

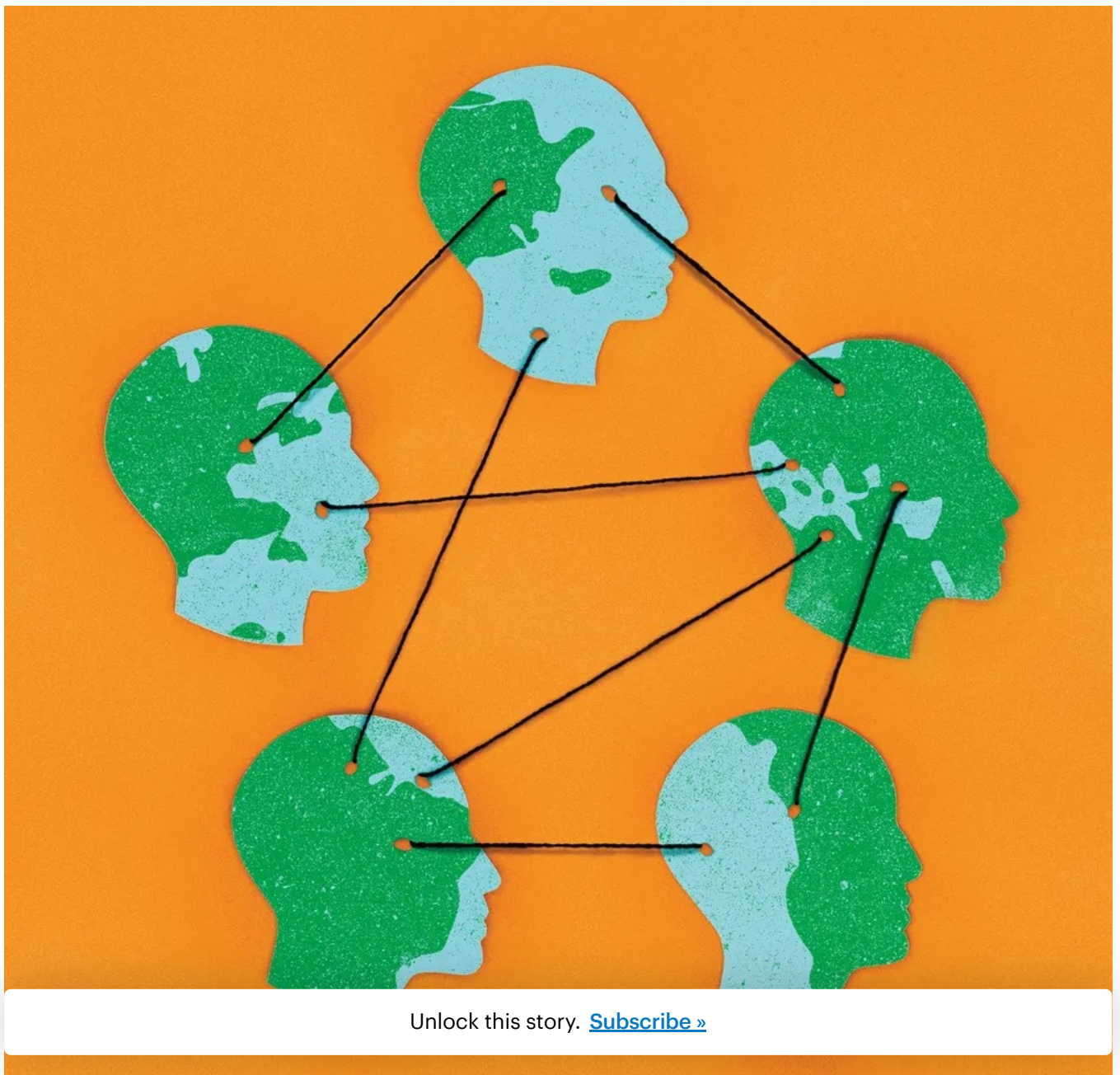
ANNALS OF INQUIRY

IT'S TIME TO RETHINK THE IDEA OF THE “INDIGENOUS”

Many groups who identify as Indigenous don't claim to be first peoples; many who did come first don't claim to be Indigenous. Can the concept escape its colonial past?

By Manvir Singh

February 20, 2023



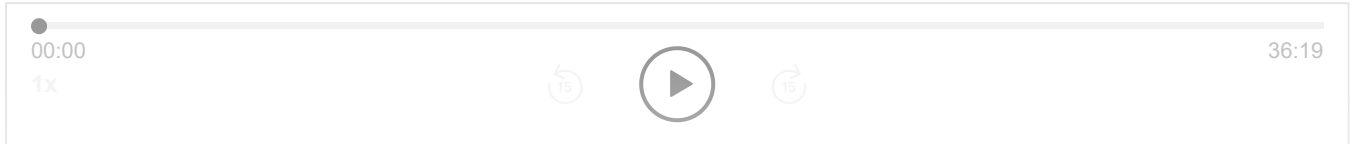
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The term was shaped by social-evolutionist thinking; white settlers used it to designate the “primitive” other. Illustration by Lauren Peters-Collaer



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Identity evolves. Social categories shrink or expand, become stiffer or more elastic, more specific or more abstract. What it means to be white or Black, Indian or American, able-bodied or not shifts as we tussle over language, as new groups take on those labels and others strip them away.

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*Manvir Singh, an assistant professor of anthropology at the University of California, Davis, has written for *The New Yorker* since 2022. He is the author of “Shamanism: The Timeless Religion.”*

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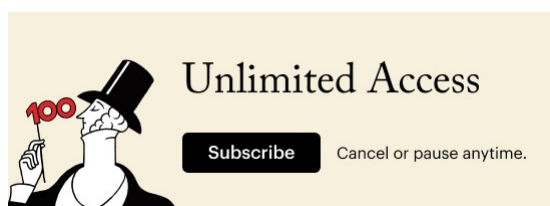
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