

**The William Alanson White Institute**  
**Course #330: Psychoanalysis: Race, Class, Culture, Difference**

**Syllabus**

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**Spring Trimester, 10 Sessions**  
**Tuesdays, 8:30 – 9:45 p.m., March - May**

This course addresses various ways in which issues of race, ethnicity, social class, and difference influence the treatment process.

**I INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE:**

These are, indeed, troubled times in which we live. But for those who care to wonder, it is, as well, a world stunning in its elegant diversity. My reflections transport me to a time, almost one hundred years ago, when W.E.B. Du Bois addressed what he believed to be the socio-political challenges confronting America at that moment in time. Listen to Du Bois' (1906) commentary:

“We have a way in America of wanting to be “rid” of problems. It is not so much a desire to reach the best and largest solution. ... To our most sinister social problem, the Negro. ... Of all possible attitudes, this is the most dangerous, because it fails to realize the most significant fact of the opening century, viz.: The Negro problem in America is but a local phase of a world problem. ... The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the Color Line.” [p.42]

Into the depths of meaning enveloped in his “Color Line” metaphor, it might be argued, Du Bois intended to wrestle American political and socioeconomic consciousness, especially given the imminent crossings of boundaries anticipated at the dawn of the twentieth century.

So, here we stand at the edge of Time's moment from which, with the benefit of Time past, we may peer perceptively into Time's future. In this moment the term, “globalization” has gained currency in our lexicon in and out of the academy. “Globalization” has come to inform much of today's dialogues on cultures and difference, on social and political matters, on economic power and supremacy, on national and international morality and responsibility. The term has infused energy into academic, political and grassroots critique of America's policies and actions on its shores and abroad in a manner that echoes Du Bois' remarkably prescient musings of 1906, in which he called attention to impending dissolutions of geographical boundaries and to those “Others” (i.e., peoples and cultures outside America's borders) with whom we would inevitably be forced to reckon.

What would this man, one of America's visionaries, see today were he a ghost among us? Actually, if Bodnar (2004) is correct, and I believe she is, Du Bois *is* a ghost among us. Have we learned? During the course of his own lifetime, Du Bois was witness to many important shifts in America's social and political landscape, as discussed in some detail in Gates and West (1996). Yet, I think that were he alive today, his soul would weep. His soul would weep for the fact that, though nearly one hundred years later the “Color Line” is less shrouded by the “veil” of secrecy, still we witness concerted efforts by many who wield political power to deny, dissociate from, or even to reject outright, the reality that large segments of our society remain politically and economically disenfranchised, even as these forgotten “Others” remain

“hungry for identity, meaning and self-worth” (West, 1993, p.20). Even so, I believe that Du Bois would also smile with pleasure at the charged voices of protest and dissent among today’s theoreticians, intellectuals and political activists. And to me, a black psychoanalyst in 2003, what is equally important is that I could hold his gaze and inform Dr. Du Bois, with pride of profession, that we, too, have entered this moment of Great Dialogue; and I would present to this ancestral ghost, for his own perusal, his intimate musings, a copy of the July/August, 2000 edition of *Psychoanalytic Dialogues* (Vol.10, No. 4), which presented its first “Symposium on Race.”

\_\_\_\_\_White, C. (2004).

**II. THE STATEMENT ABOVE (I), REFLECTS OUR SENSE** that, as we consider the patient within the context of the psychoanalytic process, we must consider psychoanalysis within the context of the larger sociopolitical world. It is imperative, I believe, that we analysts examine the motives, attitudes, and yes, the prejudices (Young- Bruehl , 1995), we bring to bear on our work with patients who, because of obvious or implied differences might, wittingly, or unwittingly, be relegated to the status of “Other.” And examining how that process of “Othering” permeates the work , like blood coursing through veins, and how we see it played out in the transference-countertransference action between our patients and us, is one key element to be examined in this course.

**III. WE ALL DO IT!** We “Other” others, that is. Some may be shocked at this revelation; others may sort of suspect it but may choose to dissociate from its painful truth; and still others may be more openly engaged with the struggle. Whatever the case may be, I choose to believe that those of us who choose to participate in the unfolding of the course, are joined by the desire to explore, to expand, to come to know the many truths and realities we co-create with our patients as intersubjective beings engaged in the process of effecting change.

**IV. PSYCHOANALYSIS: THE SOCIAL AND THE POLITICAL:** Who is analyzable? To whom is the “talking cure” applicable? Political Analysts?

**V. DIALECTICS: SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION? OR HUMAN PROPENSITY?** Are familiar dialectics such as “self/other,” “we/them,” “me/not-me” socially constructed categories? Or are they derivatives of natural human tendencies to organize our world into categories?

**VI. POST MODERN THOUGHT:** From a psychoanalytic perspective, the language of social construction, intersubjectivity, object relations, and

**VII. RELATIONAL PSYCHOANALYSIS:** In what manner does this way of thinking and related practice, facilitate the conduct of psychoanalysis with individuals who might otherwise be thought to be unanalyzable? How is the “Other” brought into inclusion?

**VIII. THE VOICES OF THE “OTHERS”:** The nature of our work is such that, even though the statement: “Analysts Are Patients Too” may be applicable to some, if not all of us, rarely do we hear the voices of patients spoken in our literature. No Matter. The socio-political experiences of our patients, their traumas and their hopes, are multiply examined in literature and published personal narratives. We will examine some of those writings not because we will then “know” the patients in our consulting room. It is my hope, rather, that through these readings we will be forced to confront our own internalized prejudices and will, therefore, enter into our intersubjective engagements in a greater state of readiness to embrace surprise: the new, the different, the unexpected in our patients and in ourselves.

WELCOME!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

We Look Forward to Engaging With You in This Dialogue

## Week I: Introductions

### Weekly Readings:

#### I: Identity: A Postmodern Perspective

Race, Gender, Ethnicity

Social class in the construction of identity.

#### Readings:

#### I

Morrison, T. (1970), *The Bluest Eye*. New York, NY: Holt, Reinhart, and Winston, PP. 38-58.

#### Suggested Readings:

Aron, L. (1991), The patient's experience of the analyst's subjectivity." *Psychoanal. Dial.* 1: 29-51.

Bodnar, S. (2004), Remembering where you come from: Dissociation Process in multicultural individuals. pp. 38-57.

Cushman, P. (1995), *Constructing the Self, Constructing America*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Dimen, M. (1991), Deconstructing difference: Gender, splitting, and transitional space. *Psychoanal. Dial.* 1: 335-352.

O'Hearn, C.C. (1998), ed. *Half and Half: Writers on Growing Up Biracial and Bicultural*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1998.

Stolorow, R. and Atwood, G. (1992), The myth of the isolated mind; Three realms of the unconscious. In: *Contexts of Being: The Intersubjective Foundations of Psychological Life*. Hillsdale, NJ: The Analytic Press, pp. 7-40.

Rodriguez, Richard (1980), *Aria: A memoir of a bilingual childhood*. In: *The Best American Essays of the Century*, ed. J. C. Oats & R. Atwood, 2000. New York; Houton Mifflin, pp. 447-466. (19)

Walker, A. (1993), *Beauty: When the other dancer is the self*. In: W. Smart, ed., *Eight Modern Essayists*. 1995, Boston: MA, pp. 268-275.

White, C. (2004), Culture, influence, and the "I-ness" of me: Commentary on papers by Susan Bodnar, Gary B. Walls, and Steven Boticelli. *Psychoanal Dial.* 14: 653-691.

#### II: Psychoanalysis, Class, Ethnicity

Eurocentricity of Psychoanalytic discourse.

The Ethnicity of Psychoanalysis. Freud's Jewish identity

Historical Background of psychoanalysis and ethnicity

The classical tradition

The interpersonal tradition

Relational Perspectives  
Clinical presentation.

Readings:

**II**

Altman, N. (2009), Theoretical, historical, and sociological background: Psychoanalysis and social issues. In: *The Psychoanalyst In the Inner City: Race, Class, and Culture Through a Psychoanalytic Lens*. Hillsdale: NJ, pp.33-80.

Suggested Readings:

Abasi, A., (1998), Speaking the unspeakable. In: *Blacks and Jews on the Couch: Psychoanalytic Reflections on Black-Jewish Conflict*, ed. A. Helmreich & P. Marcus. Westport. CT: Prager/Greenwood, 1998, pp. 133-144.

Ainsley, R. (2003), Race murder and community trauma: Psychoanalysis and ethnography in exploring the impact of the killing of James Byrd in Jasper, Texas. *J. Psychoan. Cult. Soc.* 8: 42-50.

Brown, L. (1993), New voices, new visions: Toward a lesbian/gay paradigm for psychology. In: *The Culture and Psychology Reader*, ed. N. R. Goldberger & J. B. Veroff. New York: NYU Press, 1995, pp. 559-574

Mann, C. (2002), Cross-cultural psychoanalysis and the Interpersonal perspective. *Int. Forum. Psychoanal.* 11: 309-312.

Perez-Foster, R., Moskowitz, M., & Javier, R., (1996), eds., *Reaching Across the Boundaries of Culture and Class: Widening the Scope of Psychotherapy*. Northvale, NJ: Aronson.

Sennett, R. & Cobb, J. (1993), *The Hidden Injuries of Class*. New York: Norton.

Smith, Laura (2005), Psychotherapy, classism, and the poor: Conspicuous in their absence. *Am. Psychol.* 7: 687-696.

**III: Migration & Exile**

Multiethnic Nature of American society  
Migration & Identity  
Psychosocial variables of migration  
Psychoanalysis & Migrants  
Clinical Presentation

Readings:

**III**

Boulanger, G. (2004). Lot's Wife, Cary Grant, and the American dream:

Psychoanalysis with immigrants, *Contemp. Psychoanal*, 40:353-372.

Suggested Readings:

- Akhtar, S. (1995), A third individuation: Immigration, identity, and the psychoanalytic process. *J. Amer. Psychoanal. Assn.* 43: 1051-1084.
- Akhtar, S. (1999), *Immigration and Identity: Turmoil, Treatment, and American Journal of Psychoanalysis*: Special Issue on Immigration and Psychoanalysis, 64, #2: June, 2004. *Transformation*. Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson.
- Baldwin, J. (1955), Stranger in the village. In: J. Baldwin, Notes of a Native Son. Boston:MA, Beacon Press, pp. 159-175.
- McBride, J. (1998), What color is Jesus? In: *Half and Half: Writers on Growing Up Biracial + Bicultural*. ed. C. C. O'Hearn. New York: Pantheon Books, 1998, pp. 181-196.

**IV/V: The Psychoanalytic Encounter: Difference, Othering, Transference-Countertransference.**

Issues of Ethnicity and power in the psychoanalytic dyad.  
Ethnic barriers to communication, language and gesture.  
Clinical Presentation

Readings:

**IV**

- Altman, N. (2000a), Black and White thinking: A psychoanalyst reconsiders race. *Psychoanal. Dial.* 10: 589-605.
- White, K. P. (2002), Surviving hating and being hated: Some personal thoughts about racism from a psychoanalytic perspective. *Contemp. Psychoanal.*, 38: 401-422.

**V**

- Baldwin, J. (1993), *The Fire Next Time*. New York: Vintage International, pp. 3-11, and pp.82-106.

Suggested Readings:

- Elliot, P. (1996), Working through racism: Confronting the strangely familiar. *J. Psychoanal. Cult. Soc.* 1: 63-72.
- Gump, J. (2000), A white therapist, an African-American patient - Shame in the therapeutic dyad: Commentary on paper by Neil Altman. *Psychoanal Dial.* 10: 619-632.
- Holmes, D. E. (1992), Race and transference in psychoanalysis and psychotherapy. *Int. J. Psycho-Anal.* 73: 1-11.

- Madrid, A. (1990), Diversity and its discontents. In: *The Culture and Psychology Reader*, eds. N. R. Goldberger & J. B. Veroff, New York: NYU Press, 1995, pp. 617-626.
- Kovel, J. (2000), Reflections on White racism. *Psychoanal. Dial.* 10: 579-587.
- Melville, H (19--), Misgivings. In: R. Ellman, ed., *The New Oxford Book of American Verse*, New York: NYT, 1976, p. 298.
- Wachtel, P. (1999), Talking about racism: Why our dialogue gets short-circuited. In: P. Wachtel, *Race In the Mind of America*. New York: Routledge, pp. 23-40.
- West, C. (1991), Conversation with bell hooks. In: C. West, *The Cornell West Reader*. New York: NY, Basic Books, 1999, pp. 541-548.

**VI/VII: Transference - Resistance, countertransference and counter resistance in the context of race, ethnicity and social class.**  
**Clinical presentation**

Readings:

**VI**

- DuBois, W.E.B. (1919), The souls of white folk. In: W. E. B. Du Bois, *Darkwater:Voices From Within the Veil*, Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 2003, pp. 55-74.
- Suchet, M. (2007) Unraveling whiteness. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues* 17(6) 876-886.
- Harris, A. (2007). Discussion of “Unraveling Whiteness”: Commentary on paper by Melanie Suchet. *Psychoanal. Dial.*, 17:887-894.

**VII**

- Highwater, J (1981), The intellectual savage. In: *The Culture and Psychology Reader*, eds. N. R. Goldberger & J. B. Veroff. New York: NYU Press, 1995, pp. 205-216.
- Leary, K. (2000), Racial enactments in dynamic treatment. *Psychoanal. Dial.* 10:639-653.
- Harris, A. (2000). Haunted talk, healing action: Commentary on paper by Kimberlyn Leary. *Psychoanal. Dial.*, 10:655-662

Suggested Readings:

- Abasi, A., (1998), Speaking the unspeakable. In: *Blacks and Jews on the*

- Couch: Psychoanalytic Reflections on Black-Jewish Conflict*, ed. A. Helmreich & P. Marcus. Westport. CT: Prager/Greenwood, 1998, pp. 133-144.
- Brown, L. (1993), New voices, new visions: Toward a lesbian/gay paradigm for psychology. In: *The Culture and Psychology Reader*, ed. N. R. Goldberger & J. B. Veroff. New York: NYU Press, 1995, pp. 559-574.
- Comas-Diaz, L. & Jacobsen, F. (1991), Ethnocultural transference and countertransference in the therapeutic dyad. *Am. J. Orthopsych.* 61: 392-402.
- Butler, J. (1998), Melancholy gender – refused identifications. *Psychoanal. Dial.* 5:165-180.
- Dimen, M. (1999), Unfinished business. In: *That Obscure Subject of Desire: Freud's Female Homosexual Revisited*, ed. R. Lesser & E. Schoenberg. New York: Routledge, (yr.) pp.233-256.
- Eng, D. L. and Han, S. (2000), A dialogue on racial melancholia. *Psychoanal. Dial.* 34, 667-709.
- Moraga, C. (1983), La Güera. In: *The Culture and Psychology Reader*. eds. N. R. Goldberg & J. B. Veroff, New York, NYU Press, 1995, pp. 596-604.
- Suchet, M. (2004), A relational encounter with race. *Psychoanal. Dial.* 14: pp. 423-438.
- Sue, S. & Sue, D. W. (1971), Chinese-American personality and mental health. *Amerasia J.* 4: 23-51.
- Wachtel, P. (1999), The debate over culture. In: P. Wachtel, *Race In the Mind of America*, pp. 57-72.

### VIII/IX:

#### *Readings*

### VIII

- White, C. (2015). Strangers In Paradise: Trevor, Marley, and Me: Reggae music and the foreigner other. *Psychoanal. Dial* 25: pp. 176-193.

### IX

- Gaztambide, Daniel (2015), A preferential option for the repressed: Psychoanalysis through the eyes of Liberation Theology. *Psychoanal. Dial.* 25: pp. 700-713.
- Aron, L. and Starr, K. (2005). The ego and the Yid, Revisited: Commentary on Daniel Gaztambide's "A preferential Option for the repressed: Psychoanalysis through the eyes of Liberation Theology. *Psychoanal. Dial.* 25: pp. 714-718.

Jones, A.L. (2015). A psychoanalytic reader's commentary: On erasure and negation as a barrier to the future. *Psychoanal. Dial.* 25: pp. 719-724.

**X: Reflections: How Do You Stand?**

**X**

*Readings:*

White, C. (2015). How Do You Stand?

Coates, T. (2015). Between The World and Me (Excerpts)

Rankine, C. (2015). Citizen: An American Lyric (Excerpts)