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**TACIT
RACISM**

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Tacit Racism - Rawls and Duck (2020)

Tacit racism refers to ways in which systemic racism has been coded into the structures of daily life, such that whether or not we have explicit or implicit bias, when we participate in social interaction – or otherwise engage in society – our actions will produce racist outcomes.

Every time we interact with another human being, we draw on a set of unconscious taken-for-granted social expectations to guide us through the encounter. We share these expectations with those who share our social world.



Overview

Race is a Social Fact made by people in societies

Interaction Orders are expectations for making Social Facts

We Identify Interaction Orders of Race (Rawls 2000) in:

Black/White Introductory Sequences

Fractured Reflections and Non-Recognition

Submissive Civility in Everyday Interaction

Solution: Developing a White Double Consciousness

Race as a Social Fact

As an interaction order phenomenon, Race depends on **cooperation** and mutual **understanding through shared practices** to exist.

These practices are collected in Interaction Orders (Rawls 1987) and can also produce **survival strategies for coping with racism**.

The survival strategies are based on what Du Bois (1903) called **“Double Consciousness”** and **“Second Sight”**.

Interactional equality, Submissive Civility and Null-Response are survival strategies we will talk about.

The Invention of Race

Different societies and different Interaction Orders enact Race and other social facts in different ways

“Whiteness” and “Blackness” were invented in the American colonial context to divide English/Irish from African slaves.

The binary Black/White categorization system that developed in the early US colonies had become the primary classification scheme for Race by 1725.

Living separately for 160 years Black and White Americans developed different interaction Orders.

“White People are Nosey”

We heard Black Americans repeating this narrative about White People

We collected narratives and then made transcripts of conversations to figure out what it meant.

It turned out to be quite simple.

Black and White Americans (not Europeans who are more like Black Americans) have different ways of establishing meaning and identity when they first interact (and thereafter).

The Differences

Black Americans were commenting on the difference with the narrative “White People are Nosey”.

Black Interaction Order expectations about introductions are different – providing Black Americans an oasis of equality missing from public life

Black Introductory Sequences produce this equality by avoiding category information

by contrast White Introductory sequences sort people by categories which quickly identifies status and inequality

Fractured Reflections

“Fractured Reflections” of Self Identity

Because many high status places and identities and identified as “White” people do not expect to see Black people in these places with high status identities

In our study of high status Black men we documented how this works for high status Black men whose statuses are repeatedly not recognized.

Consequences for Self

If it happens only once or twice, you can inspect your own self presentation to see if you are at fault. Everyone experiences something like this sometimes.

But when it happens routinely and in extreme ways, the person is jerked out of the taken for granted.

If they question their own self presentation every time, they will be in trouble.

Therefore, survival requires evasive action.

Non-Recognition

The refusal to recognize the legitimacy of negative responses to the self is a defensive strategy.

When one party does not recognize the identity of the other and thereby reflects back to him or her a “fractured (self)-reflection” (Rawls and Duck 2016), the citizen can refuse to accept that reflection.

We call this a Null-Response.

Submissive Civility

Re-examine what W.E.B. Du Bois called “the Submissive Man” as a defensive strategy that involves exaggerated temporary conformity to White expectations by Black Americans.

This contrasts with the White Strong Man ideal.

While White Americans don't seem to recognize the interactional nature of these troubles – treating them as shortcomings of Black people,

Stories about these as interactional problems circulate widely in the Black community, and are not a research artifact.

Developing a White “Double-Consciousness” about Race

A national conversation in which we all discuss our observations of the racism in our own lives is long overdue.

We propose that this will help *White people develop their own “double consciousness” about Race.*

Double-consciousness has given Black Americans the understanding that there is racism so tacit that only some people involved in an encounter are aware of it.

With this insight, White Americans will hopefully be able to see their own social expectations – and their behavior – as they are seen by Black Americans.

The End

