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An Exploration of Whiteness, Resilience, and Dance/Movement Therapy

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An Exploration of Whiteness, Resilience, and Dance/Movement Therapy

Literature Review

Capstone Thesis

Lesley University

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Abstract

This literature review is a thorough investigation on Whiteness, specifically how it is defined within society, embodiment and how to utilize Dance/Movement Therapy (DMT), resilience and how it affects people of color. It will address how Whiteness is a vast and highly researched topic, and this paper aims to build ground for future work both within counseling professions and Dance/Movement Therapy (DMT). The entirety of this paper discusses whiteness and how it affects various aspects of an individual's life, as well as the resiliency demonstrated by those who rise up beyond their experienced oppression. When defining Whiteness, careful consideration must be made so it remains complex enough to carry the intersectional identities affected by it. This paper analyzes the literature on Whiteness and aims to discuss how resilience is held by most people of color. Additionally, this thesis discusses how DMT is striving to use more inclusive practices, and suggests how DMT can be used to build empowerment and resilience through the use of its embodied practices.

An Exploration of Whiteness, Resilience, and Dance/Movement Therapy

Introduction

This capstone thesis began as a proposed idea to engage with the people of my birthplace in San Andres, Colombia. I wanted to examine how various forms of trauma may have had an impact on the identity development of island natives with specific attention to their resilience as a result of their hardships. My desire to engage with the community was rooted in an intention of connecting with stories of the people I come from. I wanted to tell the islanders' stories of resilience and overcoming adversity through my own reflection of their words, art and movement. Unfortunately, in October of 2018 the incumbent governor Ronald Housni Jaller and the previous governor were sent to prison on corruption charges and for embezzling over 120.000 million Colombian pesos from the San Andres Island ("Envían a prisiòn al gobernador y exgobernadora de San Andrés," 2018). This sudden change in power, and resulting national crisis made it increasingly difficult to engage with the citizens of the island. I have not given up on my goal of engage with my home community, and I hope that after time and a change in power I can create another opportunity to do so.

When finding another idea for this project, I hoped to engage with a community within the Greater Boston area. Chica Project is an organization with the goal of emboldening the voices of young woman of color and guiding them to positions of power by providing them with social, emotional, and professional development skills (E. Rodriguez, personal communication, April 10, 2018). I interned with Chica Project during my second year studying DMT and clinical mental health counseling. Their mission, workshops, and goals align with my personal and professional values, and with what I hope to do throughout my career; I want to use DMT to empower members of marginalized communities to advocate for themselves, and rise up within

structures that have historically oppressed them. Due to conflicting schedules we were unable to find a time that mutually worked for the purpose of this work. I am grateful to have a positive relationship with the Chica Project community and hope to find a time to work with them in the future.

As my ideas for my capstone thesis changed, so did the concept of what this work would be. I first wished to study trauma and its effects on the human brain and quality of life, specifically with people from San Andres. While transitioning that original plan to something more fitting to my daily experiences, I reflected on the instances of racism I witness in public and professional settings, and how the trauma of being racially marginalized affects communities. Then, I encountered one of the most overtly racist experiences in a professional setting that I have ever witnessed. Upon reflecting about this experience I learned a multitude of lessons; I am white-passing person of color, i.e. someone who many people many assume is white, and that presentation affords me privilege. Admittedly, it is problematic that it has taken me 26 years to truly reflect on the rights I receive as a result of this aspect of my identity. I am increasingly exhausted with issues of identity, specifically overlapping identities, hindering the ability of people to walk through spaces safely. These reflections made me want to explore how I feel about Whiteness, and white supremacy's effects on various systems in this world. This paper is intended to examine Whiteness, and its relationship to people whose bodies are not white-presenting.

My perspective of being foreign born, living in-between two cultures, being bilingual and being white-passing has allowed me to take more perspective when listening to or being subjugated to the toxic, insidious experiences of racism. My aim with this body of work is to not only become more enlightened about what is happening in our world as a result of racism, but

also to find a way for the stories of people of color to be stories of resilience and empowerment in the face of adversity. I want to highlight the strength needed and demonstrated by people of color when facing constant manifestations of white supremacy.

I hope to learn from the literature of the various ways marginalized communities come together to empower one another, and change the systems that oppress them. I aim to develop a deeper understanding of the systems that contribute to inequity and why they are designed to do so. Unfortunately, this literature review cannot begin to address all that is written on a topic so vast, historical, and complicated. I am constrained by the brevity of this paper, and do not have the opportunity to hold and discuss everything I would like to. I believe still it is important I use this paper to contribute to a conversation about race, which unfortunately is avoided by so many in power. Those who stray from discussions of racial oppression often are directly benefitted by its impacts, and this paper is meant to instead shine a light on those who are talking about race and have not been listened to.

The entirety of this paper discusses whiteness and how it affects various aspects of a person's life, as well as the resiliency demonstrated by those who rise up beyond their experienced oppression. When defining whiteness, careful consideration must be taken so the concept remains complex enough to carry the intersectional identities affected by it. I will analyze the literature on Whiteness, and discuss how resilience is developed by most people of color. I will explore how DMT is trying to use more inclusive practices, and I will also propose how DMT and embodiment can be used in therapeutic interventions to build empowerment and resilience. I aim to build a foundation for my own clinical practice as a counselor and Dance Movement Therapist, and suggest practices for future work both within counseling professions and DMT.

In my review of the literature I discuss Whiteness, its recent emboldening as a result of political changes in the United States, and theoretical views of its impact on oppressed people. I continue by reviewing the concepts of DMT, highlighting the importance of the mind-body connection in psychotherapy, and exploring the ways experienced oppression impacts the physical self. I then examine resiliency, and how individuals and communities move beyond the trauma imposed by societal oppression. I hope that readers of this paper, of all races, reflect on the impact Whiteness has on oppressed populations, and acknowledge the strength people of color display and continue to develop in order to navigate the world with resiliency and self-esteem. I suggest that a DMT theoretical framework may be used to facilitate resiliency development in oppressed individuals and communities.

Literature Review

Economics and identity politics were central to the 2016 election outcome (Sioh, 2018). The 2018 election demonstrated just how much power the citizens of this country can have, as the congressional freshman class of 2019 is the most racially diverse and most female group of representatives ever elected to the House of Representatives, an institution with a history spanning more than 200 years (Edmondon & Lee, 2019). In Massachusetts, Ayanna Presley, the first black congresswoman in the state, was elected to be a voice in the nation's capital. Ayanna Presley's perspective on systematic injustice's has been stated as "making progress on longstanding challenges requires a different lens and a new approach" (Pressley, 2018, para. 1). In New York, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's (2018) campaign set a precedent during which she stated:

> Nobody ever wins the first time they run for office. Nobody's ever supposed to win their
> bid for office. Nobody's ever supposed to win without taking lobbyists' money. No one's

ever supposed to defeat an incumbent. No one's ever supposed to run a grassroots

campaign without running any ads on television. We did all of those things. (para. 1)

The United States' legacy of race-based genocide, enslavement-engendered historical trauma,

and ongoing racism continues to profoundly affect current generations' inner lives (Tyson,

Richards, Quimby, Scott, Davis, Hart, Thomas, & Hopson, 2019). Specifically, the black/white

binary paradigm in this country has resulted in preservation and normalization of the United

States' racial hierarchies (Guess, 2006).

Exploring Whiteness

Racism in the United States is not surprising nor it is politically unanticipated (Sioh,

2018). The current political, social and psychological state of the United States of America is

being inundated by oppressive, hateful rhetoric. Nell Painter (2016) points out that when the

United States' current president's campaign slogan, "Make America Great Again" is heard,

many interpret the word 'great' as 'white.' Following Donald Trump's election in 2016, a

documented increase in hate crimes and harassment targeting communities of color occurred

(Hamrick & Byma, 2017). Further in this article, it was reported that people of color and other

marginalized identities, i.e. not white, queer, and people with disabilities, find themselves

increasingly at risk of harm simply as a result of their existence. Counties in the United States

that hosted a 2016 Trump campaign rally saw a 226 percent increase in reported hate crimes over

comparable counties that did not host such a rally (Feinberg, Branton, & Martinez-Ebers, 2019).

Privilege and power is afforded to white presenting individuals, and that power negatively affects

those who are not white or white presenting (Withers, 2017).

Withers (2017) describes Whiteness as a system of racial power, which is in a constant

state of change. It is explained in this article that the power Whiteness holds allows it to take on

the dominant status in any space. The author states Whiteness is accomplished by societal norms and the process of nomination, or the way white people entitling themselves as dominant. He explains naturalization as the unchangeable inequality that results from Whiteness (Withers, 2017).

Hayes, Juarez, Witt, Hartlep (2013) define whiteness as an identity that is not challenged nor is specified within discussions on race, because it assumes a status of normalcy. The authors ascertain that Whiteness is not about white people, but is about a mindset which further perpetuates the power of those who identify as white. Their book continues to describe how this seemingly invisible status creates an insidious streamline of affecting harm onto those who are not afforded this white privilege status (Hayes et al., 2013).

Oppression occurs when an individual or group diminishes another individual or group via an unjust assertion of dominance (Karcher & Caldwell, 2014). The authors continue to discuss that oppression is a socio-political and psychological activity used to abuse entire populations and individuals (Karcher & Caldwell, 2014). In a similar notion, Hitchcock and Flint (2015) argue:

> We can look at how various racial/cultural groups have stood in relation to one another. In this … sense we can make statements such as, "White people have exploited people of color" and understand it describes to relations on a grand scale, or in preponderance, but allowing as well that not all individuals' experiences could be condensed to so simple a statement. (p. 6)

The authors continue to elaborate that white culture has demonstrated it is unable to be at the center without abusing power and compete unjustly for leadership (Hitchcock & Flint, 2015).

Two of the biggest contributors to the discourse of Whiteness are the authors of Critical Race Theory (CRT), Delgado and Stefancic (2012). These authors explore the basic tenets of CRT, that deepen an understanding of racial origins and implications (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Firstly, racism is normal, and is the common everyday experience of most people of color in this country (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). They explain that racism is not abnormal, or experienced by just a few people of color, rather it is present every day for people who are not white. The authors posit that the notion of racism as something new, or something that has gone away is deconstructed, and light is shed on the consistency and history of racial bias (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012)

By shedding light on racism neither being abnormal or new they begin to honor how racism is experienced by every person of color in some way, shape or form throughout their lives (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). They argue most people would agree that the system of white-over-color superiority serves important purposes, both psychological and possessive for the dominant group (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). The dominant group being in a position of power is not by mistake. The authors explain that declining from power would take away a sense purpose for the dominant group, which leads to the dominant group continuously finding new ways to maintain their status (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). CRT continues to explain that racism is difficult to address or cure when it is not acknowledged, and those in power try to maintain ordinariness of racial hierarchies. The authors explore the idea that this commonness takes its shape within society and enables the dominant group to state itself as normal, making it nearly impossible for anyone in a minority group to challenge the status quo (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). This notion that Whiteness is normal is supported by Sullivan (2006) as she discusses how white privilege operates as unseen, invisible, seemingly nonexistent.

Building upon CRT is "interest convergence or material determinism" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012, p. 20). Racism increases the benefits of both white elites palpably and working-class whites intellectually, major portions of society have little to no impetus to abolish it (Delgado & Stefcanic, 2012). These authors further explain this piece by mentioning that because there is minimal monetary incentive to change this system it is increasingly burdensome for people of color to step into these spaces and strive to make the change happen (Delgado & Stefcanic, 2012). In most major cities in the United States, the number of white families with financial status and assets drastically exceeds the number of racially oppressed families with similar comfortabilities (Johnson, Wallack, Dungcan, Kowalczyk, Ryan, & Walker, 2017).

Continuing in CRT is how this social construct perpetuates a discourse of truth. This truth is not 'capital T Truth', however society at large finds it difficult to ignore what has been previously posited as the truth. Delgado and Stefancic (2012) state:

The third theme of critical race theory, the "social construction" thesis, holds that race and races are products of social thought and relation. Not objective, inherent, or fixed, they correspond to no biological or genetic reality; rather races are categories society invents, manipulates, or retires when convenient… That society frequently choose to ignore these scientific truths, creates races, and endows them pseudo-permanent characteristics is of great interest to critical race theory. (pp. 8-9)

Another development within CRT involves differential racialization and its consequences (Delgado & Stefrancic, 2012). This draws attention to how multitudes of minority groups have been racialized for various reason. Racialization, according to Gans (2017) is a process, often racist, and usually has damaging consequences for the racialized. In the article it is discussed that the damaging consequences is referring to can be name-calling, discrimination and persecution.

The author further posits that this harmful process really affects the non-dominant culture (Gans, 2017).

The notion of intersectionality and antiessentialism, described by Delgado and Stefancic (2012). They discuss that intersectionality is always present in power dynamics. Everyone has possibly clashing, overlapping identities; a person can be able-bodied, black, speak English, literate, and Jewish (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). CRT further discusses that intersecting identities allow the same individual to have power in certain situations and be oppressed in others. The overlapping identities, the authors speak of, do not liken to the same experience of oppression for every person, a concept known as antiessentialism. This portion of CRT further elaborate that people cannot be pared down to one single unit or form one single identity regardless if their shared identity (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012).

The final element of CRT states the notion of a unique voice of color. Minority status brings with it a presumed expertise to discuss race and racism This expertise creates a valid standpoint from which to argue for and against whiteness that comes from whiteness (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Adding to the final element of CRT is legal storytelling. Legal storytelling affords validity to the experience of people who have been negatively impacted by whiteness and keeps those individuals from having their experience be credible, rather their stories are diminished or minimized because it is difficult for nonwhites to understand what it is like to be a minority (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012).

Embodiment and Dance Movement Therapy

Chang (2016) argues that the best way to appreciate the power of dance is to experience it directly. She continues to discusses how we must investigate our own cultural history and our personal relationship to the historical conditions that have led to hierarchical distinctions and

power differentials. Dance is not universal, and Chang (2016) discusses how approaching this fact provides an opportunity to discuss the cliché's which are connection to the word universalism. She continues to develop this cliché by stating, "it is time to acknowledge the exotification of dance from other cultures" (Chang, 2016, p. 8). Chang states we can begin to acknowledge this notion by inviting equal partnerships within the ADTA, with dancers and dance therapists who live and practice these cultural dances instead of continuing a system of colonization and dominance. According to the article, because DMT is a psychotherapeutic field with the intention of body-mind integration, it is of upmost importance for this to happen. She makes various recommendations for the field of DMT. Some of these recommendations include having an increased understanding of various identity markers, and culture in the social context of the dance/movement therapist required. She adds that working intimately with the body and creating a therapeutic relationship with the client through the body it is extremely importance to be in constant conversation with oneself and these identity markers and how they interact with clients (Chang, 2016).

As Malcom MacLachlan (2004) discusses, embodiment is the manifestation of a mental concept in a physical form. Stigma and oppression permeate both mind and body (Caldwell, 2013). Identity can be synthesized to implying a united awareness of ourselves, and is connected with capacity to explain that awareness to ourselves and others (Caldwell, 2018). The author further develops this within the article by discussing that oppression in any form does harm to identity development, and the consequences of that harm cause by oppression also effect body identity development. The author develops the concept body identity and positions it as the core of our identity. The author describes body identity is something which is, "lifelong, is changeable, multiple, nonverbal, relational, situational, and social" (Caldwell, 2018, p. 35). She

further develops body identity by discussing what damages body identity by stating that either the body itself can be made wrong or lesser than and by making specific bodies wrong and less than. She calls the process of making specific bodies wrong, "somaticism" (Caldwell, 2018, p. 36). The article further posits that somaticism is an act of oppression. The author describes that this oppression can be made by excluding who is in the nondominant group through their "ways of moving, how spaced is used, eye contact, voice tone, body size and shape…" (Caldwell, 2018, p. 36), to name a few. The article states that through this exclusion, segregation of peoples can occur which may lead to self-harm or a lifetime of self-criticism (Caldwell, 2018).

Schultz (2018) found that some people experience microaggressions as personal patterns of retreating and covering the center of their body. She states that this may be due to how deeply an microaggressive experience can be felt. Schultz (2018) asserts that it is the responsibility of the therapist to address experiences of microaggression. This can either cause a therapeutic relationship to become stronger or weaker. The article discusses how clients may at times stop coming to sessions if they are not able to process microaggressions with their therapist. The author further elucidates this idea by adding that it is the therapist or the person in power who must begin the work of repairing the harm that has been done against the person who is not in power. The article further discusses that the goal is to have an integration of both mind and body, so this marginalization must be addressed in both cognitive and physical ways. Schultz (2018) emphasizes the importance of examining the body when discussing microaggressions in order to prevent mental health or physical problems. Karcher and Caldwell (2014) support the importance of this by emphasizing, "members of marginalized communities can experience a sense of agency and healing that comes from the ability to learn from the data and articulate their experience through their own words, movements, or images" (p. 483).

Leighton (2018) discusses somatic therapies, and the way they relate the body to one's identity. Our patterns of movement exist the ways that they do because of the impact our internal and external experiences have had on our sense of self and personality (Leighton, 2018). When working with a client, this author explains that it is valuable to support them in recognizing their somatic and kinesthetic experiences, so they can expand their instinctual patterns and have more autonomy behind their reactions. Leighton (2018) adapts Christine Caldwell's, Moving Cycle (MC), to state it might also be effective in working with the "traumatic symptoms of oppression" (p. 207).

Leighton's work (2018) with the MC offers a theoretical model for engaging in a deliberate, innovative way to direct an increase in positive changes by applying a new framework to building resilience. Leighton (2018) argues that DMT shows promising results for working with trauma:

Due to specific strategies: (1) establishing safety and trust in the therapeutic relationship; (2) using movement reflection and kinesthetic empathy; (3) working with symbolism, metaphor, and imagery; (4) using improvisation, play and creativity; and finally, (5) exploring embodiment and expanding the movement repertoire. (p. 207)

The MC involves the reinforcement of four phases: "The Awareness phase, The Owning phase, The Appreciation phase, and The Action phase" (Leighton, 2018, pp. 208-210). According to Leighton within each phase, the MC invites five interventions which vary depending on the phase the client is processing (Leighton, 2018). The figure below provides a visual for how the MC could play out in session with a client. Leighton (2018), offers the diagram to reinforce and encourage a continuous relationship between all phases, noting that each phase leads to the other.

The figure demonstrates how this process of re-learning and un-learning in cyclical and therefore allows a person to constantly develop.
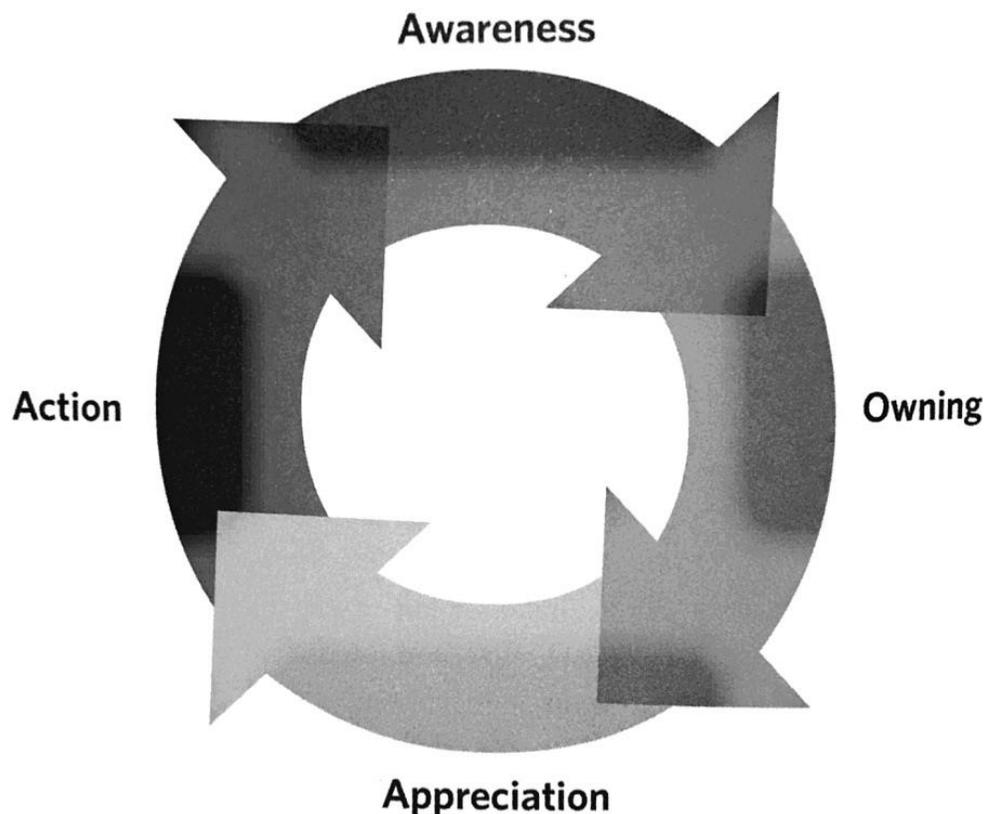

Figure 1: The Moving Cycle. Reprinted from Trauma and the body: Somatic practices for everyday resiliency, by L. B. Leighton, 2018, In C. Caldwell & L. Bennet Leighton (Eds.), *Oppression and The Body: Roots, Resistance, and Resolution* (p. 210), Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books. Copyright 2018 by Christine Caldwell and Lucia Bennett Leighton.

The Awareness phase invites a new aware of our reactions so we can have more autonomy behind how we choose to respond (Leighton, 2018). According to Leighton (2018), this phase supports an increase in awareness of our instinctual, bodily reflexes, so we can begin to examine where they originate from. Leighton (2018) encourages that marginalized people initiate reflection on how we internalize oppression, so we can reflect on our beliefs about ourselves and how navigate through the world.

Leighton (2018) describes The Owning phase within "oppression-conscious work" (p. 209), as an examination of metaphor and symbolism. This portion of the framework may produce an exploration of oppressive roles where we can introduce new patterns of movement. During this phase, Leighton (2018) denotes it may be useful to try out various patterns of movement which divert from our fixed patterns.

The Appreciation phase, next in the MC, encompasses an appreciation for what has emerged within us. Leighton (2018), adaptation for its use with oppressed populations, states that this phase may include deliberately examining ways in which maintenance of our accustomed patterns or social roles may have been necessary for our safety or to serve our needs. According to the author this phase encourages recognizing the deep-rooted strength within our portrayal of oppression, while increasing our realization of how oppression influences our instinctual movement patterns. She further posits this phase as outlining an increase in self-love and acceptance. Acknowledging that we are worthy of said love and acceptance all the while at the same time attributing the lack of acceptance to the social constructs rather than being unworthy of love (Leighton, 2018).

The Action Phase denotes practicing our previous explorations into our everyday lives (Leighton, 2018). This phase may not be available to all oppressed bodies, and requires safety and resiliency planning. In this plan, including ways in which we increase our sense of kinship to, and engagement with our communities and individuals who can be reached when facing a microaggression is important. She continues describing this plan as involving having allies we can connect to throughout challenging experiences can facilitate creating a resilient person through the connection with their resilient community. The author further clarifies that this plan

can mean look like getting involved in community activism or artistic performance (Leighton, 2018).

MC PHASE	MC TOOLS	OPPRESSION-FOCUSED INTERVENTIONS
AWARENESS	Repeat, contrast, specify, generalize, intensify	• Oppression psychoeducation • Questioning assumptions and movement patterns • Exploring privilege and oppression dynamics
OWNING	Character play, associations, metaphor, and improvisation	• Conscious re-enactment, or play with oppressive roles/systems • Exploring new/foreign movement
APPRECIATION	Integration, stabilization, and acknowledging new experiences	• Strengths-based approach to adaptive patterns caused by oppression • Facilitation of externalization of oppression • Self-love and self-care practices
ACTION	Practice, application to life, gathering more data	• Building safety and resiliency plan • Increasing ways to connect to community and social supports • Community activism and/or performance

Figure 2: Moving Cycle Tools and Oppression-Focused Interventions. Reprinted from Trauma and the body: Somatic practices for everyday resiliency, by L. B. Leighton, 2018, In C. Caldwell & L. Bennet Leighton (Eds.), *Oppression and The Body: Roots, Resistance, and Resolution* (p. 213), Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books. Copyright 2018 by Christine Caldwell and Lucia Bennett Leighton.

Leighton (2018) offers oppression-focused interventions to use during the four phases of the MC. The above diagram demonstrates the various tools, and oppression-focused interventions clinicians can use with clients when working with this theoretical model in

accordance to the phase their clients are processing. Leighton (2018) encourages increased

awareness of oppression and how it affects us on a bodily level, increased options for

embodiment and play of the oppressive structures during therapeutic interventions, and

opportunity for feelings of safety, resilience, and a sense of belonging through community

engagement.

Resilience

Alternative explanations of resilience exist (Hall, 2007). Resilience can be defined as the

ability to recover from aversive emotional experiences and by being adaptable to the constant

demands of strenuous experiences (Wengrower, 2015). In addition, Wallace (2012) describes

resilience as the overlapping of personality, development, and environmental influences.

Emotion regulation and healthy attachment contribute to successful cognitive development, and

work collaboratively to develop resiliency in the face of external stressors and change

(Wengrower, 2015).

Hall (2007) discusses differences in definitions of resilience across culture, ethnicity,

gender, age, and socioeconomic status. A white person trying to embody 'coolness' may be

viewed by their community as entitled, while a person of color doing the same could secure

safety for themselves in oppressive situation (Hall, 2007). According to the author resiliency

should be accepted as benefitting both the individual and community; it is relative, flexible and

changing (Hall, 2007).

Travis (2018) discusses "how 'cool' evolved from West African traditions of emotional

regulation and bodily presentation that were adapted to the harsh conditions of enslavement in

the United States and the Caribbean" (p. 76). Travis (2018) describes cool as a personal flair and

a way of thinking. She calls it a survival mechanism, and way to withstand a society where

conflict is unsafe for the oppressed. According to this author, cool was the way oppressed

populations were resilient (Travis, 2018).

Clonan-Roy, Jacobs, and Nakkula (2016) posit that resilience is the existence of

constructive elements that balance the interconnection between stress and risk, on one side and

coping and competence on the other. Clonan-Roy et al. (2016) theorized resilience involved two

factors: "(1) a risk or threat to development, and (2) adaption success" (p. 114) According to

these authors, resilience is not a fixed concept, rather it is changing, due to the fact that people

lives and exposure to risk is also always changing (Clonan-Roy et al., 2016).

Clonan-Roy et al. (2016) adapt the current Positive Youth Development Model (PYD)

for young girls of color, they assert that critical consciousness should be at the center of this

adaptation; as is shown in the figure below. Resilience, as well as, resistance have also been

added to this adaptation. The authors offer the revisions so the model is a better fit for adolescent

girls of color by from their experiences of working with adolescent girls of color. The authors

worked with young Black and Latina women and studied previous research of the PYD, and

found that additional aspects of 'doing well' were described. This suggested that the first model

was incomplete for universal application (Clonan- Roy et al., 2016). The figure below displays

the original model's five characteristics in green, add includes the adaptions in purple. The

authors choice to place critical consciousness in the center and have all the characteristics

interrelate with it is important to this new adaptation (Clonan-Roy et al., 2016).
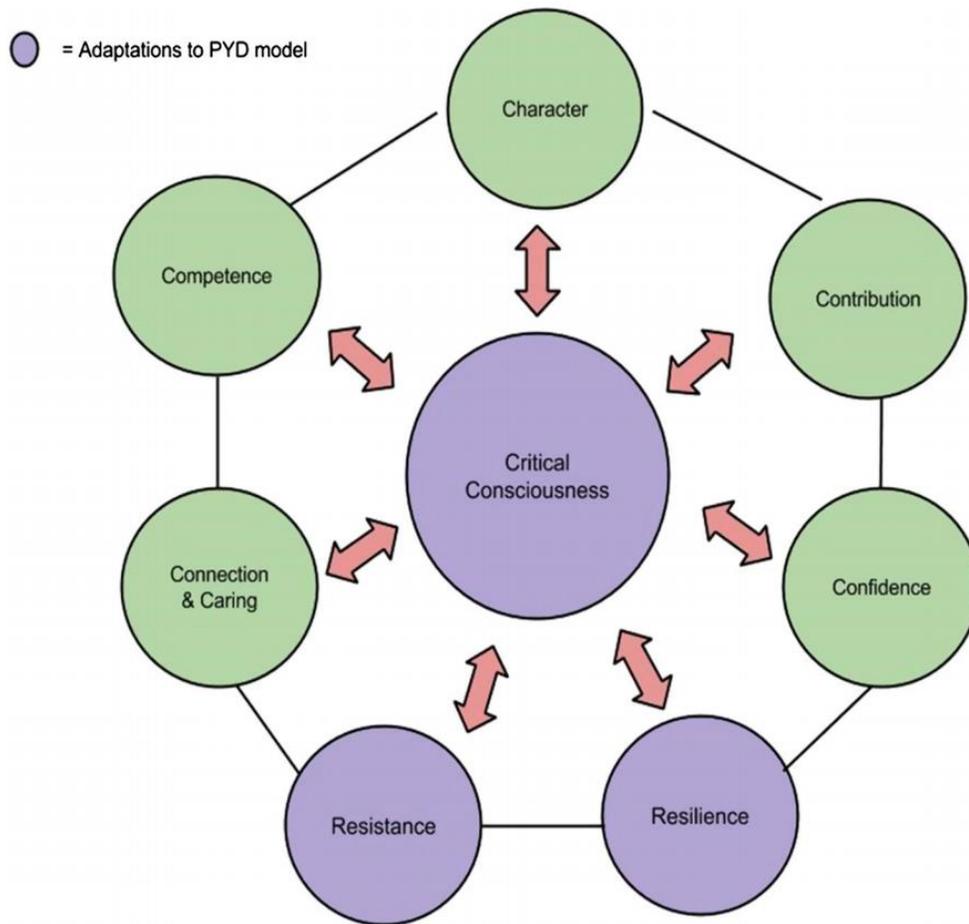
Figure 3: PYD Model for girls of color. Reprinted from "Towards a model of positive youth

development specific to girls of color: Perspectives on development, resilience and

empowerment," by Clonan-Roy, K., Jacobs, C. E., Nakkula, M. J., 2016, *Gender Issues*, *33,* p.

103. Copyright 2013 by Springer Science and Business Media.

      The construct of resilience has developed over recent years (Pressley, 2017). Travis

(2018) suggests resilience an ability to collaborate and recover from traumatic events so they can

continue increasing autonomy. Travis (2018) further posits the importance of this collaboration

of community in order bounce back from traumatic events and not allow them hinder their

success. Hall (2007) suggests families of color should explore resiliency through three central

lenses: individual, family, and community. He explains that individually, they can use a strong

sense of self-esteem as defenses against prejudice. He further describes how at a familial level, "effective communication, positive interaction, and strong family values" (Hall, 2007, p. 220) support the development of a resilient child. Finally, the author discusses that positive engagements with the community also support resilience development. The author further describes that three levels all interconnect and serve as support and protection for the developing youth, as well as their families (Hall, 2007).

Community resilience describes the developing capacity of the community to explore its narrative with criticism and advance its effectiveness in supporting themselves (Martin, 2015). Being value-centered rather than reactive and defensive may aid in that support (Holden, Hernandez, Wrenn, & Belton, 2017). Martin (2015) explains that communities who are aware of their weaknesses and find ways to build strength from those shortcomings, aid their own continuous improvement. A constant focus on building a community benefits the individuals who identify within it (Martin, 2015).

Personal Experiences from an Immigrant, White-Passing, Woman of Color

The impetus for writing this literature review began during an experiential workshop at a professional conference. This experiential started with positive intentions, and the speaker was honest about her discomfort related to being a person of color presenting in a way that was decided for her by the systems of Whiteness that controlled the conference. I will paraphrase here what the instructions of the experiential were. The speaker guided us to think of a race we may have an aversion to, and call upon our ancestors to aid us in working through this discomfort and move beyond the aversion. Once we participated, we were then asked to share. This is where things began to feel unsafe. White participants in the session began sharing statements such as, "race does not exist and the only race is the human race," or thoughts of

physically hurting and lynching people of a specific religious group. My heart rate increased, my palms were sweaty, and tears built in my eyes as I heard story after story of hate, misunderstanding, and cruelty. I watched in utter dismay as the people of color in the room began stepping back towards the walls or crouching down because of the pain they felt. I remember wondering what was going through the white participants' minds when they shared, and if they could see the hurt they were causing. Unfortunately, the answer to that question seemed to be no.

As a citizen of this country who cares about and is a part of multiple marginalized populations, I have witnessed a change in the way people approach one another when speaking about themes of racism, oppression, and subjugation as they pertain to the United States. Sometimes this change is for the better and can open new ways of seeing a person's lived experience. Other times, the approach further belittles the lived experiences of people of color to the point of inflicting harm.

The statistics I have learned from writing this literature review sit heavy on my heart because I know them all too well. The story of the young man who is stereotyped and ends up in jail is the story of a loved one. The story of having to prove every year to my universities that I am a citizen in this country, in ways disguised as random procedures, is one that I have endured throughout my higher education.

I can only speak for my own experience. As a white-passing, Colombian-American I have called myself various identities depending on the context of my experience or even my body, i.e. if I have spent time in the sun and developed a tan. If I am in a room full of brown and black bodies, others assume I am white and I am afforded privilege because of my white-passing skin tone. I have connected or disconnected to a variety of experiences, and to a variety of

privileges. My experiences of being placed in a box of being just white enough to receive the privileges which are afforded to white people, however has placed me in extremely uncomfortable situations during which I often disassociate.

The inspiration for finishing this body of work is my community; the community which supported me so I could become the strong, compassionate, loving person that I know myself to be because it is what they taught me. I hope one day this system, this social construct of whiteness, will see my community the way I do. One that is full of determined, disciplined, loving human beings who want to make this world the best it can be.

Discussion

I posit that the Whiteness is a default for 'normal' perpetuates oppression for those who do not fall under this category. I think these social constructs have created divisions within individuals. I believe this boils down to language. Due to the fact that race is a product of social construction, it is also artificial. It creates safety and power for those who need it, when they want it and will change so the dominant group can stay in power. By perpetuating a binary which only benefits those who fit in the side of power. CRT supports this by talking about the Black and White binary. Delgado and Stefcancic (2012) discuss how this binary negatively affects the ability to create coalitions, amongst other things.

I find this to be a very serious problem. People of color or and other marginalized identity markers are still finding themselves at risk, as noted by the rise in hate crimes, because they merely exist. This rhetoric is not new in any way, however I feel oppressors are being emboldened to continue to condemn, belittle, and subjugate people of color to racial disparities which have plagued this nation for over two-hundred years, especially with the current administration.

The lack of conversation makes racism more insidious. The lack of action is lazy, the lack of responsibility is ignorance. Once damage has been done there is little one can do to remedy it. Damage upon people of color continues to be done. This suggests that whiteness and its privileges have many common themes some being lack of discourse, or an over-simplification of varied experiences. I learned this through the basic tenets of CRT. Delgado and Stefancic (2012) discuss the third theme within CRT as giving various marginalized identities pseudo-permanent characteristics.

Contributing to structural racism, is the fact that we live in a country with a high school to prison pipeline. I have witnessed people of color being told to be quiet when not two minutes before, the white people were louder and allowed to continue doing so freely. My inquiries have led to me want to further my investigations about the impact of whiteness of communities of people of color. The intersectional identities are always in conflict in a country that continues to subjugate people of color as being lower or less than the privileged white person. Again, this idea has been supported by CRT and its basic tenants, which I previously discussed (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012).

I have learned that Whiteness also aims to give an economic advantage to those in the dominant group. Delgado and Stefancic (2012) support this learned idea. I knew how important it is for the dominant culture to be on top, adding to the complexity of this construct is the very real concept of money, which controls so much of accessibility. In Boston, black families have a net-worth of eight dollars (Johnson et al., 2017). It is almost impossible to raise up the economic ladder as a family or individual because the system makes it so. This is how these constructs which have real life impacts on marginalized communities.

Within resiliency, I have learned that it is more complex than just an individual. This broadened my previous biases about resilience existing in isolation. This allows for a better understanding, from the literature, that resilience is complex (Wallace, 2012). Clonan-Roy et. al. (2016) discussed how resilience is two-fold. Hall (2007) explained how families of color can look at resilience through the three-lens of individual, family and community. I believe these lenses can provide paradigms for compassion within their domains and an act as frameworks for what work can be done with these marginalized individuals.

Further, it is true that resilience has changed throughout the years (Pressley, 2017). Its very notion and understanding is being affected by more studying and literature being published about it. At the start of writing this paper, I believed that resiliency was embedded within the ancestral culture of people of color because of my lived experience in my community. Travis (2018) supported this belief by relating 'cool' to mental state, and personal flair necessary for the safety of West-African slaves during the trans-Atlantic slave trade, as well as many people of color in the history of this nation. This notion of placing a mask of cool which people of color, particularly black people, have had to put on since they were stolen from Africa made me angry. I aim to further my studies and clinical work towards engaging with communities about why this mask is exhausting, and harmful to those who have to embody it out of safety.

Using the adaptations to PYD by Clonan-Roy et. al. (2016), in conjunction with the adaptations made to the MC by Leighton (2018), I would hopefully be able to create and conduct a structure for youth to embody resilience through an embodied lens. Resilience can also be a way for communities to build self-efficacy through the adversities they face (Travis, 2018). This led me to believe that positive engagement with a community which an individual shares a common identity with. Martin (2015) supports this by stating that community resiliency

continues to grow and help rebound from past traumatic events. Connecting with affinity groups, and connecting with allies who support the individual through their experiences of micro and macro aggressions from various different dominant identities is crucial to resilience building.

DMT has the ability to connect people of color to not only their bodies, and their spirit which connects them to the royal ancestry which has been eroded by white culture. As DMT is a practice which aims to integrate mind, body, and spirit. Chang (2016), Caldwell (2018), and Leighton (2018) have contributed to the literature about DMT's work with oppressed bodies. Chang (2016) discusses how the work has changed within the last fifty-years to be more inclusive, for people of color. Caldwell (2018) and Leighton (2018) have also done a fair amount of work to create a space for all identities. I still believe more work needs to be done in order for the accessibility of this practice to reach the populations which would greatly benefit from it.

Leighton (2018) has begun this work by specifically adapting a framework of how to provide body-based interventions for oppressed bodies with Caldwell's The MC. This theoretical framework provides a structure of how to bring embodiment practices to marginalized populations. According to the author, the MC can have trauma focused interventions specific to the trauma of living an oppressed experience. The author even includes how to bring about safety to the populations outside of a therapeutic space. I can create a safety plan with my clients on how to remain in The Action Phase while also acknowledge that the constructs which make up the society of the United States are not consistently providing a space of safety for these marginalized populations to exist within. I greatly appreciate having learned about ways in which to begin providing those connections to safety for my future clients and clinical practice (Leighton, 2018).

I am aware that though I have learned a lot during this culmination of this body of work is, there are many pathways with which I can continue this. I will continue to learn and write about various embodiment practices which can be created specifically for marginalized populations. I can reach out to both communities and begin to see what the community engagement part looks like and how the literature supports the actions I take. For the field of DMT, I think creating theoretical frameworks specifically for marginalized communities is crucial to engaging with said populations. Specifically, I believe DMT needs to create new assessments for marginalized populations because various groups move differently and one assessment will not encompass all of the variances within identities (Caldwell, 2013).

As a result of writing this paper, I want to connect with my community now more than ever and create ways in which this can be healing, and inspirational. Allowing for safer spaces for people of color to feel not only empowered to be their authentic selves and to bring the authenticity forward to society at large. Being emboldened to take the risks, which are required as a person of color, and remind the white people; in particular the Whiteness construct which plagues this country, is in fact multicultural. People of color deserve safer spaces. People of color have time and time again demonstrated their resilience to trying times.

My work with these communities is only just beginning. In response to this exploration, I am now more than ever inspired to advocate and create spaces where marginalized people can begin to heal. I want to create spaces where these members of a vast community are able integrate the various aspects of their identity, hold them in power and truth. I want to create spaces that I did not have growing up. I want to create spaces where I could have felt that all parts of me belonged, and connected with a resilient community to continue building and growing in all my identities.

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