

## The Inner African: Blacks, Jews, and the Problem of the Color Line

Donavan L. Ramon, Ph.D., Southern Illinois University Edwardsville

Over the past few years, media outlets have reported on the racial passing of various people, including Rachel Dolezal, H.G. Carillo, and Jessica Krug, among others. In an effort to understand why racial passing continues, I turn to two theorists who articulated ideas about race over a century ago, but who still matter today: W.E.B. DuBois and Sigmund Freud—two of the leading intellectuals from the early twentieth century.

Despite being separated by hundreds of miles, both theorists offered provocative and compelling meditations that cast a long shadow over many fields. DuBois's double consciousness is applicable throughout sociology, literature, anthropology, etc...while we are still debating Freudian psychoanalysis today. Freud created psychoanalysis not only to understand the depths of human nature, but also to contend with his own racial issues. Specifically, the premise that animates my research is that Freud founded the field of psychoanalysis as a way to explore his relationship with race since he was a Jew at a time when Jews were thought to have African ancestry.

In this paper, I contrast the pivotal theories developed by DuBois & Freud, to uncover the ways in which Freud dealt with race through his creation of psychoanalysis, and to understand racial passing today. DuBois' ideas about double consciousness reveal African American subjectivity, while he also articulated anti-Semitism throughout his works. Freudian psychoanalysis helped him to *not* deal with some of the anti-Semitism DuBois both witnessed and invoked in his prose, which scholars have not fully addressed. Despite the conventional stance that literary critics take, psychoanalysis is *indeed* relevant for matters of race, especially racial passing. This idea comes from Sigmund Freud, who imbedded the rhetoric and imagery of mixed race and passing in his early writings. If we read between his own lines, it becomes evident that Freud himself passed in multiple ways. In short, this paper compares and contrasts Sigmund Freud and W.E.B. DuBois, to speculate on the continuance of racial passing in the twenty-first century.