We started this project with an open invitation to scholars to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the Kerner Commission by examining post-1960s developments in race, especially new versions and expressions of racism that we tentatively named “neoracism” along with advances in the struggle against it. As is fully known, in contrast with the Moynihan Report of 1965, *The Negro Family: The Case For National Action*, explaining the black condition by flaws in the black family, The National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, known as the Kerner Commission, attributed that condition to racism and called for an all out national effort to end it. Contributors to this volume chose their own topics and perspectives to examine racism forty years after the issuing of the Kerner report. Now, having completed this journey, we close this collection by examining the contributors’ views, their contributions and the possible directions emerging from their work. I examine the issues and materials critically paying special attention to the various questions the authors raised and pointing to the openings and challenges they spelled out. To do this, we start with an overview of themes and approaches in the book to then examine the more general question of neoracism and associated implications both for theory and practice.

The first issue to address relates to the ancestral ties of race and racism to European colonization of territories and peoples it turned into today's Third World. Identifying colonization as the foundational matrix of race and racism, Tomás Almaguer argues in this volume that today’s racializing practices are rooted/fused upon colonial constructions of race. This, we believe, is a critical connection that, when neglected, leads to naturalizations and misunderstandings for instance on the relationship of race to class and other sources of minoritization. It is crucial to continuously distinguish race and racism from forms of oppression with different roots and dynamics as race is to colonization what gender is to patriarchy or sexuality to religious beliefs. Along these lines, Martinot (2003) for instance
explains how the modern construction of race started in the United States with the differentiation between colonizers and colonized. Along these lines, many historians conclude that the root of racism in the United States is the enslavement of blacks, the elimination and reclusion of American Indians, and the exploitation of Mexicans, Puerto Ricans and other Latinos, all part and parcel of or legacies of colonization and the ensuing construction of empire on the backs of non-white races (Acuña 1981; Carmichael and Hamilton 1967; Martinot 2003; Cox 1948; Foner 1983; Janes 2000; Stein and Stein 1970; Steinberg 2007). We could not possibly situate race properly unless we realize this political-economic, European (and hence white)-centered form of minoritization that continues producing many of the same effects generation after generation.

Closely related to the constitution of race is the relationship between race and ethnicity. Manipulated effectively in the United States in the reproduction of unequal social relations, along or in combination with other factors, race and ethnicity have followed somewhat separate trajectories, at times converging, others diverging and for our case, merging into large racial groupings (e.g., whites and blacks – named by skin color, or Latinos and Asians – named by region of origin and defined as ethnic but also assigned color identifiers). Initially, ethnicity was used principally for European nationals (the collective “Us”) establishing hierarchies in the pecking order and level of whiteness among them. Race was originally assigned to the bipolar white-black divide with other conquered groups either placed in this divide as surrogates, differently classified as tribes (e.g., Indian Americans) or nationals (e.g., Chinese and Japanese) or viewed as ethnics with a racial ascription (e.g., Latinos). In this structure, Blacks emerged as the absolute other of colonizers and their heirs while for some time non-whites-non-blacks assumed apparently non-racial roles as peons/servants, indentured laborers, or exotic savages. Finally, by the 1960s, peoples with Third World ancestries were racialized (Omi and Winant 1994) by continent of origin (e.g., Asians, and Latinos), as subcategories of the general ‘Other.’ All these differences helped perpetuate the racial order through separate identities/ascriptions largely pre-empting the unity of disadvantaged groups and eventually forcing them into a ‘competition’ for higher standing in the racial hierarchy – as I argued earlier in this book.

In the late 1960s and 1970s, building on the realities of colonialism and neocolonialism, authors such as Carmichael and Hamilton (1967) and Blauner (1972) coined the term internal colonialism to explain the relationship between whites and non-whites in the United States. Elaborating