

# Preface

In the aftermath of the Atlantic slave trade and European colonization, white Americans discriminated against persons of African descent as a matter of cultural tradition. The various manifestations of such discrimination, based upon racial category, are referred to as racism. In the aftermath of colonial domination and racism, discrimination as a social pathology evolved into a tradition among the oppressed as well as their oppressors. That is, racist traditions directed at people of color including those of African descent were acted out by people of color themselves as a consequence of pervasive, universal acts of racism and discrimination to which they were subjected. Various manifestations, such as discrimination among people of color, while not racist per se have been referred to as “colorism.” As a consequence of discrimination, colorism practiced by people of color and other victim-group populations evolved throughout history commensurate with white racism. Thus, while less apparent in the twenty-first century, white racism prevails in the acts of discrimination engaged by victim-group populations. Their years of racist subjugation have fashioned a psychic response no less given to the pathological transgressions of their oppressors. Subsequently, in this new era, people of color have resorted to discrimination against other victim-group populations, which have been no less inclined to discriminate as well. The common medium for both at a time when race has become increasingly less relevant is skin color. Discrimination by skin color among victim-group populations is referred to as victimism.

Victimism is an extension of white racism, acted out by victim groups including people of color (African-American, Asian-American, Latino-American, and Native American), biracial Americans, gay and lesbian Americans (and, to a lesser extent, the transgender community), women, and immigrants. Much like colorism, victimism is a manner of discrimination, based on skin color, without respect to the demographic status of the perpetrator. It is historically rooted in the colonial traditions of white supremacy. In a society that has evolved to unprecedented racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity victimism, while historically existent, is the newest version of racism in the twenty-first century.

To undertake a treatise on racism in the twenty-first century is to wade into an area fraught with hegemony and Eurocentric bias. In fact, victimism as a twenty-first century version of racism has existed since the colonial antebellum and perhaps long before. Unfortunately, academia and other societal institutions, which archive the

social universe of human existence, have been the eminent domain of white intellectuals. Their version of social reality could not accommodate or indeed acknowledge any behavioral phenomenon beyond the mainstream white perspective. This inability is Eurocentrism (meaning focusing on Europe and its culture, defined herein as a Western worldview of the human, universal, and social environment), whereby any previous discussion of victimism would have been tantamount to inviting visceral accusations of blasphemy from the assumed objectivity of respected academics. Succinctly put, as an extension of white supremacy, any intellectual product of social scientific investigations must be validated by the mainstream academy or it is doomed to be considered nonexistent. Thus, while victimism has imposed upon victim-group populations in America, historically Eurocentrism has prevented its introduction into the discourse of mainstream academe. Academe both past and present thus remains an extension of the antebellum, not irrelevant to cultural traditions associated with white supremacy. In the aftermath, social reality as it pertains to discrimination amounts to little more than contrived conclusions of the intellectual status quo. Those who elect to challenge the ideas of that status quo, regardless of race or victim-group status, are then subjected to ridicule and destined for academic obscurity. Thus, despite the fact that discrimination in the twenty-first century is a multiracial, multiethnic, or otherwise multifaceted phenomenon, the intellectual status quo remains committed to the black/white racial dichotomy and its Eurocentric version of discrimination. Subsequently, it is my opinion that acknowledgment of discrimination by victimism is the most challenging task for the evolution of social science investigation. However, continued failure to acknowledge discrimination among victim-group populations merely because it is beyond the realities of a Eurocentric intelligentsia is likely to contribute to the digression of scientific investigation as a whole. Such digression will enable the continuation of a racial myth that all those who discriminate are white and that all those who suffer are black.

Despite the Eurocentric myopia of an academic status quo, throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, African-American and Latino-American scholars investigated and documented skin color discrimination as it pertains to victimism. While seldom acknowledged in text of the mainstream academy, such discrimination held that, among people of color, there were discriminatory distinctions based on skin color. Because of skin color litigation, such as *Felix v. Marquez* and *Morrow v. the IRS*, blacks and Latinos engaged in lively and frequent discussions regarding the significance and implications of victimism. We spoke in terms of a lighter-skinned upper class and a darker-skinned but expanding lower class, similar to the more widely acknowledged white racism. Notwithstanding litigation, this manifestation of discrimination in the current era remains beyond the domain of mainstream academe. Social work scholars in particular, both black and white, dedicated to racial diversity in human services have been negligent. By way of Eurocentrism, women of color especially are suffering increased rates of skin cancer, still births, and suicides relative to skin color discrimination; suffering unnecessarily because victimism is irrelevant to quality of life among white women. As a result, social work texts and journals, including those committed to women's

issues, have treated such victim-group pathologies as little more than social trivia and/or nonexistent.

In 2008, America elected its first African-American president, Barack Obama. President Obama received overwhelming support from the black community, but his election would not have been possible without the support of conscientious white Americans and other people of color. No less than a few decades prior, President Obama would have been breaking the law by a mere attempt to register to vote. His desire to become president of the United States would have been remote to the extent of being beyond the realm of fantasy. The fact that today a black man is leader of what remains the world's foremost superpower is representative of a new era in the investigation, analysis, and interpretation of a social reality that is no longer the domain of a Eurocentric status quo.

Despite the election of a black president, discrimination in America is a potent and formidable social pathology, both at present and in the foreseeable future. However, the Eurocentric models of social science research are no longer, and perhaps never were, relevant to legitimate scientific investigation. Just as America has begun to cross racial boundaries by electing a black president, the intellectual status quo of academe, both black and white, must free itself of racist cultural traditions and submit to the supremacy of ideas over the supremacy of race. It has an investment in the purity of scientific research, such that eugenic conclusions motivated by aftermath of colonization and the Atlantic slave trade should never again pose as scientific fact. Thus, pertaining to the academy of social work and other human service professions, theoretical priority and its account of social reality should not be contingent upon the preferences of social work and other scholars, but should consider what is the most urgent imposition upon the well-being of humanity—without respect to Eurocentric ideals. Such a change will require recognition of works for their scholarly worth rather than popularity or institutional affiliations. This change will require that the status quo intelligentsia resort to the spirit of debate and disciplined investigation in their incorporation and/or acknowledgment of ideas pertaining to discrimination and other aspects of social reality. They must then move beyond the trappings of a mainstream orientation in hopes of rescuing science from the bigotries of Eurocentric hypocrisy. I intend to accommodate this change with the introduction of skin color issues into the mainstream of modern social science investigation. Doing so will bring forth newer, more applicable models of discrimination and social reality that extend to a variety of human existential circumstances. The results will ultimately free academe from the tyranny of Eurocentric conjecture and align the state of scientific investigation with the momentous election of a black president in the United States.

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