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Some Comments on the Race of the Races

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Abstract. This article provides a brief analysis of the phenomenology of race and racial conflict.

Racial conflict is a social fact of the times and, perhaps, of history. This conflict is exemplified by (1) wars over territory and natural resources; (2) civil strife over political power and opportunity; (3) prescriptions and proscriptions concerning sex, marriage, mobility, and association; and (4) scapegoating during periods of crisis involving different races.

Yet there is as much conflict and much less consensus over what race is. Is it merely some concatenation of external physical characteristics like skin color, height, or the shape of lips or eyes? Can differential distributions of internal physical characteristics be substituted or added like brain size, brain structure, genetic anomalies, or blood pressure? Is the crux of the matter psychological and social characteristics inferred (by the observer or the observed) to be caused by or linked to different or differential distributions of physical characteristics? Or is the heart of the matter not inferred differences but differentially inferred values applied to inferred physical and or psychological and social differences?

With the many different approaches to race and the prevalence of racial conflict, it would seem that the phenomenology of race and racial conflict may be intrinsic or difficult-to-extinguish features of human socioperception and social behavior. That is, regardless of one's philosophical (ontological) position concerning an objective reality independent of human mental processes, race and racial conflict remain social facts permeating the strategic-moral calculus of political psychology. If so, public policies founded on goals of "color (or racial characteristic[s]) blindness" and "racial equality" as opposed to racial equity and opportunity deny or discount human phenomenology and breed estrangement from human existence. A celebration of the different among those who share basic political goals would best inform policy on the most intractable of conflicts. (See Fairchild, H.H. (1991). Scientific racism: The cloak of objectivity. *Journal of Social Issues*, 47, 101-115; Mendez, R.P. (1997). Classification of 'race' aided colonialism. *The New York Times*, <http://www.nytimes.com>; Yee, A.H. (1983). Ethnicity and race: psychological perspectives. *Educational Psychologist*, 18, 14-24; Yee, A.H., Fairchild, H.H., Weizmann, F., & Wyatt, G.E. (1993). Addressing psychology's problems with race. *American Psychologist*, 48, 1132-1140.) (Keywords: Conflict, Discrimination, Race.)