

In chapter two, "Privilege, Oppression, and Difference, Allan Johnson begins his argument that "difference is not the problem"(Johnson, pg 12). The author goes on to explain that difference by itself is not the problem, rather difference in conjunction with our ideas that cause fear. Describing the relationship of the Indians and whites, Takaki writes "[We] are here to intreat and desire your friendship and to enjoy our houses and plant our fields, of whose fruits you shall participate.' But he did not trust the strangers: We perceive and well know you intend to destroy us"(Takaki, 35). This example depicts that the Indians don't trust the colonials due to the possibility of invasion. In my opinion, I don't agree with the authors. I believe that knowledge is the basis of the problem. If the Indians and colonials spoke the same language or had better ways of communication, many conflicts could have been avoided. That being said, I believe that discrimination was a bigger problem in the past than it is today. In conclusion, racial borders are being broken more and more frequently, such as the election of a black candidate for president.

Johnson continues on with the idea that people are judged not for who they are or the things they have accomplished, but how they are perceived by others. For example, Johnson states "The British treated the Irish as an inferior race. even though their skin color was indistinguishable from that of those considered to be white"(18). " The Irish lacked knowledge of God or good manners...[they] lived like beasts"(Takaki,29). In this instance, the Irish were ostracized for their perception. They didn't grow produce in fields , nor did they follow the normal religion(more of a pagan spinoff). In this instance, the Irish were forced into a minority group even though they were white. "Dominant groups-have the power to define what is considered normal"(Johnson, 19). This is true, but it's not right. "Normal" should be defined as

an average of all minority and majority groups. No matter what, there will always be people left out on the two extremes of normal. Humans will never be the same as one another, and therefore people will always judge one another.

"Privilege exists when one group has something of value that is denied to others simply because of the groups they belong to, rather than because of anything they've done or failed to do"(Johnson, 21). Privilege can also refer to unearned advantages. Throughout history, white males were given better education than other races and minorities. in addition, until 1955 whites had priority seating on busses and trains, blacks were forced to give up their seats if need be. Throughout history, whites have oppressed minority groups for self gain. Today, nothing of this extent is still active, but racism and oppression still exists. I believe that we are all created equal and develop into who we are. one race is not above another, but intermingled.