

‘You Shall Not Replace Us!’ White supremacy, psychotherapy and decolonisation

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SUMMARY: Through the lens of an experiential seminar, this article considers the role unconscious white supremacy plays within counselling and psychotherapy. Offering a plea for counselling organisations to consider whiteness studies as an integral aspect of their trainings, this article sees decolonization as a route towards this, and towards a greater engagement with the other both as trainees and as potential clients.

KEY WORDS: white supremacy, diversity, otherness, othering, decolonisation

Several years ago, I was running an experiential seminar in South East London for psychotherapy trainees. One of the participants was a white middle-class woman of a comparable age to myself. Perhaps because of this personal nature, I found myself being regularly attacked by her. Often, she would interrupt me, make tutting noises when I spoke, or sigh whenever I asked how everyone was. The attacks were also verbal, ranging from being told that I did not know what I was doing, to the fact that I could not possibly be a psychotherapist because I did not look like one, to my making her fearful because I was so aggressive. My every intervention was challenged and undermined, and at times the vitriol aimed at myself was difficult to hold. And yet, during the breaks in the day when

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