

**Hadley, S. (2013). *Experiencing Race as a Music Therapist: Personal Narratives*. Gilsum: Barcelona Publishers. 228 pages. Print ISBN: 978-937440-39-8. E ISBN: 978-1- 937440-40-4. Cost: \$AUD28.00**

With this book, Hadley hopes to bring new voices and new perspectives to the contested concept of 'race.' She deploys the term 'race,' which she defines as 'a social, political and cultural concept,' ('Introduction,' p.30) purposefully to challenge her informants and her readers to discuss their assumptions and biases. Hadley interviewed seventeen music therapists about race and their experiences. These interviews were recorded and then transcribed into personal narratives that make up the core of the book, along with introductory and concluding chapters detailing Hadley's reflections, summaries and analysis of the themes that emerged. She stresses the importance of cultural self-awareness and the critical examination of white privilege and Eurocentrism in music therapy practice.

“... in music therapy there has been a tendency to examine issues of racial diversity as something pertaining to clients of color and not as something that is inclusive of white music therapists' identities... Eurocentrism permeates our theories, our musical practices, our research practices, our educational practices, and so on.” ('Introduction' p.51)

The therapists were asked to discuss their specific experiences of their race when they were studying music therapy and how they experienced their race in their professional lives. These therapists were selected from a range of ethno-cultural backgrounds, views and the fact that these individuals were known for their cross-cultural music therapy (academic and professional) practice. They include Sarah Hoskyns (New Zealand), Meagan Hunt (Australia), Carolyn Kenny (US), Anja Tait (Australia), Seung-A Kim (US), and Adeline Dos Santos (South Africa). Although therapists of Japanese and Korean heritage practicing in the US were included, this book did not have any informants from Asian countries such as China or Singapore.

I was intrigued by the honesty and openness of these personal narratives written in the first person. Like travelling in a foreign country, reading other people's perspectives and thoughts can effectively sharpen our awareness of our own culture and the 'cultural baggage' that we carry with us. It is refreshing to see race being discussed so openly. There are intimate details of childhood (a therapist of Jewish/ Muslim heritage growing up in Iran and studying and working in America); of courtship (interracial relationship between a white Australian therapist and her Japanese partner); of racial discrimination (an African-American therapist having to second-guess whether a job she was granted or a house she was to rent were suddenly unavailable when she showed up in person); and of alienation (a Korean therapist feeling not fitting into either of the major 'white' or 'black' racial groups with whom she lived and worked in the US). These examples, along with many others in the book, show deep levels of self-exploration. I felt as though I were guiltily reading confidential therapy notes, in which vulnerability emerged from time to time; but these are the stories of respected individuals sharing their journeys of self-awareness, and in so doing, helping music therapists at large to become more cultural competent.

The author has succeeded in inspiring readers to examine their own experiences with racial issues, to learn how to sit in our discomfort in order to learn about others and ourselves, to deepen our understandings and our relationships across racial lines. This is an enjoyable and enlightening read, a valuable contribution to the field.

**Reviewer:**

**Vannie Ip-Winfield, BMus(Thrpy), MMus(MusThrpy), GDipMtlHlthSc, RMT**

**Melbourne, Australia**

**Email: vipwinfield@gmail.com**