

Race: The Deciding Factor

Black. White.

Sounds like the prominent colors in an artist's palette, right? But let's tailor this more to modern times:

Blacks are incarcerated. Whites are innocent.

Blacks are discriminated. Whites are praised.

Blacks are shot. Whites live.

The creed of grouping humans by physical appearance and stigmatizing based on stereotypes has its roots deep in ancient colonization. Since the 17th century, Whites have dominated and ostracized Blacks. However, while today it may seem as if society has become more accepting of different races, we still continue to brand minorities with labels like “criminal” and “mentally ill”. This social stigma adheres to someone for the duration of their life, denouncing them from a whole usual person to a tainted, discounted one. It clings to the group of people it condemns, sinking its roots deeper, impacting culture one label at a time.

Thus, it's no surprise why in 2015 minorities are still people of color. Being denounced as “worthless”, the consequences have followed Blacks and Latinos throughout centuries. Just like a shadow, race and its stereotypes lurk with the person, deciding for them whether or not they receive privilege like a White or be knocked down like a Black.

The advantage of being White go far beyond than just respect. It is what determines what university you go to; It is what determines whether or not you will spend the rest of your life in poverty or if you become successful; It is what determines whether or not you get shot or leave innocent.

This clash of color has been tested in Ferguson, Charleston, and Baltimore, last year, all due to police brutality. White policemen have “unintentionally” killed unarmed Blacks—however this was not a mistake. Time after time, White criminals have gone off scot-free while Blacks have to suffer grueling torture in jail or death. There is no simple explanation for this except for the fact that it’s not your mental capability or your personality, it’s your skin color that determines how you are judged as a person and ultimately how you live the rest of your life. For example, all races use drugs at the same rate yet Blacks are more likely to get charged for the crime than Whites. The label of being “criminals” has buried itself deep into the history and culture of Blacks. A negative connotation has become the norm of a race. If one of the ideals of our nation is equality and justice for all, how can we expect a social change when we already stigmatized a whole race as “convicts”?

The definition of race has mutated from general grouping to favoritism. No longer are people just categorized based on a common trait. They are now a social class system- caste system- with minorities on the bottom and Whites on top.

Fifty years after Martin Luther King Jr. spoke out against discrimination, violence has not disappeared. Today the specific tools of oppression have altered—racial gerrymandering, voter ID laws, and mass disenfranchisement through a criminal justice system that disproportionately incarcerates Blacks. Yet, while the tools have changed, Blacks are still callously cut out of the political process.

Society's bias towards Whites has entrenched a mentality identical to the colonial-American period, where Blacks are still seen as “worthless” in the eyes of justice. But if justice is supposed to be blind, then we as a nation have not prospered in offering an equal opportunity for all races. Race shouldn't be the sole descriptor of a person, it should just be a minor detail; Simply a stroke in a painting.