

# **WHITE PRIVILEGE, FRAGILITY & Internalized Dominance**

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MLP TEACH IN #2,

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2016



# SOCIAL LOCATION MATTERS

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- I am a white cis woman, partnered with a man. I am a US citizen by birth. I grew up in Oklahoma. I do not know the exact mix of my ethnic heritage. Immigrants from Europe are in my family tree as near as my great-grandparent's generation. Family lore claims English, Irish, German and French. I am a White Anglo-Saxon Protestant. In all but one of these identities I am dominant in the intersecting systems of white supremacy. Other than my name, there are no preserved cultural ties, not even foods/dress/customs from these persons. I inherited "American" as what we call ourselves.
- Because race was taught as irrelevant to me as a white person, whiteness is outside of race (politically useful categories of different) CLASS became a powerful signifier/identifier which I can speak with more comfort and confidence.
- All grandparents would be described as white and would identify as American. They would not name white as an identifier.

# BASIC REFRESHER

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- **Race** is a system of advantage or privilege based on race
  - A political system, action and category in a context of power.
  - Dynamic and adaptable to the changing landscape: it makes meaning. An outcome of white supremacy.
- **Racism** is racial prejudice plus institutional power. It is systemic and enforced and maintained by society.
- **Racialization** lumps peoples into and socializes them to have, and participate in, race and racism.



# ADDITIONAL TERMS

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- **Bias** is implicit (person is unaware), pervasive, predicts behaviors, has different levels, usually aimed relating toward power. Bias interacts with consciously held attitudes and beliefs. It is related to...
- **Prejudice** is **learned** prejudgment based on stereotypes about a social group that someone belongs to, *or is perceived to belong to...* Emotions of prejudice span a spectrum from blatant (hatred) to subtle (lack of interest). **INDIVIDUAL LEVEL**
- **Discrimination** is action based on prejudice, an unfair action toward a social group and its members. **INDIVIDUAL LEVEL**
- **Oppression** is group prejudice + discrimination backed by **INSTITUTIONAL** and/or **SYSTEMIC** power.
  - A group is in a position **to enforce prejudice and discrimination throughout the society.**
  - Creates **NORMAL**, what is preferred/admired within its power. Insider and Outsider (margin and center).



# A FEW KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF IMPLICIT BIASES

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- Implicit biases are **pervasive**. Everyone possesses them, even people with avowed commitments to impartiality such as judges.
- Implicit and explicit biases are **related but distinct mental constructs**. They are not mutually exclusive and may even reinforce each other.
- The implicit associations we hold **do not necessarily align with our declared beliefs** or even reflect stances we would explicitly endorse.
- We generally tend to hold implicit biases that **favor our own ingroup**, though research has shown that we can still hold implicit biases against our ingroup.
- Implicit biases are **malleable**. Our brains are incredibly complex, and the implicit associations that we have formed can be gradually unlearned through a variety of debiasing techniques.



# TOOLS TO DISCOVER & WORK ON IMPLICIT BIAS

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- **Implicit Bias Test** | Harvard | Project Implicit
  - <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>
- **Bias Cleanse** | MTV and Kirwan Institute - means to work on bias to reduce its affect
  - <http://www.lookdifferent.org/what-can-i-do/bias-cleanse>



# RECOMMENDED SHORT READS/VIDEOS

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- **Explaining White Privilege to a Broke White Person** | Gina Crosley- Corcoran
  - Posted Nov 20, 2013 on her blog The Feminist Breeder.com
  - <http://thefeministbreeder.com/explaining-white-privilege-broke-white-person/>
- **The Danger of a Single Story (TED)** - Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
  - TEDGlobal 2009 · 18:49 · Filmed Jul 2009
  - [https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda\\_adichie\\_the\\_danger\\_of\\_a\\_single\\_story](https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story)

# SIMPLE ACTION FOR IMPACT: NOTICE & NAME

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- White privilege confers advantage, including being trusted more and listened to as a default.
- Noticing when white privilege, white supremacy (racism) and white fragility show up in the moment, or soon after is an important skill (moving from unconscious to conscious)
- Speaking that and naming it to another person, or the whole group, is a disrupting behavior that will make room for and give access to persons who do not have those same privileges/power.
- Influences others in the group.



# THE POWER OF OBSERVER EFFECT

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## **How the Illusion of Being Observed Can Make You a Better Person**

*Even a poster with eyes on it changes how people behave*

By Sander van der Linden | Scientific American, Published May 3, 2011

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/how-the-illusion-of-being-observed-can-make-you-better-person/>

# CONNECT

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Build community for white anti-racist work or join them where they exist. Respect boundaries. Join where you are welcome. Do your work and don't ask folks of color to do your emotional labor. One example:

**SURJ** = Showing Up for Racial Justice – national, has 150+ affiliates, has opportunities for faith organizing

<http://www.showingupfornracialjustice.org/>





## REV. MOLLY CASTEEL

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**THANK YOU**