

Gallagher, Charles. 2003. "Color-Blind Privilege: The Social and Political Functions of Erasing the Color Line in Post-Race America." *Race, Gender & Class* 10:22-37

PRIMARY ARGUMENT: The author argues that color-blindness is problematic because it maintains White privilege and diminishes the idea that racial inequality exists.

IMPORTANT DEFINED CONCEPTS:

- Colorblindness: The concept that the color of our skin (race) is ignored and in no way affects the opportunities we do or do not get to experience in our society.
- White Privilege: The societal advantages, often not experienced by minority race groups, that white people get to experience purely because of the fact that they are white.
- Laissez-Faire Racism: A kind of racism that ignores structural discrimination's negative impact on the outcomes of Black people, instead blaming those outcomes on Black people's supposed cultural inferiority

PRIMARY FINDINGS:

1. The most common explanation given by whites during the study for why disadvantages exist for people of color was lack of motivation because they believed wholeheartedly that America is based on meritocracy and the opportunity structure is open to everyone regardless of color.
2. Colorblindness has created an illusion for whites that just because it is illegal to discriminate against people of color in housing, jobs, etc., racial inequality no longer exists so we no longer have to think about or publicly discuss it.
3. Whites see experiencing one's race as optional because they get to choose when and where to show their specific European roots, they assume all races can do the same. They use this to argue that minority groups, especially blacks, are the ones who keep bringing up race and take it way too seriously. People of color are made to be at fault for why we cannot be a color-blind society.

KEY QUOTE: "The logic inherent in the colorblind approach is circular; since race no longer shapes life chances in a color-blind world there is no need to take race into account when discussing differences in outcomes between racial groups. This approach erases America's racial hierarchy by implying that social, economic and political power and mobility is equally shared among all racial groups. Ignoring the extent or ways in which race shapes life chances validates whites' social location in the existing racial hierarchy while legitimating the political and economic arrangements that perpetuate and reproduce racial inequality and privilege" (28).

QUESTION: The idea of the color of our skin not creating disadvantages for us in life sounds like a fantastic goal. Is there a way for this to happen where the color of our skin really does have no effect on our relations with other people and our chances of success? Or are we destined to always have the color of our skin be the first thing people notice about us and change how we interact with one another?