



“THE PROBLEM WITH WHITE PEOPLE...”

Julian Walker



ABSTRACT

In this article, I make race figural to heighten (white) awareness, while recognising of course that each human individual is a complex and shifting, context-specific amalgam of intersecting personal and social group identities. My intention is to support myself and other white people to recognise the inner work we need to do around race to equip ourselves to join with people of colour to fight racism. This inner work starts, I posit, with examining our white privilege and white fragility, to equip us to face the underlying problem: the ideology/worldview of white supremacy, or just whiteness (since whiteness, as it is socially constructed, implies white superiority and centrality).

In Part 2, I offer a model of whiteness that maintains and reproduces material power and emotional comfort for white people at the expense of people of colour by means of erroneous beliefs that exist at the individual, group and system level, which I identify as Ahistorical, Asymmetrical and Narcissistic.

In Part 3, I use this model to elucidate racialised patterns of behaviour I have experienced in T-Groups and other learning contexts in a way that seeks to remove blame from white individuals but squarely places with us a responsibility to acknowledge and interrogate our whiteness.

I conclude by asking what it looks like for white people to give up power over, and instead exercise power with, BIPOC to undo racism.

NOTE ON LANGUAGE: This article is based on my first-person experience as a white woman and is intentionally written from a white perspective. When I say “we” I am referring to white people. Terms to describe groups of people who are racialized as not white are contested. In the UK, the term BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) has largely been supplanted by BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic). Both acronyms are problematic in suggesting that the experience of different populations within these groups is homogenous, and

‘minority’ is itself Eurocentric since, globally, it is whites who are the minority. The term People of Colour, widely used in the US, has been challenged on the grounds it can function to erase Black experience. While recognising that any term which defines groups of people in contradistinction to whiteness is problematic, I opt here to use BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Colour) as a more inclusive term which is gaining currency in the US and to a lesser extent in the UK.



INTRODUCTION

In 2019, while co-facilitating a Human Interaction Lab, I proposed a session on 'white fragility'. We discussed this as faculty and decided against it. During our faculty discussion an African-American colleague observed that I displayed "a bias against white people, seeing them as needing to be fixed". This feedback reverberated in me after I got home – was it true? If true, was that acceptable? I determined to interrogate my approach to the critical examination of whiteness¹.

1. What is the fundamental problem?

I did not want a pedagogy that essentialises white people as needing to be fixed. That would make me hopelessly ineffective in supporting white people's inner work on race in service of anti-racism. I know from the Paradoxical Theory of Change² and from 11 years of 12-Step³ recovery that acceptance is the precondition for change⁴. If white people are not what needs fixing, is it white privilege? Or white fragility? I thought not. Those are symptoms, not cause. The underlying problem is white supremacy or simply whiteness - since oppression and dominance are inherent in whiteness as it is socially constructed - and the way white people are socialised to deny its existence.⁵

Making whiteness visible to white people⁶

My current understanding of whiteness comes via two foundational concepts. First, **white privilege**, described by Peggy McIntosh in 1989⁷ as a set of unearned advantages bestowed on white people at the expense of people-of-colour. I was almost forty, an Executive Director leading the race equality programme of a major UK charity, when an Asian co-worker shared McIntosh's work with me. From a young age I had been aware of my class privilege but the double advantage whiteness afforded me was invisible to me until then. At Oxford University and in the Civil Service fast stream I understood the dearth of Black and Asian peers by reference to their unfair *disadvantage* without connecting this to my unfair *advantage*.

McIntosh helped me see unearned assets stemming from my race – like access to, and identification with, people in power, cultural resources, self-confidence. Perhaps the biggest privilege is an *absence* – I don't have to carry the psychic burden of others' projections, stereotypes, meanings and prejudicial myths⁸. I am free of what Toni Morrison⁹ speaks of as the 'distraction' provided by racism since, being white, I am allowed to be 'just me' and to succeed or fail on those terms. As Richard Dyer writes, "There is nothing more powerful than being 'just' human"¹⁰

White privilege is insidious, and oppressive to those who don't hold it. But I cannot "fix" or forego my

white privilege; it's mine whether I want it or not, even – perhaps especially - when I deny it. The best I can do, if I strive for anti-racist practice, is to acknowledge my privilege and check how I use it – contributing to the problem or the solution?

Some white people are becoming comfortable speaking of our privilege. It can be pleasurable to rest here, enjoying the fruits of unearned advantage *and* the satisfaction of feeling enlightened. But if I have adopted the language without reflecting deeply, I am dangerous to BIPOC. If I don't address my internalised superiority then regardless of my intentions I will replicate racist oppression. Long before the term 'white privilege' had currency, Black leaders and thinkers identified the threat posed by 'whites of goodwill' who thought they had nothing to learn about themselves¹¹.

The second key concept is **white fragility**, a term Robin DiAngelo¹² coined to describe "a state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves ... such as anger, fear, and guilt and behaviors such as argumentation, silence, and leaving the stress-inducing situation". Patterns of white defensiveness, injured victimhood and claimed 'innocence' had been critiqued by Black scholars from James Baldwin to Ralph Ellison,¹³ Audre Lorde¹⁴ and bell hooks¹⁵ and are encapsulated in poet FreeQuency's question, "Why do you hate being called racist more than you hate racism?"¹⁶ So while DiAngelo's analysis is not new, I benefited from the catalogue of examples she gives of white fragility in action, such as phrases like "I feel attacked/ judged" or "She's so aggressive" that I hear repeated – often *word for word* - by white people in different settings, all asserting their individuality and the unfairness of generalising, and all, thereby, declaring their problematic whiteness.

I see myself in DiAngelo's descriptions, such as my lived experience as a well-educated adult with a responsible job and zero racial competence who had never been penalized for this deficit. Meeting online with three women of colour I heard myself say, "I don't feel safe". In truth I was uncomfortable but perfectly safe. The word 'safe' came to me out of implicit knowledge that I could play this card to divert the group and entice the (Black, male) facilitator to protect me. I joined a long line of white people whose use of the language of 'safety' when talking about race is a bitter irony, given the real physical danger racism causes BIPOC¹⁷.

Resmaa Menakem¹⁸ speaks of 'the fantasy of white fragility' which is fitting, for whites are invested with centuries of unearned privilege and power yet exhibit a learned helplessness around race. White fragility functions to erect a wall of 'white noise' deflecting attention from those injured by our racism onto our own injured feelings, causing further harm to BIPOC, infantilising white people, inhibiting our



learning and, crucially, preserving the racial status quo¹⁹.

White fragility is criticised for flattering white people, euphemising the harm we do²⁰ and for centring white experience²¹. These critiques are valid; nevertheless I value the concept for illuminating the ways that I, often unconsciously, expect to be pampered by BIPOC, and how in intimate relationships with Black people, I have simultaneously held power while *feeling weak*. White fragility has pedagogical value, I contend, if used not to shame, or excuse or essentialise white people but as an invitation to look inwards, to seek to understand our racial discomfort through critical examination of whiteness rather than projecting onto BIPOC and labelling them aggressive, unskilful or – most perversely - racist²².

I hold that white people’s internal work to recognise and disrupt our racialised privilege and fragility is an entry-level requirement for productive conversations about race. It’s not that white people need fixing, but we do need *educating*, just to get to the antiracist starting-line. I hold white privilege and fragility as the inevitable results of our socialisation into the system of white supremacy. To unpick our white conditioning is a lifelong project of unlearning and relearning.

2. White supremacy, a self-sustaining system

Whiteness as socially constructed has been used by white people for centuries to justify the enslavement, dispossession, rape, murder, humiliation, brutalisation and dehumanisation of BIPOC. Today, it underpins structural inequality that shapes every facet of life from housing to health to education, employment, culture, criminality, incarceration, and life expectancy²³. White privilege and fragility uphold white supremacy by shielding white people from the dirty truth that we benefit from, and collude in, racism.

Deconstructing Whiteness

The ideology of whiteness allows white people to harm BIPOC and benefit from racial injustice *whilst still feeling good about ourselves*. This is no accident. Whiteness was created to deny the humanity of enslaved Africans and thus maintain both the power of European colonisers and

their self-image as virtuous Christians²⁴. Racial categorisation as made normative in the 17th Century was never a neutral taxonomy, but a legal-political-moral hierarchy placing white at the top and Black at the bottom. As Ta-Nehisi Coates says, “race is the child of racism, not the father”²⁵.

Whiteness is thus inherently unjust and – in positing both white superiority and white innocence – founded on falsehood²⁶. Whiteness maintains its ideological grip by means of mutually reinforcing fallacious beliefs held consciously or unconsciously by every white person raised in a white supremacist context²⁷. These beliefs are cultivated by messages communicated in families, schools and workplaces, by accumulated centuries of culture consistently erasing BIPOC excellence and history²⁸ while depicting white people as smart, industrious and creative, as having conquered half the world through bravery, enterprise and superior ways of thinking rather than brutality, greed and a mania for power. In making this argument, I align myself with Critical Race Theory.²⁹

My own awakening to whiteness coincided with re-examining my feminism. Reading George Yancy’s account³⁰ of his experience as a Black philosopher, I reflected on my experience of three years studying philosophy without one primary text by a woman. I realised that I had decided unconsciously, as a student, to renounce my womanhood and identify with male power. I succeeded in the short term but at the cost of internalising a misogyny that had me dismissive of ‘unsuccessful’ women and eschewing female spaces. Thinkers such as bell hooks and the experience of 12-Step women’s groups helped me embrace my femaleness and confront my whiteness. While the former was a warm and welcoming process, the latter remains uncomfortable. I don’t like facing my internalised superiority, which shows itself subtly, most recently in my telling my Black boss about a “misspelling” in a presentation prepared (I assumed) by a Black media company. Her reply referred to a “typo” and thus my assumption was revealed to me, that I think Black people can’t spell. The model below shows how such white ways of thinking and speaking are expressions of underlying, false and culturally acquired ideas.³¹

Figure 1

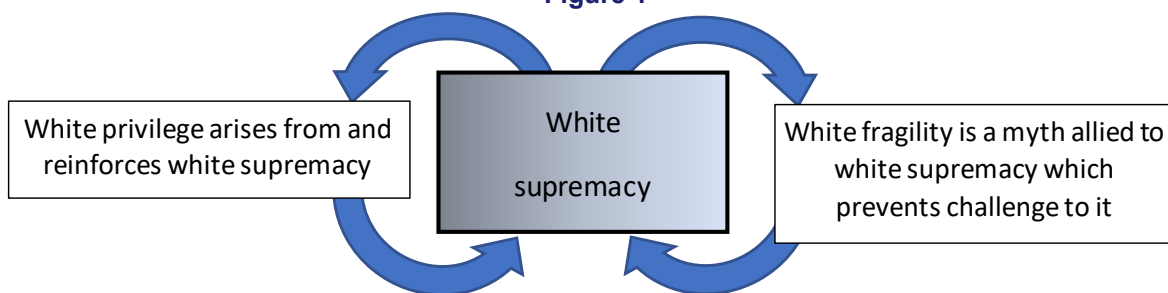
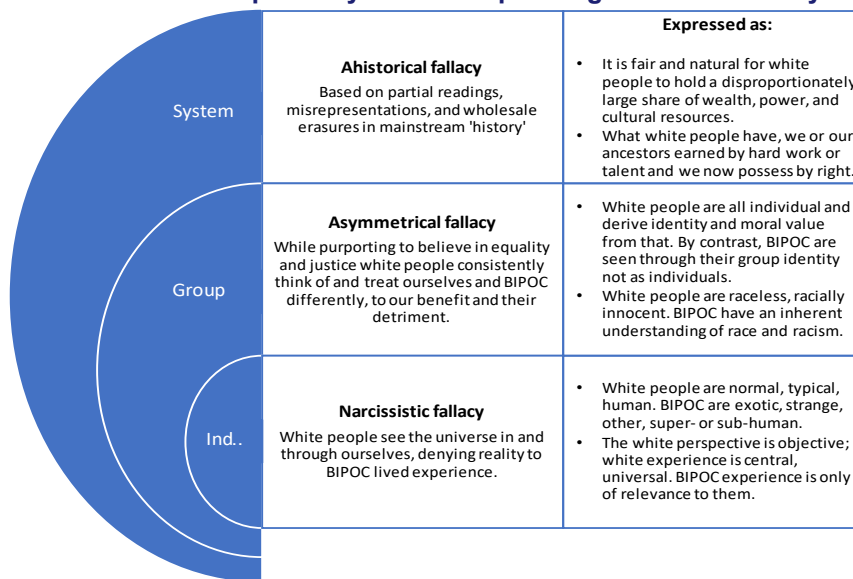




Figure 2: Whiteness is upheld by fallacies operating at all levels of system



3. How whiteness shows up in Groups

1. Why do white people get most of the airtime?

Because patterns of white domination replicate themselves in every system and level of system. At work and in family, friendship, even our most intimate relationships, whiteness centres white thoughts and feelings, and has whites dominate resources and decision-making. We feel entitled to give opinions even when they are not asked for, and feel affronted if a person of colour requests that we respect their boundaries and listen without speaking.

Example: In a T-Group, the white majority consistently deflects a Chinese man's attempts to exercise leadership in influencing the content or process of its formal sessions; he is, however, invited to lead a pre-session tai chi exercise.

2. How can I be doing something racist if a Black person says it's OK? **BIPOC, especially Black people, have been conditioned for centuries to value the feelings, voice and bodies of white people more than their own.** Without strong protective factors, this will be introjected as a form of internalised oppression³⁰ and show up in **valuing white comfort above the truth.** A Black person may choose not to challenge me because they love me, despair of me, or are simply tired of encountering my white fragility. One person not calling me out is no guarantee that my behaviour is unproblematic; one voice cannot speak for every BIPOC.

Examples: At a T-Group, a bi-racial man tells of hiding from his white father and white step-mother the racist bullying he experienced, to protect them. My own tendency in cross-racial conversations about race is to check with a person of colour whether I'm 'getting it right' thereby revealing my expectation that they make themselves available to help and reassure me.³³

3. Why do I keep getting it wrong even though I'm doing my white person's work? **Because white supremacy is constantly reinforced by the environment in which we swim.** When my mistake is pointed out, my best option is to drop my defensiveness, listen carefully and be grateful, as the critique may be a sign that I'm seen as "worth educating".³⁴

Example: the strange duality I experienced when saying to three women of colour, "I don't feel safe". I recognised this as enactment of white fragility yet simultaneously felt myself to be reporting what was true for me. Knowing about white fragility did not stop me experiencing and exhibiting it.

4. Why is white privilege harder to grasp for white men than for white women?³⁵ **Because privilege means not having to notice, and white men have a double dose of being permitted to not notice.** White women can leverage our experience of being part of a subordinated social-identity group to unpick the ways in which we are also oppressors. Women socialised in patriarchy develop a facility to deflect rather than internalise sexist barbs and stereotypes.³⁶ Men, I speculate, have less need to do this so find it harder not to feel personally attacked when hearing feedback about their impact as white men.³⁷

Example: at a Power Equity Group³⁸, I witnessed strong reactions from white men who felt personally attacked when asked to see themselves as instances of white or male group-identity; white women were quicker to 'own' our white identity but from a place of guilt and shame.

5. Why do white women repeatedly let down women of colour? **While white women may pretend (or really feel) solidarity with women of colour, we nevertheless compete ruthlessly for white, male power and attention.** If I hold that power is a zero-sum game, I may pursue my own liberation while trampling whomever to



secure my place in the sun, becoming in Audre Lorde's words a woman "so enamored of her own oppression that she cannot see her heel print upon another woman's face"³⁹.

Example: at the same Power Equity Group, I repeatedly expressed solidarity with women of colour, and was then complicit in the group not noticing the silence of two women of colour throughout our final session. When the group realised what we had done I reflected how, once again, my learning about my racism had been at the expense of women of colour.

6. *Why are white women's tears given more tender attention than Black women's resistance? Because both white and Black people are conditioned to privilege the feelings of white women over Black*⁴⁰. While everyone cries, white girls' tears are socially acceptable in a way that boys' and Black girls' tears are not. White women have the option of weaponising our tears, to exert power over a person of colour who challenges our racial worldview. By contrast, the trope of the 'angry Black woman' is so prevalent, it doesn't even need to be voiced to do its work of silencing Black women and dismissing their pain.

Example: In multiple learning settings I have witnessed a group (often facilitators too) respond to white women's tears with compassion but turn away from a Black woman voicing frustration.

7. *Why is my genuine desire to 'help' a BIPOC friend/colleague not helpful? Because unsolicited white 'help' is a disguised form of control*⁴¹ *and implied superiority*⁴². Whites assume that we *can* help and that our help will be welcomed; we are disgruntled if someone declines assistance and may consider them 'ungrateful' even though they never asked us to get involved.

*Example: at the HI Lab*⁴³ *where this article began, my African American colleague led a Diversity, Inclusion and Social Justice session during which I*

heard participants use UK legal jargon. I assumed my colleague hadn't noticed or, noticing, had not understood and thus needed my help. I raised my hand and kept it raised until she called on me to speak. I committed a microaggression then a macroaggression in my arrogant assumption that her expertise was inferior to mine.

CONCLUSION

What does it take to challenge white supremacy?

White supremacy is both ideological and material. White supremacy shapes ideas and concrete reality; it makes meaning, and prescribes what is true, and it controls people, resources and money. To combat white supremacy, white people need to start by looking inwards. But that can't be the end of it. We also need to cede and disperse the power we hold unfairly. Otherwise - in Anastasia Reesa Tomkin's words - we glorify the conversation as though it were the *action* itself⁴⁴.

What does it look like for white people to decentre ourselves, give up power-over and commit to power-with? As the reaction to the killing of George Floyd leads to unprecedented levels of white awareness, the danger is that we learn to perform anti-racism as window-dressing, without challenging white supremacy in ourselves and the world. Such efforts will be shallow and self-serving, what Layla Saad calls "optical" or "performative allyship"⁴⁵.

Each of us can do the personal work of unravelling our whiteness through studying diverse voices, writing, reflective practice and conversation. We can invest our time, money, love, energy and expertise in ways that champion BIPOC anti-racist leadership. White people individually are not to blame - whiteness predates us and is bigger than any of us. It's not our fault, but it is our responsibility to be vocal and active against it. Our efforts are vital. If the intellect, courage, and indefatigability of Black, Indigenous and People of Colour were enough, we wouldn't still be in this mess.

Figure 3

Anti-racism window-dressing	Challenging white supremacy
Use social media to show off anti-racist credentials without acknowledging how you benefit from and collude with white supremacy.	Search out resources written by BIPOC and perform anti-racism in all-white settings. In mixed groups, do some of the heavy lifting by naming and disrupting white supremacy dynamics and don't expect thanks.
Insist a BIPOC speak nicely in order to be heard, or in order to influence you. ⁴⁶	Stop being defensive when a BIPOC is angry or upset; don't make it all about you. Say nothing and really listen.
Continue to use informal (white) networks to get business done, while complying with diversity and inclusion norms during formal proceedings.	Invite BIPOC to join informal networks, asking "Where's X or Y?" if you find yourself somewhere that decisions are being taken and everybody is white.
Be determinedly upbeat and optimistic, always looking to prove that progress has been made, things are getting better for BIPOC. It's not our call.	Notice progress (don't attribute it to white saviours) but be real about things getting worse, or not changing; acknowledge the toll this takes on the physical and psychological wellbeing of BIPOC.
Ask for more research, more data so we can 'understand what's going on.' ⁴⁷	Act on data we already have, which represents innumerable instances of individual harm to the bodies, minds, and spirits of BIPOC.
Tokenise, by using one or two Brown or Black faces as 'poster boy/girl', for your Board or conference.	Ask BIPOC to speak/teach/write on their vast range of matters of expertise unconnected to race, or Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.
Mentor or promote one or two BIPOC 'stars' who are then left to sink or swim (and if they sink, this is used as evidence they weren't quite good enough in the first place).	Understand the additional pressures on senior BIPOC in white organisations and put in place structures to support their success. Continue, repeatedly, to give opportunities to people who do not look like you.



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BIOGRAPHY

Julian is a writer and facilitator, since January 2020 an associate of the equality and human rights charity, brap <https://www.brap.org.uk/> based in Birmingham UK. She took her first T-Group in 2010 and wanted to learn how to deliver that experience to others, gaining NTL membership in 2018, and completing her HI Lab apprenticeship in 2019.

She has worked as a civil servant including stints as departmental speechwriter to Home Secretaries Michael Howard and Jack Straw, and as an independent governance consultant in Afghanistan, Bosnia, Libya, Palestine, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Turkey, Tunisia and Uganda. As Director of Policy and Research for Barnardo's UK from 2006-2010, she worked on a programme to promote race equality and diversity, starting her journey to explore her white identity. [Julian Walker: Recovery, Identity and Use-of-Self: A Personal Journey](#)

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NOTES

1. White people in an expanding range of fields of scholarship and practice are recognising the need to locate ourselves racially in the world we seek to understand, heal or change, eg decolonising international development or Judy Ryde *Being White in the Helping Professions*, 2009.
2. The paradoxical theory of change is usually attributed to American psychiatrist Arnold Beisser, a student of Fritz Perls. Beisser wrote that “change occurs when one becomes what he is, not when he tries to become what he is not” and that “one must first fully experience what one is before recognizing all the alternatives of what may be”. Beisser, A. (1970) *The Paradoxical Theory of Change*. In: Fagan, J. and Shepherd, I.L., Eds., *Gestalt Therapy Now*, Harper & Row, New York, 77-80.
3. 12 step fellowships are self-organising peer support networks for recovery from addiction to substances or behaviours. 12 step programmes originated with Alcoholics Anonymous, who started meeting in Akron, Ohio, in 1935.
4. Step 1 of the 12-step process is to admit I am powerless over my addiction, in effect to accept myself as an addict.
5. At the NTL ODC Alumni gathering in London in November 2019 I co-facilitated with Tracie Joliff two sessions exploring whiteness. A white woman said afterwards, “It made me reflect that I operate hoping that people won’t notice I’m white... hoping I can be somehow ‘beyond race’ or a-racial, behaving as if my whiteness just isn’t a thing in the room - which of course is a privilege of whiteness”.
6. As Sara Ahmed has commented, “whiteness is only invisible for those who inhabit it. For those who don’t, it is hard not to see whiteness; it even seems everywhere.”. Declarations of Whiteness: The Non-Performativity of Anti-Racism, 2006.
7. <https://www.nationalseedproject.org/Key-SEED-Texts/white-privilege-unpacking-the-invisible-knapsack>
8. The dehumanising, destructive effect of having one’s humanity determined or denied by someone else’s hostile opinion is powerfully conveyed in Frantz Fanon’s *Black Skin, White Masks*.
9. In a 1975 lecture on race, Toni Morrison said: “Know the function, the very serious function of racism, is distraction. It keeps you from doing your work. It keeps you explaining, over and over again, your reason for being... None of that is necessary. There will always be one more thing”.
10. Richard Dyer, *White*, 1997.
11. Martin Luther King’s Letter From a Birmingham Jail, 1963 :“Shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will.” James Baldwin, “Nobody is more dangerous than he who imagines himself pure in heart; for his purity, by definition, is unassailable”.
12. Robin DiAngelo (2011) White Fragility. *International Journal of Critical Pedagogy*, Vol 3 (3). She explains “Racial stress results from an interruption to what is racially familiar” ie any challenge to the notion of white racial superiority.
13. In Ellison’s 1952 novel *Invisible Man*, the white world negates the hero’s existence, “I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me”. While sometimes, “You ache with the need to convince yourself that you do exist in the real world... and you strike out with your fists, you curse and you swear to make them recognize you”, most of the time the hero chooses to “remember that I am invisible and walk softly so as not to waken the sleeping ones... there are few things in the world as dangerous as sleepwalkers”. This prefigures the rage DiAngelo describes when a white person’s racial conception of the world – and their absolute entitlement to hold it as objectively true – is challenged.
14. “I speak out of direct and particular anger at an academic conference, and a white woman says, ‘Tell me how you feel but don’t say it too harshly or I cannot hear you’”, Audre Lorde, *The Uses of Anger, Women Responding to Racism*.
15. *Black Looks: Race and Representation*, 1992 in which she notes white liberals’ rage when their whiteness is pointed out, since this subverts “the liberal belief in a universal subjectivity (we are all just people)”.
16. FreeQuency’s 2015 Dear White People
17. The white habit of complaining we feel unsafe in difficult racial conversations, in DiAngelo’s words, “trivializes our history of brutality towards people of color and perverts the reality of that history”.
18. *My Grandmother’s Hands, Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies*, 2017: “The deadliest manifestation of white fragility is its reflexive confusion of fear with danger and comfort with safety”.
19. Robin DiAngelo’s *White Fragility, Why It’s so Hard for White People to Talk About Race*. Beacon Press 2018: “White fragility is ... a powerful means of white racial control and the protection of white advantage”.
20. See Anna Kegler’s blog The Sugar coated language of white fragility.
21. DiAngelo addresses the way her work serves to centre white people and the white voice: “I have not found a way around this dilemma, for as an insider I can speak to white experience in ways that may be harder to deny. So, though I am centring the white voice, I am also using my insider status to challenge racism” *White Fragility*, page xiv-xv.
22. See Monroe Bergdorf debate Piers Morgan
23. Professor David Williams of Harvard has for decades researched the adverse impacts of racism on health. Alarming, many indicators he tracks are getting worse, not better. See david-williams-discrimination-health.



24. David Olusoga in *Black and British, a Forgotten History*, explains how the category 'white' first appeared in English law in the 1661 Barbados Slave Code, later copied in plantation societies across the Caribbean and Americas. The Code gave white men of all classes rights that were systematically denied to Black people. For a North American perspective see [Jacqueline Battalora, Birth of a White Nation - The Invention of White People and Its Relevance Today](#) 2013.
25. Ta-Nehisi Coates *Between The World and Me*, 2015.
26. Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Ibid.*, speaks of this lie as the Dream. James Baldwin *On Being 'White' and Other Lies*, Essence Magazine 1984, spoke of how the invention of whiteness functioned in the US. "America became white—the people who, as they claim, "settled" the country became white—because of the necessity of denying the Black presence, and justifying the Black subjugation."
27. BIPOC in white supremacist societies may internalise their oppression. The corresponding but opposite processes involved for whites and BIPOC to unpick their conditioning is tracked in [Journeys of Race, Color & Culture From Racial Inequality to Equity & Inclusion](#) by Rick Huntley, Rianna Moore, Carol Pierce 2017.
28. For a tour de force tour of 10,000 years of erased African history, see [Akala at the Oxford Union](#), November 2015.
29. A movement emerging from American legal theorists in the 1980s positing the social construction of race, and challenging, among other things, the notion that white perspectives are "objective" in a way BIPOC perspectives are not.
30. George Yancy, *Black Bodies, White Gazes, The Continuing Significance of Race*, 2008: "In philosophy the only thing we learn to 'expose' (and to do so brutally) is a weak argument... The embodied self is bracketed and deemed irrelevant to theory, superfluous and cumbersome in one's search for truth... The white male philosopher/author presumes to speak for *all* of 'us' without the slightest notion of his raced (or gendered) identity".
31. In making this point I am rehearsing what WEB Du Bois said a century ago about white behaviour stemming from "conditioned reflexes; of long followed habits, customs and folkways; of subconscious trains of reasoning and unconscious nervous reflexes". Quoted in George Yancy, *Ibid*, page 90.
32. *Understanding Internalized Oppression: A Theoretical Conceptualization of Internalized Subordination*, Teeomm K. Williams, University of Massachusetts Amherst, 2012.
33. [Layla F Saad, Me and White Supremacy: How to Recognise Your Privilege, Combat Racism and Change the World](#), 2020 Quercus uses the phrase 'wanting a cookie' for the way white people expect coddling and praise from BIPOC.
34. <https://www.baratunde.com/blog/2013/9/9/ways-white-people-of-goodwill-and-anyone-else-can-help-end-racism>
35. Anecdotal data from a small sample of 10 practitioners. It is important to note that many white women are so identified with, and invested in, white men's power that they are among the most vocal defenders of white supremacy.
36. Chris Rock jokes about rap music with misogynistic lyrics being loved by women who, if questioned, reply "he's not talking about me" - <https://youtu.be/YCkAccc5iHQ>
37. [British actor Laurence Fox says calling him a white privileged male is 'racist'](#).
38. A Power Equity Group is an experiential learning methodology in which individuals work with group energy through the experience of participating in a group in which formal power hierarchies are flattened as far as possible. See Flat, Egalitarian Structure: Working with Energy, Carol Pierce, *Practising Social Change*: www.ntl-psc.org.
39. Audre Lorde, The Uses of Anger, Women Responding to Racism in *Sister Outsider*.
40. [Layla F Saad](#) talks of the expectation on her as a Black woman always to "act better than she is treated". Tarana Burke, originator of the Me Too movement, says "We are all socialised to respond to the vulnerability of white women first". [Tarana Burke in conversation with Steve McQueen](#), Guardian, December 2018.
41. The problematic nature of white offers of 'help' to individuals or communities injured by white racism is also highlighted in this quotation from Aboriginal activists group, Queensland, 1970s, "If you have come to help me, you are wasting your time; but if you are here because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together."
42. Toni Morrison, "the secret of kindness from whitepeople [is] they had to pity a thing before they could like it". Joe Trace is speaking, page 125 *Jazz*, 1992, Penguin Random House, Vintage edition 2016.
43. The Human Interaction (HI) Laboratory is an experiential learning activity that combines T-Group and community learning sessions. The T (for "training") Group is a technology developed by NTL in which, in the words of Charles Seashore, "Participants work together in small groups of ten to fourteen people, over an extended period of time, and learning comes through analysis of personal experiences, feelings, reactions, perceptions and behaviour" (taken from *What is a T Group? NTL Reading Book for Human Relations Training*, 8th Edition, 1999).
44. [How White People Conquered the Non Profit Industry](#)
45. Layla F Saad, *Ibid*.
46. This is 'tone policing' - see Layla F Saad, *Ibid*.
47. It's worth noting that the same individuals or institutions who repeatedly demand more evidence to prove the existence of structural racism may propose or implement 'solutions' on the basis of no evidence of effectiveness.