



Romney's Whiteness and the Times' Lightness: Both a Liability

It's interesting that liberals accuse traditionalists of wanting to turn back the clock. For they themselves live in 1952. To be precise, where those on the right want to resurrect the virtues of ages past, leftists think that characteristic vices long buried never died. It's enough to make me want to bang my head against a wall; only, neurological damage has bad effects like uncontrollable drooling and a desire to read *The New York Times*.



Speaking of which, the *Old Gay Lady* recently published an opinion piece by one Lee Siegel [titled](#) "What's Race Got to Do With It?" Discussing the presidential campaign, Mr. Siegel advances the thesis that far from Mitt Romney being at a disadvantage because of what he is (a Mormon), he has an advantage because of what he is: "the whitest white man" running for the presidency. Writes Siegel:

[T]here has yet to be any discussion over the one quality that has subtly fueled his [Romney's] candidacy thus far and could well put him over the top in the fall: his race. The simple, impolitely stated fact is that Mitt Romney is the whitest white man to run for president in recent memory.

Of course, I'm not talking about a strict count of melanin density. I'm referring to the countless subtle and not-so-subtle ways he telegraphs to a certain type of voter that he is the cultural alternative to America's first black president. It is a whiteness grounded in a retro vision of the country, one of white picket fences and stay-at-home moms and fathers unashamed of working hard for corporate America.

Siegel's piece is well written and stylistically fine, and much of what he says is true. If you accept stereotypes — and when valid I never shrink from them — Romney could be said to be the whitest guy in the room. Just a bit, I suppose, he smacks of the Dan Aykroyd character in the '80s film *Trading Places*. Yet it could be pointed out that if we traded stereotypes and spoke of the "blackest black man," we'd be trading a nice *Times* gig for the unemployment line whether it was "impolitely stated" or not. But this obvious point is not the main one, which is that Siegel is right about most everything —except the most important thing.

It is what is assumed that is accepted most unquestioningly. The prejudices we should look out for most are the ones we don't see. In Siegel's case, what he doesn't see is his own "retro vision of the country," as a place where a white sheet hides under stylish garb around every corner and a Swastika is printed



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on January 19, 2012

in invisible ink on every other forehead. But the reality is quite different, because being white today is not an asset. It's a liability.

At a gathering a couple of years before Barack Obama won the White House, a black fellow I was talking to proclaimed confidently that "a black man will never be President of America." I told him he was wrong. And when Obama later rose to the fore and the media were peddling the narrative that he had to overcome voters' racial prejudice, I said they were wrong. I said that in our politically correct time being black was in fashion. And in just the way that affirmative action gives minorities a leg up in the job market, cultural affirmative action — the phenomenon whereby average people, often unconsciously, show favoritism toward members of so-called victim groups — gave Obama a leg up with the voters. "Impolitely stated," many whites supported Obama simply because he was black.

And, in October 2008, Gallup released a poll supporting this assertion, [finding that](#) "[w]hile 6% of voters say they are less likely to vote for Barack Obama because of his race, 9% say they are more likely to vote for him...." Yet, if anything, I believe this understates the case.

During the 2008 election cycle, many of us heard people say that they "wanted to vote for a black man." And how many of the young people — a demographic that often listens to hip-hop, wears saggy pants and embraces other aspects of gangsta' sub-culture — who cast ballots for Obama because he was "cool" saw as part of that coolness his color?

It's not a stretch to say that the number might have been high. Ever since Susan Sontag stated in the 1960s, "The white race is the cancer of human history," there has been an increasing drumbeat of anti-white attitudes and implications. The Founding Fathers have oft been derided as "dead white males," and in 2008 John McCain was sometimes dismissed as just another "old white guy" running for President. The reality is that when the social engineers want to discredit something today, they often affix the label "white" to it. "White male linear logic," anyone? (Does this imply the existence of black female circular logic? Just asking.) Thus, if the designation "white" is such a pejorative, do you really think the state of being so is such an advantage?

White public figures also aren't allowed even one racial slip-up when seeking office. Obama sat in a black-power church for 20 years, and Attorney General Eric Holder, [reportedly](#), carries a card in his wallet stating, "Blackness is more important than anything, and the black US attorney has common cause with the black criminal." And neither fact proved an impediment to attaining power. Yet when Senator George Allen imprudently used the largely unknown (until then) term "[macaca](#)" — just once — it spelled the end of his 2008 presidential ambitions.

This isn't to say there aren't people who won't vote for Obama because he's (half) black. There are people who wouldn't vote for Rick Santorum because he's Catholic, for Michelle Bachmann because she's a woman, for Newt Gingrich because he's pudgy or for Ron Paul because he's gaunt. There's one in every bunch. The question is whether the prejudice at issue is fringe or characteristic of society. Is it demonized or institutionalized? And anti-white prejudice ranges from tolerated to encouraged.

When addressing the millions who don't believe Obama "legally and morally" deserves the White House, Siegel opines, "[Romney] knows that he offers to these people the white solution to the problem of a black president." The reality, however, is that what Romney really offers to these people is a business solution to the problem of a Bolshevik President. This escapes Siegel — and I do mean escapes. Unlike some Machiavellian types, I'm sure he is sincere in his beliefs. But quite like many other liberals, he has a retro vision of the country. He and *The New York Times* still live in 1952 — in all the



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wrong ways.



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