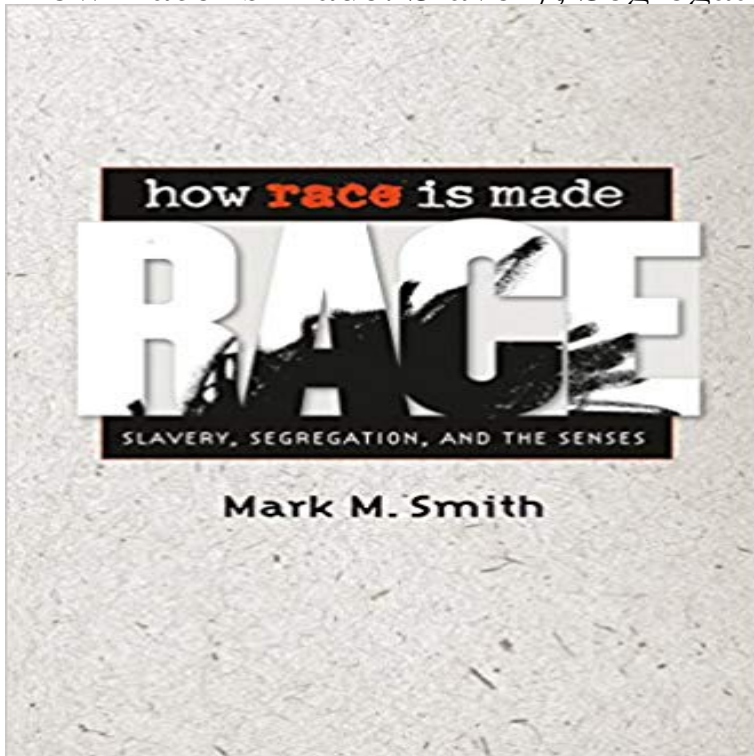


How Race Is Made: Slavery, Segregation, and the Senses



For at least two centuries, argues Mark Smith, white southerners used all of their senses--not just their eyes--to construct racial difference and define race. His provocative analysis, extending from the colonial period to the mid-twentieth century, shows how whites of all classes used the artificial binary of black and white to justify slavery and erect the political, legal, and social structure of segregation. Based on painstaking research, *How Race Is Made* is a highly original, always frank, and often disturbing book. After enslaved Africans were initially brought to America, the offspring of black and white sexual relationships (consensual and forced) complicated the purely visual sense of racial typing. As mixed-race people became more and more common and as antebellum race-based slavery and then postbellum racial segregation became central to southern society, white southerners asserted that they could rely on their other senses--touch, smell, sound, and taste--to identify who was white and who was not. Sensory racial stereotypes were invented and irrational, but at every turn, Smith shows, these constructions of race, immune to logic, signified difference and perpetuated inequality. Smith argues that the history of southern race relations and the construction of racial difference on which that history is built cannot be understood fully on the basis of sight alone. In order to come to terms with the South's past and present, Smith says, we must explore the sensory dynamics underpinning the deeply emotional construction of race. *How Race Is Made* takes a bold step toward that understanding. For at least two centuries, argues Mark Smith, white southerners used all of their senses--not just their eyes--to construct racial difference and define race. His provocative analysis, extending from the colonial period to the mid-twentieth century, shows how whites of all classes used the artificial

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