"RACE"

The Political Side of Classifying Humans

by Kenneth L. Hacker, Ph.D.
Introduction: Why Be Concerned About "Race" and Racism?

Prejudice against people because of human group membership, whether by cultural grouping or subpopulation grouping known as "race," did not end with either the cessation of slavery or the 1960s Civil Rights movement in the United States. Indeed, there is a common confusion of ethnic or racial harmony with the absence of overt and blatant racism and ethnic discrimination (known as ethnicism).

Alexis de Tocqueville, the French aristocrat and official who visited America in the late 1800s, said that White Americans first violated every right of humanity by their treatment of black Americans. He heard the noble rhetoric about freedom and equality for all, yet also saw the grand talk of justices did not apply to black Americans. de Tocqueville believed that racism in the United States would continue even after the slaves were freed. He was correct and it has continued not only after emancipation, but also after desegregation voting rights acts, affirmative action programs and dismantling affirmative action programs. It persists in the minds and discourse of the dominant ethnic group in the United States, the Anglo Americans. While we have ended overt and malicious discrimination as the enactment of racism, we have not ended the prejudices in the minds of our citizens and leaders which allow racism to continue unfettered. Some say this is not possible, but many social and behavioral scientists including myself believe that it is possible over a long period of time if we get things moving in that direction.

There is no easy solution to diminishing racism in any nation and there is controversy if it can ever be eliminated totally. Yet, like war, disease, and poverty, we have a calling in a progressive democratic society to work against this massive social problem that creates animosities, violence, discrimination, and social inequalities. The status quo line that there has always been racism and therefore there will always be racism is sheer nonsense. Imagine physicians saying, well there has always been disease and there will always be disease, so let’s give up! Or how about communication scientists saying something similar about communication problems!

Many Anglo Americans live with a delusion that racism ended with the civil rights movement of the 1960s. Some facts should dispel this delusion:

< In the late 1960s, 75% of all black men were working but by the end of the 1980s, only 57% had jobs (Julian Bond quoted in U.S. News, July 27, 1998).

< Anglo Americans continue to hold racist beliefs about the genetic inferiority of African Americans (Andrew Hacker, Two Nations, 1992).

< While strong White Supremacy movements are minority views in the United States, research continues to show that Americans are prejudicial in their treatment of minorities. The newer forms of racism are covert and concealed at times. A report released by the White indicates some
disturbing data about attitudes held by majority ethnic group members, i.e., "white Americans" in regard to African Americans and Hispanic Americans. The data show that despite public attitudes of harmony and inter-ethnic acceptance are images and feelings of superiority.

Despite the fact that many anthropologists and geneticists have shown that categories of race are unscientific and arbitrary, people continue to assign people to these categories and attribute wholesale group characteristics to individuals. At one time in America, the Irish were considered a separate race as were Jews, Hindus, and Italians (Andrew Hacker, 1992). Of course, obedient and lighter-skinned minorities are able to “pass” into the “White race” as time goes by.

Racial classification has been an absurd process of political signification in the United States. Differing tribes of native Americans such as Chippewa and Seminoles have been lumped together into one “Indian” racial category. Japanese, Korean, Chinese, and Thai people were once called “Mongoloid” or “yellow,” then “Orientals,” and now members of one cluster called “Asian.” All of these clustering categories were designed by European and American racialists and not by the people being classified. The same kind of ludicrous classification is seen in the signification of a “Hispanic race.” The racialization of these people breaks down once one finds that people who are called Hispanic can be black, white, or mixes of white and other natives peoples in the Americas.

In 1990, in the census, 51% of Hispanics told the census takers that they had no “race.” Some Hispanics have managed to “pass” into the white racial category. In 1910, we had racial categories which began to include mixes such as “mulatto.” These are no longer used. Instead we follow a degeneration principle which says that the child of a white and nonwhite is placed into the nonwhite category.

Historian Andrew Hacker claims that most Anglo Americans (“whites”) still believe that blacks carry inferior genes. Certainly they do not express these beliefs publicly. As these beliefs now stand, only a minority of Americans agree with Hacker’s claim that it is possible for our society to bring all ethnic groups into a position of equal performance scores on a variety of tests.

While about 85% of black Americans have the preference of living in integrated neighborhoods, studies have shown that regardless of economic standing, when the proportion of black residents reaches 8-20% of a neighborhood, whites begin to move out. Such behaviors are attributable to the racist images of blacks as criminals.

Intelligent professors like Nobel Prize winner William Shockley, and psychologist Arthur Jensen continue to assert that blacks are inferior. There are numerous other such professors of hate in the United States -- scholars who are endorsed and sometimes sponsored by white supremacist organizations. Racist politicians like Strom Thurmond and Jesse Helms have long held key Congressional committee assignments and positions of seniority in the United States Senate.

But most of the racism today in the United States appears to be unintentional. For example, unscientific analyses like the book called the Bell Curve continue to be promoted by credible sources like C-SPAN because the book review hosts do not know the kinds of statistical analysis errors and chicanery committed by Charles Murray and Richard Herstein in the book.

Alexis deTocqueville noted many interesting aspects of the newly forming American democratic republic. His own problem with slavery however was a moral ambivalence which is also seen in contemporary American attitudes about racism. de Tocqueville prepared a report for the French
government about slavery which concluded that one human does not have the right to possess another human, but also that “If the Negroes have the right to become free, it is undeniable that the colonials have the right not be ruined by the Negroe’s freedom.” (Kenan Malik, The Meaning of Race, 1996). While many arguments for slavery were based on economics, racist attitudes regarding black inferiority allowed such arguments to have any standing at all. Today, we want black Americans to believe in the system as much as whites do, but only with what has been called the “delicate balance” rule -- blacks can be helped to the extent that whites are not hurt, or if that rule has been abandoned, only by having blacks struggle on their own with no systematic assistance which gains the label “preferential treatment.”

We have progressed far from the days of overt and accepted racism which labeled native peoples “savages” and taught school children that “Caucasians” were more intelligent and biologically superior to all other “races.” Progress alone, however, is not success. There is still a great deal of racism and prejudice in the United States today. 

Its nature has changed from public display to private reserve, however. It still exists in the minds of many Anglo American, many representations of mass media, and in the practices of companies who discriminate against minorities.

One of the greatest problems in lessening American racism is the ideological defense that racism simply does not exist. Here are the planks of this racism denial platform:

RACISM DENIAL ASSERTIONS:

i. We do not have responsibility for what happened in the past.

ii. If subordinate cultures would put aside their roots, and assimilate, they would be accepted.

iii. Things are better now so why do they keep complaining?

iv. There are many successful blacks (and other minority group members) so they can all succeed.

One sure way to avoid doing something about a problem is to deny that the problem exists. Racism is perpetuated so strongly in the U.S. because of this perpetual denial.

Both liberals and conservatives are responsible for the perpetuation of racism in America. Conservatives, in general, believe the subordinate groups (minorities) are to blame themselves for whatever problems they face. Some do not believe the nonwhites have the talents held by whites. Conservatives are often dedicated to blocking political efforts to aid minorities in direct ways. Crimes committed by minorities require tougher law enforcement rather than programs dealing with root causes of crimes, in the conservative view.

Liberals, in general, have a different contribution to racism. Liberals like Alexis de Tocqueville and Thomas Jefferson, along with Democrats today, sense guilt over the past horrors done to subordinate groups. They seek to atone with social programs designed to expand benefits to minorities. Of course,

1 This is certainly true for other nations, of course, but I can only focus on the United States at this time.
these benefits stop at the point that they hurt the dominating majority groups too much. They seek to raise the tide that raises all ships, never confronting the fact that racism in the system keeps some people without boats and with no real chance of significant competition in a healthy economy.

Racism continues in the news media as well. We continuously hear about the negative aspects of black life and how the blacks are different in bad ways. So we hear about how black women have more children but we don’t hear facts such as unmarried white women are twice as likely to terminate their pregnancies with abortions than unmarried black women. We hear about black men committing crimes and filling prisons, but we seldom hear facts such as the fact that black men who have the same four-year college level as white men earn $798 for each $1,000 the white men earn.

Racism continues in education. While many studies have shown that SAT scores do not significantly predict performance in college courses or in occupational success, they continue to be used as a way to say that some student applications should be accepted over others. Since blacks on the average have lower SAT scores, this allows blacks to be excluded on the basis of a pseudo-objective standard. While ethnoviolence against minorities continues in the form of actions and hate speech, these actions are defended as free expression or nonracist behaviors.

Before World War II, Americans were not embarrassed by open racism in the United States. It was overt, accepted, and ubiquitous. When the black soldiers returned from combat and asked for their rights, however, things began to change. Desegregation was enforced by the federal government. After the civil rights protests in the 1960s, Americans were willing to take proactive steps against racism. During the 1980s, however, there was a significant backlash against previous progress. Many Americans, both conservative and liberal, began to abandon support for the programs designed to end discrimination. An entire language emerged to attack programs of anti-racism – “preferential treatment,” “reverse discrimination,” and “quotas.”

And today we have a great retreat from anti-racism that even included even President Clinton who was great at talking the talk but doing nothing little substantial and specific to work against prejudice, discrimination, and racism. His successor, President Bush, who helped his father’s campaign with the notorious Willie Horton campaign TV spot release, has retracted from proactive White House efforts to work against racism in the U.S. This great retreat engenders a lessened commitment to helping minorities obtain the opportunities to gain parity in education, technology, and income. Sadly the blame appears to be shifting from the victimizers to the victims.

While strong White Supremacy movements are minority views in the United States today, research continues to show that majority-groups Americans are prejudicial in their treatment of minorities and that all ethnic groups can hold negative ethnic attitudes toward other groups. The newer forms of racism are covert and concealed at times. A report released by the Clinton White House indicates some disturbing data about attitudes held by majority ethnic group members, i.e., "white Americans" in regard to African Americans and Hispanic Americans. The data show that despite public attitudes of harmony and inter-ethnic acceptance are images and feelings of superiority. For example, as a Clinton White House report indicated, 1/5 Americans believe that inter-"race" marriages should be illegal; more than 20% of Americans disapprove of such marriages; most whites prefer to live in white-dominated neighborhoods; over 50% of whites in America rate Blacks and Latinos as less intelligent; over 50% of

2 I reject the notion that racism is limited only to majority groups and argue that any group is capable of both racial and cultural discrimination.
whites in America believe Blacks and Latinos are violent; and over 2/3 of white Americans believe that Blacks and Latinos like welfare. If you try the link just cited, you may find that the Bush administration took it down, but you can still search for other reports from the White House site.

Because racial and ethnic prejudices are not simply held in the minds of individuals but are talked over by those in the in-groups, they are an important subject for those who study human communication. Other disciplines provide useful information about macro-levels of prejudice, but communication scientists have the ability to explain the more micro levels. This is necessary because racism and ethnicism are related not only to sociological and psychological factors, but also to processes of social interaction. Communication scientists, and other social scientists, should be able to link the micro levels of prejudice which occur at levels of individual perception, thought, attitudes, and cognitions to the macro levels of prejudice which occur in mass media representations, political discourse and various societal actions or refusals to act.

We will see that all humans wish to build their personal identities in various ways including membership in ethnic or “racial” groups. This is an automatic and natural process. The issues with such identification began after the most basic levels of simple personal identity. In-group members may talk about the necessities of their dominance and develop means of persuading each other about the truth and necessity of their racial or ethnic attitudes. One of the basic levels of this kind of in-group communication consists of claims and perceptions of positive self-presentation contrasted with negative other or out-group presentation about foreigners, immigrants, people are so different, etc.

Why should we be so concerned about all of this? There are numerous sociological and political exigencies to this type of research and inquiry. A few are listed below:

• 1. Resurgence of racist movements in Europe and U.S.
• 2. Confusion of subtle racism with non-racism.
• 3. Continued private images of out-group inferiority
• 4. Nativism and ethnicism affecting foreign policies, wars, etc.
• 5. Successful appeals in US in elections to ethnicity-based fears.
• 6. Many of our social and cultural problems are the products of racism and ethnicism.

Racism comes from excessive use of the concept of race. Federal government reports show that the concepts of "race" and "ethnicity" are quite fluid and change over time. One report (Office of Management and Budget) indicates this:

"There are no clear, unambiguous, objective, generally agreed-upon definitions of the terms, "race" and "ethnicity." Cognitive research shows that respondents are not always clear on the differences between race and ethnicity. There are differences in terminology, group boundaries, attributes, and dimensions of race and ethnicity. Historically, ethnic communities have absorbed other groups through conquest, the expansion of national boundaries, and acculturation.

Processes in human which are natural and automatic may be very negative. Examples include stereotyping, violent reactions, and a “truth bias” in message reception.
Groups differ in their preferred identification. Concepts also change over time. Research indicates some respondents are referring to the national or geographic origin of their ancestors, while others are referring to the culture, religion, racial or physical characteristics, language, or related attributes with which they identify.

The 1977 Directive No. 15 categories are a mix of these. The categories do not represent objective "truth" but rather, are ambiguous social constructs and involve subjective and attitudinal issues.

People are confused about "race" because it seems like such a clearly present part of life and many people don’t understand why scientists are backing down on what has been thought to be a scientific term. In fact, the term “race” has been one that is defined in many contradictory ways and even denied to exist by some. While I prefer to minimize the use of the term “race” myself, I understand that many scholars still believe it is a useful term. I have erased it from my own vocabulary because I find enormous issues of validity with it from a measurement point of view. Moreover, I think its history brings connotations that accompany ostensibly innocent efforts to simple name groups by physical feature clusters and that many of those connotations are politically oppressive or alienating. I will not try to take away the word from you but I will ask you to consider what it does for your life as a signifier and what it does for how you communicate with others about various groups of people.

What I am going to do with this essay/analysis is to attempt to expose the fictions behind the construct or concept known as "race" and demonstrate how the construct is more useful for power and dominance or for inconsequential cataloging of surface-level physical appearance differences among human groups. By processes of pseudo-speciation or artificial classification by physical appearances, millions of people in the world have suffered gross injustices and the pattern will continue until everyone is willing to confront the political nature of "race" discourse.

Is There Really Such a Thing as "Race?"

I have struggled with the question about how real "race" actually is in human beings as I have done research for writing here. If there actually is "race" in the human species, at best it is something identifiable on the skin, bone structure, facial features, and externalities more than anything else. However, the history of the concept seems to indicate that it is a term in search of a meaning and that the meanings are always minute in terms of explaining anything substantial about human behavior. Indeed, with all of the differences in skin tone, hair texture, etc. humans are very much alike in structure and their most consequential differences appear to be differences in individuals and differences among cultures.

The "race" construct arose deductively and was derived from political premises about cultural superiority and inferiority. This political baggage makes it difficult to take the concept seriously from a scientific point of view. On the other hand, we know that there are groupings of people that are possible in light of shared outer characteristics. I prefer to use the term sub-populations to refer to these groupings. Thus, my position is that the "race" construct has very limited scientific utility and that an inductive approach to sub-populations is likely to be more fruitful. The latter would show groupings by appearances, behaviors, and genetics found in the Human Genome Project. Even in this latter case, I expect we will come back to what the ancient Greeks and Hebrews knew about people. That is, we are more alike than different and what makes us different in truly important ways is how we choose to live our lives and build our societies.
Racism Builds Upon the Concept of "Race"

History reveals some ugly lessons about the use of racism for applications of political decisions and policies such as early American foreign policy. This was recently noted well by Noam Chomsky in his book, Year 501: The Conquest Continues (Boston: South End Press, 1993). As done in most of his past books, Professor Chomsky shows how the savage injustice of Europeans and American to native peoples of small islands and states, has been buried in much of history. Chomsky notes that even Adam Smith, architect of laissez-faire capitalism, wrote that Europeans were using force on remote countries to force on them their commercial interests and dominance. It was not only financiers who thought such conquest was good, but even intellectuals like Frederick Hegel, who saw native people as "aborigines" and wrote racist comments about blacks and American Indians.

Chomsky notes that Europeans and early American entrepreneurs saw non-white peoples as animals, incapable of anything worthwhile, and ripe for the benefits of being conquered by the superior and benevolent new masters. The course he describes follows the Spanish Inquisition, The Netherlands’ Dutch East India Company, and other examples of economics being served by other forms of power.

Chomsky (1993) cites many cases of 18th and 19th century racist language, including George Washington's reference to Indians as savages, Jefferson's note about their backwardness and Teddy Roosevelt's call for a war against "savages." More importantly, Chomsky notes how the metaphor of "Indian fighting" was carried through dealing with the less-than-human creatures in the Philippines and Mexico, China, and Vietnam. As historians have noted, Americans sought to annex lands to compete with European nations and to become stronger than England after the War of Independence. For example, Chomsky notes that Andrew Jackson sought to annex Texas to gain a monopoly of cotton which would hinder England's role in the international market. President Tyler boasted about how well the U.S. could progress, after conquering one-third of Mexico, toward placing the world's nations at America's feet. These are not trivial observations and Chomsky notes how the pattern is consistent: American leaders seek to establish and protect American dominance whenever and wherever possible. Often, such dominance is conducted in the name of "competition." As in the days when Americans believed the peopling the New World with white civilization would better the new territories, Americans today believe that they are invariably and naturally helping those nations they invade or dominate.

Chomsky's description of European and American racism underpinning colonialism provides glimpses of the linguistic roots of American political culture. While overt racism is far less in force than in the past, cultural superiority continues to permeate American (and British) policy formation. The origins of this superiority have connections to days such as the early 1600s in Massachusetts when colonists saw the Native American Indians as needing and asking for help from the white Europeans. Early Americans believed that their self-interests and exploitation of native people was part of divine and noble civilizing missions. Chomsky clearly implies the connection to present-day policies, but needs to show more clearly how the political culture (with its discourses) functions with the motives of public subsidy of private profits -- how they fit together and justify each other.

Thus far, I have come across four general arguments regarding the term “race,” with two being in favor and two being opposed to the construct.

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4 Contrary to what some ideologues argue, this is not a matter of ideology but of more complete and critical historical analysis.
Four Arguments about the “Race” Construct

Two Arguments in Favor

The first and original argument says that humans fall into one of several or numerous (3-60+ now) groupings or “races.” Those who do not fall neatly into one category can be considered mixes of the categories. This argument says that there is a first race which is known as either Caucasian or Aryan or Indo-European and that all other races are degenerated forms of this original “white race.” A variation of this argument, however, is known as the polygenesis argument; it says that all races are like species and each one has a separate point of origin. The monogenesis (single point of origin) and polygenesis sub-arguments are unified by the larger argument about “race” categories and natural hierarchy of supremacy following skin color. The lighter the person, the more superior they are because they are closest the white “race.”

Although the first argument was considered scientific in the 19th century, most scientists today subscribe to a differing view of “race.” They believe they have a non-racist view of “races” since the racial categories refer only to outer characteristics or traits as well as some genetic patterns. Unlike the first argument which is openly racist, the second denies being racist and says that is makes no claims about intelligence, personality, or other behaviors based on the racial categories. This argument asserts that it is possible to group humans by physical traits into racial categories and there may be differences in biology and culture related to these categories.

Two Arguments Against

The first opposing argument says that people are part of one “race” -- the human race which is simply the human species. Within this species are numerous variations but humans have been genetically intermingling throughout history so any pure types of groupings are accompanied by many groups of varied mixes of people types. This argument says there really is no such thing as “race,” except in the heads of the people who use the term. Some proponents of this argument call “race” theories and categories superstition and others say the word has only been used by scientific racists in order to promote racism and discrimination.

The second argument says that “races” exist as biological groups but that there are no inferences that can be drawn to behavior. Hence, the construct has no biological utility and appears to be more political than biological. Some geneticists use this argument and say that if there are “races,” they will have to be found in patterns of genes, not in lists of outer physical characteristics alone. This kind of soft belief in “race” actually places little faith in the construct and therefore appears more opposed to the construct than in favor of it. These scientists are more likely to talk about “subpopulations” or “human groupings.”

Why Do We Continue to Believe in Something That May be Discredited?

In pursuing this research on the topic of the "race" construct, I have come to believe that there are phylogenic (outer features) patterns for human groups but that the most scientific groupings are in the genetic patterns beneath the skin and away from the political baggage that is wrapped tightly around the traditional racial categories.

The proportion of scientists that doubt the validity of the "race" construct does not seem to match the high numbers of laypeople who continue to treat the concept as if it is valid and useful. This
phenomenon occurs in many areas of belief such as faith in extraterrestrials, faith in "subliminal persuasion," and confidence in all sorts of charlatans. Social scientists need to explain why people believe in ideas that are discredited. Most likely, part of the reasons is that the idea, even if discredited, serves some useful social function. While the term “race” can be used to described human groups in terms of general outer similarities that are different than other groups, it is possible that the term has more political than biological importance.

I need to point out that my objective here it not to encourage you to become more tolerant. In fact, if you say you are tolerant, I challenge you to think about how you can go about accepting people past the point of tolerating them. In other words, if we have one human race (human species) with lots of subpopulations and ethnic groups, will it help us in developing better communication to appreciate cultural and biological diversity to the point where we can enjoy the differences and still not exaggerate their importance?

In her study of racism, Philoma Essed (1991) discovered that black women, even if successful professionals, experience racism on a daily basis while they are at work, in stories, and simply going about everyday life. She argues that this is true despite the fact that most “white” Americans claim that they are not prejudiced against blacks. Additionally, she finds streams of political discourse which attacks those African Americans which complain too much about racism. A theme she located is this type of discourse is that blacks are too sensitive and whites are criticized too much.

Essed’s husband, Teune van Dijk, has been studying the relationship of communication processes to prejudice for decades. He believes that one must be part of either the problem or the solution to prejudice and discrimination.

As we proceed, I confess to having two biases. This has nothing to do with idiotic phrase “political correctness” which like “brainwashing” is simply a term one throws at someone with whom they vigorously disagree. My first bias is against racism, ethnicism, and prejudice against any human beings on the basis on their group membership alone. My second bias is science. I believe that what we say about groups of human beings and about human behavior must be grounded in scientific findings and freed from speculation, folklore, and “what they say” kinds of nonsense.

Attitudes have functions for people and this applies to racial and ethnic attitudes. They have purposes that help people cope with living as they wish to live. With prejudicial attitudes, one gains help (even if illusory) in explaining the social world and sorting out people in one’s environment. Stereotyping, while negative, performs a function of cognitive shorthand that people enjoy.

I am fully aware of the contested state of much of this domain of inquiry. The issues and controversies are enormous. Dunbar (2002) makes the point that one does not have to be racist due to the fact that one describes racial features in people. Dunbar also argues that there are groups, for instance, the Basques, that do have distinctive genetic and cultural traits. I believe these arguments are correct but that they do not eliminate the arguments made throughout this analysis. They inform it and they are worthy of constant consideration. Some people wish to cling to systems of pure racial categories. These have been abandoned by scientists. Other people wish to have some fairly stable racial categories with the understanding that many people are “interracial.” Many scientists do accept this approach. Both views can be problematic for the same reasons, however. For example, in both, one can overattribute how a person behaves or communicates to their “racial” membership. I sighed deeply when a man recently told me about how his adopted black son is doing so well in basketball due to his “nature.” My non-black
Hispanic stepson is a great basketball player also -- due to lots of practicing!

To accept the challenges of lowering prejudice in thought, communication, and actions, as I will advocate, requires a commitment to the ethical responsibility for improving one’s communication and taking on the moral responsibility for what effects micro-level behaviors on larger-scale interaction and patterns of behaviors. This kind of commitment should be agreeable to someone with any mainstream political ideology since it appeals to the political values in our political culture that most Americans agree with, in the same way that most of agree with the need for free speech.

My epistemological orientation is a sociocognitive one. This means that I will try to relate what goes in with cognitions and attitudes in individuals’ minds to what occurs in social interaction and mass communication. This includes an attempt to specify the phenomena that are both cognitive and social at the same time (sociocognitive).
Chapter One: The History of the Ideas about "Race"

It is quite common for people today to be classified as members of one "race" as opposed to other "races." Many people take the validity of the term "race" for granted, including academics, government officials, and statisticians. In so doing, "race" functions as a signifier that maintains a purpose of classifying individuals into categories of human beings which purportedly have important differences.

The genetic nature of these differences is taken for granted and hence assumed to be immutable. Recently, however, the American Anthropological Association recommended that the term "race" be dropped from the United States Census. In this essay, I argue that the construct "race" is a biological and anthropological term which has little scientific utility but has great deal of political utility.

The purpose of this essay is to problematize the "race" construct to the point that its historical roots, biological uncertainty, and political functions become clearly visible. To the extent that this is achieved, the role of the "race" construct in political communication will become evident.

History of the "Race" Signifier/Construct

When did people begin thinking of humans as groups of "races?" Biologist Stephen Jay Gould says that the "race" term was not found in ancient times or in the Bible of the Hebrews and Christians. Other scholars have noted that the term and use of race categories are also absent in the work of the ancient Greeks and Romans (Hannaford, 1996).

This does not mean that the Hebrews, Greeks and Romans did not sort out people in terms of who was better. They did do this but it was usually in relation to tribes and cultures. Some observers try to find evidence in the Hebrew scriptures (Old Testament Bible) for racial thinking. They trace three “races” to three sons of Noah. Some say that one son of Noah, Ham, was cursed and made black to show his cursedness for his disobedience. However, more objective observers find that the descendents of Ham would live in the Middle East. In the time between the 2nd and 6th centuries, some authors of the Babylonian Talmud decided to call these descendents black (Graves, 2001). The Hebrew leader Moses was married to a black woman named Zipporah (Graves, 2001). In the New Testament, Christ is quoted as saying that “God hath made of one blood all nations of men.” (Graves, 2001, p. 17).

The Greeks believe that non-Greeks were barbarians. Yet all a barbarian had to do to raise his status was to become Greek by taking on the culture in language, practices and values. Although Hippocrates said that the Greeks were superior to the people in the Asian areas, he attributed the Asian weaknesses in war to their less demanding agricultural environment (Graves, 2001). He did not attribute his alleged Asian weaknesses to heredity. While Aristotle believed in natural rulers and natural slaves, he did not use any detailed taxonomy of human groups to show some being better than others, although he did attribute group differences to differences in environments (Graves, 2001).

Like the Greeks, the Romans had a strong ethnocentrism and they characterized the Germans, French, and Britons as being mentally slow (Graves, 2001). The attributed this alleged slowness to what they saw as inferior cultural achievements (Graves, 2001). One Roman, Emperor Julian became a “race” theorist of sorts and argued that there were superior and inferior groups of people with innately determined characteristics. Although Julian is an early racist, it is interesting to note that he said the Aryans and Anglo-Saxons were barbaric while the Africans were intelligent and civilized (Graves, 2001).
He also said the Celts and Germans were fierce while the Greeks and Romans were political (Graves, 2001).

To both the Greeks and Romans, slaves were not a matter of any kind of racial grouping. Anyone could be made a slave. Captured people were easy candidates for slavery despite their place of origin (Graves, 2001). There was no preference to make Africans slaves in these two societies.

In days of colonial expansion, the concept appeared somewhat to describe the new people seen by explorers in the New World (Montagu, 1964). The term also had early origins in the 17th century as it was used by European tribes who fought each other for land and resources. The purpose in each case was to attribute observed physical, behavioral, and intellectual features of people to “race” and then to rank races in relation to the race considered superior ("AAA Recommends "Race" be Scrapped," 1997).

Jewish people came from numerous tribes and constituted a cultural group. Converts to their religion came from other tribes such as the Amorites, Amalekites, Egyptians, and Hittites (Graves, 2001). Additionally, they intermingled with many groups of people making it impossible for anyone to seriously consider them a “race.” Yet that is what Hitler and other strong racists would do to isolate and oppress them. However, the German Nazis did not begin the prejudice against the Jews; it was common in Europe in the Middle Ages. While Pope Gregory banned the persecution of Jews by Christians in the 6th century, Pope Urban II (Council of Clermont) exorted the Crusaders the 11th century to secure the Holy Land from the Muslims and to also go after the Jews. In 1215, Pope Innocent III ordered all Jews to wear badges and to live in ghettos (Graves, 2001).

Francois Bernier, a French physician, in 1684 was the first European to formally name and classify human “races.” He saw these races as sub-races of the human species.

The Swedish biologist, Carolus Linnaeus, father of taxonomy, described Native Americans as having reddish skin, being choleric (easily angered) and being governed by custom. He described Africans as having black skin, being indolent (prone to laziness), anointing themselves with grease and having governance by caprice (sudden changes of mind). He saw Europeans as white, gentle, muscular, inventive, having flowing hair and blue eyes, and being governed by law ("AAA Recommends "Race" be Scrapped," 1997). An air of science was added to the notion of "race" by the writings of Linnaeus and those who read his work. Linnaeus was publishing about this in early 18th century.

George Buffon was a French biologist who set the “white” race as the norm for assessing the qualities of other races. While he argued that blacks are inferior to whites, he did not support slavery (Graves, 2001).

Johann Blumenbach invented the term "Caucasian" to designate the light-skinned people of Europe, Western Asia, and North Africa. Blumenbach cited the superiority and beauty of these people as the reason he named them after the Caucasus Mountains (Gould, 1994). Blumenbach, who began the study of humans we know today as anthropology, developed five categories or classifications of "race": Caucasian, Mongolian, Ethiopian, American, and Malay (Gould, 1994).

Johann Herder, in 1784, followed the writing of Blumenbach which appeared in 1775 about races. Herder argues that all we really have for human groupings is variations one of big picture (Montagu, 1964). In the nineteenth century, the race construct appeared more scientific but still was used to contrast newly labeled races with the perfect ideal race known as Caucasians. In other words, racial variation was discussed as degeneration from the original and superior race. Races were ranked on what were considered scientific measures of intellect, facial prognathism (outward jaw projection), phrenology...
(character, mental traits related to bumps on the skull), cranial capacity, etc.

Stereotypes about different sub-populations resulted with the race construct. Thus, some were called more intelligent than others and some more athletic than others and some more mathematical than others.

**Scientific Utility of the Term "Race"**

If one examines the terms used to classify people into categories with clear distinctions, one finds that people can be placed in quantifiably different classes such as age, sex, height, weight, and years of education. However, we should note that there is only one correct answer to all of these. You can only have one age, one height, weight, and years of education. What of "race?" Many people cannot fall into one racial category because they have ancestors or parents from different racial lineages. Thus, there is nothing discrete about the term.

If the construct does not place one person into one race, it begins to falter as a means of classification for all humans, since many, if not most, people have mixed lines of descent in terms of national and racial origins. Shreeve (1994) notes, for example, that about 20-30% of African-Americans in the United States are of a pure African type which we might label as one "race."

In public opinion polling today, people are still asked for their "race," despite the fact that about 30% of Americans have changed their racial designation within two years. I once talked with a student who said that she was less than 1/10 Native American, but would self-classify herself as such in order to receive federal money. The validity and reliability of scientific measures are crucial to their being considered scientific and useful with either research or reports. Yet, the validity and reliability of the "race" construct is highly suspect. Validity is the extent that we are measuring what we purport to be measuring and reliability is the consistency of a measure over repeated measurements. The "race" construct falters on both counts.

Biologists report that the efforts to count races have yielded totals that vary from three to sixty (Wilson, 1992). Since 1900, 26 different categories for race or ethnicity have been used by the U.S. Census ("AAA Recommends "Race" be Scrapped," 1997). How can scientists or pollsters know what they are measuring in regard to race when there are between 3 and 60 racial categories?

We have always known that all humans belong to one biological species: Homo sapiens. The categories known as race are difficult to use because they are not fixed, pure, discrete, or satisfactory in validity and reliability. Moreover, they do not contribute any knowledge about human beings that surpasses the simple fact that all humans are part of one species. Users of the construct might wish to argue that the "race" construct allows us to understand more about human behavior. Yet this appears to be false since most differences in behaviors are attributable to factors that have nothing to do with "race." In fact, differences in "race" have been found to account for no more than 6% of human behaviors (Shreeve, 1994).

It is known that there are changes in human beings in certain qualities and characteristics that can be related to geographic isolation. The "race" construct is not based on these pockets of geographic isolation, however, as much as it is based on arbitrary groupings of people by physical characteristics (Shreeve, 1994). Marco Polo and others who traveled thousands of miles at the slow speed of 25 miles per day by foot and camel, never talked about difference races of people (Shreeve, 1994). These explorers did not talk about such groupings because they encountered people of many varying characteristics who
would appear to be blends of what are known as "races." They saw in-between types of people as they made their way gradually across a continent as opposed to the New World explorers who left Europe, crossed the ocean, and then encountered very different types of people much more suddenly. Today, about 50% of anthropologists believe that the race construct is no longer useful (Shreeve, 1994).

Criticizing the "race" construct for its problems with validity and reliability is not to say that there are no genetic differences among humans. Rather, it argues that the denotative meaning of the construct is quite fluid and the connotative meanings of the construct are easily used for political purposes. The American Anthropological Association ("AAA Recommends "Race" be Scrapped," 1997) recommended that the United States Census drop the category of race from its measures. They argue that the concept has no basis in human biology and cannot be tested or proven scientifically. Additionally, they argue the survey respondents confuse the terms race, ethnicity, and ancestry. They acknowledge that genetic data do indicate differences among groups, that such groups can be traced to geographic origins, and that some of this data can be helpful for health screening. On the other hand, they point out that any two people within one so-called race, are as genetically different as any two people selected from two different groups.

Race and Ethnicity

These two terms may be difficult for most people who not study human variations to sort out. Anthropologist Ashley Montagu (1964) argues that we should substitute ethnicity for race in order to label variations in humans. The American Anthropological Association says that terms like ethnicity or ethnic origins might be less susceptible to misunderstanding than the term race ("AAA Recommends "Race" be Scrapped," 1997). The association argues that both race and ethnicity, however, are constructs for categorizing people on perceived physical and behavioral differences.

The key difference, however, is that populations with similar physical appearances may have varying ethnic identities and populations with varying physical appearances may have common ethnic identities. The association notes that while people rarely know their complete ancestry, they do know what ethnic groups they identify with the most. They say that the term "ethnic group" has been shown to less confused with race than the term "ethnicity" and that respondents know it refers more to ancestry and origins. What were considered separate races in the early 1900s in the United States are now considered ethnic groups. These include the Italians, Irish, and Jews. In other words, these people were considered non-white then and now are considered variations within the white race.

How did these groups become white? Certainly, it had more to do with power than with biology. If you are less likely to be approved by a bank for a loan because you are black, it is race that makes you do something wrong in applying for the loan or are you rejected for the loan because someone is categorizing you as black and attributing certain features to the category? If you have one parent who is Anglo and one who is Mexican, are you white or Mexican? If you have one parent who is black and one who is white, are you white or black?

Historian Andrew Hacker (1992) (no relation) notes that if a white American marries a Hispanic or Asian, the children can be considered white, but if the partner is black, the children will be called black. He notes that we lost a spectrum of racial categories view that we present in the early century. A person born of one white and one black parent back then was labeled "mulatto." In 1910, the Census reported 20% of blacks as mulattoes (Hacker, 1992). "Mestizo" was a term referring to mixed European and Native American. "Creole" referred to mixed European and Negro. Hacker notes that many American do not fit into race categories.
For example, Native Americans are described as one race but he notes that they are more of a collection of loosely related tribes than a biological entity. How about Asian people? About 20 years ago, we spoke of them as Orientals because Europeans like the term to sort them all apart from Europe, the center of civilization. The race category of Asian was not chosen by the Japanese, Chinese, Koreans, Indonesians, Burmese, Thai people themselves. This as a European and American lumping together of people who have few activities and interests in common. Is there really a race that we can call Hispanic? Some people in this group have purely European roots, some have African roots, and some have American tribal roots. In California, in the 1990 Census, 51% of Hispanics/Latinos said they identify themselves as Hispanic without a race category (Hacker, 1992).

Ethnic and racial categories are both related to processes of identity formation. The categories are neither completely independent or the same. However, most scientists today prefer to talk about ethnicity because it minimized phenotypic clusters of features in favor of heritage, culture, and other characteristics that can be attributed to groups because of location and birth lineage while abandoning some of the racist baggage of the “race” construct. However, as Cornell and Hartmann (1998) point out, there is the always the political issue of assignment (categorization done to one by others) versus assertion (categorization of oneself by oneself). Additionally, we find that people can discriminate on the basis of ethnicity in ways that are similar to discrimination done with older racial grouping. It is also very important to note, as Cornell and Hartmann point out, that people take on racial and ethnic identities for specific purposes of acting on the meanings of these categories. I believe that the political aspects of both ethnicity and racial thinking must be carefully considered as one of the most potent sources of social conflict and political oppression.

Oppression from "Pseudospeciation"

As Andrew Hacker (1992) argues, dividing people into races began with convenience but then the categories tool on lives that contort facts about human beings. While we no longer have slavery in the United States, many Americans still believe that blacks are inferior to whites (Hacker, 1992). What we do legally is not what we think privately. Both Thomas Jefferson, who said that all men are created equal, and Abraham Lincoln, who ended slavery in the United States, believed that blacks are inferior to whites. Fifteen years after the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson, (Hacker, 1992, p. 25) said the following: "Nobody wishes more than I do to see proofs that nature has given to our black brethren talents equal to those of the others colors of men, and that the appearance of a lack of them is owing merely to the degraded condition of their existence in African and America."

Hacker (1992) argues that Jefferson's racism in this statement is similar to white racism toward blacks today in that they hope that blacks have equal talents but doubt that they do. White Americans feel most comfortable about blacks when blacks stop talking about their cultures (Hacker, 1992). While black residency of neighborhoods reaches the 8% mark, whites begin to abandon the neighborhood (Hacker, 1992). While many white Americans are opposed to programs like affirmative action, they are also opposed to other whites campaigning for causes to help blacks. Often the racism is concealed by arguments which say that whites made their successes by individual efforts alone and that is what blacks should do (Hacker, 1992). Hacker (1992) argues that black Americans subsist as aliens in the only homeland that they know. He says that this is a segregation that they have not chosen. They suffer the greatest prejudice because of deep historical roots in biology, anthropology, and religion in the U.S. which described them as low forms of human life -- something in between monkeys and other humans. No other group has the stigma of former slavery. Other minority groups have been able to be accepted by whites by joining in the white discrimination and oppression of black Americans. Hacker (1992) points
out that most Americans still believe that blacks are more likely than other groups to carry primitive
genes.

Oppression from Racism

Racism exists as ideas, attitudes, and posturing of superiority of one's own race in relation to
those considered inferior. But, as Hacker (1992) observes, racism is most insidious because it springs out
of assumptions and viewpoints that we are often unaware exist in our minds. Many whites can cheer on
black athletes, talk about black friends that they have, and still generalize blacks in terms that are negative
(Hacker, 1992). What are the foundations of racism at the individual level? One is personal experiences.

Another is ignorance. We may think that someone lives as people like them live on TV rather
than visiting them and getting first-hand impressions. Another reason is that we keep telling ourselves
that American has no racism, that everything was fixed long ago. Hacker (1992) notes key difference
between blacks and whites in America -- very similar to differences between men and women -- like men
don’t have to have fears related to their gender, whites do not experience fears on a daily basis related to
their skin color.

Political Utility of the "Race" Term

"Race" does not appear to be only an attempted biological category. It is related to the power
distributions of human societies and historically has performed useful political functions. In fact, it may
be that "race" is far more useful as a political signifier and one useful for purposes of biology,
anthropology, and social science. Events like the Holocaust, slavery in the United States and Europe,
forced relocations of Native Americans, can be seen as historically bolstered by racial thinking. By the
mid-nineteenth century, "race" became a tool of American imperialism (Montagu, 1964). White
-Americans mean the term white to signify European origins along with its superior cultures and
civilization (Hacker, 1992). Whites felt morally justified in having slaves and white men felt free to force
themselves on black women. Groups like Irish, Jews, Hindus, Italians, Mexicans, etc. were sorted out
from the white category. Why are dark-skinned Iranians considered white?

One useful political aspect of the race construct in the maintenance of biological determinism to
support efforts to stop trying to encourage equalities in society. Even before the book The Bell Curve was
released, psychologist Arthur Jensen was claiming that programs like Head Start will inevitably fail
because black children have been found to genetically inferior (Hacker, 1992). Scholars publish
differences about racial groups in regard to crime, rape, welfare, intelligence, etc. Why? In terms of
genetics, the "race" construct is not a useful discriminator of anything more than surface-level
appearances such as skin color. In terms of politics, it has functioned dutifully to justify segregation,
discrimination, slavery, and ending social programs which attempt to bring about multiculturalism and aid
in education to minority sub-populations. Said differently, as a biological construct, "race" contributes
virtually nothing useful to the student of human beings. Yet as a political construct, "race" can have
strong and significant effects upon communication and behavior.
A Concept That Will Not Go Away?

A term or construct does not go away when it has as much intuitive appeal as the "race" construct and when it has as much political power. As the anthropologists advocating its disuse have noted, it will take a very long time for the term to be retired. This is because the word signified something that people believe in, namely, biological and anthropological groupings that link skin tone and other outer features with internal and behavioral regularities. Until the basic term is minimized into its rightful position of a category force fitted onto observable traits, racism will not likely decline in any significant fashion.
Chapter 2: Old and New Forms of Racism

This is the kind of book chapter that will get under the skin of those racists who wish to pretend there no longer is such a thing or that to the extent that racism continues in the United States, it is perfectly normal and no longer to be challenged. Sorry, but the job is not yet done. Racism must be confronted until it finds no refuge whatsoever. The contemporary refuge for racism is a soft racism that is not easily recognizable and which may even deny its own existence.

For example, President George W. Bush has all but abolished the White House Office for Race Relations. This may be seen as nothing more than economic re-arrangement or it can be seen for what it represents in terms of communication -- a willingness to stop working on racism and failure of nerve to confront it. The question is why and the answer suggests a set of values consistent with soft racism. Such a hunch can be confirmed in stories told by reporters about Bush and his aids telling ethnic jokes on plane rides, a Bush advisor saying that the Administration lacks "Panda-huggers" for dealing favorably with the People's Republic of China (Newsweek, April 16, 2001, p. 28), the speaking engagement of Bush the candidate at racist Bob Jones University, etc. etc. There are even essays circulating with charges about Bush's family siding with German Nazis during World War II but those stories, whether true or false, lack scrutiny by the mainstream media.

New Racism

Teune van Dijk and others have long noted that subtle racism is more insidious than overt racism since it is denied and concealed, perhaps even unrecognized by the person holding the prejudiced attitudes. This opens up strong challenges to communication scientists and analysts trying to reduce prejudice since the holders of the negative attitudes keep denying the existence of those attitudes.

New Racism and Communication

Van Dijk is interested in content, organization, operation of prejudice. He is not talking about simply having negative attitudes or mental states, but rather about strategies of information processing about ethnic or racial groups. This is related to the idea of SOCIAL INFORMATION PROCESSING. He argues that prejudice is a social phenomenon involving group-based and shared cognitions. SOCIAL COGNITION is always involved with this.

ATTITUDES are taken to be SOCIAL ATTITUDES rather than mediating structures affected by stimuli and affecting behavior. Social attitudes are shared cognitions that are schematically organized. Attitudes are schematic clusters of evaluative beliefs (also known as opinions). As people do not have personal language, they do not have personal language. Only opinions or evaluative beliefs are personal. Attitude categories develop with personal experiences in relation to how people match our goals, values, interests. Once developed the attitudes influence our interactions with others.

Attitudes are also organized into clusters of attitudes known asIDEOLOGIES or what I will refer to as COGNITIVE IDEOLOGIES. IDEOLOGIES allow fast political processing as when one concept can be rapidly evaluated by its similarity a previously evaluated concept. Note that despite the fact that ideologies are social and sociocognitive, each person has multiple cognitive ideologies related to a
multiplicity of contexts related to values, interests, goals. Sets of ideologies may be organized into more abstract ideologies such as the isms we mentioned before.

Van Dijk described two types of memory that are important to racism and prejudice. EPISODIC MEMORY consists of subjective representations of personal experiences in short-term memory. SEMANTIC MEMORY consists of abstract knowledge. Since there is a social nature to the contents of semantic memory, he refers to SOCIAL MEMORY -- semantic memory about social affairs. SOCIAL MEMORY has not only semantic information, but also procedural information.

You might want to use the metaphors of episodic memory as personal diary and social memory as dictionary, encyclopedia and grammar. FRAMES are clusters of knowledge which have general properties and leave details to be filled in by specific situations. PROTOTYPES are representations of typical members of a class of people. SCRIPTS are knowledge structures guiding routine behaviors. Ex. Driving. SCHEMATA are categorical networks organizing cognitive representations. Frames, prototypes, scripts are types of schemata. A script is also called an event schema. A hierarchical structure formed by repeated situation categories is a SITUATION MODEL SCHEMA.

PRINCIPLES OF INFORMATION PROCESSING WITH THE ABOVE STRUCTURES:

1. From experience models, mental models, we form more general models for our experiences.
2. When we understand what occurs, we have formed models of specific instances that match models of similar episodes.
3. A control system monitors the flow of information between short-term and long-term memory.
4. Macro-level negative opinions dominate more specific or micro-level opinions.
5. When faced with contradictory evidence, prejudice attitudes remain stable by conflicts getting resolved through strategies of reinterpretation.

SPECIFIC COGNITIVE ORGANIZATION OF PREJUDICE -- THE GROUP SCHEMA:

1. APPEARANCE -- fast identification and categorization by this high-level category. Skin color etc are examined a person is classified as race or ethnic group member. The latter is now more acceptable than the former.
2. ORIGIN -- territorial or geographic boundaries.
3. SOCIOECONOMIC POSITION -- how can elites preformulate prejudice for other?
4. SOCIOCULTURAL PROPERTIES - beliefs about norms, values, rules, habits of outgroups. Note that cultural differences are exaggerated and polarized to the extent that what is typical of the outgroup is also what is unacceptable.
5. PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS -- inherency or immutability is part of this.
What are the functions of ethnic prejudice or racism?

1. Easy social information processing about groups.
2. Cognitive programs for planning and justifying negative actions.
3. Fast schema retrieval and application.

Research indicates that such group schemata are stable and similar across individuals belonging to the same in-group.

Difference is an issue we have mentioned, but it is not difference alone that is the problem. Once differentiation occurs, it can lead to two directions, one respectful of difference and combined with some form of commonality, and the other turns difference into deviance, threat, immutability, categorical superiority and inferiority, etc. etc.

THE BOTTOM LINE OF PREJUDICE is shown in thought and communication about other groups (other than your own) and how they should either leave or they should adapt. They should not create competition with the autochthonous group, should not be threatening, should conceal their differences, and accept being second-class. [Both Jefferson and Lincoln thought that the blacks would not be able to adapt and therefore should be shipped out of the United States]

Note how tolerance can thus be based on the proposition that they can stay if they do not bother us. Ideological work is done as demands are made by the outgroups and in the ingroup can repel those demands by not appearing overtly racist or ethnicist. Thus, instead of protecting the dominant group, you can argue you are protecting the entire society. As the Southerners argued in the 19th century, the issue of slavery was about States = rights. With prejudice, ingroup members highlight differences rather than similarities with outgroups, minimize differences among outgroups and minimize differences between outgroup members.

PREJUDICE IN EVERYDAY THINKING:

A prejudiced person seeks to form models that are consistent with stored attitude schemata. Discourse is interpreted in biased ways and this is a central feature of racism being reproduced through communication. Both internal and external data are combined to form input for understanding and evaluation. Episodic models provide structures and contents of previous encounters. Scripts and attitude schemata supply socially shared knowledge and opinions necessary for interpretation.

Attention is focused on a minority member category. Other ethnic events are accessed. Negative evaluations from previous events can be associated with the present one. The minority classification of the encountered persona can then lead to the assignation of more importance and negative evaluations will become more prominent.

NEGATIVIZATION can result from the special focus on ethnic difference and minority status. Dominant group members recall and reproduced negative facts from various sources. Same behaviors for dominants are classified in good ways and for outgroup members are negative. Ex. Well-deserved rest vs. Being lazy.
Note that what we call interpretation is being controlled by attitude schemata. Even objective news can be cognitively processes as racist or prejudiced discourse -- how?

DISCOUNTING is a way of minimizing information not consistent with existing attitudes. The observations can be dissociated from stored representations. Another technique is detopicalization which makes a theme positive or neutral about outgroups as a minor detail.

ATTRIBUTION involves putting the minority group member into a negative situation as the causal agent. Negative acts by majority members are attributed to social contexts. This applies to scapegoating and making victims victimizers. For employment, a dominant group member might be a victim of the system or of minority members while the outgroup or minority group members are told that they must personally responsible.

DISCOURSE is controlled by cognitive structures of prejudice. There is two-reinforcement between what is stored and the models used to process new encounters. Each ethnic encounter is NOT taken a unique event but as an instantiation of attitudes. The person is not represented as an individual but as a group member. This is a process of deindividualization and dehumanization.

Further abstraction of models is possible with continued processing of ethnic encounters. Each instance is confirmation. Contradictory information is treated as exceptional and may have no effect. In-group members become experts at dealing with inconsistent messages.
Chapter 3:

THE BIOLOGICAL SIDE OF THE "RACE" SIGNIFIER

In the 18th century, biology was a word applied by Karl Burdach to the study of humans. Later in 1812, Jean Baptiste Lamarck used the term to denote chemistry, meteorology, geology, botany, and zoology. Today, biology is generally thought of in a more focused way as simply the science of living things (Greek "bios" = life). The two main subsets of biology are the study of plants (botany) and the study of animals (zoology), but there are many other areas including human studies, anatomy, genetics, paleontology, etc. etc.

In 1735, Carolus Linneaus divided all living things into five taxonomic levels - kingdom, phylum, class, order, family, genus, and species. For human beings, the order became animalia (kingdom), chordata, mammalia, primates, homo, and sapiens (species). With this means of categorization and classification, scientists like Linneaus believed that they could make meaningful comparisons among living things. In biology, since Linneaus, the categories for living things have changed as discoveries have been made. So the fact that categories change is not enough reason to reject a means of classification. The "race" construct changes as do scientific constructs. The question is how scientific the "race" construct is to begin with and why it seems so embedded in cultures of racism.

In describing the origins of "races," scientists who use the term trace the following line of events. First there were apes these evolved into ape-people as well as various types of apes. Ape-people evolved into Homo erectus hominids and some of these evolved into Neanderthal people. Around 38,000 BC, it is assumed that the modern human, homo sapien, evolved from the Neanderthals. From there, from the homo sapiens human species, six "stocks" arose -- Negroid, Mongoloid, Caucasoid (1), Australoid, Amerindian, and Polynesian. Each of these "stocks" could be further divided as with the Caucasoid stock including the categories of Alpine, Mediterranean, and Nordic (Trager, 1992). Historian J. M. Roberts (1999) argues that DNA research shows clearly that all humans come from one line of human heritage and that the "races" today began as geographical and climatical specializations in skin pigment, skull shape, hair features, and bone structure. He continues that all of the main racial groups existed by 10,000 BC in the groupings of Mongoloid, Pacific, Australian, American, Caucasian, and African. Despite these categories, however, Roberts argues that after 10,000 BC, human evolution was about mental and social phenomena more than genetic changes (Roberts, 1999).

Racism is grounded in the concept of race and ethnicism is grounded in perceptions of cultural differences with an accompaniment of ethnocentrism. The basic power of racism is in its taken-for-granted linguistic status. People feel lost if you tell them that the word is what Jacques Barzun calls superstition or what Ashley Montagu calls one of humankind's most dangerous, yet meaningless concepts.

It is not possible to find one exact starting point for either racialism in thought or racism as a social problem. However we know that the concept was used by scientists to establish believes in biological determinism as well as beliefs in natural hierarchies among human groups in which some are simply inferior to others. Some observers including myself, belief that racism and the race concept go together. Some say that racism preceded the race concept and that ideas about race were necessary to expand racist thinking. This is less provable than the co functioning
argument about race and racism going together.

Those who promoted the construct of "race" also promoted the ideas of polygenesis, inequalities among groups and social-political ideologies which privilege one group as the master over others. Perhaps today we have made the last part of this silent, but have we eliminated it? Politically, slavery and exploitation of other peoples could be justified by theories of race. I argue that this political purpose far exceeds any other purpose for the word in terms of specific human actions. I believe that we need to understand some basic human tendencies to see why ethnicism can easily follow racism even if the "race" construct is severely limited or even eliminated.

I get my notions about "race" being a floating signifier from the great cultural studies scholar Stuart Hall. Hall argues that "race" is never solely defined by biological factors, but rather is made by culture and discourse. Still, to see how this shifting and fluid quality of the "race" signifier is possible, we must understand its roots in biology and pseudobiology.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF BIOSIGNIFICATION FOR "RACE":

Anthropologist Ruth Benedict (1940) noted long ago that in the nineteenth century, Vacher del Lapouge was arguing that people would kill each other because of 1-2 degrees of differenced in their cephalic index. The cephalic index is a ratio of width of the head divided by length. Benedict observes that narrow head and broad head can be found in all populations. Moreover, people have been killed for reasons of property, geography, ambitions, religion, etc. and not for any cephalic dimensions.

While racism is actually a creation of the 19th century, segregation and prejudice has ancient origins. Before concept of "race," people discriminated on other bases. Socrates, for example, told the Greeks that a stable society requires status distinctions among citizens (Gould, 19).

Biological determinism is a central part of the early racial theories. It holds that differences between human groups arise from innate differences (Gould, 19). A corollary of this premise is the assumption that intelligence can be measured as a single quantity (Gould, 19). This corollary is the foundation of the Bell Curve assertions (Herstein & Murray, 19).

Louiz Agassiz (1850) assigned blacks to a separate species and said that naturalists have a right to consider human beings without reference to religion or politics (Gould, 19). Biological determinism made political inequalities appear normal and natural. Consequently, attempts to lessen inequalities would be viewed as abnormal and working against natural laws.

Joseph Arthur Comte de Gobineau was a respected French diplomat and author. In France he had been appointed by Foreign Minister Alexis de Tocqueville as "chef de cabinet." Yet Gobineau provided many key assertions supporting the beliefs in Aryan race superiority drawn upon by the Nazis in Germany. According to Gobineau, writing in the mid-1800s, there are three human races: white, yellow and Negroid. He says that this is the order of superiority to inferiority also. He treated "race" as a kind of species and argued that white people have superior intelligence, creativity and courage.

Russian zoologist, Theodosius Dobzhansky (1963) shows that no two human beings are biologically identical. In other words, genes and chromosomes vary for both individuals and subpopulations, but people should not confuse this diversity with inequality. In this way, as we will see argued in the section on politics, equality is more a political term than a biological one.
Each human has cells which contain nuclei and those nuclei house chromosomes. Within the chromosomes are genes that are made up of deoxyribonucleic acids (DNA). Each human inherits thousands of genes from their ancestors. There are also thousands of pairs of genes from the two parents of the individuals. Because of this enormous diversity of inherited genes, even a brother and sister may have differing genes while they have the very same two parents. This is obviously tied to Mendel's Laws.

Certainly, Dobzhansky (1963) notes, there are human groups which vary in skin color, etc. However, he argues that individuals within these subpopulations also differ in traits among themselves. He observes that when such a group is named, a stereotype usually follows. People then tend to assume that all members of the group are the same. Following this, people who belong to a particular human grouping ("race") are then likely to be treated in accordance to the stereotype rather than in terms of their characteristics as individuals. This latter point by Dobzhansky is the central part of prejudice, whether it is racial or ethnic.

THE BIOLOGICAL REALITIES OF SUB-POPULATIONS:

As geographic isolation increases, so does the validity of grouping people by what we might call sub-population or what some call "race." The less that people are living in pockets isolated from other pockets of humans, the lower the validity of such categories. In 1910, a former Harvard professor of biology ran the Eugenics Records Office in New York. His name was Charles Davenport. The office was supported by the wife of a railroad tycoon -- Mrs. E. H. Harriman. People who advocated eugenics in the United States would draw upon the publications done by this office for support (Shapiro, 1991).

The founder of eugenics was Sir Francis Galton. Advocates also drew upon Mendel's work and listed things which they believed were hereditary: hemophilia, feeblemindedness, nomadism, eroticism, pauperism, and pellagra (actually due to vitamin deficiency). A fellow racist along with Galton and Davenport was Karl Pearson who you know from the famous correlation coefficient or one of them -- Pearson's r. Davenport claimed that Italians tend toward crimes of personal violence and Jews have tendencies of prostitution and sexual immorality (Shapiro, 1991). A fellow racist and eugenics believer of this group, Madison Grant, wrote in 1916 that: "Whether we like it or not, the result of a mix of two races in the long run gives us a race reverting to the more ancient, generalized and lower type... The cross between a white man and a Negro is a Negro, ...and a cross between any of the three European races and a Jew is a Jew." Science magazine called this man's work "a work of solid merit." (Shapiro, 1991, p. 44).

As Robert Shapiro says, there were serious scientists at the time who did not have political agendas, but many if not most of the eugenicists had goals of bigotry. So what are the realities about subpopulations?

1. Many strong difference predate geographic separation and thus "race." One example is blood types A, B and O. These exist in every human subpopulation.

2. Human beings have migrated or navigated from one place to another and intermingled in the process since at least 40,000 B.C. This means that one part of human cultures and the world population has been continual gene flow.

3. Some human look the same with external features but are classified as members of differing "races."
The United States Office of Management and Budget in 1997 decided that there are seven useful categories for humans -- American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, African American or Black, Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, Hispanic or Latino, and Not Hispanic or Latino. (DNA Differences Challenge the Meaning of Race, "1998). While these categories are meaningful to demographers, to many geneticists they are meaningless since they believe that genetic diversity is a continuum with no clean boundaries among groups or subpopulations (DNA Differences Challenge the Meaning of Race, "1998). While some debaters to insist on the validity of racial categories, geneticists note that humans have a great degree of genetic intermingling and also the fact that many think we all have origins in Africa, like it or not (DNA Differences Challenge the Meaning of Race, "1998). What is especially puzzling with the OMB categories is the inclusion of a linguistic category --Hispanic -- among the list of "racial" groupings. As geneticists observe, people in the Hispanic category come from very diverse genetic populations with great differences in population characteristics (DNA Differences Challenge the Meaning of Race, "1998).

Yes, there are differences among human subpopulations. The question is what are they are how important are they. S. L. Washburn, an anthropologist, held onto the concept of "race," while noting the many problems with its usage in anthropology. For example, he argued that the older three-race typologies lumped people together into single categories like all black-skinned people whether they live in Africa or in Australia. Even with the Pygmies, he found no single "race." Washburn states, "As I was reviewing classifications in preparing for this lecture, I found that almost none of them mentioned any purpose for which people were being classified. Race isn't very important biologically." The question becomes an interesting one at this point. If "race" is not a useful category for science, what is it useful for? Of course, I argue that its main utility is for politics rather than for either biology or anthropology. I heartily agree with Washburn when he says that discussions about "race" generate lots of confusion and "endless emotion" but I think are productive ways to ferret out the science from the politics.

What are known as "races" are groupings of people attributed to outer (phylogenetic) appearance differences related to assumed processes of geographically oriented evolution (Washburn, 1963). Because of the polluted nature of the term "race" I prefer to use the word suggested by some experts, that is, "sub-populations." There are no clear-cut boundaries between human groups that can be considered mutually exclusive and exhaustive, but we do know that there are logical groupings possible even as once done simply by tribe or city-state. Thus, there were once Spartans and Athenians, Mongols, Hittites, Philistines, etc. etc. The branching of all humans into a finite number of sub-populations if largely fictive. The isolation of these populations is not only fictive but absurd after the invention of the boat or even travel by foot and animal. Thus, we see that the African Bushmen do not fit neatly into one grouping that incorporates all "black" people, but rather that the Bushmen are considered by anthropologists who use the "race" construct as a mix of "Negro" and "Mongoloid" races (Washburn, 1963).

We always need to return the fundamental fact that human beings regardless of external features are all part of the same species and all share more characteristics than diverge in characteristics, particularly the most important ones. While the notion of "race" and even subpopulation (1) to some extent depends on assumptions of geographic separation or isolation, we must face the fact noted by Washburn (1963), that "There is no such thing as human populations which are completely separated from other human populations." Any human group is able to intermix with any other group. And they have been doing so since time began for the species. The German Nazi concept of racial purity is not only instance but completely idiotic. Even Hitler was most likely the product or various sub-population mixtures in the past of his parents and ancestors. (2) There is no pure German "race" and the Germans can be traced to various European
tribal intercourse.

Is There Such a Thing as "White People?"

The heart of the concept of "race" is common biological descent that is isolatable from others. With this in mind, we can see that the grouping known as "white" or even "Caucasian" is inflated beyond reason when it comes to phenotypical feature characterization. This sub-construct is the most imprecise and perhaps the most insidious aspect of the concept of "race" since it creates an overly large majority of people who are superior on the hierarchy that is used for political purposes.

It is fascinating that people who are at one time non-White can be "Whitened" through time. This happened to Italians, Irish, Jewish, and Slavic Americans. One can only understand the lack of biological validity to the "race" construct when one notes how this occurred and for what reasons.

The Human Species is the Human Race

One reason for the "race" construct outlasting any useful purpose is that racists sought to preserve the idea of superiority for their in-group. This implied an isolation of "races" that is largely fictive. While it is true that there are visibly differing sub-populations, it is also true that miscegenation is nothing new and has been occurring since at least the invention of the boat. While some observers (and racists) have sought to preserve isolatable Saxons, Jutes, Goths, Romans, Vikings, Berbers, Hittites, Mongols, etc., it is not possible in the light of history which reveals that tribes like these moved around, conquered, raped, intermarried, fused, etc., etc., in a fashion that led to a mongrelized culture we know as Europe with national boundaries we know as nations (Barzun, 2000). It is no accident that geneticists today tell us that Europeans are indiscernible genetically regardless of what nation they claim. According to journalist Nancy Shute (2001), p. 36) who interviewed various experts in genetics:

"Most people of European origin are so genetically mixed that it's impossible to tell German from Frenchman, Bosnian from Serb."

This obviously does not mean that people will not continue looking for those biological boundaries but most likely they keep confusing is culture with biology. Bloodlines are irrelevant for human cultures in comparison to cultural traditions.

From Tribes to Nations: What History and Anthropology Actually Tell Us

Once one recognizes that there are vast problems with coming up with distinct “race” groups or anything of large groupings that mean anything significant, one if forced to go back to history and locate the origins of peoples in ancient villages, civilizations and tribes. The tribes moved around, intermingled and eventually settled into geopolitical entities we know as nations. Their national identities are based on culture. While there is no Arya, and no clearly identifiable people known as Aryans separable from tribes in India and Persian, there were people using what is known as an Indo-European language and we can see that language and culture provides more useful classification from a scientific and historical view than does the “race” construct. A contemporary example is the racial term “Asian.”

The word has little significance for anything other than much generalized notions of outer
looks or geographic hemisphere. Now move into cultures and nations like Korea, Burma, Vietnam, China, Japan, etc. and you find important factors encouraging behaviors, economies, ideologies, practices, and differences among the “Asian” peoples as well as non-Asian peoples.

The idea of an “Aryan race” is the product of Nazi imagination. If one looks at geography and cultural records, it appears that the white supremacists were stretching so far for some superior group to claim as their ancestors, they neglected to notice that those called Aryans were actually dark-skinned people in India and possibly those known as the Indus. Some say that the Aryans came from the Eurasian steppes and moved into India. Aryan stories were known as Vedas and included cow worship (Trager, 1992).

Ancient Civilizations

Mesopotamia (where Iraq is today) may be the site of the oldest human civilizations. Cities were being built there at about 4,000 B.C. These included the cultures of Babylon and Sumer. The wheel was invented by the Sumerians about 6500 BC and in 3500 BC they developed animal- drawn vehicles and oar-powered ships (Trager, 1992). They also developed the first alphabet. An Akkadian empire existed in Mesopotamia in 2350 BC (Trager, 1992).

It is said that there was a civilization at Jericho about 6000 BC (Roberts, 1999).

In Ur, Mesopotamia, Abraham (of Bible history) replaced human sacrifice with animal sacrifice in 1700 BC (Trager, 1992). The Hebrews fought against the Philistines in 1141 BC. They also did battle with Moabites, Ammonites, and Edomites (Trager, 1991).

Babylonia replaced Sumer as a dominating power (Trager, 1992). Babylonians invented decimal notation and windmills (Trager, 1992). In the 12th century BC, the Assyrians destroyed Babylon (Trager, 1992).

Egyptian culture extends back to at least 3100 B.C. The first dynasty is traced back to 3400 BC under the leadership of the pharaoh Menes (Trager, 1992). Egypt was invaded by Hyksos warriors coming in from Syria and Palestine in 1680 BC (Trager, 1992). The Egyptians were conquered by Ethiopians in 710 BC (Trager, 1992). Chinese civilization emerged somewhere around 2000 B.C., but some historians argue that it is much older.

Also at about 2000 B.C. a Minoan civilization was in place on the island of Crete. The Minoans were conquered by Mycenaens coming in from Greece. The Greeks founded Byzantium in 685 BC (Trager, 1992). Greeks invented metal coins, and perhaps most importantly, democracy. Andean and Inca culture began in Peru. The Olmecs created the first civilization in Mesoa about 1000 B.C.

Contacts Among Civilizations

Seafaring is traceable to at least 42,000 BC when some say that Asian explorers landed on Australia (Trager, 1992).

In 2750 BC, Tyre became a great Phoenician seapower. The Phoenicians also made their way to the Iberian peninsula (Trager, 1992). Phoenicians founded the city of Carthage in North Africa. The Carthagians became a major military power (Trager, 1992).

Italian cities were formed by Etruscans coming in from Lydia (Trager, 1992).
The Miscegenated Nations of Europe

Whether it is France, England, Spain or any other European nation, there is single “race” category that can be equated with the population. Each one has a history of tribal and inter-tribal mixing and gene flow.

The Dorians invaded and took over territory. The Greeks had many years of war with the Persians (Trager, 1992). The Greeks did the same followed by the Romans. The Huns, coming in from Mongolian in the 4th c. invaded Europe. Earlier the Goths and Vandals had sacked Rome. Franks overtook Gaul which later becomes France. Angles and Saxons invaded Britain which had been Roman. Slavs moving in from Asia took over lands held by Germanic tribes. Romans were attacked by Aequians in 458 BC (Trager, 1992).

The Celts took over the British Isles in 450 BC (Trager, 1992).

In the year 1000 AD, there were 10 tribes of Magyars from Central Asia who were invading Europe. Later, these marauders became Christians and seven of their tribes were brought into the kingdom of Hungary. Throughout Europe, tribes were attacking other tribes. The Vikings, for example, attacked the Anglo-Saxons, Germans, and French and this included plundering and enslavement. 5

What later became Spain was a site of strong Islamic control in the year 1000. In the city of Cordova, the Islamic people ruled but Jews and Christians were welcome to participate in the society and economy if they paid a special tax. 6 There were Jewish academies in Cordova, Granada, Toledo, and Barcelona. With the reign of Alfonso of Leon and Ferdinand III of Castile, the cooperation of three religions ended and these monarchs declared a doctrine of limpieza de sangre or “purity of the blood.”

END NOTES:

(1) It seems ironic that the Caucasian grouping, arbitrarily assigned its term because of the mountains by the same name, practiced cannibalism in the 5th century BC (Trager, 1992).

(2) While it may appear that "sub-population" is the same as "race" with a new wrapper or label, I think there are important differences beyond cutting the bonds from racism disguised as science and these include a term that is open and may be defined loosely in terms of geography as well as culture, perhaps with minor references to outer anatomical features. In turn, this concept of sub-population may be more amenable to inductive grouping that results from genetic research indicating patterns of genes rather than patterns of phenotypic traits.

(3) Some observers have even argued that it is possible that Hitler may have had some Hebrew biological influence in the past of his genetic inheritance. This may be difficult to ascertain without DNA testing, however.

(4) Chinese inventions include herbal medicine, acupuncture, medical texts, grain mills, refrigeration, (Trager, 1992). In 1078, China had the amount of iron production that was twice of

what England would have 700 years later (U.S. News and World Report, August 23, 1999).

"Whether we like it or not, the result of a mix of two races in the long run gives us a race reverting to the more ancient, generalized and lower type... The cross between a white man and a Negro is a Negro, ...and a cross between any of the three European races and a Jew is a Jew."

---Madison Grant, 1916

"We talk all the time glibly of races and nobody can give us a definite answer to the question what constitutes a race."

---- Franz Boas, anthropologist

"I know perfectly well, just as well as all those tremendously clever intellectuals, that in the scientific sense there is no such thing as race. But you, as a farmer and cattle-breeder, cannot get your breeding successfully achieved without the conception of race. And I as a politician need a conception which enables the order which has hitherto existed on historic bases to be abolished and an entirely new and anti-historic order enforced and given an intellectual basis... With the conception of race, National Socialism will carry its revolution abroad and recast the world."

--- Adolph Hitler
Thus far, we have seen that racism is very rooted in the concept of "race" and that an absence of this concept might pull the foundation out from much of the racist ideologies and discourse still plaguing the world and still lingering in the culture of the United States. Once the biological utility is recognized for the minimal role it plays in any scientific explanation of anything important, attention can easily shift the real potency of the construct - power, hierarchy, and control.

None of this discussion regarding racism is going to show its importance if we do not seriously take stock of what various contexts of effects are for racial thinking and hence, racial communication. What are some of the effects of racism, ethnicism, or prejudices based on physical appearances?

• Exploitation of indigenous peoples -- note what occurs in some islands today -- article citation.
• Slavery and what follows slavery -- new forms of servitude?.
• Job discrimination -- is it really gone today? Is it unimportant?
• Early laws in US allowing sterilization of feebleminded people and prohibiting miscegenation.

Politics versus Religion and Then Racism

To the ancient Greeks and Romans, there was a necessity of politics. This historical necessity of politics in the political systems created by the Greeks and Romans was rejected by the theocratic systems of the Hebrews and Muslims.

Political activity is closely related to the ideals of community vs. privatization, polity, democracy, and persuasion as the means for reaching consensus about power. It is an alternative to laws handed down, rule by family clans, and a use of communication and dialective as an alternative to force for obtaining and maintaining power.

Politics opens debates and contestation and resists automatic allegiance to hierarchies, tribes, customs, etc. The ancient Greeks explained their transition from rule by families and tribes by their adoption of logos and reason. Politics is related to debating and philosophy and these take place in public places. Choices replace matters of Nature as the source of solutions to social problem in the ancient Greek view.

Moses Maimonides was a scholar, physician, and philosopher who taught that the Mosaic Code provides for rationality and practical living. However, he also taught that there is no room for those who are unclean and define faith (Hanaford, 1996). Prior to 1492 when the Jews were expelled from Spain, Jews had lived honorable lives in Spain for about 1500 years and the Moors had also for about 800 years. The Moors had invaded Spain in 711 AD.

Maimonides taught that Jewish law and the logic of Aristotle are the only means of
rational thought. He taught the absolute necessity of following 613 precepts of Jewish law and that the precepts are absolutes with no flexibility. Like the Catholic philosopher Augustine and the Muslim leader Muhammad, he intellectually integrated Church and State into the kind of governance we know as theocracy. He rejected the Greek ideas about politics which was governance based upon consensus, debate, and philosophy. He taught against mercy for sinners.

However, Maimonides also wrote that the Turks and others near them were irrational people and something less than human and above monkeys. He then said the Muslims were even worse and that it may be necessary to kill them, to extirpate their false doctrines in order to prevent others from being misled. Ivan Hanaford, the historian, argues that this is the first major case of Western philosophy in which sets of people are described as being beyond the hope of rationality and also of not being fully human.

While this man contributed to the love of logic, math, science, and even cooperation among the three religions for a while, he hatched the doctrine of extirpation which would plague human societies for centuries after him. This was a much respected theologian then and now. I know that at least one person has been offended by saying these things about him, but this fact should be borne in mind: good people can make bad mistakes and even with good intentions can contribute to racist thinking. I also admire Augustine for many reasons, but must confront some of the damage he did with some of his teachings.

A doctrine taught by Maimonides was turned against his own people in Spain. In the early 1200s, Pope Innocent threatened excommunication to any Christian who carried on business with Jews. In 1209, he had 20,000 Jews in southern France killed. The Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 declared that Jews would have to wear badges to identify themselves as Jews. One historian says this was the day that Jews became things.

In Spain, Jews were accused of having started the Black Death plague with black magic that included poisons made of spiders, frogs, lizards, and hearts of Christians they had killed. In France, Catholics began burning Jews at the stake. The extirpation doctrine aided all of this because before it, the Jews were protected by the political leaders of Spain and the other nations. They were part of what the Greeks had referred to as nomos -- a system of law. Now they were expelled from the political communities by the religious communities.

Torquemada and his Spanish Inquisition agreed with Augustine that the Church must make decisions about religion and the State must execute those decisions. The notion of purity of blood was introduced in addition to purity of faith. Those who had kept themselves from Moorish blood were good. Marranos were accused of being Jews in Spain who drank the blood of Christian children after the murdered them. The doctrine of extirpation makes violence against people easy to plan because they are inferior and a strong threat to true faith.

In 1910, German biologist Eugene Fischer says that superior race should only help inferiors to a point utility for the superior race. He become head of University of Berlin in 1939 and says that "alien racial elements" should be suppressed and perhaps eliminated to protect one's superior people (Shapiro, 1991, p. 45).

Political Origins of "Race"

Jacques Barzun (2000, p. 108) observes that the people in Britain used the concept of "race" to change their political identities from descendents of the Romans to allies of the Saxons and Germans:
"For a thousand years they had been the sons and daughters of the ancient Romans. Now the idea of different "races" replaced that of a single, common lineage. The bearing of this shift is clear; it parallels the end of empire and the rise of nations."

According to Barzun, "race" functioned as a political term that both united and separated for purposes of nationalism. One does not have to recollect history, even very recent history as in Rwanda or Yugoslavia to witness the blatant use of "race" to perform these functions. Of course, aiding nationalism is the accompanying assumption that racial/national characteristics are both inborn and unchanging.

Racism and Power in the United States

Historian Martin Marty (1970) notes how religious colonists in what became United States, had little compunction about assuming that native Americans (whom Columbus and they incorrectly called "Indians") had no rights. The political policies of exploitation were supported by the clergy of the day. This is why most of the natives supported the British during the War of Independence.

There were even religious voices in the late 1800s who advocated genocide in regard to native Americans (Marty, 1970). A missionary in Massachusetts, Timothy Flint, said that "In the changeable order of things, two such races cannot exist together..." (Marty, 1970, p. 12). This was typical of rhetoric at that time which linked racism to assumed laws of nature and laws of God.

Unfortunately, the early days of empire and nation-building in the United States were not only related to politics and rationalism, but also to racism. George Washington perceived America as a "rising empire" that had the right to expand wherever it chose to (Thompson, Stanley & Perry, 1981). When this empire could no longer expand justifiably on its own continent, it would seek out colonies and annexation on other continents. The ideology of Manifest Destiny obviated any discussions about the morality of annexing Texas, California, Oregon, etc. America shared this type of ideology with European nations. Between 1870 and 1900, European nations had conquered over 1/5 of the earth's land surface and 1/10 of the world population (Thompson, et al., 1981). And what would allow the total disregard for the indigenous people of the nations taken over? Quite simply, it was the concomitant racism of the dominant groups of Europe and America and their assumptions of non-white group natural inferiority.

Political Utility Over Biological Utility

The "race" construct has allowed centuries of racism to progress in various forms ranging from outright bigotry and hatred to more subtle forms of exclusion and discrimination witnessed today. Washburn (1963) notes that "Racism is based on a profound misunderstanding of culture, of learning, and of the biology of the human species." He also argues that we know more about how language and culture affect human behavior and human life than the ways they are affected by membership in any given "race." The question is then why the construct continues to have any independent importance in any analysis not designed to simply taxonomize human outer features. The answer to this question is found in tracing the political origins and uses of the construct.
Chapter 5:
Toward a Program of Anti-Racism From a Communication Theory Perspective

Drawing on the work of historians and anthropologists who have documented the racist origins of the concept “race,” and the resulting movements known as “racialism,” as well as the communication science work of Teune van Dijk (1987) and Philomena Essed (1991), it is now possible to articulate some starting points for a program of anti-racism.

A Summary of Racism in American Society

We know that there are at least five levels of racism in our society. These are, moving from the macro to micro-levels, the following:

• national and transnational economic infrastructures
• mass media representations of various groups of people
• socially shared representations and ethnic attitudes in communication
• sociocognitive phenomena of prejudice
• cognitive structures of prejudice

Two key points about these five layers of racism are a) without simultaneous anti-racist efforts within all five, racist practices will change forms and continue to survive; and b) moving from the micro to the macro layers reveals a system of hierarchical ordering of racism. Each success layer upward toward the macro draws from generalizations below and adds control back down toward the micro.

Why There Has Been Little Success With Anti-Racism in America

It is not common to recognize that you can be ethnically tolerant but still prejudiced. It is not popular to assert that even those who advocate tolerance may have thoughts and feelings and actions of racism and prejudice. It is not comfortable to admit that African-Americans in the United States perceive their nation as continuing a system of discrimination, exclusion, and separation of whites from blacks. And those who have worked against racism in the open and covert versions certainly do not want to hear that even they may harbor prejudiced social attitudes. Certainly, most people in the United States wish to believe that racism died off long ago and that discrimination is something of the past of only isolated instantiations.

To face the realities of all this required an honesty and boldness about racism and communication that is presently missing in American society, even in the most expected places of anti-racism -- the universities.

Members of our society must recognize that legal nondiscrimination does not end all social discrimination and may not significantly affect racism as a sociological, psychological, and sociocognitive phenomenon.

Most journalists and editors and most entertainment producers are not anti-racists. Thus, we see little mass media effort to challenge racism in any pragmatic or in-depth manner. With no media support for anti-racism, there is an absence of circulation for anti-racist models and discourse.
A strong beginning to anti-racism in our nation will require a national consensus on the need for systematic anti-racism. This includes a widespread willingness to recognize that while we prohibit manifestations of racism in overt and blatant behaviors, we tolerate racism in thoughts, communication, and everyday workplace and educational practices.

Proponents of programs to combat racism has generally not learned the cognitive processes and structures which protect racist attitudes and ideology. In-group members are experts at insulating these ethnic attitudes, regardless of what they are required to do verbally, nonverbally, and with actions.

Worse yet, people who initiate anti-racism are attacked by racists as working against them and making them the real victims. Even mass media join the assaults on anti-racists (van Dijk, 1987).

Anti-racism is in its crawling stages because it lacks strong counterarguments, strong models of refutation, and few strategies for people to intervene in racist talk as it occurs in everyday life. While there are corners of anti-racist activity and teaching, there are no widespread ideologies of anti-racism. Racist ideologies and shared attitudes are far more developed than anti-racist ones (van Dijk, 1987).

Initiation of Anti-Racism

Anti-racism must begin with honest history. If a nation denies its past, it cannot face its present or change its future. Next, it is necessary to have an empirical look at the prevalence of racism to end any doubts that it is a present, real-time problem in America. Beyond knowing that racism is a genuine problem, people need to learn that this problem has severe negative consequences on individual and on the society as a whole. Next, the dominating subpopulation must surrender its goals of having other subpopulations work to adapt only to the former.

Positive Equality Rather than Negative Equality

It is possible to view anti-racism as enforced tolerance. This is the norm in the United States. Social discrimination and economic inequalities are not considered political matters. Thus, we have a situation of negative equality wherein equality is defined as the absence of covert and overly obvious discrimination.

An alternative to negative equality is positive equality whereby society says that we will take assertive and affirmative measures to make sure that people are treated as fully participating and equal members of our communities, culture, and society. Thus, equality is not simply seen as the absence of behaviors supporting inequalities, but rather as deliberate actions taken to treat people proactively with values of equality in politics, economics, media representation, and social interaction. Types of anti-racism programs can be part of positive equality.

A fully status quo view of racism either denies it or says that it has always been and always will be -- therefore its inevitability and overcomplexity makes remedies impossible. A more moderate view of racism says that there should be legal constraints on legal discrimination. In other words, as it happens, it should be stopped. Thus, equality becomes the absence of overly obvious inequality-bases actions. This is negative equality.

The goal of positive equality argues for sociopolitical policies that recognize that equal opportunity coupled with inequalities in abilities or resources produces unequal results. Therefore, efforts must be made politically to gain more equality in outcomes. One strategy is to educate those who fear that the gain of one group is the loss of another. For example, people need
to recognize that that money or resources come from the rich and go to the poor help the poor more than hurt the rich.

Promising Possibilities for Anti-Racism Programs

For anti-racism programs to have any chance of success, certain barriers must be alleviated. The dominating Anglo subpopulation must learn to accept the following premises in order for success:

• Racism, ethnicism, and prejudice are strong problems of contemporary American society
• Old racism has been joined by more prevalent new racism.
• Racism will never dissipate without intervention.
• Racism is a major cause of many of our nation's domestic and international problems.
• Equality is still not a major value that is put into practice in our society.
• Differences in cultures should not be interpreted as superiority or inferiority.

As members of the dominating group become cognizant of their historical and perpetual racism, they are able to do something to diminish their domination and exploitation. As anti-racists, they can liberate themselves as well as those who suffer from their unawareness of domination and subordination affecting how subpopulations relate to each other.

Scholars are beginning to find the subtle distinctions between anti-racism programs and programs which make people feel good without changing attitudes and ideological frames. For example, we know that differences among peoples should be respected, but not overhighlighted or exaggerated into deviance. We know that we should form one larger culture as a nation and political community, but not to the point of forfeiting unique ethnic identities. We know that there are physical differences in people, but that we should not engage in pseudo-speciation.

Possible Programs for Anti-Racism: Conceptual Models

If we examine what processes of communication contribute to racism, we can see oppositional processes are possible remedies for diminishing racism. One model as below, shown for interpersonal communication, is necessary for each of the five levels of racist practices described above.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RACISM COMMUNICATION</th>
<th>ANTI-RACISM COMMUNICATION</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus on differences to point of overhighlighting</td>
<td>Simple recognition of differences without attributions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclusion behaviors</td>
<td>Inclusion behaviors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denial of racism in the nation</td>
<td>Acknowledgement of racism as problem needing solutions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This line of thinking is new in social science in terms of systematic and systemic reasoning. Further work needs to be done in model development and follow-up training for the people involved at each level of racism reproduction.
Chapter 6:

The Need for a Political Turn: Putting Politics into the Study of Racism, Ethnicism, and Prejudice

This section takes a hard look at politics and the failure of scholars to involve politics and political theory in their research and writing about issues involving racism, ethnicism, and prejudice. I begin this discussion with the assertion by historian Ivan Hannaford regarding the history of the "race" construct and the racism that accompanied it.

According to Hannaford (1996), the failure of societies to incorporate politics as their central mechanism of political debate and struggle, led to the use of racialism as such a central mechanism. The historical necessity of politics can be witnessed in the political systems created by the Greeks and Romans in contrast to other systems such as the theocratic systems of the Hebrews and Muslims, which rejected politics. The ancient Greeks explained their transition from rule by families and tribes by their adoption of logos and reason. Politics is related to debating and philosophy and these take place in public places. Choices replace matters of Nature as the source of solutions to social problems in the ancient Greek view.

Greek citizens were more concerned about political life (polis) and law (nomos) than with physical or cultural groupings. Hannaford (1996) identifies key assumptions that guided their thinking. First, they believed in a common origin for all humans. Second, they believed that all humans can excel through education. Third, they believed that public law-making is better than private family decisions. Fourth, they favored critical argumentation as the way to settle conflicts in interests. The most essential point is that the Greeks did not view individuals with mental models of group membership, but rather in terms of sociopolitical knowledge which was revealed in communication.

Note the key point here. In a sociopolitical society, we may be able o lower he prejudices of group categories by increasing the salience of communication behaviors was indicators of personal qualities. The Greeks did have groupings of favored and unfavored people, but these categories were based on observed communication behaviors. In fact, a person who was antisocial in their action was considered to be an idiot. Political activity is closely related to the ideals of community vs. privatization, polity, democracy, and persuasion as the means for reaching consensus about power. It is an alternative to laws being handed down and rule by family clans. It is also a use of communication and dialectic as an alternative to force for obtaining and maintaining power. Politics opens debates and contestation and resists automatic allegiance to hierarchies, tribes, customs, etc. Democracy and democratization are concepts and ideas that result from theories about how people organize themselves politically. Without discourse about rights and principles of democracy, a society is unlikely to have the values and practices necessary to sustain a democratic system.

What Would a "Political" Democratic System Look Like?

The political turn which I am advocating here would like the positioning of social relationships between groups and members of society as more important than differences among groups. As
psychology (study of mind) and communication science (study of social interaction) are both important for understanding human behavior, a focus on group characteristics (anthropology, ethnic studies) should be accompanied by study of intergroup politics (political communication) as well as cultural aspects of political behavior and political aspects of cultural behaviors. Clearly, the social would be treated as political and the sociopolitical (social-political) would not be confused with racial or ethnic boundaries. Dominance and submission would be a constant issue, while working as political groups would be a constant motivation. Society would take on more of the Greek themes of community and would be constructed by various groupings of people based on interests and motivations more than on histories of birth and socialization. The political society would stress deep knowledge for all citizens as well as freedom from power hierarchies, exclusion by group memberships, and communication premised on in-group/out-group boundaries. All of this assumes a rationalist, albeit critical rationalist, approach to politics, political theory, and political communication. Doors of controversy have just swung open!

The Trouble with Old (Cartesian) Rationalism

The old rationalists thought that they were above ethics and values and later rationalists and scientists found out that this is never the case. Rationalist had created racism with their theories of "race" and their "natural history" that supported all types of political inequalities. I do not accept the dualism or positivism of old rationalism, but do believe that research without theory is akin to what Chomsky describes as simply collecting butterflies. You may end up with a nice collection but without any explanation of what a butterfly is or what it does.

The Trouble with Nonrationalism

If one does art history or literary criticism, there is problem whatsoever with being nonrationalist. When dealing with power, political communication, and issues of racism, however, there are enormous problems. Nonrationalists adopt Friedrich Nietzsche's claim that there is no truth; rather there are only interpretations (Solomon & Higgins, 1996). I submit that if this claim is true, there are no politics and no political ends such as equality. Moreover, the solutions to struggles among interpretations alone are adjudicated by intellectual or material force rather than by reason. Repeating their own pompous truths, nonrationalists keep denying truths. This is much like Descarte's Circle -- I use my reason to prove human reasoning. What is critical of dogma in political theory or rationalism simply turns out to be a dogma in itself. A dogma of negation takes on dogmas of assertion! Extremities like Pre-fascism Italian communication scholar Umberto Eco and others have noted that fascism is a kind of political ideology always awaiting emergence when rational and fair ways of dealing with power diminish and falter. Strong personalities play upon social uncertainties and replace politics with a discourse of sheer power.

Professor Martin Heidegger, student of Husserl, was a phenomenologist who battled against Cartesianism and rationalism. He had little concern with science and taught the importance of discovering one's authenticity and becoming committed to one's culture (Solomon & Higgins, 1996). In 1933, he joined the German Nazi party, became rector of the University of Freiburg, fired Jewish professors, and praised Hitler (Solomon & Higgins, 1996). Some scholars say that there is no link between his philosophy and his political stand (in favor of Nazism) while others, including myself, argue that his political stand was linked to his ways of thinking and teaching about human life. Hitler did not create or even generate anti-Semitism in Germany or Europe. It was already present and some might even argue that it was also present in the United States.

Hitler began ending Jewish civil liberties in 1933 and Jews were being losing their property and synagogues by 1938. Execution squads and gas chambers followed, but the United States did
nothing to intervene until 1941 when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor (Solomon & Higgins, 1996). At this time, both rationalists and irrationalists (or what I will call nonrationalists because of connotation problems!), were unable to address Hitler from their philosophical perspectives since the rationalists (many of whom were Jewish scientists) had previously connected concerns about ethics with irrationality and as unimportant to science.

The nonrationalists, including Heidegger and Nietzsche, had also denied ethics. Heidegger spoke about those concerned about ethics as people who "fish in the false sea of values," and Nietzsche had written about his dancing on the grave of morality (Solomon & Higgins, 1996). Of course, the nonrationalists did not dismiss all morality; they dismissed the forms of morality that they thought were unimportant. Their (existentialist) ideal of authenticity included a call for integrity and responsibility. But such authenticity, they believed, could not be explained by rationalists.

Today when people embrace nonrationalism, particularly in the social sciences, they may oversimplify the epistemological assumptions of rationalists, particularly those who have developed scientific means of working for equality, anti-racism, democracy, etc. etc. For example, not one scholar has ever come close to Noam Chomsky in exposing the horrors of racism, exploitation, fascism, and political inequalities today. Chomsky believes in truth and uses his rationalist epistemology to point out lies. With a nonrationalist view, this division of truth and falsity politics blurs into points of view. I do not agree with the claim by political scientist James Ceaser that postmodernists (one flavor of nonrationalism) are either fascists or racists. I do agree that they can till some ground, however, for fascists and racists to farm. Nietzsche and other nonrationalists have argued views that assume that it is possible to transcend a rational conceptualization of political good and political evil, and that morality is not part of a valid discussion about political matters (Solomon & Higgins, 1996). Thus, progress toward idealistic ends (such as equality) are not something that Nietzsche and his nonrationalist compatriots could endorse. Nietzsche argued that humans are "will to power" and that they are driven by a desire to increase their vitality. This desire, to him, is the meaning of human life. He rejected ethics, in part, because he believed that ethics are devices intended to help people who are weak and mediocre. Such devices, in his view, hurt those who are the most talented (Solomon, 1996). In classic nonrationalist form, Nietzsche believed that there are no truths, only perspectives. James Ceaser notes that Nietzsche also believed that the only way to make anything great in society is to embrace the ideas of hierarchy. Nietzsche abhorred the ideas of citizens being united through political community as practiced by the ancient Greeks (Hannaford, 1996).

With old rationalism having flaws and nonrationalism being too flimsy to be political, what is left as an intellectual basis for anti-racism? I think is it is found in a critical type of rationalism and science. Critical Rationalism as One Method of Anti-Racism Just as many communication scholars beat the dead horses of positivist ghosts, they also beat the gravestones of old Cartesian rationalism. In both cases, they neglect to see that both science and philosophies of science change through time. Thus, rationalism can be faulted for many problems of the past, without a doubt. It is foolish, however, in my opinion, to become nonrationalist or irrationalist because of past historical inadequacies in science and theories of science or scientific approaches to human behavior.

I believe the alternatives to science (or what I will refer to as "rationalism" in a contemporary sense), are far worse and even politically powerless when used as tools to confront racism, ethnicism, and prejudice. While rationalism had sponsored racialism long ago, today it tends to use science to refute or at least mute racism; and strong forms of anti-racism emerge assertively in social science research like that of Teune van Dijk. A critical rationalism, like the work of Noam Chomsky on political imperialism and biological rejection of racialism by Stephen Jay
Gould can admit that ethics and values and political commentary are part of doing science. I believe this makes far more sense than abandoning science as a means of working toward equality in favor of adopting nonrational perspectivalism as a way of talking (and talking...) about equality. While it is certainly true that old Cartesian rationalism endorsed colonialism, racism, Social Darwinism, etc., it is also true that rationalist philosophies built on those of Aristotle and others who conceived of democratic forms of society including ideas about equality which also progressed through time. Democratic revolutions like the French Revolution were constructed with ideas and ideals generated in rationalist views of power penned by Rousseau, Voltaire, Locke, and others.

The entire history of democracy is a history of political theories and struggles over how to implement those theories. In the United States, rationalist views of Locke, Aristotle, Adam Smith, Montesquieu, Rousseau, Paine, and Jefferson are conjoined to form a political doctrine which values free markets, private property, self-reliance, individual liberties, public education, religious freedom, and free speech (Solomon & Higgins, 1996). Imagine a democratic political system with no such doctrine or without at least a basic theory of democracy. Without the pattern just described, there would be no "rights" as they have evolved over time. Imagine a nonrationalist political system; one person's claim of inhumane inequality would simply equal another person's claim of natural fairness (perspective vs. perspective).

Through politics (and attendant political theory and critical rationalism), the United States has progressed with rights for various groups of its society. This has not meant and end to racism or ethnicism, but the stage is available for new debates about these matters since the history of the nation indicates a willingness, albeit a slow one, to abandon old ideas about hierarchy and take on newer forms of empowerment or at least discussions about them. Still, American racism and ethnicism persist through various mechanisms of concealment. But tools of science as basic as survey data can be used to counter denial of racism by pointing out the existence of negative ethnic attitudes. More importantly, scientific analyses, such as those done by van Dijk and Essed, can be used to document the ways that racism is produced and reproduced in a society that wishes to avoid talking about racism. Egalitarian and democratic concerns tend to coexist.

The separation of political democracy from equality as values in a society is artificial from a theoretical, philosophical, social scientific and historical point of view. The ancient Greeks were not bound to the idea of "natural rights" as were the American colonials. In fact, the Greeks believed that political rights and duties liberate people from nature. You might see an analogy here to communication skills as we teach them; the natural ways of behaving are often sloppy and ineffective, such as being aggressive, impolite, etc. The effective skills we must learn as we unlearn out natural habits of poor communication. Where the old rationalism supported natural history and natural rights, a critical rationalism might be more likely to argue in favor of socially constructed rights and duties premised on cultural axioms of democracy and equality.

A political turn in the study of racism and prejudice may be able to situate political communication as a constitutive source of power relations, including those which are anti-racist and egalitarian. As the Greeks viewed people who follow the pressures of nature (physics) alone as barbarians, they also honored those who lived according to human-made laws (nomos). All of this required a commitment to rational discourse and knowledge. This included axioms about justice, virtues, and citizenship.
CONCLUSIONS

Without political theory, a product of rationalism in various forms and philosophy, there are no necessary conditions for democracy, equality, empowerment, reform, or revolution. Moreover, anti-racism loses its focus since the power struggle endemic to politics is overshadowed by unlimited uncertainties of what is what in the political side of life. Those who opposed the French Revolution were often also those who generated racial and racist theories. Both can be seen as rationalist, but the contradiction makes politics. Revolutionary theorists like Voltaire and Rousseau had rejected racialism. Today, it appears that racists are anti-revolutionary and anti-democratization. Both anti-racism and democracy depend on politics and political theory. To deal with the structural level of racism requires a new and critically rationalist approach to democracy and equality -- one that admits that equality is good and inequality is not good. The social scientists and physical scientists who stood shoulder to shoulder to refute the Herrnstein and Murray claims about black inferiority in 1994, are examples of this critical rationalism. In my view, there is no reason why critical rationalists should not endorse multiculturalism, provided that the latter is not separatist, prejudicial, or apolitical.

Clearly, multiculturalism begins with the mission of resisting the assumptions and results of classical racism. Ceaser objects to the reluctance of multiculturalists to connect unique ethnic group identities to the common community of a democracy. Ceaser may be correct in arguing that democracy requires community and the multiculturalists may be correct in noting that the United States, with all of its rationalist political theory, has been ethnically oppressive and exploitive. So what is the bottom line? Perhaps there is none. On the other hand, if atrocities are committed under the aegis of rationality, science, and political theory, what more can be expected under the aegis of endless perspectivalism? I suspect that there must be a dialectic that brings about a clash of the rationalism and the nonrationalism and the foundationalism and the nonfoundationalism that is splitting anti-racists in the United States.

The ancient Greeks, who invented democracy, also invented dialectic. It is in newer forms of political dialectic that we may reinstate politics into political communication. We are finally forced to ask some difficult question and sort out what possible answers can most be defended. One of our central challenges today concerns how each person can form their identity, something fundamental to their well being, without over differentiating themselves from others by looking for markers of difference as provided by the "race" construct.

The meaning of "race" changes by point in time and by speaker. There is a vague and enduring sense that there must be "races" since there are different looking people and some of the differences seem extreme at times. It is not easy for some people to accept the idea of one human species with many variations within the species, and of course, more difficult is the task of accepting the fact that surface level differences such as skin tone are largely unimportant in human affairs.

The concept of "race" was hatched by racists, men who were known as scientists and who used their knowledge of science to promote visions of white supremacy. Later the concept seemed to make intuitive sense since we can easily see differences in human populations and we can see how people fit into categories of skin color and facial features. We forget that most human features are more similar than different and what is most important to human behavior cannot be ascribed to racial narratives.

The facts which speak to the invalidity of the "race" construct are more numerous that those which argue for its validity, yet the urge to classify people into boundaried categories perpetuates the concept in a manner that exceeds any scientific utility. There is more within-group variation.
than between-group variation for most behaviors. There are polymorphisms for all groups. The Australian Aborigines are more related to the Asians genetically than to Africans yet they also receive the label "black." Charles Darwin noted that there 2-63 types of "races" in his day. Europeans appear to have genetics related to Asian and African populations. Some nations label people in India and black and some as white. Some Native American tribes are related to population outside of America, even to people living in Siberia, yet all native tribes in the United States are lumped together into a fabricated "race" called Native American or Indian. Contemporary geneticists have called the concept a fiction.

The "race" construct did not begin with the Hebrews, Greeks, Egyptians, or Romans. It did gain its currency with scientists in Europe who sought to create a typology that placed them on the upper tier and all other people as steps downward. This was profoundly unscientific and profoundly political.

"To use the rhetoric of the enemy to fight the enemy is often to become the enemy." --- Ivan Hannaford

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"To bigotry, give no sanction."
-- George Washington