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Dr. Frances Cress Welsing

During the course of the struggle of African people against European racism, brutality and domination, many innovative thinkers have risen from our ranks. The greatest and most courageous scholars have devoted their lives to the pursuit of an explanation for the virtually inherent animosity most white people appear to have toward people of color. Unlike her predecessors, Dr. Frances Cress Welsing, a brilliant, Washington, D.C. psychiatrist has rejected conventional notions about the origin and perpetuation of racism. Dr. Welsing's theories, lectures and scientific papers have provoked controversy for over twenty years. Now, the compilation of her work in *The Isis Papers* is destined to change the course of history.

Legend Clegg  
Chief Deputy City Attorney  
City of Compton, California

The Isis Papers

Dr. Frances Cress Welsing

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# THE ISIS PAPERS

THE KEYS TO THE COLORS

# Dr. Frances Cress Welsing

## The Cress Theory of Color-Confrontation and Racism (White Supremacy):

A Psychogenetic Theory and World Outlook  
(1970)

Unlike religion, the body of knowledge known as science takes the position that all observable phenomena can be explained, or, at least, is grist for the mill of investigation, analysis and understanding by the human mind.

In today's very small world at least three-quarters of the people are "non-white," and the members of this "non-white" majority population are subjected to domination throughout their lives, either directly or indirectly, by a tiny minority of the world's people who classify themselves as "white." Racism (white supremacy) then, is revealed as one of, if not *the* most important observable phenomenon in the world today for which social, behavioral and all other scientists should be seeking an explanation.

Heretofore, racism has been defined and described variously. (see Gullattee, Comer, Butts and Pinderhughes). Yet in my view, the comment made by Oliver C. Cox in his 1959 award winning text, "Caste, Class and Race" (*Monthly Review Press*), still prevails:

It is not ordinarily realized that, of all the great mass of writing on race relations, there is available no consistent theory of race relations. The need for such a sociological explanation is so great that recently, when one author succeeded, with some degree of superficial logic, in explaining the phenomena in terms of caste relations, the college textbooks and social-science journals, almost unanimously and unquestioningly, hurriedly adopted his theory.

Perhaps social and behavioral scientists have failed to develop a sound and consistent theory of racism because of their tendency to be less demanding and less stringently disciplined in sticking to observable and measurable data than the so-called "physical" scientists are required to be in formulating hypotheses. Frequently, contrary to all the basic premises of modern science, statements are made by some of these scientists "a priori" — that is to say, claimed as valid independent of observation. Similarly, society, in general, fails to impose a significant amount of pressure on behavioral and social scientists to yield viable theories and definitions. Such theories and definitions subsequently can stand and function as efficient and effective tools to be utilized by social engineers as guides for changing social reality. However, the contrary seems to be the case; if there is any pressure at all, it is to maintain the social status quo. And all too often, institutions of the society reward the superficial, inconsistent and dysfunctional theories of societal dynamics.

Neely Fuller, in his 1969 copyrighted *The United Independent Compensatory Code/System/Concept: a textbook/workbook for thought, speech and/or action for victims of racism (white supremacy)*, recognized the need for a functional statement on racism, one that could be utilized daily by those earnestly seeking to bring about social change. Fuller observed that, contrary to most present thinking, there is only one functioning racism in the known world — white supremacy. He challenges his readers to identify and then to demonstrate the superiority or functional supremacy of any of the world's "non-white" peoples over anyone. Concluding that since there is no operational supremacy of any "colored" people, Fuller reveals that the only valid operational definition of racism is white supremacy. He observes that in spite of any and all statements the world's "non-white" peoples may make about themselves having economic and/or political independence and the like, in the final analysis, they are all victims of the white supremacy process. He places major emphasis on the present realities of the world that can be verified and tested, rather than on what one could imagine to be the case (such as a black or yellow supremacy). He further emphasizes that, instead of focusing on individual cases or on specific locations, a perspective that

examines the patterns of relationships between whites and "non-whites" worldwide must be developed.

Fuller explains that racism is not merely a pattern of individual and/or institutional practice; it is a universally operating "system" of white supremacy and domination in which the majority of the world's white people participate. He discounts the validity of theories that recognize the evolution of economic systems as the origin of this state of affairs. Instead, he reveals the inadequate analysis of such theories by suggesting that various economic systems — such as capitalism, communism and socialism — have been devised, used and refined in the effort to achieve the primary goal of white domination. In other words, the goal of the white supremacy system is none other than the establishment, maintenance, expansion and refinement of world domination by members of a group that classifies itself as the white "race." Fuller then suggests that the word "race," in this sense, has little biological validity but is translated more correctly as "organization," the sole purpose of which is to maintain white domination and world control. Fuller's emphasis on the concept of color amplifies the assertion made in 1903 by W.E.B. Du Bois (perhaps the greatest American social scientist) in *The Souls of Black Folk*, that the great problem facing the 20th century is that of the color-line.

Whether or not one is emotionally comfortable with Fuller's thesis and assessment is not germane. The question of such comfort never has been the important concern of scientific investigation. Of great significance in Fuller's work is the description of relationships between "non-white" and white peoples. Fuller defines and elucidates these relationships as a means of accounting for and illuminating many past and present observable social practices. Also, this examination reveals that, despite all kinds of programs and pronouncements to the contrary, for the past several hundred years, white supremacist social conditions have remained intact as the dominant social reality.

Impressed that the concept of a "system" of white domination over the world's "non-white" peoples could explain the seeming predicament and dilemma of "non-white" social reality, I tended to focus, as a psychiatrist, on what possible motivational force, operative at both the individual and

group levels, could account for the evolution of these patterns of social behavioral practice that apparently function in all areas of human activity (economics, education, entertainment, labor, law, politics, religion, sex and war). While Fuller clearly suggests that this "system" consists of patterns of thought, speech and action, practiced to various degrees by the majority of the world's white people, the only comment on etiology he makes is that:

Most white people hate Black people. The reason that most white people hate Black people is because whites are not Black people. If you know this about white people, you need know little else. If you do not know this about white people, virtually all else that you know about them will only confuse you.

To take Fuller's account a step further, it should be noted that, in the majority of instances, any neurotic drive for superiority usually is founded upon a deep and pervading sense of inadequacy and inferiority. Is it not true that white people represent in numerical terms a very small minority of the world's people? And more profoundly, is not "white" itself the very absence of any ability to produce color? I reason, then, that the quality of whiteness is indeed a genetic inadequacy or a relative genetic deficiency state, based upon the genetic inability to produce the skin pigments of melanin (which is responsible for all skin color). The vast majority of the world's people are not so afflicted, which suggests that color is normal for human beings and color absence is abnormal. Additionally, this state of color absence acts always as a genetic recessive to the dominant genetic factor of color-production. Color always "annihilates" (phenotypically and genetically-speaking) the non-color, white. Black people possess the greatest color potential, with brown, red and yellow peoples possessing lesser quantities, respectively. This is the genetic and psychological basis for *The Crass Theory of Color-Confrontation and Racism (White Supremacy)*.

The Color-Confrontation theory states that the white or color-deficient Europeans responded psychologically, with a profound sense of numerical inadequacy and color inferiority, in their confrontations with the majority of the world's people — all of whom possessed varying degrees

of color-producing capacity. This psychological response, whether conscious or unconscious, revealed an inadequacy based on the most obvious and fundamental part of their being, their external appearance. As might be anticipated in terms of modern psychological theories, whites defensively developed an uncontrollable sense of hostility and aggression. This attitude has continued to manifest itself throughout the history of mass confrontations between whites and people of color. That the initial hostility and aggression came only from whites is recorded in innumerable diaries, journals and books written by whites. Also, records indicate that only after long periods of great abuse have non-whites responded defensively with any form of counterattack. This perplexing psychological reaction of whites has been directed towards all peoples with the capacity to produce melanin. However, the most profound aggressions have been directed towards Black people, who have the greatest color potential and, therefore, are the most envied and feared in genetic color competition.

The experience of numerical inadequacy and genetic color inferiority led whites to implement a number of interesting, although devastating (to non-white peoples), psychological defense mechanisms. The initial psychological defense maneuver was the *repression* of the initial painful awareness of inadequacy. This primary ego defense was reinforced by a host of other defense mechanisms.

One of the most important of these defense mechanisms was *reaction formation*, a response that converts (at the psychological level) something desired and envied but wholly unattainable, into something discredited and despised. The whites, desiring to have skin color but unable to attain it, claimed (consciously or unconsciously) that skin color was disgusting to them, and began attributing negative qualities to color — especially to blackness. Interestingly, the term "non-white" is a double negative resulting in a positive statement. This is perhaps a Freudian slip, wherein the use of language ultimately reveals the primary psychological dynamic. Whites' desire to have colored skin can be observed at the very first signs of spring or summer when they begin to strip off their clothes (as many pieces as the law will allow), often permitting their skins to be burned severely in an attempt to add some color to their pale bodies and rendering

themselves vulnerable to skin cancer in the process. Most cosmetics are also an attempt to add color to white skin. Such coloring makeup is provided for the white male as well as female. And finally, untold millions are spent annually on chemicals that are advertised as being able to increase the tanning potential of whites.

The fact that some Blacks have attempted to change the color of their skin to white does not mitigate the force of this argument, as it can be demonstrated readily that these non-whites are responding to the already established social conditions of white supremacy. Such a process, as seen in Blacks and other non-whites, may be described as identification with the oppressor.

Another example of the reaction formation defense is the elaboration of the myth of white genetic superiority, which continues to be reinforced assiduously (note Jensen's latest elaborations and their acceptance at all levels of the white social structure). Acutely aware of their inferior genetic ability to produce skin color, whites built the elaborate myth of white genetic superiority. Furthermore, whites set about the huge task of evolving a social, political and economic structure that would support the myth of the inferiority of Blacks and other non-whites.

An additional psychological defense maneuver utilized by whites has been that of *projection*. Feeling extreme hostility and hate towards non-whites, whites began the pattern of stating that non-whites hated them. In many instances, this mechanism has served to mitigate the guilt whites occasionally experience for their impulse to aggress against Blacks and other people of color.

Another, perhaps special, instance of the use of projection is the historic and continuing desire of whites for sexual alliances with non-whites — a desire indulged by white males throughout the world. This deep desire has been projected onto Black males and females, and is manifest in the notion that people of color have sexual desires for white males and females. The Color-Confrontation theory postulates that whites desired and still do desire sexual alliances with non-whites, both male and female, because it is only through this route that whites can achieve the illusion of being able to produce color. The extreme rage vented against even the

idea of a sexual alliance between the Black male and the white female, which has long been a dominant theme in the white supremacy culture, is viewed by the Color-Confrontation theory as a result of the white male's intense fear of the Black male's capacity to fulfill the greatest longing of the white female — that of conceiving and birthing a product of color.

There are other sexual behaviors practiced by some whites that can be illuminated by the Color-Confrontation thesis. For example, in his autobiography, Malcolm X stated that the sexual perversion he was asked to perform most often by white men was for him, as a Black male, to have sexual intercourse with white females in their presence, while they (white men) looked on. This behavioral pattern on the part of white males, instead of being dismissed as a perversion, can be understood when viewed as white males' fantasized identification with Black males' capacity to give conceptual products of color to white females — something white females desperately desire but white males cannot fulfill. Further vivid testimony is given by Black males who have engaged in sexual intercourse with white females. These men report that a frequent utterance of white females is that they wish to have Black babies.

The Color-Confrontation theory also explains why Black males' testicles were the body parts that white males attacked in most lynchings: the testicles store powerful color-producing genetic material. Likewise, the repeated and consistent focus on the size of Black males' penises by both white males and females is viewed by this theory as a *displacement* of the fundamental concern with the genetic color-producing capacity residing in the testicles. Since the fact of color-envy must remain repressed, color-desire can never be mentioned or the entire white psychological structure collapses. Therefore, attention is displaced to a less threatening object or symbol — the penis.

Finally, the degradation of sex in the white supremacy culture allows for yet another area of insight into the fundamental psychological dynamics of whites and their self-alienation regarding their physical appearance. At the most primordial level, sex can be viewed as the reproduction of one's own image, of self and of kind. According to the Color-Confrontation theory, white supremacy culture degrades the act of

sex and the process of self-reproduction because for whites both are reflective of whiteness and, in turn, their inability to produce color. This self-deficiency clearly is despised and is stated most explicitly in the religious and moral philosophies of the white supremacy culture. Yet, this manner of degrading the sexual act is not found in non-white cultures. In fact, the very opposite is the case: the act of reproduction is held in the highest esteem, as reflected in non-white arts and religious practices. The artistic and religious practices of India and Africa give strong and continuous testimony to this fact. In whites, this initial core feeling of alienation from themselves and from the act that produced their image found subsequent expression in their thought processes, religious philosophies, moral codes, social acts, and the entire social structure.

Psychiatrists and other behavioral scientists frequently use the patterns of overt behavior towards others as indications of what is felt fundamentally about the self. If hate and lack of respect are manifested towards others, hate and lack of respect are felt most often at deeper levels towards the self. Facets of other behavioral patterns within the white supremacy cultural framework support this thesis. For example, many white writers, in all areas of the world, experience and write about their profound sense of self-alienation. Additionally, some of the current political, social and behavioral activity enacted by whites against the ideology and values of the white social structure, although not spoken of in the terminology used here, can be appreciated at one level as an expression of the same kernel of alienation against whiteness. Thus, the hippies and yippies, by allowing dirt to accumulate on themselves, in one sense, are adding color to their skins. They also, by allowing their head and facial hair to proliferate, cover themselves with the only part of their bodies that has substantive color, their hair. The present frantic attempts made by whites to counter this sense of alienation take the form of free and open sexual practices and sexual orgies. Such attempts will be unsuccessful because, again, the core problem is a sense of alienation primarily from their own colorlessness, and secondarily from the social practices and structure whites have built around that psychological core over the centuries.

Racism (white supremacy), having begun as a form of self-alienation, has evolved into the most highly refined form of alienation from others as well. The Color-Confrontation theory views all of the present battlegrounds in the world as vivid reflections of this reality; the destructive and aggressive behavioral patterns being displayed by white peoples towards all non-white peoples is evidence of the inner hate, hostility and rejection they feel towards themselves and of the depth of self-alienation that has evolved from the genetic and psychological kernel of color inadequacy.

The mass inability of whites to live and attend school in the presence of non-whites is expressed in the patterns of Black and white housing and education throughout this country and the world. In terms of the Color-Confrontation thesis, this inability is seen as the apparent psychological discomfort experienced by whites in situations where, in confronting their neighbors of color, they must face their color inadequacy daily. Also, the myth of white superiority is exploded in the presence of equitable social and economic opportunity. The white personality, in the presence of color, can be stabilized only by keeping Blacks and other non-whites in obviously inferior positions. The situation of mass proximity to Blacks is intolerable to whites because Blacks are inherently more than equal. People of color always will have something highly visible that whites never can have or produce — the genetic factor of color. Always, in the presence of color, whites will feel genetically inferior.

The difficulty whites have in according non-whites socio-political and economic equality within the white supremacy structure stems neither from a moral issue nor from political or economic need, but from the fundamental sense of their own unequal condition — in regards to their numerical inadequacy and color deficiency. They can compensate for their color inadequacy only by placing themselves in socially superior positions. The color inadequacy of whiteness necessitates a social structure based on white superiority. Only tokenism can be tolerated by such a motivational psychological state, wherein the evolution of the myth of the exceptional non-white is used, again, as a defense mechanism.

The thrust towards superiority over peoples of color, the drive towards material accumulation, the drive towards a technological culture and the drive towards power are all cornerstones of the universal white supremacy culture, and they are viewed – in terms of the Color-Confrontation thesis – as responses to the core psychological sense of inadequacy. This inadequacy is not measured in terms of infant size as compared with that of the adult, as postulated by Alfred Adler. Rather, it is an inadequacy rooted in the inability to produce melanin. This genetic state is, in actuality, a variant of albinism.

The Color-Confrontation theory further postulates that whites are vulnerable to their sense of numerical inadequacy. This inadequacy is apparent in their drive to divide the vast majority of non-whites into fractional, as well as frictional, minorities. This is viewed as a fundamental behavioral response of whites to their own minority status. The white "race" has structured and manipulated their own thought processes and conceptual patterns, as well as those of the entire non-white world majority, so that the real numerical minority (whites) illusionally feels and represents itself as the world's majority, while the true numerical majority (non-whites) illusionally feels and views itself as the minority. Interestingly, the white collective, whenever discussing the question of color, never discusses any of its own particular ethnic groups as minorities, but constantly focuses on the various ethnic, language and religious groups of non-white peoples as minorities. Then great efforts are made to initiate conflict between these arbitrary groups. This is one of the key methods by which a minority can remain in power. The "divide, frictionalize and conquer" pattern, observable throughout history wherever non-whites are confronted by whites, results primarily from whites' sense of color deficiency and secondarily from their sense of numerical inadequacy. This pattern, then, is a compensatory adjustment to permit psychological comfort through dominance and control. (See Diagram I.) Similarly, the present-day frantic focus on birth control for the entire non-white world is another example of white peoples' conscious or unconscious awareness of their numerical deficiency status. There is never great emphasis on

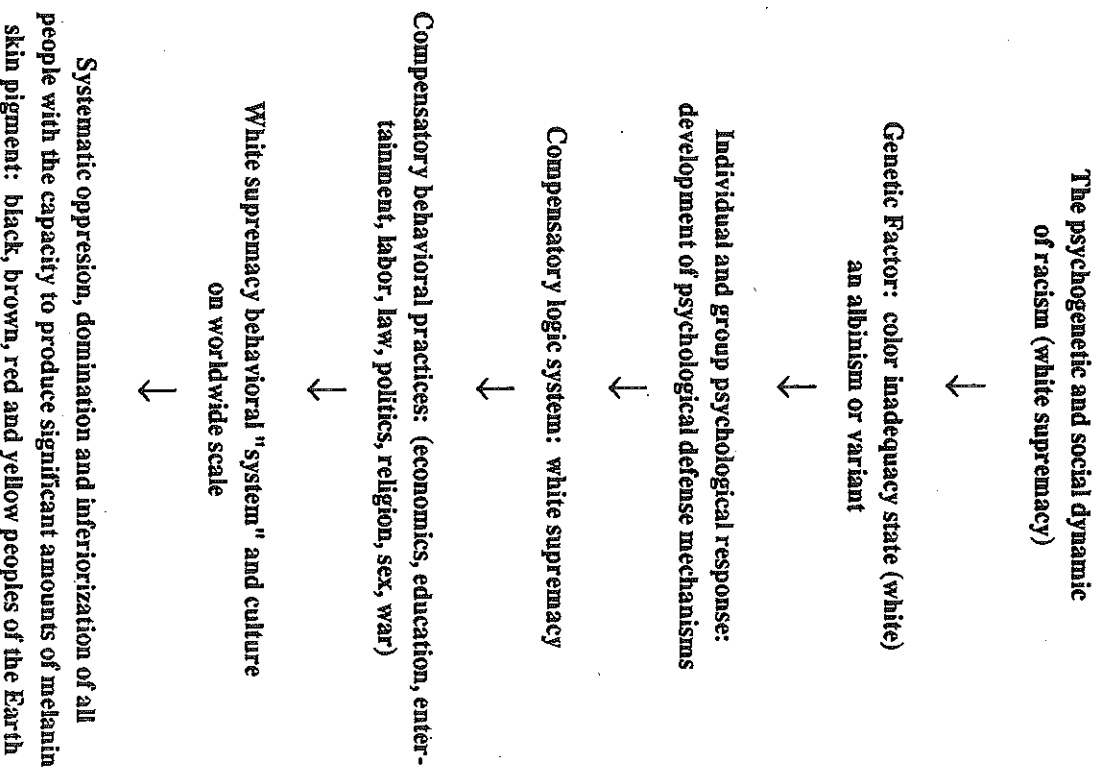


Diagram I

controlling the births of whites; in fact, there are some white governmental groups that give dividends to citizens for increased procreation.

The above are but a few examples selected from millions of large and small behavioral patterns practiced by whites in varying quantities. Yet, these examples effectively demonstrate the individual and collective neurotic need to focus on color, sex, genetics, numbers, superiority/inferiority, white supremacy and power. The Color-Confrontation theory contends that all of the above can be explained on the basis of the core psychological sense of color-deficiency and numerical inadequacy. The individual patterns of behavior that, over time, evolved into collective, social, institutional and now systemic patterns are seen as the origin of the "system of white supremacy," which operates at a universal level and is the only effective and functional racism existent in the world today. Further, racism (white supremacy), in this historical epoch, is viewed as a full-blown social contradiction and the major social dynamic superseding all others in influencing universal social practices and decisions. The Color Confrontation theory recongizes racism as one of the dominating forces determining character development, personality and formation type. Therefore, a functional definition of racism (white supremacy), is the behavioral syndrome of individual and collective color inferiority and numerical inadequacy that includes patterns of thought, speech and action, as seen in members of the white organization (race).

What then are the practical implications of this theory? Of major importance is the fact that for the first time in centuries non-white peoples throughout the world will have a rational basis for understanding the motivational nuances of individual and collective white behavior. The Color-Confrontation thesis theorizes that the majority of the world's people, non-whites, were manipulated into subordinate positions because, never having experienced such a state in terms of their own thought and logic processes and premises, they were unprepared to understand patterns of behavior predicated upon a sense of color deficiency and numerical inadequacy. This is analogous to the man with two eyes finding it difficult, if not impossible, to understand the behavioral patterns and

motivations of the congenitally one-eyed man, who always looked upon the two-eyed state with jealous antagonism and, perhaps, aggression.

Armed with such insight, knowledge and understanding, non-whites will cease to be vulnerable to the behavioral maneuverings of individual or collective whites. Non-whites will be less vulnerable to the messages of white superiority that radiate throughout the known universe and permeate world cultures, which are dominated by the white supremacy system. This understanding will have profound effects on the developing ego and self-images of all non-white children, who suffer severe damage under the white supremacy culture. Moreover, whenever they are confronted by the ideology of white superiority/supremacy, non-whites will understand that it is only a compensatory psychological adjustment for a genetic, numerical deficiency state; thus the white supremacy message can be evaluated and negated more readily. This allows non-whites to gain psychological liberation from the white ideological domination that negatively affects the total functioning of non-whites. Further, non-whites will be less vulnerable to being maneuvered into conflict with one another, thus weakening the continued domination of the white supremacy system.

Also, white peoples of the world presumably also could benefit from such an awareness of the motivation behind behaviors that often baffle them. If they are sincere in their attempts to stop the practices of white supremacy (racism), whites may be able to find methods to do so once the cause is understood. Perhaps some psychiatrist will develop a method of mass psychotherapy (i.e., therapeutic counter-racist theater) to help whites become comfortable with their color and their numbers. However, one can foresee a major problem arising from the possible difficulty of motivating whites to release the secondary gains historically derived from the racist system.

The possibility of white people accepting this analysis of the white problem in human relations is not for me to answer. I do know that the majority of the world's people are looking for an answer to the dilemma that was once called the "American Dilemma." They are looking for a change. Perhaps *The Cross Theory of Color-Confrontation* will help them

to make that change. In any event, I am reminded of a statement made by Freud's biographer, Ernst Jones: "In the last analysis, the justification of every scientific generalization is that it enables us to comprehend something that is otherwise obscure."<sup>6</sup> And, as James B. Conant has stated:

The test of a new idea is...not only its success in correlating the then-known facts but much more its success or failure in stimulating further experimentation or observation which in turn is fruitful. This dynamic aspect of science, viewed not as practical undertaking but as development of conceptual schemes, seems to me to be close to the heart of the best definition of science.<sup>7</sup>

This essay analyzes the unique universal behavioral phenomenon of white supremacy (racism), and places it in a conceptual framework and context of a theoretical formulation. The fundamentals of the dynamics inherent in the spectrum of relations cover all areas of life activity between people who classify themselves as white, and those people whom whites have classified as non-whites.

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## The Origin of Alienation, Anxiety and Narcissism (August 1980)

### *Dedication*

This essay is dedicated to Genevieve Ekete, a Nigerian journalist who, because of the profound pain of *alienation*, took her life on June 25, 1978 while residing in the United States of America. The world lost a brilliant mind and a generous person. Shortly before her death she stated, "My superstructure is solid. I need a formidable foundation..." This essay is my contribution to our understanding of the destructive dynamic of alienation.

Psychiatry as a discipline is floundering on its previously established conceptual and theoretical foundation imported from 19th century Europe. My continuing question to myself as a late 20th century precautionary in general and child psychiatry, practicing in the power capital of the world (Washington, D.C.) is, "Can a greater understanding be achieved in the study of human behavior as it is organized and manifested in the world's dominant power system/culture?"

My answer is affirmative. We can derive an ever increasing level of order out of the existing chaos, a diagnostic and statistical manual that gets heavier and wordier with each effort. Thereby, we can enhance our diagnostic and treatment skills and increase the possibility of prevention, allowing us to serve a suffering humanity better.

In *Have Astronomers Found God?*, Robert Jastrow states, "There is a kind of religion in science; it is the religion of a person who believes there