

New Sociology: Journal of Critical Praxis

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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

The theme for this issue is foregrounded in Kevin Quashie's (2012) concept of "the quiet", a term he coined to capture the limitations of blackness as a public discourse that privileges resistant expressiveness as a singular framework. Grounded in African American culture, Quashie asks, "is it possible to engage in public discourse of black identity beyond the imperative of resistance?" (p. 27) With this, Quashie offers us another way of reading Black life beyond defiance and unlivability that welcomes the whimsy of the interior—describing a space of personal inwardness, aliveness, that allows for the unexpected to be possible.

In conversation with Quashie, our fourth issue, *Narratives of Aliveness: Surrendering to Our Inner Worlds*, aims to explore the inner life worlds of racialized and Indigenous folk who in comparable, but varying ways, are denied capacities beyond dominant ideologies that usher in a subjectivity that is not quite human. The issue asks us to move beyond the reading of racialized and Indigenous subjectivities as sites of resistance, and instead, as sites of variability, offering a different kind of expressiveness—one that embraces the everyday subject, whose interiors are wildly their own. This is where the quiet emerges, as an inescapable state of being, and a reminder that we have other capacities too—we have ambitions, we desire, we pray, we hunger, we dream, we cry, we fear; quiet and interiority holds all that in. Quiet is inevitable; it is essential to humanity.

As we sit here writing this introduction, we are reminded that, as racialized individuals, we may share similar experiences, yet our everyday realities share many differences. Quiet compels us to explore the beauty of the quality of being

human—the messiness, complicated aspects of our interior that have greater human texture and specificity; that rubs against solitary cultural frameworks that make easy conclusions possible. We are appreciative of the authors for writing such poignant pieces that remind us that our intersectional identities contain a vastness of understanding and knowing from within that is beyond sight or reach of the public's limited imagination. These pieces unveil the range of terror and gorgeousness of vulnerability that mark the realities of being alive.

The pieces in this issue are meant to highlight and celebrate the everyday, mundane lifeworlds of racialized and Indigenous persons and we hope that they will resonate with you as they have with us. It was an absolute privilege to read these pieces and to witness the powerful expressions of interiority and selfhood that they bring forth. We hope that readers will engage deeply with these works and be encouraged to move beyond logics solely determined by hegemonic narratives to restore a broader, fuller picture of the humanity of racialized and Indigenous peoples exploring the complex intersections of inner self, identities, and lived experiences. This is our first time writing an editor's introduction. We thank the authors for their works, which have welcomed us with the chance to share a glimpse of their wondrous and wayward lives. Thank you for trusting us with this.

The issue contains three themes: *Inner Worlding*, *Affectual Worlding*, and *Mundane Worlding*. The first theme, *Inner Worlding*, begins with our featured piece, "Care Full Living," written by Kanishka Sikri, who reads Audre Lorde's "An Open Letter to Mary Daly" in conjunction with the practices of violability that take place in the absence of care full living. Sikri reflects on three realms of care: reading, citation, and living. The author suggests that in search of

knowledge, we should mine for concepts, ideas, visions, desires, and questions that engage in a tender, mutual exchange of knowledge(s) that our ancestors, communities, networks, and mentors have developed from the margins. This piece invites readers to consider the role of care in our academic and personal lives, and to imagine ways in which care full living can be integrated into our scholarly and creative worlds to embody writing and reading more fully as praxis.

Next in the issue is “Care Living: The Poetics of Jamaican Women’s Aliveness”, a poetic essay by Shanique Mothersill. In a delicate blend of poetry and theory, Mothersill, uses Quashie’s (2021) exploration of “Black aliveness” to articulate the liveliness, vitality, and multiplicity of a Caribbean feminist praxis and ethic. In forging their analysis through poetry, the author presents and formulates care ethics and aliveness among Jamaican women as dual sites of joy and intelligence; resistance and creativity; belonging and becoming; inner and outer worlding.

The third piece under *Inner Worlding* is written by Ali Aslan. Entitled “Quiet Disquietude”, Aslan uses fiction as a site of scholarly exploration and quiet contemplation to form a rich and messy narrative of inner life. The author’s narrative exploration of the quiet allows for the space to reflect on doubts, predispositions, failings, and misgivings. Aslan imagines a different beginning, where skin colour, one’s birth country, or one’s name, are not entirely political, so that space for the existence of a joyous or liberatory metaphysics becomes possible.

The final piece in this section is a spoken word poem, “The Reticent Revolution of Sexual Daydreams”, by Annalissa Crisostomo. Using brown’s (2019) concept of *Pleasure Activism*, Crisostomo creatively shows how sexual fantasies can provide spaces for social change and radical healing. This piece pushes the reader to approach sexual fantasies, not as taboo or that which cannot be publicly spoken, but as sites of liberation where parts of our “(sexual) selves from within” no longer need to be repressed, as they are always already celebrated.

The second section of this issue is *Affectual Worlding*, where stories of grief and vulnerability are explored in tandem. Grieving is not something

that is linear, and it looks, feels, sounds, and tastes differently for everyone. Not only do the pieces of this section uniquely capture this, but they are deeply moving, and provide a glimpse into the complex and multifaceted nature of emotions and the affectual worlds of the supposed racial Other. Through their powerful writing, these authors create a space for readers to reflect on their own affectual worlds and to feel seen and validated in their emotions. The first piece, “a line that connects the void”, is by tram nghiem, and it is a collection of stills from nghiem’s film of the same name, accompanied with the film’s script. Composed in a non-linear storytelling format with fragmented images, this piece explores interior spaces and domestic life within the city colonially known as Toronto. Both the piece and the film follow the artist’s family and the precarity experienced around the time of death of the artist’s sister through the poetics of grief. Through the use of images, nghiem captures the void that grief and the processes of grieving entails by moving back and forth between various time periods.

The second piece, “Dreaming of Fragments of Home Left Behind”, by Mehwish Mughal, is a captivating narration that takes the reader on a journey of self-discovery. The author shares their personal experience of living abroad for almost two decades and the various triggers that evoke memories of Pakistan and their mother. It is the author’s dream of reuniting with their mother, which serves as a powerful symbol of their longing to return to their roots. This piece is a deeply personal account of the joys and struggles of living between two worlds, and the enduring power of love and family ties to sustain us through even the most difficult of times.

The third piece in this theme is titled “For my friends who speak to me in quiet”, by Nishhza Thiruselvam. In this eloquently written poem, Thiruselvam describes the loss of their Uncle Kumar, and how visits home to Malaysia without his familiar face greeting them at the airport will never be the same. It is a reminder that, among the quiet, there is also a remembering – that subtle expressions and moments are a symbol of generations passed and those yet to come; that in living in grief, we bring our memories of that which has been lost into the present and allow the

spirits of our kin, our people, to continue to nurture the world around us.

The final piece in this section is “Alive in Love”, a collection of diary entries by Vidya. This collection offers a rich exploration of heartbreak, grief, positionality, ontology, and love in various contexts, questioning who gets to experience love, grieve heartbreak, and what kinds of heartbreak and love are ‘valid’. The three journal entries included in the piece offer a perspective on the nature of love and its various and complex forms beyond western categorical understandings of the romantic, platonic, or affectionate.

The final theme in this issue is *Mundane Worlding*, which combines pieces that focus on the quiet amid everyday life. First is a piece by Namitha Rathinappillai, “Mumbai Mangoes”, a short but powerful poem that reminds the reader how, even the simple and mundane act of eating a mango, can return us to our ancestors; how, outside colonial constructs of space and time, eating a mango invites the space and place of care, joy, and pleasure back into our everyday lives.

The second piece of the final theme is entitled “I Have Nothing to Say...”, a poem by Mautushi Dutta that delves into the struggles that an Indian woman faces in her pursuit of education and self-fulfillment, reflecting on the speaker's struggle to pursue their academic dreams while also facing various obstacles and abuses from family members and loved ones. Dutta's use of vivid language allows the reader to feel the raw emotions and injustices that the speaker goes through, making the poem a rich and thought-provoking read.

The final piece is “the fridge”, a poem by Sehar Moughal. This artful and embodied poem offers an introspective look into the exhaustion and emotional turmoil experienced by the author, a mother, graduate student, mental health worker, and university teacher. Through the seemingly mundane task of cleaning the fridge, the author finds a moment of relief and reflection. The imagery of the neglected fridge, housing a dead fly and various stains, becomes a metaphor for the chaos and instability of the author's world. Through a vivid and almost visceral depiction of a neglected refrigerator, Moughal explores the chaos within and around them, as well as the state of instability that is sometimes necessary for the quiet of stability to follow.

The issue concludes with a book review of Ali Meghji's *The Racialized Social System*, written by Vindra V. Moonilal. Moonilal explains how Meghji challenges the idea that theorists examining Critical Race Theory have (CRT) “overlooked the racialized social system approach”, while concertedly encouraging the emergence and enactment of racism both theoretically and empirically within the field.

We would like to thank the authors, creatives, and dreamers who contributed to our fourth issue, *Narratives of Aliveness: Surrendering to Our Inner Worlds*. A special thank you also goes to Alireza Gorgani Dorcheh, of our editorial board, for creating the cover photo for the issue, along with the Instagram graphics for the issue's social media release. Most of all, we want to thank Beatrice Anane-Bediakoh for so beautifully and masterfully conceptualizing the magnificent theme of the issue. We also want to thank Beatrice for diligently editing this introduction and for re/writing much of the front end with art and precision.

A celebration of the quiet is a reminder that our capacities as racialized and Indigenous persons are far beyond public discourses; that we cannot be subsumed nor fully understood through registers that deny our innerlives/worlds. In this issue, we celebrate the unrefined, mundane, fragmented expressions of our inner worlds. Finally, we would like to thank Jade Crimson Rose Da Costa for designing all the proofs for this issue. We would also like to thank Jade for continually supporting us as we learn about what being an editor entails, for always being kind, patient, supportive, accommodating and welcoming of any questions or concerns we might have. As we continue to grow, we are reminded that this growth would not be possible without them. This introduction is an example of that. Thank you.

Ritika Tanotra & Faezeh Esmaeili, NS Chief-Deputy-Editors, with Beatrice Anane-Bediakoh, NS Chief-Deputy-Editor, and Jade Crimson Rose Da Costa, NS Founder and Editor-In-Chief.

Reference

Quashie, K.E. (2012). *The sovereignty of quiet: Beyond resistance in black culture*. Rutgers University Press.