

[Following a book presentation at the Diplomatic Academy in Vienna, on the subject of RACE, Christl Meyer writes on Eth\(n\)ics about the meaning of Race.](#)

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by Pincas Jawetz ([PJ@SustainabiliTank.com](mailto:PJ@SustainabiliTank.com))

Eth(n)ics: What does Racism mean?

by Christl Meyer [christl.meyer@chello.at](mailto:christl.meyer@chello.at)

Inspired by a lecture at the “Diplomatische Akademie” at Vienna on the 17th of January 2011 about a book presentation and the following presentation.

The volume – “Rasse” – eine soziale und politische Konstruktion: Strukturen und Phänomene des Vorurteils Rassismus.

“Race” – a social and political construction Structures and phenomena of the prejudice of racialism.

Sir Peter Ustinov Institut(e) (Hg./editor)

I would like to recommend the book to those who are able to understand German. Publisher is “Braumüller” and the editor is Wolfgang Benz.  
ISBN 978-3-7003-1757-9

The Sir Peter Ustinov Institute was founded by himself as an association for research how to prevent prejudice.

Its aim is to become an international competence centre on this topic.

I am a biologist and I am trained in philosophy (ethics). Since many years, I try to enhance the communication between the humanities and natural science. Thus for me it is absolute necessary to be true and to promote the Human Rights.

There are many authors that influenced my thinking like Victor Frankl, Theodozius Dobzhansky and Charles Darwin to name only three of them.

Victor Frankl states: “Es gibt nur 2 Rassen: die Rasse der anständigen Menschen und die Rasse der unanständigen Menschen“ („There are only 2 races of humans: the decent and the indecent”).

Frankl was a psychiatrist and his statement is underlined by his experiences during World War 2 in a concentration camp and because of his specific knowledge of the human character.

Theodosius Grygorovych Dobzhansky was born in Ukraine and was a geneticist and evolutionist. He immigrated to the United States as a young man in 1927. He was one of the signatories of the 1950 UNESCO statement The Race Question. He published one of his most famous

essays: „Nothing in Biology makes sense except in the light of evolution”. In another statement, he says that humans are different in their genes and character but share Equality of Rights.

Charles Darwin, who studied Medicine and Theology was impressed by the huge variety of living creatures. The abuse of the scientific theory concerning natural selection ended in inhumane actions and genocide. Racialism was and sometimes nowadays is promoted by scientific research results that are taken for rationale truth. On the other hand, scientists who refer to Darwinian research results are under harassment called “Nazi” without differentiation. However, not the one who tells the unwanted truth has to be punished but those that misuse it offending Human Rights.

On the other hand, we have to observe the results of scientific research critically, which are published in the different journals and copied many times without proof of truth.

For example the deficiency of Vitamin B1 – Thiamine – in diet caused Beriberi a nervous system ailment. In 1929 Christiaan Eijkmann got the Nobelprice for Medicine. This was a milestone for science and medicine because for many years the disease was claimed to be caused by infectious agents.

What are the scientific errors of today? Is scientific fraud possible? What is the conclusion? Is it all about genetics and ethics?

Referring to scientist Eva Jablonka from the University of Tel Aviv who has published on Epigenetics “Evolution in Four Dimensions” and to Waterland and Jirtle who found transposable elements as targets for early nutritional effects on epigenetic gene regulation, we have to be aware, that the environment influences gene-expression in a way that is tremendously important for the individual and can change genetics in a heritable way. This means that nutrition, stress and social factors are now in the focus of natural and medical sciences - even genetics – for the influence on our genome over more than one generation.

Going back to racism, we have to commit that not only minorities don't have the same rights but also majorities. 52% of the world's population are females which do not share equality in payment and human rights with males in many countries and societies. On the other hand, males have the duty of military services and later retirement, which has an impact on health. We have to consider these facts. One can be harassed with different skin color or clothing, as a disabled or poor person, by different culture or education and this is possible all over the world. There are open-minded people whether they are poor or rich, little or highly educated, and those that despise human beings, act without respect, and neglect the human rights.

Yes, there are differences in our genes and the world is so colorful by our divergences. We are different in culture – and this creates the ethnic groups.

If we want a better world, we have to promote truth, justice, peace, freedom, and the human rights. We have to respect the limitations of the planet and share natural goods like water and nature. The quality of life is depending on values like healthy families and happy people.

We have to support life in dignity and teach parents that love and respect in treating one another, and the children from the very first day, leads to self-esteem and tolerance, characteristics that will create a better society. Curiosity and interest are natural for children. Parents have to listen to their child's needs and sorrows.

Self-esteem, empathy, confidence, trust and an open mind might lead to tolerance and a better communication. It is our duty to promote good education systems and finance them properly. Societies that promote these values of more equality are more stable. Teaching Philosophy and Ethics is as important as are other subjects. We have to control the political and religious systems in ways that guarantee freedom and the respect of human rights for all people. There are countries that signed the “Declaration of Human Rights” but break them continuously without being held responsible for their criminal actions by the world community. This has to end because without a decent life and freedom there will be no peace on earth. Sustainability depends on peace!

Remember Victor Frankl: “There are only 2 races of humans: the decent and the indecent”. We have to promote the decent!