

K. D. Killian: *Interracial Couples, Intimacy and Therapy: Crossing Racial Borders*

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The author, Killian, asserts this book is significant because it advances a topic—the crossing of racial borders—that is seldom addressed. He further claims to approach this through rich and descriptive data from interracial couples and through providing professionals with useful tools and strategies for identifying and enhancing couples' relationships. I agree with his claim. Little is known about how these individuals with differing pasts and identities join to create a new identity together; this book will help readers understand these journeys and will also help therapists to more effectively approach the topic in treatment.

Killian begins the book with an introduction into racialized bodies and borders in the United States. He then moves on to lead the reader through the process of crossing these borders: first on an individual and dyadic level, then a familial and societal level, and finally a level of time. After helping the reader to cross these borders he then discusses dominant and marginalized discourses and their relevance in couples' relationships. He then includes a chapter specifically addressed to systemic intervention with interaction couples that helps the reader to utilize the abstract information previously gained in a very concrete—but not confining—manner. The book closes with a discussion of interracial couples in media and research.

While the book at times feels like a large academic paper, a thesis or dissertation, Killian kept my interest peaked through his masterfully-systemic way of challenging beliefs and assumptions. Often, in our clinical training, we may have been exposed to books or lectures in which the subjects of race and privilege were addressed either

hostilely or linearly, that chooses to ignore or devalue experiences and beliefs other than the ones being presented. Throughout the book, Killian accepts, explores, and helps the reader to understand beliefs and motivations through maintaining his systemic lens that sees these heated topics in a “both/and” approach that honors each person's way of making meaning in life.

Killian has injected parts of the interviews about interracial couples that help the reader to make sense of the complexity of the emotions each participant experienced. While it can be difficult to keep track of participants, there is a summary of participant information included to make this easier. Despite this difficulty in tracking, the data is powerful and merits dissemination.

While I found no chapter to be superfluous, these last two were especially poignant in my own application of this material as a therapist. In his chapter about systemic intervention with interracial couples, Killian illuminates common concerns these couples have about helping professionals and offers examples of how each concern may be addressed in a manner that may help facilitate a therapeutic goal. I found Killian's suggested integration of past and present media depictions of racism and interracial couples to be a great tool in deconstructing beliefs that may be hindering the therapeutic process—on both the clients' and therapists' part.

I found this book to be a welcome addition to my library and my therapeutic toolbox and one that I would like to see integrated into the training of future students. The author never loses grasp of his systemic orientation and helps the reader to integrate this concept of “both/and” in a topic that is frequently discussed blamingly or defensively.

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