

Racialized Socialization and Trauma from a Somatic Perspective



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his is a time for listening and learning. It is also a time for the conversations that will build a safer, kinder, more compassionate humanity.

Overcoming the effects of trauma includes addressing the seeds of oppression and indignities embedded in our bodies as well as in our identities. When caring connection is violated, relational shocks ensue, leading, at their worst, to irretrievably deep cuts in the fabric of the heart and psyche.

Kenneth Hardy, in *Racial Trauma: Clinical Strategies and Techniques for Healing Invisible Wounds*, writes:

“It is hard to imagine how the process of therapy, the efficacy of which is predicated on the cultivation of a trusting and intimate relationship based on a mutual bond of respect, could ever be executed without overtly attending to issues of race... Therapists working with Clients of Color, must be professionally trained and racially prepared to deliver racially sensitive, trauma-informed therapy.”

Discrimination and oppression lodge in our flesh and bones, whether we are Black, Brown, women, queer, transgender, incarcerated, adopted, disabled, etc... – it lives in all who are “othered” through the internalized message that one’s very being is wrong, dangerous, ugly, or sinful.

In this issue, our guest editor Karen Roller has collaborated with practitioner-scholars who look at the world through the lens of inclusion and whose work is dedicated to helping us distance from inherited biases. With wise and loving guidance, she has brought together colleagues who, through their clinical understanding, can help us better fulfill our ethical responsibilities, manage power and privilege, emphasize shared decision-making and participatory assessment, treatment, and research. With engaged caring, their offerings speak out against prejudice while nurturing a sense of belonging that celebrates diversity.

There is no one right conversation to have in relation to the global human challenge of social justice. If we want our humanity to be kind, compassionate, and courageous, we must actively claim our part in creating it. The conversations in this issue reflect the

views of colleagues who are dedicated to speaking up when the values that underpin a compassionate humanity are assaulted.

It is our wish that the message of attunement and collaborative reciprocity arising from our somatic community continues to positively contribute to our global healing.

In This Issue...

This issue on **Social Justice in Somatics** reflects our guest editor **Karen Roller**'s fierce and loving vision for change. The title of her editorial, ***Microconnections: Healing our Macrodisconnection and Macrodissociation***, speaks to the courage we need to turn toward each other in acknowledgement of the deep wounding we humans have, and are still, consciously and unconsciously, inflicting on each other.

In ***Black Girls are Taught to Survive: Historical Trauma and the Strong Woman's Embodiment***, **Donya Wallace**, **Chanta Presley Moore**, and **Karen Roller** explore the origins of the Strong Black Woman persona through a trauma-informed archetypal lens. Honoring wisdom traditions, **Florie St. Aime** invites readers to unlearn the violent paradigms that claim our bodyminds under the guise of fixing them. Her article, ***An Anti-Oppressive Quest to Hold a Body***, seeks to breathe new life into our clinical practice. In ***Oppression and Addiction Break Families***, **Rachel Jacoby** and **Karen Roller** address the disproportionate representation of Black, Indigenous, and other People of Culture children who are raised in the American foster care system. They expose the bias of traumatic oppression that shape the perspective of referring professional, a bias that systematically wears down families who are pressed to the margins of society.

Susan F. Branco, **JaeRan Kim**, **Grace Newton**, **Stephanie Kripa Cooper-Lewter**, and **Paula O'Loughlin**, authors of ***Out of the Fog and into Consciousness: A Model of Adoptee Awareness***, describe the social activism adoptees may encounter, and the intersecting racial, ethnic, and cultural awareness that must inform body-inclusive therapists working with the somatic needs of adoptees. ***Disappearing Act: Disabled Embodiment*** by **anna s. kunin** offers a perspective on chronic pain from the disability justice lens. They explore the potential and limitations of somatic therapies to support a client's sense of agency within their chronic pain experience. In ***Somatic Practices in Disaster-Based Global Supervision: Tending to Shared Trauma and Recovery***, **Juanita Barnett**, **Elizabeth Farrah Louis**, and **Karen Roller** present the trauma models and somatic practices employed by their team in post-disaster supervision to prevent vicarious traumatization and compassion fatigue.

Our **Interdisciplinary Section** looks at unlearning voicelessness and reclaiming our voice. *Voicework and Sound Healing: Overcoming the Silencing Response and Unlearning Voicelessness* by **Nicole Cowans** and **Karen Roller** highlights the trauma processing and empowerment value of voicework to reclaim one's voice from systematic silencing by oppressive individuals and structures. The authors propose voicework as relevant to somatic psychotherapy to support resolving systematic silencing and self-assertion.

In the **Research Section**, **Letizia Sturiale**, **Roberta Rosin**, and **Irene Leo**'s *Neo-Functionalism Applied to the Lived Experience of a Transgender Person During Affirmation* sensitizes us to the transgender embodiment and identity process, and how it transcends the sociocultural expectations linked to binary biological sexes. They offer a reading of a transgender person's lived experience according to the psychological model of Modern Functionalism.

Our **Clinical Practice** section offers two powerful articles. *Somatic Experience of Microaggressions in Therapeutic Space: Understanding Rupture and Pathways to Repair* by **Shreya Vaishnav** and **Dareen Basma** explores somatic experiences of microaggressions in the therapeutic setting. They investigate somatization in relation to microaggressions through a detailed case study, emphasizing the manifestations of somatization, and proposing somatic interventions that aim to restore harmony in relational embodied encounters.

A must read, *Fanon's Vision of Embodied Racism for Psychoanalytic Theory and Practice* by **Kenyona Young** is a self-exploration of subconscious and preconscious appeasement and enactments as a body defense. Scholars such as Fanon, Hardy, and Knoblauch explored how hierarchal structures of race and racism live in our interstitium. Building on this, Young leads us into an examination of personal complicity in systems of oppression and white ideology.

In **Body Psychotherapy Around The World**, **Maurizio Stupiggia** reviews the history of body psychotherapy in Italy.

Personal Viewpoint offers inspiration and a model for determination and commitment. **Ann Bradney**, in *A Report from the Trenches*, describes herself as a process person, an experimenter who engages the world as a laboratory to develop, invite, collaborate, research, and learn. She recounts how her journey led her to create Radical Aliveness, a working space where all perspectives, all ways of expression, and all voices would be welcome. *Why War? Apologies* by **Courtenay Young** gives us an update on his quest to understand the origins of violence in human beings.

In **Book Reviews**, **Herbert Grassmann**, **Maurizio Stupiggia**, and **Stephen Porges** give us a preview of the contents of their upcoming edited book, *The Science of Embodiment: Trauma, Body, and Relationship*. To be released by Norton in 2024, this seminal volume aims to update the theory and principles of our field of somatic psychology, supporting a paradigm shift in which the introduction of the body transforms psychotherapy into somatic psychotherapy.

Equally exciting for our field is Courtenay Young's edited volume *The New Collected Papers of Biodynamic Psychology, Massage, and Psychotherapy: 2022* reviewed by **Mark Ludwig**. To quote Ludwig: "We are presented a uniquely valuable, large, and accessible archive of writings from the beginning of the modern body psychotherapy movement. I believe it is safe to say that not many readers of this review, outside the Biodynamic communities, have ever seen or read any of these 150 articles, which were written and published between 1970 and 2022." This publication, available in e-book format, is a treasury of 150 articles by 50 authors, the majority being European women.

Lisa Monagle writes about the book *Together Beyond Words; Women on a Quest for Peace in the Middle East*: "Nitsan Joy Gordon shares her life's work not as an expert in conflict reso-

lution, but as a mother sitting in a bomb shelter with her children. She envisioned creating peace and a better world for all the children. There and then she made the decision to trust her skills, feel all her feelings, and to try to know the 'enemy.' It was a conscious choice, a courageous one, and one to which she invites each of us to bring our skills and souls." Nitsan Joy Gordon describes a world of courage, of heart, of a life-and-death commitment to peace, and to never giving up.

In a statement worthy of closing this issue on social justice, she writes: "When this transformation occurs, and it shall one day, we will truly be a holy spot on earth where an ancient hatred has become a present love. May it be so."

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Aline LaPierre". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'A' and 'L'.