
Our Superior Complex Shadow is Under a Microscope

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Abstract

From the institution of slavery to current waves of systemic oppression, Black people continue to be negatively impacted. This calls attention to the pervasiveness of racism, specifically the anti-Black racism that contorts and constrains Black peoples' lives. The magnitude of anti-Black racism punctuated human consciousness on a global scale after the public brutal killing of George Floyd, an African-American man in police custody. This poem is inspired by Floyd's death and the emotional trauma and pain it ignited in Black people around the world. It illustrates the vulnerability of the Black community in respect to ongoing systemic oppression, the inferiorization of Blackness, and the corresponding suffering Black people must endure.

Keywords

racism, anti-Black racism, systemic oppression, Black Lives Matter, racial trauma

Racism led to our ancestors' bodies being chained
As animals that needed to be trained.
Purposely given a different name,
To prevent them from being reclaimed,
That's the beginning of the master's reign.
Superiority eventually attained
Inferiority severely constrained.

All these years of pain and suffering
Intensified by blatant violent policing.
In the wake of racial profiling
An outcry that has been lingering,
Leaving the Black community withering,
As it is constantly burying
Another soul stopped living.

The time has come for the Black community to be healed
But you are still stepping on our heels.
How can we reconcile your words?
When your actions cut like a sword
When we see another Black man gunned down
In front of his young Black sons
By the cops in his hometown

Black life matters and has always been
Yet we have to fight to be seen,
To get the systems to intervene.
With little help from within.
That calls attention to the scene
When a guilty verdict is hard to win,
Feeling like a blow to the chin.

Racism conceptualized as our 'superior complex shadow'¹
Has reached a tipping point where it has to go.
Echoed by the voices of those who have come to know,
Demanded by those who can't take more
Of its hundred years of painful sores.
Striking Black lives to its core
Visible now more than ever before.

We are in the midst of a slippery slope
For the many lives that have been choked.
Our superior complex shadow is under a microscope
A moment in history fueled by hope

¹ Edwards, F. (2020). Open the doors and let us out: Escaping the coloniality of racism. *Cultural Pedagogical Inquiry*, 12(1), 278–280.

That has now travelled from coast to coast,
Igniting a global community of hosts
Working to eradicate this uninvited ghost.

As we watched our superior complex shadow metamorphosize
From silence and ignorance to being heavily scrutinized.
For the tears that have been cried,
Eventually reaching every side.
Driven by actions to apologize
For the many lives that are dehumanized
Ostracized and put aside.

Author Biography

Fiona Edwards is a Ph.D candidate at the School of Social Work, York University, Canada, where she also received a Master's of Social Work degree. Her current research explores the lived mental health experiences of Afro-Caribbean Canadian youth utilizing mental health services. Fiona's research interests include child and youth mental health, the racialization of mental illness, mental illness stigma, mental health and well-being, anti-oppressive social work, race, racialization, racism, anti-Black racism, religiosity and spirituality.