

# The Races and Solution

Opinion

Volume 4 Issue 3 - 2015

**Dr. Samuel A Nigro M.D.\***

Retired, Assistant Clinical Professor Psychiatry, Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine, USA

\*Corresponding author: Dr. Samuel A Nigro M.D, Retired, Assistant Clinical Professor Psychiatry, Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine, 2517 Guilford Road, Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44118, USA, Tel: 216 932-0575; Email: sam@docnigro.com

Received: October 15, 2015 | Published: November 24, 2015

Throughout this book I refer to my family as Negroes. This was the term I grew up with, and I still think its the best description. As a look at any of the Madden family will tell you, we're no more "black" than we are "white." And I think we're too far from Africa, and of mixed blood for too many generations, to be Afro- (or African-) American.

"Negro," "colored" and "person of color" were the terms of respect in my time and the times of my ancestors. And I have used them as such in this book. As a boy, growing up in the era of Jim Crow, I can't begin to tell you what an insult it was to call a Negro, especially another Negro, "black." We all knew what it was short for: "black nigger." There wasn't a worst thing you could say.

The above was stated by T.O. Madden, Jr. in his book *We Were Always Free: The Maddens of Culpepper County, Virginia: A 200 Year Family History* (New York: Vintage Book. 1993). The Madden family did it all — and they did it during the worst of times — not only in Jim Crow days but in days of slavery too. Who is to tell T.O. Madden, Jr. that he is wrong?

After about 450 years in the world and almost 225 years in the United States, black-white relations ought to have been solved by now. In some ways, great strides have been made and communication is open for the most part. But an abyss is not only still present but growing. No tangible viable solution seems to be forthcoming. And as solutions, all this observer sees is "more of the same."

### What is all this Race Stuff Anyway?

Those who talk about race generally do not know what race is. When people think they are talking about race, they usually are talking about color or slavery, which is to miss the forest for the trees and therefore get nowhere in understanding. A brief course (Comp-ton's Interactive Encyclopedia) on race follows:

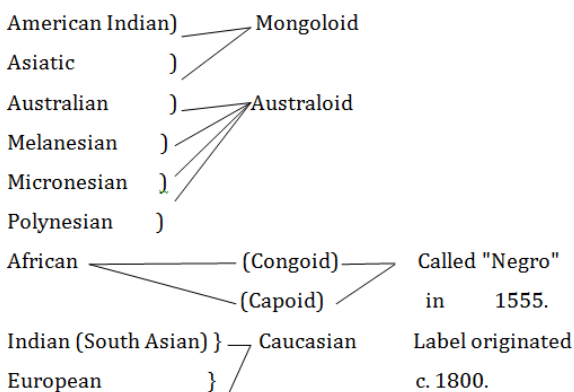
#### The Nine Broadest

##### Historical

##### The Five

##### Geographic Races

##### Generic Races



The above racial terms are valid and accurate for contemporary use. Interestingly enough, there is no color mentioned. And, simple enough, almost everyone can trace back to his geohistorical and generic racial origin. However, the significance of one's placement into any of these races is generally limited to a few genetically-inherited traits in teeth, blood, bone, hair, and skin. But even those differences are not absolute and almost always overlap in one way or another.

However, as far as *living* goes, these hereditary link-ages are secondary and subordinate to the family and society into which one has been born. That is, *how one lives* is more important than *hereditary composition* when studying the differences between the races. It is the "luck of birth" and/or family life into which one has been raised that determines almost everything rather than one's geohistorical or generic racial back-ground.

Prior to 1500, people born into any of the before mentioned races found themselves fairly well separated and confined to their own racial group. This resulted in each race developing social, political and economic inbreeding to cope with their specific environment, the available resources, God, self, and others. These social, psychological and cultural ways of relating provide the genuinely human component to each race, and the presence of this human component is what is important not only to humanity but to the ability to adapt to contacts with other races. Even though a case can be made that the ways of relating are merely matters of habit and reinforcement which, with exposure to others, can be changed, it is the way of relating that determines events. The cultural spheres dwarf the biological, even in race.

Geographically separated and culturally endogamous, the beneficial ways of relating for each listed race became relatively fixed and reflective of each race's successful adaptive thinking style. Furthermore, the peoples involved tended to ally politically into allegiances and relationships resulting in different types of governing methods varying from tribe to nation state peculiar to each setting. And because of geographic separation, each race had little experience with others unlike themselves.

However, with Christopher Columbus and improved seafaring developed by Caucasians, increasing contact occurred between geographically separated races. With this increased contact, confused efforts began as those races engaged and related for the first time in quantity in the years after Columbus proved one would not sail off the edge of the world. No longer afraid, Caucasians were going to sail everywhere and begin to break down geographic barriers between races. Cultural endogamy was going to end.

At bottom, heady in their superiority of science and thinking levels because of the power of western civilization (self-reflection, linear rather than circular thinking, libraries, reasoned emotiveness, emphasis on virtue and low tolerance for its lack), Europeans were still confused about, and very impatient with, what they perceived to be inferior (lesser developed) races if only in so far as they could not sail as well... and who discovered whom? Basically, it was all too new. The confused and tense uncertainty we sometimes feel today in relating to people looking different is minuscule to what occurred in the sixteenth century, when different races first began to interact in large numbers. No one knew what "they" (the discovered or the discoverers) were.

Witness the first recorded use of the word "Negro" in 1555: "They are not accustomed to eat such meats as doo the Ethiopians or Negroes" (from Oxford Dictionary). The bewilderment of finding such different people did not stop the Europeans from trying in their ignorance to even "wash" the Negro (Oxford Dictionary) simplistically believing that they could be made more like Europeans. Failing that, the word "Negro" stuck and it was a good word because it identified those human beings having genetically-based thicker melanin layers with geographic roots to Africa.

The word "Caucasian" was coined in the early 1800s by an anthropologist who erroneously claimed all "white" people derived from Caucasus Mountain area. He applied the term to a swath of peoples from Scandinavia across Europe through the Middle East and Northern Africa concluding with the Indian subcontinent. Thus "Caucasian" was equivalent to "Indo-European."

With that background, the following are the four racial types relevant to all today. Each person can figure out his own race in a real way and draw his own conclusion as to what is important.

1. Primary Racial Type (current geographic origin) is the birth origin and citizenship of the person (ethnicity from ethnos, Greek meaning "nation"). Examples are Nigerian, American, Italian, Ethiopian, Egyptian, Japanese, et cetera. The national cultural spheres dwarf the biological. Anyone born and raised primarily in America upon return to Africa, Italy or any preferred country would be called "American" before anything else regardless of observable genetic traits or claims.
2. Secondary Racial Type is the remote genetically based national linkage which can be any of the primary nations. It is a single, double or multiple qualification of one's primary geographic origin. Examples are: Italian-American, American-Vietnamese, Nigerian-American, English-South African, Irish-Tanzanian, etcetera.
3. Tertiary Racial Type is one's generic and/or geohistorical

genetically-based origin which can be any of the five major generic or nine geohistorical races already mentioned. This has a special significance if the primary or secondary national origins and roots are not known. Examples are European-American, Asian-American, Mongoloid-American, Caucasian-American and African-American. Negro-American is also appropriate because Congoid and Capoid designations are so blurred as to be obsolete.

4. Quaternary Racial Type is the biological hereditary description which is the use of biological characteristics for personal identification. Examples are blue eyed, black haired, brown skinned, et cetera. To use these terms in a broad way other than specific personal identification is actually to give them power which they do not deserve and is to achieve a racist type of designation, the primary examples of which are "black" and "white" as referring to groups. Biological descriptions are irrelevant except for personal description. Indeed, in all anthropology there is no rational use of any descriptive term in reference to race as a race itself. There is no "white" race. There is no "black" race. The use of color or other biological designation in substitution for race perpetuates unnatural and destructive distinctions possibly excluding one from being a part of his cultural race and country. And any society allowing such to occur will never provide the transcendental substance needed to sustain and advance.

What all this race stuff is about is essentially a matter of cultural understanding and recognition of the differences in mankind's past as part of variations within a *single* biological species. Therefore, biology is irrelevant even when present as far as human relationships go. A genuine understanding of race is to know man's unity and observed diversity, and this is a cultural expectation of oneness rather than a biological commitment to division. The "inbreeding" is now global. There is *one* human family.

### Color

Color is like breathing, i.e., breathing is so natural that if you are aware of it, you are probably having difficulty and something is wrong. In medicine, difficulty of breathing is called "dyspnea." Perhaps being aware of color should be called "dyschromia." Like breathing, if you are aware of color, you are probably having difficulty.

Identifying a person by color simplifies and minimizes the person. Identifying a person by color means you do not know race, country or citizenship. Identifying by color means you do not know who you are. How do you BE black or BE brown or BE white or BE green or BE gold? How do you act like a color? Color fools you into thinking you ARE your color. Plain color identification is usually a simple monosyllable which dulls awareness. Color is immediate partisanship. Color is a demand, a resentment and a coercion. Color is a self-defeating focus on what is supposed to be ignored. Color is anti-diversity! Color does not belong to any one group anyway. Color is meaningless and an interference to positive relating. Color demonizes those unlike. Color makes people wear sheets, sometimes white and sometimes multicolored, and sheets

are for cowards. Color is entirely irrational, so much so that it cannot be argued with, so it drives everybody crazy. And finally, in the academic world of anthropology and race, color is an adjective of little significance and rarely used. Focus on color carries with it an insurmountable self-segregation. Focus on color prevents the uniting of humanity! It is an internal self-Apartheid! Focus on color places value on it over the mind, over a sense of justice, over fairness. Color becomes more important than impartiality, honesty, crime and grief. The improper focus on color also creates a void in the thinking process and permits exclusion from full participation in humanity. At worst it is a wild sword cleaving humanity by the mere use of the color word. Identification by color creates a man without a country, without geography, without culture, and even without race! Color is a color.

The color focus is rarely true. Most people referred to as "black" are not black ninety percent of the time. The same applies to "white," i.e., white does not apply to ninety-nine percent of Caucasians who actually have more color than just plain white.

Color applied descriptively to an individual cannot carry a negative or positive connotation. But when applied to a group, the subliminal understanding is different. No group professing "white" designations can be seen but anything but racist. And the same is true for "black" or "brown" or "yellow" or "red." True equality demands it be true, and equality demands color and any other superficial physical characteristic be treated the same — as irrelevant — and rejected as divisive because it will be a source of fraudulent abusive power for those willing to use color or any physical characteristic in such a way.

In the final analysis, color, as any emphasized physical characteristic is demeaning, diminishing, dehumanizing and insulting. Color is unworthy of group use in a modern, democratic, civilized society in which diverse people are trying to live together. There can be no trust with "my color right or wrong," which is nothing less than racism. If it ever had a use, it is not needed anymore. People must live a culture, not a color.

### Negro Americans of The Past

While the word "Negro" may be in current disfavor, this status is unjust and unfair. To deny historically-identified Negroes is to lose almost all of African-American history and much of African history itself.

The word "Negro" has been used since 1555, just as the word "Caucasian" has been used since the early 1800s. In speaking, writing and recorded communications, the word was commonly used by Abraham Lincoln, Frederick Douglas, John Brown, Herman Melville, William Longfellow, Henry Thoreau, William Lloyd Garrison, Anna Thomas Jeanes, Martin Luther King, Jr., Marcus Garvey, Carter Woodson, Benjamin Quarles, and Dorothy Heicht, among others.

Historically there were also some effective and forceful Negro groups: the Negro Baseball League, United Negro College Fund, the Negro Rural School Fund, United Negro Improvement Association of Marcus Garvey and his magazine *The Negro World*, The Division of Negro Affairs under Franklin Roosevelt's presidency, *The Journal of Negro History*,

The Association for Study of Negro Life and History, *The Negro-American*. The National Negro Achievement Day, and The National Council of Negro Women, to name a few. The history of African-Americans and the four centuries of the use of the word "Negro" is undeniable. To repudiate the word is to repudiate all the decent history and the struggle itself.

The comparison between black (or brown) and Negro needs to be made, just like a comparison can be made to whatever or to any color said to be equivalent to one's personhood. Black (or brown) is a darker pigment, while Negro is genetically darker pigmented human being. Black (or brown) is an adjective and a modifier, while Negro is an identity, an existence, a substance. Black (or brown) is merely a wavelength in physics dependent on observers, while a Negro is personal individual conscious-of-consciousness capable creature. Black (or brown) is something fragmented from full humanity — it is nonhuman — it is even a nonviable object, while a Negro is a member of the human species. Black (or brown) is passive, without choice, unless activated by an external mover: in contrast, a Negro is a free individual capable of choosing properly. Black is a static, neutral entity without potential to ascend, while a Negro is able to ascend economically, socially and spiritually. And a comparable analysis can be made about any physical characteristic claimed to be a Quaternary Racial Type.

In the past, Negroes knew that white as a color was an obstacle as much as black as a color is an obstacle today to people getting along better together. The great Negroes of the past repudiated the concept that color was important, because they were living how wrong it was for a population, primarily European-Americans, so imbued with white color that it prevented them from reaching out in total humanity. The great Negroes must have known that it was more important to be Negro than black and in the long run they did teach some Europeans that it was more important to be Caucasian than white. For the great Negroes of the past, it was more important to try to be fully human than anything. Thus the Negro legacy is nothing less than human beingness. Without question, Negroes have at least made it easier for all the other geohistorical races to be seen as human beings too. Negroes blazed the trail!

The Negro success story of the humanization of mankind is not finished. In fact, the effort has been slowed by the fact that many Negroes — today have lost the wisdom of the past. They have rejected their teachers. Instead of revering "Negro," they have replaced it with "black" thereby repeating what "whites" had already tried. It is both sad and amazing that instead of following Negroes freeing mankind from confused Caucasians using "white," many current "blacks" imitate those "whites" and they repeat malignant history once again but the colors are reversed.

### The Anti-Negro Movement — The Suicide of Identity

What happened to the word "Negro"? The anti-Negro movement appears to have originated from James Baldwin's basic premise that all civil rights problems came from the insecurity of white men who needed a "Negro" to whom he could feel superior. Baldwin offered no evidence or documentation, just provocative rhetoric ignoring any alternative

hypotheses. Still, logic demands that *he who asserts must prove*, and Baldwin never proved anything except he made “Negro” to be a bad word as if no white man could feel superior to a Negro because there now no longer were any Negroes around.

The negative aspects of the word “Negro” can be reduced to an anti-historical contemporary effort to acquire manipulative power over all Negroes by depriving them of an accurate understanding of their humanity and its potential for fullness and oneness with all humanity. When “Negro” was removed, so was the concept of being a human being first. A human being who did not divide but wittingly or unwittingly was reaching out to all humanity.

The legacy of Baldwin’s destruction of “Negro” and its replacement by the color “black” was counterproductive. And four hundred years of Negro history was replaced by a monosyllable which is neither human nor a race. And, at the same time, biology replaced culture preventing progressive “natural” selection at the social level, because youth was to be taught that being “black (or brown),” whatever that meant, was more important than adapting to one’s American race — truly a suicide of identity.

### Rapprochement

Some people of every race, secure in their humanity, have been positively heroic in integration and equal opportunity efforts. No decent person can deny that many have been struggling with civil rights issues together for the good of all humanity. Common human beingness is recognized and supported above any delimiting factor.

It should be obvious to all that we must abandon color. WE MUST ABANDON COLOR. Liesf.% are major changes. The challenge is to demonstrate the errors and the alternatives. It is a matter of realizing that society is on the wrong road, to which the appropriate response is to backtrack and try a different direction: Negro, not black. Caucasian, not white. Colors have been tried and colors have been seen and they do not work. Color makes matters worse, and it leaves issues thoughtlessly simplistic. And how can color be ignored like it is supposed to be, if it is always being talked about?

Despite some Negroes preferring “black” or even

some Caucasians preferring -white- the challenge is to do what is right. because color for its own sake ruins everything and means nothing. It is a contrived racism in which black, white or any other color delimits mankind. Only virtues. transcendental existence. and total human beingness should be emphasized. Anyone accentuating their color ought to be avoided or better yet. corrected gently to be more human than their color. First. look at their skin and refuse to call anyone “black” unless they really are black. In like manner, refuse to call anyone “white” unless they really are white.

The question is how to go beyond oneself, to go beyond one’s delimiting characteristics in order to be at one with mankind, to embrace it all, for all, at all times.

Common human beingness is the only way to go. And in the United States, the first step is to establish “American” as a primary racial type, because it is!

### Let Us Go Back

**Going back** is not to return to what James Baldwin said it was. In the first place. it was not what he said it was. Insulting . and denigrating the great zeroes of the past is wrong. Going back is to find a glorious humanity. abused and mistreated. coping courageously in full personhood as best as possible given the circumstances. Negroes came out of or were forced out of Africa to embrace the world. Only Negroes can teach us to live peacefully together. Such indeed will be the completion of the legacy of the great Negroes of the past who were able to go beyond superficial attributes which confine and restrict. By a common language of real race (not color) people can be joined with participatory action and not by passive victimhood or hostile shakedowns of different others.

Some say “black:” we must say “Negro.” Some say “white:” we must say “Caucasian.” Some say “war:- we must say “peace.” Some say “alone:” we must say “together.” Some say “color:” we must say “race” — real race — the “human race” and in America, the American race.