

Letter from the Editor

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Dear Reader,

There are ideas we inherit long before we think to question them.

Some of those ideas become so familiar that they begin to feel like facts: that pain must mean harm, BDSM must be explained through trauma, unusual sensory experiences must be symptoms, and that power in sexuality can be understood only as either dangerous or liberatory.

This edition of the *Journal of Kink and Community* asks us to look again.

Beyond the Assumptions brings together scholarship, clinical reflection, lived experience, and critical inquiry examining kink through the intersections of care, trauma, power, embodiment, neurodiversity, sexuality, and therapeutic practice.

Across this issue, contributors invite us to reconsider the meanings we assign to kink and the frameworks we use to understand it. We encounter questions about care and connection, the relationship between pain and regulation, the ways collective experiences can reshape our relationship to practices that once offered comfort or safety, and the possibilities that emerge when therapeutic approaches are examined through lived experience and multiple perspectives.

We are also invited to consider power more closely: how it operates within sexuality, how it intersects with labor and social structures, how it can be reclaimed, negotiated, experienced, and understood, and what happens when we resist the temptation to reduce complex experiences to a single narrative.

Taken together, these contributions create space for complexity.

They ask us to consider what changes when pain is examined through sensation and regulation rather than assumed to be pathology. What happens when trauma can be part of someone's experience without becoming the presumed explanation for their sexuality? What changes when care is considered part of the practice rather than an afterthought? What becomes visible when therapeutic work is examined from multiple positions? And what happens when we take sexuality, power, labor, and embodiment seriously enough to allow their contradictions to remain visible?

These are not easy questions. They are still worth asking.

Welcome to **Beyond the Assumptions**.

Dr. Yulinda Renee Rahman

Editor-in-Chief

Journal of Kink and Community