stry of Science and Higher Educa
cial Anthropology (Anth 101

A Freshman Common Course

Department of Anthropology

Hawassa University,

UNIT TWO:

SUB-FIELDS OF ANTHROPOLOGY: *Four Mirrors for Understanding Humanity*

INTRODUCTION

- Due to its Broad interest on humanity, anthropology intersects the multiple approaches to the study of humankind;
  - biological, social, cultural, historical, linguistic, cognitive, material, technological, affective, and aesthetic.
- This inter-disciplinarity is integrated and formalized in anthropology within its four major subfields that compose the discipline:
  - ***Socio-cultural Anthropology, Linguistic Anthropology, Archaeology* and *Physical Anthropology.***

Socio-Cultural Anthropology

Reflect your views on the following questions:

- **What is society?**
- **What is culture?**
- **How can we study cultures?**
- **What do you know about socio-cultural anthropology?**

Socio-Cultural Anthropology

- Socio-cultural Anthropology is also often called ***social anthropology*** or ***cultural anthropology*** - is the largest sub-fields of anthropology.
- It deals with human ***society*** and ***culture***.
- In simple terms, while society is a group of people who have similar ways of life, culture is a way of life of a group of people.
- It study the social, cultural, material and non-material life of contemporary human societies.
- It studies the ***social*** (*human relations*), ***symbolic*** or nonmaterial (*religious, language, and any other symbols*) and ***material*** (*all man-made objects*) lives of people.

Socio-Cultural Anthropology

- By taking **culture** as unit of analysis, it study living people in all parts of the world:
- Culture, economic lives, kinship, sex and marriage, socialization, social control, political organization, class, ethnicity, gender, religion & culture change are few of its themes.
- Its major intention is understanding the ***existing social & cultural diversity*** across the globe.
- To study and interpret cultural diversity, it engage in two types of study: **Ethnography** & **Ethnology**.

Socio-Cultural Anthropology

- **Ethnography:** is a descriptive study of a particular contemporary culture by means of direct extensive fieldwork.
- It provides a comprehensive account of particular society, or culture in as much detail as possible.
- These detailed descriptions (ethnographies) are the result of extensive fieldwork in w/h the anthropologist observes, talks to, and lives with the people he or she is studying.
- During ethnographic fieldwork, the anthropologist gathers data that he or she organizes, describes, analyzes, and interprets to build and present that account, which may be in the form of a book, article, or film.

Socio-Cultural Anthropology

- **Ethnology**: is the comparative study of contemporary cultures/societies, wherever they may be found.
- It examines, interprets, analyzes, and compares the results of ethnography;
- ethnologists attempt to identify and explain cultural differences and similarities, to test hypotheses, and to build theory to enhance our understanding of how social and cultural systems work.
- Its main aim is to make generalizations about society and culture & ***to uncover general cultural principles, the "rules" that govern human behavior***.

Socio-Cultural Anthropology

Ethnography	Ethnology
Requires field work to collect data	Uses data collected by a series of researchers
Often descriptive	Usually comparative
Focus on single culture /specific community	Generalizes across cultures

- Socio-cultural anthropology uses ***ethnographical*** and ***ethnological*** approaches to answer all sort of questions related to culture and human societies.
- To properly address emerging questions related to culture and societies, it has been sub-divided into many other specialized fields as:
  - Anthropology of Art, -Medical Anthropology,
  - Urban Anthropology -Economic Anthropology,
  - Political Anthropology -Development Anthropology,
  - Anthropology of Religion, -Demographic Anthropology,
  - Ecological Anthropology, -Psychological Anthropology,
  - Ethnomusicology, etc.
- All of them are considered to be the applied areas of anthropology.

Linguistic Anthropology

- Taking language as one of humanity's most distinctive characteristics, it try to understand mankind from its linguistic aspects.
- Study human language as ***a cultural resource*** and ***speaking as a cultural practice*** in its social & cultural context, across space and time.
- Language is basically a system of information transmission and reception.
- Humans communicates - by sound (speech), by gesture (body language), and in other visual ways such as writing.
- Analogous to genes that carry and transmit genetic materials to offspring, ***languages hand down cultural traits from one generation to another***.

Linguistic Anthropology

- Linguistic anthropology focuses on several key issues including;
  - the origin of language;
  - the relation between Language, Culture & Human Thought Patterns;
  - the ways language constructs identity & ideology;
  - comparative analysis of language to come up with linguistic variation and change etc.
- Linguistic Anthropology is divided into **four** distinct branches or areas of research: ***structural linguistic, historical linguistics, ethno-linguistic & socio-linguistic.***

Linguistic Anthropology

- **<u>Structural Linguistics</u>**: studies the structure of linguistic patterns.
- It examine grammatical patterns & other linguistic elements including ***phoneme***, ***lexical*** & ***syntax*** *to understand the structure & set of rules of given language.*
- Every culture has a distinctive language with its own logical structure and set of rules for putting words and sounds together to have meaningful communication.
- **Historical Linguistics:-** deals with the emergence of language in general and how specific languages have diverged over time.
- It focuses on the comparison and classifications of contemporary languages to discern the historical links between them.

Linguistic Anthropology

- **Ethnolinguistics:** examines the relationship between language and culture. This is b/c;
- Language as a symbolic base of culture significantly affect human behavior.
- Language inform us about what is important in a given culture, where certain cultural aspects that are emphasized are reflected in the vocabulary.
- It also explore how language determine human thinking process & influences the modes of perception of reality & experience of the world.

Linguistic Anthropology

- **Socio-linguistics**: investigates **linguistic variation** within a given language.
- One reason for variation is geography, as in regional dialects and accents
- Linguistic variation also is expressed in the bilingualism of ethnic groups.
- Sociolinguists also study the **situational use** of **language** in different social context.
- It also investigate how language that a person speaks is used to define its social group –*professional, class group or dialects.*

Archaeology

- The term **archaeology** is derived from two Greek words: ***arkhaios-*** (ancient) and ***logia*** (study) –*it is the study of the human past*.
- It study the way's of lives of past people through the interpretation of material remains.
- It focused on the study of **historic and pre-historic cultures,** through excavating & analyzing the material/physical remains they left behind.
- To get information about earlier culture, archeologists excavate & analyze different types of material/physical remains; primarily -;
- ***Artefacts, Features and Eco-facts.***

Archaeology

- **Artefacts**: are material remains made and used by the past peoples such as tools, ornaments, and pottery. **helps to get clues about the culture of past societies- including their values, norms & beliefs.*
- **Features:** are artifacts made or modified by people, but they cannot be readily moved from site. e.g., house foundations, ancient buildings, obelisk, and steles.
- **Ecofacts**: are organic and environmental remains that were not made by human; but were used by them such as soil, animal bones, and plant remains.

helps to understand the past environment and how people used natural resources in the past.

Archaeology

- The analysis of such material/physical remains helps reveal *how people lived in the distant past and the way the past societies interacted with their local ecosystem*.
- Archaeologists also able to infer many **non-material cultural aspects** such as values, ideas and behavior patterns of past societies from such analysis.
- In general, archaeologists are interested in:
  - reconstructing, describing & interpreting the behavior and ways of life of the past societies;
  - explaining and delineating the origin, spread and evolution of the human culture.
- archaeologists focused on **what changed over time** to reconstruct ***human cultural evolution.***

Archaeology

- Archaeology has two prominent subfields: ***Prehistoric*** *Archaeology* and ***Historical*** *Archaeology*.
- **Prehistoric Archaeology**:- study human prehistory, i.e., dated between 6,000 years ago to 2.5 million years ago (the time of the first artifacts).
- To reconstruct prehistoric life ways/cultures, it used ***material remains*** and study ***contemporary foraging societies***.
- By this, archaeology is the only scientific enterprise that systematically examine prehistoric cultures & provided a much longer time frame for understanding the record of human development.

Archaeology

- **Historical Archaeology**:- study historical people.
  - It reconstruct the cultures of people who used writing and about whom historical documents have been written.
  - To come up with historical people and cultures, it uses both written documents & excavated artefactual remains.
  - Much of its work has been used to help preserve historical sites & cultural heritage (**Cultural Resource Management**).

Archaeology

- Archeology has also several **specialized areas** including ***Classical Archaeology*** (*deals primarily with ancient civilizations*), ***Ethno-archeology*** (*examine material culture of current societies to reflect on the life style of past societies*), ***Heritage management*** etc.
- **Ethiopia**: as per archaeological findings in north, south, east & western part of the country, Ethiopia is among those countries which have old civilization.
- It is believed that archeological studies and findings in the future will help to better understand the country's past and to reflect on its present and future course.

Physical/Biological Anthropology

- Study humankind from a biological perspective – humanity as a biological being/species.
- It concerned with the interactions between ***human biology***, ***environment*** and ***behavior*** (culture) in the context of evolutionary processes.
- Essentially, physical anthropology is concerned with two broad areas of investigation:
- **human evolution**:-it try's to comprehend the biological evolution of the human species.
- **human variation**:- it examines how and why the physical traits of human populations vary throughout the world.

Physical/Biological Anthropology

- Thus, it can be defined as *the study of human biological evolution and contemporary physical variations among peoples of the world*.
- It incorporates examination of the influence of ***culture*** and ***environment*** on these two areas of biological evolution and contemporary human variations.
- Along the two areas of investigation, ***diverse areas of specialization*** **-**developed within biological anthropology –having a multidisciplinary nature.
- E.g., –***Paleoanthropology*** (evolution of early humans), ***Human Genetics/Population Genetics***, ***Human Ecology*** (bio-cultural adaptation), ***Human Growth*** and ***Development, Anthropometry*** (physical measurements), ***Human Demography, Forensic Anthropology, Primatology*** *etc.*

- In general, biological anthropologists **study, analyze** and **describe** human populations to understand the mechanism and processes of **human evolution**, **biological variations**, and **bio-cultural adaptations** in human populations.

- physical anthropologists study how culture and environment have influenced these two areas of biological evolution and contemporary variations.

Physical/Biological Anthropology

- In addition, it has diverse application areas (problem solving) -in ***health sector***, ***industry***, ***physical fitness analysis***, providing evidences in ***criminal cases***, providing evidences in ***identity/paternity dispute cases***, etc.
- In general, biological anthropologists **study, analyze** and **describe** human populations to understand the mechanism and processes of **human evolution**, **biological variations**, and **bio-cultural adaptations**.
- It deeply concerned with understanding how ***bio-cultural evolutionary*** factors shaped humanity through time.

Human Evolution & Question of Human Origin

- One of the major questions anthropologists grapple with is the ***origins of humankind***.

Questions for Discussions:

- ***From where did we (the modern human species) come from?***
- ***What does different world religions and cosmologies say about the origin of human beings?***
- ***What about scientific (evolutionary/paleo-anthropological explanations) about the origin and evolution of human beings?***

Human Evolution & Questions of Human Origin

- Aside from the ***creationist*** explanations, anthropologists rely on scientific views of evolution in order to explain ***human origins***.
- In this regard, ***biological anthropologists*** are interested in studying human evolution –the emergence of humans and how humans have evolved up to the present time (in ***evolutionary perspective***).
- **Evolution**: is the gradual change and development of living organisms. It can be defined as a change in the genetic structure of a population in time and space.
- ✓ Genetically speaking, **Evolution is a change in gene frequency** within a population.

Human Evolution & Questions of Human Origin

- Evolutionary explanations & theory (*about evolution of life*) are attributed to the works of handful of scientists – the prominent one is, Charles Darwin (1809-1882).
- Darwin is known for his theory of ***natural selection*** in the evolution of species and the idea of ***survival of the fittest***.
- ✓ Darwin saw the importance of ***biological variation*** within a species & recognized the importance of sexual ***reproduction*** in increasing variation.
- ***Natural Selection*** –one of the basic factor for ***evolution***: *is a process of evolutionary adaptation by which,* ***genotypes*** *best suited to survive and reproduce in a particular environment give rise to a disproportionate share of offspring*.
- ✓ Other factors includes ***genetic mutation***, ***gene flow*** & ***random genetic drift.***

Human Evolution & Questions of Human Origin

- Darwin‘s work demonstrated that humanity was part of the world of living things (*one of his contribution*).
- For long, creationist views, held humanity as a special creation, fundamentally different from all other living things.
- However, Darwin‘s ideas and the discovery of other scientists set the foundation for a new study:
- the study of ***humans as living, evolving creatures***, in many ways no different from the rest of animal life.

Human Evolution & Questions of Human Origin

- **Paleoanthropology-**: –one of the specialties of biological Anth., study human ***biological evolution*** through the ***analysis of fossil remains*** of the ***proto human*** **species**.
  - It is interested in reconstructing the evolutionary record of the human species.
  - It trace the physical development of modern human and try's to determine the ***missing link*** b/n modern human & its biological ancestors.
  - Research findings (fossil records), in this regard, indicate that East Africa, especially the Great Rift Valley, is the origin of mankind.

Human Evolution & Questions of Human Origin

- The oldest fossils of early humans (human ancestors), including ***Australopithecus Afarensis*** (*Lucy/Dinknesh*) were discovered in this part of Africa.
- Hence, Africa, prominently, E.Africa & Ethiopia is found to be the '**cradle of human kinds**'.
- The modern man (Homo sapiens) emerged in east Africa, Ethiopia?, and migrated to Middle East, Europe, Asia, Australia, and finally to America.
- Despite this, **Primatological** studies of the biology and behaviour of non-human primates used to gain clues about human evolution and adaptation. It helps -
  - to interpret fossil records;
  - understand the way our early ancestors adapted to different environmental conditions and changes.

Human Variation (Physical/Biological)

- Obviously, not all human beings look the same - People come in many colors and shapes with wide-ranging ***physical/biological differences***.

Questions for Discussions:

- ***Why do people worldwide have differences in their phenotypic attributes?***
- ***What are the sources of human physical/ biological variations?***
- ***What do such differences mean for humanity as a species?***

Human Variation (Physical/Biological)

- Biological anthropology studies human variations within & among d/t populations in time and space.
  - It examines how and why the physical traits of contemporary human populations vary throughout the world.
- In studying human variation, ***Human Ecology and Adaptation*** become its central concerns.
- **Human ecology** is about relationships between people and their environment (general ecosystem).
- **Adaptation** refers to changes, modifications and/or variations that increase the chances of survival, reproductive success and general wellbeing in an environment.

Human Variation (Physical/Biological)

- **Adaptation** is a process whereby organisms attained a beneficial adjustment to the environment.
  - ✓ This adjustment can be either **temporary or permanent**, acquired either through **short-term or lifetime process**, and may involve **physiological, structural, behavioral, or cultural changes** aimed at **<u>improving organism's functional performance</u>** in the face of environmental stresses.
- Human beings adapt to their environments through an evolutionary process –of ***bio-cultural adaptation***.
- Indeed, the **major source** of ***human physical/biological variations*** are derived from the interrelated effects (*accumulated changes*) of processes of ***bio-cultural adaptation***.

Human Variation (Physical/Biological)

- Studies of ***human ecological adaptation,*** in this regard, shades light on how ***different physical characteristics*** help people adapt to their environment.
- Among others, ***Skin color***—one of the most visible human characteristics -is a good example of adaptation to a particular environment.
- while ***natural selection*** (overtime) favored people with ***Darker skins*** in **tropical** regions -Africa (*w/h received extensive & more intensive sunlight*), ***Lighter skins***, are an adaptation (favored) to more **cloudier** regions -Europe.
- This in a way, implicates the influence of environmental factors on the human body & human physical variation.
- Biological adaptations aren‘t instantaneous. They take place over the span of generations.

Human Variation (Physical/Biological)

- Besides, humans adapts mainly through **cultural** means including complex behavior such as making tools and technological inventions.
- **Cultural evolution** is vastly ***more efficient means*** of ***adaptation*** than **biological evolution**.
- It is a non-biological responses of people to modify or ameliorate environmental stress. And, it ***facilitates human biological adaptation.***
- More rapid - potentially to all mankind in less than one generation -*inventions/discoveries occurs at high frequency*.
- Thus, the observing ***physical/biological variations*** among the modern human population is accounted to ***bio-cultural evolutionary factors*** and ***process*** that shaped humanity through time.

Human Race/s and the History of Racial Typing

- Humans have undoubtedly been classifying their neighbors (or each other) in various ways - including in ***racial*** typologies, for a very long time.

Questions for Discussions:

- ***How can we understand 'race' from biological (genetic) and societal point of view?***
- ***Does the use of 'race' as a system of human classification has scientific validity?***
- ***The idea held by some people/groups about the presence of superior (master) and inferior racial groups has any objective/scientific basis?***

Racial Typing: A Short Historical Overview

- The history of racial typing –*people* c*lassifying each other into d/t —**'racial groups***', goes back to ancient Egypt:
  - there find records (1350 BC) of ancient Egyptian's ***classifying*** people by ***skin color***.
- Because ***skin color*** was so noticeable, many ***racial classifications*** were prominently based on that factor.
- During the age of discovery (16thc), European, encountering other people –develop ***racial classification*** of their own, based on ***skin color***:
  - they also labeled these unknown people as '***Savages***' for they didn't share ***European's culture, values & religion***.
  - the ***less European*** looking a people/group were labeled as the ***more savage*** *–this in time shaped into racial supremacist ideas.*

- In general, such ***folk notions of race***- perceived ***race*** as a *non-overlapping and distinguishable*, categories of people; w/h is fixed, natural, and immutable in its character.

  - Such ideas in time, shaped into –'***racial supremacist ideology***' – with a belief that cultural behavior correlates with skin color, nose shape, hair texture, or what have you.

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Racial Typing: A Short Historical Overview

- The **Scientific Community**, in its part were also engaged in ***human racial typing/classifications***.
- Especially, from the mid-18th c to early 20th c, d/t scholars including naturalists began to ***classify humans*** into d/t ***racial types/varieties***, using d/t methods & criteria.
  - the question of whether '***human races' were separate species or just varieties of a single species*** become crucial.

- The typology provided by **Carolus Linnaeus** (1707-1778), was worth mentioning, in this regard. *–it was influential & the first to put humans in a classification along with the primates*.
- On the basis of ***geography, skin color, humor, posture,*** and ***customs*** (*w/h involves subjective perceptions*), Linnaeus, classified humans into **four** basic "***varieties***" (1758):
  - ***American*** *(reddish),* ***European*** *(white),* ***Asian*** *(yellow), &* ***African*** *(black)*

Racial Typing: A Short Historical Overview

- Johann F. Blumenbach (1752-1840), a German physician, naturalist & anatomist, who also worked in anthropology, introduced ***comparable racial categorization***.
- He classified humans into ***five racial types,*** taking ***cranial shape*** (**beauty**) as key character & ***evaluating cranial extents***:
  - **Caucasian** (white), **Mongolian** (yellow), **Ethiopian** (black), **American** (red), and **Malayan** (brown)* (Blumenbach, 1795).
- By this, he radically changed human typology from a ***geographically based model*** (Linnaeus) to ***ranking***, from a ***Caucasian ideal***:
  - He ***ranked*** the ***Caucasian*** not only as ***the most Beautiful***, but claimed as the ***original race*** of mankind, from w/h all ***the other races*** had '***degenerated***', according to climate, environment & modes of life.
  - This is based on a ***perception*** of ***human origin*** from ***Caucasus***, near Georgia & then spread across the world.
- However, his ideas were used to support ***scientific racism***.

Racial Typing: A Short Historical Overview

- In the later years, (esp. mid-19th c), in attempt to categorize humans, scientists were *quantifying and measuring human bodies*, focusing primarily on ***cranial morphology***.
- In this regard, Anders Retzius (1796-1860), popularized a measurement called the "***Cranial (cephalic) Index***" - a *ratio measurement of the shape of the head*:
  - the maximum breadth of the skull divided by the maximum length;
  - the ratios produced were then grouped and named: ***Dolichocephalic***, ***Brachycephalic***, and ***Mesocephalic*** (in *b/n the two groups*).
  - ***Dolichocephalic***: people with long, narrow heads (*like most northern Europeans*)
  - ***Brachycephalic***: people with short, broad, (round) heads (*like many southern Europeans*).

Racial Typing: A Short Historical Overview

- However, such rigorous measurements (e.g., *craniometry*) & classification schemes–strengthen ***scientific 'racism'***.

- they led to many arguments about which peoples were ***superior*** to the others (***racial superiority*** vs ***inferiority***).
- The root problem of such ***racial typing*** was –***Biological determinism***: *the idea that physical traits were somehow linked to behavior*.
- Especially of the 18th & 19th c, scientific typologies were ***ethnocentric*** *-often* ***relied upon subjective descriptions*** *of non-Europeans in contrast with a European ideal*.
- the typologies incorporated the ***cultural values***, ***morals***, and ***stereotypes*** of their time into their explanations;
- they were **rigid**, linking behavioral traits including ***intellect to physical characteristics*** *–strengthen popular notions of* ***racism***.

Racial Typing and Racism

- **Racism**: is an ideology/a set of ***beliefs*** about the ***superiority*** of one particular (colour/social/ethnic group) over others; **rooted** *in the assumption that behavior/intellect is linked with hereditary characteristics.*
- In extreme cases, it is used to ***justify inequality***.
- This was practically observed in the promotion of the idea of ***Social Darwinism*** and the practices of ***Eugenics***.
- **Social Darwinism** – opt for application of Darwin's principles of ***biological evolution to societies***.
  - the idea that as ***societies/nations evolved & competed***, the ***morally superior societies would prevail*** as the ***less-moral, —savage societies were weeded out***; and that this was all natural and good.

- **Eugenics**– as a social philosophy, advocates ***improvement*** of ***human species*** through ***social intervention*** (*selective breeding*)–:
  - during the 19th & early 20th c, along supremacist racial ideologies, people including scientists advocated for ***state regulation of marriages, family size***, & whether to ***allow an individual*** to ***reproduce***;
  - during the **II WW,** the Nazis took it to a terrible extreme;
  - using ***eugenics*** as the basis for its acts, the Nazi party killed millions of Jewish people, Gypsies and others it considered inferior in an attempt to create a **Master Race**.
- Although we have outgrown this phase (*for the most part*), which is relieving, still there are some people, calling for '**racial purity**' –*a senseless, impossible & destructive idea*.

- The **problems** with the concept of a ***master race*** — aside the obvious **moral** issues— is that ***biological variation is necessary for the health of a population***.
  - If everyone is the same, everyone is susceptible to the same potential disaster –makes the idea of a ***master race suicidal.***
  - For this reason, many biologists measure the overall health of a species by its very genetic diversity.
- After all, **Racism** is a ***learned behavior*** that can be ***avoided*** by ***unlearning*** –by learning and being aware of the claims made about **race**.
- **Yes**, *physical/biological attributes* including peoples' ***skin color varies***, -but the **question** is:
  - does it make someone ***biologically different*** to the point of them being ***separate races*** and/or *inferior or superior*?

- Though the **modern man** exhibit *geographically based differences* within the species, a **biological** conception of '***human races***' ***makes no sense***, factually or conceptually.
- In fact, starting from the early 20th century, the "**scientific**" notions of **race** -was begin to diverge.
- **Modern genetics** abandon **race** as a variable in biomedical research and tends not to speak of **races**, and this has **two main reasons**:
  - **1**. there has always been *so much* ***interbreeding*** between human populations that it would be **meaningless** to talk of ***fixed boundaries between races***.
  - **2**. the **distribution** of ***hereditary physical traits does not follow clear boundaries***.
- *there is* ***no distinct genetic boundary*** *for a group commonly called* ***Races***.

- **Dramatic *genetic discontinuities* (*species level differences)*** are ***not found among modern human population***.
  - many of the ***physical attributes*** associated with **race** are due to ***bio-cultural adaptation*** to climate & environment.
- Thus, people are fundamentally the same biologically and it would be difficult to argue otherwise:
  - as members from what are considered to be ***different human races can mate & produce offspring*** and the ***offspring*** are ***fertile*** themselves.
- More importantly, ***human behavior isn't biologically determined*** –for the most part, it's ***culturally learned***:
  - It's culture that really drives behavior, not the genes. And,
  - Cultural behavior is not genetically linked to those geographic differences.

- Instead of ***race***, biological anthropologists prefer to speak about '***ancestry***', a more general term that *recognizes the reality of some geographically specific human adaptations* but *doesn't turn them into separate species*.
- Indeed, anthropologists (e.g., Ashley Montagu,1942, & R.C. Lewontin, 1972) concluded that ***Human racial classification is of no social value*** and is ***destructive of social relations*** –And, it's ***not the correct way*** to examine human variation.
  - there find ***no identifiable, objective phenomena*** **nor do a uniform set of coherent beliefs** about **race**;
  - As a biological classification, '**race**' fails –it doesn't predict genetic similarities or differences;
  - Thus, '**Race**' is more of a ***social construct***, ***not a biological*** entity -it is ***not scientifically rational*** therefore to refer to ***distinct human races*** (or species).