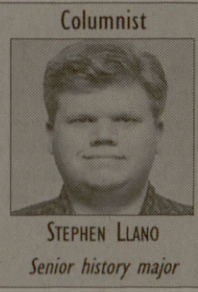


# On the road to forgiveness

## An apologetic president speaks out to heal race relations

President Clinton gets his way, he may go down in history as the retroapologetic, apologetic president. Clinton's address to students of the University of California San Diego sparked criticism and praise, but what Clinton seemed to be a national discussion on race relations.



Columnist

STEPHEN LLANO  
Senior history major

son. It is a pervasive element deeply rooted in the shameful consciousness of the entire country. A piece of paper with Clinton's signature and the seal of the U.S. government is not sincere enough. The fact that many Americans are angered or con-

fused over this legislation signals a lack of sincerity from the very beginning.

Perhaps Clinton has a better grasp on what this legislation means than Hall. "I think this has to be dealt with," Clinton said. "There's still some unfin-

ished business out there among black and white Americans."

At least Clinton understands the issue is more important than a two-bit "we're sorry."

The apology is what Clinton wants. He loves apologizing for things he took no part in causing — it makes the country think progress is being made. But in this case, the apology is too little, too late. The institution of slavery passed down volumes of supposedly scientific evidence and research which proved African-Americans to be an inferior race to whites. Even Thomas Jefferson contributed to the myth that whites were superior to African-Americans. At the time, however, this evidence was believed to be the best — and belief, no matter how old, tends to die hard.

Many white Americans feel so directly separated from slavery that they feel no responsibility. More than ever, people remark that slavery should be something to just "get over," like a common cold. African-Americans are separated just as distant from the situation as whites, but the societal inheritance of an institutionalized inferiority cannot help but pervade popular culture in television, magazines and attitudes. Over 200 years of institutionalized distrust and disrespect cannot be reversed by one Washington lawmaker.

Clinton, whether he comes to be known as retroapologetic or not, might be a little smarter than we are when it comes to supporting this policy. He wanted national discussion and debate — just look at what the nation is discussing.

It is the first step on a long road, but maybe the rest of the country can take a clue from a very instructional pamphlet published right here on campus. Jointly published by the Student Conflict Resolution Center and Multicultural Services, the pamphlet is entitled "Cultivating Campus Community," and it provides five things everyone should do to prevent discrimination and race problems:

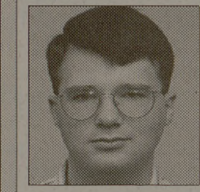
"Educate yourself, talk about things, concentrate on what you have in common with people who are different from you, participate in multicultural events and remember that it takes time to break old habits."

This sounds like a good formula to set the nation on the right track, too.



GRAPHIC: Brad Graeber

# Prejudice embodies stupidity



CHRIS BROOKS

Columnist,  
Senior physics major

**"I need to hate them. I need to be better than someone. It doesn't really hurt anyone else. It just boosts my ego a little."**

Prejudice has been around as long as people have existed. The most basic reason people hate others is because it makes them feel better about themselves. It is an immature, backward method of creating self-esteem, but through understanding why they are this way, these prejudiced individuals can see how to change.

In "On the Functions of Stereotypes and Prejudice," Mark Snyder and Peter Miene said that there are three general functions of stereotypes. Some stereotypes help their holders to reduce the amount of "incoming information to a manageable size," creating a sense of predictability in the social world. Other prejudices help their holders fit in with their own social groups, adopting a group's values to become a member. The third form of prejudice is, arguably, the most deeply-rooted: making people feel better about themselves, and less threatened by other groups, by engaging in downward social comparison.

The first two flavors of stereotyping easily are recognized and often grown out of... eventually. Generalizations about people who smoke or who wear ties to class often are rooted in boredom as much as anything else. Once people have something better to do, they grow up and learn to look past external trappings to some degree or another. At the college stage, however, few students have much else to do. So there are stereotypes against guys with long hair or people with body piercings.

The second type of stereotyping is something of which Aggies often are accused. When a student arrives at Texas A&M, he or she is expected to develop an immediate and deep hatred for the students of "that small secular school down the road." If it was just a school rivalry, it would not carry into the outside world after graduation as it often does. Another group often accused of this practice is the Corps of Cadets. It is widely believed that they hold many stereotypes, and — whether or not they are true — a few rumored Corps prejudices quickly spring to mind. The Corps' dislike of fraternities (but not sororities) comes to mind, as does its rumored disdain for female fellows. Again, these are stereotypes people hopefully will grow out of sooner or later.

The last type of prejudice is quite possibly the most harmful, as it is the one which appeals the most to mankind's base nature. Some individuals need to feel that they are better than others. Some people look at the lower grades of classmates and are satisfied, but those who do not have such an option often make up their own basis for superiority. Racial prejudices and sexual discrimination are prime examples.

Friedrich Otto Hertz once said, "At the heart of racism is the... assertion that God made a creative mistake when He brought some people into being." Some people need to be so much better than others that they actually will convince themselves that God did not mean to create "those people." The most frightening example is the people in a certain region of Mexico who honestly believe their Indian neighbors cannot possibly go to heaven. Another phrase often heard is, "The smartest black man or woman of all time will always be less intelligent than the smartest white man of all time."

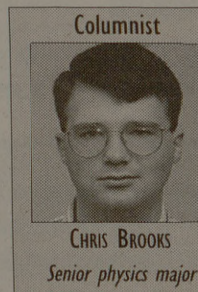
No one knows why people of different races need to hate each other or why men tend to need to feel superior to women. In the end it won't be an apology for deeds done by men long dead that will change these things.

Everyone needs to grow up. People need to outgrow their prejudices and see that Voltaire was correct when he said, "Prejudice is the reasoning of the stupid."

# Reading between the lines

## Negative attitudes concerning skin-color lead to ignorant beliefs

Racism is harmful. No one with two working brains can deny it. Everything that a member of a minority group dislikes, however, is not racist. Too often, though, that is not how it appears. In this society, racism is one of the most serious charges that can be made against a person. The mere suggestion that someone is a racist can do incredible damage to his or her reputation. People need to be careful about throwing around this term and try to remember that everything is not racist.



Columnist

CHRIS BROOKS  
Senior physics major

... manure. Not all white people like country music — some even believe that "country music" is an oxymoron. It is not unbelievable, either, that some minorities like country music.

The prevalence of country music bars and the like in this University-centered area is a simple matter of economics. The clientele supports the number of country music bars here.

If there were not enough patrons, some or all of these establishments would close down — this explains the relative scarcity of non-country bars, radio stations and restaurants.

Another occasion on which minorities tend to cry racism is the move to end affirmative action.

In the beginning, affirmative

action — perhaps even true quotas — was necessary. Nature hates change as much as it is driven toward it, so a little prodding was required to get people to change the system to which they had become accustomed.

Every day, old racists die, but they are not all replaced by new ones. Children who are raised by racist parents find it harder to support those prejudices everyday they are surrounded by minorities who do not fit their own stereotypes.

Because nature resists change, an object in motions tends to stay in motion — meaning the change that has started will continue. Also, sadly, as long as affirmative action exists, there always will be people who have to defend themselves against the accusation, "You only got the job because you're (insert color of your choice here)."

Is affirmative action still neces-

sary? The Associated Press reported that the University of California's Boalt Hall Law School has seen an 81 percent decrease in African-American enrollment and a 50 percent decrease in Hispanic enrollment since the passage of Proposition 209. But the courts have blocked its implementation. And there is no way this university's administration is going to implement that change voluntarily.

**Not all white people like country music — some even believe that 'country music' is an oxymoron.**

The fact of the matter is that people have decided they need affirmative action to get anywhere — so the minorities have stopped applying. This mindset only can harm those who hold it. Removing the cause of this defeatist attitude only can help those people.

That is the true test of whether something is racist. If an act is done for the purpose of harming a person because of his or her race, then it is a racist act. But if there are no Tejano bars because there is not enough business to keep one open, that is not racist.

If something is done to help a group of people, it is definitely not racist. It does not matter if every member of every minority hates a certain policy or act; it should only be classified as racist if the policy in question was meant to hurt them.

MIKE LUCKOVICH  
ATLANTA CONSTITUTION



MAIL CALL

**Overlooking choices lead to infant deaths**

In response to Mandy Cater's June 25 column:

While the controversy surrounding the teaching of sexual abstinence or education continues to be debated in the public arena, a more important issue should be addressed — the issue of choices.

Sex education shouldn't overshadow teaching teenagers about choices regarding sex and its consequences. Teaching abstinence will work for some indi-

viduals, but for others it will not.

The goal of families, schools, and other institutions should be to provide teenagers with the knowledge to make their own choices, and dealing with the consequences of that choice. I highly doubt that Melissa Drexler's and Amy Grossberg's decisions were made because "these teenagers felt their... actions were the only solution."

In case one wonders how I can criticize the actions and intentions of others, it just so happens that I was in a similar situation myself.

Two years ago I found myself pregnant and unmarried, except with one minor difference — I understood my choices.

The decision I made to have my baby is not for everyone, but today I have a beautiful two-year-old girl who will one day thank me for choosing life over my own selfish needs.

Angela C. Carpenter  
Class of '97

WE HOPE THE SETTLEMENT WILL BE ACCEPTED AND WE'LL ALL BE SHIELDED FROM FUTURE LITIGATION...

WHAT TOBACCO COMPANY ARE YOU WITH?!

