Personal and Professional Explorations of Power and Privilege

Lynn Parker, Ph.D., University of Denver

This narrative begins with several vignettes from the author's life—the "crazy lady," the sorority, dirt scraping—that launched a lifelong journey of learning about and being interested in issues of justice. These experiences are then placed in the context of the author's research on social-justice-based social work practice. Three interconnecting components are suggested for bringing issues of power and privilege into therapeutic conversation with clients: social education, a collective treatment format, and accountability measures.

"And it is a grave responsibility projected from within each of us, not to settle for the convenient, the shoddy, the conventionally expected, nor the merely safe."

- Audre Lorde (1984, p. 90)

As a White, heterosexual, professional class individual, I enjoy numerous privileges, many of which have been pointed out by other scholars and activists.As a heterosexual, I can be affectionate in public with my partner; I can marry; and I do not fear being judged, ostracized, or marginalized because of my sexual orientation or identity . As a White person, I can look at and consider buying a house in any neighborhood as long as I can afford it. I can mostly use bathrooms anywhere I go, as I can feign that I am staying in hotels I cannot afford. Less obvious perhaps to others but also to me, I don't have to be bothered with examining my privileges. I don't have to examine how I came to my sexual orientation or gender identity and I don't have to be aware of what it is like for others to do so. I don't have to know or be interested in the experience of poverty or homelessness or what it is like to feel unsafe or excluded because of one's gender expression, race, or undocumented status.

I grew up in the smallish, mostly working-class town of Englewood, Colorado, an older suburb of Denver . My neighborhood was relatively stable. Most residents moved in shortly after World War II, and the adults stayed well into old age. We children were fortunate to be able to play outside under the eyes of caring neighbors without worry for our safety. The fathers had jobs, most mothers stayed home, and there were several single adults who lived alone (a retired school teacher a divorced skating teacher , and a piano teacher). We, and a good share of our neighbors, belonged to the local Methodist church, a short walk away . On this platform of support and relative homogeneity I slowly began my education for critical consciousness.

I begin this reflection on privilege and oppression by sharing several vignettes that launched me on the path toward learning about and being interested in issues of justice. These experiences afforded beginning glimpses of power and privilege: Who has it, who does not, and under what conditions. Then I place these experiences in the context of my research on social-justice-based social work practice.

Beginning Glimpses of Power and Privilege: The Crazy Lady

I was in third grade. One afternoon, as my brother and I were doing yard work with our father in front of our house, my father stopped to chat with a woman passing by and then invited her in for dinner I recognized her She was the strange woman my classmates made fun of. We walked by her house each day on our way to school. She lived alone in an old run-down house that had boxes and stuff everywhere—house, yard, porch—all were very messy and in disrepair. She was likely a "hoarder." The students thought she was

weird, even "crazy"—a witch. I was shocked, embarrassed. Why would my father invite *her* into our house? I was uncomfortable, afraid that some of my classmates might see her come into our house. Yet, I was even at the time also aware of my father's generosity and the stance in his gesture. I felt proud of him. In this case, we had more power and privilege than she did. Though we were a working-class White family, she clearly struggled, both socially and economically. Perhaps she also struggled with mental health issues. Nonetheless, she was a charming and interesting dinner guest. At that age, I only had the perceptions of my peers—she's crazy, weird—someone we make fun of, and then the perception of my father (and subsequently mother): She is someone we reach out to, ask in for dinner, find interesting and worthy of conversation. I both wanted to be like my father, and wanted to be accepted by my peers, though the decision was not hard, as I idolized my father. The lesson of that evening stuck with me. We stand by those whom others ostracize, and we invite them in, even when—especially when—that will likely marginalize us as well. Often the choice is pretty clear, but not easy. Social membership is often predicated upon gossiping about, making fun of others, starting in childhood, but then also in adulthood. Vivian Paley's (1992) seminal study and book, *You Can't Say You Can't Play,* made the point well: With each growing year and starting as young as kindergarten, we learn and practice exclusion. It becomes a social norm. Her study investigated, in the kindergarten where she taught, whether it was possible to instigate another more inclusive norm, indicated in the title of her book. Interestingly, like many of her students, I felt some relief in having an alternative to exclusion. Inclusion felt better ultimately

The Dirt Scraper

Also, at about the same time, there was a group of popular girls at school who played house together each recess. I "got" to play with them by agreeing to be the dirt scraper I (and other wannabes in the popular girls' group) scraped the dirt out to make outlines of rooms for the house in which the group of girls played. We dirt scrapers did not get to play house; we got to help make the house. It was not quite as pathetic as it sounds, but the reader gets the point—pretty pathetic—a memory that has remained. We clearly did not have elementary school teachers like Ms. Paley.

The dirt scraping experience was one of many that provided me glimpses into early hierarchical positioning: In this case, who was in and who was on the margin. Interestingly, at the time, I think I felt as if the dirt scraper role was just part of membership criteria. I did not really question it. The privileged group gets to exact favors and work from those who are not as privileged in exchange for meager rewards. Although it is always easier to see the issues in the experience of being marginalized, I realize how important it is to recognize the fallout of my own privileged positions: who might be "scraping dirt" to get to play with me.

The Beauty Shop

My father's beauty shop was a respite; not only for women in search of good hair but weary souls with no money for hair care who stopped by just to chat and have a cup of hot chocolate or instant soup (always available) before they made their way from town back up the hill to their homes. My father was a hairdresser and a social and civic activist. My mother was a stay-at-home mom/housewife until our high school years, when she went back to work as a secretary. Neither of my parents had opportunity for education beyond high school. Both valued education, were voracious readers, and encouraged and supported my brother's and my higher education endeavors. Dad was involved in local politics and business organizations, and Mom was involved in service organizations. We learned early on that, "If you are not part of the solution, you are part of the problem." I wrote high school papers on the subject with coaching from my dad.

I became aware of homophobic prejudice early on with all the hairdresser jokes people freely told in my presence. My father had to look like a "man's man" (non-smiling, conservatively dressed; not at all like my fun and eccentric dad) to be elected in local politics,

because he was socially located in what was considered by others to be an effeminate profession. And of course, especially in the 1960s and 1970s, but arguably, now as well, many men do not want to be like girls/women or a non-gender conforming "queer."

What were the costs or benefits of his adherence to socially acceptable clothing, stern looks in photographs, and so on in order to get elected and be considered worthy socially? We need to ask ourselves what it means when we play the game in order to achieve a goal; even a potentially laudable goal of wanting to have more power (get elected) so that we can make positive changes. What gets sacrificed? Of course, playing along serves to reinforce and maintain current systems of oppression and privilege. Is it worth the cost? How do we evaluate that? I was proud of my father's politics: "Serve those who have the least." I witnessed him at city council meetings (shockingly often the only person awake) vote against mainstream politics, be responsive to people' s needs, and refuse to take bribes. But then he was my Dad, and I was young. What was the cost? I am aware that he had heart attacks early and died at 68. And serious men in suits remain more likely to be elected, though there are not many hairdressers in the pool. On the other hand, he is remembered well by community people with whom I grew up, and I think he made a difference.

The Feminist

My early feminist training occurred by way of a women's weekend in the 1970s with Anne Schaef. It was there I gained beginning awareness of the experiential differences between being male and female. One event stands out. We went as a group to a hot mineral spring, where I had my first experience of being nude with a group of women. I was in my late 20s and had never experienced that before. Once we were settled in the pools, Anne encouraged us to look at each other and to share what we liked and didn't like about our bodies. I was aware that though our bodies were very different from each other and from idealized images, they were right for each of us. It was a profound experience for me to experience this and to realize that none of us felt good about our bodies. As we shared, I became aware that most of us held an ideal image from the media (at that time, mostly from *Playboy Magazine*) of what a perfect female body should look like. Of course, none of us did compare. But, as we shared, we were aware of the profound effect the media images had on our own body perceptions. No matter what the reality was, all of us found our bodies lacking. We all were systematically taught to hate ourselves, to compete for male attention, and not to share meaningfully with other women.

When I came home, I was eager to share my newfound awareness with my brother and male partner. But they really didnt understand what was so profound for me. What was the big deal? They each had experienced nudity with other men, in gyms, swimming pools, and bathrooms, and assumed I had similar experiences with women. As we talked, we became aware that the experience of those places was very different for men and women. In my locker rooms, there were curtains everywhere that protected my privacy while changing clothes, showering, or going to the bathroom; very different than the men's side, which provided no privacy for those activities. My first nude experience with a group of women occurred in my late 20s, whereas nudity with other men was not at all a new , much less an enlightening, experience for them. Although privacy can offer protection, it also offers a message: that the body is something to hide, to be ashamed of.

The Sorority

I joined a sorority my first year of college, at a state school. It was my first time living away from home (only an hour and a half), and I was homesick. I thought a sorority would be like a family. Maybe it was for some, but for me, it signaled a crisis. It was elitist: we "rushed" for bubbly, pretty, popular, White girls, who also did well academically. There were "sneaks" with fraternities. The whole thing was awful for me. Unfortunately , I thought something was wrong with me because I wasn't excited about the activities or things that my sorority sisters were excited about,

and I became quite depressed my sophomore year when I lived in the sorority house. Fortunately, upon my return to school the following year, I had a change in perspective. Whereas I had assumed something must be wrong with me, I was able to realize that my values were very different from those that underlie most sororities. I grew empowered as I identified what was incongruent (elitism, latent racism, a "sisterhood" that did not exist in actuality). Quitting was unusual in those days, and it was liberating. I wrote a sociology paper on the experience, which allowed me to see it.

Marriage

As the female partner in marriage to a man, I was chagrined to notice that I was demoted from being a "taxpayer" on IRS forms to "spouse." This was (is) especially egregious as I do not co-mingle finances with my partner. When I became married, my accountant of many years suddenly addressed all communications to my husband, who was new to him. I received notes of congratulation from some of my university colleagues, who addressed the notes to me with my name changed to my husband' s last name. They apparently assumed I forsook my last name for my husband' s. This unquestioned assumption was made by professors in a social work program dominated by women, where my scholarship was (is) feminist practice. So ingrained are traditional gender roles that many faculty did not even consider I might keep my own name.

This unquestioned adherence to gender roles has not much changed. Today, most young heterosexual women still assume their husband's last name. I work to be vigilant in my therapy sessions to help couples examine these decisions. For example, I ask heterosexual couples how they decided which name to use if someone changed their name. For most, the decision was not conscious, it was automatic. And for most, the notion that a male would consider taking his female partner's name seems outlandish.Who carries the privilege and power to name others and to be named for? What are other implications of this practice?

Racism/Ableism

When I am with my brilliant, darker-skinned Asian Indian colleague, who must use crutches or a wheelchair because of childhood polio, I notice that waiters and service people often only address me, expecting me to order for her or to make her decisions. They address *me* instead of her when assessing her needs and wants. I also am acutely aware of how many places do not accommodate people with disabilities, even when they profess that they do. I have many times painfully witnessed the dehumanizing and embarrassing situations that she is unable to negotiate without great difficulty, because of the lack of accessibility as well as the discomfort and unconsciousness of many of the people with whom we come into contact. She, of course, has to negotiate this discrimination daily. I do not. But I can try to maintain this awareness when I am not with her. I can be aware of what it means to patronize restaurants, stores, towns, and cities that are not accessible. I can be sensitive and proactive to help meet the needs of persons who are not physically or psychologically able to navigate as easily as I am. Lack of accessibility keeps people out, literally. They cannot have a voice if they cannot get in the door. I am acutely aware when I am in Cuernavaca, Mexico, teaching my class on *Global Relations and Poverty in Mexico* that it would be impossible for my friend to accompany me. She would love the course and the people with whom we dialogue. But the city structure, filled with large steps and uneven cobbled streets, is completely inhospitable to her

Similarly, when I was in the company of my elderly mother before her death, age discrimination (ageism) coupled with ableism (she needed a walker) rendered her to others incapable of making her own decisions, small and big. In her case too, people asked me about her preferences rather than her .

We listen more closely , ask questions, defer to people whom we regard as having more power and privilege than we do. We more easily dismiss, make fun of, or disregard those whom we regard as having less power and privilege than we do.

I observe the process of depersonalization and lack of respect afforded my university colleagues as they age. Even in social work, which purportedly embodies humanistic and social justice values, ageism is alive and sadly flourishing. As my colleagues age, rather than being respected for their wisdom, work, and contribution, they are too often treated disrespectfully. Others wait for them to retire, eager for them to be discarded.

Soul Selling

Higher education is a conservatizing process. Faculty members adhere to and, in a sense, sell their souls to an extremely hierarchical system. Gaining power in the system further binds them to its rules. Faculty lore suggests that "junior," untenured faculty should not speak their truth—not rock the boat—until they have tenure. So they comply remaining mostly silent for 6 to 7 years, reinforcing the status quo, churning out publications, trying to obtain grants, and yes, teaching in an adequate manner Once faculty members gain tenure, they have often swallowed their voice for so many years that they appear to be beyond regaining it. And at that point, what is their lived message? Sell yourself, your principles, for the privilege of tenure? The practice of silence for 6 or more years does not produce or nurture radicals. Rather, it produces people that argue for and guard the system that silenced and now privileges them. People protect their power and privilege. Those who have it do not want to let it go, and they strive to keep their group small, coveted. I must say here that my experience of academia is not unlike my experience of the sorority: the elitism and the search, tenure, and promotion processes are unsettlingly much like sorority rush.

I am now a tenured professor in graduate social work program. I came to academia late in my career , having been a clinical social worker/family therapist for many years before I pursued the Ph.D. I would like to think I am an exception to soul selling; but of course, I am not. I find myself sometimes being critical, mean spirited like those around me. Though I try to employ practices to stay in touch with what is important to me—integrity, kindness, and respect—I am too often not successful. I feel a responsibility to use my tenured position to speak up on issues of justice, but am often the lone voice. As such, I fear I am easily rendered a bit wacky , not a serious "critical thinking" academic. Though we, as a school, profess social justice as an overarching mission, we too often fail to practice it with each other or our students. Our collective critical consciousness development is "well meaning" but incomplete (Zetzer, 2005).

As readers can see, I grew up fairly privileged and I remain so. I am of the professional class, able-bodied, heterosexual, White, female identified, and born into a body in which I am mostly comfortable. I was bestowed with working-class values that have served me well: Work hard, save your money, be responsible for self, help those who are less fortunate. It is only my gender and perhaps now my age (63) that personally provide glimpses into what it means to be marginalized.

For the last 15 years, I have studied exemplary approaches to social-justice-based practice through interviews with notable feminist family therapists (Parker, 1997, 1998a, 1998b), then conducted two intensive case studies of exemplary social-justice-based family services programs (Parker, 2003, 2008; see appendix for participants). My journey early on consistently pointed me in this direction: How do we help the least of us, and how do we notice when we are not? Moreover, how do we recognize and address issues of power and privilege in practice?

Addressing Power and Privilege in Practice

"If you have come here to help me, you are wasting your time, but if you've come here because your liberation is bound up with mine, let us work together."

- Lila Watson (n.d.), Australian Aboriginal activist

Who has access to power and privilege, who does not, in what situations, and how , remain the unspoken and unaddressed issues in social life: in relationships, families, and organizations. Why? Most of us collude to deny this unequal access to power and privilege

because raising the issues is upsetting: It unearths unspoken rules of hierarchy . And once raised, we need to address the issues, which is not easy. The issues are not often the subjects of polite conversation. Accordingly, the manner in which these issues are broached in sessions with clients becomes a central challenge for professional helpers committed to relational and social justice. They cannot wait for clients to recognize and then raise power or privilege as an issue. Rather , they must lead in that effort.

So, how do professional helpers concerned about issues of relational and social justice manage to bring power issues into conversation, when it is the last thing anyone wants to address? First, they must commit to their own ongoing consciousness raising. Therapists must read, take workshops, and immerse themselves in education for critical consciousness, so that they are able to recognize issues of power and privilege in their own lives, and then in the ordinary issues clients bring to therapy . Good resources for therapists include Aldarondo(2007), Almeida, Dolan-Del Vecchio, and Parker (2008), Carter and Peters (1996), Dolan-DelVecchio (2008), Finn and Jacobson (2003), Keeling (2007), McIntosh (1990), McGoldrick and Hardy (2008), Mirkin, Suyemoto, and Okun (2005), Papp (2001), Silverstein and Goodrich (2003), Waldegrave, Tamasese, Tuhaka, and Campbell (2003), and Zimmerman (2001).

Once therapists have done their homework, how to raise the issues with clients becomes the challenge. How do they raise the issues and not lose their clients, particularly those who hold more power and privilege and are therefore not so eager to give them up? How do they make what has been invisible to clients, more visible; what has been comfortable, less comfortable; and what has been absent, present? The dynamics of White privilege, diversity, social class, and power are rarely mentioned by clients.As such, therapists must garner the courage and develop tools for bringing these issues into clients' awareness for examination and dialogue. I suggest three interconnecting components to help facilitate this process in therapy: social education, a collective treatment format, and accountability measures.

Social Education

The process of gaining critical consciousness via social education helps clients to begin linking their interpersonal dynamics with sociopolitical realities. This can be accomplished in a matter-of-fact manner through the questions therapists ask as well as the use of tools, such as power and control wheels (Almeida et al., 2008), which help to assess for domestic and other misuses of power and privilege. They also educate clients about what constitutes power and control issues. Therapists can ask, along with other information gathering, questions that begin to unearth the power structure in clients' relationships. For example, they may ask, how are major decisions made in the family? Who tends to have the final voice? Are partners employed? How much money does each make? Are both partners economically viable if their relationship should dissolve? Can each partner support themselves and their children should they need to do so? When there are disparities in earning, partners can be asked about what impact the disparities have on their decision-making. Is there someone who more often accommodates or whose preferences more often are given priority? How are house and people care responsibilities distributed? Are there outside or government agencies involved with family members? The specifics of these and other arrangements help clients to begin to decipher the power and privilege disparities that likely underlie some of the issues for which they are seeking therapy . Again, depending on the client context, the questions can be asked in the same way that therapists ask about extended family , work, ages, and other such issues.Access to money, division of household labor , and decision-making ability are often distributed according to the amount of power people hold.As these issues are raised into clients' awareness and connected to the issues for which they have come to therapy, clients are then empowered to examine any changes they want to make.

In-session exercises, education, and homework assignments provide other ways to

elicit issues of power and privilege and to raise people's consciousness regarding the prevalence of such issues in their relationships. For example, as a homework assignment, family members may be asked to list what each actually does regarding household/childcare chores in a given day . Inequities become apparent in the concrete lists that are generated (Ault-Riche, 1994) and can then be reconsidered to create more balance and equity.

In a sense, the way sessions are organized should provide a kind of power-issues literacy training for clients. As in the previous examples, this can occur by way of specific, concrete questions that raise power inequities. It can also occur by way of genogram work, where therapists examine with partners the transmission of issues of power and privilege down the generations. Hardy and Laszloffy's (1995) cultural genogram and Halevy's (1998) "genogram with an attitude" provide good examples of this process.

Collective Healing

Systemic therapists know well how drastically the therapeutic landscape changes when more people are included in the process. In order to see ourselves clearly and make substantial changes, other people's views and perspectives are essential. This is all the more true when dissecting power and privilege.We are especially unlikely to sustain meaningful changes in our own access to power and privilege without dialogue and feedback. Personal and social liberation occurs most readily when groups of people dialogue together in an effort to make sense of mechanisms of power, privilege, oppression, and dehumanization (Freire, 2003; Martin-Baro, 1994), and as they identify how they can assume a role in social change (Gutierrez & Lewis, 1999). The liberation theology groups in Mexico and SouthAmerica, and women and men's consciousness raising groups in the 1960s and 1970s are good examples of this process. There indeed is power in people coming together to become more conscious. Consequently, social-justice-based approaches are better served in collective healing environments, particularly those that share a critical consciousness, where people both support each other and at the same time can be more easily held accountable for sustaining changes. This is difficult to accomplish in individual, couples, or even family counseling. The use of group forms of healing helps to dismantle notions of what is "private" in personal and family life from that which could benefit from being more public. Groups also serve to level power hierarchies between diverse client populations, and to provide a legitimate forum for the perspectives of traditionally subjugated groups (Figuera-McDonough, Netting, & Nichols-Casebolt, 2001). Within multifamily, or community milieus, clients more easily examine gender, class, and other systemic patterns that contribute to their dilemmas. Social education is more often included in the process.

The walls of the therapy room may be further extended by inviting other pertinent persons into the therapeutic process as cultural consultants when appropriate, including community and religious leaders. For example, a liberal-minded priest may be consulted or brought into a session to offer a more inclusive perspective to parents worried about their gay son's access to heaven.The priest in this case is able to offer the parents a perspective in their own religious language that helps them to lovingly accept their child's sexual orientation.

Accountability/Witnessing

Most therapies have no built-in source for holding clients (particularly those who hold more power and privilege, e.g., men) accountable for maintaining attitudinal and behavior changes over time. Sustaining changes in power dynamics is especially difficult. Trustable and conscious feedback systems become even more important. Group approaches, as discussed, are one way to achieve such accountability . Other group members, for example, can remember for each other a partner's past misdeeds or commitments made regarding behavioral changes.

Team approaches also help initiate this accountability. They reduce dependency on any one therapist and provide necessary

feedback to therapists as well as clients. Therapists, of course, also need to be open to being monitored for their lapses in critical consciousness—for sexism, racism, and homophobia, as well as other unconscious misuses of their own power and privilege. Therapies that are structured to allow for sessions to be observed by other team members from behind a one-way mirror (or via a television monitor) provide accountability for therapists (and therefore clients) in session and empower everyone' s consciousness raising. The goal of therapeutic accountability is to take pressure off of those clients with less social power (e.g., women) to do all the changing and accommodating, and instead, to place the onus for change on those with more power to change the power hierarchy.

The value of witnesses in the therapeutic context is recognized by others. Reflecting teams (e.g., Hoffman, 1992) and "definitional ceremonies" using outsider witnesses (White, 2007) are examples. This therapeutic structure empowers clients by affording consistent ongoing feedback to challenge misuses of power and privilege directly. It holds clients *and* professional helpers accountable to the new critical consciousness over time.

Final Thoughts

One premise shared by social justice workers is that therapeutic intervention is a political endeavor, and it involves a process of social critique. Problems between people are created in the sociopolitical arena, not just in the minds or communication patterns of partners. For us to do more than simply reinforce the status quo requires a pointed conscious intention to do otherwise. There is and can be no neutral, nonpolitical stance. At best, we as professional helpers must be committed to a self-reflective appreciation of what values and beliefs we are conveying, because all that we say and do (or fail to say and do) reflects our value stance.

How can we stay mindful of issues of power and privilege in our own lives as well as those lives we influence? Somehow we must get the issues on the table where they can be examined. This is the heart of the work. As mentioned at the outset, raising these issues is not easy , and resistance to the acknowledgment of their existence can be great. In the words of one of my students, "Wisdom is only found in truth.Who holds the truth? Are we willing to speak our truth?"

References

• Aldarondo, E. (Ed.). (2007). *Advancing Social Justice Through Clinical Practice.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

• Almeida, R., Dolan-Del Vecchio, K., & Parker, L. (2008). *Transformative Family Therapy: Just Families in a Just Society.* New York: Pearson/Allyn & Bacon.

• Ault-Riche, M. (1994). Sex, money, laundry: Sharing responsibilities in intimate relationships. *Journal of Feminist Family Therapy*, *6*(1), 69-87.

• Carter, B., & Peters, J. (1996). *Love, Honor, and Negotiate: Building Partnerships that Last a Lifetime.* New York: Simon & Schuster.

• Dolan-Del Vecchio, K. (2008). *Making Love, Playing Power: Men, Women and the Rewards of Intimate Justice.* Berkeley, CA: Soft Skull.

• Figueroa-McDonough, J., Netting, F.E., & Nichols-Casebolt, A. (2001). Subjugated knowledge in gender integrated social work education: Call for dialogue. *Affilia, 16,* 411-431.

• Finn, J.L., & Jacobson, M. (2003). *Just Practice: A Social Justice Approach to Social Work.* Peosta, IA: Eddie Bowers.

• Freire, P. (2003) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.* New York: Continuum International.

• Gutierrez, L., & Lewis, E. (Eds.). (1999). *Empowering Women of Color.* New York: Columbia University Press.

• Halevy, J. (1998). A genogram with an attitude. *Journal of Marriage and Family Therapy, 24*(2), 233-242.

• Hardy, K., & Laszloffy, T.A. (1995). The cultural genogram: Key to training culturally competent family therapists. *Journal of Marriage and Family Therapy, 21*(3), 227-237.

• Hoffman, L. (1992). A reflective stance for family therapy. In S. McNamee & K. Gergan (Eds.), *Therapy as Social Construction* (pp. 7-24). London: Sage.

• Keeling, M.L. (2007). A female therapist's dilemma: Alliance versus accommodation in feminist-informed couple therapy. *Journal of Feminist Family Therapy, 19*(4), 43-70.

• Lorde, A. (1984). *Sister Outsider.* Berkeley, CA: Crossing Press

• Martin-Baro, I. (1994). *Writings for a Liberation Psychology.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

• McGoldrick, M., & Hardy, K. (Eds.). (2008). *Re-visioning Family Therapy: Race, Culture and Gender in Clinical Practice.* New York: Guilford Press.

• McIntosh, P. (1990). White privilege: Unpacking the invisible knapsack. *Independent School, 49,* 31-39.

• Mirkin, M.P., Suyemoto, K. L., & Okun, B.F. (Eds.). (2005). *Psychotherapy with Women: Exploring Diverse Contexts and Identities.* New York: Guilford Press.

• Paley, V. (1992). *You Can't Say You Can't Play.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

• Papp, P. (2001). *Couples on the Fault Line: New Directions for Therapists.* New York: Guilford Press.

• Parker, M.L. (1997). Unraveling power issues in couples therapy. *Journal of Feminist Family Therapy, 9*(2), 1-24.

• Parker, M.L. (1998a). Keeping power on the table in couples' therapy. *Journal of Feminist Family Therapy, 10*(1), 1-24.

• Parker, M.L. (1998b). The unequal bargain: Power issues in couples therapy. *Journal of Feminist Family Therapy, 10*(3), 17-38.

• Parker, M.L. (2003). A social justice model for clinical social work. *Affilia, 18,* 272-288.

• Parker, M.L. (2008). The Cultural Context Model: A case study of social-justice-based clinical practice. *Social Justice in Context, 3,* 25-39.

• Silverstein, L. B., & Goodrich, T. J. (2003). *Feminist Family Therapy: Empowerment and Social Context.* Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

• Waldegrave, C., Tamasese, K., Tuhaka, F., & Campbell, W. (2003). Just Therapy—A Journey: A Collection of Papers from the Just Therapy Team. Adelaide, *New Zealand*: Dulwich Centre.

• Watson, L. (n.d.). Quote retrieved on July 5, 2009, from http://famousquotes.psyphil.com/quotes-by/lila-watson/

• White, M. (2007). *Maps of Narrative Practice.* New York: W.W. Norton.

• Zetzer, H.A. (2005). White out: Privilege and its problems. In S. Anderson & V.A. Middleton (Eds.), *Explorations in Privilege, Oppression, and Diversity* (pp.3-17). Florence, KY: Cengage Learning.

• Zimmerman, T.S. (Ed.). (2001). *Integrating Gender and Culture in Family Therapy Training.* New York: Haworth Press.

Appendix
Research Participants

Rhea Almeida, M.S.W., Ph.D., Institute of Family Services, NJ **Carol Anderson**, Ph.D., University of Pittsburgh Medical School, PA **Judith Myers Avis**, Ph.D., Department of Family Studies, University of Guelph **Michelle Bograd**, Ph.D., Private Practice, Bedford, MA **Lois Braverman**, M.S.W., Des Moines FamilyTherapy Institute, IA **Betty Carter**, M.S.W., Family Institute of Westchester, NY **Virginia Goldner**, Ph.D., Acherman Institute for Family Therapy, NY **Thelma Jean Goodrich**, Ph.D., Family Therapy Institute of Westchester, NY **Evan Imber-Black**, Ph.D., Bronx Municipal Hospital Center, NY **Joan Laird**, M. S., Smith College for Social Work, MA **Peggy Papp**, M.S.W., Acherman Institute for Family Therapy, NY **Peggy Penn**, M.S.W ., Acherman Institute for Family Therapy, NY**Marsha Sheinberg**, M.S.W., Acherman Institute for FamilyTherapy, NY**Beth Sirles**, M.S.W., Ph.D., University of Alaska, School of Social Work **Marianne Walters**, M.S.W., Family Therapy Practice Center, Washington, DC**Case Studies Institute of Family Services,** Somerset, NJ **Affinity Family Services Agency**, New Brunswick, NJ

Lynn Parker is an associate professor with the University of Denver , Graduate School of Social Work and faculty with the Denver Family Institute, a postgraduate family therapy training center. She is a couples and family therapy specialist having practiced in the field for more than 30 years. She conducts research and writes about how to address power, privilege, and oppression in therapeutic work. Comments regarding this article can be sent to: lparker@du.edu

Copyright of Reflections: Narratives of Professional Helping is the property of Cleveland State University and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.