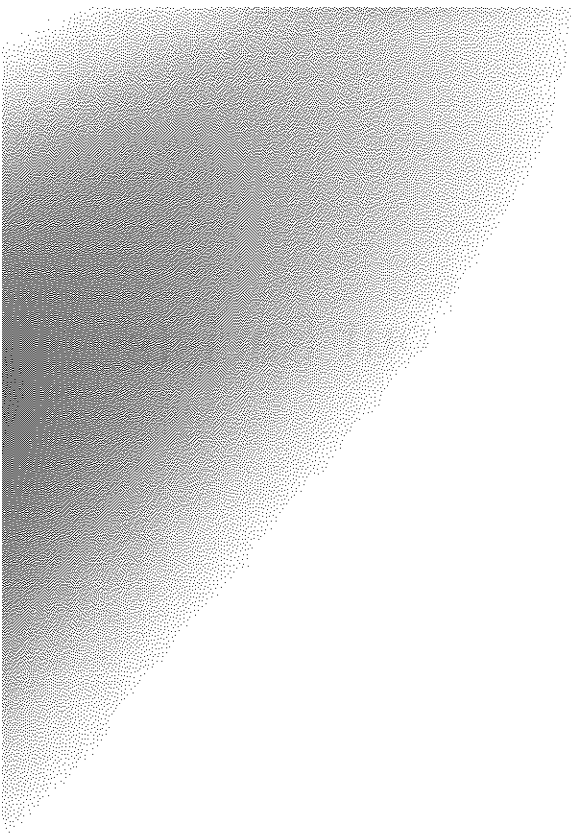




Racism without Racists

Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in America

Fourth Edition

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The Central Frames of Color-Blind Racism

The master defense against accurate social perception and change is always and in every society the tremendous conviction of rightness about any behavior form which exists.

—John Dollard, *Class and Caste in a Southern Town*

If Jim Crow's racial structure has been replaced by a "new racism," what happened to Jim Crow racism? What happened to beliefs about blacks' mental, moral, and intellectual inferiority, to the idea that "it is the [black man's] own fault that he is a lower-caste . . . a lower-class man" or the assertion that blacks "lack initiative, are shiftless, have no sense of time, or do not wish to better themselves"¹; in short, what happened to the basic claim that blacks are subhuman?² Social analysts of all stripes agree that most whites no longer subscribe to these tenets. However, this does not mean the "end of racism,"³ as a few conservative commentators have suggested. Instead, a new powerful ideology has emerged to defend the contemporary racial order: the ideology of color-blind racism. Yet, color-blind racism is a curious racial ideology. Although it engages, as all ideologies do, in "blaming the victim," it does so in a very indirect, "now you see it, now you don't" style that matches the character of the new racism. Because of the slipperiness of color-blind racism, in this chapter, I examine its central frames and explain how whites use them in ways that justify racial inequality.

THE FRAMES OF COLOR-BLIND RACISM

Ideologies are about "meaning in the service of power."⁴ They are expressions at the symbolic level of the fact of dominance. As such, the ideologies of the powerful are central in the production and reinforcement of the status quo. They comfort rulers and charm the ruled much like an Indian snake handler. Whereas rulers receive solace by believing they are not involved in the terrible ordeal of creating and maintaining inequality, the ruled are charmed by the almost magic qualities of a hegemonic ideology.⁵

The central component of any dominant racial ideology is its frames or *set paths for interpreting information*. These set paths operate as cul-de-sacs because after people filter issues through them, they explain racial phenomena following a predictable route. Although by definition dominant frames must *misrepresent* the world (hide the fact of dominance), this does not mean that they are totally without foundation. (For instance, it is true that people of color in the United States are much better off today than at any other time in history. However, it is also true—facts hidden by color-blind racism—that because people of color still experience *systematic* discrimination and remain appreciably behind whites in many important areas of life, their chances of catching up with whites are very slim.) Dominant racial frames, therefore, provide the intellectual road map used by rulers to navigate the always rocky road of domination and, as I will show in chapter 6, derail the ruled from their track to freedom and equality.

Analysis of the interviews with college students and DAS respondents revealed that color-blind racism has four central frames and that these frames are used by an overwhelming majority of the white respondents. The four frames are *abstract liberalism*, *naturalization*, *cultural racism*, and *minimization of racism*. Of the four frames, abstract liberalism is the most important, as it constitutes the foundation of the new racial ideology. It is also the hardest to understand (What is *racial* about opposing busing or affirmative action, policies that clearly interfere with our American individualism?). Thus, I dedicate more space in this chapter to its discussion and to how it plays out in the color-blind drama.

In order to adequately understand the *abstract liberalism* frame, first we need to know what is liberalism. According to John Gray, liberalism, or "liberal humanism," is at the core of modernity; of the philosophical, economic, cultural, and political challenge to the feudal order. Although he acknowledges that liberalism has no "essence," he points out that it has a "set of distinctive features," namely, individualism, universalism, egalitarianism, and meliorism (the idea that people and institutions can be improved).⁶ All these components were endorsed and placed at the

core of the constitutions of emerging nation-states by a new set of actors: the bourgeoisies of early modern capitalism. When the bourgeoisie lauded freedom, they meant "free trade, free selling and buying"; when they applauded "individualism," they had in mind "the bourgeois . . . the middle-class owner of property"; "The ideas of religious liberty and freedom of conscience merely gave expression to the sway of free competition within the domain of knowledge."⁷

Hence, classical liberalism was the philosophy of a nascent class that as an aspiring ruling class expressed its needs (political as well as economic) as general societal goals. But the bourgeois goals were not extended to the populace in their own midst until the twentieth century.⁸ Moreover, the liberal project was never inclusive of the countries that Spain, Portugal, France, Britain, the Netherlands, Italy, and later on, Germany used as outposts for raw materials and racialized workers (e.g., slaves). Although contemporary commentators debate the merits of liberal humanism as it pertains to current debates about race-based policies, multiculturalism, and "equality of results,"⁹ many seem oblivious to the fact that "*European humanism* (and liberalism) *usually meant that only Europeans were human.*"¹⁰ Philosophers such as Kant stated that the differences between blacks and whites were "to be as great in regard to mental capacities as in colour." Voltaire, the great French philosopher, said on the same subject that "only a blind man is permitted to doubt that Whites, Blacks, and Albinoes . . . are totally different races." Lastly, even the father of modern liberalism, John Stuart Mill, author of *On Liberty*, justified nineteenth-century colonialism and supported slavery in antiquity and in certain nineteenth-century colonial situations.¹¹ To be clear, my intent here is not to vilify the founders of liberalism, but to point out that modernity, liberalism, and racial exclusion were all part of the same historical movement.

The liberal tradition informed the American Revolution, the U.S. Constitution, and "the leading American liberal thinker of this period, Thomas Jefferson."¹² And in the United States as in Europe, the exclusion of the majority of white men and all white women from the rights of citizenship and the classification of Native Americans and African Americans as subpersons accompanied the development of the new liberal nation-state.¹³ Specifically, racially based policies such as slavery, the removal of Native Americans from their lands and their banishment to reservations, the superexploitation and degrading utilization of Mexicans and various Asian groups as contract laborers, Jim Crow, and many other policies were part of the United States' "liberal" history from 1776 until the 1960s.

Nevertheless, I would be remiss if I failed to acknowledge that, in both Europe and the United States, disenfranchised groups and progressive politicians used the liberal rhetoric to advance social and legal reforms (e.g., the civil rights movement, the National Organization of Women,

Liberal parties in Europe).¹⁴ Thus liberalism, when extended to its seemingly logical conclusions ("Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for all") and connected to social movements, can be progressive. My point, however, is less about social-reform liberalism (although I contend many reform organizations and many white reform-minded individuals¹⁵ have adopted color-blind racism) than about how central elements of liberalism have been *rearticulated* in post-civil rights America to rationalize racially unfair situations.

The frame of *abstract liberalism* involves using ideas associated with political liberalism (e.g., "equal opportunity," the idea that force should not be used to achieve social policy) and economic liberalism (e.g., choice, individualism) in an abstract manner to explain racial matters. By framing race-related issues in the language of liberalism, whites can appear "reasonable" and even "moral," while opposing almost all practical approaches to deal with de facto racial inequality. For instance, the principle of equal opportunity, central to the agenda of the civil rights movement and whose extension to people of color was vehemently opposed by most whites, is invoked by whites today to oppose affirmative-action policies because they supposedly represent the "preferential treatment" of certain groups. This claim necessitates ignoring the fact that people of color are *severely* underrepresented in most good jobs, schools, and universities and, hence, it is an abstract utilization of the idea of "equal opportunity." Another example is regarding each person as an "individual" with "choices" and using this liberal principle as a justification for whites having the right of choosing to live in segregated neighborhoods or sending their children to segregated schools. This claim requires ignoring the multiple institutional and state-sponsored practices behind segregation and being unconcerned about these practices' negative consequences for minorities.

Naturalization is a frame that allows whites to explain away racial phenomena by suggesting they are natural occurrences. For example, whites can claim "segregation" is natural because people from all backgrounds "gravitate toward likeness." Or that their taste for whiteness in friends and partners is just "the way things are." Although the above statements can be interpreted as "racist" and as contradicting the color-blind logic, they are actually used to reinforce the myth of nonracialism. How? By suggesting these preferences are almost biologically driven and typical of all groups in society, preferences for primary associations with members of one's race are rationalized as nonracial because "*they* (racial minorities) do it too."

Cultural racism is a frame that relies on culturally based arguments such as "Mexicans do not put much emphasis on education" or "blacks have too many babies" to explain the standing of minorities in society.

This frame has been adequately discussed by many commentators and does not require much discussion.¹⁶ During slavery and Jim Crow a central rationale for excluding racial minorities was their presumed biological inferiority. Even as late as 1940, a white newspaper editor in Durham, North Carolina, could confidently state that

a Negro is different from other people in that he's an unfortunate branch of the human family who hasn't been able to make out of himself all he is capable of. He is not capable of being rushed because of the background of the jungle. Part of his human nature can't be rushed; it gets him off his balance. . . . You can't wipe away inbred character in one year or a hundred years. It must be nursed along. We look upon him for his lack of culture, as being less reliable, in business and unsafe socially. His passions are aroused easily.¹⁷

Today only white supremacist organizations spout things such as this in open forums. Yet, these biological views have been replaced by cultural ones that, as I will show, are as effective in defending the racial status quo.¹⁸ For example, George McDermott, one of the white middle-class residents interviewed by Katherine Newman in her *Declining Fortunes*, stated,

I believe in morality: I believe in ethics: I believe in hard work: I believe in all the old values. I don't believe in handouts. . . . So that the whole welfare system falls into that [category]. . . . The idea of fourteen-year-old kids getting pregnant and then having five children by the time they're twenty is absurd! It's ridiculous! And that's what's causing this country to go downhill.

And as Newman poignantly comments, "George does not see himself as racist. Publicly he would subscribe to the principle everyone in this society deserves a fair shake."¹⁹ Color-blind racism is racism without racists!

Minimization of racism is a frame that suggests discrimination is no longer a central factor affecting minorities' life chances ("It's better now than in the past" or "There is discrimination, but there are plenty of jobs out there"). This frame allows whites to accept facts such as the racially motivated murder of James Byrd Jr. in Jasper, Texas,²⁰ the brutal police attack on Rodney King, the Texaco case,²¹ the 2005 lawsuit by black workers alleging that Tyson Foods maintained a "Whites Only" bathroom in one of their Alabama plants, the neglect and slow response by government officials toward a mostly black population during Hurricane Katrina, and many other cases and still accuse minorities of being "hypersensitive," of using race as an "excuse," or of "playing the infamous race card." More significantly, this frame also involves regarding discrimination exclusively as all-out racist behavior, which, given the way "new racism" practices operate in post-civil rights America (chapter 1),

eliminates the bulk of racially motivated actions by individual whites and institutions by fiat.

Before proceeding to illustrate how whites use these frames, I need to clarify a few points about the data and how I present them. First, whites used these frames in combination rather than in pure form. This is understandable, since informal expressions of ideology are a constructive effort, a process of building arguments in situ. Therefore, the examples of how whites use a particular frame may be mixed with other frames. Second, the frames were verbalized by participants in various emotional tones, ranging from sympathy to absolute disgust and outrage toward minorities. This suggests whites with differing levels of sympathy toward minorities resort to the *same* frames when constructing their accounts of racial matters. I attempt to represent this range of emotion in the quotes. Third, because the college student and DAS samples represent two different populations, I present quotes from the two studies separately in the text. I do so to better identify differences in style or content among the two populations. Fourth, the quotes in the chapter were selected to embrace the variety of ways in which the frames are used by respondents. This implies that many outrageously racist quotes were left out for the sake of representing the variance in the samples. Fifth, the interviews were transcribed to be as close to what the respondents uttered as possible. Thus the transcripts include nonlexical expressions (umm, ahh, umhmm), pauses (indicated by ellipses when they are short and by a number in seconds in parentheses representing the duration of the pause when they are longer than five seconds), emphases (indicated by *italics* or, for notations of the respondent's tone, by italic letters in brackets), self-corrections (denoted by a short line, —), and other important discursive matters (laughs and changes in tone are indicated with italic letters in brackets). Whenever I have added words, they appear in brackets; the interviewers' interventions appear in brackets and in italic letters. However, to improve its readability, I edited the material lightly.

ABSTRACT LIBERALISM: UNMASKING REASONABLE RACISM²²

Because of the curious way in which liberalism's principles are used in the post-civil rights era, other analysts label modern racial ideology "laissez-faire racism" or "competitive racism" or argue that modern racism is essentially a combination of the "American Creed" with antiblack resentment.²³ The importance of this frame is evident in that whites use it on issues ranging from affirmative action and interracial friendship and marriage to neighborhood and residential segregation. Because of the pivotal role played by this frame in organizing whites' racial views, I provide numerous examples below.

Rationalizing Racial Unfairness in the Name of Equal Opportunity

An archetype of how white students use the notion of equal opportunity in an abstract manner to oppose racial fairness is Sue, a student at SU.

When asked if minority students should be provided unique opportunities to be admitted into universities, Sue stated:

I don't think that they should be provided with unique opportunities. I think that they should have the same opportunities as everyone else. You know, it's up to them to meet the standards and whatever that's required for entrance into universities or whatever. I don't think that just because they're a minority that they should, you know, not meet the requirements, you know.

Sue, like most whites, ignored the effects of past and contemporary discrimination on the social, economic, and educational status of minorities. Therefore, by supporting equal opportunity for everyone without a concern for the savage inequalities between whites and blacks, Sue's stance safeguards white privilege. Sue even used the notion of equal opportunity to avoid explaining why blacks tend to perform worse than whites academically: "I don't know . . . um, like I said, I don't see it as a group thing. I see it more as an individual [thing] and I don't know why as a whole they don't do better. I mean, as I see it, they have the same opportunity and everything. They *should* be doing equal."

College students are not the only ones who use this abstract notion of equal opportunity to justify their racial views. For example, Eric, a corporate auditor in his forties, and a very affable man who seemed more tolerant than most members of his generation (e.g., he had dated a black woman for three years, recognized that discrimination happens "a lot" and identified multiple examples, and even said that "the system is . . . is white"), erupted in anger when asked if reparations were due to blacks for the injuries caused by slavery and Jim Crow: "Oh tell them to shut up, OK! I had nothing to do with the whole situation. The opportunity is there, there is no reparation involved and let's not dwell on it. I'm very opinionated about that!" After suggesting that Jews and Japanese are the ones who really deserve reparation, Eric added, "But something that happened three God-damned generations ago, what do you want us to do about it now? Give them opportunity, give them scholarships, but reparations?"

Was Eric just a white with a "principled opposition" to government intervention (see chapter 1 for analysts who make this claim)? This does not seem to be the case since Eric, like most whites, made a distinction between government spending on behalf of victims of child abuse, the homeless, and battered women (whom whites deem as legitimate candidates for assistance) and government spending on blacks (whom whites deem as unworthy candidates for assistance). This finding was consistent

with DAS survey results. For instance, whereas 64.3 percent of whites agreed that "we should expand the services that benefit the poor," only 39.6 percent (as opposed to 84 percent of blacks) agreed with the proposition "The government should make every effort to improve the social and economic position of blacks living in the United States." Furthermore, whereas 75.2 percent of white respondents approved of increasing federal spending for the environment and 59.7 percent for social security, only 31.7 percent approved such increases for programs to assist blacks. And when the question dealt with government programs that were not perceived as "racial" in any way,²⁴ the proportion of whites supporting the program increased even more.

"The Most Qualified . . .":

A Meritocratic Way of Defending White Privilege

Another tenet of liberalism whites use to explain racial matters is the Jeffersonian idea of "the cream rises to the top," or meritocracy (reward by merit). And whites seem unconcerned that the color of the "cream" that usually "rises" is white. For example, Diane, a student at SU, expressed her dissatisfaction about providing blacks unique opportunities to be admitted into universities: "I don't think you should admit anyone. It's gotta be, you've gotta be on the level to do it. If they were prepared beforehand to handle the college level to succeed in it, then there you go, anyone can." Diane then added, "They've gotta have the motivation to do well before you get there, I mean, I can't imagine being unprepared to go [to college] like just barely getting by in high school and then coming here to take the classes, you just can't go, 'OK, we want to put minorities in here so put anyone in,' you know." Diane also used the notion of meritocracy to explain her opposition to affirmative action.

That's so hard. I still believe in merit, you know, I still believe in equality, you know. If you did have two people with the same qualifications, one's minority and one's not, you know, I'd want to interview them and just maybe a personality stands out that works with the job, I don't know. Just find something other than race to base it on, you know? Let that not be a factor if they qualify.

How could Diane maintain these views and remain "reasonable"? Diane could say these things and seem reasonable because she believes discrimination is not the reason why blacks are worse off than whites. Instead, she relied on the cultural racism frame to explain blacks' status. This view can be seen too in her response to a question on why blacks fare worse academically than whites: "I don't know why. Mine was a personal motivation so, you know, I don't know. I don't want to say they weren't

personally motivated to get good grades, but that's what it was for me." Diane expanded on this matter and said, "Maybe some of them don't have parents to push them or . . . maybe the schools are not equal." She also speculated, "Maybe, you know, they've got in their mind that they can't succeed because they're a minority and they don't try, you know, no one there to tell them 'You can do it, it doesn't matter who you are.'"

Whites from the Detroit metro area used the meritocratic frame as extensively as college students. For instance Jim, a thirty-year-old computer software salesperson from a privileged background, explained in the following way his opposition to affirmative action:

I think it's unfair top to bottom on everybody and the whole process. It often, you know, discrimination itself is a bad word, right? But you discriminate every day. You wanna buy a beer at the store and there are six kinda beers you can get, from Natural Light to Sam Adams, right? And you look at the price and you look at the kind of beer, and you . . . it's a choice. And a lot of that you have laid out in front of you, which one you get? Now, should the government sponsor Sam Adams and make it cheaper than Natural Light because it's brewed by someone in Boston? That doesn't make much sense, right? Why would we want that or make Sam Adams eight times as expensive because we want people to buy Natural Light? And it's the same thing about getting into school or getting into some place. And universities it's easy, and universities is a hot topic now, and I could bug you, you know, Midwestern University I don't think has a lot of racism in the admissions process. And I think Midwestern University would, would agree with that pretty strongly. So why not just pick people that are going to do well at Midwestern University, pick people by their merit? I think we should stop the whole idea of choosing people based on their color. It's bad to choose someone based on their color; why do we, why do we enforce it in an institutional process?

Since Jim posited hiring decisions are like market choices (choosing between competing brands of beer), he embraced a laissez-faire position on hiring. The problem with Jim's view is that discrimination in the labor market is alive and well (e.g., it affects black and Latino job applicants 30 to 50 percent of the time) and that most jobs (as many as 80 percent) are obtained through informal networks.²⁵ Jim himself acknowledged that being white is an advantage in America because "there's more people in the world who are white and are racist against people that are black than vice versa." However, Jim also believes that although blacks "perceive or feel" like there is a lot of discrimination, he does not believe there is much discrimination out there. Hence, by upholding a strict laissez-faire view on hiring and, at the same time, ignoring the significant impact of past and contemporary discrimination in the labor market, Jim can safely voice his opposition to affirmative action in an apparently race-neutral way.

**"Nothing Should Be Forced upon People":
Keeping Things the Way They Are**

A central tenet of liberal democracies is that governments should intervene in economic and social matters as little as possible because the "invisible hand of the market" eventually balances states of disequilibrium. A corollary of this tenet, and part of the American mythology, is the idea that social change should be the outcome of a rational and democratic process and not of the government's coercive capacity.²⁶ During the Jim Crow era, the belief that racial change should happen through a slow, evolutionary process in "peoples' hearts" rather than through governmental actions was expressed in the phrase "you cannot legislate morality."²⁷ This old standpoint has been curiously reformulated in the modern era to justify keeping racial affairs the way they are. These ideas appeared occasionally in discussions on affirmative action, but most often in discussions about school and residential integration in America.

Sonny, a student at MU, explained in typical fashion her position on whether school segregation is the fault of government, whites, or blacks. As almost all the students, Sonny first stated her belief that school integration is in principle a good thing to have: "In principle, yeah, I think that's a good idea because like with, like with people interacting, they will understand each other better in future generations." But Sonny also, as most students, was not too fond of government attempts to remedy school segregation or, in her words, "I, I don't—I mean, it should be done if people want to do it. If people volunteer for it, and they want that part of their lives, then they should do it, but the government should not force people to bus if they don't want that." When asked to clarify her stance on this matter, she added, "I don't think the government should impose any legislation thinking that it will change people's hearts because people have to change them on their own. You can't force them to say, 'Well, OK, now that I have to bus my kid there, I like it.'"

DAS respondents were as adamant as students in arguing that it is not the government's business to remedy racial problems. For example, Lynn, a human resources manager in her early fifties, explained why there has been so little school integration since the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision:

I don't and that's another one. *I do not believe in busing.* The reason I don't believe in busing, you know, I said I don't. I didn't encourage my children to play with the neighborhood kids. I still felt that going to school in your community was the key to developing a child's sense of community and I still believe that. One of the reasons, another reason I moved from where I was [was] that I didn't want my children to be bused. I didn't want to have them got on a bus, especially me working. So I don't think that is an answer.

I think the answer is education and helping people learn to make a life for themselves and, you know, any type of social program that interacts, that provides interaction between races I think is excellent. But I'm just not a busing person.

Lynn wants equal opportunity in education as well as community schools, a position that sounds perfectly reasonable. However, one would expect Lynn to support doing something to make sure that communities throughout America are diverse, a policy that other things being equal would guarantee school integration. Yet, Lynn took a very strong laissez-faire, anti-government-intervention stance on this matter. Lynn answered as follows the question, "America has lots of all-white and all-black neighborhoods. What do you think of this situation?"

I don't have a problem with all-white and all-black neighborhoods if that's the choice of the people, the *individuals*. But, if it's *forced* either way, if I'm a black person and I've come into the neighborhood and I want to live here and selectively denied that option, that's wrong. But, again, there still has to be some type of social interaction for growth and if the social interaction takes place then, the cross-integration will take place, I think.

When pressed about what she thought could be done specifically to increase the mixing of the races in neighborhoods, Lynn restated that this could only be achieved "through educating (people) and encouraging businesses." Lynn was not alone in having this abstract view on school and neighborhood integration. Only one of the white respondents who opposed busing in the interviews (69.7 percent of whites opposed busing in the survey) provided a specific proposal that if implemented would increase residential as well as school integration.²⁸

**Individual Choice or an Excuse for Racial
Unfairness and Racially Based Choices?**

Individualism²⁹ today has been recast as a justification for opposing policies to ameliorate racial inequality because they are "group based" rather than "case by case." In addition, the idea of individual choice is used to defend whites' right to live and associate primarily with whites (segregation) and for choosing whites exclusively as their mates. The problem with how whites apply the notion of individualism to our present racial conundrum is that a relation of domination-subordination still ordains race relations in the United States (see chapters 1 and 4 in my *White Supremacy and Racism in the Post-Civil Rights Era*). Thus, if minority groups face group-based discrimination and whites have group-based advantages, demanding individual treatment for all can only benefit the

advantaged group.³⁰ And behind the idea of people having the right of making their own "choices" lays the fallacy of racial pluralism—the false assumption that all racial groups have the same power in the American polity. Because whites have more power, their unfettered, so-called individual choices help reproduce a form of white supremacy in neighborhoods, schools, and society in general.

Lynn, a human resources manager, used the notion of individualism in a very curious way. Although Lynn expressed her support for affirmative action because "there's still a lot of discrimination," she thinks that "there isn't as much discrimination as there used to be." Lynn also acknowledged white males have advantages in society and said "the white male is pretty much instilled" and "very much represses . . . um, people and other minorities." Nevertheless, when it came to the possibility of affirmative action affecting her, Lynn said,

Um, because affirmative action is based on a group as a whole, but when it comes down to the individual, like if affirmative action were against me one time, like it would anger me. I mean, because, you know, I as an individual got ripped off and, you know, getting a job.

DAS respondents also used individualism to justify their racial views and race-based preferences. For example, Mandi, a registered nurse in her thirties, said she had no problems with neighborhood segregation. She justified her potentially problematic position by saying that people have the right to choose where and with whom they live.

Umm, I think that people select a neighborhood to live in that they are similar to and people, you know, whatever similarities they find [louder voice], you know, it's race, economical level, religion, or, you know, whatever. When you are looking at somebody you don't know what, what denomination they are or what political preference they have, but you can tell right off in race. I think that they choose to live in a neighborhood that is their race.

NATURALIZATION: DECODING THE MEANING OF "THAT'S THE WAY IT IS"

A frame that has not yet been brought to the fore by social scientists is whites' naturalization of race-related matters. Although the naturalization frame was the least-used frame of color-blind racism by respondents in these two projects, about 50 percent of DAS respondents and college students used it, particularly when discussing school or neighborhood matters, to explain the limited contact between whites and minorities, or to rationalize whites' preferences for whites as significant others. The

word "natural" or the phrase "that's the way it is" is often interjected to normalize events or actions that could otherwise be interpreted as racially motivated (residential segregation) or racist (preference for whites as friends and partners). But, as social scientists know quite well, few things that happen in the social world are "natural," particularly things pertaining to racial matters. Segregation as well as racial preferences are produced through social processes and that is the delusion/illusion component of this frame.

The importance and usefulness of this frame can be illustrated with Sara, a student at MU who used the frame on three separate occasions. Sara, for example, used the frame to answer the question on black self-segregation.

Hmm, I don't really think it's a segregation. I mean, I think people, you know, spend time with people that they are like, not necessarily in color, but you know, their ideas and values and, you know, maybe their class has something to do with what they're used to. But I don't really think it's a segregation. I don't think I would have trouble, you know, approaching someone of a different race or color. I don't think it's a problem. It's just that the people that I do hang out with are just the people that I'm with all the time. They're in my organizations and stuff like that.

Sara also used the naturalization frame to explain the paltry level of school integration in the United States.

Well, I also think that, you know, where you are in school has to do with the neighborhood that you grow up in and, like, I grew up in mainly all-white communities so that community was who I was going to school with. And if that community had been more black, then that would be, I guess, more integrated and that would be just fine. I don't know if there's any way you can change the places in which people live because I think there are gonna be white communities and there are gonna be black communities and, you know, I don't know how you can get two communities like in the same school system.

The interviewer followed up Sara's answer with the question, "Why do you think there are white communities and black communities?" Sara's answer was, "Maybe like I said before, if people like to be with people that they're similar with and it means, you know—well, I don't think it has anything to do with color. I think it has to do with where they. . . ." Sara did not complete her thought as a light seems to have clicked on in her mind. She then proceeded to change her answer and acknowledged that race has a bearing on how people select neighborhoods: "Well, I guess it does [laughs]." The interviewer asked Sara if she thought her parents would move into an almost all-black neighborhood. Sara employed

all sorts of rhetorical maneuvers (see chapter 4) to defend her parents by conveying the idea that racial considerations would have never been a criterion for selecting a neighborhood.

Finally Liz, a student at SU, suggested that self-segregation is a universal process or, in her own words: "I do think they segregate themselves, but I don't necessarily think it's on purpose. I think it's that, you know, *we all try to stay with our own kind* so, therefore, you know, *they get along better with their own people* or whatnot [my emphasis]." By universalizing segregation as a natural phenomenon, Liz was able to justify even her own racial preference for white mates. When asked if she had ever been attracted to minority people, Liz said,

Um no, just because I wasn't really attracted to them, you know, I'm more attracted to someone that's like kinda more like me. But, you know, and I wouldn't say that, I mean, I like if he's good looking or not, you know, it's not that, it's just I'm more attracted to someone white, I don't know why [laughs].

DAS respondents naturalized racial matters too, but in general did it in a more crude fashion. For instance, Bill, a manager in a manufacturing firm, explained the limited level school integration:

I don't think it's anybody's fault. Because people tend to group with their own people. Whether it's white or black or upper-middle class or lower class or, you now, upper class, you know, Asians. People tend to group with their own. Doesn't mean if a black person moves into your neighborhood, they shouldn't go to your school. They should and you should mix and welcome them and everything else, but you can't force people together. If people want to be together, they should intermix more. [Interviewer: OK. So the lack of mixing is really just kind of an individual lack of desire?] Well, individuals, it's just the way it is. You know, people group together for lots of different reasons: social, religious. Just as animals in the wild, you know. Elephants group together, cheetahs group together. You bus a cheetah into an elephant herd because they should mix? You can't force that [laughs].

Bill's unflattering and unfitting metaphor comparing racial segregation to the separation of species, however, was not the only crude way of using the naturalization frame. For example, Earl, a small-time contractor in his fifties, explained segregation in a matter-of-fact way.

I think you're never going to change that! I think it's just kind of, you know, it's going to end up that way. . . . Every race sticks together and that's the way it should be, you know. I grew up in a white neighborhood, you know, most of the blacks will live in the black neighborhood. [Interviewer: So you don't think there's anything wrong?] No. Well, they can move, they still have the freedom to move anywhere they want anyway.

A significant number of DAS respondents naturalized racial matters in a straightforward manner. For example, Jim, a thirty-year-old computer software salesperson for a large company, naturalized school segregation as follows:

Eh, you know, it's more of the human nature's fault. It's not the government's fault, right? The government doesn't tell people where to live. So as people decide where to live or where to move into or where they wanna feel comfortable, [they] move to where they feel comfortable. We all kinda hang out with people that are like us. I mean, you look at Detroit, we have a Mexican village, why do we have a Mexican village? Why aren't Mexican people spread out all over on metro Detroit? Well, they like being near other Mexican people; that way they could have a store that suited them close by them, you know, those sort of things probably together. So, it's more human nature that I would blame for it.

Despite whites' belief that residential and school segregation, friendship, and attraction are natural and raceless occurrences, social scientists have documented how racial considerations affect all these issues. For example, residential segregation is created by white buyers searching for white neighborhoods and aided by realtors, bankers, and sellers.³¹ As white neighborhoods develop, white schools follow—an outcome that further contributes to the process of racial isolation. Socialized in a "white habitus" (see chapter 5) and influenced by the Eurocentric culture, it is no wonder whites interpret their racialized choices for white significant others as "natural." They are the "natural" consequence of a white socialization process.³²

"THEY DON'T HAVE IT ALL TOGETHER": CULTURAL RACISM

Pierre-André Taguieff has argued that modern European racism does not rely on an essentialist interpretation of minorities' endowments.³³ Instead, it presents their presumed cultural practices as fixed features (hence, he labels it as the "biologization of racism") and uses that as the rationale for justifying racial inequality. Thus, Europeans may no longer believe Africans, Arabs, Asian Indians, or blacks from the West Indies are biologically inferior, but they assail them for their presumed lack of hygiene, family disorganization, and lack of morality.³⁴ This cultural racism frame is very well established in the United States. Originally labeled as the "culture of poverty"³⁵ in the 1960s, this tradition has resurfaced many times since, resurrected by conservative scholars such as Charles Murray and Lawrence Mead, liberals such as William Julius Wilson, and even radicals such as Cornel West.³⁶ The essence of the American version of this frame

is "blaming the victim," arguing that minorities' standing is a product of their lack of effort, loose family organization, and inappropriate values.

Since there is little disagreement among social scientists about the centrality of this frame in the post-civil rights era, I focus my attention on highlighting what this frame allows whites to accomplish. I begin my illustration of this frame with two, clear-cut examples of college students who used it. The students agreed with the premise of the question, "Many whites explain the status of blacks in this country as a result of blacks lacking motivation, not having the proper work ethic, or being lazy. What do you think?" The first student is Kara, an MU student.

I think, to some extent, that's true. Just from, like, looking at the black people that I've met in my classes and the few that I knew before college, not like they're—I don't want to say waiting for a handout, but to some extent, that's kind of what I'm like hinting at. Like, almost like they feel like they were discriminated against hundreds of years ago, now what are you gonna give me? You know, or maybe even it's just their background, that they've never, like maybe they're the first generation to be in college, so they feel like just that is enough for them.

The second quote is from Kim, a student at SU:

Yeah, I totally agree with that. I don't think, you know, they're all like that, but, I mean, it's just that if it wasn't that way, why would there be so many blacks living in the projects? You know, why would there be so many poor blacks? If they worked hard, they could make it just as high as anyone else could. You know, I just think that's just, you know, they're raised that way and they see what their parents are like so they assume that's the way it should be. And they just follow the roles their parents had for them and don't go anywhere.

When cultural racism is used in combination with the "minimization of racism" frame, the results are ideologically deadly. If people of color say they experience discrimination, whites, such as Kara and Kim, do not believe them and claim they use discrimination as an "excuse" to hide the central reason why they are behind whites in society: their presumed "laziness."

Although Kara and Kim used the cultural racism frame in a crude form, most students did not. They articulated their culture of poverty views in a gentler, at times even "compassionate," way. For example, Ann, a student at WU, inserted the frame in her answer to a question about why blacks as a group fare worse than whites academically.

Um, I guess I would have to say primarily family structure. Maybe it's not [being] able to support the child and, you know, in school and really encourage. It might be that it's a single-parent family and it's necessary [for them] to get out and get a job, you know, a full-time job and work a part-time job and still try to go to school. Maybe it's not encouraged as much for, like long term, it's mainly survival. I don't know, something, income; if the family is really skimping by it would be really far-fetched, well, it wouldn't be probably necessarily the first thing that a child from [such] a family would think of, you know, expensive college rather than paying the rent, you know what I mean [laughs]? So, I mean, you know, the priorities are different.

Although Ann's arguments seem "reasonable" (poor people may have a different set of priorities than other people based on their economic situation), her explanation is wanting because it avoids mentioning the institutional effects of discrimination in the labor, housing, and educational markets and the well-documented³⁷ impact that discrimination has on middle- and upper-middle-class blacks. More significantly, Ann's failure to recognize how old- and new-fashioned discrimination affects blacks' life chances is not an argumentative slip, but the way in which most whites construe the situation of blacks, as evidenced by how respondents in both samples used similar arguments in answering questions about blacks' status.

This kinder and gentler way of using the cultural frame was the preferred choice of students. For example, Jay, a student at WU, explained as follows why blacks have a worse overall standing than whites:

Hmm, I think it's due to lack of education. I think because if they didn't grow up in a household that afforded them the time to go to school and they had to go out and get jobs right away, I think it is just a cycle [that] perpetuates things, you know. I mean, I can't say that blacks can't do it because, obviously, there are many, many of them [that] have succeeded in getting good jobs and all that.

Jay, as most whites, admits to the "exceptional black." However, Jay immediately goes back to the gentle cultural argument:

So it's possible that the cycle seems to perpetuate itself because—I mean, let's say they go out and get jobs and they settle down much earlier than they would normally if they had gone to school and then they have kids at a young age and they—these kids—have to go and get jobs and so.

How did DAS respondents use this cultural frame? They relied on this frame as often as students did but were significantly more likely to use it in a straightforward and crude manner. The following two cases exemplify how most DAS respondents used this frame. First is Isaac, an

engineer in his fifties. In response to the question comparing blacks' and whites' overall standing, Isaac argued that few blacks have the education to work as engineers. This led to the following exchange between Isaac and the interviewer:

Interviewer: So you feel maybe there's a lack of interest in education that black people have?

Isaac: They want to get a shortcut to make money. There's no urgency to get education. They want to make, to get money faster than whites. They don't want to take the time to get educated, they want to get money fast.

Interviewer: So they also don't put the time into developing their educational skills?

Isaac: Yeah the way you learn, the way you grow, is the way you become.

Interviewer: Some people say that minorities are worse off than whites because they lack motivation, are lazy, or do not have the proper values to succeed in our society. What do you think?

Isaac: Right now I think our minorities are lazy. They don't have the patience to keep going.

Ian, the manager of information security at an automotive company, explained why blacks are worse off than whites as follows: "The majority of 'em just don't strive to do anything, to make themselves better. Again, I've seen that all the way through. 'I do this today, I'm fine, I'm happy with it, I don't need anything better.' Never, never, never striving or giving extra to, to make themselves better."

Ian's perception of blacks as lazy emerged from his understanding of blacks as culturally deficient. This view was clearly expressed in his response to the question, "Do you think that the races are naturally different?"

Well I think that genes have something, some play in this, but I think a lot of it is past history of the people and the way they're brought up. You look at Chinese, if you're gonna get ahead in China, you've gotta be very intellectual and you've gotta be willing to, uh, to fight for everything that you're gonna get. Ja-Japan is the same way. For a kid just to get into college, they gonna take two years of going through entrance exams to get in. Then you kinda look at the blacks' situation. It's like, "Well, because of slavery, I ought to be given this for nothing, so I don't have to work for it, just give it to me." So culture and their upbringing is the big part of this.

Although Ian came close to the old biological view ("Well, I think genes have something, some play in this"), overall he made use of the cultural frame to explain blacks' status (Asians do well because they "gotta be intellectual," whereas blacks believe that because of slavery they do not have to work).

MINIMIZATION OF RACISM: WHITES' DECLINING SIGNIFICANCE OF RACE THESIS

When William Julius Wilson published *The Declining Significance of Race* in 1978, he made many whites in academia feel good about themselves. Wilson's main claim—that class rather than race was the central obstacle for black mobility—was an argument that had been brewing among whites for quite a while. Yet, whites believe that discrimination exists. For example, when white and black respondents in the DAS survey were given the statement, "Discrimination against blacks is no longer a problem in the United States," a high proportion of *both* groups (82.5 percent of whites and 89.5 percent of blacks) "disagreed" or "strongly disagreed" with that statement. Although whites and blacks believe discrimination is still a problem, they dispute its salience as a factor explaining blacks' collective standing. Thus, in response to the more specific statement, "Blacks are in the position that they are today as a group because of present day discrimination," only 32.9 percent of whites "agreed" or "strongly agreed" (compared to 60.5 percent of blacks). This means that in general whites believe discrimination has all but disappeared, whereas blacks believe that discrimination—old and new—is alive and well.

College students were more likely than DAS respondents to give lip service to the existence of discrimination. Because students for this study were taking social science courses at the time of the interviews, they may have become sensitized to the significance of discrimination as well as to the new character of contemporary discrimination. However, despite this sensitization, few believed discrimination and institutionalized racism are the reasons minorities lag behind whites in this society. In general, the students articulated their declining significance of race thesis in three ways. A plurality (eighteen of forty-one) used an indirect strategy of denial set by one of the following two phrases, "I am not black" or "I don't see discrimination" (see chapter 4 for an analysis of the functions of these phrases), others (nine of forty-one) minimized racism directly, and yet others (seven of forty-one) argued minorities make things look racial when they are not.

The following example illustrates how students used the indirect strategy of denial. The response of Mary, a student at SU, to the statement, "Many blacks and other minorities claim that they do not get access to good jobs because of discrimination and that when they get the jobs they are not promoted at the same speed as their white peers," was,

I think before you really start talking about hiring practices and promotion practices, you have to look at credentials. I mean, you know, I've only really had one job. I worked for a general contractor so it was basically me in the

office all day with him, my boss. But I, in fact, you have to look at credentials. I mean, I don't know if, you know, a white person gets a job over a minority, I can't sit here and say, "Well, that's discrimination," because I don't know what the factors were. This person got a master's degree versus a bachelor's degree, or more in-depth training than this person, you know? I mean, I definitely do not doubt that [discrimination] happens, that minorities get passed over for promotions and that they are not hired based on their race. I have absolutely no doubt that it happens. I think that before you can sit there and start calling a lot of things discrimination, you need to look into the background, the credentials behind it.

Rather than stating "I don't believe minorities experience discrimination," Mary suggested they may not get jobs or promotions because they lack the credentials. And although Mary, as most whites, recognizes discrimination exists ("I definitely do not doubt that [discrimination] happens"), she clearly believes most claims are bogus ("I think that before you can sit there and start calling a lot of things discrimination, you need to look into the background, the credentials behind it").

The next example is of students who minimized the significance of racism directly. Andy, a student at WU, answered a question on whether discrimination is the central reason why blacks are behind whites today by saying, "I think they do." Yet his answer was wanting, since he could not provide a meaningful explanation of how discrimination affects minorities' life chances. More importantly, Andy's answers to the other questions minimized the salience of racism. For instance, his answer to the question of whether or not discrimination affects the chances of minorities getting jobs and promotions was, "I think that there's probably less than it used to be, but that it still happens. It's just in isolated places or, you know, it happens in different places, but in most jobs, I think it probably does not happen." When asked to elaborate, Andy stated he believes the reason why blacks do not get good jobs is, "if anything, it's probably education" because "you can't apply for certain jobs without a lot of education."

The last example is of students who argued blacks make situations racial that are not. Janet, an SU student, answered all the questions on discrimination by denying that discrimination is a salient factor in minorities' life chances and suggesting alternative interpretations. For instance, Janet's answer to the same question, on whether or not discrimination is the central reason why blacks lag behind whites, was, "I would say it depends on the individual. I'm sure there are some . . . that do and others [that] don't, so . . ." When asked to clarify, she said, "Right. But I would say for the most part, most of them don't unless they make it out to be the case." When the interviewer asked Janet if she thought most claims of discrimination by minorities were a perception

issue, she replied, "If they looked at it as a different way or something, they might see—might not see it as racism, you see what I'm saying? [Interviewer: *You are saying that they are seeing more than is actually out there?*] Right." When asked about discrimination in jobs, Janet answered in a blunt fashion:

I would say that's a bunch of crap [laughs]. I mean, if they're qualified, they'll hire you and if you are not qualified, then you don't get the job. It's the same way with, once you get the job, if you are qualified for a promotion, you'll get the promotion. It's the same way with white, blacks, Asians, whatever. If you do the job, you'll get the job.

DAS respondents used similar argumentative strategies to deny the significance of discrimination. The strategy they used the most was direct minimization (eighteen of sixty-six), followed by outright denial (thirteen of sixty-six), stating that minorities make things racial (eleven of sixty-six), and indirect minimization (three of sixty-six). The remaining respondents (twenty of sixty-six) include a few who sincerely believe discrimination is important (see chapter 7) and others who denied the centrality of discrimination in their own peculiar way.

The first case exemplifies DAS respondents who minimized the significance of discrimination directly. Joann, a poor white woman in her fifties who works in a large chain store, answered the direct discrimination question by stating, "I don't see any in the store." When asked about discrimination against minorities in general, Joann said,

I don't think it's as bad as it was. It probably needs improvement. What [society] needs is a knowledgeable crew and I think that is the truth there. I think that the work will have to be done up continually until we're all one big happy family. [Interviewer: *Do you foresee that happening?*] It wouldn't surprise me. My great-granddaughter might marry a black, I don't know. I have no idea!

The next case is an example of respondents who denied discrimination outright. It is worth pointing out that all the DAS respondents who used this strategy were from working- or lower-class backgrounds. Scott, a twenty-three-year-old drafter for a mechanical engineering company, answered the direct question on discrimination as follows:

I don't—nowadays I don't, I don't really feel that way, I really don't at all. Maybe like when I was younger I would notice it, but right now I don't really feel that there's too much segregation anymore. If it is because of the person, you know, from their past experience. And, I mean, if you got a record, you're not gonna go too far, you know. So then they might feel like "Just being held back just because, you know, just 'cause I'm black."

The interviewer followed up Scott's answer with the question, "So you don't think that discrimination is a factor in most blacks' lives nowadays?" His answer was, "It might be just because of their past and their attitudes toward life. But if you just took it as everyday life and just went with it, no, I don't feel it at all, I don't see it. I don't practice it and my friends, all my friends [don't] practice it."

Next are examples of respondents who argued blacks make things racial that are not. Sandra, a retail salesperson in her early forties, explained her view on discrimination as follows:

I think if you are looking for discrimination, I think it's there to be found. But if you make the best of any situation, and if you don't use it as an excuse. I think sometimes it's an excuse because people felt they deserved a job, whatever! I think if things didn't go their way I know a lot of people have a tendency to use prejudice or racism as whatever as an excuse. I think in some ways, yes there [are] people who are prejudiced. It's not only blacks, it's about Spanish, or women. In a lot of ways there [is] a lot of reverse discrimination. It's just what you wanna make of it.

Finally, I provide an example of respondents who used the indirect minimization strategy. Dave, an engineer in his forties who owns a small-time employment agency, answered the direct question on discrimination by saying, "[laughs] I don't know any blacks so I don't know. But, in general, I probably have to say it's true." When asked for clarification, Dave stated,

Oh that's a hard one to just, well, I guess it comes down to stereotypes though like I said earlier. It just—some people may try to say that some blacks don't work as hard as whites. So, in looking for a job they may feel like they didn't get the job because they have been discriminated against because they were black, that's very possible. That may not really be, but as a person, they make the assumption.

Dave explained blacks' inferior status as compared to whites by suggesting that it "really comes down to individuals" and that he has "especially noted that if you want a job, [there are] jobs out there." In this reply Dave intimates his belief that racial discrimination is not a factor in the labor market since "[there are] jobs out there."

The last case is of DAS respondents who did not fit the overall strategies and used *sui generis* arguments to deny the significance of racial discrimination. Henrietta, a transsexual school teacher in his fifties, said the following in response to the question on discrimination:

[Nine-second pause] Trying to be an unbiased observer because as a transsexual I am discriminated against. I think if people act responsible they will

not be discriminated against. People who are acting irresponsible, in other words, demanding things, ah, "I need this" or "You did this because of my skin color," yeah, then they will be discriminated against. People who are intelligent present themselves in a manner that is appropriate for the situation and will not be discriminated against.

Thus, Henrietta suggests that blacks who experience discrimination deserve so because they act irresponsibly or complain too much.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I illustrated how whites use the four central frames of color-blind racism, namely, abstract liberalism, naturalization, cultural racism, and minimization of racism. These frames are central to the views of whites, young (college-student sample) and old (DAS respondents), and serve them as an interpretive matrix from where to extract arguments to explain a host of racial issues. More significantly, together these frames form an impregnable yet elastic wall that barricades whites from the United States' racial reality. The trick is in the way the frames bundle with each other, that is, in the wall they form. Whites, for example, would have a tough time using the abstract liberalism frame if they could not resort to the minimization of racism frame as well. Precisely because they use these frames the way children use building blocks, whites can say things such as "I am all for equal opportunity, that's why I oppose affirmative action" and also say "Everyone has almost the same opportunities to succeed in this country because discrimination and racism are all but gone." And if anyone dares to point out that in this land of milk and honey there is a tremendous level of racial inequality—a fact that could deflate the balloon of color blindness—they can argue this is due to minorities' schools, lack of education, family disorganization, or lack of proper values and work ethic. In short, whites can blame minorities (blacks in particular) for their own status.

But what if someone pokes holes in whites' color-blind story by pointing out that whites live mostly in white neighborhoods, marry and befriend mostly whites, interact mostly with whites in their jobs, and send their children to white schools or, if they attend mixed schools, make sure they take most of their classes with white children. Whites have two discursive options to avoid the potentially devastating effects of these arguments. They can resort to the abstract liberalism frame and say something like "I support integration, but I do not believe in forcing people to do anything that they do not want to do" or "People have the right to make their own individual choices and no one can interfere." Alternatively,

they can naturalize the whiteness in which they live ("Blacks like living with blacks, and whites like living with whites . . . it's a natural thing"). As I documented in this chapter, whites mix and match arguments as they see fit. Therefore, someone can say, "Segregation is a natural thing" but also say that "I believe that no one has the right of preventing people from moving into a neighborhood." These frames then form a formidable wall because they provide whites a seemingly nonracial way of stating their racial views without appearing irrational or rabidly racist.

But if the ideological wall of color-blind racism were not pliable, a few hard blows would suffice to bring it down. That is why the flexibility of the frames is so useful. Color-blind racism's frames are pliable because they do not rely on absolutes ("All blacks are . . ." or "Discrimination ended in 1965"). Instead, color-blind racism gives some room for exceptions ("Not all blacks are lazy, but most are") and allows for a variety of ways of holding on to the frames—from crude and straightforward to gentle and indirect. Regarding the former, almost every white respondent in these studies mentioned the exceptional black ("Well, Robert, my black friend, is not like that"), agreed in principle with racially progressive notions ("I believe that school integration is great because we can learn so much from each other" or "Gee, I wish I could see the day when we have the first black president"), or even joined Martin Luther King Jr. in the dream of color blindness ("In two or three generations race will disappear and we will all just be Americans"). Regarding the latter, whites used the color-blind frames in crude ways, displaying resentment and anger toward minorities ("Blacks are God-damned lazy") or in compassionate ways ("It is terrible the way they live in those neighborhoods, with those schools, without fathers, with crime just around the corner . . . it saddens me whenever I see all that on TV").

The pliability of the color-blind wall is further enhanced by the style of color blindness. For instance, if whites find themselves in a rhetorical bind, such as having disclosed a personal taste for whiteness or a dislike for blackness, they can always utter a disclaimer such as, "I am not prejudiced," or "If I ever fall in love with a black person, the race thing will never be an obstacle for us getting together." They can tiptoe around the most dangerous racial minefields because the stylistic elements of color blindness provide them the necessary tools to get in and out of almost any discussion. I examine these tools in detail in the next chapter.

NOTES

1. John Dollard, *Caste and Class in a Southern Town*, 2d ed. (New York: Doubleday, 1949).

2. For discussions on the "defensive beliefs" that supported Jim Crow, see Dollard, *Caste and Class*; Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy* (New York: Harper Brothers, 1944); Allison Davis et al., *Deep South* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1941); and Charles S. Johnson, *Patterns of Negro Segregation* (New York: Harper Brothers, 1943).

3. This is taken from the title of conservative commentator Dinesh D'Souza's book, *The End of Racism: Principles for a Multiracial Society* (New York: Free Press, 1995). This book is, among other things, a crude example of color-blind racism.

4. J. B. Thompson, *Studies in the Theory of Ideology* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 1984).

5. All ideologies aspire to be hegemonic, to rule the hearts of rulers and ruled. However, only those that incorporate elements of the "common sense" of the oppressed (albeit in partial and refracted manner) can truly become hegemonic.

6. See John Gray, *Liberalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986).

7. All these quotes are from *The Communist Manifesto*. See David McLellan (ed.), *Karl Marx: Selected Writings* (London: Oxford University Press, 1982). For a detailed intellectual assault at the farce of liberalism, see Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology* (New York: International, 1985).

8. For a marvelous discussion of this point and of "racial capitalism," see Cedric J. Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

9. Good examples of this trend are Andrea T. Baumeister, *Liberalism and the "Politics of Difference"* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), and Patrick Neal, *Liberalism and Its Discontents* (New York: New York University Press, 1997). Although Baumeister skillfully shows the tensions in traditional liberal discourse that foreshadow some of today's debates and provides a reasonable philosophical resolution based on "value pluralism," she fails to point out the exclusionary character of liberalism and the Enlightenment. Neal's account produces two interesting modifications of liberalism: the idea that liberal states cannot be neutral and the notion of "modus vivendi liberalism," which entails an open liberal approach to social issues. Yet, like Baumeister, Neal is silent about the racism of the founding fathers of liberalism and the meaning of their racial exclusions for today's liberal project.

10. Charles W. Mills, *The Racial Contract* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1997), 27.

11. The quotes by Kant and Voltaire as well as the views of Mill on slavery and colonialism can be found in chapter 2 of David Theo Goldberg, *Racist Culture* (Cambridge, UK: Blackwell, 1993). See also Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and Ambivalence* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1991).

12. Richard Bellamy, "Liberalism," in *Contemporary Political Ideologies*, edited by Roger Eatwall and Anthony Wright, 23–49 (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1993).

13. See Dana D. Nelson, *National Citizenship: Capitalist Citizenship and the Imagined Fraternity of White Men* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1998), and chapter 5 in Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States* (New York: HarperCollins, 1980).

14. From a social movements perspective, "liberal groups are those that attempt to reform social systems for the purpose of giving all groups equal oppor-

tunities." Margaret L. Andersen, *Thinking about Women: Sociological Perspectives on Sex and Gender* (New York: Macmillan, 1988), 299.

15. For a scathing critique of color-blind "radicals" such as Todd Gitlin, Michael Tomasky, Richard Rorty, Jim Sleeper, Barbara Epstein, and Eric Hobsbawm, see chapter 4 in Robin D. G. Kelley, *Yo' Mama's Disfunktional: Fighting the Culture Wars in Urban America* (Boston: Beacon, 1997).

16. The classic statement on the subject still is William Ryan, *Blaming the Victim* (New York: Vintage, 1976).

17. Charles S. Johnson, *Racial Attitudes: Interviews Revealing Attitudes of Northern and Southern White Persons, of a Wide Range of Occupational and Educational Levels, toward Negroes* (Nashville, Tenn.: Social Science Institute, Fisk University, 1946), 153.

18. It is important to note that cultural racism was part and parcel of European and American racisms. My point is that this theme has supplanted biological racism in importance and effectiveness.

19. Katherine S. Newman, *Declining Fortunes: The Withering of the American Dream* (New York: Basic, 1993), 168.

20. James Byrd was a black man murdered by three white supremacist ex-convicts in 1998 in Jasper, Texas.

21. High-level Texaco executives were caught on tape saying some racially insensitive things about blacks and other minorities a few years back, which led them to settle a lawsuit brought by minority employees accusing the company of racial discrimination in pay and promotion.

22. I borrow the phrase "reasonable racism" from Jody David Armour, *Negrophobia and Reasonable Racism* (New York: New York University Press, 1997).

23. The former label is used in the works of Lawrence Bobo and his coauthors (see chapter 1) and the latter by Philomena Essed, in *Diversity: Gender, Color, and Culture* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996).

24. When the question at hand could be perceived as racial, white support declined significantly. Thus, for example, only 21 percent of whites agreed with the proposition to increase welfare spending.

25. The specific citations for these facts can be found in the introduction, or the reader can consult my chapter, coauthored with Amanda E. Lewis, "The 'New Racism': Toward an Analysis of the U.S. Racial Structure, 1960-1990s," in *Race, Nationality, and Citizenship*, edited by Paul Wong (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1999).

26. Bringing about social change in this country has never been a rational, civilized feat, particularly when racial considerations have been involved. Force and resistance have accompanied the most significant changes in America's political and racial order. We used force to achieve our independence from Britain, to keep the Union together, and to end state-sanctioned Jim Crow. An excellent little book on this subject is Irving J. Sloan, *Our Violent Past: An American Chronicle* (New York: Random House, 1970).

27. Southern sociologist Howard W. Odum took William Graham Sumner's idea of "mores" and suggested that racial conflicts must be solved through an evolutionary approach that he labeled "racial adjustments." In a similar vein, northern sociologist Robert E. Park argued that race contacts went through "race cycles" that ended in racial assimilation. See Howard W. Odum, *American Social*

Problems (New York: Holt, 1939), and Robert E. Park, *Race and Culture* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1950).

28. One respondent suggested a tax-incentive policy to stimulate residential integration.

29. Despite its elitist origins in American history (see chapter 5 in Zinn, *A People's History of the United States*), the notion of individualism has been used by social reform movements such as the Jacksonian democracy movement of the nineteenth century, the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s ("one man, one vote"), and the woman's suffrage movement of the early twentieth century ("one person, one vote") to advance truly inclusive democratic agendas.

30. David Ingram, *Group Rights: Reconciling Equality and Difference* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2000).

31. For a review, see chapter 4 in my *White Supremacy and Racism in the Post-Civil Rights Era* (Boulder, Colo.: Rienner, 2001).

32. On all these matters, see Beverly Daniel Tatum, *"Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?": And Other Conversations about Race* (New York: Basic, 1997).

33. Most of the work of this important French scholar has not been published in English. A few of his pieces have appeared in *Telos* and, fortunately, the University of Minnesota Press translated his *La Force du préjugé: Essai sur le racisme et ses doubles*. Pierre-André Taguieff, *The Force of Prejudice: Racism and Its Doubles* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001). See also Pierre-André Taguieff (ed.), *Face au racisme, Tome II: Analyse, hypothèses, perspectives* (Paris: La Découverte, 1991).

34. See my "'This Is a White Country': The Racial Ideology of the Western Nations of the World-System," *Research in Politics and Society* 6, no. 1 (1999): 85-102.

35. The culture of poverty argument was formally developed by anthropologist Oscar Lewis. His claim was that the poor develop a culture based on adaptations to their poverty status, which is then transmitted from generation to generation and becomes an obstacle for moving out of poverty. Although Lewis formulated his thesis as a class-based one, because the characters in his famous books, *The Children of Sánchez* (1961) and *La Vida* (1965), were Mexican and Puerto Rican, respectively, it was almost impossible not to interpret his argument as especially pertinent for understanding minorities' well-being in America. Lewis's argument was roundly condemned by many of his contemporaries, but it stuck in scholarly policy circles as well as among conservative politicians and a few "liberals" such as Senator Patrick Moynihan.

36. Charles A. Murray, *Losing Ground: American Social Policy, 1950-1980* (New York: Basic, 1984); Lawrence M. Mead, *Beyond Entitlement: The Social Obligations of Citizenship* (New York: Free Press, 1986); William Julius Wilson, *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); Cornel West, *Race Matters* (Boston: Beacon, 1993).

37. See Sharon Collins, *Black Corporate Executives: The Making and Breaking of a Black Middle Class* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997); Ellis Cose, *The Rage of a Privileged Class* (New York: HarperCollins, 1995); and Joe R. Feagin and Melvin Sikes, *Living with Racism: The Black Middle-Class Experience* (Boston: Beacon, 1994).



The Style of Color Blindness

*How to Talk Nasty about Minorities
without Sounding Racist*

Subscribing to an ideology is like wearing a piece of clothing. When you wear it, you also wear a certain style, a certain fashion, a certain way of presenting yourself to the world. The style of an ideology refers to its peculiar *linguistic manners and rhetorical strategies* (or *race talk*),¹ to the technical tools that allow users to articulate its frames and story lines. As such, the style of an ideology is the thread used to join pieces of fabric into garments. The neatness of the garments, however, depends on the context in which they are being stitched. If the garment is being assembled in an open forum (with minorities present or in public venues), dominant actors will weave its fibers carefully ("I am not a racist, but . . .") and not too tight ("I am not black, so I don't know"). If, in contrast, the needlework is being done among friends, the cuts will be rough and the seams loose ("Darned lazy niggers").

I examine in this chapter the basic style of color blindness. At the core of my analysis is the idea that because the normative climate changed dramatically from the Jim Crow to the post-civil rights era, the language of color blindness is slippery, apparently contradictory, and often subtle.² Thus, analysts must excavate the rhetorical maze of confusing, ambivalent answers to straight questions; of answers speckled with disclaimers such as "I don't know, but . . ." or "Yes and no"; of answers almost unintelligible because of their higher-than-usual level of incoherence. This is not an easy task and the analyst can end up mistaking honest "I don't know" for rhetorical moves to save face or nervousness for thematically induced incoherence. Cognizant of this possibility, I offer as much data as possible on each cited case.

Since a full discursive analysis of the stylistic components of color blindness is beyond the scope of this chapter,³ I focus instead on showcasing five things. First, I document whites' avoidance of direct racial language to expressing their racial views. Second, I analyze the central "semantic moves" (see below) whites use as verbal parachutes to avoid dangerous discussions or to save face. Third, I examine the role of projection in whites' racial discourse. Fourth, I show the role of diminutives in color-blind race talk. Finally, I show how incursions into forbidden issues produce almost total incoherence in many whites. This last element is not part of the stylistic tools of color blindness but the result of talking about racially sensitive matters in a period in which certain things cannot be uttered in public. Nevertheless, because rhetorical incoherence appears often in whites' remarks, it must be regarded as part of the overall language of color blindness.

One concern for readers of this chapter may be whether I am attributing intentionality to whites as they piece together their accounts. That is, am I suggesting white respondents are "racists" trying to cover up their *real* views through these stylistic devices? First, readers need to be reminded that I see the problem of racism as a problem of power (see chapter 1). Therefore, the intentions of individual actors are largely irrelevant to the explanation of social outcomes. Second, based on my structural definition of "racism," it should also be clear that I conceive racial analysis as "beyond good and evil." The analysis of people's racial accounts is not akin to an analysis of people's character or morality. Lastly, ideologies, like grammar, are learned socially and, therefore, the rules of how to speak properly come "naturally" to people socialized in particular societies. Thus, whites construct their accounts with the frames, style, and stories available in color-blind America in a mostly unconscious fashion. As Stuart Hall has pointed out, "We all constantly make use of a whole set of frameworks of interpretation and understanding, often in a very practical unconscious way, and [those] things alone enable us to make sense of what is going on around us, what our position is, and what we are likely to do."⁴

CALLING BLACKS "NIGGER" SOFTLY: RACISM WITHOUT RACIAL EPITHETS

The literature about life in plantations, accounts from frontiersmen, or narratives from cattle ranchers show that whites used to talk about minorities in a straightforward matter. When people of color were property or regarded as secondary human beings, there was no reason to be concerned in talking about them. But the civil rights era shattered, among many things, the United States' norms about public discussions on race.

Hence using words such as "nigger" and "spic" and even saying things that sound or can be perceived as racist is deemed immoral. And because the dominant racial ideology purports to be color blind, there is little space for socially sanctioned speech about race-related matters. Does this mean that whites do not talk about minorities in public? As I showed in the previous chapter, whites talk about minorities in public, even in the somewhat formal venue of an interview sponsored by a major research university. But I also showed they talk in a very careful, indirect, hesitant manner and, occasionally, even through coded language.⁵

Almost all whites we interviewed avoided using traditional Jim Crow terminology to refer to blacks. Only one college student and six DAS respondents used terms such as "colored" or "Negroes" to refer to blacks and not a single one used the term "nigger" as a legitimate term. The student who used the term "colored" was Rachel, an MU student who had very conservative racial views. However, it was not clear whether or not she used the term as part of her normal repertoire. She used the term in her answer to a question about who were her friends in college:

I wouldn't say mostly white. I'd say, it's probably a mix. 'Cause I have like a lot of Asian friends. I have a lot of colored friends,⁶ you know, but it wasn't maybe not even the same, like, background either, I don't know. It's hard to tell, you know? From looking at somebody, so. . .

From this statement, it is unclear whether she used the term in the old sense or wanted to say "people of color" and got confused.

All DAS respondents who used the term "colored" were sixty years of age or older. For example, Pauline, a retired woman in her late seventies, described the racial makeup of the schools she attended while growing up: "They were mixed, you know. [*Interviewer: Mixed of what?*] Well [*raises voice*] we had mostly colored and the white."

Although none of these older respondents were racial progressives, it would be a mistake to regard them as "Archie Bunkers," just because they used the racial language of the past. In truth, all these respondents were whites who have not fully absorbed the racial ideology and style of the post-civil rights era. Yet, based on what they said, some of these respondents seemed more open-minded than many younger respondents. For instance, when Pauline was asked if she had black friends while growing up, she said, "I always had black friends, even when I worked I had black friends. In fact, I had a couple of my best friends." Although many whites' self-reports on friendship with blacks are suspect (see chapter 5), based on Pauline's own narrative, she seems to have had real associations with blacks. For example, she played with black kids while growing up and remembered fondly her black coworker. More significantly, Pauline, who

has a niece who is dating a black "gentleman," seemed less concerned than one would expect:

I feel like it's none of my business. She's had trouble with ah, she's divorced. She's had a lot of trouble with her ex, and he's very, very abusive. This fellow she's going with is very kind. The kids like him so there you go. So maybe it's gonna be good for her and the kids. And for him too, who knows!

The fact that white youth do not use racial slurs as legitimate terms in *public* does not mean that they do not use these terms or denigrate blacks in *private*. For example, most college students acknowledged listening to or telling racist jokes with friends; six even told the jokes in the interviews. For example, Lynn, an MU student, told the following joke she heard back home:

Lynn: Okay [laughing]. It was, it's terrible but, what do you call a car full of niggers driving off a cliff?

Interviewer: What?

Lynn: A good beginning.

Eric, another MU student, told the following joke: "It was, what do you call a black man, a black man in a, in a coat and a tie? And it was, the defendant or something. Yeah, it was the defendant. And that was probably a couple of weeks ago or something that I heard that."

In addition, racist terminology is current in the life of students and DAS respondents, as illustrated by the fact that more than half of them acknowledged that they have friends or close relatives who are "racist." For example, Lee, a WU student, acknowledged, "My father is pretty racist, so I heard everything, just about every racial slur you could possibly think of I heard it from him and I think that had an effect on me early." He also said that while his family was watching black TV shows such as *Sanford and Son* or *The Jeffersons*, his father would say things such as "Are we gonna watch the nigger shows?" Lee and his brothers would say, "Yeah," because it was "just kind of second nature." Although Lee believes he has been able to successfully repel his father's racist influence, he admitted that he had some Nazi leanings while growing up and that although "I wasn't a skinhead or anything, but, you know, every now and again, I would draw a swastika on my notebook or something."

READING THROUGH THE RHETORICAL MAZE OF COLOR BLINDNESS

Because post-civil rights racial norms disallow the open expression of racial views, whites have developed a concealed way of voicing them.

Analysis of post-civil rights racial speech suggests whites rely on "semantic moves," or "strategically managed . . . propositions" whose meanings can be determined by the "content of speech act sequences,"⁷ to safely state their views. For instance, most whites use apparent denials ("I don't believe that, but . . ."), claims of ignorance ("I don't know"), or other moves in the process of stating their racial views. The moves act as rhetorical shields to save face because whites can always go back to the safety of the disclaimers ("I didn't mean that because, as I told you, *I am not a racist*"). The data in this chapter will show whites often sandwich their racial statements between slices of nonracial utterances. In what follows I showcase the most common verbal strategies of post-civil rights racial speech.

"I Am Not Prejudiced, but . . ." and "Some of My Best Friends Are . . ."

Phrases such as "I am not a racist" or "Some of my best friends are black" have become standard fare of post-civil rights racial discourse. They act as discursive buffers before or after someone states something that is or could be interpreted as racist. Therefore, it was not surprising to find that four students and ten DAS respondents used phrases such as "I'm not prejudiced, but" in their answers. One example of how the respondents inserted this semantic move was Rhonda, a part-time employee in a jewelry store in her sixties. She used the move to safely express her highly racial views on why she thinks blacks are worse off than whites:

Well, I'm gonna be, you understand I'm, I'm [not] prejudice or racial or whatever. They're always given the smut jobs because they would do it. Then they stopped, they stopped doing [them]. The welfare system got to be very, very easy. And I'm not saying all, there's many, many white people on welfare that shouldn't be. But if you take the percentage in the Tri-city country area, you will find that the majority are white, but all you see is the black people on welfare. But it's a graduation up. Thirty years ago they started it and they continued it, and they continued it, and they continued it. And it was easier to collect welfare from the state rather than go out and get a job. Why work if, if they gonna, if the government's gonna take care of you?

After Rhonda stated that, "I'm, I'm [not] prejudice or racial or whatever," she then gave her account on how she believes the welfare state has spoiled blacks. The ideological value of the "I am not a racist, but . . ." move is clear here.

The phrase "Some of my best friends are . . ." or its equivalent was used by eight students and twelve DAS respondents. Surprisingly, many respondents used it to refer to their Asian friends. For example, Eric, a student at MU, used this phrase after revealing that most of his friends while growing up were white. Specifically, when asked "Okay, and you

say mostly whites, were there nonwhite friends along the way?" Eric answered, "Yeah I had a few. I, one of my best friends when I lived in New Jersey was Korean."

Jill, a salesperson in her thirties, used the "Some of my best friends are black" move in a rather odd way. In response to the question, "Have you ever dated racial minorities?" Jill said, "No, but I think one of my best friends is black."

The interviewer then asked Jill, "OK, can you talk a little bit about that relationship?" Jill answered,

Yeah we worked together at Automotive Company and what happened is this man was very bright. He graduated first in his class in economics from Indiana University and he got a fellowship through Automotive Company, which probably helped because he was black. And I also know he got into Harvard because he had terrible GMAT scores, but he did get in. He didn't have terrible, he had in the high fives. He did get in and graduated from Harvard and now he's an investment banker. But you know what? He is a nice guy. What he lacks in intellect he makes up for in . . . he works so hard and he's always trying to improve himself. He should be there because he works harder than anybody I know.

One of Jill's "best friends," according to her own narrative, was "very bright" but had "terrible GMAT scores." Yet, she continued, he "did get in" Harvard, which he deserved because "he is a nice guy" who makes up for "what he lacks in intellect" with hard work (was her "best friend" "very bright" or lacking "in intellect"?). She also sprinkled the story with her veiled concerns about affirmative action (her commentary about Automotive Company helping him "because he was black"). Please also notice this "best friend" is never identified by name.

"I Am Not Black, So I Don't Know"

Since the aforementioned moves have become cliché (and thus less effective), color-blind racism has produced other semantic moves. These moves, as all the parts of any ideology, have developed collectively through a trial-and-error process and become resources available for the production of people's racial accounts.⁸ One such move that appeared frequently among white college students but not among DAS respondents was the phrase "I am not black, so I don't know." After respondents interjected this phrase, they proceeded with statements that indicated they have strong views on the racial issue in question. For example, Brian, a student at SU, inserted the statement in response to the direct question on discrimination.

I don't know. I believe them. I don't know, I'm not a black person living so I don't hang out with a lot of black people, so I don't see it happen. But I do watch TV and we were watching the stupid talk shows—there's nothing else on—and there's people out there. And just that and just hearing the news and stuff. I'm sure it's less than it used to be, at least that's what everybody keeps saying so . . . I think it's less but I can't say. But I can't speak for like a black person who says they're being harassed or being prejudice or discriminated against.

Brian's statement can be broken down as follows. First, he stated "I'm not a black person," so he did not see discrimination happening. Second, he recognized that discrimination still happens. Third, he carefully stated his own view: "It's less than it used to be."

The second example is Liz, a student at MU. She also used the phrase in her answer to the direct question on discrimination:

Um, just because I'm not black, I'm not Hispanic, I don't really, don't understand. I don't go through it I guess. But then again, I've seen like racism on, you know, towards whites, scholarships and as far as school goes, which, I mean, which bothers me too. So I guess I can kind of understand.

Liz began her answer with the move and pondered whether or not she could understand minorities' complaints about discrimination because "I don't go through it I guess." But then she changed the topic to the issue of so-called reverse discrimination toward whites in "scholarships and as far as school goes," which "bothers me too." Thus Liz equalized the complaints about discrimination by all groups and concluded that, after all, "I guess I can kind of understand" minorities' claims about discrimination. In a specific question on whether or not blacks experience discrimination in jobs and promotions, Liz answered by avoiding the issue altogether: "Um, I just think that the best qualified should probably get the job and that, you know, like I wouldn't see why someone black wouldn't get a job over someone white who was more qualified or better suited for the job." Since Liz hinted that blacks lie when they make claims of discrimination, the interviewer asked her, "So when they say that [discrimination] happens to them, do you think they're lying or . . . ?" Liz proceeded to make a quick reversal to restore her image of neutrality:

I mean, I don't think they're lying, but I wouldn't, I mean, I guess in my little world, that everything is perfect, I wouldn't see why that would happen. But I guess that there are people who are, you know, racist who do, you know, would not promote someone black just because they're black, which I don't really understand, you know.

Liz's rhetorical back and forth (not understanding minorities' claims of discrimination and then claiming she does) and reversals (hinting that minorities lie when they claim to have experienced discrimination and then saying that discrimination happens) typify how dangerous are the waters of color blindness. Negotiating the seemingly contradictory views that "race does not matter" but, at the same time, that "race matters" a little bit for minorities and a lot for whites in the form of reverse discrimination is not an easy task.

"Yes and No, But . . ."

Another semantic move typical of color-blind racism is the "yes and no" strategy. After respondents insert this phrase and, apparently taking or examining all sides, they proceed to take a stand on the issue at hand. Students were more likely than DAS respondents to use this move, a finding that resonates with the fact, discussed in the previous chapter, that DAS respondents were more straightforward in the enunciation of the frames of color-blind racism. An example of how respondents used this move is Emily, a student at SU who answered a question about providing minorities special opportunities to be admitted into universities as follows:

Unique opportunities, I don't know? There might be, I guess, some minorities do get schools [that] aren't as well funded as others. So, I would have to say yes and no. I think they should get an opportunity to come, but I also don't think they should allow other people to come. 'Cause that's sort of like a double-edged sword, maybe because you are discriminating against one group any way you do it and I don't believe in that, and I don't think you should discriminate against one group to give another a better chance. And I don't believe that's fair at all. But I also don't believe that it's fair they have to [attend a] school that can't teach as well or don't have the facilities to teach them like they should. I don't know. I'm kinda wishy-washy on that.

This "yes and no" answer can be interpreted as an expression of whites' ambivalence on a very "controversial" social policy.⁹ However, Emily's answer to the direct question on discrimination clearly shows that she is decisively against affirmative action:

I just have a problem with the discrimination, you're gonna discriminate against a group and what happened in the past is horrible and it should never happen again, but I also think that to move forward you have to let go of the past and let go of what happened. You know, and it should really start equaling out, um, 'cause I feel that some of it will go too far and it will swing the other way. One group is going to be discriminated against—I don't believe in that. I don't think one group should have an advantage over another, regardless of what happened in the past.

Thus, Emily opposes affirmative action as it is practiced because she interprets it as reverse discrimination. In turn, she favors programs that are not in place (expanding educational opportunities for minorities before college) or that would not change minorities' status in a significant way (equal opportunity).

Mark, an MU student, used the "yes and no" strategy to express his view on affirmative action:

Yes and no. This is probably the toughest thing I have deciding. I really, 'cause I've thought about this a lot, but I can make a pro-con list and I still wouldn't like. I've heard most of the issues on this subject and I honestly couldn't give a definite answer.

Mark, who was taking a sociology course at the time of the interview, recognized minorities "don't have the same starting points and, if you are starting from so much lower, they should definitely be granted *some* additional opportunities to at least have an equal playing ground." But he immediately added, "I'm gonna be going out for a job next year, and I'll be honest, I'd be upset if I'm just as qualified as someone else, and individually, I'd be upset if a company takes, you know, like an African American over me just because he is an African American." Mark repeats this point when discussing three affirmative action-based hiring scenarios. When asked if he would support the hypothetical company's hiring decisions, Mark said, "If I'm that person, I'm not gonna support it. If I'm that majority getting rejected just because I'm a different race." Hence Mark's philosophical "yes and no" on affirmative action seems to disappear when the policy is discussed in practical terms.

It is important to point out that other respondents did not use the particular phrase "yes and no" but inserted similar buffer statements to safely express their reservations, objections, and at times, opposition to certain policies. For example, Brian, a student at SU, explained his stance on affirmative action: "Man, that's another one where [laughs] I kind of support and oppose it [laughs], you know? Uh pretty much the same thing I said before was that, I don't know, if I come, I don't know—somebody underqualified shouldn't get chosen, you know?" Brian opposed providing minorities unique opportunities to be admitted into universities and the hiring decisions in the three affirmative action hiring scenarios. This suggests Brian leans more toward the "against" than the "for" stance on affirmative action, regardless of his odd "I kind of support and oppose" stance.

One example of DAS respondents who used this strategy is Sandra. A retail person in her forties, Sandra used the move to voice her opposition

to affirmative action. Sandra's answer to the question, "Are you for or against affirmative action?" was

Yes and no. I feel someone should be able to have *something*, education, job, whatever, because they've earned it, they deserve it, they have the ability to do it. You don't want to put a six-year-old as a *rocket scientist*. They don't have the ability. It doesn't matter if the kid's black or white. As far as letting one have the job over another one just because of their race or their gender, I don't believe in that.

Sandra's "yes and no" answer on affirmative action seems like truly a strong "no," since she did not find any reason whatsoever for affirmative action programs to be in place. Her "yes and no" at the beginning was followed by a long statement on why affirmative action is wrong and thus she concluded by saying, "As far as letting one have the job over another because of their race or their gender [which is the way she interprets affirmative action policies], I don't believe in that."

Anything but Race

Another rhetorical move akin to the "I am not a racist, but" and "Some of my best friends are" is "Anything but race." This strategy involves interjecting comments such as "it's not a prejudice thing" to dismiss the fact that race affects an aspect of the respondent's life. Hence, this tool allows whites to explain away racial fractures in their color-blind story. For example, Ray, a student at MU, dismissed the notion that race had any bearing on the fact that he had no minority friends in high school:

Yeah, I think, I think that as things got later on, I don't think there was any type of prejudice involved. I just think that we really didn't know these kids. You know what I mean? They lived in different neighborhoods, they went to different schools. Um, and there was never any effort made to exclude, and if anything, there was an effort made to cultivate these kids.

Sonny, a student at MU, also used this tool to explain why she did not have minority friends while growing up. Sonny revealed in the interview that she had Italian friends,¹⁰ but suggested that "race never came into play" and that "most of my friends were just normal kids." After revealing that "one of my best friends is Indian" (Asian Indian), she pondered why she and her friends did not have blacks in their crowd:

I mean, there was so many kids. I don't think we had any black friends. I don't know why. It kind of stuck together and I don't know, it wasn't that we, it wasn't that we wouldn't be like . . . allowing to black people. It's just

that there was never, like, an opportunity. There's no population like that around where we lived.

Both Ray and Sonny seemed to realize their almost-all-white networks violate their color-blind view of themselves. Thus, in their descriptions, they pointed out that this was a nonracial fact in their lives. My point here is not to accuse whites who do not have minority friends of being "racist" (see my definition of "racism" in chapter 1). Instead, I want to show that whites explain the product of racialized life (segregated neighborhoods, schools, and friendship networks) as nonracial outcomes and rely on the available stylistic elements of color blindness to produce such accounts.

As college students, DAS respondents used phrases in line with the "anything but race" strategy. For instance, Marge, an unemployed woman in her early fifties, used this rhetorical strategy in her response to the interracial marriage question:

Very different than what I used to think, I think it doesn't have anything to do with racism. It has to do with how you will all be treated. Now, if it's just a matter of you and the other person and there's no families involved, no kids involved, and if you are living in an area [where people have] open minds, I think it's fine. But when you start dragging kids in, no matter how much you love or whether you are a racist or not, that's not the question, it's how those kids are going to be treated. And so my answer is if there are kids, you know, families in and all that involved, and you're living in a racially, you know, racist kind of area, no, I don't believe in marrying somebody of a different race. But if it's you two together and there's nobody else involved, then I say it's fine. But, you know, when you are dragging other people in, you have to think of them too.

Obviously, the phrase "I think it doesn't have anything to do with racism," and the carefully but long-winded statement afterwards, allowed Marge to oppose almost all kinds of interracial unions on a variety of apparently nonracial grounds (but see chapter 5).

"THEY ARE THE RACIST ONES": PROJECTION AS A RHETORICAL TOOL

Psychologists since Freud have argued that projection is part of our normal equipment to defend ourselves.¹¹ It is also an essential tool in the creation of a corporate identity (Us versus Them).¹² More pertinent to this section, projection helps all of us "escape from guilt and responsibility and affix blame elsewhere."¹³ College students and DAS respondents projected racism or racial motivations onto blacks and other minorities

as a way of avoiding responsibility and feeling good about themselves. The projections of college students appeared on a variety of issues (e.g., affirmative action, school and residential segregation, interracial friendship and marriage, and the work ethic of blacks), but most often on the hot issue of so-called black self-segregation. For example, Janet, a student at SU, answered a question on whether or not blacks self-segregate, as follows:

I think they segregate themselves. Or, I mean, I don't know how everybody else is, but I would have no problem with talking with or being friends with a black person or any other type of minority. I think they've just got into their heads that they are different and, as a result, they're pulling themselves away.

The interviewer followed up Janet's answer with a question trying to ascertain whether or not Janet had tried to mingle with blacks, but Janet cut her off quickly with the following statement: "They're off to their own kind of little, own world."¹⁴

Janet projected once more in her answer to the interracial marriage question, but this time not onto blacks, but onto people who marry across the color line:

I would feel that in most situations they're not really thinking of the, the child. I mean, they might not really think anything of it, *but* in reality I think most of the time when the child is growing up, he's going to be picked on because he has parents from different races and it's gonna ultimately affect the child and, and the end result is they're only thinking of them—of their own happiness, not the happiness of, of the kid.

By projecting selfishness onto people who intermarry ("they're not really thinking of the, the child"), Janet was able to voice safely her otherwise racially problematic opposition to intermarriage. Nevertheless, she admitted that if she or a member of her family ever became involved with someone from a different race, her family "would *not* like it *at all*!! [*laughs*]."

Other examples of projection among students occurred when they discussed affirmative action. Although most students expressed open resentment on this subject, a few projected the idea that blacks feel "terrible" if they are hired because of their race. For instance, Rachel, the conservative MU student cited above, explained her position on affirmative action as follows:

Affirmative action programs? Like I was saying, I think, I don't know if I do because, I mean, I think the only reason they, you know, established it was to make up for the 200 and some years of slavery. And it's just trying to,

like, for us it's just trying to like make up for the past. And on the blacks, on that end, I think they're kind of . . . I would feel bad, you know, because I'm getting in because of the color of my skin, not because of my merits. And I'd feel kind of inferior, you know, like I'd feel that the whole affirmative action system would inferiorize me. Just because maybe I'll get like, you know, a better placement, you know, in a school just because of the color of my skin. I don't know.

This argument appears quite often in whites' objections to affirmative action.¹⁵ The rhetorical beauty of this projection is that it is couched as a "concern" on how blacks feel about affirmative action. Of course, because the market is heavily tilted toward whites, if someone ought to feel "inferior" about market decisions it should be whites, since they are the ones who receive preferential treatment "just because of the color of [their] skin."

DAS respondents projected racism and racial motivations onto blacks and minorities but at a slightly higher rate. Twenty-two of the sixty-six white respondents projected racism or racial motivations onto blacks on a variety of issues. For example Ann, an unemployed woman in her twenties, answered the question on whether blacks are hard to approach or are not welcomed by whites as follows: "I think that, I don't know—they live too much on the past, if you ask me. Some of 'em do. You know, I think blacks are more prejudiced against whites than whites are against blacks."

Francine, a homemaker in her late twenties, answered a question on why blacks and whites see the police and the criminal court system very differently in the following way: "Black people are just prejudiced. They just think that they're out to get them or something."

Pat, an orderly in a psychiatric hospital in her early thirties, balked at the idea of the government establishing programs on blacks' behalf to deal with the effects of discrimination:

On behalf of blacks? No, I think it's equaling out, I mean, if you want to go to school you can. I don't think there should be—Years back [the government] came out with a Negro College Fund. We don't have any United Caucasian Fund, I mean, I don't know why they separate themselves because they are allowed to go to the same schools and colleges and everything as white people. It should be all together. I don't think there should be *specials*, you know what I am saying? [*giggles and snorts*] No, I don't—it should all be the same for everybody. Everybody wants equal rights, equal this and equal this and that will equal everything out.

Beverly, a small-business owner and homemaker in her forties, projected the idea that blacks who are hired through affirmative action feel terrible. She stated that affirmative action is "unfair to black and white." When the interviewer asked her to explain what she meant, Beverly said,

"Because a lot of companies they know that they're hired [because they are black]. I mean, it's got to be in their mind, it would be in [my] mind, that's why I'm saying this. 'Was I hired because I was good or because I was black?'"

Racial projections bring to mind the famous statement by DuBois in *The Souls of Black Folk*, "How does it feel to be a problem?"¹⁶ Whites freely lash out at minorities ("They self-segregate," "They take advantage of the welfare system," "They must feel terrible about affirmative action") and seldom exhibit self-reflexivity. Minorities are the problem; whites are not.

"IT MAKES ME A LITTLE ANGRY": THE ROLE OF DIMINUTIVES IN COLOR-BLIND RACE TALK

Because maintaining a nonracial, color-blind stance is key in the post-civil rights era, whites rely on diminutives to soften their racial blows. Hence, when they oppose affirmative action, few say, "I am against affirmative action." Instead, they say something such as, "I am just a little bit against affirmative action." Similarly, few whites who oppose interracial marriage state flatly, "I am against interracial marriage." Instead, they say something such as, "I am just a bit concerned about the welfare of the children."

About half of the college students and a quarter of DAS respondents used diminutives to cushion their views on issues such as interracial marriage and affirmative action. For instance, Andy, a student at WU, used diminutives twice to state his concerns on interracial marriage:¹⁷

I would say I have a little bit of the same concern about the children just because it's more, I mean, would be more difficult on them. But, I mean, I definitely [*nervous laugh*] have no problem with any form of interracial marriage. That's just, just an extra hurdle that they would have to over, overcome with the children, but, but I—[it] wouldn't be a detriment to the kids, I don't think. That just makes it a little more difficult for them.

Mickey, a student at MU, used diminutives to make the potentially problematic claim that people at MU were oversensitive about matters regarding race or sexual orientation. Andy made his comments in response to a question about whether or not he participated in political activities on campus. After Andy stated in no uncertain terms that he did not participate in any political activity, the interviewer, curious about the tone of the answer, commented "You sounded pretty staunch in your no." To this Andy replied,

Yeah, I just, I don't know. I think everybody, everybody here just seems like really uptight about that kind of stuff and, I mean, maybe it's just because

I never had to deal with that kind of stuff at home, but, you know, it seems like you have to watch everything you say because if you slip a little bit, and you never know, there's a protest the next day.

When asked to explain what kind of "little slips" he was referring to, Andy said,

Like, I mean, if you hear a professor say something, like a racial slur, or something just like a little bit, you know, a little bit outta hand, you know. I mean. I would just see it as like, you know, he was just, you took it out of context or something, but, you know, it's just little things like that. It's just, it's so touchy. Everything is so touchy it seems like around here. And I don't, like I don't like to get into debates about stuff and, you know, about cultures and stuff like that. 'Cause I've seen it, I've seen it around here, you know, plenty, you know, about like, with religious stuff and gay stuff and minority stuff. And it's just nothin' of that, I just don't like to get into that stuff.

Thus, Mickey uses the diminutives to state that people at MU are hypersensitive because they protest when a professor does "little things" like making "a racial slur" in class or making some insensitive religious or homophobic remarks.

DAS respondents also used diminutives, but consistent with what I have documented for other rhetorical tools and the frames of color blindness, they were less likely to use them. The following two examples illustrate how they used diminutives. First is Rita, an underemployed woman in her twenties. Rita stated her controversial belief that blacks are naturally different from whites as follows: "Well, I can't say that generally they all are, but a lot of the ones I've encountered are a little more aggressive, a little bit more high tempered, or whatever."

Obviously, the diminutives and her qualification that her view applies to most but not all blacks muted somewhat her otherwise traditional Jim Crow position.

Judy, a college professor in her forties who throughout the interview signified her "racial progressiveness," softened her opposition to affirmative action by using a diminutive. "I'm for it a little bit, not real dramatically. I think it's ah, I think is a temporary solution. I think it's bad when, if you have like, it's used for quotas."

"I, I, I, I DON'T MEAN, YOU KNOW, BUT . . .": RHETORICAL INCOHERENCE AND COLOR BLINDNESS

Rhetorical incoherence (e.g., grammatical mistakes, lengthy pauses, or repetition) is part of all natural speech. Nevertheless, the level of

incoherence increases noticeably when people discuss sensitive subjects. Because the new racial climate in America forbids the open expression of racially based feelings, views, and positions, when whites discuss issues that make them feel uncomfortable, they become almost incomprehensible.¹⁸

Almost all the college students were incoherent when discussing certain racial issues, particularly their personal relationships with blacks. For example, Ray, the MU student cited above and a respondent who was very articulate throughout the interview, became almost incomprehensible when answering the question about whether he had been involved with minorities while in college:

Um, so to answer that question, no. But I would not, I mean, I would not ever preclude a black woman from being my girlfriend on the basis that she was black. You know, I mean, you know what I mean? If you're looking about it from, you know, the standpoint of just attraction, I mean, I think that, you know, I think, you know, I think, you know, all women are, I mean, all women have a sort of different type of beauty, if you will. And I think that, you know, for black women, it's somewhat different than white women. But I don't think it's, you know, I mean, it's, it's, it's nothing that would ever stop me from like, I mean, I don't know, I mean, I don't if that's, I mean, that's just sort of been my impression. I mean, it's not like I would ever say, "No, I'll never have a black girlfriend," but it just seems to me like I'm not as attracted to black women as I am to white women, for whatever reason. It's not about prejudice, it's just sort of like, you know, whatever. Just sort of the way, way like I see white women as compared to black women, you know?

The interviewer followed up Ray's answer with the question, "Do you have any idea why that would be?" Ray replied, "I, I, I [sighs] don't really know. It's just sort of hard to describe. It's just like, you know, who you're more drawn to, you know, for whatever reason, you know?"

Mark, an MU student cited above, answered a direct question on interracial marriage in the following manner:

I mean, personally, I don't see myself, you know, marrying someone else. I mean, I don't have anything against it. I just I guess I'm just more attracted to, I mean, others. Nothing like, I could not and I would never, and I don't know how my parents would—just on another side, I don't, like, if my parents would feel about anything like that.

Mark was one of three students who openly opposed interracial marriage. Acknowledging this seems to have rattled him emotionally, as his speech pattern became incongruous.

Another issue that made students feel seemingly uncomfortable was discussing their views on the matter of self-segregation. Ann, for example, a WU student, became very hesitant in her answer to the question

of whether or not blacks self-segregate (remember, short lines [—] stand for self-corrections):

Um, no, I don't think they segregate themselves, they just probably just, I guess probably they are, I don't know. Let's see, let's try to—Like we were trying—Like mutual friends, I suppose, maybe and probably maybe it's just your peers that you know, or maybe that they, they have more, more like activities, or classes and clubs, I don't really know, but I don't think it's necessarily conscious, I don't—I wouldn't say that I would feel uncomfortable going and talking to a whole group.

One potential reason why some whites get out of rhythm when discussing self-segregation is the realization that whatever they say about minorities can be said about them. Thus, as they explain their opinions on this issue, respondents make sure they provide nonracial explanations of why minorities may seemingly self-segregate (Ann suggesting friendship networks are based on people sharing similar interests).

DAS respondents were significantly less likely than students to become incoherent, but when they did, it was around the same issues. Dorothy, for instance, a retired automobile company worker in her seventies, who spoke clearly throughout the interview, seemed confused when addressing the topic of interracial marriage:

Eh, well, I donno, but I, I, I feel that uh, I donno, I just feel like, that uh, you should [low voice] stick to your own race for marriage [Interviewer: And why is that?] Uh because I feel that there's uh problem—There would be problems on both sides. A girl would feel hurt if, if his parents, you know were. . . . [End of Tape 1. Interviewer asked her to continue her answer.] Yeah, I really do. Well, I donno—they have a different culture than we do, really and I think that his family would be, would probably be just as upset. I watch this on TV every day and see how, you know, how they, they have a different, I donno—I hear the men, I know I hear that the black men on TV say that the black women are so, you know, so wild and mad, you know, tempers, you know what I mean. And I just feel that's the limit. I donno, if my dau—If one of my daughters woulda, ah, married one, I would have accepted it because it's my daughter and I would, I wo—And I would have never be, I would never be nasty to them. Because I feel they're just as human as we are. If they treat me decent, I'm gonna treat them decent. That's my feelings!

Dorothy's incoherence "makes sense" in light of her opposition to interracial marriage. Because openly opposing interracial marriage is controversial and violates the notion of color blindness, Dorothy seemed compelled to qualify her answer and insert the profoundly awkward statement about the equality of the races ("they're just as human as we are").

Lynn, a human resource manager in her early fifties, became incoherent while stating her reservations about dating black men:

I don't know. Just, well [*high pitched voice*] I think I would have been very uncomfortable, okay, I really do. I mean, it would just be, I [*raises voice*] wouldn't want to go out with a really dark Middle Eastern man, or Indian, or Oriental. I mean, I, I just would be uncomfortable. If they're closer to me in looks, okay. That's just always the way I felt. Not that I didn't like men of ethnic diversity, but I just—You have a certain taste, you know. I think I do.

As with college students, DAS respondents became nervous when discussing some matters other than interracial marriage. For example, Eric, an auditor for an automotive company, became anxious when discussing whether or not he associates with his black coworkers:

Sure, sure, you can, it's—if you work in that environment the, the race is there obviously. I don't think it will ever go away, but I don't practice it and I see a lot of people who don't practice it. The, they, you know, but it's existing and I know that and I don't. Yeah, I, I, I, I go out with the black guys. I don't even care. It don't matter to me.

CONCLUSION

If the tales of color-blind racism are going to stick, whites need to be able to repair mistakes (or the appearance of mistakes) rhetorically. In this chapter I have documented the variety of tools available to whites to mend racial fissures, to restore a color-blind image when whiteness seeps through discursive cracks. Color-blind racism's race talk avoids racist terminology and preserves its mythological nonracialism through semantic moves such as "I am not a racist, but," "Some of my best friends are . . .," "I am not black, but," "Yes and no," or "Anything but race." Thus, if a school or neighborhood is completely white, they can say "It's not a racial thing" or "It's economics, not race." They can also project the matter onto blacks by saying things such as "They don't want to live with us" or "Blacks are the really prejudiced ones."

But how can whites protect themselves against the charge of racism when they state positions that may be interpreted as racist? They can use diminutives as racial shock absorbers and utter statements such as "I am a little bit against affirmative action because it is terribly unfair to whites" or "I am a bit concerned about interracial marriage because the children suffer so much." And, as in the case of the frames of color-blind racism, whites mix and match the stylistic tools of color-blind racism. Hence, respondents could use a diminutive ("I am a little bit upset with blacks . . ."),

followed by a projection (" . . . because they cry racism for everything, even though they are the ones who are racist"), and balance out the statement with a semantic move at the end (" . . . and I am not being racial about this, it's just that, I don't know").

The interviews also revealed that talking about race in America is a highly emotional matter. Almost all the respondents exhibited a degree of incoherence at some point or other in the interviews. Digressions, long pauses, repetition, and self-corrections were the order of the day. This incoherent talk is the result of talking about race in a world that insists race does not matter, rather than being a tool of color blindness. However, since it is so preeminent in whites' race talk, it must be included as part of the linguistic modalities of color-blind racism.

One final important point to make is that college students were more likely than DAS respondents to use semantic moves such as "I am not a racist, but," "Some of my best friends are . . .," "Yes and no," and "I am not black, but." The students were also more likely to use diminutives to soften their racial views and to become incoherent when discussing sensitive racial matters. DAS respondents, however, were more likely to project than students. These findings match my findings in the previous chapter. Why is this the case? Preliminary analysis of survey and interview data from these two projects suggest that younger, educated, middle-class people are more likely than older, less-educated, working-class people to make full use of the resources of color-blind racism.

This means white youths are more adept at surfing the dangerous waters of America's contemporary racial landscape. This should not be surprising, since they are the cohort that has been ingrained from day one with the ideology of color blindness. However, it is worth noting that young, educated, middle-class DAS respondents are not too far off from their older, less-educated, working-class counterparts in their crudeness and lack of rhetorical sophistication. This may well mean that, as whites enter the labor market, they feel entitled to vent their resentment in a relatively straightforward manner. No need to sweeten the pill when you feel morally entitled to a job or promotion over all blacks, since you believe they are "not qualified," when you believe the taxes you pay are being largely wasted on "welfare-dependent blacks," when you are convinced that blacks use discrimination as an excuse to cover up for their own inadequacies.

In my substantiation of the frames and style of color blindness, many respondents inserted stories to make their points: stories about the mysterious "black man" who took "their job" or their "spot at Harvard." These stories provide the emotional glue and the seal of authenticity needed to validate strong racial claims. Without these stories, venting racial animosity would be untenable. I examine these stories and their functions in the next chapter.

NOTES

1. For a full discussion of the various stylistic components of a racial ideology, see chapter 3 in my *White Supremacy and Racism in the Post-Civil Rights Era* (Boulder, Colo.: Rienner, 2001).
2. There is no systematic research on whites' private racial discourse. I suspect the structured and formal nature of our interview process made it a public matter and thus signified to respondents to be cautious. However, community-based studies on whites and undercover observational studies suggest whites are more likely to use racialized language in private, white spaces. For examples of the former, see Jonathan Rieder, *Carnarsie: The Jews and Italians of Brooklyn against Liberalism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985), and John Hartigan Jr., *Racial Situations: Class Predicaments of Whiteness in Detroit* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999). For an example of the latter, see Lawrence Otis Graham, *Member of the Club* (New York: HarperCollins, 1995). Other notable studies on this subject include Kristen Myers, *Racetalk: Racism Hiding in Plain Sight* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), and Melanie Bush, *Everyday Forms of Whiteness: Understanding Race in a "Post-Racial" World* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011). See also Leslie Houts Picca and Joe R. Feagin's *Two-Faced Racism, Whites in the Backstage and Frontstage* (New York: Routledge, 2007), where they document, using students' journals, the extensive level of racist interactions in college campuses.
3. For an example, see Eduardo Bonilla-Silva and Tyrone A. Forman, "'I Am Not a Racist but . . .': Mapping White College Students' Racial Ideology in the USA," *Discourse and Society* 11, no. 1 (2000): 50-85.
4. Stuart Hall, "The Narrative Construction of Reality," *Southern Review* 17, no. 2 (1984): 7.
5. For a discussion of coded racial discussions on government spending and taxes, see Tomas Edsall and Mary D. Edsall, *Chain Reaction: The Impact of Race, Rights, and Taxes on American Politics* (New York: Norton, 1992).
6. To help readers, all the rhetorical maneuvers used by respondents in this chapter are set in sans-serif type. It does not indicate any type of emphasis in tone of voice.
7. Teun van Dijk, *Communicating Racism: Ethnic Prejudice in Cognition and Conversation* (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1987), 86.
8. On ideology, see Teun van Dijk, *Ideology: A Multidisciplinary Approach* (London: Sage, 1998).
9. Paul Sniderman and Thomas Piazza, *The Scar of Race* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993); Seymour M. Lipset, *American Exceptionalism* (New York: Norton, 1996); Paul Sniderman and Edward G. Carmines, *Reaching Beyond Race* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997).
10. Italians seem to have a tenuous claim to whiteness, since many "whites" mentioned them as examples of "minority friends" in the interviews.
11. For an excellent analysis of racial projection, see the classic book by Gordon W. Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday/Anchor, 1958).
12. For an excellent analysis of the creation of the antithetical figures of "barbarian" or "wild men" and "civilized men" in Europe and its central role in the

- creation of the notion of "the other," see Roger Bartra, *Wild Men in the Looking Glass: The Mythic Origins of European Otherness* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994).
13. Sam Keen, *Faces of the Enemy: Reflections of the Hostile Imagination* (New York: Harper & Row, 1986), 21.
 14. On this matter and white college students' lack of self-reflexivity, see Joe R. Feagin and Nikitah Imani, *The Agony of Education* (New York: Routledge, 1996). On the so-called issue of self-segregation, see Beverly Daniel Tatum, *"Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?": And Other Conversations about Race* (New York: Basic, 1997).
 15. For a critique, see Bryan K. Fair, *Racial Caste Baby: Color Blindness and the End of Affirmative Action* (New York: New York University Press, 1997).
 16. W. E. B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: Penguin, 1995), 44.
 17. The question was, "twenty-five to thirty-five percent of whites oppose interracial marriage. Many claim they do not have any problem with minorities, but that they are concerned about what would happen to the children. What is your view on this delicate matter?" It is important to point out that we obtained similar "concerns about the children" from the DAS sample, even though we did not include the second part of the question. At any rate, my focus here is on whether or not respondents used diminutives while stating concerns over racially sensitive issues.
 18. For a similar finding, see van Dijk, *Communicating Racism*.