

**The Magical Mask of Whiteness:
Disguising Racism and Doing Whiteness Studies Under the Second Bush Reich**

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Roediger's historic "wages of whiteness" secure access to success and wellness for those agents of whiteness who play and safeguard the game. The persistence of wages suggests there still is a game of racism to be played, the same racial domination continues in the post-civil rights era, but no longer is it the game we used to play, for the rules have been changed and we call this rule change the 'new racism.'

To proceed with analytical precision we must cease claiming that racism was made 'new' at the inception of the 21st century when the color-line remains gerrymandered. 'New racism' is a misnomer, for racism is not new, its function is unchanged, and the term still refers to arrangements that preserve inordinately more resources for the dominant white group. Nothing has changed except that the agents of whiteness who once served the game by attenuating blackness do so today by fiercely circumscribing, distancing and discrediting blackness as we undergo our demographic shift. As we transition from a white to a non-white majority, an escalating attack on blackness operates in defense of white privilege. Circumscribing blackness is now done by anti-racist scholars or activists who see blackness as an anachronistic, reactive response to racism. This wrong-headed view presumes that exposing whiteness to eradicate racism requires the eradication of blackness, a blind and bad idea.

Anti-racist activists grow weary of the same old racial game. We entertain sugar-plum visions of an equitable democracy, but in delirium we fail to counteract the advance of a worse and more likely scenario - an increasingly effective white racial minority. Masking racism today requires the tactical maneuver that old standards of whiteness be replaced with new standards of whiteness so that it seems racism is dying when its outcomes and agenda have not changed. Whiteness studies should reveal how racism has been popularized and legitimated by agents of whiteness who are granted dominant racial authority and it should be able to suggest what new shapes the same racial authority might take in the future.

This panel examines the new rules for masking racism through the actions of the agents of whiteness. How racism is disguised by morphing whiteness enables the old racism to be legitimated and safely sequestered from public scrutiny even in whiteness studies. This seems necessary when we are more suspicious of familiar enactments of racism that produce overt discriminations that favor whites by generally excluding non-whites. Racism still favors whites who feel too vulnerable to scrutiny to keep going it alone, so new racial projects aim to redeem whites and whiteness. Otherwise one's racist actions end up on 60 minutes and this would be bad for business, so the post-civil rights mood requires that the same agenda of securing white privilege be far better disguised. Racism favors whites no longer by generally excluding non-whites; now its agents of whiteness select non-whites and cultural practices to mask the excluded mass of persons and practices. Today's tactical maneuver is more inclusionary and less exclusionary.

Part I: The Anti-Blackness of Whiteness

1. Introduction: Enoch Page

2. Presenter: Vanessa Adel

Title: Sometimes a White Notion: Bridging Old and New Racism through Whiteness Studies

Popular scholars of whiteness studies reformulate what it means to be progressive and white. Contributing to 'the new racism,' a number of them use "bridge concepts" to upgrade racial self-identification regarded as

racist but they make upgrades unilaterally, without sufficient feedback from scholars of color. They overlook how reconstructing white identity side-steps the project of dismantling white privilege. This repositions 21st century white racial authority onto safer ground during the demographic shift.

Repositioning is performed by producing new 'anti-racist' identities thought liberating and un-oppressive. I interrogate the production of new identities in whiteness studies. The academic publication of such studies favors analytical perspectives that pose no real threat to white privilege while undoing negative racial formulations of the past. Initially planning to celebrate this unscrutinized racial project, I was surprised to find unexpectedly that it enables agents of whiteness to deflect from the pressing realities of white privilege and reify a newly essentialized notion of whiteness, firmly attached to white bodies.

It fails to expose floating white cultural practices (unattached to white bodies) that are available to be adopted by any bodies. Building bridge identities appears to be racially progressive while leaving the privileging white cultural practices ambiguous and vaguely defined. While racism worsens, this relieves 'white' subjects of an accountability for their complicity with racial oppression and unremediated role as the benefactors of white privilege. Such formulations reveal whites' interest in preventing their alienation by providing "white entry" into the anti-racist discourse without any need to renovate their behavior.

3. Presenter: Valerie Joseph

Title: How A Caribbean Deployment of 'The Royal Readers' Whitened Colonized British Subjects

In Black Anglo Caribbean culture, children are indoctrinated with the principle that to succeed in life, one must succeed in school. Because the schools are, for the most part, schools of the state, children's succeeding in school is predicated on accepting academic values and excelling at academic tasks set out by the state-designed curriculum. During schooling of the 1930's and 1940's, the British colonial authority in Grenada had a vested interest in the survival and success of their tightly administered system of colonial schools. The textbooks used were The Royal Readers –published in England. Because of the access these books provided to white lifestyles, they are cherished among many Grenadians and elsewhere in the Caribbean. Through a close analysis of four stories in volume IV of The Royal Readers (the only volume I, so far, have found), it appears that the maintenance of the colonial system, and the success of students within that system, depended on students learning and accepting the unstated and often unrecognized tenets of whiteness. Significant aspects of these tenets include the authorial expectation that the students skillfully learn to internalize and defensively shroud the racist values that drove the organization of Caribbean (and particularly Black) domination and subordination in a cloak of counterfeit academic superiority and fraudulent solidarity with White British subjects – a cloak that Caribbean students were trained to wear and that one presumed to be necessary to advance one's upward mobility. The significance for African descendant children of the Royal Readers generations is explored.

4. Presenter: Elizabeth Braun

Title: "Pressured to 'Whiten:' Adapting or Resisting Prescribed Survival Behavior at a New England College"

As racial diversity at predominantly white institutions (PWIs) grows in the post-Civil Rights era, I consider how pressure to assimilate is experienced. Such pressure discourages self-affirming racial identity for students of color and white cultural practices operate unexamined. While research examines students of color at PWIs, I study the dual expectation that students of color adopt the standards of whiteness and behave as if they face no expectation that they adhere to this hidden cultural agenda.

Does a professional veneer produce a marketable school culture? Institutions prohibit overt discrimination, but white students are freer to exercise self-expression than are students of color. White cultural practices prevail where overt racism is brought under administrative or legal control, and where subtle racial behavior is permitted. I explore the role of these standards of whiteness in selecting, fostering, and promoting campus agents whose expectations seek to contain within prescribed limits the college experience of students of color.

I scrutinize white cultural practices that students of color report and explain why white cultural agents contribute this pressure. I hypothesize that students of color who are pressured to "whiten" their behavior respond by adopting white cultural practices or by evading venues where situational success is predicated on their adoption. I interviewed six domestic students of color at a small women's college in New England and identify arenas in which students "whiten-up" in accordance with prevailing standards: language and

communication style, curriculum and faculty, clothing and personal appearance, residence halls and peer interactions, and cultural organizations.

5. Presenter: Enoch Page

Title: Out of Egypt and Into the Blackness: Beyond Afrocentricism into an Anthropology of Consciousness

Blackness, existing prior to Western racism, does not require racism to exist. It evolved practices still pursued today. An ancient tradition of drawing one's attention into an inner blackness was conveyed as cultural blackness that emerged out of Egypt, through the middle-east, into Europe and, into the Americas. Stigma deeming blackness anathema was attached, first by the Romish Church and later by western scholars. As a result, the cultural and biological blackness of this tradition has been kept as secret knowledge. To grasp this concept we must entertain the concept of the light body as a product of Self knowledge attainable through journeys into blackness. This concept was articulated in the Pyramid Texts and in other ancient traditions. Esoteric meanings in (not assigned by) sacred geometry and other Egyptian-origin concepts recognized a human origin from black people, and a cultural lineage traced to a black Buddha, Jesus and Krishna. Knowledge of this tradition has been forced underground because it argues that humans require no outer authority by which to live. Rather, it contends that all humans are capable of absolute self-governance simply by committing to rigorously entering the blackness. It contends that by dwelling in what an archetypal Christ called the "Kingdom Within" that all humans can evolve, in a non-sectarian way, towards an opening of the Third Eye that enables one to manipulate spacetime, and undergo a physiological enlightenment indicative of self-divination, that involves a higher state of embodied existence described in Judeo-Christian metaphors as *transfiguration, ascension and resurrection*. Discussant: Kwame Harrison

6. Discussant: Katya Gibel Azoulay

7. Break

Part II: The Play of Whiteness

8. Presenter: Annalise Fonza

Title: Title: The Wages of Anti-Porn and White Feminist Movements

Pornography debates have afforded white feminists with a particular privilege. Anti-porn feminism put white feminists on the map. An emerging field of anti-porn critical study has afforded certain white feminists, such as Andrea Dworkin and Catherine McKinnon, and women studies departments, with political recognition and scholarly credibility. Anti-porn positions and legislation proposed by white feminists have promoted a critique and critical consciousness of heterosexual commercial pornography. However, anti-porn discourse generated by white feminists has failed to revolutionize and/or challenge the production, distribution, and consumption of commercial heterosexual pornography. Published white feminist anti-porn discourse insufficiently incorporates 'othered' feminist voices -- black feminists and writers, vocal and prolific on the subject, have been excluded from white feminist anti-porn discourse. The most visible white feminists have bought into the 'wages of whiteness,' have furthered their careers through hegemonic alignment with those at the core of the global economy and at the expense of so-called 'others.' Their critiques have essentialized gendered sexual practices, producing greater constructed differences between male and female. Heterosexual commercial pornography is entrenched in an 'imperviousness of whiteness.' This renders many unable to recognize and critique white supremacy in commercial heterosexual pornography. For the anti-porn movement to transform, change, or eliminate it, or for non-sexist pornography to be possible, white feminists must analyze white supremacy in their anti-porn discourse. Those who do wils align themselves and will be aligned with those on the periphery of resistance against a matrix-like heterosexual commercial pornographic industry that exploits racialized gendered images to its self-aggrandizement.

9. Presenter: Betty Lou Graulau

Title: 'Do the Hustle' in a Sea of Whiteness: The White Cultural Practice of 'DAMP-ing' Disco

Billboard Magazine reports that in 1978 about 36 million Americans stepped onto the dance floors of 20,000 US Discotheques and just about six months later, Disco 'died' when it was executed, in effigy, in a ritualistic

burning in centerfield of Chicago's Comisky Park. What spurred this execution when the new dance craze of Disco was still in its infancy (as compared to the longer running Rock and Roll and Hip Hop cultures)?

I will argue that this execution was a corporate protest that happened due to the white cultural practices of domestication, appropriation, modification and propagation, or what I now refer to as "DAMP"-ing.

From its underground inception in the Black, Latino and Gay communities of New York City in 1970 to the Loft in SoHo and then to the anti-hegemonic "Disco Sucks" Movement, I investigate and display how the "DAMP"ing of Disco was deployed. The consequent whitening of Disco reveals a capitalist agenda accomplished by dominant racial agents of hegemonic structures who seduced the creative and interpretive lower class minority communities, whose members originated Disco, into allowing an appropriation of their subaltern cultural production.

This appropriation of Disco initiated elite interpolation and facilitated the rhizomatous exploitation of the subjectifieds' cultural production for mass consumption. What was once known only to certain communities in off-the-beaten-path clubs spawned 'high-brow' cultural production including: Gucci hand bags; "Dazzle", a comic book Roller Disco Super Heroine; and, the multi-million dollar success of "Saturday Night Fever," the movie and collateral commercial commodities it spawned.

10. Discussant: Kwame Harrison

Part III: The Work of Whiteness

11. Presenter: Vanessa Martinez

Title: Inclusionary White Cultural Practices as a Factor in Unequal Access to Health Care: The cases of TB and AIDS

While new research continues on Tuberculosis and AIDS and US minority populations, little shows how these groups' systemic oppression influences health outcomes. Health care operates as a commodity and minorities face problems trying to get care—are two effects of stratified care. In 2001, 69% of the reported cases with AIDS and 79% with TB were minorities, according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. With the non-white community being so afflicted with these diseases, we must understand how these conditions precipitate unequal care access and health outcomes. Several scholars have studied these problems from the viewpoint of racism. The receding, prevalent model of racism construes exclusionary discrimination as a primary barrier to minority health care access. Whiteness theory provides a more comprehensive look at racism not as exclusionary discrimination in which people are disqualified for care as a function of race, but offers an analysis of whiteness as a necessary adjunct to racism and reveals far more benign, inclusionary practices of structuring health care access that secure white privilege for some populations, without overt discrimination, while omitting many due to factors that ostensibly appear not to be racial ones. Privileged access for some without overtly excluding others is a key feature of minority health care. Using AIDS and TB as case studies, I explore preliminary research on masked underlying factors including race, poverty, and the result of unequal access in the history of white privilege on past and current prevention, diagnosis and treatment policies for TB and AIDS.

12. Presenter: Isabel Espinal

Title: Whiteness at Work: Latina Librarian Ethnography in a White Female Profession

Members of US professions have tried to address their lack of "diversity." Librarianship is one such profession. Since 1999, I've worked within my profession and library institution to examine how the conduct of anti-racist efforts to address diversity in librarianship may be a problem which at times can evoke reactive agencies of whiteness in defense of white privilege.

To remediate the whiteness of librarianship, I consider who comprises the library's audience and on this issue I report the reception of and reaction to research I did on this topic and presented at a professional conference of librarians. Some questions addressed in my published study are: How are the standards of whiteness played out in this white and female profession? How do gender and racial concerns intersect with whiteness? What ethnographic promises, challenges and dangers characterize this type of study? Who does it benefit?

Reactions to presentations I made to other librarians offer new data for this study. As a librarian ethnographer of color, I found myself doing what audiences of color consider "reverse anthropology." Reversal occurs where in the professional librarian communities there are ethnographic opportunities to observe the widespread view that anthropology legitimately is done from a whiteness perspective. While a simplistic white/non-white categorization easily is deconstructed, what remains is a set of white cultural practices enacted by predominantly white librarian staff. As an insider and outsider of the librarian profession, I suggest that whiteness theory can have pragmatic real world applications helpful in decolonizing anthropology and library user-ship.

13. Presenter: Jeremy Thorne

Title: Exporting Whiteness as an 'American' Upgrade of Russian Corporate Professionalism

The crash of Soviet Russia with Yeltsin's 1991 coup threw open the doors for increased western influences on Russian culture. In this reorientation, capitalism was posed as the answer for the Russian economy. What emerged is a Russian desire to do business with western corporations. To achieve this, the Russian mentality must shift from communist to capitalist predilections. Upwardly mobile Russian executives aim to construct an interface across which will flow business, products, and dollars. They manage working relations with American businessmen by ratcheting up their acquisition of whiteness.

Whiteness is a set of cultural practices arising from a demonstrated 'investedness' in western cultural conceptions. American agents of whiteness pursue and reward the ideological conversion of Russians, seen as foreigners, by encouraging movements in mentality from super-ordinate racial Soviet positions to subordinate racial positions vis a vis white Americans. Transmitting information about how to be white in a new way occurs in formal and informal institutions and such conversions occur at the macro and micro level across cultures.

I explore how agents of whiteness foster a cross-cultural ideological conversion at micro and macro levels in Siberia. The first concerns the internal activities of a large software-programming company to which Americans outsource work; and, the second involves a United States government-sponsored business exchange program. In each setting, Whitened Russians sympathetic to an American business model get the competitive edge over Russians whose failure to measure up to the same criteria of whiteness make them less attractive to the American business world.

14. Discussant Pem Buck

15. Discussion