

## *Mixed Heritage: Mixed Feelings*

Reflections by a white therapist on working with difference in Psychoanalytic Parent Infant Psychotherapy

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Parent Infant Foundation Network Day

Lubaina Himid, 'My Parents, Their Children', 1986



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# Ms D

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A misunderstanding.

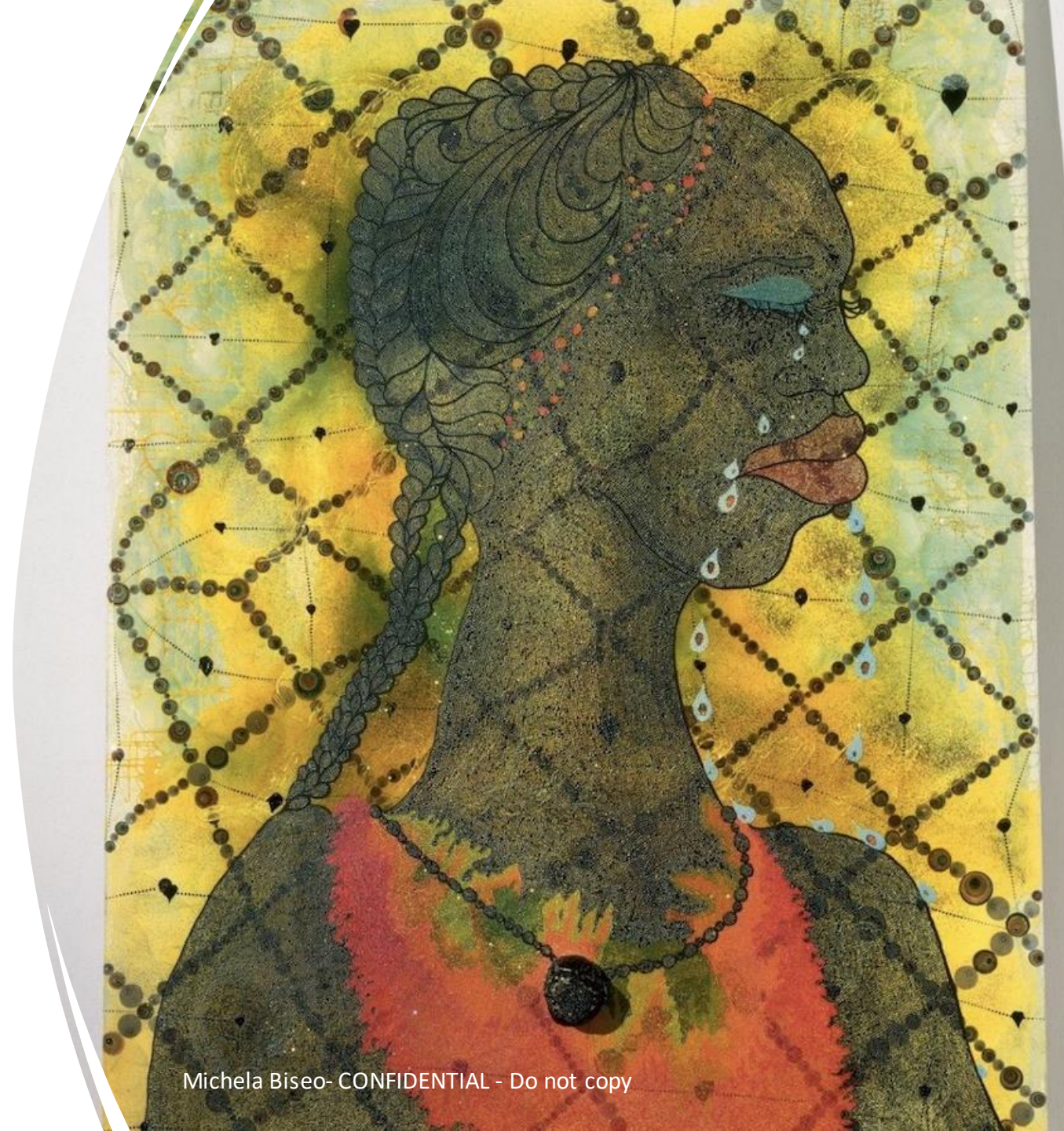
I AM IN PAIN

Zayne is “a pain”

These encounters “*mobilise the dynamics of internal racism*”

Fahkry Davids

‘No Woman No Cry’ Chris Ofili, 1998



# “Weaving inner and outer worlds”

(Z. Eleftheriadou)

Cross –cultural work.

Therapist’s self analysis of own racism – more than Counter transference exploration


Curiosity: genuine & authentic (reality : inner & outer) vs Taboos

*Adverse Cultural Experiences (ACE v2) Ghosh Ippen*

- The baby’s experience & introjections of self/ other
- Progress & Future: towards the point of view of the Baby







## Zayn's hand

Faltering... "we are all different"

- Therapeutic error or "Cultural Opportunity"?
- Can skin colour be a proxy for race ?
- Intersectionality
- Counter transference- unconscious sense of a taboo
- Therapist's blind spots?
- SUPERVISION +++

Covid  
Lockdown:  
Hidden Baby

Painting  
Lynette Yiadom-  
Boakye







# Black Lives Matter

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### **White therapist// Black Mother-**

Acknowledgment of “*Living while Black*” (G. Kinouani) in times like this.

- Precision, hesitation & use of careful, conciliatory language. Guarded, muted tone- enquiry/ noticing.
- Leads to:

### **White baby : Black Mother:**

**Who are you Zayn? Who can you be?**

- Turning point.
- Cultural port of entry- BLM
- Racial abuse



KEY

Birth Trauma

Verbalising the shock & then the response  
to the shock:

**Shame**

Zayn's delivery : terrible pain

- Shock & humiliation
- Pride mixed with shame
- Denial of "connection"- defensive?

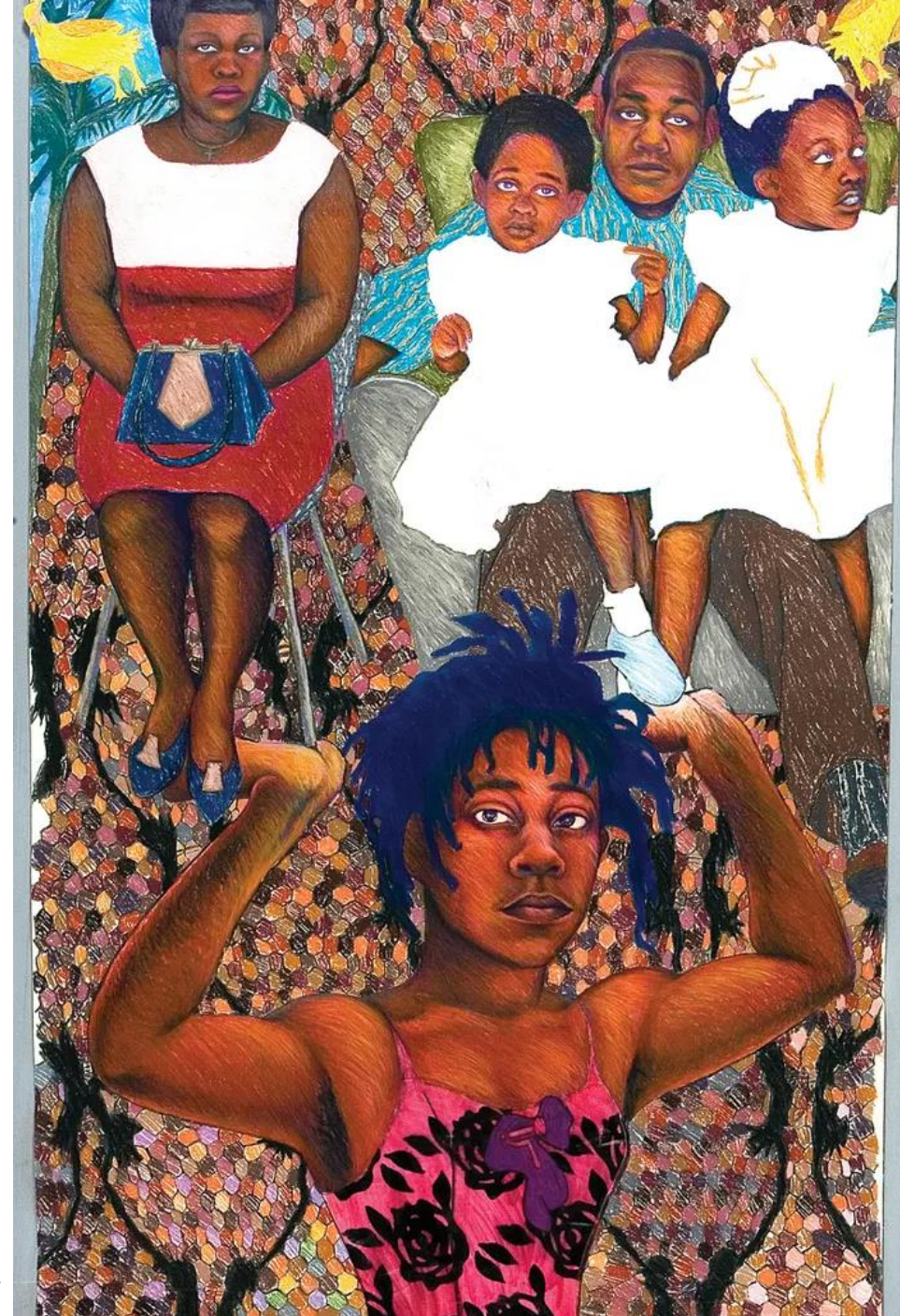


Ghosts in *Society* not just in the Nursery  
Adverse *Cultural* Experiences (ACES)  
not just *Childhood Experiences*.

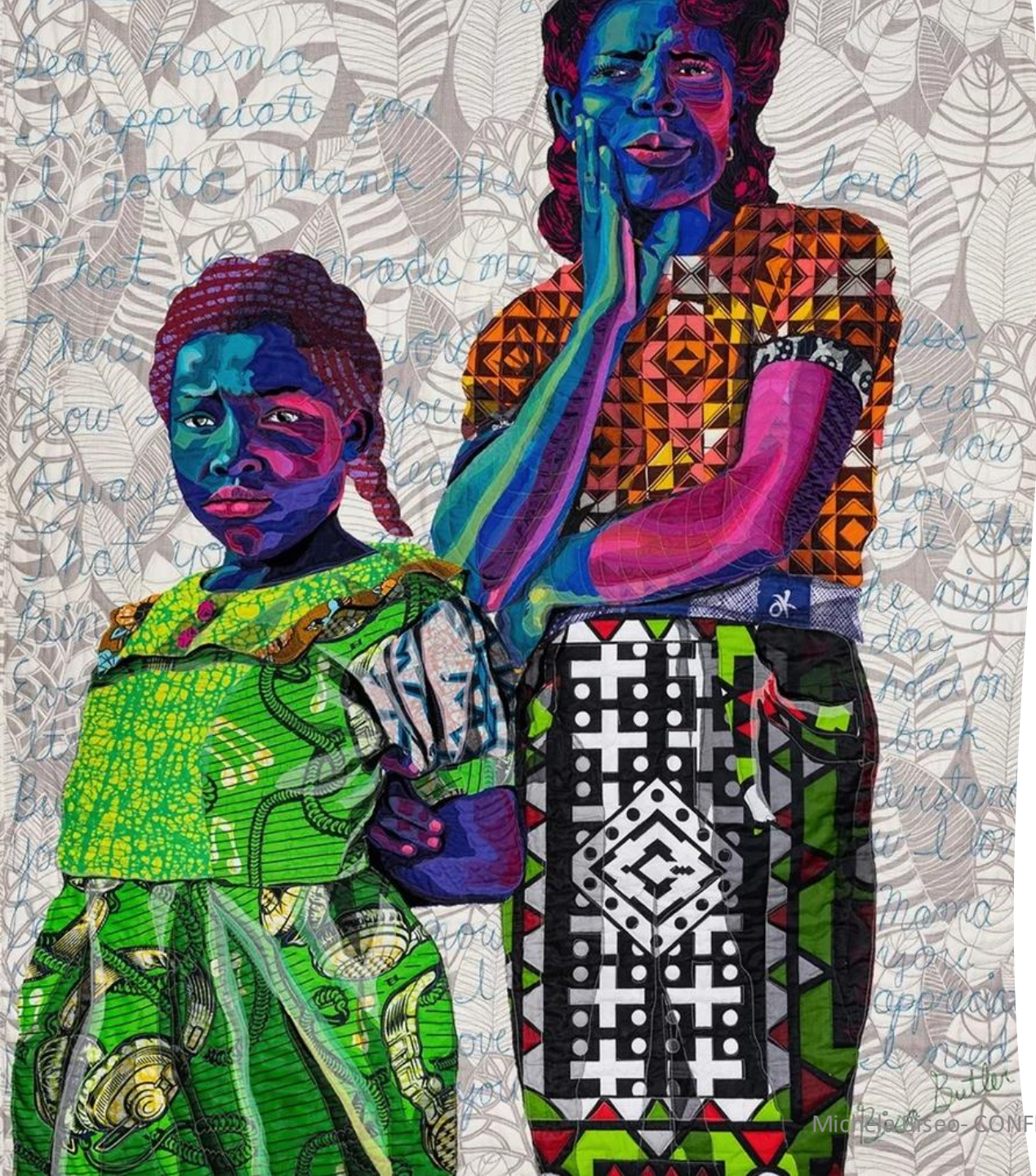
*What happened to you?* What happened to YOUR PEOPLE?

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*Sonia Boyce: 'She ain't holding them up,  
She's holding on (Some English  
Rose)' 1986*







# Dear Mama, Bisa Butler, 2019

Going back to go forward:

- How to not be like MY mother



# Progressing toward more integration

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- Reconstruction
- Recognition of intergenerational patterns
- Acknowledge the context of structural racism
- “What will I help Zayne to feel, be & say about himself to others?”
- Back & Forth between the internal world of the child/mother, to the external realities

Painting by Lubaina Himid



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**Mixed heritage, mixed feelings:  
psychoanalytic parent infant psychotherapy during the coronavirus  
pandemic. Biseo, M.**

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