

## Whiteness and White Privilege in Psychotherapy

Andrea L. Dottolo and Ellyn Kaschak: Routledge, 2016, 203 pp.

ISBN 13: 978-1-138-64842-5

This book – edited by Dottolo and Kaschak - is a collection of over a dozen articles originally published in *Women & Therapy* during July-December 2015, which focus on the intersecting issues of gender, whiteness and white privilege in the broad context of the talking therapies. I think that the articles can be sorted into two broad categories, namely critiques of Whiteness in North and South American cultural settings, and training interventions. Whilst the authors are addressing White privilege from a specific setting which might seem detached from a Eurocentric perspective for example, the themes discussed are in fact universal. A core notion of the collection is that the term “*multicultural*” has thus far been reserved for people of color and ethnic groups other than white; for privileged white clinicians it is argued, difference is seen to be a characteristic of those “other than” white. The book seeks to extend the notion of “otherness” to hitherto “non-others”, or whites. The authors take-on the very academic framework and practices of psychology itself arguing that it is time to begin chipping away at the “propped-up” racial hierarchies which secure the place of select groups within these hierarchies.

The five articles addressing teaching and training are particularly interesting, offering specific strategies and exercises for the personal development of students and practitioners alike. Peggy McIntosh’s seminal essay “unpacking the knapsack” which skilfully reveals and explores various forms of invisible and unearned privileges is reproduced here, along with an extended exercise which supports clinicians in engaging with their client’s framework. Other contributors explore the interlocking or intersectional effects of race, class, sexuality, and gender, which defy separating-out; “gender is always raced, and race gendered”. Exercises challenging “color-blindness” which serve to propel “whiteness” to the centre of the conversation, rather than as the unquestioned vantage point from which “others”, are discussed in detail. An important consequence of this aspiration I feel, is that it seeks to shift self-awareness in training into the realm of enacting social justice.

Dottolo and Kaschak’s academic collection is an understandably extensive and erudite extension of Ryde’s accessible chapter “Issues for White Therapists” in Lago’s popular “Handbook of Transcultural Counselling & Psychotherapy”. I would say that this is a useful book for anybody who seeks to access this important collection and does not have access to the journal *Women & Therapy*; it is a *must* for the library of any counsellor/psychotherapist/clinical psychologist training centre.

James Costello PhD, is a registered MBACP (accredited) counsellor who teaches counselling in the Department of Psychology, University of the West of England, Bristol.