

Racism

in Mind

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2 : THREE SITES FOR RACISM SOCIAL STRUCTURES, VALUINGS, AND VICE

This essay philosophically examines some recent and important understandings of racism. The distinguished historian George Fredrickson (2002) conceives of racism as constituted by certain forms of conduct between social groups. Recent treatments within cultural studies, represented here by critical and creative surveys that Mike Cole (1997) and Peter Sedgwick (1999) offer of that literature, see it as consisting in social structures of hierarchy or disadvantage. The social theorist Albert Memmi (2000) maintains that racism resides in various value judgments unfavorable to a group. I present reasons to reject each of these views, reasons which, I maintain, lend support to an understanding of racism as essentially affective, desiderative, and volitional in its core. I briefly explicate this view and defend it against two objections. I conclude by revisiting Fredrickson's account to discuss the progression implicit in the sequence of accounts I treat and the lessons it teaches about what matters morally, and I offer a suggestion about ways to reform social inquiry.

I. RACISM AS INTERGROUP BEHAVIOR

Near the end of his definitive review of racism's varied history, Fredrickson (2002: 170) offers the understanding of racism to which, he thinks, his study has led: "Racism exists when one ethnic group or historical collectivity dominates,

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excludes, or seeks to eliminate another on the basis of differences that it [the first group] believes are hereditary and unalterable.” Despite the authority his career of expert scholarship properly commands, I think this account flawed in ways that make it untenable.

We can distinguish several problems. The first is that of reification. Frederickson’s account talks of the conditions in which racism “exists,” but he does not tell where—that is, in what—it then exists. *What* is racist when racism exists? Is the whole society then racist? Is it only the group that dominates or excludes or seeks to eliminate that is racist? Does Frederickson think that only groups, and not individuals, are and can be racist? If so, his account is plainly implausible and inadequate, for giving us too limited an account. Indeed, we rightly think that we must understand talk of racism’s existence in terms of people and things being racist. If not, then does Frederickson think someone *S* can be racist only if *S*’s group (or some other group) is racist? That too is implausible. Suppose *S*₁ simply wants (what she thinks of as her racial) group *G*₁ to dominate some other group *G*₂. Suppose she even takes steps toward this end, but her efforts are unsuccessful and her preference is never realized. Is what Frederickson’s account entails—namely, that *S*₁ wants and attempts racism, but no racism “exists” and therefore she is not herself a racist—really correct? In fact, because there is then no racism—again, none “exists”—it cannot even be true on Frederickson’s account that *S*₁ has a racist desire! We want to know when, and in virtue of what, people, actions, preferences, statements, beliefs, and much else are racist, not just when it exists. Frederickson’s conception of racism does not do this explicitly, and the answers it suggests are not credible.

Second, if Frederickson is correct in holding that group *G*₁’s simply “seek[ing] to eliminate” group *G*₂ suffices for racism, then should not *G*₁’s seeking to dominate or exclude *G*₂, rather than *G*₁’s actually *succeeding* in dominating or excluding *G*₂, also suffice? If not, why not? What does Frederickson think makes such a crucial difference between eliminating, on the one hand, and dominating or excluding, on the other? He provides no answer and I cannot see any plausible one. That suggests that success is required for racism in either all three projects or in none. There are good grounds to think the latter alternative is true. Actual domination or exclusion by one group over another (normally, that is, successful domination or exclusion) seems not to be necessary for racism. We would count a group’s pursuing, longing for, and rejoicing in the prospect of dominating or excluding another group as racism—better, as racist—irrespective of whether their preferences and projects bore fruit. It may not even be sufficient. It is not entirely clear whether accidental or otherwise unintended domination or exclusion by one group of another is even possible. Remember that Frederickson requires that the dominant or excluding group engage in its conduct on a certain (racial) basis. That indicates that they do it for a certain kind of reason, and therefore on purpose, with intent. However, even if unin-

tentional racial domination or exclusion is somehow possible, it should not suffice for racism. It is not enough that exclusions happen to trace a racial divide. As Frederickson's own account indicates, we think it must be more deeply informed by race.

The same goes a fortiori for racism in individuals, for they cannot normally dominate or eliminate whole groups. Moreover, their racism will more commonly be targeted against individuals they think belong to the racial group, not against the group itself. That fact exposes another lacuna in Frederickson's overly socialized conception.

Third, we should remember a fact that Frederickson's account, centered as it is on how racism tends to dominate and exclude, tends to obscure. What matters for racism is not so much what is done, or even what is desired or sought for the targeted group (or some of its members), but *why*, on *what basis*, and *for what ends* it is sought for them. The distinguishing feature of racist persons, societies, projects, actions, institutions, and the like is their viciousness—the malicious, or contemptuous, or callous frame of mind from which they spring.

Fourth, these last considerations should lead us to notice how unjustifiably narrow is the list of what we might call “racist projects” that are internal to Frederickson's account. Why should wanting only domination, exclusion, or elimination be necessary for racism? Ought not group G1's seeking (or just wanting, or wishing for, or delighting in) *other* harms for G2 similarly suffice for racism? And remembering what we said above, ought not *individual* members of G1 (or other groups) wanting ills (as such) for G2 or (various of) its members also suffice? If not, Frederickson owes us some explanation why. All these reflections on Frederickson's account of racism, and the corrections those reflections motivate, urge us toward thinking of racism as consisting chiefly in such vicious mental stances as ill will, disrespect, and unconcern for others on account of their believed race or shaped by it. I return to develop this line of thought below and indicate some of its implications.

II. RACISM AND RECENT CRITICAL THEORY OF CULTURE

In an article in a reference work in so-called cultural studies, summarizing the history and current state of the discussion and proceeding to draw out what he sees as its implications, theorist Michael Cole (1997: 450–51) conceives racism

as entailing a process of racialization whereby social relations between people are structured by the signification of human biological and or cultural characteristics in such a way as to define and construct differentiated social collectivities. Such groups are assumed to have a natural unchanging origin and status. They are seen as inherently different and causing negative conse-

quences for other groups and/or as possessing certain evaluated characteristics [perhaps evaluated positively as well as, or instead of, negatively]. Since these evaluated characteristics are stereotypes they are likely to be distorted and misleading. . . . [T]here is no logical correlation between cognition and action. However, the distinction [between cognition and action] is of limited use . . . because it is only when ideologies are expressed and or actioned [*sic*] that there is any need to attend to them or indeed to worry about them. In order to understand the phenomenon [of racism] it needs to be situated economically, ideologically, historically, and geographically. It takes different forms at different historical conjunctures and is justified in different ways according to different circumstances. Notwithstanding the fact that there are common features to all forms of racism, there is in fact a variety of racisms. . . . Thus the above definition needs to be context-specific.

In a similar reference work, the influential social thinker Peter Sedgwick (1999: 325) states his view, based on his understanding of the direction the discussion has taken in the field.

Racism draws a hierarchical distinction between races, opening a gulf between them and setting one racially designated group over and above another on a scale of worth, intelligence, or importance. A racist ideology, therefore, is constructed on the basis of hierarchical distinctions drawn between different groups. . . . Racism thus embodies the attitude of a rigid and naturalized conception concerning the nature of individuals and groups. Whether or not racism should therefore be defined solely in terms of ideologically constructed attitudes or additionally in terms of the norms and practices of a given society is a matter of some debate.

Similar problems afflict both these accounts. First, both are murky and boil down to claims that racism consists in beliefs or in some complex of beliefs and actions (“practices” in Sedgwick), opening them to the literature’s objections to doxastic and behavioral accounts of racism. As for doxastic accounts of racism, we need only note that there is little reason to call someone’s believing something racist (save in a counterfactual sense) when she believes it from an innocent epistemic error, independent of any contempt or insensitivity. However, people and their attitudes and actions can be racist if they are so dependent. I point out some problems in behavioral accounts in other writings.¹ There are issues to sort out here, but it is plain that these cultural theoretic accounts introduce little genuinely novel, little that is not subject to the problems identified in

1. For more on belief-centered and action-centered conceptions of racism, see the critical discussions of Appiah, Ture and Hamilton, Goldberg, and others in, *inter alia*, Garcia 1997a, 1997b, and 2001b.

other accounts.² Second, claims, such as that explicit in Cole, that ideologies matter only when acted on, are ugly and obtuse. Beliefs can matter morally and socially because of the affective, conative (desiderative), and volitional stances they express (and come from) as well as for their results. In fact, the moral significance of actions is plainly derivative, for we condemn them for being ill-intended, malicious, thoughtless, and so on, and praise them for being connected to the opposed mental states. Third, it is unclear whether the racial hierarchy explicitly invoked as essential to racism in Sedgwick's account, and, I think, implicit in Cole's, needs actually to be socially instantiated or may be merely desired or believed in. The latter position is more intuitively appealing, but it approximates and anticipates core claims of an attitudinal account of racism.

Making racism depend on social structures and historical context can have grotesque consequences. Shaylee Ledbetter, a foul-mouthed, thieving, perverted, and incestuous White junkie prostitute in a theatrical fiction, affirms, "I'm not a racist. I just don't like niggers."³ This is in protest to her brother's charge of racism after she has delivered herself of various contemptuous remarks. Permit me to speculate a bit on the character's psychology. To her, it appears, racism is a complicated matter, a business of widespread ideologies, theories, systems of thought, social meanings, and perhaps of complex social and institutional ar-

2. This may not be true of all those who emphasize the social in their understandings of racism's nature. Haslanger, in chapter 5, deliberately contrasts her social approach to oppression with another approach that is individualistic and emphasizes what she calls "agent oppression." This is not the place for a detailed rebuttal of her position. Suffice it to observe, first, that I see no future for an account of oppression in which there are no agents of the oppression, for oppression is not something that merely exists or happens, but is done and therefore done by some agents. (Haslanger is not consistent on this point, sometimes contrasting "structural oppression" with "agent oppression," but sometimes talking of all oppression as having agents.) The same goes for several other related phenomena whose essentially agentive nature Haslanger only poorly obscures by her use of the passive in talk of being disadvantaged, etc. (Who is doing the mistreating?) Second, Haslanger's position hinges on structural oppression of a race involving "nonaccidental" correlation between disadvantage and race without the oppressive behavior being targeted at harming the race's members, nor grounded in contempt or insensitivity toward them. This strategy, I think, is likewise hopeless. My little desk dictionary defines the accidental as involving lack of intent or foresight and characterized by carelessness. Without pursuing the matter here, we should note that this suggests that the nonaccidental disadvantaging Haslanger emphasizes will involve disadvantage that the agents intend or foresee and that they take care to insure. Contrary to Haslanger's project of rebutting views that, like mine, require vicious malice or contempt or insensitivity for racism, this resort to the nonaccidental will on examination lead right to those mental states.

3. Adam Rabb, *Stone Cold Dead Serious*, act 1; produced at the American Repertory Theater, Cambridge, Mass., February 2002. Ms. Ledbetter seems to mean that she does dislike, even detests, those she so designates.

rangements. In contrast, she seems to see herself merely as voicing her own personal likes and dislikes, loves and hates, independent of any such highfalutin theories or high-level conspiracies, to which she, a figure at the margins of society, may plausibly see herself as in no position to make a contribution even if she were so disposed. An account of racism should show why her presuppositions are incorrect and why it is precisely in the depths of our individual minds, in our fears and choices, our disdain and hatreds, that racism dwells, with the other moral vices there lodged. It is a shame that nowadays many accounts of racism, focusing as they do on ideologies and theories and grand social structures, side with Shaylee when they should be helping to educate her and us about where her assumptions are in error.

III. RACISM AS VALUE JUDGMENT

“Racism is a generalizing definition and valuation of differences, whether real or imaginary, to the advantage of the one defining and employing them, and to the detriment of the one subjected to the act of definition, whose purpose is to justify (social or psychological) hostility or assault.” Thus writes the contemporary European social theorist Albert Memmi (2000: 100). He continues, “Heterophobia would designate the many configurations of fear, hate, and aggressiveness that, directed against an other, attempt to justify themselves through different psychological, cultural, social, or metaphysical means, of which racism, in the biological sense is only one instance” (118).

This view is appealing and insightful in viewing Blum’s “inferiorizing” beliefs (that is, beliefs that a group is inferior in important ways) as racist in that they rationalize (actual, believed, or desired) victimization (see Blum 2002: 8, 181–82). Still more promising, the second quoted passage suggests that Memmi may conceive racism more as an emotional (and volitional?) matter. Elsewhere, and again below, I suggest we conceive racism as focally a matter of volitions, desires, and hopes. However, Memmi’s account is different from, and less appealing than, my own in several ways. (i) It concentrates on the evaluative and doxastic rather than on the volitional, understanding racism as consisting in doxastic, judgmental states and processes (evaluating differences); (ii) it requires racism differentially to distribute beneficial and detrimental effects; and (iii) it assumes that racism is always directed against an other. As I indicated, each of these commitments is problematic. The first serves to exclude from the class of racists such people as the Black-hater who does not bother to rationalize her hatred with beliefs about the supposed inferiority of Black people. (Indeed, some racists may think the targets of their hatred superior to themselves, and hate them precisely from resentment.) The second excludes from it racism that is passive, for one reason or

another never issuing in action. Indeed, it excludes even racist action that is merely *unsuccessful* in its aim of harming. The third leaves no room within racism for the type that consists in internalizing as self-hatred an ambient loathing for one's own group.

There is a lesson. We all generalize about people, and need not do anything immoral thereby. The distinguishing marks of racism do not lie in these illative details. Nor ought we reflexively classify as racist someone who loves all people of all races but has a personal favorite among what she thinks to be the human races. She is foolish and dangerous, but not necessarily a racist simply because of her evaluative generalizations. Rather, racism's central forms lie in what a person wants for those assigned to a racial group, and in how she feels about them, what she hopes for them or aims to do to them, and so on.

It is worth remarking at this point that some work in virtue epistemology indicates that beliefs are made epistemically unjustified by being intellectually vicious, infected by some intellectual vice, in their formation (or maintenance). However, the intellectual vices as a class cannot be easily, persuasively, or sharply differentiated from the moral vices. Many intellectual vices share the same name as moral vices—cowardice, pride, diffidence, laziness—and perhaps the same nature as well (see Zagzebski 1996: 137–211). This properly suggests that, if we follow the trail of racist value judgment, we will find ourselves looking for racism's heart in moral vice, that is, in deformations of character, in our dispositions to want, desire, choose, ignore, or neglect what we ought not.

IV. MOTIVATIONAL AND VOLITIONAL CONCEPTIONS OF RACISM

The upshot of our critical discussions of the accounts of racism found in Frederickson, in the cultural theorists Cole and Sedgwick, and in Memmi is that an adequate account of racism needs to attend more to the quality of the racist's motives, aims, decisions, preferences, and so on. In short, to matters of moral virtue and vice. Let me say a bit more about this, sketching an account of racism that moves these matters front and center.

Tzvetan Todorov (1986: 370) claims that racism is "a type of behavior which consists in the display of contempt or aggressiveness toward other people on account of physical differences (other than those of sex) between them and oneself." Thomas Schmid (1996) has similarly proposed what he calls a "motivational approach," which identifies racism in its central, "morally most objectionable" sense as "the infliction of unequal consideration, motivated by the desire to dominate, based on race alone." Both views highlight the morally objectionable factors feeding into someone's behavior. They capture the deep truth in Emmanuel Eze's observation that "racism . . . manifests itself in a refusal to love others . . .

[R]acism [is] already a sign of our incapacity to love enough" (2001: 179, 180).⁴ Indeed, if a view like the ones Todorov and Schmid (and I, below) offer is correct, departure from love, that is, from goodwill, is not just what racism "manifests" or signifies but is.

I have elsewhere (Garcia 1999, 2001b) registered my reservations about details of Schmid's and Todorov's positions.⁵ For my purposes here, it will have to suf-

4. Counseling that we need to "practic[e] to live in service to a particular future . . . a future where there could be love and care enough for everyone," Eze (2001: 179, 180) asks rhetorically, "Isn't love the cure for hatred?" In my virtues-based view, love is justified not instrumentally, as Eze's language suggests, for its effect on hatred. Rather hatred, malevolence, is morally bad (vicious) in that by its nature it stands in opposition to the virtue of benevolent love. Eze ties his hope for an end to racism to his ideal of a "postracial future," by which he seems to mean a time when people no longer credit racial distinctions. While I agree that race-centered thinking and the recent vogue of racial "identity" are confused both intellectually and morally, I do not hold that racism can end only when racial beliefs are eliminated. Rather what is needed is an end to racial hostility and disregard (and their de-institutionalization).

5. Todorov's position misses other crucial features of racism. The racist's hostility, contempt, or indifference need not be directed to those she deems different from herself. Sometimes, *pace* Todorov, the racist is a person who internalizes the vicious attitudes others feel for her and those classed with her, coming to despise herself and those assigned to the *same* race as she is. Moreover, despite what Todorov says, not just any nonsexual physical difference is such that responding contemptuously to those thought to have it can constitute racism. That would make immoral discrimination on the basis of height, physical disability, and perhaps even age into forms of racism. Rather, the racist must do the thinking that shapes her responses in roughly racial terms—that is, especially, in terms of what are deemed heritable characteristics of skin and hair, etc. as differentiated in ways tied to the major continental land masses. (This holds whether or not, in her more theoretical moments, she denies the reality of race as a biological or cultural category.)

Likewise, Schmid's implicit concession that a less controlled race hater would be a racist seems not to jibe with his view that racism demands a desire to "dominate" (indeed, a desire put into practice in the form of unequal treatment); for even if hatred always involves some desire to harm, it need not be anything so extreme. More important, Schmid does not adequately or consistently explain why racism is immoral. He locates racism's immorality in its "opposition to the principle of human equality," among whose "elements" are both a "perception of all humans as essentially equal" and a "willingness to extend to all humans and human groups the same basic rights." However, it is unclear that one can properly talk, as Schmid does, of principles demanding that we perceive this or that. Belief is not so fully under our immediate control as that seems to require, although a person may be vicious—not just epistemically but morally—in allowing herself to develop certain cognitive habits. Besides, Schmid wants to distinguish the real, immoral racist from someone who innocently comes to hold ugly racial beliefs. However, contrary to what Schmid's distinction needs, even the "merely cognitive racist" will violate his principle of equality simply by perceiving some as unequal. (For more on these thinkers, see Garcia 1999 and 2001b.)

fice to point out two. First, contrary to a central features in both views, it seems counterintuitive to maintain that racism need find expression in behavior. We ordinarily think the person who feels racial hostility, contempt, or indifference is already marked with racism whether or not she “display[s]” it behaviorally. Second, any such account needs to tell us more about how they explain the wider range of racist phenomena, how not just individual actions but also feelings, beliefs, persons, social practices, and institutions are related.

In a series of papers over the last decade, I have urged an account of racism as vicious ways of falling short in regard to the moral virtue of benevolence. This account retains factors of the sort that are motivational in Schmid’s and Todorov’s positions, but without their presupposition, which we saw to be problematic, that racism requires that racial contempt, desire to dominate, and the like actually motivate action. What matters for racism is that someone’s preferences, dislikes, and choices be of a certain sort, whether or not they lead to action, let alone successful action. Here I wish to stress, as I have not before, the character of the benevolence to which the chief forms of racism stand in opposition. The interpersonal moral virtue is a distinctively *human* benevolence, one grounded in recognition and appreciation of any human person’s status and dignity as a person. Thus, a person who genuinely is benevolently disposed toward people, in the ways in which benevolence constitutes moral virtue, is someone who wishes them well. She wishes every one of them each of a variety of central and distinctive human goods, goods whose possession enhances and helps them realize the fuller humanity of their lives. Turning against any of these goods, or treating someone’s possession of any of them as a light matter, beneath pursuit, is to respond to the relevant person and the good so inadequately as to constitute moral vice. This is an important fact to keep in mind, as it will play a significant role below in our effort to understand certain kinds of racial paternalism, both in their relation to racism and in their immorality.

Racism, at its core, then, consists in racial disregard, including disrespect, or most gravely, in ill will. Racially based or racially informed disregard (or ill will) is an indifference (or opposition) to another’s welfare on account of the racial group to which she is assigned.⁶ Since, so conceived, racism is primarily a mat-

6. An intriguing related question, raised for me by Blum, is whether racists have to believe in races. It seems to me that, just as someone could make a racial classification without realizing (and even while denying) that she is doing so, someone could make a racial classification while sincerely denying that there really are races. So perhaps someone who is what we might call an “antiracist” (a disbeliever in races) could still be a racist. I return to this briefly below.

Eze agrees that racism can involve either ill will or insufficient goodwill. He holds that the opposition to moral care that constitutes racism may take the form of either commission or omission—it is commissive when someone “actively seeks to exclude” and omissive when she restricts her care to those she views as her own kind (Eze 2001: 179). I here call this

ter of what a person does or does not wish, will, and want for others in light of their race—the contents of her will, broadly conceived—I call it a volitional conception of racism.

Such a view helps explain the range of potentially racist phenomena. Actions, beliefs, projects, hopes, wishes, institutions, and institutional practices are all racist insofar as they are informed by racial hostility or disregard. This account also makes manifest why the term “racism” is properly pejorative. The ill will or disregard that constitutes racism is inherently contrary to the moral virtues of benevolence and justice, and often to others as well. The vice may be conscious or unconscious. Perhaps I do not realize that what motivates me, when I let the elevator you are riding pass and wait for the next, is the fact that riding with someone of (what I take to be) your race troubles me. Still less may I see that this troubles me because of stereotypes I have internalized to soothe my conscience as I benefit from the exploitation of your group. Racism is thus always and inherently wrong, and wrong for the same basic reason in every instance.

The sort of view I have proposed locates racism, like other forms of moral viciousness, in the hearts of individuals—in their likes and dislikes, their hopes and wants, their preferences and choices. Racists are *against* those assigned to a certain race. Notice I do not say simply those *of* a certain race: I leave open the vexed question of whether race is real. What matters is that racial assignments are real. These classifications may be conscious or unconscious, and they may be made by the racist herself or by others to whose classification she defers, reluctantly or not, with or without awareness. That someone declares, and even believes, that there are no races does not exempt her from racism. Whether she is a racist depends on how she, in fact, classifies and responds internally to those classifications, her theoretical convictions notwithstanding.

What makes someone a racist is her disregard for, or even hostility to, those assigned to the targeted race, disregard for their needs and well-being. She is racist when and insofar as she is hostile to or cares nothing (or too little) about some people because of their racial classification. So conceiving racism thus allows for the possibility, implicitly denied by some accounts of racism, that someone may be racist against her own group.⁷ The phenomenon of racism internalized as self-hatred is too tragic a one to pretend it is impossible. Similarly, this conception of racism allows that the weak, the powerless, even the oppressed, can be racists, unlike some accounts, which treat personal or group power as a precondition for racism. Poor, marginalized White skinheads who hate Black people in order to feel good about themselves can be racists, as can poor, marginalized Black people

omissive type of racism “disregard” and understand this sort of viciously insufficient goodwill to include modes of disrespect, which offend against the virtue of justice. Disrespect can also figure in acts of ill will by removing or weakening appropriate side constraints.

7. See Todorov 1986 and the discussion below of the position taken therein.

filled with rage against Asians because of perceived slights by a local storekeeper, as can poor, marginalized Asians or American Indians embittered against those at, above, or below their own social or economic level. Neither high income nor social power is a precondition for racism.

It is important to remember that hate and callous indifference (like love) are principally matters of *will* and desire: what does one want, what would one choose, for those assigned to this or that race? Those who fail to act—because of lack of power, opportunity, or for other reasons—can nevertheless be racists. The view taken here has this advantage over accounts that see racism exclusively in personal or institutional *conduct*, or as dependent on such behavior and its success. As we saw, such views give a pass, for example, to the isolated race hater, alone in her room, longing for the oppression of the Black people she sees outside her window, who are beginning to prosper. It is absurd to think that if and when, contrary to her wishes, such a system of oppression ceases to exist, then she *eo ipso* ceases to be a racist. It is no less absurd to think she cannot be racist because, in her isolation, she cannot take effective action against Black people and her longing to do so is frustrated. We thus avoid some conceptual confusions that plague attempts to understand racism as a social system or as a form of behavior. Similarly, our old woman can be a racist even if she never rationalizes her hostility by coming to believe that Black people are her moral or intellectual inferiors. Thus, our account avoids the error of the large number of theorists (not just Memmi, but also thinkers from Ruth Benedict to Dinesh D'Souza) who identify racism with a belief, ideology, theory, or doctrine.⁸ On the contrary, racism is chiefly what a recent religious intervention called it: “a sin.”⁹ It is a form of moral viciousness. It is correct to insist, as some have, that racism need not involve immoral intentions.¹⁰ However, it must involve immoral mental (that is, intentional) states, and often it involves, more specifically, states of intending someone some evil or of failing to intend someone a good. It is, thus, an offense against the moral virtues of benevolence and justice.

8. See Garcia 1997a for examples and further criticism of those espousing views of each of these kinds.

9. “Racism is a sin. It is fundamentally a lie, a concept deliberately invented to create division in humanity” (Holy See 2001: 1). The claim that racism is a lie may be a crude statement of the view that it consists in false beliefs. I think this misstates the way in which racism is a sin, what sort of immorality it chiefly involves. Later, the document talks more promisingly of “racist attitudes and racist practices” (4). I am in full agreement with the statement that racism’s elimination awaits “a fruitful interaction of peoples founded on equitable, just, and fraternal relations in solidarity” (2).

10. “Racism may be intentional or unintentional. . . . [R]acism may involve a complex array of mental states some of which are intentional and some of which are unintentional” (Corlett 1998: 31). Similar claims are common; see, for example, Haslanger’s essay in this volume.

Racism, we have said, is not, and need not involve, action. However, many actions—both individual and institutional, discursive and nondiscursive—are racist. Action and beliefs are racist on the basis of their input, not their output: they must come to exist or be sustained in the right ways by racist desiderative, volitional, or affective attitudes. Despite what many say, nothing is made to be racist simply by its effects.¹¹ (Indeed, I should make the same claim if we replaced the term “racist” by any other basic term of moral approbation or disapprobation.) The bigot who rationalizes her racial disregard or contempt by accepting doctrines of racial inferiority holds racist beliefs. So, too, does someone whose antipathy stems from her antecedent belief in one race’s inferiority. She is racist in holding them; it is racist of her to think like that. Similarly, her behavior is racist when it emerges from those racist feelings, desires, and choices *directly*, as when she tries to harm someone because the latter is deemed Black (or Red or White or Yellow). It is also racist when it emerges *indirectly*, as when she discriminates on the basis of beliefs she holds to rationalize her racial hostility. This is also true of speech acts. Like other actions, they are racist when they stem directly or indirectly from racial antipathy or disregard.¹²

As racism may seep outward from an individual’s heart to pollute her behavior, so it may go on to infect the conduct of an institution as well. Racist attitudes and beliefs and behavior may become *institutionalized*. While racism is chiefly a sin, it may come to inhabit what Pope John Paul II calls “structures of sin.”¹³ This relationship can become reciprocal as racist structures strengthen and perpetuate the (noncognitive) racist attitudes that gave rise to them. Thus, the volitional/desiderative/emotive conception of racism advanced here—in contrast to views of racism as social practices or as discriminatory deeds or as types of judgment—can explain how each of these phenomena came to be racist.

My view largely fits that of a joint statement on racism, issued by a group of interreligious leaders: (i) “*Racism is a problem of the heart and an evil that must*

11. See my critique of Goldberg’s claims in Garcia 2001b and of Ezorsky’s in Garcia 1999.

12. We should acknowledge a general problem that input-sensitive accounts like mine face. We might say that an act is racist when it is “prompted by a racist motive” (Blum 2002: 14; see also 2, 8–10, 14–16). Unfortunately, problems arise from some nonstandard motivational chains. What if my racism prompts me to do things to become more racially sensitive and benevolent? Those acts are motivated by my racism, but not in such a way as to be themselves racist. (Similar problems arise for other virtue and vice terms, of course.) Perhaps we do better to use such verbs as “express,” “epitomize,” or “embody,” instead of such causal ones as “prompt” to note this point and help avoid absurd implications. Not just *any* motivational or causal relationship will do for our purposes, but only those that proceed along certain paths, which paths we can often recognize but are difficult clearly to demarcate, delineate. The problem is a familiar one in philosophy, similar to that of the “wayward causal paths” that bedevil some accounts of intentional action.

13. See Pope John Paul II’s 1987 encyclical letter “*Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*.”

be eradicated from . . . *institutional structures*.”¹⁴ This view of racism as chiefly a moral deformation—located in the heart’s desires, choices, and hopes, but also infecting social institutions—closely matches my own. However, the statement’s authors also say: (ii) “Racism is *learned behavior* that is rooted in ignorance and fear,” and they condemn (iii) “denigrating, disrespecting, or oppressing people based on the color of their skin or their ethnicity or their culture.” This second passage may suggest that racism is not a matter of feelings and choice but of (presumably external) behavior, which I deny. However, the authors probably mean that racism leads to such behavior, not that it consists in conduct, since the third quotation appears to include “denigration” and “disrespect” within racism, and they are certainly mental states in their origin, not forms of external behavior.¹⁵

14. National Conference for Community and Justice, statement for the year 2000, available from the NCCJ Washington office; italics added here and below.

15. Though I make no detailed response in this essay to Blum’s critique of my volitional view of racism (see chapter 3), perhaps I should point out here that I do not make the sharp distinction between justice and benevolence he seems to presuppose. I should state my view that the gap between justice and benevolence is greatly exaggerated nowadays, fueled perhaps by Kant’s misleading image of love bringing people closer together and justice driving them apart. For our purposes, it is important just to point out the interrelation between racism’s offenses against benevolence and its offenses against justice, and the connection between acting with viciously insufficient benevolence (even with malevolence) and acting unjustly. Plainly, the forms of action to which racism most characteristically leads are not only contrary to benevolence but also to justice. Discrimination, even lynching, offends not just benevolence but also justice, for the goods that the racist tries to strip from her victim are ones the victim is entitled to have anyone seek to protect. The sort of goodwill toward a human being that constitutes moral virtue is willing her the human goods, the things that enhance human life; and respect and limited autonomy certainly belong within their number. There can be no fully virtuous benevolence toward a human person that is not also characterized by the deference and respect for her dignity that is properly seen as foundational to justice. Likewise, racist acts against justice are acts of disrespect for the victim’s moral status and human dignity. Respect, however, is neither a mere feeling nor a matter simply of believing that the other has that status. It crucially involves a characteristic disposition of the will, a willingness to defer to the other. This amounts to the just agent’s willing the other person the good of some limited autonomy, i.e., self-management; it requires benevolence. More important, injustice, *qua* disrespect, involves a vicious departure from the virtue of benevolence. I cannot see how someone could respect another precisely in virtue of her dignity as a human being without also wishing to see her well-being advanced. More can be said about the general connection between justice and goodwill, of course. Whatever conceptual differences may distinguish benevolence for justice, I should think that what violates justice will normally therein offend against benevolence, and vice versa. So, I make less than Blum over my failure sometimes to say explicitly that disrespect, and thus injustice, counts as the kind of insufficiency of regard that is vicious, and sometimes racist. In sum, for our purposes here, we will not go far wrong, I think, if we say that racism is a

V. PROBLEMS FOR VOLITIONAL ACCOUNTS

Broadly volitional understandings of racism have drawn criticism. I will not here dwell on criticisms directed specifically against my own account.¹⁶ Rather, I will discuss the implications of claims otherwise directed within the literature.

The legal scholar Harlon Dalton (1996: 92–93) entertains a view like mine but rejects it. After asking, “What does racism mean?” he suggests, “One view—perhaps the most common—centers on race-based animosity and disdain. Racism [thus viewed] equals disliking others (or regarding them as inferior) because of their race.” He repudiates this “most common” understanding on the grounds, first, of its purported “indifference to hierarchy and social structure,” which he thinks requires one to say that an imaginary White-hating Rodney King “would be just as guilty of racism as the white officers who beat him.” Dalton explains that his complaint is that such a view “ignores material consequences,” which, he thinks, morally differentiates “fox and hound, that is, relevantly distinguishes hatred in those below for those on top from hatred in those on top for those on the bottom.” Moreover, he worries that such an account identifying racism as “race-based animosity or disdain” cannot capture the racism of people “who have no malice in their hearts but nevertheless act in ways that create and reproduce racist hierarchies.” For Dalton, “racism consists in culturally acceptable ideas, beliefs, and attitudes that serve to sustain the racial pecking order.”

It is not hard to see where both Dalton’s criticism and his advocacy go wrong. That Black and White racists are both racists does not mean that their racism is equally bad, nor does it imply that there is no moral difference between the conduct of one who performs racist actions and the conduct of one who does nothing. Suppose you steal Mary’s nail file and I steal her purse. You are just as guilty of theft as I am, but not guilty of as bad a theft. The moral difference, to be sure,

kind of ill will or disregard that constitutes an offense against the virtues of both benevolence and justice.

Perhaps I may also add at this point that, contrary to what Blum suggests, I have always held and affirmed that any human, any person, has such dignity and is so linked to us that benevolence toward her is moral virtue and its lack or insufficiency is therefore moral vice. Tying virtues to roles, as I do, need not exclude any from the circle of human caring. Everyone ought to feel and show benevolence to everyone, in my view, as I think my writings in general moral theory make clear.

16. See the essays by Blum, Haslanger, Levine, and Pataki in this volume, as well as by Shelby (2002). Charles Mills (2002) extends some criticisms of what he sees as my positive view of racism, though his main project is rebutting my criticisms of his book. (The thrust of his response is to explain how the racial contract, while “real,” “historical,” and “explanatory,” nevertheless is “nonexistent” and “hypothetical.” Needless to say, this doesn’t succeed, though Mills does show that he is not alone among devotees of contract in wanting thus to have things both ways.)

is not that of “material consequences.” However, if I could reasonably foresee that my theft would cause Mary substantial inconvenience, loss, and distress, and did it anyway, that shows a more vicious indifference to her welfare, added on to the offense against the virtues of justice and goodwill involved in both your and my intentionally taking something whose taking violated her rights. Contrary to what Dalton suggests, it is not merely what happens to ensue that aggravates my offense, but my vicious callousness to the likely effect. These considerations also allow us to see some of the problems in Dalton’s preferred account of racism. Mere causation is without moral import, and there is no reason to impute racism to agents or acts that merely happen to worsen things racially. What is crucial is whether these contributions are intended (stem from “malice in the heart”) and, if not, whether they nevertheless manifest some other morally vicious attitude—indifference to likely suffering, disrespect or contempt for those affected, and so forth. Dalton’s view threatens (indeed, seems designed) entirely to absolve from racism race haters, White or Black, who are inactive, ineffective, socially in the minority, culturally marginal, or loners. In fact, it implies that if enough of you stop being racists so that my racism stops being “culturally acceptable,” then my racism automatically disappears along with yours, though I and my attitudes remain exactly the same. Finally, it seems that someone who seeks, or merely hopes for, a “racial pecking order” is a racist independently of Dalton’s requirement that she enjoy success in efforts she may direct to that end. (That is, she is racist at times *prior* to her success, *after the end* of the racial hierarchy she desires, and in situations where success *never* comes to her, perhaps because, for one reason or another, she never moves from wanting such hierarchy to pursuing it actively.)

Certain queries can also help highlight certain difficulties besetting Dalton’s critique in ways that draw us back to an account more focused, like mine, on intentions formed or spurned. With respect to the first of his complaints against volitional accounts, we can ask why we ought think that it is *actual* hierarchy that crucially matters, rather than a person’s *attitude toward* hierarchy. Concerning his second criticism, we can ask: If material consequences are unsought, unforeseen, unforeseeable, why ought we to think them pertinent? And what of ineffectual or counterproductive acts of racial hatred or disregard? Regarding his third objection to volitional views, we can ask: Why should we deem acts racist simply on the basis of their effects, when these effects are not just unintended but precisely counterproductive to those aimed at? Should we blithely follow Dalton to the implicit conclusion that to determine who and what is racist, we must always wait (how long? one wonders) to see how things turn out? I decline that invitation.

Henry Louis Gates Jr. raises an important objection to Todorov’s understanding of racism, according to which it consists in “a type of behavior . . . display[ing] contempt or aggressiveness” (1986: 370). Gates (1986: 403) dismisses

such views as Todorov's (and, by implication, mine) because he thinks history provides plentiful "examples of 'racist' benevolence, paternalism, and sexual attraction which are not always, or only, dependent upon contempt or aggressiveness."

Here the conspicuous array of qualifiers is what matters. Notice, for example, that Gates himself feels the need to put the term "racist" in scare quotes, as if aware that his talk of "racist benevolence" is paradoxical. Likewise, J. Corlett is careful twice to put scare quotes around the term "benevolence" when he talks of "'benevolence'-based racism."¹⁷ Observe, also, that Gates realizes that he needs to show not merely that there has been racist paternalism and lust, but that there have been instances of it that were not derivative from the vicious sentiments on which Todorov's account of racism and mine focus.¹⁸ This last, however, cannot be so easily read off from the historical record and is doubtful on its face. After all, paternalism implies treating another like a child, and regarding a responsible, mature adult as one would a child bespeaks forms of disdain and disrespect that are plainly contrary to the virtue of goodwill.¹⁹ Anyone who rejects the extreme consequentialist doctrine that the end can always justify the means will recognize that some actions that are good in their ultimate intentions are nonetheless wrong in their means. Thus, an input- and intention-centered account of racism, such as the virtues-based one offered here, can allow that the paternalist may be racist precisely in her adopting infantilizing, disrespectful means to her (putatively) protective, benevolent goal.

The paradox we alluded to in Gates is thus clarified. Benevolence, which is virtue, can never simply be racism, which is vicious. Even allowing that our paternalist is benevolent in her ultimate goal, however, underdetermines the relevant question of whether she acts with some disregard that offends against the virtues of goodwill. When, on account of race, she adopts arrogant, haughty, self-important, supercilious, and manipulative treatment toward another, even in

17. "Racism can be motivated, jointly or separately, by hatred, perceived inferiority, 'benevolence,' perceived superiority, fear, and power. . . . Yet another basis for racism is ideological dogmatism" (Corlett 1998: 28; see also 29). It is interesting that in this list of purported bases for racism, Corlett qualifies only one, "benevolence," with scare quotes, therein implicitly acknowledging that there is something problematic in something's being both racist and benevolent, and thus that racism is incompatible with benevolence in the unqualified, literal sense.

18. Gates also insists that racist benevolence is not "only" dependent on vicious attitudes, but this is just a distraction. Obviously, it may have many sources. The issue is whether such benevolence is always in part informed by vicious attitudes, for, if it is, a sophisticated version of a position like Todorov's or mine is vindicated, since internal moral vice would remain the core of racism.

19. The morality of paternalism is a difficult matter, but I attempt a treatment of racist paternalism also in Garcia 1996.

pursuit of what she perceives as the latter's good, she manifests the kind of moral vice that brands her actions racist.²⁰

VI. CONCLUSION: WHY CARE?

I have discussed understanding racism as forms of social structure, as certain value judgments, and as vices of preference, affection, and will. I also delineated problems in each such account. I suggested that this volitional account of racism, according to which racism in its heart consists in race-based disregard or contempt (in which an action is racist in the principal sense of that term when it expresses such a stance), can explain how both individuals and institutions, and both attitudes and conduct, can be racist. Recognition of this fact could, I think, change and improve our thinking about racial matters. Some, especially on the political Left, pride themselves nowadays on deeming personal racist sentiments insufficient for racism and even insignificant.²¹

People who think that the real problem of racism resides in comparative holdings or representation among socioeconomic elites similarly delude themselves with the comforting illusion that racism lies out there, somewhere in externalities. That is not to say that there is no institutionalized racism.²² What it does is de-center institutions in favor of people, their minds, and their interpersonal relationships. Frederickson, with whom we began, looks to the causes of historical effects. This approach, though understandable, especially in a historian, tempts the social thinker to identify racism with whatever causes the salient effects that interest her and only with what causes them. It is a short step from this to Frederickson's conception of racism: "My theory or conception of racism . . . has two components: difference [more precisely, differentiation] and power. It [racism] originates from a mind-set that regards 'them' as different from 'us' in ways that are permanent and unbridgeable. This sense of difference provides a motive or rationale for using our power advantage for treating the ethnoracial Other in ways that we would regard as cruel or unjust if applied to members of our own group" (2002: 9).²³

The difficulties that, I hope to have shown, afflict any account of this sort, not

20. My discussion here follows that in Garcia 2001b.

21. For a summary and discussion of one such position, Benjamin DeMott's, see Garcia 1999.

22. Haslanger suggests that I discredit institutional racism (see chapter 5). In fact, I have never denied that racism is sometimes institutionalized; I have repeatedly affirmed it and have criticized thinkers who pretend institutional racism does not exist. Among many places, see especially my criticism of D'Souza's position in Garcia 1999.

23. This preliminary account eventually issues in the final, summary understanding of when "racism exists," the one stressing social structures, that Frederickson offers in his book's appendix and that I analyzed in section I above.

only Frederickson's but also those of the cultural theorists, seems to me to arise from at least two sources. The first is a failure to think conceptually. In chapter 5 of this volume Haslanger insists that social philosophy needs to be informed by empirical study of history and society. Maybe she is correct. It is, however, no less true, and in fact more important, that sociohistorical studies need careful conceptual reflection if they are to keep the contingent actualities that are found empirically from being mistaken for defining and essential features. Frederickson is aware of this temptation besetting the empiricist and tries to correct for it by broadening the range of his most recent book's inquiry to include forms of racism that characterized different times and places.²⁴

Unfortunately, as we saw, Frederickson and others continue to defend accounts of racism that are too narrow in some ways and too broad in others, because the examples on which they are based remain limited to those that are historically salient.²⁵ These theorists do not consider the broader possibilities that are conceptually and logically open. We cannot adequately grasp what racism is, in what it consists, until we consider not only what it has been and how it has been experienced, but also what it might have been and could be in situations and experiences quite different from those familiar to us. I have sometimes deployed fanciful scenarios in arguing my case. Far from being embarrassed by this, I wish to insist such reflection is indispensable to achieve the much-needed liberation of social inquiry from its distorting and enervating thralldom to the empirical.

A second source of error may lie in the tendency in today's social inquiry to depreciate or misunderstand moral features. In fact, in the sequence of analyses treated here—which emphasize and focus on, first, social structures, then on value judgments, and finally on vice—I think we can discern a movement from the outside to the inside and also a progression from the shallower to the deeper, from what is morally peripheral to what is central. Appiah, discussing Frederickson's recent book, is driven to pose the crucial question *why* racism is “wrong” (immoral). Is it, he asks, because of (i) the racists' hatred and contempt, (ii) their epistemic irrationality, (iii) the bad treatment to which these lead, (iv) the anti-individualistic way in which racists take account of their race in regarding peo-

24. Frederickson (2002: 157) chastises himself, for example, for earlier identifying racism with efforts to maintain hierarchy. This claim, formed under the influence of his close studies of the recent American past, he now sees as too narrow, in that it excluded forms of racism, found in other times and places, that sought not merely to subordinate but utterly to destroy targeted races and their members. “When I myself [in earlier works] defined the essence of racism as the ideas, practices, and institutions associated with a rigid form of hierarchy, I was unwittingly privileging the white supremacist variant [of racism] over the antisemitic form [which seeks to exile and even exterminate].”

25. More surprisingly, these accounts, undone by their empiricism, are also sometimes too abstract, as when Frederickson (2002) purports to tell us when “racism exists” but never specifies in what it exists (that is, *what* is racist when racism “exists”).

ple, or (v) the fact that racism operates through “law and social life” to some people’s disadvantage? (Appiah 2002: 11). Two explanations, (ii) and (iv), concentrate on what is central to epistemology but not to ethics. It is difficult to justify a moral theory stressing such epistemic matters as how someone reasons or thinks about others, except insofar as the ways involve treating them disrespectfully.

In contrast, (iii) and (v) stress external results, not internal cognitive states and processes. Any such approach goes astray because it cannot avoid misconstruing racism as whatever it is that has certain undesirable effects. It is easy to show that this construction cannot be adequate. First, the undesirable effects of an action, policy, or structure may be merely aleatory. Yet nothing is racist simply by chance. It follows that its bad effects are not sufficient for something to be racist.²⁶ Second, undesirable effects that an agent expects or prefers or intends in a course of action can be blocked, not just by chance but sometimes also in ways that an expert familiar with the situation could predict. Yet it remains vicious, and racist, of anyone to expect, prefer, or intend certain bad effects. So, bad effects that actually occur are not necessary for some people and their and mental phenomena to be racist. Third, by their nature as contingent concomitants, undesirable effects of individual or social actions cannot explain why racism has to be immoral (at least, *prima facie*).²⁷ Nor can they well explain even why racism is always (in fact, in this world) immoral.

26. Aware of this problem, Haslanger resorts to insisting that the bad effects she thinks sufficient to render some social practices racist must be “nonaccidental” (see chapter 5). Whether or not this move is desperate, it is doomed. We can see this in two ways. Dictionaries say that what is accidental is either unintended or unexpected. If Haslanger, in saying that the undesirable effects must be “nonaccidental,” means they cannot be unintended then she is committed to holding that they must be intended, and thus joins my side in rooting racism in volitional phenomena, though I would not say racist actions are always viciously intended. To avoid that, she must hold that the requisite effects are unexpected. However, Haslanger would still need to offer adequate explanation of why this epistemic phenomenon has such moral significance. Suffice it to say that she cannot do this save by noting how undertaking a course of action expecting such harmful results for others manifests a disregard or lack of respect for them. Likewise, we can note that the chief charges we should raise against someone who acts expecting bad results are that she and her action are either negligent or reckless. In an important discussion, White (1985, chap. 7) argues that both notions derive from, and need explication in terms of, the concept of care. Reckless actions, we can say, adapting his position, show insufficient care, and negligent ones indicate insufficient taking care. He distinguishes these but, I think, exaggerates the difference. He himself observes that “sometimes we take care because we do care” (1985: 93). More important, failure to take care matters morally when and because it reveals a failure adequately to care. What is important is that, again contra Haslanger, the epistemic state takes on its moral significance from the affective/volitional ones behind it.

27. Shelby (2002) denies that racism need be even presumptively immoral, but any such denial is implausible.

Only (i), a view that, like the one advanced here, focuses on individual states of will, preference, and affection is one that highlights what is morally central. That is because caring, respect, regard, and the like are definitive of human personhood and of the modes of personal response due it. Of course, those mental states and events are also the engines of human agency. We cannot pursue the fuller moral theory here, but this approach can help provide us an answer to one of the things we might mean in asking, Why care? We morally ought to care for others in that such attitudes are the ground of the modes of personal and interpersonal relationship that constitute and configure our moral lives. If so, then racism is primarily of moral import not because of what it causes but because of what it originally is: a deformation in someone's affective and volitional stance toward others.

Appiah concludes, against Frederickson, that we need such an account of racism, one focused more on matters of heart than on beliefs.²⁸ Here and elsewhere I have tried to show how the volitional view is comprehensive, explaining how and why supporting or participating in certain practices, deciding on or engaging in certain actions, and holding certain beliefs (including making some value judgments) can all be racist, and therein immoral, insofar as they are infected by racist, and therein vicious, attitudes toward other people.

Even if there is reason to regret hatred, ought we nevertheless focus our social effort on changing social practices rather than on changing attitudes? Modifying the effects of social practices may be comparatively easy to effectuate.²⁹

28. "There is a deeper difficulty here, that the attitudes Frederickson stresses are, as he says, 'sets of beliefs' about the immutable awfulness of other races, rather than hostile feelings toward them. But . . . at least as important in the everyday life of racism are the deep feelings of revulsion, hostility, contempt, or just plain hatred that many racists feel. As . . . Garcia has put it, racism lives more in the heart than in the head" (Appiah 2002: 12). This is an especially gracious remark of Appiah's, in light of the fact that I explicitly develop my volitional approach as an improvement over the doxastic one that he himself had earlier offered. See Garcia 1996.

In fairness to Frederickson, we should note that whatever the problems in his account of what racism is, he does find it salient that the racist treats certain people in ways she would find it "cruel or unjust" to have her own people treated (Frederickson 2002: 9). That closely approximates my claim that racism entails some vicious disregard or disrespect. As for Appiah's reading of my own position, more broadly than he suggests, my account focuses as much on volitional states as on "feelings" (or on preferences) and, more narrowly than he suggests, I think the will of *anyone* who is a racist in the word's central senses must be in a vicious state, not just that "many" are.

29. Note that altering the *effects* of social practices need not even involve changing the practices themselves. We can sometimes alter effects of a certain type simply by *adding* some forces to block the efficacy of what remains inclined to cause them, whether on a case-by-case or practice-by-practice basis, or more systemically.

However, it will be difficult to *motivate* such social change, let alone sustain it, without also achieving more difficult, deeper changes within persons. The social change is thus *unstable*, and it is also morally and politically *inadequate*. Justice requires more than mere nonviolation of rights to receive various material goods. We can see justice is itself founded in the recognition and appreciation of human dignity, status, personhood. The right to respect is often and rightly regarded as foundational even within liberal individualism. In traditions that conceive justice as community and social comity, the inadequacy of changing mere effects is still more obvious.

The volitional, vice-and-virtue-driven account of racism can stand on its merits. It and the sort of methodology that I have employed in its support can, however, hold larger promise. Social inquiry, particularly into race, in addition to being mired in the empirical in the ways I have suggested, has, when it reached the theoretical, usually had recourse to airy discourse about genders, classes and their supposed struggles, social identities, “materialism,” and similar theoretical flights. My hope is that focus on mental and moral realities can offer a more sober counterpoint to these speculations. The current moral campaign against terrorist hate groups has resurrected the language of evil, unfashionable till quite recent days, the battle against which pits not just some people and regimes against others, but every society and every heart against itself. There is, then, some basis for hope that the new century’s serious political thought, in intrasocial inquiry as well as international affairs, will outgrow the specters of nineteenth- and twentieth-century social thought and return to these ancient and deep realities: the struggle against evil (even if not simply *by* the good), the primacy of the internal over the external, and the need to cultivate love and respect for persons, to understand and appreciate their value. It can be tempting to hate or depreciate others, a nice shortcut to utilize them merely as means to our ends, as if they were not people but things. Things would be simpler, easier, if racism and our racial problem lay only in social structures and their operation, in faulty generalization, and inaccurate assessments of value. The hard fact and the real problem is that they reside within the states of will, desire, and affection that ground our personhood and hold the power also to deform it.