

ETHN 255 Race and Psychoanalysis

Winter 2012

Professor Roshanak Kheshti

Tuesdays 10-12:50 SSB 103

Office Hours: SSB 231

Wednesdays: 12-2pm

Thurs: 11am-12pm

Description:

Psychoanalysis represents a disparate paradigm with a theoretical and practical spectrum that has been applied to the analysis of various macro-level socio-cultural, political, aesthetic and epistemological processes and micro-level (non)normative, psychic and “perverse” developments in subject formation. This incredibly vast scholarly and clinical field has primarily been formulated around the case studies of Sigmund Freud and students of his work. While there has been a great deal of critical reflection on Freud’s patriarchal and Lacan’s subsequent phallogocentric positionalities and formulations, there has been comparatively little attention paid to how race functions in schemas of psychoanalytic subject formation.

This seminar explores the centrality of race to the formation of the discipline of psychoanalysis as well as the relevance of psychoanalysis to the study of race, gender and sexuality. We will engage with key texts by Freud, Lacan and Fanon and follow the development of their ideas in the works of 20th and 21st century scholars like Spillers, Marriott, Judy, Sheshadri-Crooks, Eng and Mercer in order to examine and debate the use-value of psychoanalytic theories to the study of race. We will also explore the evolution of critiques of psychoanalysis over the course of quarter. We will end the quarter with readings that attempt to imagine an afterlife for psychoanalysis that goes beyond lack, trauma and death.

Recommended Books (E denotes e-book)Badia Ahad *Freud Upside down*Dina Al-Kassim *On Pain of Speech* ILLAnne Cheng *The Melancholy of Race* EG. Deleuze *Anti-Oedipus*David Eng *Racial Castration* EEng, Kananian & Butler, Eds. *Loss: the politics of Mourning* EFranz Fanon *Black Skin White Masks*Peter Gay, Ed. *The Freud Reader*Sander Gilman *Freud, Race and Gender*Ranjana Khana *Dark Continents* EJacques Lacan *Ecrits*David Marriott *The Haunted Life*Kalpana Sheshadri-Crooks *Desiring Whiteness*Mikko Tuhkanen *The American Optic* ILLAntonio Viegas *Dead Subjects* E

Attendance and Participation requirements:

This course requires active seminar participation. Therefore, no absences are allowed. Additionally, no late papers (including response papers) will be accepted. Response papers are due in seminar each Tuesday (not by email and not in my mailbox) and will not be accepted at any other time. This course will require close reading and textual analysis. While it is not a requirement, you are highly encouraged to form reading/writing groups outside of class in order to discuss competing interpretations and critiques of texts.

Response Papers:

Each student will produce one response paper (one single-spaced, twelve point font page) for each class meeting synthesizing the readings, bringing them into conversation with each other and/or with the student's own work. Late response papers will not be accepted.

Presentations:

Each student is responsible for presenting and facilitating discussion during one class meeting. Presentations are first and foremost **close-readings of the text**. Presentations should facilitate discussion and offer interpretations of the text(s), preferably bringing ideas into conversation across class meetings. Students can incorporate texts, archives and practices (videos, images, music, sculpture, fashion, dance, etc.) into their presentations. Objects might reflect, complicate, interpret or interrogate the ideas raised in the reading ideally putting the object into conversation with the reading.

Papers:

Each student will produce one 12-16-page paper due on a date TBD. The syllabus is organized by themes rather than chronologically or by scholar. Pay attention to the major themes that predominate in scholarship on race and psychoanalysis. Focus your paper on one of these themes bringing the scholarship within that theme into conversation. Late papers will not be accepted.

Readings

Week 1 January 10

On Looking: The issue of looking has been taken up within psychoanalysis in analyses that vary from the white gaze as discussed by Fanon to the the imaginary and fantasy relations enacted within dreams, fantasy and visual culture (film, television, etc.).

- "Introduction" & "The Negro & Psychopathology" in Franz Fanon *Black Skin, White Masks*
- Anne Cheng *The Melancholy of Race* Ch. 1 & 4

Week 2 January 17

On Looking II

- "Introduction" from *The American Optic*
- Jane Gaines 1986. "White Privilege and Looking Relations" *Cultural Critique* 4: 59-79.
- Kalpana Sheshadri-Crooks "Introduction" in *Desiring Whiteness*
- Sigmund Freud "The Interpretation of Dreams," "On Dreams" and "Screen Memories" from *The Freud Reader*, Gay Ed.
- Jacques Lacan "The Split Between the Eye and the Gaze" in *Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*
- David Marriott "Forward" and "I'm Gonna Borrer Me a Kodak" in *On Black Men*

Week 3 January 24

Death I: The subject of death is a significant area in which questions of race have been raised, particularly regarding the correlation between the "pleasure principle" and the "death drive."

- Sara Kaplan (2009) "Our Founding (M)other: Erotic Love and Social Death in *Sally Hemings* and *Our Founding mother*. *Callaloo* 32(3): 773-791.

***In-class visit with Professor Kaplan**

- S. Freud *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (selections)
- Introduction, Ch. 8 & 15 in Hortense Spillers. 2003. *Black, White and in Color*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press
- Michelle Wallace The Search for the "Good Enough" Mammy in *Multiculturalism: a Critical Reader*

Week 4 January 31

Death II

- Arlene Keizer "African American Literature and Psychoanalysis." In *A Companion to African American Literature*. Ed. Gene Andrew Jarrett. Wiley-Blackwell 2010: 410-20.
- J. Lacan "Death, Desire and Freud's Radical Turn"
- Achille Mbembe "Necropolitics"

Week 5 February 7,

Melancholia: a theme that has historically been taken up within feminist theory but that has gained great purchase in studies of race in the last twenty years.

- Freud "Mourning and Melancholia"

- Preface & Ch. 2 Ann Cheng (2001) *The Melancholy of Race*. New York: Oxford University Press. E
- David Eng and David Kananian "Introduction" & Judith Butler "Afterward" in *Loss: the politics of Mourning* E
- Antonio Viegas *Dead Subjects* E
- Ranjana Khanna "Colonial Melancholy" in *Dark Continents* E

Week 6 February 24,

Colonialism I: What originally inspired Fanon to go into psychiatric practice and what continues to be the basis for critical race studies critiques of psychoanalysis and normative subject formation.

- Franz Fanon *A Dying Colonialism or Wretched of the Earth* (selections)
- Derrida, J. (1991). Geopsychoanalysis: "...And the Rest of the World". *Am. Imago*, 48:199-231.
- Ranjana Khanna "Introduction" in *Dark Continents* E
- S. Freud *Totem and Taboo*
- Edward Said "Freud and the non-European" in *Freud and the non-European*
- Alys Weinbaum Ch. 4 "Sexual Selection and the Birth of Psychoanalysis" from *Wayward Reproductions* E

Week 7 February 21

Colonialism II

- Gilles Deleuze "Psycho-analysis and Familialism: The Holy Family" in *Anti-Oedipus* (other selections)
- Achille Mbembe "God's Phallus" in *On the Postcolony* E
- Christopher Lane "Savage Ecstasy: Colonialism and the Death Drive" in *The Psychoanalysis of Race*
- David Marriot "Preface" and "That Within" in *Haunted Life*

Week 8 February 28

Primal Scenes & Fetishism: Queer of color theory has identified the oedipal family as an important site of critique and elaboration upon non/normative racialized subject formation through the themes of fetishism & Freud's classic notion of the "primal scene".

- S. Freud "History of an Infantile Neurosis [The Wolfman]" in *Freud Reader*
- Ch. 3 "A Long Tirade for a Direct Interjection" in Dina Al-Kassim *On Pain of Speech* ILL
- Luz Calvo "Racial Fantasies and the Primal Scene of Miscegenation"

- Mercer, Kobena. 1994. "Dark and Lovely Too: Black Gay Men in Independent Film" in *Welcome to the Jungle*. New York: Routledge.
- S. Freud "Fetishism"
- David Eng "Introduction" & "Primal Scenes" in *Racial Castration*

Week 9 March 6

The Oedipus Complex, Race, and Law (of the father): critical race theory scholars focusing on intersectionality and law have tended toward the deployment of psychoanalytic critiques of law and language through an engagement with oedipalization.

- Sora Han "Strict Scrutiny" in *Beyond Biopolitics* ed. by Clough & Willse
***Skype meeting with Professor Han**
- S. Freud *Three Essays* (selections)
- Lacan "Essence of Tragedy" in *Ethics of Psychoanalysis*
- Drucilla Cornell "Sex Discrimination Law and Equivalent Rights" in *Transformations*
- G. Deleuze Pt. 2 in *Anti-Oedipus* (selections)
- Slavoj Zizek "Lack in the Other" in *The Sublime Object of Ideology*

Week 10 March 13

Beyond Symptom: is there potential for a critical subject formation that is not beholden to the structural limitations of psychoanalysis?

- *Women and Performance Quarterly* Volume 19, Issue 2,
2009 Special Issue: Between Psychoanalysis and Affect: a Public Feelings Project (selections)