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## Fanon and DuBoisian Double Consciousness

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## ***Fanon and DuBoisian Double Consciousness***

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**Abstract:** Within an American context, W.E.B. DuBois defines double consciousness as blacks being forced to view themselves through white perspectives while maintaining their own self-definitions. Works of Frantz Fanon, and other classic writers on colonialism, show evidence that colonized peoples also experience the condition of double consciousness. This similarity of double consciousness between people of color in the U.S. and colonized people historically supports the claim of close connections between racism in the U.S. and colonialism internationally. When double consciousness is unilateral, when it is experienced only by the oppressed, double consciousness is unhealthy. However, when whites and colonists develop their own abilities to see their racial positions from the perspectives of people of color, then this multilateral double consciousness can enable a form of critical interracial dialogue. The transition from harmful unilateral double consciousness to critical multilateral double consciousness has not been explicitly suggested. Some views of recent writers on whiteness and multicultural education, however, are conducive to the development of white, and multilateral, double consciousness. By linking DuBoisian double consciousness with Fanon and with multilateral double consciousness, new dialogues about race might lead to new insights into hidden power dynamics and advances toward race conscious struggles against white supremacy.

There is a connection between Frantz Fanon's work and W.E.B. DuBois' concept of double consciousness. DuBois first defined double consciousness in 1903, and although the concept is familiar within African American Studies it has not been elaborated upon thoroughly. Fanon's work shows that double consciousness is also a condition of colonized people. This connection demonstrates that the positions of African Americans, and people of color in general, are in at least one way similar to the positions of colonized people. Americans do not think our country practices colonialism, but the common experience of

double consciousness among oppressed peoples illuminates the common position of whiteness, and white people, as that of oppressor both in the U.S. and abroad, now and in the past. Also, the double consciousness link strengthens the claim that African Americans are colonized within their own country.

The connection between double consciousness in the U.S. and in colonialism has not been explored. DuBois spent a lot of his life fighting colonialism in Africa through his writings and the Pan African Conferences, but he never connected his observation of double consciousness in the

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U.S. with double consciousness in the rest of the world. Fanon was familiar with some African American writers, but he did not recognize the common issue of double consciousness. A recent article in the *Journal of Black Studies*, by T. Owens Moore (2005), entitled, "A Fanonian Perspective on Double Consciousness," argues against the concept of double consciousness and misses how tightly Fanon and DuBois can be connected. However, double consciousness connects DuBois and Fanon and relates racism in the U.S. to colonialism historically.

DuBois describes double consciousness as follows:

After the Egyptian and Indian, the Greek and Roman, the Teuton and Mongolian, the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world—a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a particular sensation, this double consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder (DuBois, 1965, p. 215).

DuBois explains that African Americans are forced to view themselves from, and as, the negative perspectives of the outside society. Having two antagonistic identities means that a lot of time and energy is spent negotiating and enduring the conflicts between who one is as a person and how one struggles to live with the misrep-

resentations of the outside world. Having one's own sense of self and also having imposed contempt for an ascribed self, having twoness, is what DuBois calls double consciousness. The true self consciousness prevented by this condition may be a merging of two positive identities (black and American) without the harmful ascription, contempt and negation from the outside world. DuBois (1965) writes,

The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife—this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost. He would not Africanize America...He would not bleach his Negro soul...He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American, without being cursed and spit upon by his fellow, without having the doors of Opportunity closed roughly in his face.

This, then, is the end of his striving; to be a co-worker in the kingdom of culture... (p. 215).

Instead of antagonism between one's own sense of self and imposed contempt, DuBois is suggesting a merging of positive meanings of blackness and American. He wrote extensively and in detail about the positive meanings of blackness in terms of Africa's early civilizations and their contributions as leaders in world history (see *The World and Africa*). It is these contributions, and these meanings of African heritage, that have been supplanted by the negative contempt with which blackness has become associated. Instead of a merging of being both black and American, each in a positive way, twoness and double consciousness remains.

Writing in 1996, about ninety years after *Souls of Black Folk*, Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Cornel West (1996) write in *The Future of the Race*,

The rich African traditions—including the kinetic orality, passionate physicality, improvisational intellectuality, and combative spirituality—would undergo creative transformation when brought into contact with European languages and rituals in the context of the New World. (p. 81)

They continue,

[T]he specificity of black culture...lies in both the African and American character of black people's attempts to sustain their mental sanity and spiritual health, social life and political struggle in the midst of a slaveholding white supremacist civilization that viewed itself as the most enlightened, free, tolerant and democratic experiment in human history. (p. 79)

Also,

This unrelenting assault on black humanity produced the fundamental condition of black culture—that of black invisibility and namelessness. (p. 80)

And connecting explicitly to DuBois they write,

Whites need not understand or live in the black world in order to thrive. But blacks must grapple with the painful 'double consciousness' that may result [in DuBois' words], "An almost morbid sense of personality and a moral hesitancy which is fatal to self-confi-

dence." (p. 86)

So the self-proclaimed enlightened, free, tolerant and democratic America seems that way because it does not look at the struggles for sanity and struggles with double consciousness faced by blacks and other people of color. Two examples of this invisibility, and the invisibility of double consciousness, are provided by Richard Wright in *Native Son* and *Black Boy*.

In *Native Son*, it is Bigger Thomas' first day as chauffeur for the Daltons. He is extremely uncomfortable dealing with white people and working for them. When he meets Jan, Mary Dalton's boyfriend, Bigger sees Jan's condescending friendliness as alien and mocking. When Jan holds out his hand to shake,

Bigger's right hand gripped the steering wheel and he wondered if he ought to shake hands with this white man. (Wright, 1987, p. 66)

Then,

"First of all," Jan continued... "Don't say sir to me. I'll call you Bigger and you'll call me Jan. That's the way it'll be between us. How's that?" ... Bigger did not answer... He flushed warm with anger... (Wright, 1987, p. 67)

This is the invisibility of double consciousness. Bigger has to try to understand how Jan and Mary see him, but Jan and Mary do not even have to know that they have no clue about Bigger's perspective, attitude or feelings. Bigger is entirely overwhelmed and stymied by his double consciousness. Jan and Mary have no double consciousness at all.

A different response to invisibility and double consciousness is shown in Wright's autobiography, *Black Boy*. There, Richard is more familiar and comfortable with the

whites and he has philosophical insight into the alienation. Richard is in a park outside the restaurant where he works, listening to white waitresses talking to each other. He says,

I wished that Negroes, too, could live as thoughtlessly, as serenely, as they...They knew nothing of hate and fear, and strove to avoid all passion...They lived on the surface of their days... For these poor, ignorant white girls to have understood my life would have meant nothing short of a vast revolution in theirs. And I was convinced that what they needed to make them complete and grown-up in their living was the inclusion in their personalities of a knowledge of lives such as I lived and suffered containedly. (Wright, 1993, p. 319-20)

Here, Richard deals with the views of whites and responds with analytical critique that saves him from the miasma and consternation endured by Bigger. His double consciousness becomes a form of insight, of second sight, as DuBois says. Many other examples of double consciousness developing in blacks and lacking in whites can be found in African American literature and non-fiction.

It's not just American blacks, though, who are forced to view themselves through the perspectives of others while those others do not have to share such a burden or such second sight. Frantz Fanon, in *The Wretched of the Earth*, and in *Black Skin White Masks*, reveals that colonized people have DuBoisian double consciousness too.

On the surface, though, Fanon seems to reject this connection. He writes,

[E]very culture is first and foremost national, and the problems for which Richard Wright or Lang-

ston Hughes had to be on the alert were fundamentally different from those faced by Senghor.... (Fanon, 1968, p. 154)

But then he reveals exactly the colonized struggle of twoness that Africans Americans share. He writes,

"Speaking as an Algerian and a Frenchman"... Stumbling over the need to assume two nationalities, two determinations, the intellectual who is Arab and French..., if he wants to be sincere with himself, chooses the negation of one of these two determinations. Usually, unwilling or unable to choose, these intellectuals collect all the historical determinations which have conditioned them and place themselves in a thoroughly "universal perspective." (Fanon, 1968, p. 155)

The conflicting two perspectives, or the two identities and selves, seem comparable to the "two souls, two thoughts, two unrecconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body," that define DuBoisian twoness. One thought and striving is self-defined while the other is imposed from the outside, white, world. Bigger, Richard and Fanon all struggle with contradictions between these two warring ideals while whites, both in the U.S. and in the broader world, do not even have to realize that they are seen by and as racial others. This is the white supremacy of unilateral double consciousness. Other examples from *The Wretched of the Earth* reiterate the double consciousness of colonized people. Fanon (1968) writes,

The colonized intellectual, at the very moment when he undertakes a work of art, fails to realize he is using techniques and a language

borrowed from the occupier. The colonized intellectual who returns to his people through works of art behaves in fact like a foreigner. (p. 160)

And,

[T]he first duty of the colonized poet is to clearly define the people... We cannot go resolutely forward unless we first realize our alienation. We have taken everything from the other side. Yet the other side has given us nothing except to sway us in its direction through a thousand twists, except lure us, seduce us, and imprison us... We must focus on that zone of hidden fluctuation where the people can be found... (p. 163)

Fanon explains extensively how colonized intellectuals try to liberate their people, but the colonized liberators talk, think and act like the colonizers. It is only when these intellectuals return to the general population that they can regain their indigenous perspective from which to critique their colonized perspective. It is the people who liberate the intellectuals, not the other way around. Liberation, in Fanon's sense, includes assessing one's colonized perspective through one's indigenous perspective. He does not claim that people can or should forget the white European perspective, but he maintains that people should not be dominated by, and limited to, the outside perspective. This is the merging of strivings that DuBois also seeks. Fanon makes this point in *Black Skin White Masks*:

Sealed into that crushing objecthood, I turned beseechingly to others. Their attention was a liberation, running over my body suddenly abraded into nonbeing, endowing me once more with an

agility that I had thought I had lost, and by taking me outside the world, restoring me to it. I stumbled, and the movements, the attitudes, the glances of the other fixed me there... (Fanon, 1967, p. 109)

Fanon comes closest to DuBoisian double consciousness by saying,

Overnight the Negro has been given two frames of reference within which he has to place himself...[H]is customs and the sources on which they are based, were wiped out because they were in conflict with a civilization that he did not know and that imposed itself on him. (Fanon, 1967, p. 110)

Other writers on colonialism also reveal problems of double consciousness. In *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, Albert Memmi (1967) says,

The candidate for assimilation almost always comes to tire of the exorbitant price which he must pay and which he never finishes owing...[H]e has assumed all the accusations and condemnations of the colonizer, that he is becoming accustomed to looking at his own people through the eyes of their procurer. (p. 123)

This is double consciousness.

In *Orientalism*, Edward Said provides a broad framework within which double consciousness can be situated. He writes,

[Orientalism] is, rather than expresses, a certain will or intention to understand, in some sense control, manipulate, even to incorporate what is a manifestly different (or alternative and novel) world... (Said, 1978, p. 12)

Orientalism means Europeans, colonizers and whites have institutionalized their projections of identities onto people of color. Developing and imposing such negative views comprehensively and absolutely means Orientalism, colonialism and racism render people of color dehumanized so they can be exploited. What remains of people's humanity is a nuisance or confrontation to white supremacy and a widespread struggle of invisibility and double consciousness for subjugated people. Like Richard Wright, Memmi and Fanon, Arabs and Muslims face this struggle too. Said (1978) says,

The net effect of this remarkable omission [of Arab literature] in modern American Awareness of the Arab or Islamic Orient is to keep the region and its people conceptually emasculated, reduced to "attitudes," "trends," statistics: in short, dehumanized. Since An Arab poet or novelist—and there are many—writes of his experiences, of his values, of his humanity (however strange that may be), he effectively disrupts the various patterns (images, clichés, abstractions) by which the Orient is represented. A literary text speaks more or less directly of a living reality (p. 291).

Said shows that people are forced to contend both with their own lived experiences and with their imposed invisibility. This is double consciousness. Aimé Césaire (1972) makes a similar point when he says,

They talk to me about progress, about "achievements," diseases cured, improved standards of living. I am talking about societies drained of their essence...extraordinary possibilities wiped out. They throw facts at my head, statistics, mileages of road, canals, and

railroad tracks. I am talking about thousands of men sacrificed... (p. 21)

Césaire must assert his being against the claims of progress that make others and unmake him. There is no room for Césaire in their progress, in their living. This is similar to what Wright (1993) says,

I wished that Negroes, too, could live as thoughtlessly, as serenely, as they...They knew nothing of hate and fear, and strove to avoid all passion...They lived on the surface of their days... (p. 319-20)

The waitresses who live on the surface of their days and the colonizers who talk of mileages of roads share a way of being that requires the invisibility of others. And these others, like Césaire and Wright, have to live with their own invisibility. If whites realize they are seen as projecting invisibility, even if they don't mean to, then the whites can start noticing that and how they are seen by and as others. This way, by developing their own double consciousness, these white people can become more human themselves by recognizing, not negating, other people. Everyone would be humanized. Césaire (1972) writes,

[T]he colonizer, who in order to ease his conscience gets into the habit of seeing the other man as an animal, accustoms himself to treating him like an animal, and tends objectively to transform himself into an animal. It is this result, this boomerang effect of colonialism, that I wanted to point out. (p. 20)

The whites are also dehumanized because they exile themselves from the rest of humanity and lose sight of their isolation. They lose sight because they sublimate their impunity into a tradition and a way of

life. Then they say they are colorblind, so there is no more racism.

So unilateral double consciousness and invisibility are white problems. The dehumanization of people of color is the incompleteness of whites and colonizers. They do not realize they are incomplete or dehumanized themselves because their whole language and outlook tricks them into thinking they are normal and healthy. Indeed, Herbert Marcuse explains that a group of people can construct meanings and realities that make them feel that they have complete and sufficient perspectives only because they prevent themselves from seeing other views and perspectives that would show them the limitations of their views. Marcuse (1964) calls this, "Closure of meaning" (pp. 181, 184). People can live like horses with blinders or like ostriches. What is missing from their views is how they are seen as whites or as colonists by people of color or by colonized people.

By developing their own double consciousness, whites could expose and critique their own closure of meanings while sharing the burdens of double consciousness they impose on others. When whites see themselves as white from the perspectives of people of color, they can see their place in the world in a whole new way that they did not even realize had been closed off to them. When they are shocked to hear themselves saying, "I had no idea I came across like that," then they can begin a vast revolution in their lives and develop white double consciousness as a way to learn about themselves. And this revolution in their lives can contribute to the DuBoisian merging of strivings of everyone.

This transformation from closure of meaning to double consciousness is a social process. It is one version of Fanon's conception of liberation. Fanon (1967, pp. 109-10; 1968, pp. 160, 163) argues that grounding oneself in an indigenous perspective can provide the vantage point from which to assess one's internalized colonizer perspec-

tive. When the colonized intellectuals return to the people, this return can help the intellectuals regain the identities and world-views that had been perverted by the adopted colonized perspective. In this way, double consciousness can become a form of critical thinking rather than a languishing in consternation and alienation.

For the colonizers and for the white Americans, embracing the perspectives of the subjugated, marginalized and silenced populations can introduce white double consciousness. Just as colonized intellectuals can view their colonized perspectives from other perspectives, so too can whites view themselves from other perspectives. When Fanon's model is shared with whites and colonizers, this new route toward self-knowledge connects with the teachings of Paulo Freire. Freire writes,

[People] almost always bring with them the marks of their origin: their prejudices and their deformations...Those who authentically commit themselves to the people must re-examine themselves constantly... Conversion requires a profound rebirth...Only through comradeship with the oppressed can the converts understand their characteristic ways of living and behaving. (Freire, 1992, pp. 46-7)

When Fanon and Freire are read together, they reveal that whites and colonizers, as well as colonized intellectuals, can learn to evaluate their outlooks and identities from the perspectives of colonized or racially subjugated peoples. Freire's comradeship of whites and colonizers with the oppressed can be similar to a return explained by Fanon (1967),

Sealed into that crushing objecthood, I turned beseechingly to others. Their attention was a liberation, running over my body

suddenly abraded into nonbeing, endowing me once more with an agility that I had though I had lost, and by taking me outside the world, restoring me to it. I stumbled, and the movements, the attitudes, the glances of the other fixed me there... (p. 109).

In both cases, double consciousness can develop because one learns to view oneself through the perspectives of others. When whites and colonizers learn to practice and develop double consciousness, a whole new level of discussion can open between the oppressors and the oppressed. The white or colonist conversion to *camaraderie* with people of color or colonized people can be like the whites' or colonists' being taken outside the world and restored to it, as Fanon explains. When whites and colonists participate in this conversion and restoration, then the burden that historically falls to people of color can be shared by all people. This sharing of the burden of double consciousness changes the harmful condition of unilateral double consciousness to a healthy condition of multilateral double consciousness.

Fanon and Freire, again, help illuminate this evolution of double consciousness. Providing an example of the harm of unilateral double consciousness, Fanon (1967) says,

To speak a language is to take on a world, a culture. The Antilles who wants to be white [i.e. treated as human and adult] will be the whiter as he gains greater mastery of the cultural tool that language is... Historically, it must be understood that the Negro wants to speak French because it is the key that can open doors... [W]e find a quest for subtleties, for refinements of language—so many further means of proving to himself that he has mea-

sured up to the culture. (p. 38)

This adaptation, or assimilation, leads to harmful unilateral double consciousness when it includes developing a sense of inferiority of one's indigenous language and culture. It is then that one's own people are needed to take one outside the world and restore one to the world, returning one from non-being. This harm of unilateral double consciousness would be prevented if the cultural exchanges were engaged equally by all parties, not just the people of color or colonized people. Then, all parties would be both hosts and guests, sharing the challenges of measuring up to each others' cultures. The status of white or European cultures and languages would be equal with the status of African cultures or cultures of color when people of all groups learn about each other and themselves from each others' perspectives. Such exchange would be part of multilateral double consciousness, of seeing oneself and one's culture through the perspectives of others. This equality is a form of what Freire calls, "Dialogue." Freire (2001) writes,

[T]he possibility of true dialogue, in which subjects in dialogue learn and grow by confronting their differences, becomes a coherent demand required by an assumed unfinishedness that reveals itself as ethical. (p. 59)

When all parties confront their differences by learning about how they are seen by each other, then they can become more aware of their unfinishedness, of how much they can learn about themselves and each other through such dialogue. This process, however, is severely compromised when the white or colonizing culture is positioned as superior to that of the colonized or people of color. Racial or cultural hierarchy curtails the possibility of healthy multilateral

double consciousness and maintains the unhealthy unilateral double consciousness defined by DuBois and exemplified by Fanon.

Instead of unilateral double consciousness being a conflict the oppressed must endure alone, multilateral double consciousness can become a healthy form of critical thinking with which all people can become more aware of their own assumptions, intellectual conditionings, social roles, positions and relationships with others. By developing a new discourse, a Freirian dialogue, where one's sense of self is informed by how one is seen by others, multilateral double consciousness can help all people transition from hierarchical conflict with each other toward comradeship and cooperation.

Lilia Bartolome's model of border crossing helps illuminate how seeing oneself through the perspectives of others can be liberatory for everyone involved. First, though, Bartolome (2004) says,

Members of the dominant culture typically tend to border cross without compromising their position of cultural and social privilege. This type of border crosser can travel the world, study the "Other" in a detached and curious manner without ever recognizing that cultural groups occupy different positions of power and status and that many cultural perceptions and practices result from such power asymmetries. Often, these types of ideologically and politically "blind" border crossers assume "tourist" or "voyeur" perspectives that are very much tainted by their unconscious deficit and White supremacist ideologies. (p. 109)

These tourist border crossers do not have double consciousness. They are not taken outside the world and returned to it, as Fanon discusses. They do not re-examine

themselves through comradeship with the oppressed, as Freire suggests. Instead, they "study the other in a detached and curious manner without ever recognizing...positions of power..." (Bartolome, 2004, p. 109). These whites may feel that they are helping people of color, but they are not seeing themselves as whites from perspectives of people of color. That means all the burdens of double consciousness continue to fall to people of color while whites are privileged with the delusion that they are adapting. As an alternative to this conflation of whites' anti-racism with their white supremacy, Bartolome suggests empathetic border crossing. Bartolome juxtaposes tourist border crossers with those who, she says,

crossed ethnic and socioeconomic borders and came to the realization that some cultural groups, through no fault of their own, occupy positions of low social status and are marginalized and mistreated by members of higher-status groups. This realization enabled the individuals to authentically empathize with the cultural "Other" and take some form of action to equalize asymmetrical relations of power and eradicate the stigmatized social identities imposed on subordinated students. (Bartolome, 2004, p.10)

Empathetic border crossers endeavor to see from the perspectives of people of color, the oppressed or the colonized. They are not aloof as are the tourist border crossers, who are self-indulgently certain that they are not racists so they exempt themselves from concern that they might be unknowingly participating in white supremacy. Transitioning from tourist to empathetic border crossing can be similar to what Fanon describes as being taken outside the world and returned to it. Also, such a transition can be similar to Freire's explanation of re-examining oneself through comradeship with the oppressed. It

is a hard transition to do, though. It takes a lot more than the language of political correctness and it cannot be done simply with good intentions, no matter how strongly one feels those good intentions. Lisa Delpit (1995) explains,

Too often minority teachers' voices have been hushed [by good-intentioned white teachers]: a certain paternalism creeps into the speech of some of our liberal colleagues as they explain that our children must be "given voice." As difficult as it is for our colleagues to hear our children's existing voices, it is often equally difficult for them to hear our own... It is vitally important that non-minority educators realize that there is another voice, another reality... (p. 19)

This other reality can be found through white double consciousness development. By seeing oneself as white through perspectives of people of color, a new relationship can develop. Whites may start to notice that they had been seen as patronizing and silencing even though they had the best intentions to be respectful and good listeners. If whites notice such a difference between their intentions and actions, then new ways to conceptualize, negotiate and pursue equality and new forms of critical thinking may develop through interracial cooperation and conversation.

A difficulty with empathetic border crossing, whether Bartolome's, Fanon's or Freire's conception, is that it can make people, especially whites, feel extremely uncomfortable. Whites usually do not like to be made to feel white. Janine Jones (2004) writes,

Race is something that others possess. Whites are just "normal." Whites' inability to form the belief that they are white skews the na-

ture of the relationships that exist between whites and blacks. It affects their ability to empathize because they are unable to import an ingredient essential to empathy: an appreciation of their own situation.

Goodwill whites' desire not to see themselves as whites may partly explain their desire not to see blacks as blacks (p.70).

Tourist border crossers would want to help people of color as long as they did not have see themselves as whites. Goodwill tourist border crossing whites might want equality but they have to be comfortable. George Yancy (2004) writes,

Whiteness fails to see itself as alien, as seen, as recognized...Whiteness refuses to risk finding itself in exile, in unfamiliar territory, an unmapped space of uncertainty...[W]hiteness denies its own potential to be Other... (p. 13)

Empathetic border crossers are less bothered by whether they are comfortable or uncomfortable with seeing themselves, and being seen, as white. They know that they are not really in exile when they are others, anyway. As others, they can try to connect with people of color on the terms of the people of color, as Fanon and Freire explain. The inability to do that, the need to stay in the familiarity of whiteness that everyone else has to pretend is invisible so whites can stay comfortable, is exile. According to Gary Howard (1999),

Too often as White educators we have seen the problems [of racial inequalities and multicultural education] as "out there," and we have conceptualized our role as one of "helping minority students." Seldom have we helped White educa-

tors look deeply and critically at the necessary changes and growth we ourselves must achieve if we are to work effectively with the real issues of diversity (p. 3).

Howard draws on his own experiences as a white person living in a black community during the riots of the 1960s to explain how he becomes aware of his own whiteness (1999, p. 16). He discovers what it means for him to be white by learning how black people help identify and explain what his whiteness means. Howard (1999) writes,

It was only through living with people outside my particular fish-bowl [i.e. segregated white community] that I was able to finally perceive the true nature of my previously invisible milieu. Through their eyes I came to see the water of White dominance... (p. 16).

Through black people's eyes, Howard learns how he has been privileged to see race and racism as existing outside his own behavior, identity and responsibility. Black perspectives enable Howard to see how it is the invisibility of his own whiteness that makes race and racial problems appear to be out there, outside of himself.

For Howard, learning about whiteness and white supremacy is an interpersonal process that depends on exploration with people of color. He needs to join and help develop a community and discourse within which people of diverse races and cultures expose and change their own, and each others', views and interactions together. Howard (1999) says,

All of us who occupy this land of multicultural commitment have had to cross the borders of our own particular racial and cultural groups to arrive in this new mental, emotional, and political

place...We had to learn from each other, always open to unravel ever-deeper layers of ignorance, narrowness, and defensiveness regarding our limited perspectives and perceptions of truth. (p. 119)

Howard illuminates the possibility and potential of white double consciousness. The writings of DuBois and Fanon reveal that the absence of such multilateral double consciousness forces unilateral double consciousness for people of color and colonized people. DuBois defines double consciousness as seeing oneself through one's own self-defined perspective and also through the perspectives of others. Fanon shows that the problem of unilateral double consciousness extends far beyond the dynamics between black and white Americans. Fanon, Freire, Bartolome, Jones, Yancy, Delpit and Howard all help to show how and why whites and colonists can learn to see themselves through the perspectives of people of color and colonized people. Such white, or multilateral, double consciousness helps whites engage in dialogue so they can learn about themselves and their sociopolitical positions through the perspectives of others.

Colorblindness focuses attention on how people are all the same biologically and how race has no biological significance or essence. However, multilateral double consciousness would help reveal how race has social significance and how the social meanings of race create differences between people that maintain inequality, oppression, alienation and illusions of equality and justice. These differences, and the insidious limitations of colorblindness, can be exposed, explored and discussed between all people when we all learn to see ourselves through the perspectives of others.

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