladder.

5. Bring Minority creators in and work with small studios, or make smaller games with them. They will develop IP you never imagined reaching audiences you never could.

## 6. USE ACADEMIA

- a. Create college endowments for incubator studios that make games industry can't or won't make.
- b. Since academic funding does not support art, design, narrative, or production of games for game's sake, step up.
- c. Help establish game design programs at HBCUs. Free consulting here, and it takes 200 thousand before human investment to set up a games program.
- d. Fund non-research initiatives fund creative narrative, design, and art structure initiatives. Especially working on DEI
- e. Understand Endowments are often set up for use for only one thing, This requires colleges to spend the money only on that thing or they forfeit the funds.



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Our job is to create new worlds so gamers can explore and boldly go where none has gone before.  
It is to expand their tribe, and get them to realize their tribe is bigger if they think about  
psychographics over demographics

We shouldn't want them to feel or be incels, my goal is to create worlds where they can meet  
people and change their real lives and make gamer babies so we can sell them more games.

Let's make Humanity fun again for the first time.

#GDC23



**Congrats you've already done what Frederick Douglass knew, you sat down for what was right!**

**THANK YOU!**

**Questions?**

# GDC

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## rigs of Color

Our Team will work with you!

<https://rigsofcolor.com/support>



# WPI

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#GDC23

