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TODAY'S "QUICK HIT": RACIAL BLINDNESS? OR NOT? IT'S A BIT CONFUSING!

By Stephen L. Bakke  March 7, 2017



Here's what provoked me:

While observing the recent push for multiculturalism and all the complexities that brings with it, I began to realize this phenomenon, along with the related identity politics and political correctness, actually argues against the Martin Luther King Jr. ideal of racial blindness. This "came to a head" when reading a letter from the Artistic Director of the renowned Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis.

Here's my response:

Racial Blindness? Or Not? It's a Bit Confusing!

On March 6, Guthrie Artistic Director Joseph Haj took exception to a critic's criticism of casting for "The Royal Family" ("Distracting' to cast artists of color in period plays? That's regressive"). The critic commented on casting a black actress in a traditionally white role. Haj feels the critic found it distracting to have an unexplained racial mix in the cast – i.e. it introduced an unexplained potential "sexual dalliance."

Haj expressed his support for diversity in casting, without an over-riding regard for racial inferences from the original script. I support the "racial blindness" ideal that Haj expresses. It enhances the Martin Luther King Jr. ideal of not judging "by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character." Let us applaud the Director's noble cause in pushing hard for that goal.

I become confused, however, because many who would support this goal of racial blindness as it applies to theatrical casting, I believe would also be supporting emphasis and attention given to racial and cultural differences in other areas of everyday America. Multi-culturalism, along with its handmaidens, political correctness and identity politics, emphasizes differences, and seems to argue against Kings ideal. This move away from *E Pluribus Unum* is even becoming common on college campuses through "black-only" housing and courses, and "no-white safe spaces."

Please provide guidance for those of us who don't know when to give notice to racial differences and when we should be blind to them. I'm willing to listen and learn!