The enigma of unintentional racial microaggressions: Implications for the profession of psychotherapy

Malik McCann

PSYCHOTHERAPIST, AUCKLAND

Keith Tudor

PROFESSOR OF PSYCHOTHERAPY, AUCKLAND UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, AUCKLAND

Abstract

Unintentional racial and cultural microaggressions towards indigenous and minority peoples while injurious to recipients, are characteristically not recognised by the perpetrator and when challenged, are often not able to be met with curiosity or the capacity for reflection. The difference in racial and cultural realities exposed in these encounters can lead to breakdowns in recognition and polarising dynamics which perpetuate structural oppression. They also represent missed opportunities for greater understanding of the ways socially sanctioned norms, assumptions and beliefs reinforce the implicit positioning of self and other as racial and cultural objects. Through consideration of the societal, interpersonal and intrapsychic aspects of the first author's experience through heuristic enquiry (supervised by the second author), we consider unintentional racial microaggressive encounters and challenges as the observable outcome of implicit racialisation into colonial society. This article presents some discussion and implications for the discipline or profession of psychotherapy.

Whakarāpopotonga

Ko te whiu kōrero whakaiti, kaikiri ki tangata taketake ki iwi iti ahakoa ehara koirā tē whāinga e kīia ana kāre taua tangata e kite i tērā āhuatanga ā, inā tohua atu kāre tonu e kite e whakaae i tōna kaikiritanga. Ko ngā rerekētanga ā-iwi me ngā tikanga ahurea ka puta ake i ēnei tūmomo āhuatanga te huarahi whakawhānui ake i te kūare ngā mahi wehewehe, ā me te mau tonu o ngā whakarite whakaiti. He take whakatakaroa anō hoki ēnei i te kitenga

tikanga noho hāpori, ngā whakaaro mau ngā whakapono whakahōhonu i tōna me ō ētahi atu tuakiritanga. Mai i ngā whakaarohanga hāpori o te kaituhi tuatahi, ō ōna ake wheako whaiaro ā-tinana, ā-hinengaro (ko te kaituhi tuarua nei te kaihautū) ka āta whakaarohia ēnei momo whakaititanga, werohanga ko te hua o te kaikiritanga e tauna ana te porihanga taea te kitea e puta ake ana. Ko tā tēnei tuhinga he hora kaupapa whakawhitiwhitinga kōrero me ngā whakatūpatotanga mā te roopū whakaora hinengaro.

Introduction

Microaggressions are defined as "the identifiable outcomes of racism, whether conscious or unconscious, and are brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioural, or environmental indignities that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of colour" (Sue et al., 2007, p. 273). In the landmark paper "Racial microaggressions in everyday life: and their implications for clinical practice", Sue and colleagues (2007) popularised this term and its taxonomy as speaking to the spectrum of overt to covert forms of racism as experienced by minorities in contemporary society.

Research on microaggressions tends to focus specifically on covert, subtle, unconscious and "out of awareness" forms of racism, i.e., "micro-insults", which Sue et al. (2007) define as "communications that convey rudeness and insensitivity and demean a person's racial heritage or identity" (p. 274), and "microinvalidations" as "characterised by communications that exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality of a person of colour" (p. 274). The introduction of the term racial microaggression has resulted in a proliferation of research and academic literature over the ensuing years in a range of disciplines with some interest from psychoanalysis (Fleischer, 2017; Pacheco, 2021; Taffel, 2020). The significance of this concept and the body of work it has produced is that it has foregrounded the voice of minority experiences of this phenomenon, thereby creating a distinctive picture of the themes, dynamics and tensions characteristic to the microaggressive encounter.

A dilemma commonly identified in the dynamics of racial microaggressions is the clash of racial realities (Sue, 2008a). Sue (2003) states that subtle racism is "more problematic, damaging, and injurious to persons of colour than overt racist acts" (p. 48) precisely because they are insidious and often leave the recipient questioning themselves (Fleischer, 2017; Sue, 2008), while perpetrators tend not to view themselves as racist or capable of racist behaviour (Sue, 2008) and, if anything, perceive racial microaggressions to cause minimal harm (Sue, 2007).

Part of the nature of this phenomenon is that interracial conversations about race and racism can bring deep anxiety, defensiveness, fear, guilt, shame, thought paralysis and aggression for all parties, resulting in rupturing impasses (Dalal, 2012; Sue, 2005; Taffel, 2020). Because microaggressions are often invisible to perpetrators, who are likely to react defensively when challenged, recipients often feel put in a bind and pressured to stay silent (Sue, 2007). This relational dynamic ensures that the beliefs and attitudes expressed by

perpetrators in microaggressive moments remain largely unexamined and, therefore, unprocessed and unchanged.

In societies with a history of colonialism and oppression of indigenous and minority peoples, subsequent generations are prone to inherit the racial bias of their forebears (Sue, 2005). Greenwald and Krieger (2006) suggest that unconscious bias produces "behaviour that diverges from a person's conscious or endorsed beliefs or principles" (p. 951) and, thus, can sit alongside the subject's conscious beliefs in social justice (Burkard & Knox, 2004). Furthermore, individuals often "display implicit attitudes that appear more concordant with their general cultural milieu than with experiences of their individual upbringing" (Rudman, 2004, p. 80). Research confirms the widespread existence of unconscious racism in well-intentioned progressives (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2004); thus, the assessment of whether a racist act has occurred is most accurately identified by the marginalised (Jones, 1997; Keltner & Robinson, 1996).

The research on which this article is based has its origins in a racial microaggression experienced by the first author, which, eventually, led to her conducting a heuristic enquiry into this, supervised by the second author (McCann, 2022). From that research, the authors have published one article that focused on the psychodynamics of racial microaggressions, specifically with regard to the social unconscious (McCann & Tudor, 2022), and have written another that focuses on the heuristic process of (re-)discovering the racial enactments and unconscious associations the microaggression represented (McCann & Tudor, 2024). This article focuses on the implications of this research for the profession of psychotherapy, introducing this by positioning the first author (who is the first person "I", "me", "my" and "myself" in this article), and acknowledging the context of the research. This is followed by some comments on racism written with a psychodynamic lens.

Positioning

I (Malik) identify as a mixed heritage Aotearoa New Zealander. The first generation born in Aotearoa New Zealand on my Father's Irish side, and the second generation on my Mother's Niuean, Samoan, Chinese side, I am phenotypically brown. In multicultural societies such as Aotearoa New Zealand, prescribed assumptions of ethnicity are often rigid, and don't take into consideration the complexities, evolution and fusion of shifting self-identified or mixed ethnic affiliations (Bryce, 2020; Keddell, 2006). On a Venn diagram (Venn, 1880) I would place myself somewhere between Western and Pasifika cultures, overlapping in parts but not fully fitting essentialised identity constructs of either of my cultures. I feel most accurately positioned in-between these cultural worlds, in a third space.

It was through the focus on social and cultural issues in a predominantly psychodynamic psychotherapy training that I became curious to my own social and cultural conditioning and to recognise the impact that essentialised cultural constructs and normative racism in the form of microaggressions have had on my own internalised racialisation and of my position in the wider world. I began to recognise how I had been conditioned to accept normative assumptions and behaviours in the form of racial and cultural microaggressions, to override my emotional responses, and to leave them unspoken. Over time, I began to pay attention to my internal experience when I felt culturally wounded or unsafe and to

experience the complex mix of anger, hurt, confusion, paralysis and shame that would arise when microaggressions occurred.

I don't doubt that the psychotherapy education/training environment — or, at least, the one I experienced — genuinely aims to provide cultural safety, embrace non-Western worldviews, and practice the cultural competence it advocates. I recognise that my cohort and the teaching staff generally and consciously held egalitarian values, and I appreciate having had the space to explore racial and cultural dynamics as well as our historic and socio-cultural context during training. I began to trust that this environment would support challenging conversations about race and culture.

Over the course of training, I began at times to address microaggressions as I encountered them, seeking to decolonise my own mindset from the pattern of silent complicity and accompanying shame I had recognised as part of my own social conditioning. I also felt a responsibility to raise awareness of these issues with my peers, who might one day work with clients like myself in clinical practice.

However, and consistent with existing research on microaggressions, I found that confronting these issues, however delicately, often led to defensive responses which foreclosed further reflection or discussion. I experienced a troubling dissonance between the cultural competence and inclusivity to which training environments aspire, and the actual practice of these ideals in the moment when microaggressive tensions arise.

Sue (2007) highlights the Catch-22 of responding to microaggressions, the "damned if you do, and damned if you don't" dilemma. While challenging microaggressions does not often lead to reciprocal reflection or deeper understanding, not challenging them reinforces patterns of accommodation and silence in recipients and further reifies and normalises damaging beliefs and prejudicial behaviours, not only for those who are directly involved, but for all who witness such interactions.

Coming into the original research (for my Master's dissertation), I wanted to find words to voice these experiences and to understand my own complex internal process in response to microaggressions. I also wanted to understand how, in a discipline in which understanding unconscious dynamics were a key focus and conscious egalitarian beliefs prevailed, there was such strong resistance to considering other cultural or racial perspectives during microaggression interactions — and/or for reciprocal reflection on the unconscious relational dynamics that might be at play in these interactions.

Armed with these questions, I chose a heuristic self-search methodology for my Master's dissertation on which this article is based (McCann, 2022). Heuristic research is a qualitative phenomenological research methodology and method, which aims to discover meaning in significant human experience (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985). It is a process of exploration which emphasises the interiority of experience (Sela-Smith, 2002). Douglass and Moustakas (1985) describe it as "a passionate and discerning personal involvement in problem solving, an effort to know the essence of some aspect of life through internal pathways of the self" (p. 39). In the heuristic process the researcher's attention "is focused *inward* on feeling responses of the researcher to the outward situation" (Sela-Smith, 2002, p. 59), though Tudor (2023) argues that heuristic research can and should also face outward. In any case, heuristic research requires that the researcher experiences or has experienced the subject under enquiry in a vital way, and that new

understanding discovered through the heuristic process result in self-transformation (Moustakas, 1990).

Sela-Smith (2002) speculates that it is not the thinking-observing self, but rather the I-who-feels who is experiencing the feeling that provides access to the aspects of the tacit dimension of nonverbal thought. This ability to reconstruct tacit knowledge to fit new experiences as they are felt and given meaning is particularly pertinent with regard to this present topic. It also highlights the dilemma of the dynamics of microaggressions. In other words, it is not the fact that microaggressions occur — in fact, we suggest that they are an inevitable outcome of living in a colonial society — it is that the assumptions, stereotypes, and, ultimately, the beliefs they embody are not able to be reflected on; and, that this being so especially in relationship, we wonder how implicit social conditioning can be examined in order to reconstruct tacit knowledge in a way that aligns with one's conscious values. This wondering offers the first implication for psychotherapy, which is the focus of this article, that, as a reflective practice, psychotherapy needs to be able to examine and to help clients examine social constructions and conditioning precisely in order to make tacit knowledge explicit.

While the primary focus of this introduction is on the positionality of the first author, I (Keith), the second author, also have a position with regard to the first author (academic supervisor and, now, colleague), and to racial microaggressions — as a participant; sometimes, no doubt, as a perpetrator or bystander; hopefully, more often, as a facilitator of the processing of such transactions and of some repair of ruptures caused. As a practitioner (a health care provider), supervisor, educator/trainer, and academic, and especially as one holding certain privileges, I consider it important to name such positioning, a view I have explored in a number of publications and presentations Tudor (2021, 2023, 2024b).

Context

In Aotearoa New Zealand, the colonial foundations of our prevailing social order continue to resonate through our systems, social and political structures, and interpersonal engagements. Initially, relations between Māori and Pākehā were characterised by trade and diplomacy. However, these interactions deteriorated into unjust treatment of Māori as conflicts over resources and power escalated (Barnes & McCreanor, 2019). Despite the existence of foundational documents such as *He Whakaputanga* (The Declaration of Independence, 1835) and *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* (1840), which outlined the terms of agreement between Māori and the Crown, Māori endured ongoing prejudicial treatment, cultural oppression, and marginalisation, which escalated after the signing of Te Tiriti. The Crown's commitments to the protection of Māori interests and self-governance, as outlined in these agreements, were largely disregarded for over a century (Houkamau et al., 2017; Taonui, 2012).

Before the British arrived in Aotearoa in 1769, Europeans had a long history of conquest and colonisation (Waswo, 1996). By that time, racist and Eurocentric beliefs were deeply entrenched in the British Empire, which had developed complex justifications for colonisation, including the supposed duty to spread Christianity and civilization to what were deemed "heathen" and "savage" peoples (Waswo, 1996). This "racial worldview" facilitated an unequal distribution of political and economic power (Lovchik, 2018, p. 3).

The term "new racism" or "cultural racism", originally coined by Barker (1981), has been used to describe the shift from assumptions of superiority regarding perceived biological differences based on race, to prejudice and discrimination based on cultural differences between ethnic or racial groups (Barker, 1981; Haenga-Collins & Tudor, 2021; Hopkinson, 2020). Inherent in the complex history of colonial Aotearoa New Zealand is the deeply entrenched normalisation of negative stereotypes of firstly Māori and later Pasifika people and culture(s), and a privileging of the Eurocentric worldview. Racist beliefs were normalised in the general population (McCreanor, 1999), becoming what Fanon (1952) terms myths, which became self-perpetuating. In his historical overview of Māori/ Pākehā relations, McCreanor (1999) notes split constructs of "good Māori", i.e., "those who fit successfully or unobtrusively into Pākehā society" (p. 42) and "bad Māori", i.e., "those who protest, agitate or fail in Pākehā society" (p. 42). This discursive flexibility provided the means to label Māori selectively depending on their level of compliance to Western norms, exerting pressure on Māori to assimilate (McCreanor, 1999). The active dismantling of Māori culture, confiscation of land, negative profiling and second-class citizenship under the guise of civilisation and "progress": resulted in widespread displacement, economic disadvantage, psychological trauma, and transgenerational consequences for Māori in Aotearoa New Zealand's colonised society (Mutu, 2019; Shepherd & Woodard, 2012).

Pasifika peoples had varying experience of colonisation and European intervention in their own homelands, exposing them to assumptions of a binary racial, ethnic, and spiritual hierarchy which favoured the Western world view before their arrival in Aotearoa. In the 1950s and 1960s, access to immigration was opened up to Pacific people as demand for cheap labour increased, resulting in an influx of Pasifika to Aotearoa New Zealand (Phillips, 2005). However, in the 1970s, when economic conditions deteriorated, scapegoating and stigmatisation of Pacific peoples as a drain on the economy was touted by politicians and reinforced through the media (Loto et al., 2006). Populist opinion regarded Pacific Islanders as taking the jobs of New Zealanders and they were blamed for the deterioration of inner-city suburbs, and for problems of law and order (Spoonley, 2011). Between 1974 and 1980, many Pacific Islanders with short-term work visas were subjected to invasive "dawn raids" by the police, despite the fact that it was European migrants who were more frequently working on expired visas (Pearson, 2021). At this time, Pasifika were objectified as the scapegoat for the ills of society (Loto et al., 2006). Although Pacific people have been marginalised in Aotearoa for a much shorter period of time, the outcomes in wellbeing and socio-economic measures are staggeringly similar to those of Māori. Essentialist constructs regarding Pacific culture are formed in a similar vein to Māori as uncivilised and inferior in relation to a civilised and superior Western culture.

As a politically bi-cultural society with a colonial heritage and a multicultural population, over the past 50 years, this country experienced a gradual cultural and political shift, with increasing intolerance for racism (McCann, 2022). This shift has prompted significant efforts to address the impacts of racism on Māori and Pasifika, including the implementation of affirmative action and equity schemes to create a more diverse workforce (Curtis et al., 2015); the establishment of policies and practices to combat racism and discrimination (Houkamau et al., 2017); and initiatives in health and mental health (Harris et al., 2018;

Talamaivao et al., 2020). Current statistics continue to show stark disparities and poorer outcomes for Māori and Pasifika across various social wellbeing indicators including health, mental health, and education (Ministry of Treasury, 2019). Discrimination has been shown to be an ongoing contributor to inequitable treatment of minorities (Cormack et al., 2018). Despite well-intentioned efforts to address such inequities, they persist and, in some cases, have increased (Marriot & Sim, 2015; Walsh & Grey, 2019).

With the election of the more conservative right-wing coalition government in this country in 2023, there has been a troubling acceleration in the dismantling of policies and structures designed to address inequities for Māori and Pasifika communities, with a particular focus on initiatives that empower Māori and Pasifika to address the needs of their communities in ways that are culturally responsive to these communities. The current government's narratives and actions increasingly normalise racism while, at the same time, denying its existence, thereby contributing to a socio-political climate where such attitudes are again emboldened. This shift not only undermines hard-won progress but also reflects a broader trend toward the re-normalisation of racial discrimination and the erosion of efforts aimed at fostering equity and social justice.

Finding solutions to the outcomes of colonialism and imperial ideology without addressing the problematic foundational beliefs and frameworks of that ideology may help to explain why the "progress" towards racial and cultural equity appears to be unravelling so quickly.

A psychodynamic lens on racism, its origins and purpose

The development of theory and research on racial microaggressions provides both an observable foundation and language for their exploration. In my research, I used a psychodynamic lens to explore the deeper processes of unconscious racialisation (i.e., the internalisation of imperial ideology as it exists in the individual) as they are expressed in interactions when microaggressions are encountered and challenged. I was — and am — interested in unconscious racialisation as revealed through exploring what is discovered in the space between realities which become visible during racial microaggressive encounters.

van Dijk (1993) defines racism as:

> a complex system rooted in unequal power relations by 'race', ethnicity and culture that involves shared social cognition (prejudice), as well as social practices (discrimination), at both the macro level of social structures and the micro level of specific interaction and communicative events. (p. 47)

Racism is woven into the foundation of our society and is intimately tied to an asymmetry in power, control and privilege (Dalal, 2002). Despite being socially constructed, race remains a complex and enduring social dynamic with significant real-life impacts that must be acknowledged and addressed (DiAngelo, 2018). It has profound implications, influencing aspects such as survival rates at birth, educational attainment, income levels, and life expectancy (DiAngelo, 2018).

Psychoanalysis often uses Kleinian object relations theory (Klein, 1928, 1952) to explain

the intrapsychic mechanisms of racism (Altman, 2000; Balbus, 2004; Caflisch, 2020; Dalal, 2002; Goedert, 2020; Kovel, 1995; Rustin, 1991). Klein's conceptualisation of the paranoid schizoid position, the relationship between love and hate, guilt and rage, and the emphasis on shifting self-states captures some key aspects of racialised dynamics (Rasmussen, 2013; Stephens, 2020). As Hart (2017) puts it:

> The problem of racism and discrimination largely comes from a defensive process of disavowing one's unwanted parts, one's unwanted impulses and insecurities, locating them in the other person and then hating that other person in order to protect one's self. (p. 13)

Being of infantile or psychotic intensity, these projections are highly resistant to rationality or reason, while the return of projected content threatens annihilation and must be avoided at all costs (Rustin, 1991). This projection of the disavowed implies that the object of racism is strongly compelled to contain it through projective identification (Davids, 2006). On the receiving end of racism, introjection or internalisation is the mechanism by which what is projected comes to reside in the self. This introjection results in the splitting of the self in the face of the projective gaze of the other (Fanon, 1952; Stephens, 2020).

Many contemporary theorists argue that race is a social construct and that racism has a sociogenesis (Altman, 2000; Dalal, 2002). Altman traces modern conceptions of "race" to imperial ideologies formed during the Enlightenment era in 17th and 18th century Europe (Altman, 2000). This period was characterised by an intellectual shift away from the authority of the church, with reason increasingly privileged over faith, thus creating a dichotomy between the rational and the irrational (Altman, 2000). According to Fanon (1952), colonialism constructs its own discourse and perpetuates itself through creating a powerful divide between the coloniser and the colonised (Dalal, 2006). Foucault and Gordon (1980) assert that such social dichotomies create hierarchies that place one category above another in order to facilitate domination and control. The divide between the "civilized and rational" Europeans and the "uncivilized and irrational" natives served as the philosophical justification for European colonialism (Altman, 1995, p. 138). However, Layton (2020) contends that, within the resulting power asymmetry, subordinate group identities are not entirely determined by the power of dominant groups. Instead, minorities can forge their own identities, which may be healthier and more resilient than those conforming to "split cultural ideals of whiteness" (Layton, 2020, p. 193).

Having set the social, cultural, psychological, and personal context for the original enquiry and this article, the discussion that follows considers the unconscious aspects of imperial ideology inherent in cross-cultural relations as manifested in racial microaggressive dynamics. It critically reflects on the interpersonal nature of such dynamics in and of perpetrators as experienced by me as a recipient — and a challenger — of microaggressions. This discussion and the implications for the discipline and profession of psychotherapy is structured with regard to the socio-political environment; interpersonal racial microaggressive encounters; and the first author's intrapsychic process.

The socio-political environment

The current sociopolitical context in Aotearoa represents an ambivalent picture which reflects the dissonance between conscious, progressive efforts and unconscious resistance in cross-cultural dynamics, for instance, as I experienced them in the education/training environment. Just as standards of cultural competence are defined and expected to be upheld, social-political initiatives such anti-discrimination legislation and policies are in place to rectify disparities and increase equity. Yet, here again, there is a dissonance between the aspirations and actual outcomes of these initiatives. This incongruence suggests that conscious attempts to address inequities (often from a Western perspective) are like a band-aid, addressing the surface but not the root of the injury and trauma. While consciously striving for progress towards racial and cultural equity, tacit colonial dynamics work unconsciously to undermine these initiatives, further perpetuating racial and cultural oppression.

Brown (2001) describes processes of the social unconscious as manifesting in the form of common assumptions, disavowals, social defences (such as projection, denial and avoidance), and structural oppression (see also McCann & Tudor, 2022). According to Layton (2006), "normative unconscious processes" refer to "that aspect of the unconscious that pulls to repeat patterns that uphold the very social norms that cause psychic distress in the first place" (p. 241). Layton (2019) also suggests that, in order to recognise and disrupt normative unconscious processes which keep racial oppression in place, we need to embrace an ethic of disillusionment. Disillusionment, the undoing of disavowal is a painful process. It first entails a willingness to become conscious of historical trauma (Salberg & Grand, 2017):

> It is a process that renders visible the ways this trauma, alive in intersectional ghosts, haunts all of our institutions… including the theories and practices of psychoanalysis…. The alternative is disavowal, turning a blind eye to painful truths; this lies at the heart of perversion, repetition, and the inability to learn from experience. (Layton, 2019, p.110)

Steiner (2018) adds to this exploration by using the story of Oedipus to speak to the role guilt plays in the psychic retreat of idealised illusion in response to trauma. The trauma in this case may be the reality of racism, and the psychic retreat, an idealised illusion that we personally do not carry the racialised scars of colonisation in our own psyches. Disillusionment comes as an awakening via a new event which reveals the disavowed trauma, where its impact can no longer be denied (Steiner, 2018). Unintentional racial microaggressive encounters and challenges can be considered a potential awakening event as an entry point for both recipient and perpetrator to explore reciprocally their disavowed, implicit social conditioning, racialisation, and its impacts.

Steiner's (2018) thoughts on the working through of disillusionment can be applied to the process of working relationally with microaggressions. He asserts that working through first shame and then guilt is essential in reaching the depressive position, but offers the caveat that the guilt must be bearable and that responsibility must be taken without denying the guilt of others (Steiner, 2018). Without this, a return to denial, idealisation, and omnipotence are inevitable. Steiner also notes the importance of guilt being neither

minimised or exaggerated, but recognised as appropriate to the truth of what happened. When guilt is faced in this way, it often turns out to be less severe than one's unconscious phantasies imply, and persecution lessens as guilt gives rise to remorse and the wish to make reparation (Steiner, 2018).

Steiner gives some direction about how this can be worked through in therapy, which can be applied to working through microaggressive tensions in a therapeutic relationship:

> The analyst has not only to help the patient accept his guilt, but also help him to attribute guilt where it is appropriate, and this may require that the patient is free to hold the analyst responsible for his errors and enactments. True reparation does not then recreate ideal objects, but accepts real ones and strengthens the capacity to discriminate between them. (Steiner, 2018, p. 565)

This implies that, in order to explore the affect, tensions, realities and projections that come alive in a microaggressive encounter, the therapist must be prepared for this exploration to be reciprocal and be willing — and able — to be held responsible for their part in the dynamic, while holding space for the client to explore their own projections and assumptions. This may lead to reparation based on the acceptance of two fallible subjects rather than reinforcing idealised objects.

The drive towards cultural equity on a societal, institutional and interpersonal level over the last four decades may reflect elements of the manic reparation to which Klein (1940) refers. Perhaps in the rush to repair in order to avoid disavowed feelings of guilt and anxiety (Dalal, 2012), a true reckoning with the trauma of colonisation and the recognition and grieving of its imprint on the self has been sidestepped. As Caflisch (2020) puts it:

> Reparative guilt can often become focused more on self than other; inspiring ways of thinking and acting that...have less to do with repair than with protecting ourselves from a sense of persecution by others, and by our own thoughts and feelings. (p. 582)

Manic reparation involves a fantasy of omnipotence and erasure (Caflisch, 2020; Klein, 1935, 1940; Mitchell, 2000), a desire "to repair the object in such a way that guilt and loss are never experienced" (Segal, 1973, p. 95). Caflisch (2020) describes this as a narcissistic goal of restoring ourselves to "an idealised state of goodness" (p. 591). To get to the reparative guilt of the depressive position, we must begin to synthesise destructive impulses and feelings of both love and hate from both sides of this polarity towards each other as integrated objects (Balbus, 2004; Klein, 1940). Functioning from the depressive state of mind, Caflisch (2000) suggests that reparative guilt can instead serve as a compass, guiding us to take responsibility within the limitations of our "ordinariness" (p. 591).

> It will necessitate acknowledgement of our own aggression and destructiveness, without collapsing into a view of ourselves as irredeemably harmful or broken; and in respect and concern for those we have harmed, maintaining an awareness of their separateness, rather than identifying with their suffering in an appropriative or masochistic way. (Caflisch, 2020, p. 582)

In navigating the microaggressive encounter Caflisch cautions that, as well as acknowledging our own destructive impulses, we must resist collapsing into a sense of paranoid schizoid badness or appropriative over-identifying with the one we have harmed. The limits of what Caflisch refers to as our ordinariness in the context of microaggression dynamics may refer to accepting that, despite our best conscious intentions, we are not immune from internalising and perpetuating racism. In accepting this reality, reparative guilt felt from the depressive position may become the compass that leads us to be more curious and willing to self-reflect rather than solely project, in the desire for reparation.

Interpersonal racial microaggressive encounters

Morgan (2008) describes the well-established system of assumptions and patterns of uncritical thought of colonial Western culture with regard to racism which, she asserts, needs to be aggressively broken through to "challenge the squatting rights of our internal colonizer" in the unconscious (p.39). Both Hogget (1992) and Sue (2015) discuss how uncritical thought isn't passive; rather, it actively resists any views that contradict it. This resistance can manifest as wilful ignorance, where individuals refuse to acknowledge or understand the racial realities faced by others (Sue, 2015). The following discussion explores several interrelated themes about the dynamics of microaggressions, including racialised ones, the responses to them, and the psychological mechanisms at play in both.

The dynamic of "doer" and "done to" proposed by Benjamin (2004), whereby and wherein a mutual breakdown in recognition occurs, is useful in considering microaggressive encounters and challenges. In this interaction, each person feels victimised or "done to", rather than seeing themselves as active agents in a shared reality. This dynamic is evident in microaggressive encounters in which the recipient feels wronged, and the perpetrator feels attacked or misunderstood. Benjamin notes that this dynamic is marked by unresolved opposition due to each party's use of psychological splitting, the cognitive process of dividing experiences into either/or categories, which prevents nuanced understanding (2004). In the context of microaggressions, this might manifest as the perpetrator refusing to acknowledge the harm they've caused, while the recipient feels dismissed or invalidated.

Hoffman (2006) builds on this dynamic, suggesting it can result in a complementary impasse, a symmetry where both parties struggle with acknowledging the other's reality. This struggle for recognition and validation often leads to an ongoing contest for dominance and self-regard at the expense of the other (Shaw, 2018). Benjamin (2004) describes this dynamic as a power struggle where the options seem limited to submission or resistance. The doer and done to dynamic highlights how microaggressions can trap both parties in a conflict where neither can fully recognise the other's reality. Understanding this dynamic can help find ways to bridge the gap in racial realities that are revealed in these moments and to work towards more constructive and mutually empathic interactions:

> In the doer/done-to mode, being the one who is actively hurtful feels involuntary, a position of helplessness. In any true sense of the word, our sense of self as subject is eviscerated when we are with our "victim," who is also experienced as a victimizing

object. An important relational idea for resolving impasses is that the recovery of subjectivity requires the recognition of our own participation. (Benjamin, 2004, p. 11)

In Western society, the doer/done to dynamic occurs in the context of a societal power asymmetry in which the denial of responsibility by the perpetrator is a normative and often socially-sanctioned enactment. This means that the complementary impasse as defined by Hoffman (2006), in which each party struggles to acknowledge the other's reality, is weighted towards imposing the reality of the perpetrator (i.e., the person in the centred or dominant position) over that of the recipient (i.e., the person who holds the minority position). This adds further complexity to the doer/done-to dynamic. Yet, even within the context of this structural power imbalance, if both recipient and perpetrator can hold the other's reality alongside their own, it becomes more possible to explore the space between these realities (i.e., the other's racialisation and positioning as well as one's own).

When challenging microaggressions as a recipient, the sense of being perceived as a "victimizing object" (Benjamin, 2004, p. 11) resonates with my own experience. No matter how gently this is conveyed, it often appears to be experienced as an attack on the perpetrator, triggering various defences which are likely employed unconsciously but which minimise, dismiss or invalidate my reality.

The invalidation of a recipient's reality in response to challenging microaggressions can be understood as a form of gaslighting. This occurs when a person or group sows seeds of doubt in the recipient, causing them to question their own memory, perception, or judgment (Dorpat, 1996). Gaslighting employs tactics such as denial, misdirection, contradiction, and disinformation to destabilise the recipient and delegitimise their beliefs (Dorpat, 1996). In the context of unintentional racial microaggressions, gaslighting acts as a second micro-aggressive act which compounds the harm of the initial transgression (Rini, 2018; Williams, 2020). Despite the recipient's attempts to address the issue sensitively, they are often met with increased aggression or heightened emotional responses from the offender (Minikel-Lacoque, 2013). This may be considered as a normative unconscious process: a defence enacted to shield the perpetrator from reflecting on their own disavowed aggression and/or racism.

> While perpetrators can acknowledge that racism and even unconscious racism exist in greater society, there often appears to be an assumption that the self is somehow excluded from this equation. This is reflective of Matte-Blanco's (1988) asymmetrical and symmetrical bi-logic, the abstraction and manipulation of similarity and difference relating to the formation of group identities (cited by Dalal, 2002). This sophisticated form of splitting is a common element of modern racism. Much of the damaging racism in contemporary society is committed by individuals who acknowledge society's racism but deny their own (Caflisch, 2020; Dalal, 2002; Davids, 2011). As Altman (2000) asserts, If we said that racism is 'out there,' in racist society, and not 'in here,' in our very psyches, we would be splitting off and denying an important 'bad object' experience between us. (p. 597)

Following on from this form of splitting, which places racism "out there", microaggressions can be made from an implicit positioning of the speaker as a protector or rescuer. This

patronising approach positions the speaker as a protector and the minority as a Victim (Karpman, 1968) over elusive racist perpetrators who exist "out there". Despite coming from a place of protection, this form of over-identification places the speaker in a position of power who is speaking for a helpless "other". This can be understood as an interpersonal form of paternalising benevolence (Gilbert & Tiffin, 2008) whereby, under the conscious narrative of protection, the speaker unintentionally undermines the other. However, this only reinforces asymmetrical power relations as the speaker requires the other to be in a Victim state as a counterpoint to our Rescuer state (Karpman, 1968; Straker, 2018), which can all too easily switch to becoming the Persecutor. This approach can be differentiated from that of an ally in that it involves speaking for, as opposed to listening to the minority voice (Tudor, 2024).

Dominance and oppression are hierarchical positions that can be utilised in moments of conflict by the person in the dominant position to gain, restore and/or maintain supremacy — and the disavowal of that supremacy (DiAngelo, 2018). Challenging microaggressions is risky for recipients, as it can provoke anger, defensiveness, and denial from the perpetrators (DiAngelo, 2012; Sue et al., 2007). This risk is magnified when challenging individuals in positions of power who may retaliate or abuse their power to maintain their supremacy (DiAngelo, 2018). Williams (2020) notes there is often strong social pressure to endure these encounters without recourse. Morgan (2008) argues that those in positions of power must recognise their own ignorance about racial issues and suggests the person of minority race is likely to be far more knowing regarding the issues of race and racism. For learning to occur, the person in power (such as a therapist) must acknowledge their lack of understanding and resist projecting their unconscious incompetence onto others (Morgan, 2008). Relating this to microaggressive encounters and challenges, when the perpetrator is able to approach these moments from a place of acknowledging their not knowing, deeper understanding and reciprocal reflection of these issues for both the recipient and perpetrator become possible.

The first author's intrapsychic process

Through immersion into the societal and interpersonal aspects of the experience and phenomenon of racial microaggression, I was able to contextualise my internal experience in response to both specific and general microaggression dynamics in the context of this country, and to explore aspects of my own racialisation through identifying and differentiating the various racial and cultural self-states that come alive in me during microaggressive encounters.

In microaggressive encounters and challenges I can find myself in the position of both recipient and perpetrator at different times and in different contexts. In these interactions, I can experience an internal fragmentation (Dalal, 2002) or, in Fanon's (1952) words, a splitting of the self into dual self-states. Alongside the "I who feels" (Sela-Smith, 2002), as the recipient of a microaggressive encounter, I can experience the awakening of an internalised gaze of my Pasifika self through Pākehā eyes. Moreover, when challenged as a perpetrator of microaggressions, I can experience an awakening of an internal gaze of my Pākehā self, through Pasifika eyes.

The awareness of myself as a Brown Pasifika object as seen through the Pākehā gaze

reflects aspects of the concepts of double consciousness as described by Du Bois (1903); the colonial gaze, a term coined by Fanon (1952); and the internal oppressor as described by Alleyne (2007).

Du Bois (1903) describes this "peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others" (p. 2), which is felt intra-physically by the marginalised on whom the disavowed is projected. Fanon (1952) states that one of the mechanisms of colonial ideology is the day-to-day repetition of myths or stereotypic assumptions about the other achieved through social discourse. He posits that these myths become part of the belief system of those they denigrate and are also repeated and perpetuated by them (Fanon, 1952). The colonised person internalises the colonial gaze, causing an internal fragmentation, a splitting of the self (Dalal. 2002; Fanon, 1952). As Fanon (1952) puts it:

> In the colonial situation, the black person has to look in the white man's eyes to give himself substance, to find himself, but instead of himself he finds the white man's perception of himself, in effect he is torn asunder and becomes an object to himself. (Fanon, 1952, cited in Dalal, 2002, p. 97)

Alleyne's (2007) concept of "the Internal Oppressor" enhanced my understanding of this experience, where the struggle involves not only external racial oppression but also psychic conflicts with an internal adversary awakened by oppressive situations. Voicing my experience in the microaggressive moment represents a victory over this internal oppressor and an act of decolonising my psyche from its conditioning to stay silent in these moments.

At times I find myself in the position of the perpetrator of microaggressions, whereby, despite my own egalitarian beliefs and societal positioning as a mixed heritage minority woman, I have made an assumption based on essentialist constructs or stereotypes which has been hurtful to an other. In response, at times, I can find myself enacting defensive invalidating behaviour as I defend against recognition of the disavowed racism in myself. Recognising the existence of these "internal racist organisations", as Davids (2011, p. 37) puts it, in myself was by far the most difficult self-state to acknowledge and explore over the course of this research, but also the most important. As Dalal (1998) suggests:

> The power of ideology is such that the "whiteness" as organizing principle is unconscious. In other words the white ensign at the centre is invisible, and it is only the black ensign at the margins that is able to be seen. Thus those at the centre feel themselves to be innocent, unfairly assaulted from without. (p. 206)

The view of myself as a Pākehā object as seen through Pasifika eyes is akin to the term "white double consciousness" introduced by DiAngelo (2018), which describes the dual awareness that white people may experience regarding their racial identity. It reflects the internal conflict between acknowledging systemic racism and the discomfort or defensiveness that can arise when faced with the implications of one's own racial privilege.

This concept supports Sartre & MacCombie's (1964) observations of the internalisation of the colonised gaze on white subjectivities: "Today, these black men are looking at us, and

our gaze comes back to our own eyes" (p. 13). With this statement, Sartre is describing the interpersonal impact of people of colour on White subjectivities in the context of decolonisation (Stephens, 2020). Sartre describes how the "shock of being seen" as a White subject (1964) prompts an experience of White double-consciousness, a sudden and confronting self-awareness which holds up a mirror to what has been disavowed. This may foster persecutory guilt, which can feel unbearable and annihilating when, as Caflisch (2020) puts it, "reparation is felt to be impossible" (p. 578). We suggest that the White double consciousness self-state is not exclusive to those who are White, and can exist as a Western double consciousness self-state in any member of Western society who has been exposed and, therefore, conditioned into Western social norms and implicit colonial ideologies:

> When we stop relating to racism as something abstract and outside ourselves, and begin to reclaim some of our own projections, another possibly irreparable fact emerges: namely, that the history and present-day realities of racism are inscribed in our own minds, permeating and shaping our thoughts, feelings, perceptions, and relationships, at times outside our conscious awareness, or at the edges of this awareness. (Davids, 2011. p. 132)

The insights from this intrapsychic exploration suggest that racialisation is multi-dimensional, dynamic, intersubjective, and context-specific.

Relating this sense of double consciousness to Bromberg's (1996) multiplicity of selves, a microaggressive encounter and challenge may awaken experiences of double consciousness in both recipient and perpetrator, bringing awareness to dissociated self-states. These shifting, racialised self-states represent not only how we are seen by the other but also how a part of us might view ourselves as racialised objects in the moment of microaggressive encounter and challenge.

My disavowed self-states constitute the negative stereotypes of both Pasifika and Pākehā. Layton (2006) defines the regressive force of racial/cultural identity constructs as the normative unconscious processes pushing for the "right" kind of identity involving both idealisation and denigration. Internalised negative beliefs, which exist out of conscious awareness form representations that become introjected and organised into a set of object relationships and form "bad" cultural objects to whom we counter-identify (Davids, 2011). Both idealisation and denigration are at play in societally-constructed hierarchical identities, defining different aspects of self and other to which we identify and counter-identify, and which we project (Layton, 2006).

Layton (2009) suggests that narcissistic wounding is present on all sides of racialised enactments, and that it results from attempts to defend against, or align with, societally-constructed racial/cultural identity norms. Perhaps "I am racist" is disavowed and defended against by Pākehā in the same way that "I am inferior" is defended against in recipients. Similarly, a perpetrator may fear recognising or owning that they are racist as a defence against annihilation, just as a recipient defends against an internalised but disavowed belief that they are inferior.

The sense of narcissistic injury and responding defensiveness in the dynamic of racial microaggressions (which we consider occurs in both recipient and perpetrator), are a

response to the sense of double consciousness experienced in moments of conflicting interracial engagement by both parties. The view of ourselves we "see" through the other, might evoke a form of double consciousness which includes projections of the way a part of us sees disavowed aspects of ourselves, exposing or challenging the racialised traits with which we identify and counter-identify. In response to the sense that we have become the "bad" cultural object, we may project these judgements as coming from the other.

Considering double consciousness from the perspective of intersubjectivity, Stephens (2020) suggests that in racial engagements, "projective identifications and affective enactments around racial identities are seen as engaging simultaneously, next to, and alongside each other" (p. 216). Double consciousness is an essential component of the psychodynamics of intersubjectivity (Bromberg, 2008), a form of consciousness which, according to Stephens (2020), is formed through the "the experience of one's relationship to one's internal, disavowed 'not me's', and the stimulation by a real, experience-near, interaction with a racial other" (p. 219).

During the course of the original research, I had a profound conversation with a supervisor in which we discussed parts of my dissertation in which we had different perspectives, shaped by our own life experiences and positioning in society as a mixed-Pasifika/Palagi female and a Pākehā male. It was uncomfortable at times, as "not me" parts were reciprocally exposed and I experienced and perceived moments of shame and tension that came and went between us. The power of the exchange was that we were able to stay in relationship: to bear witness to ourselves and the other in a way that felt curious, sad at times, but with an unspoken acceptance of the reality of our social conditioning to different cultural identities and positions. I had a sense that alongside this "I–Thou" engagement (Buber, 1937), we were witnessing the interaction between our shifting racialised self-states as they were enacted in the moment.

Within the holding of these self-states occurring between and within us simultaneously, I believe we were able to create a cross-cultural intersubjective third which facilitated a deeper knowing of the "not me" of ourselves and the other. As Swartz (2020) suggests, if both parties can embrace the mutual sense of double consciousness that emerges, it becomes possible to create a space where both can "sit (together) with sadness and a sense of mutual containment and recognition" (p. 619). If we are able to tolerate this, we suggest that double consciousness — for both perpetrators and recipients in the microaggression dynamic — may provide a rich and holding space in which both parties might come to experience and explore their unconscious racialisation as it arises in the moment(s) together.

The discipline and profession of psychotherapy

While being an enigma in the sense of being difficult to understand, and notoriously difficult to navigate productively, the encounter and challenge of unintentional racial microaggressions represents a moment of opportunity, not only for fostering mutual recognition but also for exploring intersubjective racial and cultural conditioning as it manifests and is reflected through the cultural/racial self and other in microaggressive interactions.

The discipline of psychotherapy, with its appreciation for the dynamic and reciprocal

interplay of unconscious processes, is well-oriented to apply these foundational aspects of the profession to a consideration of racialisation and social unconscious processes as they arise in microaggression dynamics. However, in order to do so, we must look critically at the way these issues are currently approached, theorised, practiced, and resisted in educational/ training environments and, following from that, in clinical practice.

We suggest that, as a profession, we must start by acknowledging the contradictions that occur between the aspirations and the reality of cultural safety and inclusivity in the discipline and profession of psychotherapy and to accept that, although we genuinely want to do better, it is an ongoing journey and that we're not there yet. We must acknowledge and consider the influence of society and its colonial foundations on the self, and normalise the existence of unconscious aspects of racism and structural oppression as something to which we are all prone. Rather than trying to avoid microaggressions, and then feeling deep shame and defensiveness when we do, we may focus on developing curiosity, self-awareness, and critical consciousness, as well as the tolerance to be able to meet the disavowed aspects of ourselves that reveal themselves in these moments, and to embrace and learn from experiences of mutual double consciousness, through the creation of a cross-cultural intersubjective third.

As therapists, educators/trainers and supervisors, we must reckon with the illusion that racism exists outside ourselves, and accept that education regarding historical context, and social and cultural issues and holding egalitarian beliefs do not necessarily protect us from enacting racism. Importantly, we must also reckon with the illusion that we do not enact colonial dynamics or reinforce damaging narratives simply because we are not aware of how we do so. As Layton (2019) suggests, an ethic of disillusionment is required in order to recognise that, alongside genuine attempts at progress, normative unconscious processes are at play which work to undermine genuine equity and cultural parity. Letting go of these normative illusions and reframing unconscious racialisation and bias as potential and possibly inevitable, may open up the possibility of making use of microaggressive encounters for deeper reciprocal exploration.

Exploration of the unconscious aspects of our socialisation must begin in education/ training. The way microaggressive encounters are navigated in this context demonstrate how they will be navigated in the therapeutic relationship, so how they are approached is important. In order to facilitate exploration of unconscious racialisation with student/ trainee psychotherapists, it is vital that educators/trainers and supervisors continue to explore and reflect on the unconscious aspects of socialisation to Western society as manifested in themselves. This may require these colleagues to have facilitated relational engagement in the kind of challenging conversations regarding race and culture that are normally avoided precisely in order to foster double consciousness and to come to know their own shifting racialised self-states. This engagement will also be beneficial for building tolerance and capacity to hold, explore, and understand their own affective responses to microaggressive interactions before they are required to facilitate this process for others. Through these experiences educators/trainers and supervisors may be better equipped to guide students to navigate microaggressive encounters and other moments of cultural tension productively as they arise in the classroom and/or supervisory relationships.

We suggest that the burden of responsibility to transform microaggressive moments

into learning opportunities lies with the person in the position of power. In the context of a therapeutic relationship, this power asymmetry is weighted to the therapist; in the education/ training environment, it lies with the educators/trainers and supervisors. It is also important to note the power that comes with being centred in Western society, regardless of the position one holds and the intrapsychic privilege that comes with holding a seat on the "superior" side of superior/inferior binary constructs. Alongside and, perhaps, as a result of this power, it is likely that those who hold centred positions may be less aware of how they are personally implicated in and perpetuate damaging narratives and positioning as expressed through unintentional microaggressions, which is why it is so important that they are and remain open to learning. If those challenged as perpetrators are primed to the possibility of their not knowing with regard to normative assumptions, beliefs, disavowals and defences, and are aware of the realities of structural oppression in the wider social-political context, they may be more open to discovering what they do not yet know.

For minorities, challenging a microaggression of which the perpetrator is unaware can be extremely difficult and deeply exposing. The intrapsychic disadvantage that may come from holding a seat on the "inferior" side of racial binary constructs suggests that, for some, a battle against the internal oppressor has already taken place in order to initiate a challenge. These moments occur in the context of compounding experiences of previous cultural and racial invalidation and minimisation, and may come with an affective intensity that does not belong solely to the current microaggressive moment. This highlights the need for those in positions of power to be available as allies to recipients, to facilitate reflection and learning by perpetrators, and to be able to contain the volatile affect for all parties involved in microaggression interactions.

The ability to contain and tolerate the intense affect that can arise in microaggressive encounters (in both perpetrator and recipient) is crucial in being able to make use of these moments. Experiencing, exploring, and building tolerance for the discomfort which arises in microaggressive moments during education/training will provide student/trainee psychotherapists with the opportunity to explore their own unconscious racialisation, their disavowed, and their resistance (Sue, 2013). Facilitated and considered experiences of navigating microaggressions during education/training will provide a framework for students/trainees to navigate these moments with clients as they arise in their own therapeutic practice. Emphasis must be placed on the fact that it is not the microaggression itself, but the navigation of rupture and repair in these moments which determines the ability to maintain relationships (Caflisch, 2020; Lee et al., 2018; Sue, 2013; Taffel, 2020).

The therapeutic relationship has the potential to provide a reparative experience for both perpetrator and recipient. Developing awareness of one's dissociated and shifting racial and cultural self-states as a therapist and building tolerance for the uncomfortable affect that comes with these states can be highly beneficial in experiencing microaggressive dynamics as they arise with clients. It can mean being able to stay in relationship, and the ability to listen and reflect on others experience when they are different from one's own. Therapists may have the capacity to acknowledge and take responsibility for any harm that is caused by their own unintentional microaggressive behaviours, and to stay curious to the self-states and experiences of double consciousness that may arise in themselves and in the client. These encounters, navigated in relationship, can facilitate an exploration of

unconscious racialisation and exploration of the differing societal experiences and world views which racial positions entail.

Awareness of normative unconscious processes and the interplay of unconscious racialisation may facilitate the therapist's ability to acknowledge unintentional racial microaggressions non-defensively, if and when challenged in the clinical encounter. If the therapist can neither deny, enact manic reparation, or collapse into a view of themselves as bad or fragile, these moments may provide a pathway to deeper trust in the therapeutic relationship; to clients' deeper understanding of their racial and cultural selves; to healing validation of their lived experience; and an understanding and exploration of both clients' and therapists' racialisation as an outcome of holding differing racial and cultural positions in Western colonial or post-colonial society.

Dalal (2002) suggests a model to explore internalised aspects of racialisation which moves from the outside (acknowledging the social realities of racism and its inevitable impact on both therapist and client), in, by building sufficient trust for the client to explore the internalised aspects of this phenomenon. With the creation of an intersubjective cross-cultural third, both therapist and client are more likely to be able to explore the aspects of unconscious racialisation as experienced through the relationship and reflected by the gaze of the other in a way that is understood to be reciprocal. Understanding the regressive and damaging influence of these constructs while acknowledging those aspects which are protective and positive may help both therapist and client to grieve the realities of racism together and to take ownership of both the me and the not me of their racial and cultural identities.

This article has examined unintentional racial microaggressions and suggested that they hold a potential entry point into exploration of the deeper unconscious processes of racialisation for both perpetrator and recipient. In order to turn these moments into opportunities, we as educators/trainers, supervisors and therapists (who, by definition, hold positions of power) must be prepared to confront our own resistances and internal racist organisations (Davids, 2011); to explore and reflect on the implicit racist beliefs we may hold unconsciously as reflected back to us in microaggressive moments; and to develop the capacity to remain in relationship in the face of the intense affect that arises in these uncomfortable interactions. If we are able to embrace our ordinariness, these explorations may be a valuable therapeutic endeavour, but to do so, the spotlight must be held on the imprint of colonial ideology on the psyches of all involved.

References

Alleyne, A. (2007). The internal oppressor: The veiled companion of racial oppression. *New Directions in Psychotherapeutic Relational Psychoanalysis* ,1(3), 269–274. https://www.baatn.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/The-internal-oppressor-the-veiled-companion-of-external-racial-oppression-1.pdf

Altman, N. (1995). *The analyst in the inner city: Race, class, and culture through a psychoanalytic lens.* Analytic Press.

Altman, M. (2000). Black and White thinking: A psychoanalyst re-considers race. *Psychoanalytic*

Dialogues, 10(4), 589–605. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi epdf/10.1080/10481881009348569

Balbus, I. (2004). The psychodynamics of racial reparations. *Psychoanalysis, Culture & Society*, 9(2), 159–185. https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.pcs.2100016

Benjamin, J. (2004). Beyond doer and done to: An intersubjective view of thirdness. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 73, 5–46. https://onlinelibrary-wiley-com.ezproxy.auckland.ac.nz/doi/pdf/10.1002%2Fj.2167-4086.2004.tb00151.x

Barker, M. (1981). *The new racism: conservatives and the ideology of the tribe.* Junction Books.

Barnes, H. M. & McCreanor, T. (2019) Colonisation, hauora and whenua in Aotearoa. *Journal of the Royal Society of New Zealand*, 49(1), 19–33. https://doi.org/10.1080/03036758.2019.1668439

Bromberg, P. (1996). Standing in the spaces: The multiplicity of self and the psychoanalytic relationship. *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, 32(4), 509–535. https://doi.org/10.1080/00107530.1996.10746334

Bromberg, P. M. (2008). Shrinking the Tsunami: Affect regulation, dissociation, and the Shadow of the flood. *Contemporary Psychoanalysis* 44, 329–350. https://www-tandfonline-com.ezproxy.auckland.ac.nz/doi/abs/10.1080/00107530.2008.10745961

Brown, D. (2001). A contribution to the understanding of the social unconscious. *Group-Analysis*, 34(1), 29–38. https://doi.org/10.1177/05333160122077695

Bryce, E. (2020). *What's the difference between race and ethnicity?* Live Science Contributor. http://livescience.com/difference-between-race-ethnicity.html

Buber, M. (1937). *I and Thou.* (R. G. Smith (Trans.). Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark.

Burkard, A. W. & Knox, S. (2004). Effect of therapist color-blindness on empathy and attributions in cross-cultural counseling. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 51(4), 387–397. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0167.51.4.387

Caflisch, J. (2020). When reparation is felt to be impossible: Persecutory guilt and breakdowns in thinking and dialogue about race. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 30(5), 578–594. https://doi.org/10.1080/10481885.2020.1797402

Clark, R., Anderson, N. B., Clark, V. R., & Williams, D. R. (1999). Racism as a stressor for African Americans: A biopsychosocial model. *The American Psychologist*, 54(10), 805–816. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.54.10.805

Cormack, D., Stanley, J. & Harris, R. (2018). Multiple forms of discrimination and relationships with health and wellbeing: findings from national cross-sectional surveys in Aotearoa/New Zealand. *International Journal of Equity Health* 17, 26 https://doi.org/10.1186/s12939-018-0735-y

Curtis, E., Wikaire, E., & Jiang, Y. (2015). A tertiary approach to improving equity in health: Quantitative analysis of the Māori and Pacific admission scheme (MAPAS) process, 2008–2012. *International Journal of Equity in Health*, 14 (1), 7–7. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12939-015-0133-7

Dalal, F. (1998). *Taking the group seriously: Towards a post-Foulkesian group analytic theory.* London: Jessica Kingsley.

Dalal, F. & Ferguson, H. (2002). *Race, colour and the processes of racialization: New perspectives from group analysis, psychoanalysis and sociology.* Routledge.

Dalal, F. (2006), Racism: Processes of detachment, dehumanisation and hatred. *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 75, 131–161. https://doi-org.ezproxy.auckland.ac.nz/10.1002/j.2167-4086.2006.tb00035.x

Dalal, F. (2012). *Thought paralysis: The virtues of discrimination: Exploring psycho- social studies.* Karnac.

Davids, M. F. (2006) Internal racism, anxiety and the world outside: Islamophobia post- 9/11. *Organizational and Social Dynamics, 6,* 63-85. https://pep-web.org/search/document/OPUS.006.0063A?page=P0063

Davids, M. F. (2011). *Internal racism: A psychoanalytic approach to race and difference.* Palgrave Macmillan.

DiAngelo, R. (2012). *What does it mean to be white? Developing white racial literacy.* Peter Lang.

DiAngelo, R. (2018). *White fragility. Why it's so hard for white people to talk about racism.* Beacon Press.

Dorpat, T. L. (1996). *Gaslighting, the double whammy, interrogation and other methods of covert control in psychotherapy and analysis.* J. Aronson.

Douglass, B. G., & Moustakas, C. (1985). Heuristic inquiry: The internal search to know. *Journal of humanistic psychology, 25*(3), 39-55. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022167885253004

Dovidio, J. F., & Gaertner, S. L. (2004). Aversive racism. In M. P. Zanna (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (pp. 1-52). Elsevier Academic Press. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601(04)36001-6

Du Bois, W. E. B. (1903/1994). *The souls of black folk.* Dover Publications, Inc.

Fanon, F. (1952). *Black skin, white masks.* Grove Press.

Fleischer, L.M. (2017) Ego psychological contributions to understanding microaggressions in clinical social work practice, *Psychoanalytic Social Work, 24*(1), 1-17. https://doi.org/10.1080/15228878.2016.1226905

Foucault, M., & Gordon, C. (1980). *Power/knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings, 1972–1977.* Pantheon Books.

Gilbert, H. & Tiffin, S. (2008). *Burden or benefit? Imperial benevolence and its legacies.* Indiana University Press.

Goedert, M. (2020) Racism in the countertransference. *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly, 89*(4), 715-740. https://doi.org/10.1080/00332828.2020.1805270

Greenwald, A. G., & Krieger, L. H. (2006). Implicit bias: Scientific foundations. *California Law Review, 94*(4), 945-967. https://doi.org/10.2307/20439056

Haenga-Collins, M. (Ngāti Porou, Te Aitanga a Māhaki, Ngāi Tahu) & Tudor, K. (Tangata Tiriti). (2021). Racism in New Zealand. *Journal of Critical Psychology, Counselling and Psychotherapy, 21*(4), 40-58.

Harris, R. B., Stanley, J., & Cormack, D. M. (2018). Racism and health in New Zealand: Prevalence over time and associations between recent experience of racism and health and wellbeing measures using national survey data. *PloS One, 13*(5). https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0196476

Hart, A. (2017). From multicultural competence to radical openness: A psychoanalytic engagement of otherness. *The American Psychoanalyst, 51*(1), 12-27 https://apsa.org/wp-content/uploads/apsaa-publications/vol51no1-TOC/html/vol51no1_09.xhtml

Hoffman, I. Z. (2006). Forging Difference out of Similarity: the Multiplicity of Corrective Experience. *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly, 75*(3), 715-751. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2167-4086.2006.tb00055.x

Hoggett, P. (1992). *Partisans in an uncertain world: The psychoanalysis of engagement.* Free Association Books.

Hopkinson, J. (2020). Viewed through history, racism is a lot more than black and white. *News.*

https://www.hud.ac.uk/news/2020/june/george-floyd-murder-and-the-history-of-racism/

Houkamau, C. A., Stronge, S., & Sibley, C. G,. (2017). The prevalence and impact of racism toward indigenous Māori in New Zealand. *International Perspectives in Psychology: Research, Practice, Consultation*, 6(2), 61–80. https://doi.org/10.1037/ipp0000070Jones, J. M. (1997). *Prejudice and racism* (2nd ed.). McGraw-Hill.

Karpman, S. (1968). Fairy tales and script drama analysis. *Transactional Analysis Bulletin*, 1(9), 51–56.

Keddell, E. (2006). Pavlova and pineapple pie: Selected identity influences on Samoan-Pakeha people in Aotearoa/New Zealand. *Kōtuitui*, 1(1), 45–63. https://doi.org/10.1080/117708 3X.2006.9522410

Keltner, D., & Robinson, R. J. (1996). Extremism, power, and the imagined basis of social conflict. *Current Directions in Psychological Science: A Journal of the American Psychological Society*, 5(4), 101–105. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8721.ep11452765

Klein, M. (1988). Early stages of the Oedipus conflict. In M. Klein *Love, guilt and reparation and other works 1921-1945.* p. 306–343 Virago Press. (Original work published 1928)

Klein, M. (1935). A Contribution to the psychogenesis of manic-depressive states. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis 16*, 145–174. https://ezproxy.auckland.ac.nz/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/contribution-psychogenesis-manic-depressive/docview/1298174759/se-2

Klein, M. (1940) Mourning and its relation to manic-depressive states. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis 21*, 125–153. https://ezproxy.auckland.ac.nz/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/mourning-relation-manic-depressive-states/docview/1298173141/se-2

Klein M (1960). Notes on some schizoid mechanisms. In M. Klein, (Eds Heimann, P. Isaacs & S. Riviere, J.), *Developments in psycho-analysis.*(pp. 292–320). Hogarth. (Original work published 1952)

Kovel, J. (2000) Reflections on white racism. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues 10*, 579–587 https://doi.org/10.1080/10481881009348568

Layton, L. (2006). Racial identities, racial enactments, and normative unconscious processes. *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 75(1), 237–269. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2167-4086.2006.tb00039.x

Layton, L. (2009) Who's responsible? Our mutual implication in each other's suffering. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues 19*, 105–120 https://doi.org/10.1080/10481880902779695

Layton, L. (2019). Transgenerational hauntings: Toward a social psychoanalysis and an ethic of dis-illusionment. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 29(2), 105–121. https://doi.org/10.1080/10481885.2019.1587992

Layton, L. (2020). *Toward a social psychoanalysis: Culture, character, and normative unconscious processes.* (M. Leavy-Sperounis, Ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003023098

Lee, E. A., Tsang, K.T., Bogo., M. Johnstone, M & Herschman, J. (2018). Enactments of racial microaggression in everyday therapeutic encounters, *Smith College Studies in Social Work*, 88(3), 211–236 https://doi.org/10.1080/00377317.2018.1476646

Loto, R., Hodgetts, D., Nikora, L. W., Chamberlain, K., Karapu, R., & Barnett, A. (2006). Pasifika in the news: The portrayal of pacific peoples in the New Zealand press. *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology*, 16(2), 100–118. https://doi.org/10.1002/casp.848

Lovchik, J. (2018). *Racism : Reality built on a myth*, Wipf and Stock Publishers.

Marriot, L,.& Sim, D. (2015). Indicators of inequality for Māori and Pacific people. *Journal of new Zealand Studies*, 20, 24–50. https://ojs.victoria.ac.nz/jnzs/article/view/3876/3464

Matte-Blanco, I. (1988). *Thinking, feeling, and being: Clinical reflections on the fundamental antinomy of human beings and world*. Routledge.

McCann, M. (2022). *Invisible wounds: A heuristic exploration of unintentional racial microaggressions and their relationship to unconscious racialisation* [Master's dissertation, Auckland University of Technology]. Tuwhera Open Access Theses & Dissertations. https://hdl.handle.net/10292/15067

McCann, M., & Tudor, K. (2022). Unintentional racial microaggressions and the social unconscious. *International Journal of Applied Psychoanalytic Studies*, *19*(2), 202–216. https://doi-org.ezproxy.auckland.ac.nz/10.1002/aps.1753

McCann, M., & Tudor, K. (2024). *(Re)discovering racial microaggressions through heuristic enquiry*. Manuscript under review.

McCreanor, T. (1997). When racism stepped ashore: Antecedents of Anti-Māori discourse in Aotearoa. *New Zealand Journal of Psychology*.*26*, 36–44. https://www.psychology.org.nz/journal-archive/NZJP-Vol261-1997-4-McCreanor.pdf

Minikel-Lacocque, J. (2013). Racism, college, and the power of words: Racial microaggressions reconsidered. *American Educational Research Journal*, *50*, 432–465. https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831212468048

Ministry of Treasury. (2019). *The Wellbeing budget*. Ministry of Treasury. https://www.treasury.govt.nz/publications/wellbeing-budget/wellbeing-budget-2019-html

Mitchell, S. A. (2000). Juggling paradoxes: Commentary on the work of Jessica Benjamin. *Studies in Gender and Sexuality 1*, 251–269. https://doi.org/10.1080/15240650109349158

Morgan, H. (2008). Issues of 'race' in psychoanalytic psychotherapy: Whose problem is it anyway?. *British Journal of Psychotherapy*, *24*, 34–49. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1752-0118.2007.00062.x

Moustakas, C. E. (1990). *Heuristic research: Design, methodology, and applications*. Sage Publications.

Mutu M. (2019). *The Treaty claims settlement process in New Zealand and its impact on Māori. Land*, *8*(10), 152. https://doi.org/10.3390/land8100152

Pacheco N. E. (2021). Examining racism in psychoanalytic training: Perspectives from a psychiatry resident. *Psychodynamic Psychiatry*, *49*(4), 481–486. https://doi.org/10.1521/pdps.2021.49.4.481

Pearson, D. (n.d.) Race, ethnicity and inequality. *Te Ara — the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*. https://teara.govt.nz/

Phillips, J. (2005). Class — New groupings. *Te Ara — the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*. https://teara.govt.nz/en/class

Rasmussen, B. (2013). Making sense of Walt: A psychoanalytic understanding of racism. *Psychoanalytic Social Work 20*(1), 50–61 https://doi.org/10.1080/15228878.2012.749185

Rini, R. (2018). How to take offense: Responding to microaggression. *Journal of the American Philosophical Association, 4*(3), 332–351. https://doi.org/10.1017/apa.2018.23

Rudman, L. A. (2004). Sources of implicit attitudes. *Current directions in psychological science*, *13*(2), 79–82. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0963-7214.2004.00279.x

Rustin, M. (1991). *The good society and the inner world: psychoanalysis, politics, and culture*.Verso.

Salberg, J. & Grand, S. (2017). *Wounds of history; repair and resilience in the trans-generational transmission of trauma*. Routledge.

Sartre, J.-P., & MacCombie, J. (1964). Black Orpheus. *The Massachusetts Review*, *6*(1), 13–52.

http://www.jstor.org/stable/25087216

Segal, H. (1973). *Introduction to the work of Melanie Klein*. Basic Books.

Sela-Smith, S. (2002). Heuristic research: A review and critique of Moustakas's method. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology, 42*(3), 53-88. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022167802423004

Shaw, D. (2018). (Review of the book *Terror, love and brainwashing: Attachment in cults and totalitarian systems*, by A. Stein). Routledge, 2017. *Attachment: New Directions in Relational Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy 12*, 206-210. https://pep-web.org/browse/AJRPP/volumes/12?preview=AJRPP.012.0206A

Shepherd, T., & Woodard, W. (2012). "Not home" is sometimes where we start. *Ata: Journal of Psychotherapy Aotearoa New Zealand, 16*(1), 51-71. https://doi.org/10.9791/ajpanz.2012.07

Spoonley, P. (n.d.). Ethnic and religious intolerance — Intolerance towards Pacific migrants. *Te Ara — the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*.
   http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/ethnic-and-religious-intolerance/page-4

Steiner, J. (2018). The trauma and disillusionment of Oedipus. *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis. 99*, 1-14. https://doi.org/10.1080/00207578.2018.1452570.

Stephens, M. (2020). Getting next to ourselves: The interpersonal dimensions of double-consciousness, *Contemporary Psychoanalysis, 56,*(2-3), 201-225. https://doi.org/10.1080/00107530.2020.1776095

Straker, G. (2018). Reaping the whirlwind: Reply to Garth Stevens, Gillian Eagle, Margarita Kahn, and Donna Orange. *Psychology Dialogues, 28*(3), 292-301. https://doi.org/10.1080/10481885.2018.1459388

Sue, D. (2003). *Overcoming our racism. A journey to liberation*. Wiley.

Sue, D. W. (2005). Racism and the conspiracy of silence: Presidential address. *The Counseling Psychologist, 33*(1), 100-114. https://doi.org/10.1177/0011000004270686

Sue, D. Capodilupo, C. Torino, G. Bucceri, J. Holder, A. Nadal, K. et al. (2007). Racial microaggressions in everyday life: Implications for clinical practice. *American Psychologist, 62*, 271-286. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.62.4.271

Sue, D. W., Capodilupo, C. M., & Holder, A. M. B. (2008). Racial microaggressions in the life experience of Black Americans. *Professional Psychology, Research and Practice, 39*, 329-336. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0735-7028.39.3.329

Sue, D. W. (2013). Race talk: The psychology of racial dialogues. *American Psychologist, 68*(8), 663-672. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0033681

Sue, D. W. (2015). Therapeutic harm and cultural oppression. *The Counseling Psychologist, 43*(3), 359-369. https://doi.org/10.1177/0011000014565713

Swartz, S. (2020). Giving in, Giving up, and being blown to smithereens: A discussion of "'When reparation is felt to be impossible': Persecutory guilt and breakdowns in thinking and dialogue about race". *Psychoanalytic Dialogues 30*(5), 613-620. https://doi.org/10.1080/10481885.2020.1797399

Taffel, R (2020) The myth of micro-aggression, *Contemporary Psychoanalysis, 56*(2-3), 375-393, https://doi.org: 10.1080/00107530.2020.1780816

Talamaivao, N., Harris, R., Cormack, D., Paine, S. J., & King, P. (2020). Racism and health in Aotearoa New Zealand: A systematic review of quantitative studies. *New Zealand Medical Journal. 133*(1521), 55-68. PMID: 32994637.

Taonui, R. (2012). Te ture — Māori and legislation — Restoring Māori customary law. *Te Ara*

— the *Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/te-ture-maori-and-legislation/page-5

Tudor, K. (2021). He tangata Tiriti tatou. In *20/20 vision, 2020* (pp. 1–9). [E-book] Tuwhera Open Access Books. https://ojs.aut.ac.nz/tuwhera-open-monographs/catalog/book/6

Tudor, K. (2022, 17th November). *Touch, pause, crouch, engage: My position as a non-Māori, Palagi researcher in Aotearoa New Zealand* [Contribution]. Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia Safety through diversity [online] Festival of ideas, 14th–18th November, Day 4: Research and the future of the profession.

Tudor, K. (2023). Critical heuristics: From 'I who feels' to 'We who care — and act'. In K. Tudor & J. Wyatt, (Eds.), *Qualitative research approaches for psychotherapy: Reflexivity, methodology, and criticality* (pp. 115–132). Routledge.

Tudor, K. (2024a, 10th February). *Friends and enemies: A transactional analysis* [Keynote speech]. Ukraine Society of Transactional Analysis (Online) Conference "USTA is welcoming friends: The unbreakable power of life", Kiev, Ukraine.

Tudor, K. (2024b). S is for settler: A psychosocial perspective on belonging and unbelonging in Aotearoa New Zealand. In B. Lythberg & C. Woods (Eds.), *Ally strategies — What is the work of settlers towards decolonisation?* (pp. 144–162). Routledge.

van Dijk, T. (1993). *Elite discourse and racism*. Sage Publications.

Venn, J. (1880). On the diagrammatic and mechanical representation of propositions and reasonings. *The London, Edinburgh, and Dublin Philosophical Magazine and Journal of Science*, 9, 1–18.

Walsh, M., & Grey, C. (2019). The contribution of avoidable mortality to the life expectancy gap in Māori and Pacific populations in New Zealand — A decomposition analysis. *New Zealand Medical Journal* 132(1492), 46–60. https://auckland.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/64UAUCK_INST/3mftp2/cdi_proquest_miscellaneous_2200777157

Waswo, R. (1996). The formation of natural law to justify colonialism, 1539–1689. *New Literary History*, 27(4), 743–759. http://www.jstor.org/stable/20057389

Williams, M. T. (2020). Psychology cannot afford to ignore the many harms caused by microaggressions. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 15(1), 38–43. https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691619893362

Malik McCann is a registered psychotherapist, wife and mother of three wonderful young adults. She is of mixed heritage Niuean, Samoan, Chinese and Irish descent, born and raised in Aotearoa New Zealand. She is a member of Tangata Moana Psychotherapy Collective and through her own journey of reclamation and decolonisation has come to be deeply interested in exploring the unconscious aspects of normative intergenerational socialisation into the colonial environment and how this is enacted in therapeutic relationships and training spaces. She is currently undertaking a PhD, exploring the underlying and often unspoken cross-cultural tensions that exist in training environments from the stand point of different cultural perspectives and relationships to power, through talanoa.

Keith Tudor is Professor of Psychotherapy at Auckland University of Technology, where he is also a co-lead of Moana Nui — Research in the Psychological Therapies. He has published on the subject of psychotherapy, culture, race, the social world, and politics, and, alongide being the Editor and Co-Editor of *Ata* (2012–2017), was the Editor of *Psychotherapy and Politics International* (2012–2022) https://ojs.aut.ac.nz/psychotherapy-politics-international/, another open-access journal published by Tuwhera Open Access. He also promotes and supports students and graduates to publish articles from their master's and doctoral research.