Reducing Inequalities

Doing Anti-Racism: Toward an Egalitarian American Society

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Introduction

One day, a few months ago, Sharon Rush's nine-year-old daughter sat down and offered to help her think about long-term solutions for U.S. racism. Mary, who is African American, took a few pieces of paper and wrote her own "Word to the World." Basically, it was her promise to end racism simply by living a life of joy and loving all people. In her youthful handwriting she asserts, "All you need to remember is that no matter if you're black or white, Asian or American, boy or girl, you are just as special as any one else in the world." In her nine-year-old wisdom, she knows she may not be able to end racism during her lifetime, but is committed to the struggle. She adds: "I could die but I still would reach my goal, I would die and my spirit would go into the right person, and if they didn't reach it before they died, then their spirit would go into someone else. That would go on and on and on until my goal was reached" (Rush, forthcoming).

Mary's solution to the problem of racism is activist, future-oriented, and deeply spiritual. Her ringing words frame much of our assessment of the likelihood and character of an ideal nonracist egalitarian society, as well as of the ways to move toward it. We see in these wise words recognition of both the individual and the structural dimensions of modern racism, as well as of the long-term strategies necessary to its eradication. This essay draws on Mary's and our own insights to advance tactics for constructing the United States as a nonracist society.

We argue that racism is much more than a set of racial prejudices and propensities held by a few individuals or extremists. Now nearly four centuries old, racism is a complex and embedded *system* of oppression that encompasses several major dimensions. In the North American case, this system of racism was originally created by whites, beginning in the seventeenth century, and has since that time encompassed at least four major dimensions: the white attitudes, emotions, practices, and institutions that are integral to the long-term domination of Americans of color. Central to this domination are the well-institutionalized practices of whites that have for centuries routinely denied black Americans and other Americans of color the dignity, opportunities, positions, and privileges generally available to most whites of all backgrounds (Feagin and Vera 1995). Given this comprehensive definition, it is clear that no black American or other American of color can be racist in the deepest sense of this concept, for they are not the beneficiaries of the extensive structure of white privileges and power that cut across all major institutions. Americans of color can collude to some degree in white racism, and they can express prejudices toward whites on occasion. Yet they are mostly the targets of discrimination and oppression in this system of white-determined racism, with no say whatsoever in its origins and little say in its routine maintenance.

Here we focus on the case of white-on-black oppression for two reasons. First, the U.S. ideology of racial classifications is grounded in a system of hierarchy and privilege maintenance originally designed to legitimate the subordination of African Americans. "Race," as we know it, is not merely an account of the color of one's skin or ancestry but has been embedded in the social, economic, and political structure of northern Europe and the United States for centuries. This racist system placed Europeans, including the American colonizers, at the top of a hierarchical chain of human evolution largely because they had the power to control resources and designed the system. Africans, centrally known to Europeans at that time as slaves, were placed at the bottom. Thus began a rationale that legitimates as "natural" or "divine" the subordination of Africans, African Americans, and other people of color, while greatly privileging those whose skin is socially defined as "white."

Second, this racial typology and configuration have endured the longest of all systems of racialized oppression—indeed, now for at least

four centuries. Its current reality can be seen in modern cultural representations and negative stereotypes found in most U.S. settings. Although more whites than ever reject old-fashioned racist beliefs in response to brief questions in opinion surveys (Thernstrom and Thernstrom 1997), several studies using in-depth interviews show that such survey results are inaccurate accounts that gloss over the deep-seated racist sentiments held by most whites (Carr 1997; Bonilla-Silva and Forman, forthcoming). Likewise, recent psychological studies on racial typing find that most whites associate pictures of other whites with mostly positive characteristics and pictures of African Americans with mostly negative characteristics; the studies conclude that racism runs deeply at an unconscious level (Greenwald, McGhee, and Schwartz 1998; Kawakami, Dion, and Dovidio 1998). Thus, modest changes in public policies, shifts in some rules for interracial interaction, and more liberal attitudes held by whites may, indeed, be symptomatic of changes in U.S. racial relations in recent decades. Yet everyday discrimination and subtle or covert racial attitudes continue to be very much a part of the U.S. scene.

In the final section of this article we go beyond analysis of the configuration of modern racism to advance strategies for a utopian nonracist society: the construction of a new sociopolitical foundation; the education and re-socialization necessary for a nonracist society; and the personal engagement necessary for "doing" anti-racism. Since white racism is a core element in the foundation of U.S. society, we propose that a nonracist society must begin with the establishment of a new sociopolitical structure based the full implementation of the principle of representative government. We call for a new political covenant, which requires a new constitutional convention. We also call for a massive campaign of re-education that includes all sources of socialization. Finally, we call for individuals, especially white individuals, to reject current racist myths by actively critiquing their own prejudices and working to remove racist ideologies and practices from modern social, political, and economic landscapes. Our vision is to create a society where respect for humanity, rather than racial hierarchy, is the social foundation.

Much of our argument targets white Americans because they are also the ones who so centrally benefit from the persisting racist system. As a group, whites have significant wealth, power, and privilege derives from centuries of oppression of African Americans and other Americans of color. Although not all whites have direct ancestral links to the whites who founded the nation in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, most do benefit directly from great privileges still afforded to white skin in this country, not the least of which are greater access to social resources and a longer life expectancy (Feagin, forthcoming). Today, it is whites—and disproportionately white men—who control 90–100 percent of the positions of power in all major U.S. institutions (Dye 1986: 190–205). Thus, it is they who have the most power to do good or ill for the society. Without great, continuing, and organized pressure on these powerful whites, there will likely be no change in this racist society.

Creating Myths of "Race" and the Maintenance of White Privilege

Modern conceptualizations of race do not stem from hard scientific evidence of genetic differences, an evolutionary hierarchy, or some "natural" order. Racial classifications are based largely on European folk knowledge. With the development of large ships and other seagoing technologies, Europeans began to circumnavigate the world in the fifteenth century. Some of their first contacts with people of color, most specifically with Africans, involved slave-trade interactions. The first categorizations of humans into distinct "race" categories grew out of this brutal system of exploitative social relations, and reflected many cultural myths and inaccuracies about the cultural and biological differences between Europeans and Africans. For example, Johann Blumenbach, a German scholar, established the first developed typology of "race" in the late 1700s, just as slavery was becoming more central to the economies of the United States and major European nations. He was the first to refer to white Europeans as "Caucasians." This terminology stemmed from Blumenbach's fascination with Europeans in the Caucasus Mountains of Russia, whom he viewed as the peak of human evolution and therefore as biologically superior (Feagin and Feagin 1999).

The new typology of race placed the Caucasians at the top of what was seen as a "natural" hierarchy, with Asians, Africans, and other non-European peoples much lower on the ladder. The scheme was embraced widely

through the next century and a half—well into the middle of the twentieth century. This hierarchical scheme was primarily a means to legitimate European systems of slavery and colonization, where skin color was accepted as a marker for one's location in the "natural" order. Studies of colonization (Cox 1948) show that hegemonic groups generally create strong ideologies to legitimate their dominance over others, often by exaggerating physical and cultural differences.

The new sciences of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were commonly used to legitimate the exaggeration of differences and the new racial hierarchies. Scientific racism and eugenics were developed to further explain social relations as a "natural order." Influential European and American writers associated physical characteristics such as nose shape, skin color, and hair texture and cultural practices to significant regressions in intelligence, civilization, and social evolution. Africans were viewed as so low on the racial typology that they were often described as subhuman. When viewed from this perspective, it is not surprising that the new system of racial classification, based on pseudo-scientific evidence of biological and cultural inferiority, was a key factor in legitimizing and rationalizing the slave colonies in the Americas (Feagin and Feagin 1999). Slavery was accepted and especially encouraged by powerful white landowners even while the United States was fighting for its establishment as an independent country under the ideology of democracy and freedom from English tyranny. It is also not surprising that this scientific racism was later invoked to legitimate the domination and extermination of Jews and Gypsies in Nazi Germany, or that genetic and ethnic inferiority are still cited as rationales for more recent attempts at "ethnic cleansing" in several European countries.

What is significant about the development and use of scientific racism is that within a century, science was systematically refuting it by demonstrating the irrationality of biological and genetic arguments linked to racial categorization schemes (Diamond 1994). Nonetheless, the application of Darwinist explanations of a "natural order" to social relations and the accent on a racialized hierarchy of intelligence are still propagated by conservative social scientists, white supremacy groups, white politicians, and much of the white public. This line of arguing often receives much financial and public support because the underlying racist mythologies are linked to specific social, economic, and political agendas. The *social* use of notions of racial hierarchy remains firmly rooted in the foundation of American racial relations (Davis 1991).

These rules of skin color and ancestry do not continue to apply for all groups who were once defined as physically and mentally inferior. Some European immigrants, such as the Irish and Italians, were once viewed as inferior "races" by Anglo-Protestant Americans and were not considered "white," despite their European origins. The definition of whiteness was only gradually expanded to include the once-despised Irish and Italians, as the presence and power of these ethnic groups increased in U.S. cities (Feagin and Feagin 1999; Ignatiev 1995). New ideologies accompanied the expansion of whiteness to include these immigrants, and public perceptions of their "inferior" racial status largely disappeared from the social and political landscape of American society. Thus, despite the "scientific" explanations of racial hierarchy and the entrenchment of race within the social structures, social definitions of "race" can and do change. They are temporary constructions, shaped in social and political struggles in particular times and societies, that can even disappear with shifts in the political and social interests of the dominant groups. Clearly, one result of the nonracist, egalitarian society we project below is an eradication of race categorizing. Since racial categories are specific to a particular racist society, a nonracist society will be a "post-race society," where the concept of a rigid hierarchy of races will not be scientifically or socially meaningful. In the nonracist society, liberated people will see only a human race.

One might argue that Americans, particularly white Americans, have come far from the racist science and social relations of the nineteenth century to new social and economic advances and arrangements. However, the racist ideologies, prejudices, and stereotypes about African Americans, as well as about other Americans of color and whites, continue to underlie the construction of everyday knowledge and social reality among many whites. This racist framework is so much a part of the structure of social and institutional relations in the United States that it is often rendered invisible, with overt displays of white racial consciousness generally pushed to the margins of social acceptability. As we see it, the construction of a true

nonracist society is impossible without the destruction of racist ideologies and beliefs that privilege whiteness through the demonization of blackness.

Continuing Stereotypes, Prejudice, and Discrimination

The modern media-driven view of racism is that it is located only in the prejudiced attitudes and actions of political extremists, such as Ku Klux Klan members and Skinheads. While the average white citizen of the Jim and Jane Crow eras would readily admit racist beliefs, it is now taboo for most whites openly to endorse crude displays of anti-black racism. Some white analysts even see the racist past as fading entirely from view; therefore, they argue that "as new generations of whites are born and raised, the memories of Jim Crow will fade, along with the guilt" (Shepard 1999).

Much evidence runs counter to the notion of the United States as a nonracist society, as reflected in the minds and actions of new generations. A significant number of white youth remain openly racist. One survey of the Class of 2000 found that a quarter of high-school students admitted making blatantly racist comments and also that the proportion disapproving of interracial dating was significant, and even greater than the proportion among older Americans (Shepard 1999). Testimonies about racial profiling and harassment of African-American motorists—the "Driving While Black" phenomenon—show us that negative racial stereotypes are fundamental elements in the present-day practices of many police departments (Feagin and Vera 1995). A recent study sponsored by the Russell Sage Foundation and Harvard University found that negative racial stereotypes are tools that many employers use consciously to construct and operate their businesses in the 1990s. Not only were African-American workers perceived by white employers as the least desirable job candidates among all groups in this study, most of the interviewed employers expressed skepticism and reluctance toward the notion of locating businesses in neighborhoods with high concentrations of minority residents. Similar attitudes were revealed among white homeowners, who voiced fear and hostility to the idea of African Americans as neighbors (Russell Sage Foundation 1999). Add to such findings the current white backlash against affirmative action programs in employment and institutions of higher learning, the rise of participation in anti-black hate groups among white youth, the continued marginalization of African Americans in mainstream media, and the deep-rooted racist sentiments among whites not revealed in superficial opinion surveys, and one quickly comes to a less-than-optimistic view of racism in the United States today (for evidence, see Carr 1997; Feagin and Vera 1995; Bonilla-Silva and Forman, forthcoming).

Even whites who are reasonably educated about racism seldom understand its pernicious and pervasive impact. We can take an example from our experience. Sharon Rush, a white professor, has seen this in her experience with raising her daughter Mary. Rush began to truly see racism only after becoming the mother of a black daughter and witnessing her mistreatment, often by apparently well-intentioned whites. White privilege sometimes operates in subtle ways: At Mary's elementary school the student-of-the-week always seemed to be white, leading the very talented young (then six years old) Mary to conclude that, "You have to be white to get that." At other times the white privilege was manifested overtly and immediately. One day, a white woman sitting near Rush and her daughter in an airport could not find her purse. After a brief search, the woman loudly and confidently exclaimed, "I bet that black kid took it," pointing at the innocent six-year-old doing ballet twirls in the waiting area. Everyone else in the area was white and their whiteness excused them from being viewed as criminals. By process of elimination and consistent with the prevailing stereotype, the woman deduced that the only black person had to be the criminal.

These accounts of Mary's interracial interactions signal a common finding in the social science literature: Racial stereotyping, and discrimination based on it, remains widespread in U.S. society. The power of racist stereotyping can be seen in housing, health care, education, employment, politics, police practices, and even routine interactions between whites and the racial others on public streets (Brown and Kennelly 1999; Johnson 1999; Feagin and Sikes 1994; Essed 1991). Even children are not immune to the stigma of everyday racism.

What factors contribute to the continued racism revealed by in-depth interview studies and ethnographic studies of whites, many of whom publicly express nonracist sentiments? Gordon Allport (1958) defined prejudice as an

"antipathy based on faulty generalization." To a significant degree, prejudice is based on inaccurate information about or ignorance of another group. Racist prejudices are often based on information gleaned from the perpetuation of stereotypical information that is sketchy at best and subject to much distortion (Lippman 1922). Racist stereotypes can be dismantled only in the face of knowledge claims that provide strong and compelling counter-evidence. Since the dominant group has the means and power to construct and perpetuate, through control of the media and other outlets, the knowledge claims that legitimate their privileged positions, the deconstruction of inaccuracies about race and legitimization of nonracist knowledge claims have not yet penetrated the central educational mechanisms of this society.

Herbert Blumer (1958) argued that racial prejudice and stereotyping are more than a matter of negative feelings possessed by members of one group for another, for they are rooted in power relations and group positions. He noted that a high priority in dominant groups is to create ideologies and images that legitimate privilege and rationalize their discriminatory behavior. Clearly, dominated groups do not have the same power to set the terms of categorization, and are viewed by those who dominate in terms of stereotypical representations (Moscovici 1981). The biological and social myths about African Americans and other people of color make negative racist stereotypes ready tools for maintaining status and privilege, as in the account above. Similarly, Fiske (1993) shows that stereotyping and discrimination are mutually reinforcing means through which dominant groups maintain power and privilege.

The racialized thinking and emotions of the white-racist system are much more than a matter of how whites view people of color. They are also about—and perhaps are principally about—how whites see *themselves* as individuals and a racial group (Gallagher 1999). Most whites' sense of themselves is strongly positive: Whites as a group are thought to be highly civilized, racially superior, hardworking, intelligent, freedom-loving, honest, and highly virtuous, as illustrated in a previously mentioned study of racial typing (Greenwald, McGhee, and Schwartz 1998). This virtue justifies white privilege and power. Out-groups of color are viewed as less than virtuous, even as subhuman, and thus deserving of their many social disadvantages. This view of the virtues of whiteness has come down now over 15 generations of whites—from leaders like Thomas Jefferson and George Washington, and rank-and-file whites in the distant past, to most whites, both leaders and the rank and file, in the present day (see Takaki 1990).

Ideas about whiteness and about racial others are formed by the informal and tacit lessons whites learn as children at home and school and as adults who absorb messages from the media and socialize with relatives and friends. Take this comment from an interview with a white businessperson of substantial means: He was asked a hypothetical question about how he would feel about his adult child dating a black person. He replied: "I'd be sick to my stomach. I would feel like, that I failed along the way. . . . I'd feel like I probably failed as a father, if that was to happen. . . . It would truly be a problem in my family because I could never handle that, and I don't know what would happen because I couldn't handle that, ever" (Feagin and Vera 1995: 149). Here we see some important aspects of white racism in modern-day America. We see its emotional side, the sick-to-the-stomach reaction many whites have when they must focus on white-on-black matters. We also see here how images of the racial other are closely linked to images of oneself, in this case a linkage between images of being white and of being a father. Perhaps even more important, we observe the way in which racist thought and feelings run in *families*.

Pettigrew (1975) contends that whites make the ultimate attribution error in their perceptions of African Americans. This involves routinely blaming African Americans for all their perceived failures, also discounting the many African-American successes by attributing the latter to luck or unfair advantages rather than to intelligence and hard work. Sears (1988) and McConahay (1986) agree, arguing that most whites believe that serious anti-black discrimination does not exist in the United States today and view outspoken African Americans as making illegitimate demands for social change. For that reason, these whites resist the large-scale changes necessary for racial integration of U.S. society. Bobo (1988) discusses this as an ideology of "bounded racial change," where whites' support for changes in discrimination ends when such changes seriously endanger their own standard of living. Whites actively and consciously

work to preserve their privileged status by continuing to embrace aspects of the old racist ideology and stereotypes, which is coupled with denials of societal racism.

In recent years, several scholars (Feagin and Vera 1995; Gallagher 1995; Frankenberg 1993) have suggested that most white Americans possess a racial consciousness that consists of not just a few prejudices and stereotypes but a broader structure that organizes information about whites and people of color. A sense of white racial superiority, overt or unconscious, grows out of a process in which whites grow up with power over people of color. The social relations of African Americans and whites have been more or less segregated since the slave trade was established. The destruction and deconstruction of this pattern was among the greatest hopes of abolitionists and de-segregationists. Nevertheless, patterns of racial segregation in many facets of American life continue to be a social reality, including neighborhoods, workplaces, churches, many schools, and most classrooms. It is obvious from the racial demography of most cities that most African Americans, on the average, have regular contact with many more whites than whites have with blacks at work, in schools, and in shopping malls (Feagin and Sikes 1994). Such racial isolation does not allow whites to move beyond negative generalizations and stereotypes because they have little knowledge that disputes these claims.

The many costs of racism for its targets are often severe and rarely delineated (Feagin and Sikes 1994; Feagin, forthcoming). Those who are racially oppressed are routinely wounded, hurt, and hampered. Being constructed as black means never being able to escape thinking about race. Negotiating one's way through the range of daily indignities that occur is difficult, mentally exhausting, and often physically dangerous. Sadly enough, black children and other children of color know much more about this than do the misguidedly optimistic white analysts, such as the aforementioned Thernstroms (1997), for children of color must experience and counter racism on a regular basis.

To this end, Sharon Rush, the white adoptive mother of Mary, was preparing for the day when she and Mary would speak of racism. She worked diligently to fortify Mary's self-esteem and to build up her confidence so that she can withstand the racist assaults. Sharon thought she had years to prepare for their talk. However, one evening when Mary was just seven years old, she asked, "Mom, is it true that when people get too close to the sun their skin gets darker?" Sharon said, "Yes, that's true," trying to remember her biology. With her head held low, Mary responded, "Well, if that's true, then I'm going to fly to the moon because it's no fun being dark." Sharon held Mary close and gently said, "Oh please don't go to the moon, sweetheart. I love your darkness" (Rush, forthcoming). Every black person faces racism *now*, and as parents of black children know, racism has to be fought right from the beginning of a child's life.

Eliminating Racism: Utopian Visions of a Nonracist Society

We turn now to a discussion of strategies for deconstructing and destroying this racist ideology and establishing a nonracist society. We view both structural and individual change as crucial for creating a new society without racism. Prior efforts to destroy structures and institutions that reinforce a system of racism have generally not cut to the heart of the racist prejudice and discrimination still implemented in the lives of most whites. Serious desegregation efforts by U.S. governmental agencies lasted barely a decade, and weak enforcement of most civil rights laws in states and at the federal level is now a national scandal (see Bendick, Egan, and Lofhjelm 1998). Recurring white backlashes against affirmative action programs, such as Proposition 209 in California, and the ongoing struggle for meaningful school desegregation still convulse communities across the country. By passing Proposition 209 and similar laws in various state legislatures and in the U.S. Congress, white leaders and citizens consciously resist structural change in the entrenched racial hierarchy. Likewise, efforts that solely target individual racism do not root out the structural embeddedness of racism. Many programs, for example, that stress a liberal ideology of tolerance or color-blindness encourage people to accept individuals, opinions, and cultures that are different from their own, but require little or no work from those in dominant groups to critique and confront systematically their own privileges and power (see Carr 1997). These liberal programs tend to reinforce the separate-but-equal ideology that fueled the Jim and Jane Crow era of the past. In many multicultural programs, whites become just one more "ethnic group" like all the others, rather than the dominant group with great privileges associated with

its racial classification (see Van Ausdale and Feagin, forthcoming). Thus, whites can be "liberal" and still be comfortable within the inegalitarian structure of economic, political, and social arrangements.

A nonracist society cannot be achieved if whites continue to deny the reality of the racist society and of racism within themselves. The painful emotional work of actually undoing individual racism must be accomplished in combination with collective efforts for structural change. Since this essay calls for a middle-range utopian vision, a useful place to begin undoing racism is to address the social, economic, and political embeddedness of white racism within the foundation of the U.S. political system.

The openly professed democratic ideals of the "founding fathers"—no "founding mothers" were immortalized in building the political institutions—were, by intention, never realized. The white men who created the political foundation of what became the United States intended that men like themselves would hold the reins of power for the foreseeable future. Thus, our first suggestion for beginning to eliminate institutionalized racism is to call for a new constitutional convention, one that will represent fairly and equally, for the first time, all major groups of U.S. citizens. What might the social, political, and economic landscape of the United States look like if we started with a social system constructed to actually meet the ideals of democracy and humanity rather than the goals of privilege-maintenance and racial hierarchy?

Laying a New Sociopolitical Foundation

Our vision of an anti-racist future begins with a critique of the Constitutional framework that limits the full participation and equality of all citizens. That over 90 percent of the American population, including all white women, African Americans, and Native Americans, lacked representation in the creation of the original Constitution is an omission that must be rectified if the principles of representative government and democracy are to be taken seriously. The original writers and interpreters of the Constitution for the United States were an elite group of white men. Yet, over 200 years later, women and people of color are woefully underrepresented in the judicial, executive, and legislative branches of government.

Moreover, the original framers of the Constitution introduced at least two aspects of constitutional interpretation that still perpetuate the inequalities they had built into the document. First, the notion that the Constitution should be interpreted in an "originalist" framework—that is, according to the framers' intent—continues to be a viable, if not the most popular, theory of the proper method of interpretation. But central to the framers' intent in creating the Constitution was protection of *their own* interests. Second, the concept of *stare decisis*—that is, prior interpretations are binding on future ones—significantly increases the probability that inequalities will determine future cases.

Another issue involves the process of Constitutional amendment. Although the Constitution can be and has been amended, it requires a super majority vote by Americans. Unless the issue that is the subject of an amendment is supported by the political majority who already receive the most constitutional protection, it has little chance of receiving protection in the written Constitution. The failure of the Equal Rights Amendment (the ERA) poignantly illustrates this. The ERA did not pass because many men, having little incentive to alter the balance of power, did not support it. Following the originalist framework, women's voices were not heard at the Convention, and the Supreme Court historically interpreted the Constitution to mean that women are less equal than men.

In short, a combination of barriers to receiving full equality under the Constitution for women and people of color—their lack of representation in the original drafting of the Constitution, their lack of representation in interpreting the Constitution, the continuing adherence to originalism, and the arduous process of constitutional amendment—all speak to the urgency of a new Constitutional Convention. The central goals of this convention are to assert the basic human rights of those previously excluded and oppressed, and to ensure that the governing document of the new multiracial, and soon-to-be nonracist democracy is produced by representatives of all the people.

As a starting point, this new convention might make use of the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights in beginning debates on an egalitarian democracy (Department of Public Information, United Nations, 1995). The Declaration, now supported by most nations, indicates a growing consensus across the globe that human rights are essential to a healthy society. Since 1948,

this Declaration has been used frequently in crafting many international treaties and agreements. As we see it, the official call for such a constitutional convention should include a prior acceptance of the democratic ideals of liberty and justice such as those expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This call for the convention would indicate a grounding of discussions in a mutual respect for the plurality of U.S. cultures, heritages, and values. Given the bedrock of present human rights, a constitutional convention is not only possible but has a chance to create a just and democratic society (Feagin, forthcoming).

A truly democratic constitution would be the political basis on which to build an array of new democratic institutions. The form that a new democratic government would take in a utopian society, if it had one at all, is difficult to imagine because all current government models function with some type of hierarchical power. Whatever form the new governing bodies might take, however, their members would need to be elected democratically by an electorate that has reason to participate actively in the new political system. The representatives could be drawn from the general public, with strict term limits and guaranteed participation by all major groups. The new government's citizens would have to be raised to be committed to supporting the human dignity of its people.

There are many necessary steps to this political utopia. A new democratic government will need to take determined action to redress past oppression if it is to create a truly nonracist, egalitarian society. It must aggressively pursue desegregation—or, better, meaningful reciprocal racial, class, and gender integration—in schooling, housing, health care, employment, politics, and public accommodations. (We consider education in more detail below.) Private efforts will also need to be made to desegregate voluntary associations, including the now highly segregated churches, synagogues, and mosques of the nation.

Moreover, the new democratic governments will need to go far beyond conventional desegregation solutions. For more than a century now, black leaders have called for reparations for the racist oppression that African Americans have suffered for 15 generations (Bittker 1973; Brooks 1999). White oppression of African Americans has been more extensive and has lasted longer than that imposed on other Americans of color. For that reason, substantial compensation is just. The new democratic government would also need to take action to compensate Native Americans for the land stolen from them and to compensate other Americans of color for the land and labor taken from them. Interestingly, this idea is already accepted by the U.S. government. The recognition, albeit often grudging, that reparations for racist oppression are sometimes morally justified and necessary can be seen in the modest governmental reparations provided by the U.S. Congress in the early 1990s for the Japanese Americans incarcerated during World War II in U.S. detention and concentration camps, and by means of court decisions for some Native-American groups whose land was stolen in violation of treaties with the U.S. government.

Education and Re-education for a Nonracist Society

Another major step in our vision of a nonracist, egalitarian society is the re-education of white and other Americans to address the previous and current miseducation about racial differences and racial history. The new education cannot be launched in schools alone, but must also involve all structures that actively communicate and reinforce information about racial matters and racial ideology. This includes structures of mass communication (media), structures that facilitate the intergenerational transference of knowledge (families), and other social structures that have been used to reinforce racist dogma and white notions of privilege (American religion).

Eliminating institutional oppressions like racism is essential to achieve an egalitarian society, but institutions are sustained and administered by individuals. Therefore, it is important to emphasize that institutional and individual racism are co-dependent. Racist systems construct as "natural" the tendency of individuals to use skin color as a basis for assigning others to in-groups and out-groups (Tajfel 1982). But seeing and treating other human beings in such oppositional terms is "natural" only because such belief systems reflect racist, sexist, and classist societies. If these anti-human impulses were not overtly and covertly taught to children, a society would not embed them in its realities.

The integrationist intent of many civil rights activists of the 1950s and 1960s was noble; their goal was to bring all Americans together to foster collective understanding and to reduce the

negative social meanings attached to racial categorization. Educational systems, such as public schools, were seen as primary sites where racial misconceptions could be refuted, resulting in greater racial accord in all social arenas. However, because most attempts at actual desegregation have been controlled by whites, the attempts to deal with institutional racism or reeducation were mostly tentative baby steps. Most white desegregationists did not seem to understand, or perhaps did not wish to understand, that racism was deeply embedded in white minds and institutions, including the educational institutions at hand. White policy makers in towns, cities, and states, as well as at the federal level, have not come close to achieving the idealistic goals of justice and equality often stated for school and other societal desegregation.

Changing the way that the public schools are supported is one way to attack segregation. The current system, where public schools are funded largely by local taxes, guarantees social inequality, segregation, and continued racism across large areas of cities and states. This system reinforces white notions of entitlement and privilege by linking wealth routinely to educational quality. What was once considered overtly racist "white flight" to avoid desegregated schools and neighborhoods has now been reconceptualized, as the socially conscious attempts of white parents to build a "better" life for their children. But, often what makes this life "better" is their limited contact with people of color.

We argue that racial segregation was then, and still is, harmful to white and black children, as well as to other children of color. It teaches them that separation is "natural" and conventional. These children, especially the white children, then have to rely on folk knowledge and mainstream media sources to gain information about people color. Consequently, racist stereotypes and misconceptions will continue to flourish in minds of new generations as they work to construct a perception of reality that includes an analysis of self in relationship to others. Also, a declining tax base in central cities accompanies the movement of affluent families to the suburbs. This in turn affects the funding of schools and the quality of education—and also governmental support for inner-city businesses and job creation. Hence, the cycle of structural inequality is reproduced.

We need new educational approaches and structures if we are to move to the nonracist society. Schools would need to be nonracist, nonsexist, nonclassist, democratic, and egalitarian in structure and process as well as in fundamental values. Children would be taught both through example and ideology that all people—black or white, Anglo or Latino, Asian or non-Asian, boy or girl, man or woman, rich or poor—have a right to grow and develop to their fullest potential. In a nonracist society, all children would be supplied with learning environments of equal quality so that their abilities could be developed.

Racist attitudes and understandings also stem from mass media, advertising, and popular music, all of which are still controlled mostly by white men in key corporations and other organizations. Like schools, these societal sources carry stereotypes of Americans of color. In this way, the old racist understandings are perpetuated in new settings by those who control the educational process outside the schools. For example, much stereotyping can be seen in the spoken dialects attributed to African, Asian, and Latino Americans in the movies and on television. In films and on television the "good guys" often speak prestige versions of the English language, while those portrayed as the "bad guys" often speak some negatively stigmatized version of English (Vera and Gordon, forthcoming). Critical analyses of Disney films further illustrate that such messages are commonly communicated to children (Giroux 1994).

In all educational settings, including the media, nonracist educators will have to work aggressively to destroy the sense of white innocence about past and present racism and the common denial of the reality of U.S. racism. A nonracist society cannot exist in the presence of such insistent "innocence." Beginning in the seventeenth century with the first European colonizers, the idea of the virtue and superiority of white civilization was to protect growing white power and privilege, the unjust enrichment whites gained at the expense of Native Americans (their land) and Africans and African Americans (their enslaved labor) (see Takaki 1990). The long tradition of protecting and disguising white privilege with notions of superior cultural, biological, and intellectual whiteness persists to the present. A distorted and biased history is propagated in U.S. schools to disguise these harsh and bloody realities. A nonracist curriculum will have to extend to the many other places where racist socialization still

takes place. Re-education will need to be a routine part of the mass media and to operate within American families, especially white families.

All forms of racist attitudes and practices directed against Americans of color reinforce each other. Each group has had to struggle to assert human dignity and reduce the heavy hand of oppression. Still, some Asian- and Latino-American groups have benefited from whites' treating them with less discrimination, thus enabling them to attain an apparently more privileged position allowed for groups intermediate between whites and blacks. Adopting a color-blind position, whites often cite the advancement of certain Asian and Latino groups as evidence that the nation is already a multiracial democracy unfettered by institutionalized racism. Moreover, once in the intermediate position, some non-black people of color imbibe white-racist attitudes toward yet other Americans of color, most especially toward African Americans (Feagin, forthcoming). White-racist attitudes, the bedrock of U.S. racism, have to some degree permeated most of those living in U.S. society. Even African Americans must daily fight the racist images of their own group, which they often harbor as a result of being bombarded with racist images in the media and many social settings. Much literature, from psychological studies to historical documents, paints a clear picture of the damaging affects of racism on African Americans in terms of self and identity, light-dark color consciousness, and stigmatization within black communities (Grier and Cobbs 1968; Cobbs 1988). The very real psychic pain of being labeled an outsider within an already marginalized group is the result of larger-scale culturally embedded definitions of physical characteristics, aesthetics, intelligence, legitimacy, and power.

Re-education must also involve all social structures that reinforce and support essentialist notions of racial hierarchy. One such structure, Western religion, historically has been used to support the idea of a "natural" or "divine" hierarchy of racial and class privilege. Indeed, long before the development of biological racism, Christianity was used to rationalize the enslavement of Africans (Ani 1994). Consequently, it is no accident that most modern-day white supremacist groups use a religious framework to support their racist dogma. Most Western religions divide the world into those who are divinely privileged and those who are divinely oppressed. As long as this stratifying and dividing exists, as we know from the history of Christianity in the West, there will always be outcasts. As long as some people are defined as outcasts in religious settings, then color, gender, and sexuality will likely be factored into demarcations of ostracism. Changes in religious attitudes do not mean that spirituality or religious ideology will disappear. Religious beliefs also provide hope and comfort. Slave accounts and narratives, for instance, provide many accounts of how spirituality was often the only source of comfort to people who were being brutalized—despite the simultaneous use of religious ideology to justify their oppressed condition (Lincoln and Mamiya 1990). Members of a nonracist utopian society would enjoy a common human spirituality grounded in universal tenets of humanity. Perhaps the most important tenets are assertions of the rights of every human being to be as free as possible from suffering and to enjoy a life of freedom and happiness. International agreements like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights speak of respect for the inherent dignity of human beings as a central aspect of human freedom and happiness. Personal suffering that arises from natural disasters may be inevitable, but suffering caused by institutional degradation of human beings would not exist in this nonracist utopia. Institutional racism and sexism violate these tenets, and the absence of these cruel oppressions would contribute significantly to community and individual happiness.

Furthermore, many churches, synagogues, mosques, and other houses of worship have been important gathering places for people to engage actively in anti-racist work. Southern black churches, for example, have long been important in the nation's civil rights movements (Lincoln and Mamiya 1990). Early in institutional history, thousands of runaway slaves found refuge in Quaker and other liberal churches throughout the South and Midwest. Still, churches remain one of the most racially segregated public arenas in modern societies. For our nonracist utopia we envision a return to the basic principles of humanity found in all major religions—principles that gave rise to the abolitionist and anti-racist activities of the past. As a result, racial segregation within houses of worship would be exposed as inconsistent with humanistic religious ideologies.

While moves can be made toward the egalitarian society, a fully egalitarian society cannot be reached without the simultaneous destruction of major axes of institutional domination brought about largely by collective and individual efforts. All those striving for this utopia have a large responsibility to enhance the egalitarian quality of the current societal environment and to model individually the basic human rights tenets.

"Doing" Antiracism: Social and Personal Activism

Finally, we envision all pro-utopian individuals actively "doing" anti-racism. To some degree, most Americans of color are forced routinely to engage in anti-racism work, at least in regard to their own group. These Americans of color may need to expand their activities to include the discrimination faced by other groups of color. But the most challenging task is to move significant numbers of whites into anti-racist actions and activism. This means that whites must move out of their present comfort zones to confront personally the painful and usually emotional work of doing anti-racism every day. We also envision the widespread formation of cross-racial coalitions with others who are devoted to doing anti-racism. Overall, we visualize many white individuals actively, consciously, and consistently working to eliminate racism by rejecting systems of privilege-maintenance in favor of human dignity, mutual respect, and liberty.

Organizational Efforts. African-Americans and other Americans of color have long led the struggles against racism in the United States. They continue to lead that struggle. As we see it, the goal must be to continue that struggle and to recruit more whites to the nonracist cause. Some members of the dominant group, albeit a very small percentage, are moving already toward the ideal nonracist society. Over the last several decades nonracist whites, with other nonracist Americans, have participated in a number of grassroots organizations working against racial oppression. For example, the Institutes for the Healing of Racism, created in the early 1990s, hold seminars and dialogues on racism in more than 150 cities (Rutstein 1993). Numerous other multiracial groups are pursuing nonracist strategies; these include the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond (PI) and Anti-Racist Action (ARA). PI works in a variety of communities to establish Undoing Racism workshops. The mostly white ARA groups are working aggressively to counter local racist activities and organizations, such as neo-Nazi groups, in dozens of Canadian and U.S. cities (O'Brien 1999).

These nonracist organizations deal with individual prejudice and stereotyping and with the reality of institutional racism. A next step in a broad nonracist strategy for the United States would be to expand the number of these nonracist organizations and to connect them into a national and international network of all peoples working against systemic racism in this and other societies across the globe.

Whites in these organizations have gone well beyond the liberal position where one might spout some nonracist rhetoric but still engage in racist activities when encountering people of color in daily life. Many well-intentioned whites who would never consider themselves racist, who are active in civil rights organizations, who are aware of racism at the interpersonal and institutional levels as it affects the black poor "out there in the inner cities," still are threatened in their own organizational bailiwick. That is, they are pro-civil rights until there is a reversal of power—power as control over resources, such as knowledge, the construction of reality, and media imagery. To effect a genuine move away from racism and toward the nonracist egalitarian utopia, these well-intentioned whites must understand their own racism and that of the society. They must combat institutional racism—the racism built into every facet of American life. Although they may be opposed to discrimination, too many liberal whites are unaware of the demon of white privilege in their own lives. The next step is for them to acknowledge that their own white privilege contributes to the persistence of racism.

Individuals Undoing Racism. The inner views and attitudes of Americans, including white Americans, are not genetically ordained but are social and culturally constructed through hundreds of interactive influences and experiences. Whiteness and white racism must be carefully learned and maintained over lifetimes. Individual selves and psychologies are shaped by structural realities. Thus, the question arises: What would the nonracist individual in the nonracist society be like? If we can begin to construct such a person, then perhaps we can take real steps toward the utopian society. The emerging nonracist person, like all human beings, is not without faults. Many Americans of

color have already moved well down the road to nonracist or nonracist attitudes and actions. It appears that a pressing need today is to create a multitude of whites who can be started along that road. Unlike most whites today, however, a white person committed to the nonracist utopia would be filled with a very deep and lasting *respect* for all human beings as equals, including those who are physically or culturally different.

Respect, not just tolerance, is the necessary emotional orientation. Because the primary goals of the nonracist utopian society are to eliminate unnecessary suffering and to create the rights to life, liberty, and human happiness so eloquently asserted in the U.S. Declaration of Independence, people therein would be motivated to treat each other equally with dignity and respect. Within this positive energy cycle, everyone will enjoy the equal rights to be free from unnaturally imposed suffering and to be happy. A skeptic might suggest that this sounds good, but ask whether individual Americans, especially individual whites, are up to this difficult task. How do we bring changes in those centrally responsible for racist oppression?

Clearly, being willing to talk candidly about individual and societal racism is one essential step for whites to take in moving toward the nonracist society. Honestly discussing with Americans of color the realities of racism increases the possibility that whites will move beyond their misunderstandings and fears and begin to put good intentions into the hard work of dismantling racism. This effort requires whites to actively join the struggle by working with African Americans and other people of color side by side, day in and day out. With this effort may come not only the loss of fearful emotions, but also a growth of caring and even loving relations. As skeptical as we are that the United States can achieve racial justice and equality in the near term, we are not without hope that some whites can begin to transcend their racism.

Moving to the ideal nonracist society will require much work on the cognitive and emotional aspects of contemporary racism. This is perhaps the most difficult task for white Americans. However, whites' identification with oppression on the other side of the color line can develop through at least three different stages: sympathy, empathy, and what might be called transformative insight. The initial stage, sympathy, is important but limited. It usually involves the willingness to set aside some of the racist stereotyping and hostility taught in white communities and the development of a friendly interest in what is happening to the racial other. Empathy is a much more advanced stage, in that it requires the ability to reject distancing stereotypes and a heightened and sustained capacity to see and feel the pain of the racial others. Empathy involves the capacity to sense deeply the character of another's pain and to act on that sensitivity.

Empathizing with victims of racial discrimination is an important and valuable but limited emotional skill. Such empathic feelings are limited because they stem largely from perceiving the reality of anti-black discrimination. The empathic person's energy may be directed mainly at ending those practices. However, this outward focus on blacks' pain may incline empathic whites to avoid the inward reflection necessary to understand the role that their own white privilege plays in maintaining patterns of racism.

Actually crossing the color line provides an opportunity for a more informed understanding of the dynamics of racism that even very liberal whites have not gained from academic studies, civil rights activities, or limited social contacts with black Americans. This third stage of white development we call transformative insight. Transformative insight is more likely to develop in loving and caring interracial relationships. Interpersonal love characterizes most relationships in which people care deeply about each other: parent/child, husband/wife, friend/friend, and so forth. Typical love can be powerful: Loving parents would not hesitate to die if it meant saving their child's life. Transformative insight, or transformative love, is most likely to develop in people who are in loving relationships that challenge institutional norms about power distribution. As a result, whites in such a position come to understand much more about the way in which the racialized hierarchy bequeaths power and privilege. The transformative insight includes a clear understanding of the broad range of privileges that comes from being white in a racist society, privileges a person has whether she or he wants them or not.

As we see it, people who are in loving relationships that do not challenge these norms are unlikely to develop transformative insight. For example, every loving relationship between a man and a woman in a patriarchal society reflects the institutional power imbalance between the sexes. The individual man who

believes in gender equality empathizes with women living in a patriarchal society and strives to treat women equally to the way he treats men. Despite his good intentions, however, he will continue to support patriarchal values, albeit often unconsciously, if he lacks transformative insight. A man develops transformative insight when he personally and deeply feels both the injustice of patriarchy's subordinating women and the injustice of patriarchy's privileging men, including himself. It is the awareness that he is part of the problem that moves such a man beyond empathy.

There is even less likelihood that whites will develop transformative insight with respect to their racial hegemony. One reason is that there are far fewer interracial loving relationships than there are loving relationships between men and women. Moreover, even within many interracial loving relationships, well-intentioned whites have a difficult time understanding the pervasiveness of institutional racism. They do not directly experience it. It often takes many years of a loving relationship before a white person develops a strong growing awareness of white privilege. However, once there, a white person starts on the path to transformative insight, a long journey because white privilege is so pervasive. A well-intentioned white person has to dig deep to uncover knowledge of this privilege, even though it is obvious to black Americans and other Americans of color. Unfortunately, most whites do not have a caring or loving relationship with even one black person. For that reason, increasing real respectful relations across the color line is essential to the long-term battle against white racism.

Every child knows that race *does* matter (see Van Ausdale and Feagin, forthcoming). White children are born into privilege, and this privilege plays itself out in the children's world the same way it plays itself out in the adult world. White children learn the precept of white superiority and take advantage of this privilege, as children of color witness and experience every day. Thus, although few whites have written about loving across the color line, their experiences and voices can be critical to the development of a utopian society (see Rush, forthcoming). They bear witness to the dynamics of racism as seen from both sides of the color line. Their insight is transformative because they understand the need to repudiate white privilege to end black subordination and white domination.

Unlearning racism and the essential emotional work to eliminate individual racism are essential steps in becoming an effective nonracist activist. Nonracist activists cannot interact merely within limited social circles. They must actively work to break down existing structures that maintain and reproduce inequality. It is not enough to acknowledge difference or to be tolerant of others. The new anti-racists must acknowledge the real pain and the white privilege embedded in the existing system, must be willing to give up much privilege, and must work actively to create more egalitarian structures. This is tough work—emotionally, spiritually, and physically—but it is ultimately crucial for the construction of a nonracist utopia.

Conclusion

There is only one race, the human race, and most human beings are shades of one color, brown. Racist hierarchies were created to do away with the oneness of the human race. Archaeological research indicates that the earliest members of *homo sapiens* evolved in Africa. All people now living have African ancestry and are thus at least distant cousins of one another other. Yet this point about African ancestry is rarely made among white and other non-black Americans; Africa remains a distant and "dark" place in the minds of most non-black Americans. Sadly, by hating and attacking African Americans and other people of color, those who see themselves as white are in effect hating and attacking themselves, their own kin, and their own family tree.

Recall the opening story. Mary sees her own efforts to end racism and live joyously going on over the generations, until racism is ended. Even at age nine, this child understands that this task may well take several generations. Mary's hopeful outlook creates a utopian space not only in her mother's heart but in all whose hearts can celebrate with Mary the joy of loving other people. Such loving exchanges are hidden power resources for renegotiating the extant power imbalances of racism and are the key starting points for dismantling racism. Yet the racial utopia is not likely to come in our lifetimes; our children probably will not see it in theirs. Having good intentions is just not enough.

The realization that racism is so deep and persistent can be overwhelming. What hope is there for Mary and all children of color to have

joyful lives with the heaviness of racism constantly on their shoulders and weighing them down? The answer lies in a radical restructuring of the nation, the creation of a nonracist utopia where it is safe, perhaps even fun, to be dark, medium, or light in color. While a satisfactory set of solutions to end racism continues to elude us, all Americans must find ways to fight this racism, lest it drive us all mad, rob us of the joy life can bring, and end this society in bloodshed. Mary's promise to the world tells us that committed and hopeful utopian spaces can be created even in a racist world. In the meantime, we must spend much time creating these utopian spaces, places of respite from a racist world that we are trying to change but which can no longer strip us of life's joy.

We call on social scientists and other intellectuals to lead the way in realizing this nonracist, utopian vision. We can begin by casting a mirror on ourselves, at the racist ideology that provides the framework for much of our intellectual history and academic knowledge. All Americans should participate in building a new democracy, perhaps with the first step of a new and democratic constitutional convention. We should reconstruct governing systems, mainstream sources of knowledge, and institutions of higher learning in ways that reflect the full representation of all people.

We should heavily critique our educational systems, both in regard to curriculum and to real diversity of people within them. This is as important for Ph.D.-granting institutions as for undergraduate institutions, high schools and grammar schools, and pre-schools. A nonracist future is impossible to realize if those who achieve advanced degrees continue to be disproportionately white. A nonracist future is also out of reach if whites continue to live in worlds—personal, work, and educational worlds—where they are socially isolated from African Americans and other people of color. Most of us are at some level educating others, whether that teaching occurs within families, classrooms, or workplaces. We all share the responsibility for nonracist education.

To this end, we must critique ourselves and the way our social institutions, including our academic disciplines and careers, are structured in ways that reinforce existing systems of domination and privilege. We envision social scientists, other academics, and grassroots intellectuals providing some leadership in working toward personal transformative insight, as well as conscious, active work toward change in institutional racism. Moreover, we see this as much more than a task for "leaders." Often the best moral leadership has come from those in the trenches of everyday oppression, from the so-called "ordinary" citizens. Thus, we visualize all Americans, from all walks of life, working for change, for the nonracist utopian society. This anti-racist activism will affect all Americans and have a major impact on the ways that this society is structured.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., often encouraged us to keep the utopian dream of a nonracist alive:

> I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal." I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood. I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. (1971: 349–50)

Dr. King's vision still remains a viable model. It awaits implementation.

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Limiting Inequality through Interaction: The End(s) of Gender

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Sociologists have recognized increasingly that gender is not primarily a role or identity. Instead, it is an institutionalized *system* of social practices for constituting people as two significantly different categories, males and females, and organizing relations of inequality around that difference (Ferree, Lorber, and Hess 1999; Lorber 1994; Ridgeway and Smith-Lovin 1999; Risman 1998). Like other systems of difference and inequality, such as race and class, the gender system is multilevel, involving cultural beliefs and distributions of resources at the macro level, patterns of behavior and situational structures at the interactional level, and selves and identities at the individual level. The interactional level is especially important for gender, however. Compared to those on opposite sides of race and class divides, the advantaged and disadvantaged in the gender system interact frequently and intimately. Gender crosscuts kin, is involved in reproduction and heterosexual behavior, and divides the population into two similarly sized groups, all of which increase interaction between men and women.

With men and women interacting so frequently, interaction becomes a potent forum in which the basic rules of the gender system are at play. The gender system turns on its defining cultural beliefs; these tell us the cues by which we can classify people as males or females, the different behaviors and traits we can expect of them once we have done so, and why these differences imply male superiority. To sustain these defining beliefs, the terms on which men and women interact with one another must, on balance, confirm for them that men and women are sufficiently different in ways that justify men's greater power and privilege.[1] As a result, interactional processes are a vital link in the gender system and can enact and reproduce the system's defining beliefs or create pressure for those beliefs to change. In this essay we present an achievable utopian vision for changing the gender system by answering two questions: What must be done to undermine interactional forces that feed gender inequality? What can be done to harness interactional processes to change the gender system and increase equality?

The End of Gender, or Pushing Gender to Its Ends?

It is helpful to be clear about the vision of utopian change that we have in mind. Naturally, we seek fairness and equality for both men and women. Inequality and difference co-determine one another in the gender system, however. Efforts to radically reduce inequality imply efforts to greatly reduce gender difference as well. There are two utopian possibilities in this regard. The first is to end gender as we know it. This approach seeks to end the process of routinely sex categorizing (i.e., labeling as male or female) everybody all the time. With an end to pervasive sex differentiation, inequality based on it also ends. The second possibility does not seek to "end" gender itself, but rather to push gender to its "ends." This more limited vision acknowledges that sex categorization will continue, but seeks to limit the inequality that it implies.

Social scientific evidence suggests that the first of these utopian possibilities would be very difficult to achieve, but the second may be realizable. In fact, interaction itself is a major reason

[1] Not all encounters between men and women privilege the particular man over the particular woman. The additional effects of other systems of difference and inequality, such as class and race, and institutional roles can produce local settings where a particular woman is advantaged compared to specific man. However, since most mixed-sex encounters occur between men and women of similar class and race, and men tend to hold more powerful institutional roles, interactional experiences, on balance, confirm gender difference and inequality.