

I Am Not Your Negro: Deconstructing Racial Politics (and Implications for Psychiatry) Through the Psyche of James Baldwin

Commented [p1]: Title includes both the name of the film as well as a description of the intended focus of discussion.

Objectives

Understand the historical context of racism in the United States through the perspective of American author and activist James Baldwin

Explore the lasting impact of race and identity on the mental health of both patients and providers

Discuss and exchange therapeutic reflections on racism and racial trauma in the United States

Identify best practices for deconstructing privilege and strengthening bonds of unity

Commented [p2]: Objectives identify tangible outcomes for the session.

Consider the role of psychiatrists and mental health providers in addressing racism in America

Abstract

In the Academy Award Nominated documentary film, *I Am Not Your Negro*, an unfinished James Baldwin manuscript about the assassinations of Medgar Evers, Malcolm X, and Martin Luther King, Jr. serves as a starting point for a deep dive into the history and present status of race relations in the United States, and into the unique mind of a genius. With this film, some 30 years after his death, a new generation has been reintroduced to the writer/activist James Baldwin, and his anguished, yet hopeful view of racial politics in America. Racism is rooted deep within the American psyche, and recent events have reopened long-festering wounds. Issues of racism and hatred have always been difficult to discuss openly in safe, non-judgmental spaces. Psychiatrists and other mental health professionals have a moral responsibility to increase their own comfort and confidence in addressing these issues, and may have a unique role in leading the charge to dismantle racism in our society. Following a screening of this brief, introspectively affecting film, a diverse panel of psychiatrists and psychologists (with expertise in child/adolescent psychiatry, psychoanalysis, cultural psychiatry, and community psychiatry) will lead a discussion, informed by themes that James Baldwin contemplates in his artistry. Areas of focus include the importance of deconstructing privilege to effectively combat racism and discrimination, forming and strengthening bonds between privileged and discriminated populations, and analyzing the impact of racism on therapeutic relationships with patients. Recognizing that patient-provider relationships are microcosms of the broader society, participants will contemplate best practices to eradicate racism on a larger scale. Baldwin once said, "I imagine one of the reasons people cling to their hates so stubbornly is because they sense, once hate is gone, they will be forced to deal with pain." This media lab will contemplate the ways to make progress toward eliminating racism, will consider the multifactorial causes of its intractable nature, and will address the underlying pain that affects us all.

Commented [p3]: Abstract incorporates both a description of the film and the discussion to follow.

Agenda

0:00 Viewing the Film *I Am Not Your Negro*

1:40 Introduction of the Panel

1:45 Panel Discussion - Reflections

2:15 Audience Discussion and Panel Interaction

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