

# The Cost of Whiteness

Thandeka

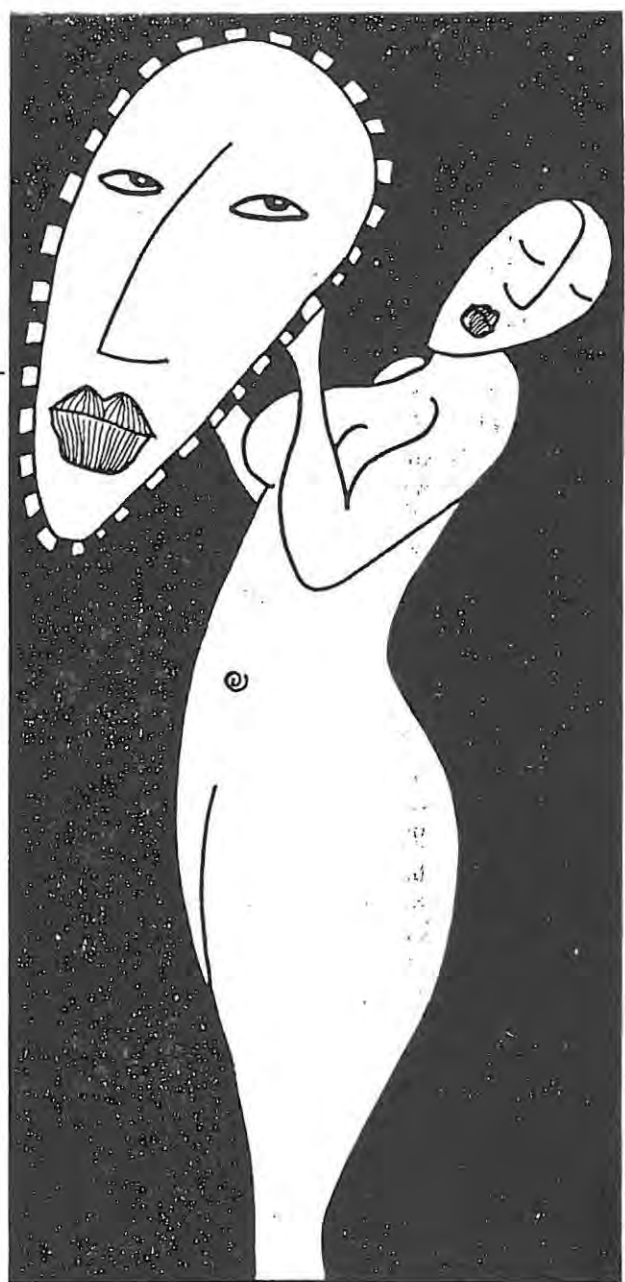
Most white Americans believe they were born white. Yet their own stories of early racial experiences describe persons who were bred white. Which is it—nature or nurture? Neither. The social process that creates whites produces persons who must think of their whiteness as a biological fact.

The process begins with a rebuke. A parent or authority figure reprimands the child because it's not yet white. The language used by the adult is racial, but the content of the message pertains to the child's own feelings and what the child must do with feelings the adult doesn't like. Stifle them. Philosopher Martha Nussbaum, in her book *Cultivating Humanity: A Classical Defense of Reform in Liberal Education*, tells how she learned to do this as a child being taught to be white.

Nussbaum's reflections begin with a description of the incident that provoked her father's racial rebuke: "In Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, in the early 1960s, I encountered black people only as domestic servants. There was a black girl my age named Hattie, daughter of the live-in help of an especially wealthy neighbor. One day, when I was about ten, we had been playing in the street and I asked her to come in for some lemonade. My father, who grew up in Georgia, exploded, telling me that I must never invite a black person into the house again." Nussbaum's first lessons ended at school where the only African Americans present were "kitchen help." Here, she and her classmates learned how to "efface them from our minds when we studied." The target of Nussbaum's first lessons in whiteness was her own sentient awareness of the surrounding environment. She had to learn how to disengage her own feelings, how to dissociate herself from them.

Most discussions of the creation of whites overlook this stage in the development of a white racial consciousness and thus assume that whites are insensitive to blacks by nature. White supremacist and anti-racist groups seem to hold this belief in common—that whites are born racist with a biologically predetermined disposition to hate blacks. To begin

Thandeka, associate professor of theology and culture, Meadville/Lombard Theological School, is author of *Learning to Be White: Money, Race, and God in America* (Continuum 1999). Her name, "lovable" in Xhosa, was given to her by Archbishop Desmond Tutu.



elsewhere, we have to pay attention to the feelings the child learns to squelch. I was able to listen in on these feelings when I conducted interviews for my book, *Learning to Be White*. An adult I call "Jay," for example, described the rationale for his parents' decision to take him on a car tour of the "black ghetto" when he was four. His parents knew he had never seen black people before and did not want him to embarrass the family by staring at "them" when the family went to New York on vacation the following month. The adult motivation for this mini tour of black America was to pre-empt a parental rebuke that would have occurred if Jay had indeed stared at "them" while on vacation. Jay thus learned something about what to do with his own natural curiosity. Suppress it. The protocol associated with this new knowledge was self-evident: don't stare at them. The deeper implications of the message Jay received would develop over time: don't even notice that they are there. Such behavior, of course, is described by Ralph Ellison's protagonist in

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*Invisible Man*: "I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me." Jay had begun to learn not to see what he saw.

Another example. "Sally's" parents, strong civil rights supporters, preached racial equality both at home and in the streets. She was thus flabbergasted when her parents prevented her from going out with a high school friend who came to pick her up for a Friday night date. He was black. The parents sent him away and forbade her to date him. "What will our neighbors say if they see you on the arms of a black man?" Sally was furious with them and thought them hypocrites. But she submitted to their dictates. "What was I going to do?" she asked rhetorically. "Rebel? Not in my household. They would have disowned me." So she suppressed her feelings.

Then there's "Dan." In college during the late 1950s, Dan joined a fraternity. With his prompting, his chapter pledged a black student. When the chapter's national headquarters learned of this first step toward the integration of its ranks, headquarters threatened to rescind the local chapter's charter unless the black student was expelled. The local chapter caved in to the pressure and Dan was elected to tell the black student member he would have to leave. Dan did it. "I felt so ashamed of what I did," he told me. "I have carried this burden for forty years," he said. "I will carry it to my grave." And he began to cry. Why? Because as psychoanalytic theorist Judith Lewis Herman reminds us in the opening pages of her book, *Trauma and Recovery*, the unspeakable will out.

"Sarah." At age sixteen, Sarah brought her best friend home with her from high school. After the friend left, Sarah's mother told her not to invite her friend home again. "Why?" Sarah asked, astonished and confused. "Because she's colored," her mother responded. That was not an answer, Sarah thought to herself. It was obvious that her friend was colored, but what kind of reason was that for not inviting her? So Sarah persisted, insisting that her mother tell her the real reason. None was forthcoming. The indignant look on her mother's face, however, made Sarah realize that if she persisted, she would jeopardize her mother's affection toward her. Horrified by what she had just glimpsed, Sarah severed her friendship with the girl. Sarah told me she had not thought of this incident in twenty years. She also said that until now, she had never consciously said to herself that for her the deepest tragedy in this incident was her loss of trust in her mother's love. Sarah, like Dan, began to cry.

Every European American I interviewed could tell me a tale about how they learned as youth to blunt positive feelings toward persons beyond the pale. These aren't the kinds of tales I had expected when I asked them to recount stories of their earliest racial incidents. To my astonishment, instead of describing interracial incidents, they described intra-racial conflicts. The message they learned was repress, deny, and split off from consciousness feelings that, if

expressed, would provoke racial attacks from the adults in their own community. From these stories, I learned that becoming white is the product of a child's siege mentality. It's a defense mechanism to stop racial rebukes from one's own kith and kin.

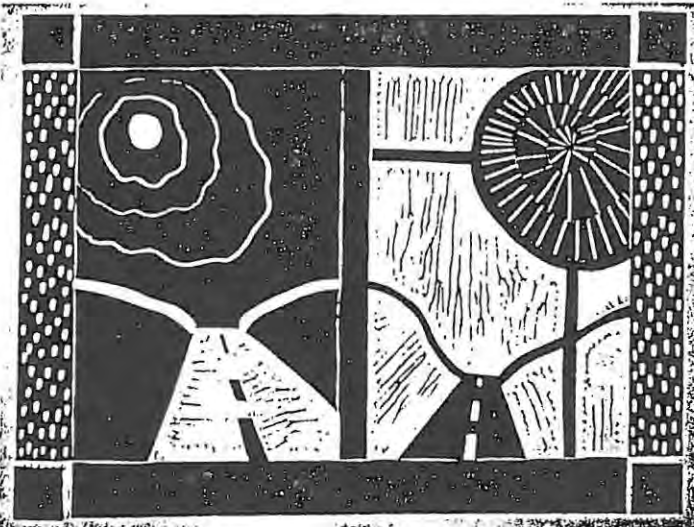
Few accounts reveal this white siege mentality better than a story by writer Don Wallace in his *New York Times*, October 11, 1995, op-ed piece, "How I Learned to Fear the Cops." Wallace, in this essay, describes several incidents in which he was accosted by cops. The first altercation occurred when Wallace was ten. Wallace uses the third-person singular to tell this tale in the opening paragraphs of his essay:

The 10-year-old boy skipped down the sidewalk a few steps ahead of his parents in the warmth of a Los Angeles night in 1962. Behind him glowed Olvera Street, a slice of the old California's Mexican heritage.... He heard the screech of brakes but paid no mind until a police officer seized him by the shoulder and pushed him against a wall. Another officer shoved his 12-year-old brother. Then the boy saw something even more terrifying: the gun in the cop's hand.

Wallace's father spoke up, berating the cop and demanding an apology for pointing a gun at his sons, who were church-goers, Boy and Cub Scout members, and good students. The cops stood their ground, demanding that he get out of the way or face arrest. Wallace, who until this point has not told the reader the "race" of the family, now teases his reader, asking: "What do you think happened next? You've read the papers. You followed the Rodney King case. If the family in this true story were black, what odds would you give on the father staying out of jail? Or staying alive?" But he and his family are white, Wallace tells us, and they "got to go home to [their] all-white suburb."

As a teenager, Wallace continued to play on the wrong side of town. He attended a large inner-city high school in Long Beach and would often visit his first girlfriend, "a biology whiz" who had a Spanish surname and lived on the west side. To visit her, Wallace had to go through a Checkpoint Charlie consisting of a concrete levee, oil fields, and two eight-lane boulevards marking a racial change from all-white to brown, black, and yellow. The few streets which led in or out of the area created choke points and were usually "guarded by a squad car at each one, day and night." In his sophomore year, almost every night as he drove from his girlfriend's house, a squad car would swing behind him and tail him. "I got used to it," Wallace says with the determination of a teenage Rambo. He treated "each drive home as if it were a mission through hostile territory: my signals perfect, my turns crisp, my speed steady and always five miles per hour below the limit." Nevertheless, in spite of his white, "preppie look," he was stopped eleven times "with nary a ticket to show for it." The policemen's message was clear: whites were not allowed to socialize in a non-white zone.

Recounting an incident in which he and two friends were caught in the wrong zone, Wallace writes: "The police marched three of us into a field behind a screen of oil wells and then separated and handcuffed us. For an hour we were threatened with a beating and arrest, yet no infraction was mentioned. The police were delivering their message of intimidation, insuring the crackle of fear, the walking-on-eggshells feeling, every



time we entered the nonwhite zone." Similarly, when Wallace, who was president of the student body and a football letterman, chose to sit with black friends during a school basketball game, two police officers "waded into the bleachers and hauled me out to the floor to be searched, in full view of my teachers and friends."

Such incidents made it clear not only that race mixing was prohibited by these cops, but that neither whites nor nonwhites are safe from police brutality when they enter a racial zone off limits to their kind. There is, however, another story being told. Wallace, in the process of recounting his youthful escapades with the police, also sings a different tune. He tells us how "this white boy [who] got the message long ago" grew up to "fear the cops." Wallace recounts this adult tale of submission to authority in another key.

Wallace's journalistic eye focuses our attention on the fact that as a youth, in spite of his ostensibly rebellious nature, he did not rebel. The boy did not protest his harassment but adjusted. Writes Wallace: "I am astonished how we adjusted to this state of constant siege." This adult astonishment forces us to set aside his teenage bravado and focus on a fact that neither the teenager nor the adult could state directly: both the white youth and white adult civilians in Wallace's recollections submitted to the policemen's harassment. That he submitted to authority is clear. We simply must pay attention to the unsaid. Absent from Wallace's account is a description of complaints to his parents or schoolteachers. Nor does he report having gone to either the local police station or to the District Attorney's office to file a complaint. Such acts would have been made less likely by the fact that both his parents and the adults at his school were models of submission to police abuse rather than rebellion. Even Wallace's father, after an initial dismayed protest against the officer who had pulled a gun on white boys who were good (Scouts, Christian, and smart), relented and took his family home to their "all-white suburb." This, of course, was what the cops had wanted in the first place.

ILLUSTRATION BY BENNY ALBA

Wallace is recounting the antics of a teenager who grandstanded rather than rebelled. He is describing more than members of a police force out of control. He is also exposing a pervasive white adult submission to the threatening presence of its own police force, which is dead set on preventing so-called race mixing. The adult submission to this threat, in the boy's eyes, was the same as consent. Police harass-

ment, together with the massive submission of adults to this brute force, taught the boy and the adult he grew up to be what he must do to act like a white person: submit to the unwritten race laws of his policed state. This demand for submission to white race laws created a zone of fear and timidity within Wallace, the adult. As he writes: "Layer upon layer of incidents like these build a foundation of mistrust. It's why I'm a very cautious driver today." Wallace, in effect, has described the origins of his present siege mentality.

He had learned through experience that in a *de jure* and/or *de facto* system of racial apartheid, every member of the community is under siege. Instead of inspiring his rebellious rage, however, this siege mentality actually prevents Wallace from expressing his rage toward the police force. Even in his essay, instead of calling for more civilian oversight of an out-of-control police force, Wallace muffles his impulse to protest by cloaking it in blackness and concludes his essay with the moral tepidity of an interracial truism: "I firmly believe there will be no peace until black people can walk the same streets as white people without fearing the sound of the squad car's brakes, as I learned to do that night on Olvera Street." By referring to the risk African Americans run when they enter white zones, Wallace expresses in blackface his own fears as a European American caught in the wrong racial zone. Albeit unwittingly, this gesture towards tolerance ends up confirming the system Wallace criticizes.

After the siege mentality is in place, race talk by the newly created white usually follows. Such talk, however, often distracts attention from what produced it: white adult abuse against their own kids. The story of Dorothy, a middle-aged woman I met at a dinner party in an Upper West Side Manhattan apartment, shows how race talk about racism begins as a distraction from the emotional pain entailed in becoming white.

Dorothy and I were introduced by the host of the dinner party: Dorothy was a "poet," whose most recent volume of

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poetry was prominently displayed on the coffee table in front of the couch on which we were seated. I was a "writer" working on white identity issues. After our host departed, Dorothy wanted to know what a "white identity" was. She did not have one, she assured me. She was simply an American. I could help her find hers, I responded, if she wanted to know what it looked like. Her interest piqued, she accepted the offer. True to form, I asked her to recollect her earliest memory of knowing what it means to be white.

After a little excavation, she finally found the memory: When Dorothy was five, she and her family lived in Mexico for a year. Although her family's housekeeper brought her daughter, who was also five, to work, Dorothy's parents forbade her to play with the little girl. Dorothy, in fact, was never allowed to play with any Mexican children, and she and her two brothers were forbidden to venture beyond the gates of their backyard. Dorothy remembered her feelings of sadness and regret. The Mexican children and their parents seemed so much more at ease with themselves and each other. They seemed warm and tactile, unlike her own family, whose manners and expressions were cold and constrained.

Dorothy told me she had not thought of these feelings in years. She confessed that she now recalled how often, during that year, she wished to be brown. I suggested that the term "white" might not mean anything consciously to her today because it had too much negative meaning for her when she was five. She agreed and now expressed surprise that she had not written about these feelings, memories, or experiences in her work. She said much of her life had been devoted to freeing herself from the emotional strictures imposed on her by her parents. Most of her poetry was about them and the way they had drained life out of her. She reiterated her astonishment that this set of memories had not surfaced in her work. As she blushed, the resurrected feelings of the child seemed to disappear.

I now watched Dorothy transfer her own dis-ease to me and I braced myself for an attack. She was no longer the object of her painful racial memories. Now, I was. "You know," Dorothy now said pointedly, "you are the first black I've ever felt comfortable with talking about racism." To which I responded, "Why is it so easy for you to think of me as a 'black,' and yet until a few minutes ago you could not make any sense out of thinking about yourself as a 'white'?" Further—"Were we really talking about racism? And if so, whose? Your parents'? Yours? That of the five-year-old girl who wanted to be brown?"

Dorothy was silent for a long moment. "I now understand what I've just done, and I'm horrified," she finally confessed. She realized that if I were a black, she, too, must have a race: the one that had enraged her as a child. Not surprisingly, Dorothy now confessed that she was afraid to say anything else—not because I might condemn her, but much more tellingly because, as she put it, "I might not like what I hear myself saying." If she'd been forced to listen to herself

continue to talk, she would have had to listen to a white woman speak in ways that the five-year-old child would have despised. She did not want to listen to such talk. Nor did I. Our conversation very quickly came to an end.

Dorothy had recalled the feelings of the child whose parents wanted to love a *white* child. The parts of her that were not "white"—her positive feelings toward Mexicans—had to be set aside as unloved and therefore unlovable. This sense of being unlovable is the core content of shame, psychoanalyst Léon Wurmser reminds us in his book, *The Mask of Shame*. Shame, Wurmser suggests, "forces one to hide, to seek cover and to veil or mask oneself." Such feelings, self psychologist Heinz Kohut notes in *The Search for the Self*, actually result from the failure of the parents or caretakers to adequately love the child, but the child blames itself rather than its parent or caretaking environment. Guilt, by contrast with shame, Helen Merrell Lynd notes in her book, *On Shame and the Search for Identity*, results from a wrongful deed, a self-condemnation for what one has done. A penalty can be exacted for this wrongful act. Recompense can be made and restitution paid. Not so with shame. Nothing can be done because shame results not from something one did wrong but rather from something wrong with oneself. Split-off feelings can create this feeling of personal shame.

No contemporary writer has made this link between personal shame and racial antipathy towards African Americans more evident than Norman Podhoretz, the neo-conservative editor-at-large of *Commentary*. I think of him, in fact, as an unwitting progenitor of modern White Studies, because he so carefully chronicles his own lessons in whiteness as both defense process and invention. While White Studies scholars like Michelle Fine, Lois Weis, Linda C. Powell, and L. Mun Wong study "whiteness as a system of power and privilege, as a group, an identity, a social movement, a defense, an invention," Podhoretz chronicles whiteness writ small as his own fretful I.

Podhoretz begins his February 1963 *Commentary* essay, "My Negro Problem—and Ours," by showing how he transformed the shame entailed in his personal ordeal of becoming white into his "Negro Problem." First, he describes how the Jewish and Italian children in his lower-class Brooklyn neighborhood were united as "whites" by their shared experience of persecution by local "Negro boys." He tells us that as a child in the 1930s, he was repeatedly "beaten up, robbed, and in general hated, terrorized, and humiliated" by the Negroes in his Brooklyn neighborhood. Next, he tells us that, thirty years later, he's still mad even though he's now a self-identified "liberal." He hates Negroes. However, he bases this confident declaration of hate on his belief that all whites, whether they have had personally harrowing experiences with black Americans or not, "are sick in their feelings about Negroes." We can gather from this remark that Podhoretz' "Negro Problem" doesn't

stem from his actual assault by the "Negro boys." What then is the cause of this pervasive feeling? Podhoretz' answer is painfully clear. It's the repression of feelings entailed in becoming a white that creates a cauldron of self-contempt. For Podhoretz, the Negro began to represent all the impulses in himself that he had to repress in order to make it in the white world. The Negro, Podhoretz says, "feared the impulses within himself toward submission to authority no less powerfully than I feared the impulses in myself toward defiance. If I represented the jailer to him, it was not because I was oppressing him or keeping him down: it was because I symbolized for him the dangerous and probably pointless temptation toward greater repression, just as he symbolized for me the equally perilous tug toward greater freedom. I personally was to be rewarded for this repression with a new and better life in the future, but how many of my friends paid an even higher price and were given only gall in return."

Podhoretz' perspective makes even more sense when put in the context of his book, *Making It*. There he discloses America's "dirty little secret": if you aren't a WASP, you'd better become a "facsimile WASP" if you want to make it. Podhoretz thus had learned early on that "there was no socially neutral ground to be found in the United States of America." Instead, "a distaste for the surroundings in which I was bred, and ultimately (God forgive me) even for many of the people I loved, and so a new taste for other kinds of people" was required. For Podhoretz, the trick was to become white without being Anglo-Saxon or becoming Protestant. After all, he was not about to break ranks with his chosen family, the New York Jewish intelligentsia, as he "made it" into the American realm of power, privilege, and prestige. Thus, his annals tell us not how he became an Anglo-Saxon Protestant, but rather how he became "a white" with WASP-like sentiments which show up, not surprisingly, as his own self-contempt. "Becoming white" for Podhoretz meant making the anti-Semitic sentiments of the WASPs around him his own. The self-hatred entailed in this process was hidden from Podhoretz by his mask of white racism towards "the Negro." Podhoretz, in short, learned that being "white" was not a privilege, but a very painful, life-long psychological process of denying his own more original feelings toward himself as whole, wholesome, and good. At this level of psychological development, we must conclude that Podhoretz' deepest sense of self is not "racist" but "broken."

Podhoretz' plot line is not new. In Europe, as University of Chicago master social theorist Sander L. Gilman reminds us in his books *Jewish Self-Hatred* and *Freud, Race, and Gender*, Jews were thought of as blacks. They were the "white Negroes." Writes Gilman, "In the eyes of the non-Jew who defined them in Western [European] society the Jews became the blacks." The male Jew and the male African were conceived of as equivalent threats to the white race.

What's new about Podhoretz' confessions is his attempt to stay Jewish while publicly acknowledging his acquired distaste for "many of the [Jewish] people [he] loved." He talks freely about his "Jewish Problem." Thus the "tears of rage" he felt toward the Negro boys who humiliated him begin to blend with his own feelings of "self-contempt," because he's ashamed of some of his own feelings toward



Jews. The Negroes begin to represent for him "the very embodiment of the values of the street that he had abandoned: free, independent, reckless, brave, masculine, erotic." They were "beautifully, enviably tough, not giving a damn for anyone or anything"—all the things that Podhoretz, in his own eyes, was not and dared not give into: the perilous tug toward greater freedom from his internalized WASP rule over his own feelings.

Podhoretz, however, does not see the connection between his "Negro" and "Jewish" problem. Instead, he characterizes his "rage" against Negro anti-Semites as "insane" and proposes to end the "Negro Problem" completely through miscegenation. The source of his rage may not be clear to him, but is clear once we understand "whiteness." The Negro anti-Semite becomes a mask for Podhoretz' own feelings of self-contempt as a Jew. His rage against the Negro hides his own shame as a WASP-manqué with anti-Semitic sentiments. That same need to hide from himself also obviously prevented Podhoretz from seeing the absurdity of his "final solution" for the Negro. This was brought home to him by novelist Ralph Ellison, who suggested that such a strategy would simply "increase the number of 'colored' children." Says Podhoretz: this was "a point, I had to admit, which had never occurred to me before." But this point is so obvious that we have to ask ourselves, what blinded him to it? The answer is self-evident. His solution to "the Negro Problem" would get rid of his "White Problem" by bringing about the disappearance of the WASP. Podhoretz concludes his essay with the frank admission that if his daughter wanted to marry a Negro, he would rail, rave, rant, and then "give her my blessing." Here we find Podhoretz with both his best and his worst foot forward at the same time, stepping forward simultaneously as both racial bigot and race reformer.

What can we conclude from these various examples of the processes entailed in becoming white in America? Two things. Whites like to think of themselves as biologically white in order to hide what they'd like to forget: once upon a time they were attacked by whites in their own community because they weren't yet white. To stop the attack, they learned to disdain their own feelings. Who wants to remember such attacks? Who wants to know that they were once

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racial outsiders to their own racial group? Who wants to unearth denied feelings? Better to blame the blacks (and other so-called "colored groups"—"so-called" because I've never met anyone who didn't have a color!) than face the truth: whites are race victims of their own community's racial codes of conduct.

Most whites suffer from a survivor complex. They are products of a race war that rages within white America. The fact that there's a racial pecking order among ethnic groups in white America exacerbates this problem. As social psychologist Gordon Allport notes in his classic 1954 study *The Nature of Prejudice*, this race rating-scheme is widespread and remarkably uniform in judgments "concerning the relative acceptability [that is, whiteness] of various ethnic stocks: Germans, Italians, Armenians, and the like. Each of these can in sequence look down upon all groups lower in the series." Such racial abuse meted out to "ethnics" who are too far away from the Anglo-Saxon Protestant ethnic ideal can have devastating effects not only on one's personality but also on one's paycheck.

This economic penalty is difficult to grasp because Americans have been taught to think only of the benefits—the "privileges"—of whiteness accorded to Europeans who immigrated to America and became white. W.E.B. Du Bois called the race privileges given to these workers and their progeny "the wages of whiteness." Whiteness, as Du Bois notes in his book *Black Reconstruction in America: 1860-1880*, meant "public deference and titles of courtesy"; access to "public functions, public parks and the best schools"; jobs as policemen; the right to sit on juries; voting rights; flattery from newspapers while Negro news was "almost utterly ignored except in crime and ridicule." These privileges also included the right, based on legal indifference and social approval, to taunt, police, humiliate, mob, rape, lynch, jibe, rob, jail, mutilate, and burn Negroes, which became a sporting game, "a sort of permissible Roman holiday for the entertainment of vicious whites." During the late 1800s, for example, "practically all white southern men went armed and the South reached the extraordinary distinction of being the only modern civilized country where human beings were publicly burned alive."

The price exacted for these privileges, however, was also considerable. Du Bois summarizes the main cost in the nineteenth century antebellum South: no major labor movement to protect the region's five million poor whites, who owned no slaves, from the 8,000 largest slave-holders who, in effect, ruled the South. Hatred of the Negro, slave and free, blocked furtive attempts by the lower classes to fight their own race's class exploiters. By playing the labor costs of both whites and Negroes against each other, contractors kept the earnings of both groups low. Both before and after the civil war, white privileges functioned as a kind of "public and

psychological wage," supplementing the low-paying jobs that whites could easily lose to a lower-paid black worker.

I am not denying "white privilege." "All whites," as legal scholar Cheryl J. Harris notes in her essay "Whiteness as Property"—regardless of class position—"benefit from their wage of whiteness." Such talk of privilege, however, is incomplete unless we also speak of its penalty. For poorer wage earners "without power, money or influence," their wage of whiteness functions as a kind of workers' "compensation." It is a "consolation prize" to persons who, although not wealthy, do not have to consider themselves losers because they are, at least, white.

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*Their wage of whiteness  
is a "consolation prize."*

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The irony, of course, is that neither in the past nor today are low-paid wage earners held in high esteem by their own white bosses who exploit their labor. These workers are, in effect, exploited twice: first as workers and then as "whites." Their "race" is used to distract them from their diminishing value as wage earners. Diminished as workers, they feel shame. Inflated as whites, they feel white supremacist pride. This is the double jeopardy of whiteness Martin Luther King, Jr. pointed to in his 1967 book, *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?*, when noting that racial prejudice put poorer whites in the ironic position of fighting not only against the Negro, but also against themselves. White supremacy, King wryly noted, can feed the egos of poor whites but not their stomachs.

Today's "poor whites" are the working poor, the "overspent Americans" be they lower- or middle-class—all the white Americans who are living from paycheck to paycheck. Whiteness functions as a distraction from the pervasive class problem of the white American worker. Talk of white privilege from this class perspective is really talk about the privileges entailed in being and remaining poor and exploited in America. Such talk is cheap. Too cheap.

We can do better than this—but only if we attend to the way in which most "whites" are broken by the persons who ostensibly made them white "for their own good": their parents, caretakers, and bosses.

In his September/October 1996 essay "Can the Left Learn to Take Yes for an Answer?" TIKKUN editorial board member Michael Bader describes a repeated pattern among white American progressives: "an unconscious belief that they're somehow not supposed to have a happier and healthier life than their loved ones, past and present." To explain this syndrome, Bader talks about "survivor guilt." We must begin to talk about survivor shame in Americans who are forced to become white. Without such discourse, the fact that European Americans racially abuse their own children, suffer from class exploitation under the guise of "white-skin privilege," mask their own racialized feelings of shame, and then download their self-contempt on the rest of us will remain America's invisible race problem. □