

Naming My Privilege, Reclaiming My Voice:

Enhancing professional judgement with personal privilege awareness through the narrative
art of autoethnography

Yasmin Abdul Majid

Mount Saint Vincent University

August 21, 2020

Thesis supervisor: Dr. Shane Theunissen

A thesis submitted to the Department of Child and Youth in partial fulfilment of the
requirement for the degree of Master of Arts in Child and Youth Study

© Yasmin Abdul Majid 2020

Abstract

This thesis explores a personal narrative of my journey, as a privileged member of my community, to become aware of the impact of privilege on myself and others around me. It documents conditions needed to support the environment that helped me overcome internal rage and grief that were part of the price of becoming privilege. The process of privilege awareness changed the way I experience the world as I reclaimed my voice and I believe it also changed the way the world experienced me.

The reflective processes that were used for writing this thesis, through autoethnography, made visible the connected oppressions (within myself, in others and within social structures) that were part of the structures of my personal privilege. Repeated reflections and actions in my life, that were discovered in the research, were the praxis (Freire, 2000) that helped me name my privilege, own it and transform it. The new awareness guided me to discover ways to more fully relate with others in many varied ways of being. This ultimately brought new understanding that enhanced my professional judgement as an early childhood educator.

Although issues of marginalisation may not be particularly new knowledge but knowledge on how the privileged become aware of their privilege and its connection to marginalisation of others is still new and this is where this thesis offers new understanding.

Acknowledgements

All knowledge belongs to the cosmos and we merely discover what has been there all along. I am grateful to have this opportunity to be a *musafir* or traveller in this journey of discovery and to be able to share what I have found. I am also extremely grateful to have had Dr. Shane Theunissen as my supervisor and Dr. Fernando Nunes as our reader for this thesis.

I would like to thank everyone (family, friends and professors) who have been patient with me while I attempt to untangle the dissonances of my heart, mind, body and spirit to write this deeply personal thesis. Thank you also to all who will be patiently reading this in the future. I am so glad we met in the past, present or future. We are all beads in a bracelet even through time and space. I wish you peace in the search that has set you on your own journey.

I dedicate this imperfect but enormous effort to my children Adam, Maya, Samira, Dahlia, their children and all who will come after them – everything that you are at any point in your life is enough for all the universe, you are loved. May all the good that comes of this effort be a mercy for my parents, their parents and all who were before them. You are remembered.

However, any mistakes found or hurt caused by this thesis are mine to bear alone, I seek forgiveness in advance.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Acknowledgments.....	iii
Introductory Poem – 15 Wooden Beads.....	1
Introduction.....	2
My Core Being.....	3
My Authentic Self.....	5
Types of knowledge.....	6
Ilm’ al-muamallat.....	6
Ilm’ al-mukashafa.....	6
Privilege as Practice.....	7
Mechanism of preferences of differences.....	9
Research question.....	12
Literature review.....	13
The Context of Nova Scotia’s Education System.....	13
Underlying belief #1 – education leads to economic access and success.....	14
Underlying belief #2 – students need to compete to succeed.....	16
The Context of Child and Youth Care practice.....	17.
Three areas of practice	19

Three components of professional judgement.....	20
Three areas of reflection.....	21
The 3-3-3 model of conceptual connections in ECE practice.....	22
Privilege.....	26
Definition.....	27
Location.....	29
Oblivion.....	31
Privilege oblivion connected to marginalisation.....	32
Privilege endears and pervades.....	35
Privilege as outcome of world-system.....	36
Privilege as colonisation of core being.....	40
Diversity as strength and resistance.....	41
The process of privilege awareness as an intentional act.....	42
Methodology.....	45
Multivocal Autoethnography.....	45
Data Collection.....	49
‘Zoom in / zoom out’ strategy (Chang, 2008).....	49
5-stage process for personal privilege awareness (Dunlop et al, 2007).....	50
Accommodation and assimilation.....	53

Data analysis and findings.....	62
Data 1 - Autobiography – Trigger event (step 1).....	62
Reflections – grappling (step 2).....	65
Diversity within diversity.....	66
Multiple independent states for capitalist market competition.....	67
Endogenous development of core being as resistance to competition....	68
Data 2 – Memory.....	69
Reflections – personalization (step 3).....	70
‘Zoom in’ reflection – divided self (step 4).....	70
“Zoom out’ reflection – loop back to grappling stage (step 2).....	72
Data 3 – Autobiography.....	73
Reflections – grappling, personalization and divided self spiral.....	75
Data 4 – Journal entry – divided self (step 4).....	78
Encounter of difference, holding space and suspended judgement.....	83
Authentic assessments to acknowledge children’s experiences.....	85
Love and honouring as accommodative action.....	86
Multiple states of conditions as basis for racism and discrimination.....	86
Global privilege in core-periphery economies.....	89
Personal limit of resistance	93

Independent and interdependent self-construal (grappling step 2).....	97
Code-switching as a characteristic of interdependent self-construal....	99
The privilege bubble.....	101
Data 5 – Social media post – resolving the disequilibrium (step 5).....	103
Inverted flow of reflective practice.....	107
Results.....	111
Humanizing the oppressor within.....	111
Sustained encounters of difference.....	112
The endogenous expansion of the authentic self	118
Art as a relational practice.....	120
Education as part of humanity.....	123
Sustainability as a path to humanity.....	123
Expansion of core being as resilience in children.....	125
Suspended judgement as a result of evolved Image of the	127
The impact of evolved professional judgement.....	130
Kindness.....	132
Reflecting with varied perspective.....	132
Humble listening.....	133
Catalyst for organisational humanization.....	133

Management and Leadership.....	134
Conclusion.....	136
References.....	148
List of Figures	
Figure 1 Privilege as Practice (PAP) model.....	7
Figure 2 Inverted correlation between privilege and diversity.....	9
Figure 3 Interconnectivity of three components of practice.....	20
Figure 4 The 3-3-3 model of conceptual connection in ECE practice.....	23
Figure 5 Location of ECE practice within the PAP model.....	25
Figure 6 Professional Personality Guide.....	
Figure 7 5- Step model of personal privilege awareness.....	30
Figure 8 Suspended Judgement and encounters of difference.....	50
Figure 9 The Sacred Scarf.....	96
Figure 10 Aceh, Indonesia – Tsunami response in 2005.....	107
Figure 11 Inverted Flow of reflective practice.....	110
Figure 12 Locating reflective practice.....	115
Figure 13 Discussion with children and parents.....	120
Figure 14 With early childhood educators conducting workshops.....	121
Figure 15 With church youth group – child friendly space.....	121

Figure 16	Preparing coconut milk with Malay elder.....	122
Figure 17	Hiking Trips with friends.....	122
Figure 18	Dance for social and transcendental connections.....	127
Figure 19	Traveling around Malaysia with children.....	134
Figure 20	Tonle Sap River, Cambodia.....	135
Figure 21	Sand Dunes, Vietnam.....	135

15 Wooden Beads



15 wooden beads
Scratched and faded
With journeys and memories,
15 wooden beads
Every single bead separate and many
yet when binded together become one,
A single bead holds no purpose without the others,
the 'I' and the 'them'
Invisibly connected
Hidden by privilege, ambition, pride, entitlement, disconnect,
Challenged by frictions, crisis, exclusions, frustrations, confusions, anger,
Until an awareness makes clear the dissonances
And find
That in others is me, in me are others,
With conscious intentions, patience, humility, love and a surrender to destiny
I learn to be a new me
I tread ever more considerately,
On my space that is surely their space too,
We are all
Beads in a bracelet
Separate yet one

Introduction

My move to Canada in 2017, as an international student enroute to permanent residency was the pinnacle of a long, painful and necessary process of being in my truth. I was born to a family that was very much privileged in my country, Malaysia. My father held the second most important position in the Ministry of Health, my grandfather was amongst the delegation that successfully achieved our independence from British colonisation without violence, my great grandparents developed the town I resided in and my great great grandfather was the son of a Raja which is more like the chief of elders and he was accepted with status in Malaysia when he left his father's 'kerajaan' or state in Indonesia. I grew up socially, economically and politically privileged.

In my life there were many events that triggered a deep discord in my being. However, the lack of safe spaces for reflections on my personal privilege, the unsupportive socio-political climate of race-based policies based on economic fundamentals in Malaysia and threats to my children's safety made this move to distance myself from my community and home necessary for self-preservation and an opportunity to untangle the many confusing dissonances within me. It is also an effort to redeem myself and find a way of being that is both meaningful and joyful. My application to pursue a Master of Arts in Child and Youth Studies was accepted at Mount Saint Vincent University and I have taken this opportunity to study again in order to understand my predicament and find a way forward for myself and for others who may identify with my situation.

After much prayer, reading and reflection, I set my heart and mind to write this thesis not only as a prerequisite for graduation but also as an act of seeking knowledge in a way that honours myself and others. I believe that God is a power that is all-aware (Quran

6:103) and all knowledge belongs to God. There are some who may call God with different names that are more relevant to their own culture and ways of knowing. These names include the terms divinity (Whitman, 2005) or subliminality (Willis, 2011) or the cosmos (Wilson, 2008). Indigenous paradigm similarly believes that “knowledge is seen as belonging to the cosmos of which we are a part and where researchers are only the interpreters of this knowledge” (Wilson, 2008, p.38). I do not create nor own knowledge but merely discover and share what has always been there all the while.

As I continued to seek knowledge outwardly, to understand the meaning of the internal rage within me, the path inevitably led me inward to my core being. According to Rumi, one can find divinity within “his own fundamentals (asl), his soul (Oda, 1975, description). The truth is as much within me as it is outside of me. The process of personal privilege awareness changed the way I existed in the world as I reclaimed my voice that was the culmination of my heart, my spirit, my mind and my body. I learned to accept (redha’) that some things are destined (maktub) even when we cannot know completely how, when or why. I can only attempt to perpetually be in a state of naming and renaming the world without really knowing it completely. “To exist, humanly, is to *name* the world, to change it. Once named, the world in its turn reappears to the namers as a problem and requires of them a new *naming*” (Freire, 2000, p. 88). My values have changed as I humbly acknowledge that there is much I still do not know. It has transformed my views on children and enhanced my professional judgement to be more ready to embrace diversity and equity.

My Core Being

Throughout the thesis, I will use the term 'my being', 'core being' or 'my way of being' to refer to the personal inter-connectedness of the core of my being. According to Islamic worldview the core being is made out of four components of the heart (qalb), the spirit (ruh), the ego or lower self (nafs) and the mind ('aql). The ability to use all four components of core being is needed in the seeking of knowledge and is a person's way of being.

In this thesis, the first component of core being is the heart which will refer to the ethereal heart which is the inner-most consciousness. Imam al-Ghazali, in his third book of *IhyaUlum al-Din*, expands the meaning of ethereal heart as a consciousness and perceiving part of a person. My heart suffered from being ignored and isolated in the process of being socialized through Euro-western education to be objective, empirical and professional in life. The knowledge that was found without the heart was not enough nor was it meaningful for my well-being. The heart must be part of the process of knowing.

The second component is referred to as the spirit which is the energy that moves the body. It is also the higher self that has the capacity to receive divine inspiration or cosmic revelation that is part of the unseen reality and of which human knowledge is limited. "They ask you about the spirit. Say: The spirit is among the affairs of my Lord (God), you have been given little knowledge of it." (Quran, 17:85).

The third component of my being refers to the self. This version of the self is called 'nafs' in Arabic which is the language of the Holy Quran. It is the lower self that is also called ego. It is easier to understand 'nafs' as the needs of the body. This part of being is the

combined origin of blameworthy traits within the human being, such that they say one must strive against the self and break it. (Ghazali, 2015). It is not evil in itself. It is, in fact, the appetite needed for survival. However, the 'nafs' has the ability to grow into a self-destructive component that is insatiable in its appetite or need for more. It is part of obligatory knowledge to learn to keep the nafs in balance where it is supportive of well-being and not a destructive element. The internal struggle of balancing the 'nafs' or appetite within the self is the true meaning of 'jihad' which is translated as the struggle. The battles we fight within ourselves are just as important as the struggles outside of the self.

The fourth aspect of being is the mind which is the intellectual capacity of a being. It is the ability to think, contemplate, reflect and understand. It is the foundation of being. Within the intellectual capacity, reflection takes place to untangle confusions and come to an understanding of situations. In western psychology, it is referred to as the cognitive functions.

The authentic self

The connectedness of all the four aspects of being – the heart (qalb), the spirit (ruh), the body (nafs) and the mind (aql) - are needed in the ability to seek knowledge and understand the world. My state core being determines my sociality or the way I relate to the world around. It influences the way I experience the world and the way the world experiences me. The authentic self emerges when all aspects of the core being are cohesive and able to interact with the world in the way that it needs to, through its own language and through its own strengths.

Haines (2011) elaborates these two concepts of the core being and the authentic self as her core strength and her contribution. She believes that when core strengths align with contribution, which for her is her work as an art teacher, she finds meaning in her existence. This meaningfulness of operating from inner-cohesiveness of the being or core strength through its own unique ways of interaction which can be expressed as contributions or work, also defines the concept of authentic self in my thesis. With reference to the poem at the beginning of this thesis, my being is like a bead while my authentic self is the state of being when the bead (my being) becomes a part of other beads (other beings) and form a bracelet (a reality or a co-existence).

The process of personal privilege awareness and privilege transformation, that will be elaborated in this thesis, enabled the inner connectedness of my core being and allowed it to engage with the world according to its strengths. When I was able to use the cohesive strengths of my core being to interact with the world, I came to more fully understand my own soul, the world and the values that honour both. The process facilitated the sociality of my authentic self which was then able to seek knowledge and know the world. I became more human and increasingly surrounded by diversity, resilience and innovation that was interdependently connected by love, kindness and caring.

Types of Knowledge

Ilm' al-muamallat

The knowledge gained and discovered in the process of writing this thesis has been for me a close experience of having knowledge that Imam al-Ghazali, who is one of the 5 leading Islamic scholars, explains in his Book of Knowledge as:

1. knowledge of one's conduct with people and God (ilm' al-muamallat)
2. knowledge of unveiling (ilm' al-mukashafa)

Ilm' al-muamallat refers to "knowledge of practical conduct and it comprises the knowledge of the states of the heart" (Al-Ghazali, 2015, p.52). The state of the heart can be in a positive or praiseworthy state, which include patience, gratitude, abstinence, sufficiency in God, good mutual relationship, truthfulness and sincerity, or it could be negative or blameworthy state such as fear of poverty, discontent with God's decree, spitefulness and resentment, ambition to high station, anger, hatred, greed for wealth, demeaning the poor, and self-importance in wealth and ancestry. This knowledge "comprises as well the realization of the realities behind these states" (Al-Ghazali, 2015, p.52) which is an understanding of why and how things are as they are.

Ilm' al-mukashafa

Ilm' al-Mukashafa is the unveiling of the unseen realm that is interpreted as "a light that appears in the heart when it is cleansed and purified of blameworthy traits." (Al-Ghazali, p. 49). At this point of clarity, certain matters are unveiled such as the realization of 'ma'rifa' which is intuitive knowledge that is not rationally obtained. Both the process of achieving knowledge of ilm' al-muamallat and ilm al-Mukashafa is considered obligatory knowledge for the well-being of a person in this world and also the world after life. It becomes obligatory only when there is awareness that arises in a person while interacting with the world. It is a step by step process that builds according to the awareness and readiness of the seeker of knowledge.

All parts of the self are important in the ability to seek knowledge. The heart that is denied the ability to seek knowledge will die (al-Ghazali, 2015, p.11). As I started school, my heart was silenced along with my spirit to fit into the standardization mechanisms of the education system. And, slowly but surely, a part of me was diminished and the whole of me became unwell.

Privilege as Practice

The process of becoming aware of privilege and its accompanying marginalizations will inevitably also include the process of becoming privileged. As I grew up and started going to school, I began to become more and more privileged. This will be understood with the help of a social-ecological framework of sustainability which is referred to as Privilege as Practice (Kolan & Sullivan TwoTrees, 2014) and is illustrated below in Figure1.

Differences are the diversity within the environment. Kolan & Sullivan TwoTrees (2014) describes differences within the model as diversity that sustains the ecology. Within this socio-ecological sustainability framework of Privilege as Practice, the presence of diversity is an indicator of an environment that supports ecological variations. Theunissen (2017) expresses this ecological variation as the “vibrant culturally diverse intellectual archive from which to draw innovations and adaptation” (p. 17). Within this thesis, the differences can refer to the possible outcomes of the combinations of heart, spirit, mind and body.

Preferences refer to the mechanisms that filter the differences available and select those that the system prefers. The preferences homogenizes the abilities of children or select the abilities that are relevant to the conservation of the system. Children who have the abilities preferred are privileged. Those who do not have the abilities that are preferred

must adjust themselves to adhere to the preferences or become marginalised by the system. Privilege is conserved through standardization in society. This can be seen in the standardization of curriculum and exams in schools which become the mechanisms of preferences. The mechanisms of preferences is where the power of privilege is conserved.

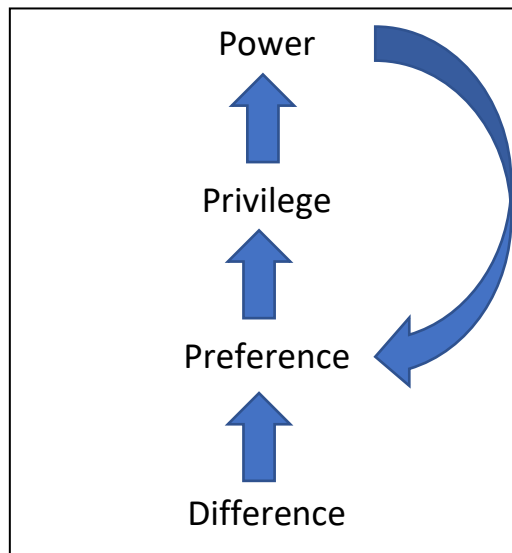


Figure 1. Privilege as Practice (Kolan & Sullivan TwoTrees, 2014)

On the contrary, the process that result in ecological variations is often called the process of differentiation and is “the process through which the universe sustains life.” (McLaughlin, 2004, p 28). This thesis will examine privilege and standardization in schools as a process of marginalization of diversity within the self and within society. The standardizations in schools and society are socialized as norms where they are cloaked and become unseen (McKintosh, 2020). Privilege and diversity are invertedly correlated as shown in Figure 2. High privilege situations (standardization) will silence diversity (differentiation). In silencing diversity, a society also loses its resources for innovations and thriving.

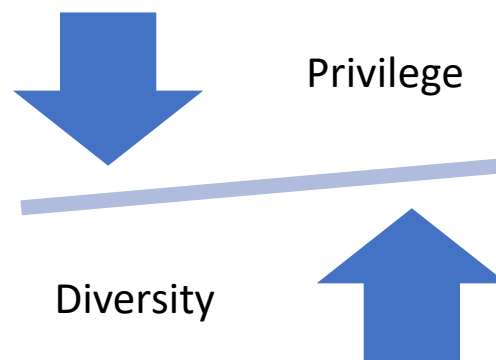


Figure 2. The inverted correlation between privilege and diversity

Mechanism of preferences of differences.

Differences in a society include the diversity in people's ways of being. In schools, differences refer to the many varied ways children learn about their world. In 1985, Howard Gardner proposed a theory of multiple intelligences through his book 'The Frames of Mind'. It is a cognitive theory that can serve as an explanation of the many ways children make sense of their world. According to this theory, children have many ways of receiving, processing and expressing information from around them. According to Gardner (1984), children draw on these abilities in isolation or in combinations to understand the world. This would represent the differences in the framework of Privilege as Practice.

The mechanisms of preferences in schools filter out or silence the majority of these abilities. As the result of the way exams, written tests and assessments are standardized in schools, only two intelligences which are linguistic-verbal and mathematic-logical are preferred (Gardner, 1984). In following the Privilege as Practice framework, this preferential selection for only two types of abilities in children creates situations where certain types of children are privileged over others.

Children who are able to adjust their ways of being or adhere to the process of selection for linguistic-verbal and mathematical-logical, will be privileged by the education system and will later hold the power to influence the system and other systems connected to education to maintain the status quo. Children who do not adhere (for various reasons) to the ways of standard assessments will not do well in the education system and are marginalized by the system. A lot of fear, uncertainty and doubt or what is termed as FUD (Frost, 2020) is conditioned into parents, educators and students about the ramification of not doing well in exams and the risk of becoming marginalized. This has repercussions on the way teachers teach which often times focus on practicing how to answer exam questions (Frost, 2020). It also influences parenting styles and values in society. Many of the variations in children's abilities are silenced in the process of becoming educated and privileged.

This thesis proposes that societies that practice privilege through standardization in education systems, miss out on two levels of diversity that may hold much innovations for a better way to exist. The first level of diversity that is silenced is the diversity of core being within each child and the second level of diversity that is silenced is the authentic self that is the sociality of a core being as it connects with the world through its strengths. "In the absence of authentic and reciprocal relationships across difference, we miss out on the potential creativity, adaptability, and resilience that diversity can bring." (Kolan & Sullivan TwoTrees, 2014, p. 3).

The process of becoming aware of my core being, my authentic self, my personal privilege and the implications of my privilege has been a journey into myself and at the same time, a journey outward into the world to understand my situation. I realized that the

rage that consumed me for many years was part of the culture of privilege within my life that oppressed my core being and hindered the authentic developments of personal and professional relationships. The education system does try to extinguish children's creativity and initiative, by promoting standardized patterns of learning and knowledge. This is often portrayed to children as teaching them what they will need to become privileged people in society. However, in this process of extinguishing children's subjectivity and personal uniqueness, many children are disenfranchised and feel rage (from both minority and privileged backgrounds).

As much as being privileged helped me succeed in many aspects of life, it equally contributed to the loss of hope (Blazer, 2005) and the inhibition of thought and expression (Widlocher, 2001). The culture of privilege absorbed my consciousness by erasing my authentic way of being in the world. It made me a part of the oppression and it made oppression a part of me. I became the oppressor of my being and I also became an oppressor of others as I normalized the ways to silence the inner voice of my being and the voices of others. The process of writing this thesis allowed me a safe space to untangle myself. "To no longer be prey to its force, one must emerge from it and turn upon it." (Freire, 2000, p. 51). I was able to examine how my personal privilege had affected me both personally and professionally.

I wish I could say that my present way of being is completely transformed but the truth is that privilege is still very much a part of me and vice versa. There are still moments of privileged thoughts and behaviours that are still difficult for me to notice. However, I am now more conscious of the existence of privilege and the implications it has in my life and how it affects others. In being conscious of personal privilege, I have become more aware of

how my privilege bias can silence the voices of others. Through much effort, I learn to adjust my actions accordingly, as a mother to my children and as an educator to other children, to be able to listen to the voices of their being in the language of their soul. Acknowledging that there is so much that I don't know due to the endless variations in people's spirits, hearts, minds and body, I have given up the habit of arguing and being confrontational on matters that are different from my points of view. My thesis may diverge from the views of many and I ask that my readers take it as a variation of perspective that does not make other perspectives that are already available completely wrong. It is a new humility in me that accepts the smallness of my being in comparison to the greatness of the world and beyond. The process of becoming aware of personal privilege is a humanizing process and it is a new vocation for me and a new way of life that is ongoing and multifaceted.

Research Question

This thesis is a sharing of self-exploration, connections and relationships that is not meant to be a discourse of proving or prescribing any universal truth for a certain decided objective through debates of practical reasoning. The structure of this thesis moves "us away from the objectivistic conception of processes of reaching understanding" (Habermas, 2004, p.276). Instead, it delves deeply into the complexities of personal experience (Ellis, 2004) that "reach out to social, historical and philosophical contexts to gain a wider significance, academically and personally 'making the personal political' (Holman-Jones, 2005, p. 763). The knowledge within personal experience cannot always be rationalized. As a result of the way this thesis approaches the concept of knowing, there may be some

divergence, at times, from the privileged liberal belief of western society where knowing is based on practical reasoning (Kahn, 2008; Habermas, 2004) and positivist outcomes.

In order to explore the process of personal privilege awareness and the implications of this awareness on the core being, professional judgement and educational leadership of Child and Youth Care practitioners, I will be addressing the following research question:

“What conditions are needed in the process of personal privilege awareness and reclaiming of core being? How can this process be a part of the development of professional judgement in pre-service training of Child and Youth Care practitioners in Nova Scotia?”

Literature Review

The Context of Nova Scotia's Education System

I will disaggregate the context of education in Nova Scotia in relation to Privilege in Practice model (Kolan & Sullivan TwoTrees, 2014), in order to connect my personal experiences to professional practice. I will attempt to elaborate some of the barriers to authentic self and diversity in ways of being that are present in the educational environment. As mentioned previously, diversity is an indicator of an inclusive environment that acknowledges and supports the development of differentiated ways of being. Homogenization is an indicator of privilege reproduction and marginalisation of diversity.

In 2014, the Report of the Minister's Panel on Education was published in Nova Scotia as "Disrupting the Status Quo: Nova Scotians Demand a Better Future for Every Student." It was the first review of the education system in 25 years. The report found that Nova Scotia academic results have been consistently below average for national and international standardized tests. Three out of ten students do not have adequate math and literacy for market demands. Overall, the report recommends the course for change within seven themes:

Theme 1 – **Curriculum** - Strengthen curriculum to transform teaching and learning

Theme 2 – **Teaching** - make high-quality teaching the norm in every classroom

Theme 3 – **Transitions** - prepare today's students for tomorrow's opportunities

Theme 4 – **Inclusion** - Ensure that inclusion is working for everyone

Theme 5 – **School Climate** - Create a positive climate for learning

Theme 6 – **Health and well-being** - Collaborate for improved student health and well-being

Theme 7 – **Modern structure** - Build a modern-day structure for teaching and learning

(Minister's Panel on Education, 2014, p.3)

Disrupting the status quo in education was a response that followed the economic report by the Nova Scotia Commission on Building Our New Economy (2014) entitled "Now or Never: An Urgent Call to Action for Nova Scotians. The economic reform urgently recommended changes to avoid a point of no return in the failing economy. In the foreword page of the economic report, it was found that "the evidence is convincing that Nova Scotia hovers now on the brink of an extended period of decline." In the concluding remarks in the Minister's Education Report, published 9 months after the Building Our New Economy report, only the view of the panel for the Nova Scotia Commission on Building Our New Economy (February 2014) was included for justification for the recommendations for educational reforms, even though the development of children overlaps with many other important social aspects (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). "Education is increasingly viewed as a vehicle for maintaining or enhancing the nation's economy" (Deakin Crick & Joldersma, 2007, pp 82). This interdependency between economy and education is clearly evidenced.

There are two underlying economic beliefs in the report that are important to highlight as part of the process of privilege awareness that this thesis seeks to explicate. The first underlying belief is that education in Nova Scotia leads to economic access and success in life. Secondly, the economic culture of efficiency and competition is a necessary personal characteristic that needs to be socialized through the education system.

Underlying belief #1 – education leads to economic access and success

To further investigate the interdependency and more finely understand the direction of the relationship between economy and education in Nova Scotia, we have to look at the state of economy at the time the report was released and the situations just before it. About 25 years before the education report, it was found that “in 1990 the richest 20% of Nova Scotian households had an average disposable income of 6.2 times greater than the poorest 20%. By 1998, the income of the rich was 8.5 times greater.” (Dodds & Colman, 2001, p. iv). The top 1% saw an increase in their share of income “mainly at the expense of the 40% of Canadians in the middle and upper-middle portions of the income distribution” (Fong, 2017, p. 6). Between the year 2000 and 2010, the income inequity stabilized and decreased after that. Although, the state of economy in Nova Scotia was not robust during the decade before the report in 2014, it was increasing modestly for most people and showing positive trends that resulted in the decreasing of income equity gap. In the two decades previous to that, the economy was worse for most people but there was no panic nor revamping of education as it was in 2014. So, how was the economy on the brink of crisis in 2014 to prompt the urgent economic report and the first education report in 25 years? A more detailed look found that ‘the share of income accruing to the top 1% of Canadian income rose steadily from 1990 until 2006, when it began to decline steadily to its lowest level in 2013 (Storring, 2019).

By 2014, at the time the report was published, the top 1% income share in Nova Scotia reached its lowest level in 25 years while other economic indicators were showing positive trends. So, when the report of the Minister’s Panel on Education was citing economic crisis, it was in fact, referring to the experience of the top 1% of income earners of Nova Scotians. The power of economic privilege of the top 1% to influence educational reform is overwhelming in Nova Scotia and more acutely determines economic access.

Therefore, the underlying belief that education in Nova Scotia leads to economic access and success in life is not entirely true. Economic access through education only happens when it conserves privilege of the top 1% income earners. When it does not, as what happened between 2006 to 2013, the education system will not create access and instead it will be reformed. The education reformation in 2014 was an adjustment to the preferences in schools and an effort to standardize education. The decline in the income of the top 1% begins to stabilise after 2014 and increased after that.

Underlying belief #2 – students need to compete to succeed

The second underlying belief builds on the first. It is a belief that youths must compete with other youth nationally and globally in the labour market in order to survive and succeed. “Given that our youth need to succeed in a competitive world,”(p. 3) the low educational scores in national and global measures is “deeply disturbing.” (p. 3). This underlying belief is consistent with the capitalist economic model that Canada had inherited through its history of western imperialism. This underlying belief influences the way we view children and society believes they should be.

According to World Systems Theory (Wallerstein, 2010), the continuous expansion of an economy, such as a global, national or provincial economy, is necessary for averting crises within the capitalist economic system. The capitalist economy accompanied geographical colonisation by the western imperial powers in the 16th century. The economy expanded with the expansion of colonisation. Although the geographic expansion of colonisation was limited and had stopped as colonized nations gained independence, the capitalist economic system has lasted till today and needs continuous expansion for its

existence which now progresses as the globalisation of markets. In order to expand an economy, two things must be present – 1) sovereign states and 2) monopoly (Wallerstein, 2010).

Capitalism requires multiple sovereign states which can compete against each other. Sovereign states could be independent nations, private corporation or other concepts that separates situations into competing sides. In this thesis, the concept of sovereign states would include polarised or divided situations such as found in the concepts of race, ethnicity and economic status that can all compete amongst each other. The culture of competition creates a mindset of 'us' against 'them'. It motivates affinity to identifying groups and bolster efforts to win against other groups. There will always be a winner that takes the market share of the loser. Repeated wins create growing monopolies and monopolies are the most efficient mode of trading (Wallerstein, 2010). It is the same mindset as competitive sports – there must be a winner and a loser. Competitors train to get better in their game and at the same time use strategies to undermine the opponent or have advantages to get ahead. These strategies to undermine or give advantage to certain teams are the preferences of differences of the game. The top athletes are the few that are able to pass through the preferences of differences, train their skills in a prescribed manner and score in many levels of competition to defeat competitors and win. Only a small percentage of athletes earn high income and become part of a small group of elite sports players or the sports oligarchies. Similarly, economic oligarchies are small number of people who are preferred and have advantage to win and expand their economic monopoly of market share.

Understanding this disparity between external economic influence of education and internal development of personal ways of being in children is instrumental in politicizing this thesis of privilege awareness in educators. “For as society pluralizes, it would increasingly require open discussion leading to mutual understanding and consensus formation in order to be effective in realizing social integration that is not facilitated through money or power” (Deakin Crick & Joldersma, 2007, p. 81). The culture of competition and monopoly is not supportive of the social integration needed in a plural society.

The education reform that was suggested in 2014, coincided with mechanisms that conserve privilege through standardization of curriculum and assessments. It places the education reform as a mechanism for increased privilege reproduction that would homogenize outcomes of education and fracture the core being of children.

The Context of Child and Youth Care practice

As a following response to this call to disrupt the status quo, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development introduced the Capable, Confident, and Curious: Nova Scotia’s Early Learning Curriculum Framework (NSELCF) and its accompanying Educators’ Guide in 2018. The document now serves as a framework for a social pedagogy “that emphasizes relationships and experiences” (pp. 11) as a way to inform practice. The preferences for this framework supports a more differentiated effect that is influenced by suspended judgement that allows for more variation in the ways of being. I will elaborate the framework to better understand how it is able to counter the standardization of the current Nova Scotian educational reform and support the cohesive core being of children. I

would encourage readers to patiently read and follow the flow of thought that will make visible the challenges within the educational context in Nova Scotia. My own personal story within the data section will show a similar path in Malaysia as both context are subjected to the economic colonisation elaborated in Wallerstein's (2004) World Systems Theory.

Within the NSELCF context, educators are guided by five main principles:

1. Play-based learning
2. Relationships
3. Inclusion, diversity and equity
4. Learning environments
5. Reflective practice

The social pedagogy that incorporates emergent curricular processes shifts away from program planning of defined activities intended to produce a defined standardized outcome. Instead, the framework encourages educators to be observant, engaged and receptive to children's input as a way to inform practice. Educators' professional judgement, that is "driven by a vision of children's potential", is viewed as a key component in achieving an early childhood education environment of 'fairness, justice and equity for all children' (p. 11). Although the document does not explicitly elaborate the role of privilege, it clearly calls for equity in early childhood education. This requires privilege awareness in educators and education systems in order to make visible and remove the barriers to making early childhood education "accessible, affordable, and inclusive for all families" (p. 5) and ensure that every child in Nova Scotia has opportunities they need to succeed in life. The NSELCF further asks educators to "challenge practices that contribute to inequalities and to make pedagogical decisions that promote inclusion and participation of all children."

(p. 31). In order to challenge these discriminatory embedded practices, educators must first be able to recognize these biases as a problem.

Three areas of practice for inclusive ECE environment

As Canada becomes more diverse, with Statistics Canada reporting 21% of the population being new immigrants and 4.9% indigenous in 2016 and projected to reach a combined 40% of population by 2036 with almost 55% of immigrants coming from Asia, a predominantly Euro-western, anglophone and monocultured early childhood educator workforce (Hyland, 2010; Gharabaghi, 2017) faces challenges creating equitable environments for well-being within their increasingly diverse classrooms. Nova Scotia's Early Learning Curriculum Framework (NSELCF) addresses this challenge with its pedagogical shift and encourages educators to reflect on three major areas of practice - Image of the Child, professional judgements and authentic assessments - to create a positive learning environment for every child. The interconnectivity of the three areas of practice, as shown in Figure 3, have the capacity to adjust the biases of privileged, anglo/franco-phone monoculture education. And, teachers as the instrument/agents in this process can pave the way for a more diversity inclusive environment that supports equitable access to learning and well-being for every child.

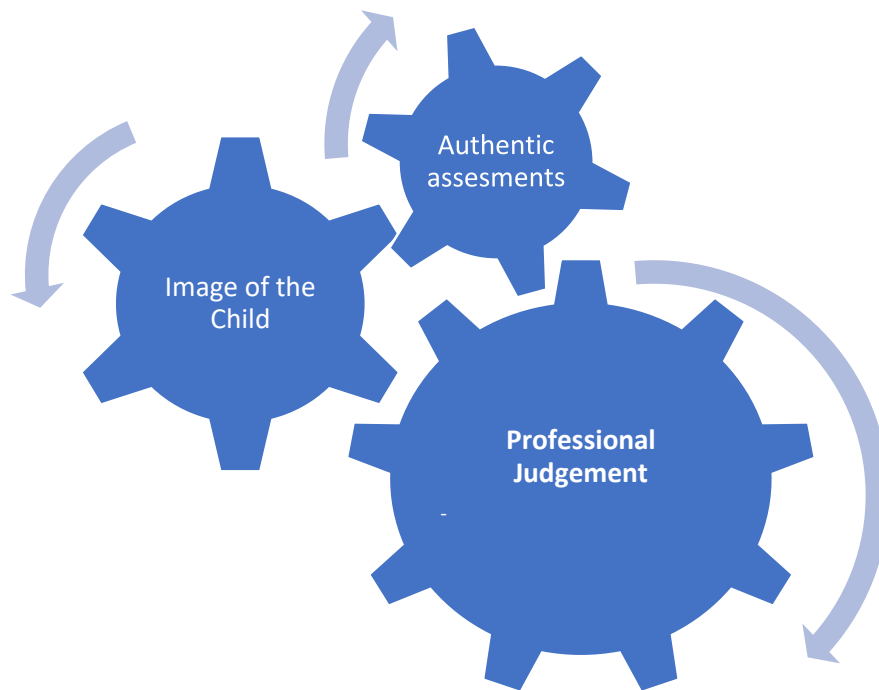


Figure 3. Interconnectivity of three components of practice

Three components of Professional Judgement

This thesis will address more deeply one area of practice which is the development of educators' professional judgement that emphasizes "fairness, justice and equity for all children" (NSELCF, 2018, p. 11). Educators are encouraged to bring together three components that build professional judgement:

1. "Professional knowledge of child development, children's learning, and skills to guide children's learning in an intentionally-planned play-based environment
2. Knowledge of children, families and communities, and cultural traditions
3. Awareness of how their beliefs, values, and Image of the Child impacts children's learning" (NSELCF, 2018, p. 11)

The third component of professional judgement that addresses the educators' awareness of self is where this thesis will be most relevant. Hays, Chang and Havice (2008) found that a

professional counsellor's awareness of their personal privilege was important in increasing multicultural competency. In mirroring that research, early childhood educators' awareness of personal privilege is important to increase their capabilities in supporting equitable access to learning and well-being for all children.

Three levels of reflections

The NSELCF believes that professional judgement for the facilitation of children's learning and well-being "requires educators to be reflective and intentional" (p. 11) in understanding educator's actions, the reasons for those actions and how those actions impact children and their families. Carol Stuart (2013) encourages child and youth practitioners to intentionally reflect and "understand the factors that affected their own development as a young person and the influence of those factors on their practice..." (p. 60) as part of educators' learning cycle of experiential learning and reflective practices to inform educators' knowledge and professional judgements. The experiential learning cycle includes the process of experiencing, sharing, processing, generalising and applying to practice.

Reflective practices introduced by Donald Schon (1987) have been adopted by the Nova Scotia early childhood education framework to support educators' learning cycle. There are three types of reflective practices elaborated by Schon (1987) and cited by Stuart (2013), which are

- reflection-in-action
- reflection-on-action
- reflection-for-action

Reflection-in-action happens during interaction and involves making choices for action while interacting with children. Reflecting on ourselves and our situation as early childhood practitioners “has a major impact on those we work with. The need to reflect, adapt, and evoke change is necessary to our practice.” (McKinlay & Ross, 2019, p. 9). Reflection-on-action occurs later after the interaction. It is a time where we try to sort out our thoughts and reactions through “internal narrative (thinking about what has occurred) or external narrative (talking to someone about what has occurred)” (McKinlay & Ross, 2019, pp.8). Reflection-for-action is a time to explore new experiences by linking it to past knowledge to create new meanings that will lead to intentional actions for practice. It is within the level of reflection-for-action that the process of privilege awareness is best located. Reflecting on ourselves and our situation as early childhood practitioners “has a major impact on those we work with. The need to reflect, adapt, and evoke change is necessary to our practice.” (McKinlay & Ross, 2019, p. 9).

The 3-3-3 model of conceptual connections in early childhood education practice (3-3-3-CCECEP)

The three areas of practice, three components of professional judgement and three levels of reflections build on each other. Enhancement in one part will encourage developments in other parts. The connections are visualized below in the 3-3-3 model of conceptual connections in early childhood practice as shown in Figure 4.



Figure 4: The 3-3-3 model of conceptual connections in ECE practice (3-3-3-CCECEP)

- **3 areas of Practice – (Image of the Child, Professional Judgement, Authentic Assessment),**
- **3 components of Professional Judgement (professional knowledge, particular knowledge, personal awareness)**
- **3 levels of reflections (reflection-in-action, reflection-on-action, reflection-for-action)**

In order to achieve professional judgement for the successful implementation of an emergent curriculum that is guided by the ‘pedagogy’ (guided by children) of the NSELFC, it is instrumental that the predominantly Euro-western, anglophone and monocultured early childhood educator workforce (Hyland, 2010; Gharabaghi, 2017) in Nova Scotia, become acutely aware of their personal biases, privileges and power. The ability and the willingness to become aware of personal privilege as a part of reflective practices are important in developing educators’ knowledge of self and how that self relates to others.

Privilege awareness moves the location of the three areas of practice (Image of the Child, Professional Judgement, Authentic Assessment) from the top of the Privilege of Practice model (power) to the bottom of the model (differences). The location of ECE

practice within the Privilege as Practice model will determine whether the mechanisms of preference for differences, as shown in Figure 5, homogenizes the core beings of children in a top-down prescription or acknowledges the various ways of being of children in a bottom-up differentiation process. Professional judgement is enhanced as educators become more aware of the normalization of privilege culture through its homogenizing effect that marginalizes children who do not fit its preferences, as elaborated in Figure 5.

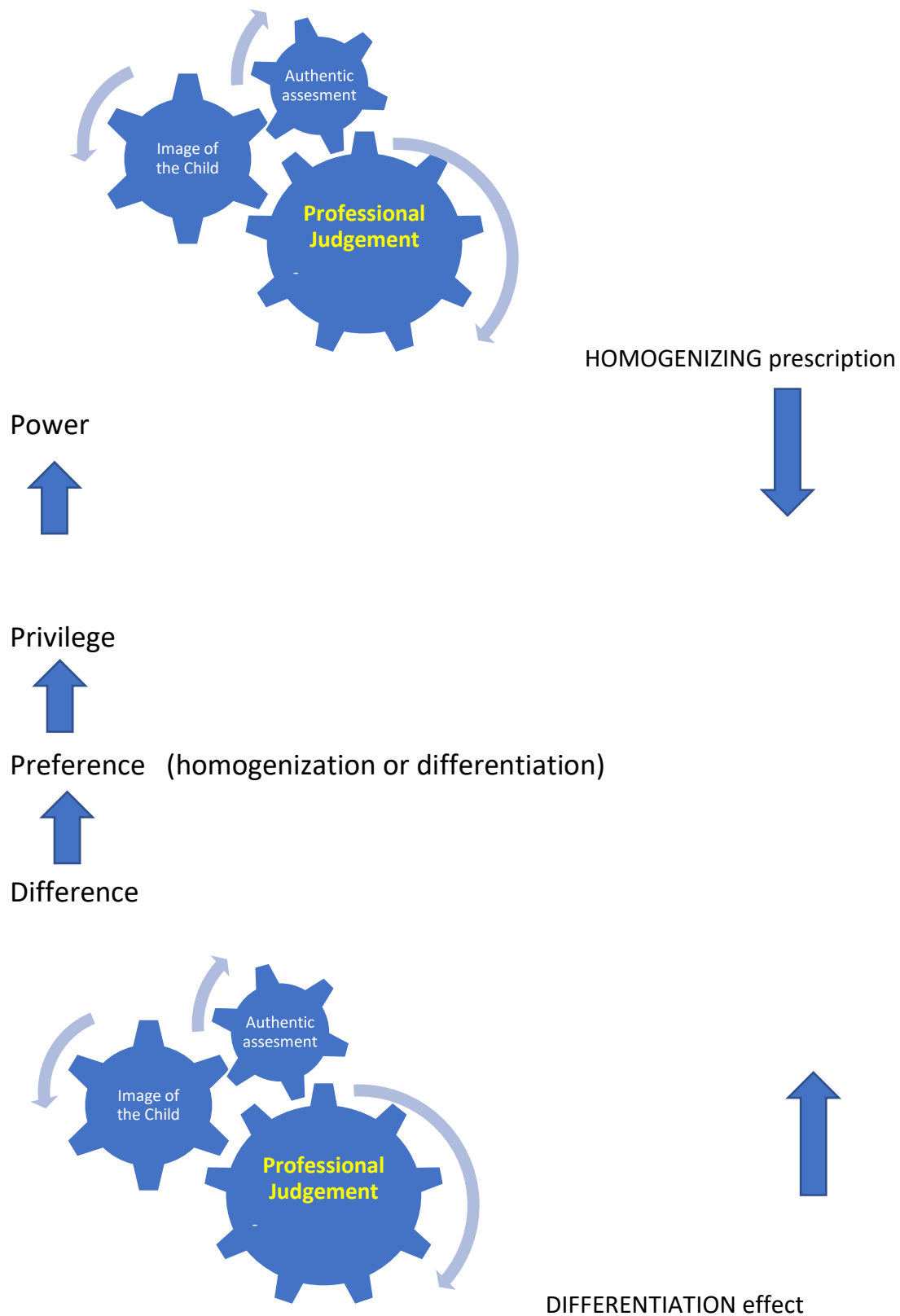


Figure 5: Location (power/difference) of ECE practice (Image of the Child, Professional Judgemnet, authentic Assessment) in Privilege as Practice Model

PRIVILEGE

In order to gain a greater and more wholistic understanding on the importance of the process of personal privilege awareness in shaping professional judgement through reflective practices in early childhood education, it might be helpful to understand

1. what is privilege,
2. the location of privilege,
3. privilege oblivion and,
4. how privilege is connected to marginalisation.

The interconnectedness of privilege and marginalisation makes it important for us to understand privilege and it's systems in order to address oppressions (Derman-Sparks, LeeKeenan and Nimmo, 2015; Ahmed 2012; McIntosh, 2020). Mullaly and West (2018) explains that "a singular focus on oppression ignores or overlooks the fact that oppression and privilege go hand in hand. You cannot have one without the other." (p. 35). Oppression and privilege are flip sides of a same coin. The systems that produce privilege is the same system that oppresses others.

Many sources are available to help understand how marginalized communities are oppressed which have resulted in many strategies regarding how the marginalized can become critically aware of their oppressed situations and find ways to overcome them (Freire, 2000; Hyland, 2010; Evans, 2019). However, very few studies exist on the process of how the privileged become aware of their personal privilege and the implications of the role that their privilege play in the marginalization of others. There is wide "literary silence protecting privilege" (McIntosh, 2020, p. 22) and this has helped to make privilege invisible

to those who have it (Ahmed, 2017; McIntosh, 2020; Mullaly & West, 2018; Phillip & Lowery, 2018; Thaler & Sunstein, 2009), thus making it unseen and unproblematicized.

The process of privilege awareness is needed as part of reflective practices and intentional actions in early childhood education to understand how our way of being in the world and the values that we hold have been influenced by privilege systems. These in turn, have affected our self-knowledge, how we connect to others and how way we view children (Image of The Child). Therefore, in order to affect the lives of children and our own in ways that allow for thriving and dignity, we must become aware of the structures of our personal privilege and how they are critically connected to the oppressions of others as well as to oppressions within ourselves.

Privilege definition

In the scope of this thesis, privilege can be defined as “unearned advantage derived from one’s group membership” (Hays, Chang, and Dean, 2004; Heldke & O’Connor, 2004; Marsiglia & Kuli, 2009; Northouse 2019, Phillip & Lowery 2018;). Peggy McIntosh (1988) explains the concept of privilege as an invisible backpack of tools for thriving or an unearned bank account that automatically tops up itself while Thaler & Sunstein (2009) explains this invisibility of privilege as habits of the Automatic System in people that minimizes time and effort in making decisions. These unearned advantages make those with privilege more successful because they have more opportunities, access and status (Hays, Chang & Dean, 2004).

Sara Ahmed (2012) elaborates how habits such as the ones that are part of Automatic System in people contribute to the concept of institutional wall which exerts an inertia that allow privileged habits to become hidden and ‘not revealed unless you come up

against them” (Ahmed, 2012, p26). The invisible backpack, Automatic System and institutional wall are the ‘background of habitualized activity’ of privilege (Ahmed, 2017, pp. 26). They help to make privilege become the norm without one really having to become aware of the privileges. Those who live comfortably in this background or default setting are those who live with privilege and they are able to pass through spaces easily and exist comfortably (Ahmed, 2017). Awareness of privilege and its systemic structures will bring awareness of its connected marginalization of those who do not fit into the prescribed system.

I would like to add that privilege is unearned advantage that is compounded over time much like the interest on loans are compounded oppressions. The characteristics of privilege and oppression as compounding in opposite directions allow them to grow exponentially apart. Islamic tradition would term this compounding privilege and interest as *riba*. It is a characteristic that swiftly widens the gap between the privileged and the marginalized (equity gap) resulting in extreme polarization of the two situations within the present economic system.

At different times and in different spaces, different groups may be privileged. In previous feudal states, the elites were privileged. In recent liberal states, the reasonable and empirical middle-classed are privileged. Many people with privilege may struggle in life and they do not notice nor acknowledge their privilege because life is hard for them too, “yet, it is harder for those who do not have privilege.” (McIntosh, 2020, p. 49). A thorough and exhaustive process of personal privilege awareness is needed in understanding who is exactly privileged, how they are privileged, the location of personal privilege and the systems that produce the privilege.

Privilege location

In my own journey of becoming aware of my privilege, I encountered many prolonged dissonances and personal disequilibrium that were mostly due to the fact that my personal privileges were not seen as privilege. I grew up with racial and class privilege in my home country which will be better explained later in the thesis. I believed that the good life I experienced were norms and I believed it to be a natural course of hard work and dedication. This made my privilege invisible and seen as the natural consequence of a life lived well.

This invisibility of privilege persists when we do not identify “the markers that are associated with privileged persons,” (Mullaly & West 2018) and this allows privilege to reproduce itself persistently and effortlessly cloaked as the norm and justified entitlement of hard work and dedication.

An example of this happened in my early childhood education centre. I would expect teachers there to be able to do things independently and in a professional (objective) manner. I had written policies and behaviour expectations to increase professionalism, efficiency and productivity. Why should two people do a task when one person was enough to get the job done? I chastised my staff, even the ones who had been with me for so many years, on this inefficient behaviour. Completing a task with a colleague when it could be done by just one person was redundant and a duplication of effort and above all not economically efficient. My teachers were stressed out with the demands for more efficiency, accountability and professionalism – much like the “Quality Matters’ documentation in Nova Scotia. Below is an example of reminders in the centre for the

behaviour expectations of staff that required specific professional, progressive and proper behaviours in thought, speech and action.



Figure 6. Professional Personality guide – Professional, Progressive, Proper in Thought, Speech and Action

Many capable early childhood educators left my centres. I could not see that my expectations were privileged expectations and that I was privileged. I could not see that because they were not as rigorously educated, their ways of being in the world were not as individualized as my way of being was. According to Markus and Kitayama (2010), the way their selves related to the world was by becoming interdependent and the way I related to the world was transactional as individuals. My teachers' core beings were more cohesive and they related to each other with a combination of heart, spirit, mind and body. They would not do tasks (buying groceries, planning events, prepping for activities) independently not because they were not capable but because they were interdependent with each other. They worked better together, they enjoyed sharing space with each other, giving support to each other and they cared for one another as they cared for themselves. The privilege was

in me and the mark of that privilege was the ability to disconnect my heart and spirit from my work resulting in objectivity and efficiency. Asking my staff to be professional and individualized was asking them to deny their cohesive ways of being and the connections they had with each other. I used myself as a privileged standard for them and I asked them to be efficient, which meant doing a lot of things without their heart and spirit. I asked them to chip away their authentic selves to be an individual that would fit into the mechanization of the centre operations. My centre marginalized the thriving of inner core being in my staff as the operations preferred the professionalism based on privileged western individualism and efficiency.

Privilege Oblivion

Due to the intersectionality of privilege and erasure (marginalisation/oppression), when the privileged are oblivious to their privilege, they are also oblivious to how their privilege is related to the sufferings of others. (McIntosh, 2020; Freire, 2000; Phillips & Lowery, 2018). As much as it hurt my staff, it also hurt myself as well, only I didn't realize it then.

I would argue that privilege oblivion is also related to the oppression towards the self. I dehumanized them and in the process became similarly dehumanized (Freire, 2000) "Privilege hurts both the victims and the beneficiaries of privilege even as it pays dividend to the latter group" (Mullaly & West, 2018, p.37). I ended up becoming the beneficiary of the privilege system and also its victim. Even to the day I arrived in Canada, I could not understand what went wrong. I could not see my position as being privileged. I was blind to the connections of my privilege and the oppression of their ways of being. I was even more oblivious to how my privilege erased the cohesiveness of my core being – my heart,

mind, self and spirit. I could not access my heart nor my spirit to understand that my actions caused hurt to others in their heart and soul. My core being was oppressed.

I could not understand that my privileges were unearned advantages of being a member of the social and economic elite. I believed my abilities were the normative development of a person. I believed the system that privileged me through my education and environment were societal norms, the way things needed to be. My professional judgement was located and operated from the top of the Privilege as Practice model making my expectations a part of homogenizing process that marginalizes those who did not comply as shown in Figure 5.

My inner core of being (heart, mind, body and spirit), became fractured, separated and broken. My authentic self which is the sociality (the way the self interact with the world) that is based on the conditions of my core being became highly individualized, competitive and unable to fully be a part of others. I could not access my heart nor my spirit to understand how my actions silenced and caused harm to the well-being of others. My privilege was an invisible barrier to my humanity.

Privilege oblivion connected to marginalisation

Unfortunately, this privilege oblivion is not just my unique blindness. In Canadian schools and many schools that are similar, the privileged values of universal Euro-western, middle class monoculture and the use of coloniser languages (English and French) are pervasive (Minister's Panel on Education, 2014) even though Statistics Canada records a diversity of over 200 different languages in the population. It can be assumed that the diversity in languages is an observable characteristic of the diversity in cultures and values that are somehow not reflected in the school system. The school system is seen to

marginalize other ways of being through silencing their cultures, values and languages while simultaneously privileging students who are able to exhibit similar Euro-western values, middle class monoculture and are able to speak English or French. Evans (2019) reports that racially black students are not comfortable in school environments. This discomfort is when the existential space does not extend or allow for the movement of those who are different (Ahmed, 2017). “While schools have made some improvements to recognize different cultural and racial experiences, there is still a significant way to go in building a curriculum that is inclusive of minority culture, race and language experiences.” (Minister’s Panel on Education, 2014, p. 16)

The BLAC report in 1994 followed by the Reality Check report in 2009 elaborated systemic marginalization of Black students within Nova Scotian education system. The current education report have also acknowledged that school environments do not fairly reflect racialized students. “African Nova Scotian respondents were 30 percent less likely than respondents of European or Acadian descent to agree that schools are committed to equity and human rights; and only half of all Aboriginal, African Nova Scotia, Middle Eastern, Asian, and East Asian respondents agreed that classrooms reflect their cultures,” (Minister’s Panel on Education, 2014, p. 46). This inequity also includes teacher representation as “decades of working to remedy the under-representation of certain groups in the teaching profession have made some difference, but more needs to be done.” (Minister’s Panel on Education, 2014, p.49). Following logical deduction, under-representation of a situation must correlate in an over-representation in its connected opposite situation. Therefore, the under-representation in certain groups which are racialized teachers would indicate an opposite situation of over-representation of white teachers.

The under-representation of racialized students' cultures would mean an over-representation in white culture which is the result of the effect of privileged preferences of selective differences. The way professional judgements are made by all levels of the education system tend to favour (prefer) whiteness or white culture through the preferences made at gates of privilege in schools as mentioned earlier in this thesis in the Privilege as Practice model. There is strong preference for practices such as independent self-construal (Markus & Kitayama, 2010), separation of parts of core being (professionalism defined by objectivity and absence of emotions), strategizing, competition and efficiency. This situation results in those having similar culture which coincide with White culture becoming privileged and those who don't are marginalised. This privilege and marginalisation are compounding over time, as I have explained, which creates a polarizing situation of over-representation of White culture and marginalization of other cultures in schools.

An example of this privilege bias that supports systemic racism was made visible when two opposing views of the student race riot in 1989. Minister David Nantes was quoted by Allen (1989) as saying "there is no problem with racism in the educational system – it simply doesn't exist." (p. 14) Nantes was reported to have said this late January 1989 as a response to the racial student (white and black students) riots in Cole Harbour District High School on 10th January 1989. Offering an opposing view, the racially Black vice principal of St. Stephen's-Highland Park School in the North End of Halifax, Van Roy Tobbit, was reported in the same article as saying, "All teaching methods are designed to teach white, Anglo-Saxon, upwardly mobile people." (p. 14). He went on to add that "Nothing has been done to alter the way teachers are taught to teach, so we have culturally deficient teachers teaching culturally different kids." (p. 14). Minister Nantes could not or would not see the

oppression of Black children which manifested as systemic racism within the education system even when presented with evidence of a racially motivated student riot and direct accounts of the experiences of the Black community. In order to make visible the discriminatory preferences of differences which guard the gates of privilege in schools, privileged educators and administrators must look inward and acknowledge their own cloaked privilege that are connected to the silencing and marginalisation of others. Privilege bias and privilege oblivion enables marginalization and is a barrier to equity, inclusion and diversity.

For the purpose of this thesis, I will be using the term White race (with capitalized 'W') as a social construction (not as a biological phenology) in the same way other races are accepted as social construct. Although this will bring a situation that is uncomfortable and anxiety provoking in many who identify as White, it is a necessary step in the process of privilege awareness and addressing its connections to oppression. The unearned advantages that White community have are usually invisible to themselves (DiAngelo, 2018; McIntosh, 2020). However, DiAngelo (2018) explains that if "I understand racism as a system into which I was socialized, I can receive feedback on my problematic racial patterns," (p. 4). Personal privilege awareness and solving its oblivion requires that the White racial construct be named and placed clearly so that the situation can be acted upon concretely.

Privilege endears and pervades

Privilege that is practiced within the education system has been highlighted since the racial student riots in 1989 and continue to be highlighted by the BLAC report in 1994 followed by the Reality Check report in 2009. It is again mentioned in the Minister's Panel

Report on Education in 2014 and most recently in the Black Lives Matter movement in 2020. Even with so much evidence of marginalisation in the education system, it continues. Even through changes in political parties in 1994 from conservative to liberal, it continues. Economic privilege in schools is able to “cross political lines” (Frost, 2020). This is the enduring compounding power of privilege that is invisible but is able to determine the preferences within systems. This situation needs to be clearly named so that the ‘more that needs to be done’ as recommended by the education report in 2014 is based on inclusive reality and not a privilege bias.

The implicit bias that is linked to unearned privilege needs to be explicitly and objectively be acted upon to dismantle the institutional wall (Ahmed, 2012) of privilege which are barriers to the well-being (survival, development, protection and participation) and authentic ways of being in children. According to Allan Johnson (2006), “privilege creates a yawning divide in levels of income, wealth, dignity, safety, health, and quality of life.” which makes the problem of privilege not just a moral dilemma, but a matter of survival.

Privilege as the outcome of world-systems

In correlating privilege in Canada with Euro-western, anglophone and monocultured values, that were part of previous external expansion of western imperial colonial empires and continuing internal expansion of colonial economy, it is important to note that privilege is not exclusively a biological pre-disposition. Certain races have had the advantage of history, socio-politics and economy to be more numerous represented in the place of privileged presently through the accompanying exogenously developed education. ‘White privilege’ is the result of much violence around the world that enacted various policies

which created advantageous positions and present-day privileges of many racially White persons and White dominated countries (McQuade, 2016; Murray, 2017; Thomas, 2012). However, White privilege is not biologically nor genetically reproduced. It is institutionally reproduced by education, economy, class norms, practices, policies and assumptions.

For example, my great grandfather worked in the British colonial government and was sent to serve in Malaya in the early 1900s. This was almost 300 years after the first western imperial warships from Portugal headed by Afonso D'Albuquerque arrived in 1511 to invade and colonise the thriving port of Melaka in what was then known as Tanah Melayu (land of the Malays). The 1500s was a time when the internal feudal economy in western Europe was failing and their imperial expansion dominated many parts of the world in order to export the economic structure and support the situation back home. According to Wallerstein (2010), the European colonisers came to establish a capitalist world economy that would ensure the continued economic growth in their European homeland by enforcing unequal trade relations. This was part of the exogenous development of external prescription on the ways of the natives of the lands they colonised. According to Wallerstein's world system theory, this created an advantageous position for the colonisers and they proceeded to systematically delete any cherished cultures and traditions that were deemed as sources of friction and inefficiency in this economic system (Friedman, 2005). Along with their canons, the Western European expansion brought with it exogenous development (Theunissen, 2017) that exerted Euro-western norms on the everyday lives of locals and natives. "This imposition was most acutely articulated through formal education systems modelled on the hegemonic intellectual and cultural institutions, and processes endemic to the West." (Theunissen, 2017, p.267).

The geographic expansion was limited but the internal expansion of their socio-politics and economy were limitless and remain a continuous reality that has been normalized presently. The normalization of this colonial socio-political and economic culture have institutionalized its privileges as deserving meritocracy within its education systems. It continues to disconnect colonized populations (the Malays) from the diversity of traditional knowledge that could help innovate more equitable ways of existing. Leyden (1821) remarked that Portuguese had destroyed the strength of the native states while the greedy policy of the Dutch “swallowed up the resources of this extensive Archipelago in a narrow and rigid monopoly” (p. x) that led to the destruction of native trade which caused the loss of dignified existence for the natives and signalled the beginning of the oppression and marginalization of the Malays which later enriched the British empire. The political and economic systems that were brought by imperial colonial empires through religious indoctrination were later enabled by the Euro-western universal education system that continue to privilege those who are White.

The Portuguese were defeated by the Dutch in 1641 and were succeeded by the British in 1795 (Leyden, 1921). It was during the British imperial rule that my great grandfather arrived. He was Scottish and racially White but he was not privileged amongst the White men within the British government. The British empire privileged not all of its white race but a select oligarchy of wealthy merchants who were politically connected to the elite of the society, which were their version of top 1% income earners. The elite privileges of the coloniser British empire did not flow through my grandfather’s legacy to my mother or her siblings. Not all Whites are privileged to the same extent and there existed and still exist intra-racial diversity of levels of privilege. Although there exists some class

mobility in present times, the preferences of differences at the gates of privilege in schools ensures that this mobility remain selective.

My paternal great grandfather was the son of a Raja from the Mendailing clan in Indonesia. A Raja is more closely similar to the indigenous chief of the elders than a western concept of a King. My paternal great grandfather, was said (disclosed by living elders in my family), to have disagreed with his father, Raja Gadu. And, true to traditions, he left rather than fight his father. Traditionally, people would leave the 'Kerajaan', which is the jurisdiction of the Raja, when they were unhappy and would be accepted in another Kerajaan.(Milner, 2016) This system ensured that a Raja would have to be very connected to his people's needs and be just in his rulings to retain his community, ability to lead and protect his kerajaan.

The Malay culture and traditions spanned over a wide area between Indonesia and Malaysia where there were no borders as like what we see now. When my great grandfather left his father's Kerajaan, he was accepted with status by the community in a thriving town of Kajang in present day Malaysia. My great grandfather starts a family in this new land and with the help of his new family, began developing large areas for the growing community. My grandfather was born soon after. He was sent to school and was said to have scored the highest marks for the standardized British Lower Secondary School Certificate. He rose in rank in the government service after that. My late father was born as my grandfather became the District Officer in Kajang. He was sent to elite residential/boarding school from the age of 7 years old to be Euro-western educated in service of the privilege system and simultaneously be instructed in Islamic Studies as we embraced Islam in the new land. He became a doctor as his father became the Governor of

the state of Malacca. My father ended his service with the government of the newly independent Malaysia as the Assistant Director General of Health. He was a Malay (indigenous) who learned the English language well, wrote eloquently, was acute in his mathematical and critical thinking and scientifically educated through privileged elitist Euro-Western schools in Malaysia and in England. He was intentionally privileged by government, education, economic and social policies as our country transitioned into an independent state but retained much of the colonised practices of the British empire. However, the privilege was conditional on him giving up traditional ways of being that were deemed inefficient and inconsistent with the economic structures of western imperial privilege. Even though my father was not racially White, but he was privileged by the same world-systems that privileged the Whites in Canada.

Privilege as a cultural and personal colonisation

Although, it would seem like my father's life was the epitome of success, my father held much unspoken resentment or sadness which I believe I better understood later as I began to live those same privileges and lose my authentic self and core being. Through my father's legacy of being intentionally disconnected from family and culture through elitist residential/boarding schools and 'White privileged' through its monocultured Euro-western education, economy and politics, I was, inter-generationally, further disconnected and inherited the evolved version of White privilege which was the Malay privilege. I continued to be politically and economically privileged through many new government policies that were meant to eradicate poverty and inequity for my racial group. The experience of Malaysia in trying to decolonize and balance economic inequities will be discussed further within this thesis and have similar trends as present situation in Nova Scotia. At this point, it

is suffice to note that the networking of the privileged class (the invisible backpack) was passed on to me as was the culture of individualistic achievement, discipline, efficiency, capitalist financial intelligence, personal/health safety, choices, self-determination and a safe home in the “Bedford” of the city of Kuala Lumpur. I was privileged through the disconnection to my indigenous father’s history and not the biological inheritance of my mother’s White Euro-western ancestors. My personal privilege is not a biological predisposition of the White racial genotype but the predisposition of its evolved localised world-systems. Privilege interfaces with race wherever it is efficiently beneficial. I see my privilege as a cultural colonisation of the Malays and a personal colonisation of my core being.

Similar privilege advantages rooted in past colonisation persist for others, like me, who are not White but live the various versions of evolved western imperial privilege. The awareness of this situation of privilege has simultaneously brought awareness of the erasure of my cultural identity and the silencing of my authentic self through the domination of endemic hegemony of the West. I do wonder if racially White people are aware of the erasure of their cultural identity through the use of their race for the perpetuation of white privilege for some but not all of their social group? When the white race reclaim their personal core being by understanding how the top 1% have colonized them from the time of the first western imperial ship, then maybe we will know what is the authentic white cultural identity that must surely be varied and diverse, not homogenized as it is today. The erasure and the silencing of diverse cultural capital to enable economic privilege within education systems also erases potential for valuable innovations and adaptations for the collective good (Theunissen, 2017; Leyden, 1821).

Diversity as strength and resistance

Personal privilege awareness takes courage and commitment. It is not just a mere noticing but a deep understanding, of our place and our part in the systems that favour some and oppress others (Pilarska, 2014; Mullaly & West 2018; Freire, 2000; Kahn, 2005). If we are lucky, certain life events would come against these default settings of privilege and make visible the structures of privilege that have influenced our identity in the course of our lives. These “lucky” life events would trigger a discomfort or dissonance in our consciousness due to the undeniable sufferings of others at the other end of the spectrum of privilege. The trigger could be a person, a movie, a show, an event, a poster, a trip, a scholarship or a relationship. The dissonances at the beginnings of the process of privilege awareness may fester for years before being moved into a path of reflection that will challenge our identities, the way we view ourselves, all our values and how we connect with the world around us.

The process of privilege awareness must be extended from the initial awareness to a thorough process of reviewing the self in a process of becoming. “The approach must be to deepen our understanding of ourselves” (Kahn, p.37) and to clarify our “own political location in the world relative to many variables” (McIntosh, 2020, p. 13). The process of becoming aware of my privilege made me more clearly understand how my own identity had been formed. Markus and Kitayama (2010) explains how the self and the social environment affect each other to create independent and interdependent self-construals as the outcome of people attuning to their environments. Privilege reproduction mechanisms create individualistic self-construal and, as the presently dominant social environment, it will continue to seek to erase the interdependent self-construal of many non-privileged

communities. Selective reproduction of privilege should be the 'status quo' that the education reforms in Nova Scotia aim to disrupt, in order to support mechanisms for differentiation of core beings that offer the diversity that hold potential to innovate new ways forward. Diversity is the strength that will produce new ways of thriving together and is a resistance to the culture of competition.

The process of privilege awareness as an intentional act

The process of personal privilege awareness for educators as part of reflective practice is an intentional process that educators need to commit to willingly, with open hearts and minds (McIntosh, 2010; Igbu & Baccus, 2019; Mackenzie, 2019;). Courage and support are needed to overcome privilege's persistent, endearing and addictive habits. It cannot be a process based on external compulsion but instead needs to be internally triggered and intentionally maintained. Intentionality is an ability of those who believe in their efficacy to affect their situation (Bandura, 1997). Therefore, a level of personal efficacy (belief in personal ability) is needed to commit to the process of privilege awareness. "People need firm confidence in their efficacy to mount and sustain the effort required to succeed." (Bandura, 1997, p. 11).

The path may be different for each person and this uncertainty of unprescribed progression is very disconcerting for most privileged people. Privilege culture vehemently dislikes risks as it can disrupt the conservation of its power. The demonizing of risks manifests as the 'Kiasu' syndrome in Malaysia and Singapore which has similarly pervaded Nova Scotia as Fear, Uncertainty, Doubt (or FUD) (Frost, 2020). The uncertainty of the process of privilege awareness challenges the very psyche of privilege culture. I cannot emphasize enough that it needs much courage to commit to the process. It is a process that

will evolve and change the identity of a person with privilege in unique ways. Islamic traditions would call it as a return to Fitrah, the way we were meant to be (Ramadhan, 2016). Such life changing process should not rest on luck but instead should be initiated by intention. Intentionality is one of the bases of humanizing and honourable actions (Freire, 2000) and “people must first critically recognize its causes (of oppressions), so that through transformative action they can create a new situation” (pp. 47) that leads to fuller humanization. Therefore, privilege awareness should not depend on the alignment of the stars or luck. It should be an intentionally pertinent part of a critical culture of equity and diversity.

Although this process of reflection in addressing disequilibriums cannot be imposed by external structures, it needs much external support. There must be safe spaces within educational institution that would support the emotional, psychological, cognitive and spiritual exploration of the self. Supportive systems must be prepared to encourage the maintenance of the process until internal dissonances are resolved. Educators need to believe that it is a process that they have the efficacy to explore with support and understanding from their team and institutional systems involved. It is a process that requires institutional kindness, empathy, love and much personal courage from educators and their professors. I will clarify this conceptual reasoning through autoethnographic stories within this thesis.

However, firm confidence must not be equated to certainty in outcomes but a belief that the efforts will make a difference. The outcome of the process of personal privilege awareness is unique for each educator. There is no certainty in the ways that a person would progress in the process and this uncertainty can be distressing for those with privilege as part of the culture of privilege, which widely intersects with economic privilege,

is eliminating risks or uncertainties in decision making, as banks do when evaluating loans. But, people are not banks; therefore, the rules governing economy cannot be simply transferred to individual's intentionalities. There will be unknown risks, which cannot be mitigated from the onset of this process, that would cause disruptions to a person's normative ways of being during this process. It is a process of losing the present oppressive ways of being and reclaiming the cohesive core (heart, mind, body and spirit) being. The uncertainty is a space for creation of new ways of being. This unique intentional process of privilege awareness requires vulnerability and can be daunting but it is necessary to maintain the process until inner disequilibriums are resolved. Vulnerability is the measure of courage.

Methodology – Multivocal autoethnography

To be consistent with my present state of being privilege aware, I looked for a research method that would be able to delve into my particular truth that would allow me to share stories about my life, my way of being, the context surrounding me and how the process of privilege awareness changed me, my work and the relationships with those around me. I wanted a methodology that would enable a deeper personal connection with readers that encourage readers to feel, as well as know, my experiences. I needed a method that moved away from universal truths, empiricism, positivism and argumentative rationalizing. I looked with my cohesive core of qalb, aql, nafs and roh. When I read the book entitled 'The Ethnographic I: A Methodological Novel About Ethnography' by Carol Ellis (2004), I knew that it was the perfect method for this thesis.

In the book, Carol Ellis writes that autoethnography gives readers "the benefit of experiencing how I had acted and felt in this extreme situation" (Ellis, 2004, p.19). She

continues to assert that autoethnographic writing practices artful, poetic, and emphatic social science that evoke emotional experience in readers, challenge the privilege of social scientific inquiry by giving voice to stories that are usually marginalised, produce quality and artistic literature and improve readers', participants, and researchers lives. Ellis' work is complimented by Arthur P. Bochner who adds that "one of the joys of reading and learning from autoethnography is the pleasure of following the consciousness of a thoughtful, introspective, flawed human being struggling to disentangle from a knotty experience and in the process tossing his or her voice into the confusion." (Bochner & Ellis, 2016, p117). Both Ellis and Bochner have given me the confidence to write from my heart, embrace my experiences, trust my reflections, use writing as a process of inquiry and to honestly strive to make meaning from my memories and experiences.

After understanding the process of autoethnography, I have decided that data will be distilled through an autoethnographic lens which utilises a combination of autobiography, ethnography, and interpretive analysis (Ellis, Adams & Bochner 2011; Ngunjiri, Hernandez & Chang, 2010; Bochner & Ellis, 2016; Choi, 2017.) The autoethnographic paradigm is grounded in a unique interpretive social science that diverges from realist, positivist, modernist social science and instead moves toward reflexive, dialogic, and collaborative research process. The process of autoethnography validates the personal experiences that have impacted the participants and brought changes in their lives (Bochner & Ellis, 2017). Autoethnography "evokes in readers a feeling that the experience described is lifelike, believable, and possible, a feeling that what has been represented could be true." (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011). "Collectively, the elements of autoethnography form a systematic analysis of the actions, thoughts, reasons, and situations of a particular

individual operating in a particular culture that aims to understand his/her way of life.”

(Choi, 2017, p. 30).

In an autoethnography, the researcher is both a subject (that investigates) and object (that is investigated) and the method is both a process and a product. Although this has led to many criticism of the method, it has also opened up “opportunities to study subject areas that would not be as easily and profoundly expressed with other methods” (Ngunjiri, Hernandez & Chang2010) which include grief, loss, depression, disorders, family drama and self-awareness. “Readers would not only know but also feel the truth of first-person accounts, and thus be more fully immersed, and engaged – morally, aesthetically, emotionally, politically, and intellectually” (Bochner & Ellis, 1996 as cited in Bochner & Ellis, 2016). Autoethnography as a research method acknowledges that it is not possible to do research from a neutral, impersonal and objective points of view (Bochner, 2002) because “Individuals cannot ‘step out’ of their lifeworlds,” (Habermas, 2004, p. xxvi). Each person involved as researcher, participants or readers engages with the data and experience an understanding with personal influences from unique past learnings and various previous knowledge. This subjectivity between researchers, participants and readers acknowledges unique realities of each person.

The method is strengthened when the narrator is believed to have had the experiences and that the account is the particular truth of the narrator instead of a universal truth (Bochner, 2002). The method requires a common ground or a common understanding of the background for the narrator’s experience so that both writer and reader “can begin to see or understand the same things.” (Wilson, 2008, p. 6) and readers can “comprehend the writer’s beliefs in order to see what the writer sees’ (Wilson, 2008, p.7). Herbamas (2004) explains this as the background for “a shared global preunderstanding that is prior to any

problems or disagreements” (p. xxvi) to reach an understanding (*Verstandigung*) where both “understand a linguistic expression in the same way” (p.307). Thick or evocative descriptions that bring the readers into the story strive to create this common ground here readers and narrators can have a common understanding of the experiences (Bochner & Ellis, 2016). “These writers want readers to be able to put themselves in the place of others, within a culture of experience that enlarges their social awareness and empathy.” (Ellis, 2004). It is a decolonized method that requires humble positions to facilitate relational experience from voices that have been silenced by dominant research methods. Habermas (2004) elaborates the process of silencing more clearly when he explains that meaning is found in the structures of interpersonal communication and any interference (such as colonization of systems) to this action will result in a crisis stemming from a loss of meaning, invalidation of personal truths, disconnect and confusion. The process of autoethnography is a structure of interpersonal communication that limits the interference of privileged empirical rationalisation as it discards the need to conform to external measurements of validity and allows stories to organically emerge from within the narrators in their own way. Autoethnography correlates well with emancipatory relational paradigms such as the Indigenous paradigm and for me, my reflexive narrative. It gives me the liberty to be my authentic self who can recognize connections with deeper meanings as I learn more about how my situation relates to the world around. Robert Mizzi (2010) illustrates a more precise form of autoethnography that acknowledges the plurality of being within researchers who may use multitudes of voices in sharing their stories. Mizzi’s multivocal autoethnography creates space for plural and even contradictory narrative voices of the researcher. It enhances the richness and reflexivity of qualitative research and will be used as the primary research method for data collection in this thesis. It also captures the grappling of the

researcher in the making sense out of the process of privilege awareness. Multivocal and evocative versions of autoethnography were selected as the method for data collection in this thesis for four reasons.

Firstly, evocative multivocal autoethnography as a research method offers a valid way of sharing personal stories of privilege awareness through the various voices of personal identity multiplicity and intersectionality (Choi, 2017). It supports the many versions of myself in different historic moments of my life, through which it is possible to witness my identity evolution as I become more and more privilege aware. Secondly, the inherent self-analysis and reflections on social expectations and structures give this particular form of autoethnography the reflexivity needed in connecting data to reality. Thirdly, the combination of autobiography, ethnography and analysis is therapeutic as new understandings of reality create new ways of being and new hope for the future. Finally, evocative multivocal autoethnography is the revolutionary progression of research away from the dominant colonized academic privilege of universal truths. It is a method that includes plurality, interdependent identity, relational ethics and it amplifies silenced voices. The method allows the plurality of being within me and the interdependent nature of my self-construal with others to be shared in its completeness in order to affect those who relate to it.

It is for all the aforementioned qualities that autoethnography is used as a research method to offer a critical space for dialogue between different worldviews/culture/paradigms for the process of privilege awareness.

Data Collection

'Zoom-in/zoom-out' strategy (Chang 2008)

The data to address my research question is collected from personal journals, social media postings, photographs, letters, discussions and memories. The data will be processed in two distinct ways which are analysis and interpretation. Heewon Chang (2008) conceptualized an approach of 'zoom-in' and 'zoom-out' technique that aims to balance analysis and interpretation. Analysis is the fracturing of experiences into certain categories such as privileged views and non-privileged realities. In this thesis, analysis would be a 'zooming in' of inward reflections while 'zooming out' would be a reflexive action to interpret the analysis within the context or background of the experience. Inward reflections using internal narrative (thinking or communicating with own self about what has occurred) and external narrative (talking with someone else about what has occurred) are used to zoom in to analyse my reactions and responses towards a phenomenon while reflexive reflection will zoom out to facilitate interpretation as part of connections to world events that are linked to the phenomenon being reflected on. "An ideal data analysis and interpretation process combines the zoom-in and zoom-out approaches" (Chang, 2008). In addition to this approach, the 5-stage model of privilege awareness proposed by Dunlop, Scogin, Green & Davi (2007) is central to my methodology and will be a guide to collecting pertinent data.

Modified version of Dunlop's (2007) 5-step model of privilege awareness (Dunlop et al, 2007)

In order to help the process of untangling confusions, reflections will be guided by a revised 5-step model of personal privilege awareness proposed by Dunlop, Scogin, Green & Davi (2007) as illustrated in Figure 7.

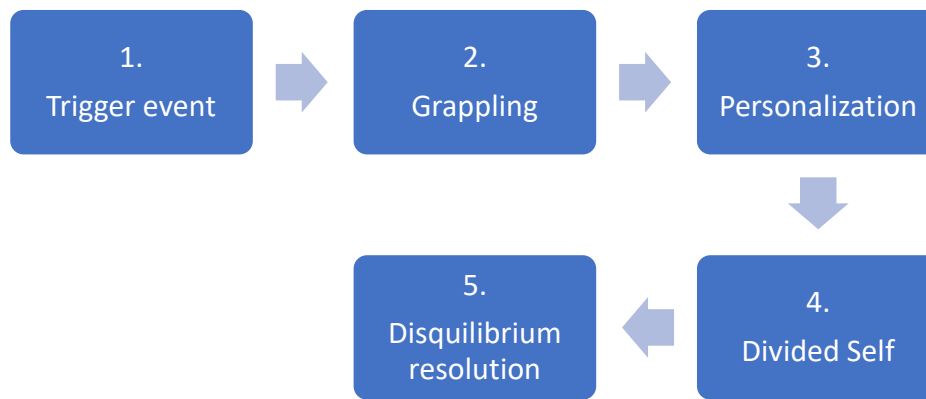


Figure 7. 5-step model of personal privilege awareness (Dunlop et al, 2007)

The 5-step model is a way to make visible personal privileges and a guide to resolve existential disequilibriums such as rage, grief, anger, disappointment and disbelief. Instead of a linear step model, I will showcase, through the narrating of my personal journey, how Dunlop's model could be re-framed from that of a step model to that of a looping-spiral process. The process can loop back instead of progressing forward as the process is challenged by difficult realizations and confusions. It may also spiral with several steps going on at the same time. The steps may include

Step 1- Trigger events – an experience that creates a dissonance or disequilibrium

Step 2 - Grappling – the process of making meaning

Step 3 - Personalization- challenging the self

Step 4 - The Divided Self- conflict within the self

Step 5 - Disequilibrium Resolution – resolves the conflict

The first step in this process is ignited by trigger events which bring about a dissonance in our being that may affect the way we think, feel or do things (Dunlop et al,

2007). English (2016) describes this dissonance as a discontinuous moment indicating our blind spot that is the limit of our knowledge. It disrupts our normal way of being and will cause feelings of discomfort, confusion or frustration. These trigger events are more likely to occur in an environment of diversity where there are opportunities for encounters of difference (Dewey 1916,2008) that will make apparent the existence of personal privilege or unearned advantages (Dunlop et al, 2007; Neal & Vincent, 2013) within the discrepancies of situations. It's all too easy to see the difficulties of those who are underprivileged when it is apparent in their physical situations but there needs to be some level of focus and intentionality to start noticing the invisible connections of privilege. And, then to go further and to implicate the self as part of the systems of marginalization to make visible how personal privilege is connected to marginalization. It is a process that has brought me face to face with myself, not the obvious self that other people can see but the self that even I don't usually notice – the self that has been kept private and buried under much socialization and normalization. According to Kahn (2005) such a process of apprehending the self is not the work for the faint-hearted. Courage is needed in this process of privilege awareness as a radical action to disengage from the norm and the certainty of our unchallenged reality (Freire, 2000) to find our location and our connections to the world and beyond.

In the beginning of my process of privilege awareness there were a few triggers (step 1) that created prolonged dissonances over many years as I grappled (step 2) to consider and understand all the explicit and implicit concepts, causes, connections and outcomes of my situation. In this stage of the process, I was overwhelmed by guilt, confusion and grief over issues related to my personal privilege (step 3) and other intersecting issues that created

many levels of dissonance. When there were no safe spaces for me to internally or externally reflect on my situation, these many dissonances were not resolved and they rolled into each other like small storm systems that converged into a superstorm that disrupted my life. Living in a state of internal disequilibrium caused many confusions which was compounded by guilt, misplaced anger, hurt and mistrusts that broke my spirits and left me divided in my ways of being (step 4). It has taken a lifetime and much intentional effort to create safe spaces and helpful experiences to resolve these disequilibriums in me. And, now with more understanding, I find the strength to reform myself and how I relate to my reality to be able to share my privileges, from the vantage of love instead of power, in my personal life and professional work with children (stage 5).

The stages elaborated in the 5-step model above are not always linear in progression. There were times when certain disequilibriums were resolved but another dissonance was triggered along with other dissonance that were going through the stages of grappling, personalization or causing some parts of me to be divided. The process of becoming aware of my personal privilege through this 5-step-model seemed to be more of a looping spiral process instead of linear progress to arrive at an equilibrium stage as I zoom in to reflect on my response and reactions and zoom out to connect to events in the world outside of myself. Therefore, this thesis will showcase how Dunlop's 5-step model for personal privilege awareness can be re-framed with a combination of Chang's (2008) zoom in-zoom out process to modify the linear step model, to that of a looping-spiral process.

Accommodation and assimilation

Trigger events create a slight imbalance or disequilibrium in our usual way of being as it presents new and novel information that we often were previously oblivious to. Piaget

(1963) proposed two possible cognitive processes of accommodation or assimilation when faced with information that causes disequilibrium. Assimilation is when the new information is adjusted before it is accepted. The dissonance is resolved by adjusting the novel information so that it fits into the unchanged personal schema when information is assimilated. Accommodation, on the other hand, is when personal reflective practices adjusts the personal schema which is the way of being, or the self, to resolve the dissonance. When accommodating information, the identity adjusts to make sense of the new information.

A simple example of these processes of accommodation and assimilation was when I was presented with a new dish of poutine when we first arrived in Halifax and it caused a great dissonance in my perspective on how food should be put together. The poutine was an assault on my good sense and I didn't eat it. I decided that Canadians must be quite deprived in their gastronomic experience and I felt quite sorry for them. I maintained that I know better how food should be prepared and did not touch poutine. I assimilated the new information, which was poutine, as an inferior combination of food and I did not change my way of being or my own perspective. The dissonance was resolved and I maintained my schema of food combinations.

However, after two years, I was encouraged, by my children who had grown to love poutine, to give it another try. By that time, I had understood better that the fusion in foods such as poutine and donaire is reflective of the fusion of cultures that combined different aspects of what the community liked. So, one day at a local pizza place, we ordered poutine and I decide to have an open mind and try the fries topped with gooey cheese curds and brown sauce. It was salty, cheesy and crunchy. I was confused. I asked my children what they liked about it and we discussed the nutritional content of poutine and other issues

regarding poutine. It wasn't too bad. My perspective or personal schema on how food should be combined was changed and I accommodated this new concept of food as a unique local recipe.

Accommodation leads to changes in values which is part of personal schema. It changes behaviour. Poutine is now a regular part of celebrations in our home. We make space for it in between our spread of rice, curry and wontons. Food is an important part of a loving environment with children (Holmes, 2019). It is interesting to note that the catalyst for the change from assimilation to accommodation was my relationship with my children. My love for them encouraged acts of seeing them, honouring their ways of being and making visible the fact that they matter. Although it may seem like a very small gesture on my part, it brought much joy to the children as they enjoyed their poutine in the knowledge that they are seen and that they matter. Honouring my children also meant accepting them as who they are, how they are at that time, meeting them wherever they are at in their experiences (Garfat, Freeman, Gharabaghi and Fulcher, 2018) and including them in making decision about the foods we have for our meals.

The historical, political and social background for common understanding

In order to understand the full extent of my journey of privilege awareness and how it changed my personal life and professional work with children, I will start with a bit of background for a shared understanding of the context of my experiences. The process of privilege awareness (5-step-model) must be situated correctly within the context of history, politics and culture.

My personal privilege is connected to the progression of history that has brought about the present hegemonic world system comprised of the present global economy and

its colonisation of social institutions. It is crucial to understand these historical, political, economic and cultural connections in an honest process of becoming aware of our position within it, for the purpose of bringing needed changes in ourselves that will translate into changes in our realities.

This thesis will be most accessible by academics because of the medium used for its sharing which is research written in English. This academic accessibility is a privilege for all those in higher education. It is important to acknowledge this privilege in order to understand the immense accountability of this group, as the ones who are now the 'privileged' in every country in the world, towards the collective well-being of increasingly diverse society. This is not to underscore the importance of those who exist 'uneducated' in this world, instead it is to place the moral, political, economic and cultural onus for change in the hands of the ones who have the power of privilege as shown in the Privilege as Practice framework. The underprivileged are busy just trying to survive from day to day It hardly seems fair to expect them to fight for justice when the privileged who are able to spare time and effort remain oblivious to their privileged position (Maslow, 1943). The privileged have a greater onus of adjusting the privileges in themselves as part of accommodative actions that dismantle existing as barriers to social equity (McIntosh, 2020; Mullaly & West, 201; Kahn, 2005; Ahmed, 2012).

It has been a sobering and utterly humbling experience for me as a privileged person to acknowledge my part in supporting social inequities that impacted the lives of so many others. The remorse I felt and still feel is better expressed by Rodriguez (1982) as he realized that in acknowledging his privilege, he had to seek forgiveness "of those many persons whose absence from higher education" (p. 52) allowed him to benefit from government policies that privileged him. The historical, political and social background that

privileged me caused many others to be marginalized and I acknowledge it. My story of realizing that my politically (neo)liberal beliefs of rational thought, reason and universal values were the basis of my privilege has to begin at the start of my life.

I was born in the perfect intersectionality of the 'right' race, religion, class, political affinity, education, history and geography in my beloved home country, Malaysia. I grew up in much safety and peace as Malaysia transitioned from a British colony into an independent sovereign country. Historically, Malaya, as it was previously known before independence in 1957, was continuously colonised by western imperialism from 1511 to 1957. The Portuguese invaded in 1511, followed by the Dutch in 1641 and by Britain from 1786 to 1957. The western colonial rule, particularly the British colonial era, saw devastating exploitation of the country's resources and social integration.

Muhammad Abdul Khalid (2014) noted that unrestricted and large-scale immigration from China to Malaya was carried out to supply workers for the tin mining industry and immigrants from India were facilitated to work in rubber plantations. (pp34). This was done as the natives and locals were not cooperating and were offering passive resistance. By 1919, exports of tin and rubber from Malaya accounted for half of world output for each resource according to Stenson (1980). The migration of workers from India and China changed the demographics quickly without plans of consolidating the society in a beneficial way. "The British made no serious effort to absorb these immigrants into the Malayan social system, and these immigrants were left to settle in separate communities..." (Abdul Khalid, 2014, p. 38) and remained isolated in their ways of life. The indigenous Malay population, who for many centuries nurtured and supported the thriving trading posts that facilitated trade between the east and the west, were diminished in numbers and relegated to rural areas in non-profitable agricultural work. "As a result of the effective Portuguese and Dutch

monopoly affecting parts of Malaya, an independent, influential Malay trading class operating in international business where they financed their own activity, organised their own shipping, on equal terms with other traders, was eliminated.” (Abdul Khalid, 2014, p. 49) The vacuum created by the marginalization of Malays by colonial powers were filled by the Chinese trading class in the 18th century and remained until the present time.

In 1957, when Malaya became independent of colonial rule, all immigrants from China and India that had been brought to Malaya by the colonial British government were granted citizenship. We became a multi-ethnic country with new cultures and religions. At that time, “the Chinese became the sole local participant in the economic and commercial sectors while Malays remained in the rural areas and continued small-scale farming and fishing.” 75% of poor households were Malays, 17% were Chinese and 8% were Indians (Abdul Khalid, 2013). Disproportionate amounts of poor households were Malays as the population was made up of 49.8 Malays, 37.2 Chinese, 11.3 Indians and 1.8 other races. The racial disparity was not only in income levels but also in employment, assets, capital, business ownership and education. The Malays lagged in all areas except in civil service where the British reserved general leadership positions for agreeable Malays. They were the economic minority in their own land.

As a result of these disparities, “many Malays believed that ethnic Chinese economic hegemony together with biased British policy were responsible for their economic underdevelopment, while the Chinese believed that the Malay-run government should allocate some political power to them and felt that they were discriminated against by the government.” (Abdul Khalid, 2013, p.7). The social disarray initiated, perpetuated and left as a legacy of western (Portuguese, Dutch and British) colonisations presented a great challenge to the newly formed independent nation of Malaysia.

Unbeknownst to me, while I grew up in the safety of a peaceful country, there was a lot of strife in maintaining the social balance. We lived in a modest home that belonged to my father's father. My father would talk to plants and he grew the most beautiful garden of tropical plants, flowers and fruits. I befriended the trees, played with insects and talked to the clouds. I remember how he stitched the head of an injured bird and nursed it until it was well enough to fly away again. For me there was no barrier between nature and myself. The connective energy of beings was what I grew up on and was how I was. I would become connected to new places and new people in the same symbiosis of energy. It's not something I can reason or explain rationally. It was just the way I was. I could feel the world around as my heart, mind, body and spirit cohesively processed my experiences.

When I was about 12 years old, after being advised by his older sibling, my father accepted the option to purchase a home at reduced price(for civil/government officers), in a housing area that surrounded a beautiful new golf course. My siblings and I were amazed that this house had its own staircase to an upstairs! We each had our own room which was such a luxury. While we were in awe of the new house and the community, my father seemed to passively resist the life of privilege that surrounded us.

After many years of living in the new house, we were the only house with the original gate while others had ornately decorated front gates into their opulently renovated homes. Ours was the only one without extensive renovations and was quite frankly, plain looking and boring when compared to our neighbours except for our majestic trees that my father planted when we moved in. My father never utilised the country club membership that came with the house. Instead, he was often found in the basic coffee shops outside the gated community with his like-minded friends. They all seem to wear the same clothes with

their cheap sandals every day. I never really understood my father from that point and grew more distant as I grew up in increasing social privilege of our new community.

As I begin to deeply reflect on myself and my experiences, I now come to understand how a child can learn many things without ever being taught about them. I will attempt to tell through stories in this autoethnography of the many overlapping circumstances and events that unfolded. They led to the crumbling of my being and forced me to a face-off between my privileged self and my authentic self. I will not attempt to rigidly arrange the stories for a logical structure but instead it will maintain some erratic combinations as an expression of my relational experiences. I had to revisit these particular memories of my father to understand the storm of personal disequilibrium that spanned many years of anger, grief, denial and multitudes of emotions as I uncover layer upon layer of privileged conditioning and arrive at the truth of my core being and my authentic way of existing.

The National Economic Policy (NEP)

The economic and political context of the time was important in understanding how education culture shaped and contributed to my state of being, my personal values and professional judgements. In 1972, I was born into a nation reeling from the effects of the violent and bloody race-based riot of 1969 after 10 years of apparently peaceful transition from colonial rule to independent state. Racial, economic and political tensions that began during colonial rule erupted in widespread rioting after the Chinese-dominated political party Democratic Action Party (DAP) won the elections in the capital state of Kuala Lumpur. According to official documents, “a total of 196 deaths occurred, of which 143 were Chinese, 25 Malays, and 13 Indians...” (Jones, K, 2014, p 82.). The race riots of 1969 continue to be a traumatic memory for many Malaysians until today. There are several

different accounts of how the riot began and unfolded. I will not get into the specifics of these accounts but would like to emphasize the political environment that incubated the perspectives that encouraged the population to behave in the way that they did. The Malays felt unfairly treated in their own land and the Chinese felt their businesses threatened and limited. Both sides felt that political powers should ensure their well-being. When the DAP won in a historically Malay area, it ignited strong emotions and led to the violent riots.

It was with this very raw and vulnerable memory of 1969 that a new National Economic Plan was proposed. It was an opportunity to implement liberal economic measures to redistribute wealth and asset amongst all the races in the country. Economic redistribution was believed to be the key to promote national unity and balance of power between races for peace in the country. The National Economic Plan was a liberal economic policy implemented as a direct response to the racial riots. The aims of the NEP were “1. Poverty eradication regardless of race and 2. The restructuring of society to eliminate the identification of race with economic function.” (Malaysia, 1971). The NEP was implemented with very little challenge as a 20-year plan from 1971 to 1990 to ultimately achieve national unity and ensure peace in the country. It was with the neoliberal assumption that with these strategies in place it should logically bring about the expected social cohesiveness that would support peaceful existence between all races. There was a level of optimistic certainty in these rational socio-economic strategies. My friends and I became part of the generation to have been born and grow up in the era of the National Economic Plan.

By the time I graduated from high school in 1989 at 17 years of age, various affirmative action programs for the Malays, under the National Economic Plan (NEP), had been implemented since 1971 (Abdul Aziz, 2012). However, my friends and I were not made aware of the plan, its history nor its aims due to the political suppression of discussions on race-relation issues including information on the riot of 1969. After the riots, under the protective measures of the Internal Security Act 1960, anyone deemed to be inciting racial sentiments or causing racially based disruptions could be detained without charge. The ISA 1960 was introduced to defeat the communist insurgencies earlier to the riots but was found to also be useful in 1969. Formal documentations of the race riots of 1969 were suppressed and could not be published, discussed nor shared, even today. As the law was vague in its definitions of racial tensions and race discussions, many people were afraid to speak openly on any matters of race. And, the NEP as a response to the race riots remained vague and disconnected to us. What was initially meant to be an accommodative policy was implemented as an assimilative policy instead. There were no safe spaces nor opportunities for me to discuss the very confusing issues related to NEP policies and race-based politics and this prolonged and expanded many dissonances within me.

In the proceeding parts of this thesis, the stories may meander, overlap and circle back. They follow the flow of my thoughts and the events that helped me make sense of my experiences guided by Dunlop's (2007) revised 5-step process of privilege awareness. Autoethnographic data will be presented in the form of autobiography, memory, pictures and social media postings. This autoethnographic data will be followed by inward and outward reflection.

Data**Data 1 Autobiography – Trigger event (Step 1)**

I turned 15 when I started Form 3 (Year 9) in my school which was a girls' secondary school. My form mates and I became seniors of the lower secondary level and began attending school in the morning session instead of the afternoon session. We felt so grown up, closer to being adults than children. It was an important year for us as we prepared for the final external exam for lower secondary schooling – The Lower Certificate Exam or Sijil Rendah Pendidikan – at the end of the year. As much as I wanted to study for it, I also wanted to explore the few new freedoms I had been given that year. Firstly, I was allowed to take public buses and get home by my own whenever I had to stay back for activities at school. This also meant that I could stop by the brand, new McDonald's before getting on the bus. The bus rides opened up a whole new adventure for me as I was introduced to the parts of town I had never been to. I took in the bustle of the inner parts of the city of Kuala Lumpur with my best friend forever, Shantha, who was of mixed culture with an Indian dad and Thai mom. We explored the central market and she introduced me to dosa which is a crepe-like delicacy made of rice flour and the unforgettable chicken rice cooked in claypot. It was an almost magical time for me.

Thankfully, that year I was assigned to the same class with most of the same friends as the previous two years of secondary school. Many of the friends in my class and the next class had actually been my classmates for longer than that. We had been classmates for the past eight years since Primary 1. We had been through ponytails and ribbons, knee length socks, hop-scotch games, ballet classes, birthday parties, swimming lessons, top of the pops weekly countdowns, gymnastics trainings, drama competitions, and then make-up, fashion, shopping, boys, dating and of course through it all studying and exams. Many of those

friendships have endeared through universities, colleges, work, volunteer missions, awards, medals, the seven seas, the five continents, heartbreaks, mistakes, resentments, jealousy, joy, happiness, marriages, divorces, children, grandchildren and whatever that came along. The 40 years of friendships have not been without difficulties. This particular year stayed in my mind as beginning of many difficulties. It was the year privilege came up in our lives.

On a usual day at school, we were sitting around, after Physical Education class, at the gym. Most of us sprawled out on the floor or sitting lazily as we chatted and enjoyed the time passing by. It might have been a cancelled class after the lesson and so we had time to just relax. As I sat crossed legged on the floor of our gymnasium with my back against the wall, one of my close friends who was Chinese Malaysian asked me, “eh, don’t you think the boarding school for Malay is unfair?”. Sometimes, my friends forget I am classified as Malay. And, most times, I forget too. By this time, many of our Malay friends had left our school as they were accepted into premier government boarding schools which had better facilities, teachers and support. News broadcasting and newspapers reported that the preferential treatment for Malay students was part of the National Economic Policy which was implemented to redistribute resources and wealth more equitably between major races (Malay/Bumiputera, Chinese and Indian) in the country after the British relinquished power over Malaya. The residential or boarding schools were implemented systematically to use education as a means to pull the Malays out of the widespread poverty they were in. ”Were the premiere boarding schools unfair?” I asked myself. It was a big question to ask a naïve 15-year-old who knew nothing of the world outside home and school. I had only just been allowed to go on the public bus! I took a few more moments to consider the question. I remembered my father saying to me, “takpayahlah (no need eh). It’s not for you,” when I asked him if I should go to boarding school after Primary 6 as many of my friends did. I was made to understand that it was for rural Malays who did not have the opportunities I had in

the capital city of Kuala Lumpur. My father also did not hold in high regards the separation of young children from their families and did not let me, or any of my siblings, go to these boarding schools. After a few moments, I responded without directly answering her question, “it is for the rural poor Malays who do not have the good fortune we have.” She nodded, and the conversation died down. I didn’t think more on it but it had struck a dissonance in me. I didn’t understand why my friends who were non-Malays and poor could not go to these boarding schools. It would surely help them too. There were many things I still did not understand. I have been told many times that I was Malay but I did not realize the political and social implications of it. To make matters worse, I looked Chinese and I was culturally fluid. I ate as comfortably with my right hand as Malays and Indians did, with chopsticks as Chinese did or with the full set of silverware as the ‘Mat Salleh’ (western people) did. I spoke Malay, basic Cantonese, a smattering of Tamil and the ‘Queen’s English’, as my dearest English teacher, Mrs Aziz, would say. I celebrated all the cultural festivals as my parents had friends of every race and my father being a civil servant constantly worked with Malaysians of every race and backgrounds. I was comfortable in all our diverse cultures and so in my 15-year-old mind, I was all these cultures. I wasn’t just Malay. Do I have to be just Malay? Can’t I be a bit of everything? Did I need to change and fit into just one category? Why?

Reflections – Grappling (Step 2)

I was a Malay child growing up in a social, economic and political environment that was the purposefully engineered reality of a newly independent nation trying to rectify the racial and economic divisions left behind by western imperial rule. Social engineering based on economic fundamentals were implemented in the newly independent country for its survival in a new world. Many but not all in my generation were endowed with new

institutionalized privileges to carry the hope of a whole nation. I was doubly privileged through these policies and through the privilege inherited from my father.

In Year 9, parents of my non-Malay friends discussed with them the reality of preferential access or affirmative actions for the Malays. Scizmadia (2013) explained the parental behaviour as 'cultural socialization, preparation for bias, promotion of mistrust' (Scizmadia, 2013, p 228). It was also within this particular year and the next that I noticed many friends becoming markedly more serious about doing well in exams and giving up co-curricular activities such as rhythmic gymnastics, hockey, badminton, chess, dance and music. It was the selective preferences of differences, as shown in Figure 8, that was homogenizing our choice to conditioning us for standardized exams.

There was also a lot of fear of being left behind in the rapid development of the economy. In Singapore this fear started to be termed the 'Kiasu' syndrome and quickly spread to Malaysia. Kiasu is a Hokkien word that is translated by the Oxford Dictionary as 'scared to lose'. It encompasses the fear of losing out, missing out, being left behind and ultimately suffering in life. Frost (2020) refers to this as Fear, Uncertainty and Doubt (FUD) that is a strategy to increase competition in economic markets. "Fear, Uncertainty and Doubt" works best when the issue or the product in question is of particular value to consumer," (Frost, 2020, loc 127). Education in Malaysia became the FUD/Kiasu issue for parents and children. It magnified the issues of affirmative action for Malays and racial barriers for the Chinese in the Malaysia. The heightened awareness of the race-relations and urgency of the Kiasu syndrome would have been used to prepare my friends for the challenges that they would face as a politically non-dominant race in the country even though many were economically privileged as part of the Chinese hegemony.

Diversity within diversity

I had previously viewed racial category as a monoculture; but now I realize that even within a racial category there is much economic and intracultural diversity. Not all Malays were economically disadvantaged and not all Chinese were rich. These were stereotypes that were repeated in order to simplify situations and justify policies.

Many of our friends who were not poor nor rural but were middle-class and elite Malays were accepted into these boarding schools (which negated my statement earlier that the boarding schools were only for poor or rural Malay students). The NEP policy started out to address the poverty of all Malaysians but the implementation greatly benefitted the middle-class and elite Malays. Similar to affirmative action in the US, the least disadvantaged were helped first because they were culturally closer to the way the help was structured and the most economically disadvantaged were not addressed as the policy strategies did not acknowledge the intracultural diversity within racial groups (Rodriguez, 2018).

It is important to be cognisant of the diversity within diversity which was then the intracultural differences within racial groups. This understanding needed a deeper level of privilege awareness for me and a lot more courage to disaggregate. Although there were inefficiencies in the implementation of the NEP policies, quantitative data on its outcome shows a reduction in wealth gaps between races and within racial categories (Abdul Khalid, 2014). But, it had left animosity and competition between races and solidified monocultural race identification as a way of life even though most of us had a multiplicity of racial identities.

Multiple independent states for capitalist market competition

The neighbouring Singapore government was quick to capitalise on this inefficiency of policy strategies and endearing racial animosity in Malaysia. The Singapore government introduced a gamechanger to the Form 3 or Year 9 external examinations. They offered fully sponsored ASEAN scholarships for any student who excelled in the Form 3 exams and wished to have a “better future” in the island state. Again, the Kiasu syndrome was used extensively and many of us were swept into the rigorous competition in the education arena.

The expansion of economy needed competitive multiple independent states, which in this case, were Singapore-Malaysia and Chinese-Malay racial groups. The ASEAN scholarship was the reason many non-Malay parents, who were in the know, began the difficult conversation on race and race policies in our country with their 14 going on 15-year-olds. It was to prepare their children to work hard for the scholarship opportunity and leave the country. These conversations were not done openly but in hushed talks between parents and children.

Endogenous development of core being as resistance to competition

I was increasingly left out of the conversation and was not included in information sharing or study tips by my friends who were vying for the ASEAN scholarship. I suppose it was a strategy of reducing competition. After that year, a few of my Chinese Malaysian friends left for Singapore on the ASEAN scholarship as Singapore took advantage of the growing resentment in Malaysian race relations to entice non-Malay intellectual potential to

the island state. I was not aware of all these background happenings at that time and my parents did not prepare me for the challenges as my non-Malay friends were.

It was only recently that I discovered that my father was the second generation of the lineage of a Malay Raja from Indonesia. Even though we are now separate countries with different cultures, at the time my ancestor came to Malaysia, the two countries shared similar culture and people from both countries often regarded each other as part of the same nation. Historically Indonesia and Malaysia were protected under many same 'Kerajaan' or jurisdiction of Raja (Milner, 2016). The lineage of any Malay Raja is more similar to the lineage of eldership than it is to the concept of western imperial royalty.

I will borrow a term from Wallerstein's (2004) world-systems theory where endogenous-exogenous refers to the key variable of social actions, whether they are internal (endogenous) or external (exogenous) to the unit of social action that is being referred. The core being of a person, which is made of the heart, mind, body and spirit, can be endogenously or exogenously influenced. The centre of will for the development of eldership or the lineage of Raja is endogenous within the core being. In order to inherit the strength of the 'Kerajaan' or the eldership, the way of being must be strengthened endogenously. I believe that this was part of the reason I was allowed to chart my own way. It was seen as the way children developed – from within. It is a form of resistance to the competition in economically colonised socialization. I often thought that no one noticed me as I went about my life until one evening at my aunt's house. The incident that happened there would more clearly explain my parents' worldview and the hidden interconnectedness as a family.

Data 2 - Memory.

June 16, 2013.

When I was 5 years old, my brother and I went swimming for the first time. After putting on my swimsuit, mom was busy with putting on the arm floaters on my brother and as I waited for mine I asked her, "so with the swimsuit I can float right?" I thought she said, "yes!." So, I excitedly jumped into the pool. I remembered sinking to the bottom of the pool and I couldn't move much but I saw the steps of the pool and thought, "I need to get there!" I started to walk calmly on the floor of the pool completely submerged in the water. I was thinking how interesting it felt to have water hugging me. It was like another world and I loved the silence as I looked out toward the deeper end where the pool dipped down.

Then suddenly the water around me seemed to explode. I couldn't see anything and my body was just pushed around by the water. My dad, fully clothed in nice clothes (because we were at a grand party at my aunt's grand house), had jumped in, grabbed me and pushed me to the surface. I heard people screaming and everybody rushed around. I didn't understand what the fuss was all about. My father was more shaken than I. I didn't know the danger but he was a young doctor and he must have known that in less than a minute my brain could have been injured and more than that I could have died. Even though I couldn't see him and didn't know where he was when I jumped, I learned that day that even though I was left on my own most of the time, my father was always watching, always ready to catch me if I fell. Even through adulthood, he had shown this over and over again. His quiet patience and presence have been my strength and example. And, in that scaffolded environment, I felt safe and this sense of safety gave me the freedom to know myself and my core being strengthened as my spirit linked with my emotions, thinking and actions. I knew the world by becoming part of it with all of my being.

Reflections – personalization (step 3)

My parents did not prepare me for the power struggle and critical effects of government policies was because my parents did not view life through a critical or liberal framework. The economy and competition was not overriding in their Image of The child. They did not believe in training a child to achieve milestones but instead their role was to provide a safe environment, to be patient, to be present and to intervene only when I was in complete distress. My father as the leadership in the family did not view children as the means to fulfilling his or anyone else's expectations but instead a child was to just be as his garden was.

Even though my parents' way of parenting did not prepare me for the difficulties of critical race-relations, it prepared me for a life that didn't fear uncertainties, the courage to journey new life paths and the self-love to eventually reclaim my core being and my authentic self that is unapologetically interdependently connected to others. My parents nurtured the development of my cohesive core being and did not dominate it with external exogenous prescription that would destroy the cohesion of the heart, mind, body and spirit.

'zoom in' reflection - the divided self (Step 4)

Many of my Chinese friends had parents who were mostly in business and I believe that their parenting was influenced by their values and those values were based on the economic realities of their vocation. A nagging thought at the back of my mind suggest that maybe my being left out of conversation about the ASEAN scholarships was not because of the reaction towards the NEP policies for Malays but instead was the habits of the Chinese hegemony where parents collaborated together for their children's success as part of their privileged network. Many of my Chinese friends and probably the Malay friends that went away to boarding school were strategically tutored, trained, and conditioned to do well in

exams and extra-curricular activities so they would get into good standing universities and proceed to gain well-paying employment or become part of the family business. I knew it was important for them to conform to the demands of exams and often felt their anxieties as they tried to become what was expected. I did not have those anxieties as I continued to live life as play and didn't aspire to get a good job or take over businesses. I wanted to take care of animals and flowers. However, I still did well enough in exams to be allowed to remain happily in the background. Although I did not have the same stresses, at that time, as many of my friends but I felt the tensions and the changes in them.

As a result of the NEP policies and Chinese hegemony, some of my friends who had known me for most of our lives became distant and cold, even angry towards me. I remained oblivious to how my Malay privilege and government policies were connected to the struggles of others.

As I reflect deeper, even though I didn't understand the political, social and economic situation, I remember being angry. I remember when a few of my friends started to become estranged and I could feel their hurt and disappointment. I was angry because they were hurt. I wasn't being kind towards them. The anger I felt was as if the injustice was done to me because my way of knowing was by becoming interdependent with others. I was angry along with them against the 'Malays'. I was them and they were me. And, as I write this, I finally understand how I became my own enemy in my confusion over race issues that were part of the social engineering based on economic fundamentals. Being Malay and any race is a social construct. In Malaysia, race is exogenously prescribed by government policies and they are unchanging. Not being able to define myself enraged me for a long time to come.

'zoom out' reflection - loop back to grappling (step 2)

In the struggle to decolonise and find a new collective identity, Malaysians were divided between the liberal concepts of individuality, rational discipline, capitalist economy, scientific evidenced based information and the more traditional ways of interdependence, caring, economy of well-being and revealed knowledge. Kahn (2005) explains this as the struggle between liberalism and communitarianism. I was not clear where my location was within this system and my views on affirmative actions and other government policies would be understood differently depending on what racial affinity others perceived me to be. According to Igbu & Baccus (2018), determining social locality is critical to understanding a situation because of how people are perceived by individuals and institutions. I did not, at that time, clearly know where I was located in the social, political and historical context and I rebelled against the prescribed racial category that I felt limited my ability to engage interdependently with others. At this time, I looped back into step 2 (grappling) of Dunlop's model of personal privilege awareness.

I tried to make sense of my situation and figure out what I felt were confusing expectations. On one hand, honesty is the best policy. On the other hand, there were so many social rules that I honestly did not like. I was often called snobbish and I didn't know why. I ended up often being in my own world— books and nature were my escape to feel safe from the confusion. I realized I had never had to struggle, never had to worry about my meals, never had to worry about the future. I didn't know what it was like to truly worry about my survival. I was privileged but I did not recognize it as such. For me, it was just the way things were, the norm. In the end, I became very confused and hurt when people labelled me negatively for being Malay. The world became an emotionally dangerous place.

I needed more information and I needed the space to reflect and people I could reflect with. However, there weren't any safe spaces for me to process my experience and I didn't know what exactly was wrong. I was at a blind spot and the discontinuous moment created dissonance but I was not able to process the disequilibrium. I was stuck in the grappling step and there were to be several other trigger events before I was able to go deeper into the process.

Data 3 - Autobiography – spiralling multi-trigger events

When I entered upper secondary school (year 10 and 11) in 1988, I was part of the school magazine as one of the school photographers. I learned from a senior student photographer how to adjust the manual settings and how to use different angles to make photos more interesting. More than half of the photos in the whole yearbook that year were mine. I also managed the reprinting and sale of photos to students and teachers. Overall, it was a good year! The following year, the executive committee of the school magazine made unclear excuses to have another student lead the photography section when it should have been me as graduating senior with the most experience. This immediately sparked a rage in me. All the while, the school culture that I had internalized was that of critical actions and fairness. (The word equitable which would have better described the sense of 'fairness' was not yet in use and I had never heard of it). I trusted my teachers and friends. It never occurred to me that they may act without my best interest at heart. Therefore, I concluded that I must have been not as good a photographer as I thought I was. As a young teenager, the incident made me doubt my abilities. I didn't touch a professional camera (until 2014!) after that incident and refused to take any photos for the school magazine that year.

On September 18th 2014, I wrote on my facebook page:

I was a school photographer at 16 years of age. That year, my photos were selected to be published, almost half the school year book photos were mine. My senior, Aina, took me along to most school activities and I loved the hockey match photos and sports day most. I guess out in the sun, I didn't have to mess with aperture and shutter speeds. I learned all I could and was a pretty good photographer. Most of the photos published in the 1988 school magazine were taken by me. But, some things took place within the school magazine committee that resulted in me being left out as a school photographer when I should have been leading it. It was my first taste of unfair practices...hmmm...and I stopped taking photos w a professional camera after that until now...the fragile nature of a shy, awkward teenager.

In the ensuing discussion in the social media post, a schoolmate, Diya wrote, "Min I am sorry but that year they selected a Form 6 senior to head the dept who was not even a photographer...tried to reason things with them. Felt bad about it but had no say...I did enjoy working with you." In a personal message, Diya admitted that it was a racially motivated decision. Another Malay friend, Lynn, commented, "Wow! You too? I was in the art section for a wee short while. Then I was dropped just like that, no explanation...it was like nothing took place. Hurts 😞".

Reflection – grappling, personalization, divided self.

I did not lead the photography section of my school's yearbook in 1989 because I was Malay. I believe that the act of giving the position of lead photographer to a Chinese Malaysian student instead was a case of counter affirmative action (or could it have been reproduction of Chinese hegemony?) done by teachers who felt that I would be accepted at universities and receive scholarships (due to ongoing affirmative action programs of the

NEP) even without reference for active participation in co-curricular activities such as heading a section of the school magazine. The animosity and competition for a slice of the economic pie between the Malays and the Chinese Malaysians with Indian Malaysians in between were continuously increasing and encroached personal spaces and school spaces such as what had happened in the school magazine committee. This event spiralled with the unresolved first event. And, when both triggers combined it became harder to dismiss these events as random events. I continued to grapple as the dissonance grew.

In the same way I was enraged by the incident, many of my non-Malay friends were disheartened by being marginalised repeatedly by the NEP policy. The circumstances were hard on our friendships as the frustrations of adults (parents and family) were taken in by the children through naïve perceptions. Our collective identity as a sisterhood which was the pride of our school culture started to be challenged. When these friendships were tested and challenged by the policies of the NEP and the sentiments of Chinese hegemony, I felt betrayed as my school sisters and even teachers began to see me as a Malay child who was given unearned advantage to succeed when they were not similarly privileged. I was also deeply hurt when they left me out of conversations on study tips for the ASEAN scholarship. I was assigned by others to a narrow category of racial identity that I did not completely identify with and I did not choose. Nobody asked me what I wanted or what I thought of it all.

As I reflected more deeply and began to realize that it must have been difficult for the teachers and our parents who loved us and supported our friendships to stay silent as they watched friendships tested. They couldn't discuss openly the effects of government policies on our friendships as it would have contravened the The Laws of Malaysia, Act 82,

Internal Security Act 1960, where a person can be detained for any period not exceeding two years for “acting in any manner prejudicial to the security of Malaysia” which included discussions on race-relations. As the definitions of prejudicial manner was not clearly defined in the context of the times, people were afraid of discussing anything that was connected to race-relations openly. One of our friends was called by our headmistress when she wrote about her view of the education bias to privilege the Malays. According to her, she was told by our headmistress that for her own safety to never write nor speak of these ‘injustices’ again.

For women who dedicate their lives to the teaching girls to challenge the many oppressions in the world, I imagine it would have been difficult for the teachers to reign us in and silence our growing awareness of we thought were inequities without being able to have conversations about it. They must have understood the aims of the NEP in trying to correct historical inequities in the country. But, they must have also seen the impact that the implementation of the policy had on us in our personal spaces and friendships. However, being absolutely committed to their vocation of humanizing the girls whom they hoped would become future leaders, they lived the examples that couldn’t be spoken as communities of mothers often do (Scott-Myhre, 2009). And, for this act of courage and love, I take this opportunity to thank them and wish them peace. Their legacies of patience, commitment, kindness and love live on in all of us as a form of intergenerational wealth.

Sadly, as a result of government policies, many of my friends who were brilliant minds continued their studies outside the country after secondary school. They were mostly non-Malays and many were privileged by the endearing wealth of the Chinese hegemony of pre-independence even whilst being marginalized by government policies that

sought to right historical inequities by balancing wealth distribution within the new country. I wonder if there could have been another way to correct social inequities other than through prescriptive social engineering based on economic fundamentals and race?

As things become clearer with more reflection and increasingly connecting memory to world events, I am not as sure that the NEP was an overall injustice as data indicate a reduction on overall poverty and reduction in income disparity and wealth disparity as the result of the NEP (Abdul Khalid, 2014; Abdullah & Mohd Nor, 2015). Equity can feel like oppression to the privileged (McIntosh, 2020) and we were all privileged. I now believe that my friends were as oblivious to their privileges as I was to mine. We all felt entitled to a good life in our country. In the end, most of them did not return and now reside where they studied.

However, not everyone was part of Malay privilege or Chinese hegemony. My best friend who was of Indian and Thai background went to England for tertiary education and still resides there now. In order to finance her education in the United Kingdom, her father took a higher paying job in the neighbouring country for many years. His absence caused emotional and psychological hardships for the whole family and left her mom parenting 3 daughters on her own.

I know she could not have meant to blame me for the situation but we were children who could not fully comprehend our situation, and her resentment was palpable even when it was never verbalised. I recognized the anger and resentment although I did not fully understand then why things were as they were. I remember feeling guilty for being myself, for being Malay, for causing her father to be away. I felt that Malay privilege and dominance, which was the government in the country, should take care of all our people. I

did not realize that the definition of 'our people' was different for different people and just because I did not use race as a division did not mean others didn't. In the end, we were, as many of our other friends from all sides of the political divide, hurt in this process of social engineering through affirmative action of the NEP. And, the trauma of these race-based affirmative action program and social engineering would take me a lifetime to undo and heal.

Data 4 – Journal entry – Divided-self event (Step 4)

In trying to manoeuvre the social and political climate of my environment, some things were just too much for the younger me. Some events early in life have a way of affecting the path of the rest of life as these events affect the soul. Many people told me then that what I felt and perceived as a teenager or youth was not important as it was small when compared to the bigger and more important things to deal with in later life. Adults often do not recognize their privilege over children and may make light of children's experiences.

Earlier on I wrote about my children and their poutine. I said that even though it seemed like a small act on my part, it meant a lot to my children and to our collective identity and relationship as a family that cares for each other. When we dismiss what might be a small act in our view as adults, we may be dismissing something that is so important to a child which could deter the child from engaging further. Dismissing the heart and spirit of a children is an act of silencing their voice. Caring for a child, whether our own, in foster care, in early childhood or in schools, is in the relationship between the carer and the child (Stuart, 2009). In acknowledging the many forms of personal privilege, we must also acknowledge the connection between adult privilege and children's/youths' experiences.

Power dynamics such as adult privilege which are unchallenged or not thoroughly reflected on will create a relational practice that is non-reciprocal where the child is silenced (Igbo & Baccus, 2018).

The events that unfolded as I turned 18 years of age took a whole lifetime to untangle and accept. Adult privilege that intersected with economic privilege dismissed what they considered was a small part of my young life. The experience felt to me like the floor under me disappeared sending me into a free fall through broken glass.

I laid my head in Cheong's shoulder and my body moulded into his as we slow danced at a popular club called the DV8. I wore a soft black jacket over a black top with silver trimmings and blue jeans. He wore a knitted sports shirt with casual brown khaki pants. We were the epitome of 80s fashion and in the midst of 80s youth culture of clubbing and dancing. Many were also drinking, responsibly and not so responsibly, but we both did not enjoy drinking much and had soft drinks instead. The DJ played Lisa Stansfield's chart topping hit song, "been around the world, and I can't find my baby...". The dance floor filled with partners moving to the music that seem to flood the room. Cheong and I smiled at each other when the song started playing and he pulled me to him. Our relationship had not been easy for many to accept including his family. But, between the both of us it was effortless and easy. Until today, those moments with him are the only moments that I have been able to let anyone to see the real me. The me ths devoid of its own consciousness, devoid of ego, devoid of the need for certainty and where I was completely detached from all the social and political confusion yet completely connected spiritually to the energies around me. I could just be the way I used to be in my father's garden.

As our bodies moved to the music and to the energy of the room, it would seem like our souls entwined in the simplest way of just being present. I wanted to etch that moment in

my memory forever as I ran my fingers through his straight black hair and he held me closer. We were barely 18 and 19, but it felt like an ancient ritual dance that we had repeated over many lifetimes. We met when I was 14 and he was 15. He was a year older because he had to spend a year in transition class to transfer from Chinese primary school to national type school where the medium of instruction was in the national language, Bahasa Malaysia. We lived close by and took the same chartered bus to school. He went to an all-boys school which was on the way to my school. My eyes would catch his in the rear-view mirror of the bus and our eyes would acknowledge each other then we would both quickly look away. We spoke occasionally and were cordial to each other. This went on until, as fate would have it, I was assigned to his school for sixth form, the level at which his school accepted girls for science stream classes while my school only had Arts stream.

In early January 1990, I attended my first day at Cheong's school with a few of my other friends. I did not see him and found out that he was in another class. It was still exciting to just be in the same school. The next day, I went to school as usual and chatted with friends while getting to know new classmates. Suddenly, there was a commotion with the boys towards the back of the classroom. I turned to see what was happening and those familiar eyes locked onto mine, this time it came with a smile. "I switched classes!" He said to his friends in a voice loud enough for all of us to hear while he continued to look my way with his signature mischievous grin. I turned back to face the whiteboard with my heart beating quickly and smiling to myself.

We all became fast friends in the class. Below is a picture of us in our 6th Form Science Lab with friends who have remained wonderful friends until now. We were both involved in sports. He was a sprinter and competed at the state level and obvious from the

picture, he played tennis as well. I trained in rhythmic gymnastics and swam for the school. It was so very long ago yet still clear in my memory.



Pic 1: Cheong, Tze Ken, Yuz and me in the Science Lab at the boys' school

On Valentine's Day that year he gave me a little cupid bear pin and we quickly became a couple – high school sweethearts! It did not matter to me or to him that he was ethnic Chinese and I was Malay. He saw me and not the trappings of privilege, race or religion and I saw him, just as he was.

A few months after our first Valentine's Day, I was accepted into the most prestigious local university, University of Malaya (UM), to join the pre-university foundational science program and was expected to continue into the medical program after two years. Cheong was so happy for me but I knew what could not be said – that he did not feel it was fair. My every achievement was a reminder that I was Malay and that he was not. We were

continuously reminded that we were not the same and that we should be in competition. It was a reminder that I was part of new Malay privilege (on top of inherited privilege) in new Malaysia and he was being marginalized (on top of his family's economic struggles) at every point in our lives. The economic fundamentals of the National Economic Plan institutionalized multiple states of racial groups that could compete and motivate economic growth.

As time went on, there were many more things that became difficult to share with Cheong and with my other friends. I could not tell him or any of our friends about the interview I had for a government scholarship a few weeks before being accepted to UM. I was called for a scholarship interview (part of the NEP for Malays to further their studies overseas) and I went to the interview by myself. I was offered a full scholarship to study Law in any university in the UK. Instead of being ecstatically happy, I was deeply conflicted.

The scholarships should have been for those who were poor and disadvantaged. I was not poor nor disadvantaged but I was told that I, and those like me, were the hope for the Malays and I should accept this responsibility to help other Malays and be loyal to race, religion and country. "What was he talking about? The fate of a whole race on my shoulders?" my still naïve 18-year-old self quietly thought. What the officer said disturbed me greatly. I didn't quite understand why. I believe as I had written earlier, that I saw myself as not just Malay, I was many cultures. Being told that I was the hope for all Malays put me at odds with my connections to my friends and mixed-race family who were dear to me. There were poor Chinese and Indians too. What will become of them? The forming of a new privileged middle class of Malays that the NEP seemed to be aspiring in its implementation at that time instead of its original aim of alleviating poverty for all was not an effort I felt entirely comfortable with. It did not acknowledge the economic diversity within racial groups

and was being offered to people like me who were not the ones who needed the help. Would it have been different if policies were made to implement mechanisms to disrupt the process of privilege reproduction and moderate the accumulation of wealth instead?

Rodriguez (1982) observed that when class was not acknowledged, affirmative action based on race assumed that creating an elite society would ameliorate the underclass. The assumption that a privileged middle-class would lift the whole race out of poverty was not logical in my mind. And, even without thorough understanding then I knew that it would silence the experiences of others even though I did not have the words to verbalize my understanding. Affirmative action based on race helped to cloak the real problem of institutional bias, Malay supremacy (Ketuanan Melayu) as well as Chinese economic hegemony. The work that should have been the work of leaderships were put on children to bear. In the end, I could not accept these racial policies and refused to be a trophy scholar that would be used to justify the NEP policy. In the absence of any clarity, I decided to step out of the situation. At the end of the interview, I thanked the government officers and walked out without accepting the offer. I was divided within myself and grew more conflicted.

Encounters of difference, holding space and suspended judgement

At that time, I did not fully understand my situation and there was no one I could discuss this with nor a safe space to discuss it in. Every time I tried to discuss it with my friends, someone would get terribly angry and I stopped trying. My confusion grew and turned into a slow growing rage. As much as I did not want to be a part of it, I was continuously privileged by the situation. I grappled with my confusion, simultaneously was divided within myself and didn't know how to exist. This was a spiralling of Dunlop's 5-step model where more than one step could be happening at the same time. I had so many questions. Was I wrong? Should I accept it and help the Malays but exclude my friends? Why

wouldn't our government help anyone who needed help? Why was help given according based on race and not need?

According to Dewey's theory of learning, I was at the limits of my knowledge and ability (Dewey, 1916/2008). It was an encounter with my 'blind spot' (English, 2013) that indicate a situation where I could not accurately anticipate or control. This blind spot is an outcome of encounters of differences and an indicator of progress in the process of privilege awareness.

In the Privilege as Practice model shown in Figure 8, encounters of differences would be situated in the bottom most where differences or diversity are most present. The top side of the model is homogenized and would not offer much encounters of differences.

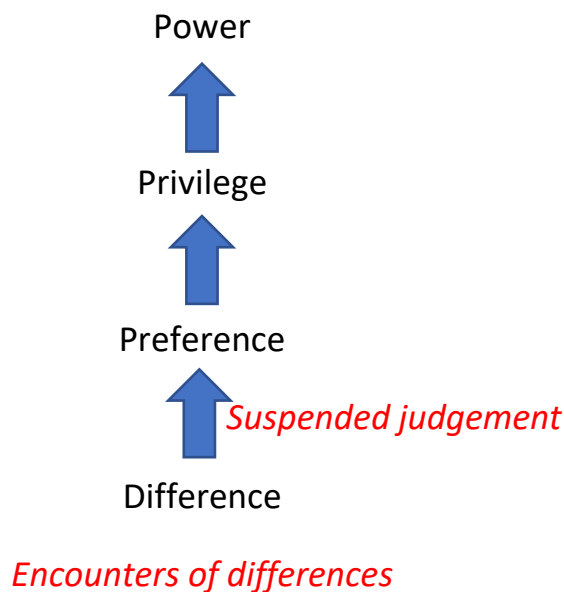


Figure 8. Suspended judgement and encounters of differences

Blind spots present experiences of resistance (dissonance) that signifies an opportunity to discover new knowledge. (Dewey, 1916/2008; English, 2013; Neal & Vincent, 2013). The process of learning or gaining new knowledge is a relational process that requires a holding space (safe space) in which to make empathetic connections. This holding space is a space between differences and preferences. In this space, we can have suspended judgement

and the opportunity for accommodative actions to create innovations for a new way of existing. At that time, there was no holding space for me and it was a missed opportunity to reflect and try to understand my situation.

Authentic assessments to acknowledge children's personal experiences

When I turned down the Law scholarship, I accepted instead a more modest offer to join the fast track science foundational program at UM. I felt that even without affirmative action and on my own grit I could have succeeded in getting the acceptance into UM. However, although my exam results were within the top 10% of all students, my entrance into MU was largely assumed to have been assisted by affirmative action. My efforts in studying, revising and practicing for the examinations were reduced in value when connected to affirmative action for Malay students. The assumption that I was assisted instead of the acknowledgment that I was capable undermined my confidence and belief in my own capabilities.

This incident stayed with me all my life and has made me more aware that when planning policies or carrying out programs for children, we must find ways filter distractions and clearly acknowledge children's strengths. Authentic assessments that are part of the NSELCF as shown in the 3-3-3 model of conceptual connections in early childhood practice in Figure 6. is where this can be done effectively.

Love and honouring as part of accommodative actions

I was expected to continue into the medical program and I knew that made my late father so proud although he always said, "ahhh, takpayahlah" (ahh, no need eh!) when I asked him as a child if I was to become a doctor when I grew up. He was himself one of the

few Malay doctors of his time. In 1968, only 12 Malays (10% of medical graduates) graduated from the medical faculty (Khalil, 2005) of the only university at that time which was University of Malaya. This was how much Malays were marginalized in education at that time. My father would have been one of those young doctors and he dedicated his service at the government run General Hospital of Kuala Lumpur and retired as the assistant director general of health at the age of 55 years old. I was happy to attend his alma mater and to train to be a doctor in his footsteps. It wasn't for the nation or my race that I was willing to become a doctor. Just as my act to accommodate routine was because I loved my children, my continuing at UM was an act of honouring my father. I think it is important to emphasize again the role of love, which is a feeling of being connected and honouring each other, as an important part in accommodative actions for equity and change.

Multiple states of conditions as a basis for competition, racism and discrimination

My cohort mates in UM were mostly Malays from out of the city. There was a big cultural difference between rural Malays and myself as an urban Malay. I had never been to a Malay village nor had much opportunity to practice the Malay traditions at home or at school. I was not very Malay at all by the time I stepped into UM. The colonisation of my Malay ways were so subtle that I did not realize it had happened at all until then.

The fact was soon noticed by some of the senior Malay students who would harass me to attend religious gatherings and persistently reminded me that I needed to dress more Malay, be more Malay. The non-Malay students would not even talk to me and their conversations would become silent when I tried to join in. Everyone was so focused on studying for and competing to get the best result in the exams. It created an environment

of 'me' and 'them' which created great anxiety in me as I was neither. I refused to compete and be drawn into this division.

As I struggled with settling into university life, Cheong would come by and *lepak* (hang out) with me after classes. He wasn't allowed in the dorms as it was a women's only dorm. Instead, we would sit at the open lounge area or walk around the campus. We were both caught off guard by the level of racism from both the Malay and Chinese students on campus. There were many unpleasant remarks, name callings and accusations of being a traitor from both sides. Could it have been the resentment of the increasingly privileged rural middle-class Malays, who are the outcome of NEP policies, against what they felt was the moral freedoms of urban Malays like me? Was it part of Chinese hegemony who saw inter-cultural relationships as a threat to its privilege? It could have been a combination of both. How did we get to this point? Things were not as divisive when we were in school.

It did not matter what the reason was, I soon could not cope with the environment at the university. I started failing in most of my classes, started sleeping through the day and couldn't get out of bed for many days at a time. I was drowning in depression and anxiety. My core being felt a deeper kind of grief. It was the tip of an understanding that I could not be the way I was if I was to survive this education environment. But, deep down I knew I could not be that individualized, efficient, compartmentalized being that was required to be part of the economically privileged world.

By my third semester, my father transfers me to a private college and I started classes in an American degree program instead. Just as he was watching when I jumped in the pool at my aunt's house, he was also aware of my difficulties and yet again intervened when he saw I couldn't cope on my own. This act from my father showed me that he will

always be a part of me and that growing up did not mean growing apart. It was just the way we were and I felt safe in that. And, it is the same way I am with my children now. Values are lived and learned by the next generation directly from experience. Barriers to living the values of a family, is also a barrier to learn those values. And, this makes it very important that educators are able to facilitate family participation as part of education.

At the private college I began to get a little better. I stayed at home and took the public bus to college daily. Every morning at 6.15 am, my father would send me to the bus stop outside of our gated and guarded community and waited till I got on the bus. I started enjoying the company of new friends, who were more open, multicultural, accepting and admittedly economically privileged. Cheong would drop by and we would all hang out. I could be myself again as I fit into the college environment comfortably. Life became easy again as I melted into the background of privilege where the spaces accommodated me (Ahmed, 2012).

However, my experience in UM became a traumatic memory that created a phobia in me towards the rural Malays. I developed an indignant anger and displaced my rage towards them even though many were kind to me. I was also cautious of the Chinese community as I realized I was not seen as part of the community. In the end, I felt, I didn't belong anywhere in this new Malaysia. I was Malay but I was not poor and I could not be Chinese. I felt the resentment growing from friends over government policies I had no influence over.

Prescribed exogenous social engineering of the NEP based on economic fundamentals may have worked to statistically show improvement in income levels and

other economic indicators. However, the social impact on personal life was very different for me.

Global privilege in core-periphery economies

I sit here writing this thesis as many Malaysians still struggle to survive. Even as income levels increase locally, the income gap globally remains disparate. Malaysia remains what Wallerstein (2004) calls a periphery economy that is subservient to core economies of countries who were historically the beneficiary of the global western imperialism that began in the 16th century (Wallerstein, 2004). Goods made by periphery countries are bought at much cheaper prices and sold many times over in core countries in a global economic structure that was made by the privileged, perpetuated by the privileged and benefit the already privileged.

No matter what policies Malaysia implements for its children, the uneven global economic situation will not allow the disruption to this periphery-core arrangement. And, we see that one of the premise for the disruption of status quo in Nova Scotia is to avoid becoming a periphery economy within Canada and the world. This indicates that decision makers are quite aware of the implications of periphery economy and they are aware of the dynamics of uneven globalisation of markets. The goods bought for cheap in periphery countries are sold many times more expensively in core economic countries with many trade barriers at point of sale and throughout the process of bringing it to market. Much of this difference is in profits that go to big businesses in core economy. It is compounding oppressions to the periphery countries and compounding privilege to core economies.

I will use the example of fees for international students in Nova Scotia as a manifestation of this periphery-core economic privilege structure and highlight the uneven trade of intellectual and diverse potential from periphery countries to core countries. This inequality of periphery-core intellectual potential trading is held in place by how global currency is traded, economic control implemented by various immigration policies and university policies. The valuable perspectives and contributions that the diversity of international students bring to classes and its positive affect of increasing the quality measurement of the universities among world institution of higher learning are not equitably acknowledged or purposely obscured.

Let us begin with currency difference. One Canadian dollar equals 3.3 Malaysian ringgit which means, in simplified terms, that the economy of Malaysia is 3.3 times weaker than that of Nova Scotia according to global calculations. International students from Malaysia pay 2 times the fees of Canadian students. In the simplest terms, the effort to pay just two times local Canadian fees for a Malaysian student, is at least 6.6 times the effort of a Canadian student when we take into account the structure of periphery-core economy (Wallerstein, 2004) and the currency difference. If a student is sponsored by the government which is often the case, it means taking tax money from the periphery economy of Malaysia which is taking money from welfare programs for the well-being of the needful people of Malaysia who are struggling to compete in global economy with centuries of intentionally prescribed economic barriers.

International students are only allowed to work 20 hours per week and be registered in a full load of classes except in the last semester. This is not merely a time limit of 20 hours, but a discriminatory practice that automatically designates international students to

only minimum wage jobs that are often precarious work. Any other jobs would need a commitment of more than just 20 hours a week. It keep them from building equity by investing the money they bring in as banks will not give loans to low income persons and instead compels them to spend the money (periphery economy money) on rent and various utilities. There is no evidence that support that 20 hours a week is the optimum amount of work to support well-being. In the absence of evidence, it can be assumed that decisions to place barriers on international students are ideological and very much part of the same ideology that encourages competition and discriminations in education and economy.

In Nova Scotia, there is no law nor statute that compels universities in the province to continue to charge these differential fees except to cap it at no more than 3% increase per year which is equivalent to a 6% increase of local fees. The privilege oblivion is staggering but is often contested on the grounds that locals have contributed to taxes for longer and government funding for the maintenance of the universities come from these taxes. However, from 1976, differential international student fees have not been a financial need to cover cost of cancelled federal subsidy in education but “an acceptable way for province to generate additional revenue at institutions.” (Canadian Federation of Students, 2015, p. 1). This becomes more hurtful to observe when there are international students from poorer economies than Malaysia in Nova Scotia. Beatrice Chang, president of Dalhousie International Student Association, is reported to have said that “There is this common stereotype that international students are really wealthy, but we’ve come to know that most of them are not.” (Ziafati, 2020)

Besides, double differentiated fees, International Student Centres at Nova Scotian universities more often represent business interest than international students’ well-being.

On January 25th 2019, International Student Centre reposts an event called the 'Dining Etiquette Luncheon' to "learn proper meal etiquette and make a good first impression at a lunch meeting or business dinner" on their international student facebook page. Not only did the event ignore the diversity of international students and diverse local cultures, it deemed them deficient and selectively preferred the western dining etiquette as the proper way. The stereotyping continued in July 2020 with yet another workshop to teach International students soft skills. Now, it begins to be very clear and consistent with the hegemony stereotyping of others as savages.

This selective preferences produce and maintain privilege and power against the best interest of international students. Amrinder Singh, an international student and president of the Cape Breton University Students' Union, proposes that lowering tuition fees would reduce barriers for international students to maintain well-being especially after the coronavirus pandemic (Ziafati, 2020). However, to be fair there are students from other core economies and stronger economies than Nova Scotia. Therefore, there is diversity within diversity that needs a thorough understanding of privilege, barriers and its impact on personal lives of international students and Nova Scotian students. Universities and their leaderships are at liberty to choose which international students they would like to admit to their program of studies. They are also privileged with the power to choose to be part of oppressive practices or to be a part of global equity practices through their policies for international students. Intentionality in actions is the basis of humanization (Freire, 2000).

Personal limit of resistance to the colonisation of core being

That night that Cheong and I danced at DV8 as I wrote earlier, we were meeting friends for a farewell gathering for me. I had completed a semester at the private university and was accepted to complete the rest of my degree in California and my father agreed to help with the fees. Even though I could have stayed for few more semesters, I made the decision to accept the offer and believed that the move was for the best for everyone. As I held on to Cheong that night, his father's words rang in my ear and stabbed at my heart, "if you still want to be with her, I will disown you! You can leave the family. She is Malay, I will never accept it."

Cheong's family was middle-class Hokkien Chinese. His parents, who were only the second generation in Malaysia, worked hard to provide for three sons and was assisted by the Chinese community through many of their organizations. My courage to leave came from my concern for Cheong. I began to believe that I had caused these problems for him and in general. But, the reality was that there was a growing divide between Chinese and Malays that was fuelled by resentment over the affirmative action policies for Malays and the endearing economic hegemony of the Chinese. It was further complicated by the class disparity in both racial groups. Social policies that were colonised by economic strategies were not providing the cohesiveness that was needed (Habermas, 2002) and instead created greater division in the population.

The socio-political environment as described was not conducive of cross-cultural and inter-ethnic relationships. Two days after that night at DV8, I sat anxiously at the airport holding my boarding pass for a flight to San Francisco, California, USA. Even though I told Cheong that he did not have to come to the airport, I hoped that he would. As my sister and I started walking towards the departure hall with my parents, my sister whispers "There he

is!”. My feet stopped and I could feel him even before I turned to see him. He was walking to cross the distance between us. I stood still and watched him while everything else became a blur. I still cannot remember details of what happened next. I can only remember that he held me and kept talking to me but I couldn’t hear anything. I could see his very straight black hair falling over his forehead and as usual getting into his eyes in such an endearing way. I could smell his cologne as I put my head on his shoulders as I often did. But, I could not hear a word that he said and my mind was completely blank. I don’t know how long it was until my mother says it was time to go. There were no tears, I suppose we both had shed enough by then. I could feel his hands grip mine before slipping away and as I write these words over 35 years later and the tears I could not cry then fall freely now. As my mum called out for me to come along, I didn’t say anything to Cheong, there were no words that were enough for what I meant to say.

I walked away with his father’s last words clearly ringing in my ears, “if you continue to be with her, I will disown you.” I know his father tried his best to do all he could to keep his family safe and steer away problems that may have been too much to handle as I try to do with my children now. Cheong will always be a part of me as all the memories are a part of me. I believe that some connections are not made by choices and some things in life are destined for purposes that we are not aware of. And, in these cases, I learn to suspend judgement for the opportunity to create new meaning in the future.

Cheong later dropped out of a Psychology degree course at a private college after being persuaded by his family to accept an offer to train as a pilot in Singapore. His family was adamant that his future would be better out of the country. The kiasu fears were well in place to drive out many Malaysians.

Many years later, Cheong shares with me a photo of him in Yosemite Park in the US at exactly the same spot I was in a picture I sent to him many years earlier during my first year in the US. We would both end up trailing each other across the world at different times. It seemed that was the only way for us to honour each other and to be in the same space even though it was not at the same time. 25 years later, we both trekked the mountains of Tibet as we had always said we would. Only we were two years apart from each other. I laid a sacred scarf in the vastness of the mountains (Figure 9). There at the roof of the world, I whispered a prayer into the wind for peace in both our hearts.



Figure 9: A sacred scarf in Tibet

My leaving that day, so many years ago, was traumatic for both of us and it was to be the straw that broke the camel's back. It was my personal limit of resistance to the colonisation of my core being. The reproduction of privilege bombards many demands on the ones receiving the unearned advantages. There is always a cost for privilege. I had to evolve my way of being in the world. I had to accept without fully understanding the

meaning that I was Malay, that education was my only path and that some things could not be.

The grief and pain that I attributed to losing the relationship with Cheong was also the grief and pain of losing myself, my way of being, my core being – my voice. That was to be the catalyst for my prolonged internal rage that took a lifetime to understand and undo. I did not speak for many days and months after that. I was completely and devastatingly silenced. I believe, I did not speak in the same spirit ever again. It could be said that I lost my voice when I could not be all of myself. I felt myself (my core being) become invisible.

I wrapped layers of barriers around my heart that slowly diminished the light in my spirit. After that, it was easy to become more independent, individualistic and competitive as preferences of the way of being for the many systems, policies and processes of my Euro-western education. I succumbed to the homogenizing effect (Figure 5) of privilege preferences that erased my authentic way of being. I was primed for the prescribed success and privilege that education would bring in the next years of my life.

Independent and interdependent self-construal – loop back to grappling (Step 2)

It is important to understand concepts of self as they interact with the world around in order to better understand how class and racial personal privilege affected me. There are many studies on the concept of self but the most pertinent to my experience of becoming aware of my personal privileges was researched by Hazel Rose Markus and Shinobu Kitayama in 1991 and updated in 2010. Their theory on how the self is constructed was researched in America and Japan. They defined the self as the 'me' at the center of

experience which is “a continually developing sense of awareness and agency that guides action using cognitive, emotional, motivational, somatic and behavioural schemas.” (Markus and Kitayama, 2010, p. 421). This definition of the self is consistent with my definition of cohesive core being made up of heart, mind, body and spirit.

The study revealed two divergent self-construals. A self-construal is the result of the mutually influencing process between the self and context or the way the people attune to their environment. A self-construal is the sociality of the self. Markus and Kitayama (2010) found that the concept of self can be divided into independent self-construal and interdependent self-construal. The two versions of selves engage differently with their environments. Their perception, cognition, emotion, motivation and relationships are influenced by the ways each attune to their environments and the way the environment conditions them. Both the self and the environment mutually affect each other (Ahmed 2014; Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Gharabagi 2014; Holmes, 2019; Markus & Kitayama 2010). Changes in one will bring changes in the other in a continuous relationship of mutual constitution.

The independent self is prevalent in North American society. It assumes that people are self-contained and autonomous with unique internal abilities of cognition, feelings and motivation. The independent self is egocentric and individualistic and forms “social relations on the basis of instrumental interests and goals of participating individuals” (Markus & Kitayama, 2010, p. 423). This individual and independent self is a form of self that can be efficiently commodified within the market economy of the world systems and is privileged through its accompanying exogenous Euro-western universal education as theorized by Wallerstein (2004). This concept of independent self took root in North

America as the normative culture and helped form the basic belief of the education system that viewed children's abilities as separate, independent and unique from others. In other words it influenced the Image of The Child. The abilities of the child are measured by exams or assessments to determine the child's future potential economic contributions. This developed the culture of meritocracy through individual distinction, competition and personal achievements that are accepted as the outcome of individual effort and independent abilities when equal (but not equitable) opportunities are available.

Meritocracy as described by McIntosh (2020) is a reward system that gives unearned advantage to those who fit in the 'background of habitualized activity' of privilege (Ahmed, S, 2017, p. 26). Meritocracy in schools privileges those who show potential to benefit the economy as its future workers. However, through various studies on many versions of the self, Markus & Kitayama (2010) found that the independent self-construal that is positivist in its sociality is not the most relevant version in the world.

According to Markus & Kitayama (1991), in many more parts of the world, the individual self may not be the most important unit of consciousness. They found that the independent self that is individual, egocentric and detached is not an efficient mode of existence. Instead, a concept of interdependent self is more prevalent. (Hall, 1976; Markus & Kitayama, 2010). One way of defining the interdependent self is through its opposite which is a self that is not independent. Instead of detached individualism, the interdependent self would value relationships and is "made meaningful through relationships with others" (Markus & Kitayama, 2010, p. 423). This was how I was when I was younger. My friends and family were not separate from my identity and our relationships are part of the pieces that made me who I was. Just as my relationship with Cheong was part of who I was. Even plants and animals in my father's garden were part of

me! The interdependent self focuses on understanding how the self and others are in symbiotic relations with each other instead of competing with one another.

Code-switching as a characteristic of interdependent self-construal

The interdependent self is able to accept or accommodate various ways of connections and multiplicity of being which is a state of self that Choi (2017) explains is able to code-switch between world views, values, plural cognition, various feelings and forms of communication. In the process of code-switching, the self is in an in-between realm of knowing where the self is “between old and new, right and wrong in which we recognise that old values and beliefs no longer guide us, but have not found new ways forward (English, 2013, 2016). In this suspended space, the self is in a state of possibilities that Bartlett, Marshall & Marshall (2012) presents a similar concept of Etuaptmumk or two-eyed seeing where the strengths of two worlds can be brought together in a novel interdependent existence. According to the Privilege as Practice model, this is the space between differences and preferences shown in Figure 9. The interdependent self-construal is consistent with an “emergent, integrative cultural movement and worldview, which attempts to reconcile rational thought and science with spiritual sense of awe for the cosmos.” (Hedlund-de Witt, A., 2014, p.191). It is needed to share privilege. The loss of the interdependent self-construal from a society will lead to the depletion of the differentiation that is needed for creating novel ways of thriving.

The reflections done in the process of writing this thesis has helped in untangling the confusions that were the contradictory values of my independent and interdependent self and find balance in my life. In becoming aware of my privileged self that dominated me, I became aware of my interdependent self. I am privileged in many

spheres in life such as education, income, economic access, credibility and safety because those spheres are dominated by privilege culture. Those who are not a part of privilege culture - those who are interdependent with the world, those who love too much, those who do not fear hunger and poverty, those who share their fortunes, those who see the soul of others and those who will not fight - do not have the same privileges.

And, for a long time I believed that I had to be only one version of myself. If I was privileged then that was uncompromising. However, I now believe that the ability to fundamentally shift between being in the state dependent and interdependent (code-switching) is the ability that facilitates justice and equity. I know what it is to be independent as a result of the process of being euro-western educated and I also understand what it is like to be interdependent with others as part of the traditional worldview I grew up with. Code-switching may be accepted as a typical mark of minority children but it is also an ability that is needed in the process of becoming aware of personal privilege. It enabled me to adjust my location within my privilege and made it possible for me to share my privilege or to spend my privilege for more equity. (Russel, 2014).

The privilege bubble.

After receiving education in the US and returning to Malaysia, I started my own Early Childhood Centre in the East Coast of Malaysia in the beautiful seaside town of Kuantan which was the capital of state of Pahang. It was a play-based program and was attended by a mixture of local and international children. We were honoured to have the present Regent of the state of Pahang and all his siblings attend the centre for their early childhood education. Their mother, the present Malaysian queen, Her Royal Highness Tengku Azizah, would drop by and always encouraged us to do our best. I was happy to be lead teacher for

the younger groups and prepared the spaces with little areas for play. It was a bright, beautiful little center.

I returned to my bubble of safety and privilege where there was easy acceptance and trust. I was able to establish a thriving child development centre in a new area that I had never lived in. The privileged families there knew my family and family history that even I didn't know. I was able to implement a play-based program with developmental goals just as I did at university. Even though I would have liked to have had a 'play as a state of being' program where it was fully child-directed, it would not have been as easily accepted and wouldn't have made good business sense. I enjoyed my life in Kuantan and met my husband there. When my son was born, we moved back to Kuala Lumpur which was on the west coast of Malaysia and is the country's capital. My daughter was born a year after and I started an informal playgroup for my children that grew into another children's centre near to where we lived.

I became a typical privileged mom, who scheduled her children's time with classes and activities to make sure that they had a head start in life. I didn't realize I was moulding their self-concept to enable them to inherit my privileges. The readiness of children in inheriting privilege is how it endures over generations as it is with wealth. Children need to be moulded to become independent and individualistic to inherit these privileges which are rooted in the culture of western imperial economy and education. The image of the Child that is based on this premise would support the process of dominating children's ways of being as part of the homogenizing effect shown in Figure 5. It is based in an Image of the Child that is located in the values of privilege and power. It is part of the mechanism of colonisation. I was the enabler of my children's privilege and the silencing of their voices. By

the time they were three years old, my children were in the latest right brain development program, they were in math abacus class, art program, music class on top of going to my new children centre daily. They shouldn't miss out on any opportunity to get ahead of others. They had their own rooms, their own toys and their own books. They were able to bathe and dress themselves and eat their meals on their own. They were very independent and on track to becoming highly individualistic. Everything seemed to be progressing well, I thought. The business expanded and I established two more centres. I scheduled everything efficiently. In my busy schedule, I didn't share space or time with anyone including my children. I had lost the ability to connect with others as I became more successful because that success was dependent on my efficiency which would have been reduced with habits of spending time and connecting with others.

Soon after my daughter turned 3 years old, my father fell ill with cancer. It was deeply painful to witness my father deteriorate and finally succumb to the illness. Yet, through it I could not be fully present. I could not connect to my heart. It was like watching but not really being connected to the moment. My father's passing was followed by such deep grief that I was forced to confront the direction and meaning of my life. I was so focused on being successful and chasing the elusive happiness that was supposed to be the outcome of such a success that I didn't spare the time to get to know my father as I would have liked to. I knew then I was not on the right track in life.

Data 5 – Social media post - Resolving the disequilibrium – Step 5

As if the universe heard and conspired to help me resolve this pain, dissonance, grief, guilt, disconnect and detachment, later that year, an unprecedented natural disaster

happened. I watched the news as the Indian Ocean Tsunami devastated many coastal towns in Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Malaysia. It took under 10 minutes, with waves up to 100 feet moving at up to 800 km/h, to devastate coastal areas from Indonesia to Sri Lanka and residual effects felt on further areas (BBC News, 2014). Mercy Malaysia which was a non-governmental medical organisation, requested for volunteers with Psychology background who could work with children. I graduated with a double major in Psychology and Child Development and promptly volunteered. I joined the Psychosocial Team of the 8th mission to Aceh, Indonesia. Mercy Malaysia was funded, through private donors, to establish temporary shelters for internally displaced persons at their Weu Raya camp. During this mission, I experienced many physical hardships for the first time – I slept on the floor with no air conditioning, I bathed in freezing cold well water, ate simple food and worked up to 16 hours a day. I met volunteers from all over the world and we co-operated through meetings and planning groups. I learned to identify risks, communicate effectively, I learned to listen to the locals, support without judgement and help without discrimination. And, as if my prayers kept reaching to higher heavens, I had the opportunity to shadow the then president of Mercy Malaysia, Tan Sri Dr.Jemilah Mahmood who was the example of strength and kindness that I needed. She was a medical doctor who was capable, efficient, resolve in her actions and committed to ensuring the best for our beneficiaries. In the middle of a disaster response, I found the emotional safe space to reflect on myself and to face some of the disequilibriums in me.

The experience in Aceh was my encounter of difference that made visible not just the sufferings of others but also my privilege. The opportunity to observe Dr.Jemilah's joy in doing the work that she did assured me that this privilege that I had can be shared to

balance the inequities for those who were less privileged and those who needed justice in the form of critical assistance and support. It was to be a mission that finally tore down the remaining barriers that shrouded my heart and my spirit.

Facebook post

26th December, 2018

Acheh tsunami, Mission 8, Mercy Malaysia.

Some events in our lives are transformational in that it changes us forever. This mission to Acheh after the Indian Ocean Tsunami, 2004 so profoundly changed me. I thought I was going to help children affected by the disaster, turns out I was the one saved. Huh!

Until Acheh I had never seen real hardship in all my life. The understanding that a power such as waves could so thoroughly devastate the lives of so many thousand people in under 10 minutes was the dawning of my humility. I am but a speck of dust, really. It was a change that was not immediately recognizable but slowly took me in a very different trajectory of life. It was a change in my soul that made me yearn for a more meaningful life, it started a storm in me that I battled back and forth for many years. It influenced so many decisions in my life even now.

Since Acheh, I have never complained or criticize food! My children knew they would be asked to leave the table if they complained about a meal! Since Acheh, I didn't complain much and I started noticing things were not very fair everywhere. And, I think that it was after Acheh that my work with children become more about their rights and not just about their development.

The sight of wreckage and devastation as far as my eyes could see to the left and to the right forever etched in my memory. I still make du'a and pray for the many wonderful souls that truly worked tirelessly to bring semblance of normality to those who survived.

I remember being so exhausted but still going out to distribute needed personal items to a group of people by the beach. It was a long and bumpy ride. We arrived at the designated place as the sun was quickly setting and there was no electricity. It became pitch dark. I remember flashlights and candles, silent people reaching out and then softly the sound of beautiful dzikir from the broken mosque that was the only building still standing. Invisible winds blew softly on my skin and the gentle 'singing' from the mosque grew steadily louder as more people joined in. Our team stood still for a while, not a dry eye amongst us. This was the moment I understood strength from a people who had nothing, who did not know what will happen next, who could not do anything about their predicament, who made beauty with their prayers in a broken mosque by candlelight. May the people who perished be at peace. May the ones who survived continue to thrive. I am thankful for the opportunity to have helped, the lessons learnt and the direction it brought in my life.

For the first time ever, I stared into devastation that was so complete. There wasn't a single building standing except for one mosque. The community lived in tents and temporary shelters. The only clean water was bottled water that was transported by the Malaysian army until we could drill a well some months later. Amongst those affected, I met the most patient and gentle people. How did they not go crazy after losing everything and many loved ones? Not only did they not lash out or get angry, they were welcoming and helped us cope. It was a mission that threw my life into a tangent from its course, it flipped the trajectory of my life. I am forever indebted to the people of Aceh, Indonesia for showing

me what strength is and to Tan Sri Dr Jemilah Mahmood, the founder of Mercy, Malaysia for being the example I needed and believing in me.



Figure 10. Aceh, Indonesia, Tsunami response in 2005.

My father's passing and the sobering experience in Aceh, compelled me to continue to reflect deeply about my values and my life. The moment I stared into the devastation that was so complete in Aceh was the moment I stared into the devastation in me. After the mission, I spent many hours swimming and quietly working remotely on my own. I needed space and time to recover from the mission and the unveiling of knowledge (Al-Ghazali, 2015) in me. The social isolation gave me the safe space to face the growing understanding of the power of my privilege and the responsibility to use it with clear intentions. This was the way I created a space for myself with the resources I had. Others

may find it in reading or basketball or cooking or even working. In any form, this personal safe space is influenced by personal resources that are available and is a part of human agency and is not necessarily dependent on having privilege.

Inverted flow of reflective practice

When I felt ready a few weeks later, I began to talk earnestly with the parents of children at my centre and this became one of the forms of external reflection as shown in Figure 4. Other forms of external reflection included observing and spending time with my own children and listening to their stories. In an effort to decide on future actions, I revisited all the theories I learned in university and found a group of similar minded people to discuss with as part of my reflection-for-action. I realized that I had been extremely self-focused in my life. The belief that I was entitled to the privileges in my life and the self-affirmation that came with economic, class and racial unearned advantage were the source of egocentrism in thoughts, feelings and actions which were characteristics of the independent individual self (Markus & Kitayama, 2010). I had often expected that everything and everyone should act in ways that ensured the smooth progression of work and life - It was just logical and the right way to be in life. I felt entitled to a problem free existence just because I was me and anything to the contrary would frustrate me. But, this time, it was different. It was a challenge that took a lot of my time but there was no anger or frustration. There was just a desperate need to understand and to know. "How do I proceed? What do I do?", were questions that repeated in my mind. Self-knowledge can be daunting but it is always a strength needed for change and especially a change in the way one views the world – a life changing event.

After much internal and external reflections, I decided that maybe, my personal success wasn't the end game. After all the success in my life up to that point, I felt alone and that could not possibly be the epitome of success. I wanted to be a part of happiness. And, I realized that maybe happiness was not what I thought it was and was not where I thought it would be. I would have flashbacks of the faces of the children in the Acheh IDP camp, I could feel the lightness of their spirit, I could see the grief through their smiles, I could sense their hope, their trust and their perseverance which fuelled me to work as hard as I did for absolutely no financial reward. How was I able to connect with them and not with those in my own life? What was different in Acheh? So many questions kept bombarding my mind like a freight train with endless cars that carried these questions and unloaded it in various corners of my mind. This was the period of reflection-for-action

I finally realized that I had the ability to choose certain actions that were against privilege culture and the freedom to try to influence (not determine) a desired outcome. I believed I had efficacy and agency to influence the direction of my life and this was not a privilege but an ability within the self. "Beliefs of personal efficacy constitute the key of human agency." (Bandura, 1997, p. 3). This was a pivotal moment because it signified my acknowledgement of my part in the creation of my personal crisis and the rage within me. "The self is socially constituted, but, by exercising self-influence, individuals are partial contributors to what they become and do." (Bandura, 1997, p. 6). I can change myself.

I decided to trust this belief that I can affect my own life. I became more observant and began to see opportunities to connect with others that I did not see previously. I was not able to see these opportunities previously because I did not see my privilege. This new awareness facilitated my ability to reflect-in-action which is the decisions I make while going

about with life and reflect-on-action which is reflecting on what had happened. For me, the reflective processes were inverted from Figure 2 and I have modified it below.

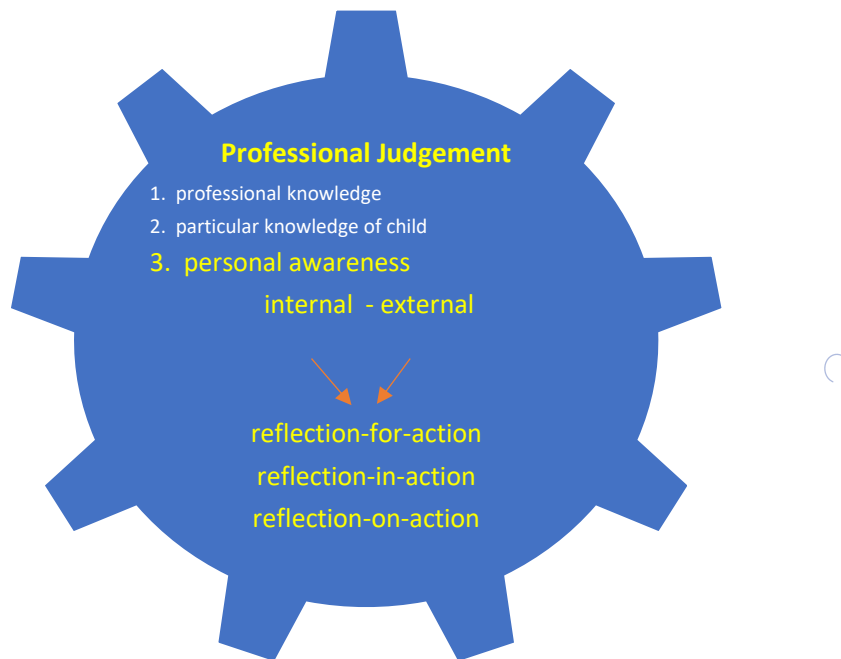


Figure 11. Inverted flow of reflective practice

As I became more aware of the structure of my privilege which were the ways I was privileged and the systems that privileged me, I also became aware of the gaps between privilege and inequity. And, within those gaps were existential space for the opportunity to find new ways of doing things and new meanings.

I was a participant in this space but I was not the only participant. In Aceh, this existential space was thoughtfully and intentionally created with mutual trust and a sense of love between the volunteers and the beneficiaries. There was suspended judgement and an acknowledgement of the differences between all involved. Many actions were innovated while in the field as a result of collaborations between volunteers and beneficiaries. Our

team evolved to include engineering volunteers whose first job was to find water and drill a well. We also set up a children's safe space in the midst of the disaster response because the beneficiaries asked for it so they can leave young children and help with rebuilding their community. It was a situation that fuelled me, as I had written earlier, to work the hardest I had ever worked.

I began to see that I needed an external environment that would mutually engage with the internal changes in me. My world of privilege did not offer the mutual trust and sense of love that was needed for safe spaces to co-create new restorative ways forward. My personal privilege is built on competition, monopoly and winning. I knew then that I had to use my agency to intentionally and thoughtfully change my experiences in the world and simultaneously change the way the world experienced me. It changed my self-construal from independent to interdependent.

Results

Humanizing the oppressor in me – maintaining the 5-step process of privilege awareness

In resolving the dissonances arising from the process of personal privilege awareness, I also came to understand my own identity. My rage began to sooth as I felt I became whole again. I began to connect to myself especially to my heart and to my spirit. I knew the world with my mind using scientific methods and evidence-based knowledge. But, the heart and the spirit also has its own ways of knowing which cannot be rationalized nor scientifically disaggregated. The world became a different place when the core being of heart, mind, body and spirit related with it cohesively.

I acknowledged my privilege, I named it, I owned it and it changed the way I experienced my world. It was a process of getting to know myself and the foundations of my convictions. I could see with my heart and spirit what my intellect could not. And, as I resolved the disequilibriums in me in the final step of the process of privilege awareness, the confusion and rage that had consumed me for many years, finally subsided. I understood the historical, political and social circumstances that had brought me to this point in my life. I was not the enemy, there is no enemy. Accepting, defining and understanding my identity as being privileged by my society was an important process of self-awareness that contributed to my well-being and the well-being of others around me.

A big part of my process of privilege awareness was viewing my privileges as concrete concepts or objects that could be reflected and acted upon. Despite Freire's belief that the oppressors "can free neither others nor themselves" (p. 56). I believe I did by reframing my perception of privilege as the oppressor that lived in me. I am both the oppressor and the oppressed. Critical pedagogy should not be a rationale for the perpetuation of privilege by mistaking the person with privilege as the oppressor that is unable to humanize. Instead make it clear that privilege is the oppressor within a person and the core being is the oppressed. "As the oppressed, fighting to be human, take away the oppressor's power to dominate and suppress, they restore to the oppressor the humanity they had lost in the exercise of oppression" (Freire, 2000, p. 56.). The process of becoming self-aware is a process of moderating the power of personal privilege and humanizing the self. A person with privilege is an oppressed core being that is hosting the oppressor (privilege). Therefore, as an oppressed entity, a privileged person is capable of igniting the process of liberation and humanization through the process of personal privilege awareness.

Sustained encounters of difference

In acknowledging that privilege is an oppressor that lived in me, it became an object that could be reflected on and intentionally acted upon. But how do I reflect on the privilege in me that was invisible to myself? I recalled that during the humanitarian mission in Aceh, Indonesia, I was able to notice my privilege quite clearly because of the distinct difference between my situation and the beneficiary situation. The situation in Aceh was an encounter with difference that made it possible to notice my privilege. Privilege cannot be seen in homogenized social situations. My privilege became visible in Aceh. The encounters of difference cannot be compelled as communist states tried to do in the past. We cannot exogenously unprivilege the privilege to privilege the unprivileged or vice versa. It creates trauma that is intergenerational.

There must be sustained encounters of difference in society to make visible the privilege. It is a challenge as economic fundamentals of capitalism have encroached into most parts of life and have homogenized living spaces. Real estate developers now make privileged areas self-sustaining as we see in the development of West Bedford, Nova Scotia. It is possible to live comfortably within these privileged areas and not have to ever venture into other less affluent areas. In homogenized environments such as these, privilege becomes invisible. It is similar in universities where selective preferences of difference in the education culture homogenizes the environment and culture. Increased and sustained encounters of difference are needed to make privilege visible to the privileged themselves. Economic fundamentals of multiple states of situation and competition must be moderated in order to have the diversity needed for sustained encounters of difference and privilege awareness as shown below in Figure 10. When reflective practice is placed in environments with sustained encounters of difference, it has the potential of inverting the flow of power

to a bottom up flow and dispersing it within the system resulting in the funnelling of privilege that creates more equitable situations.

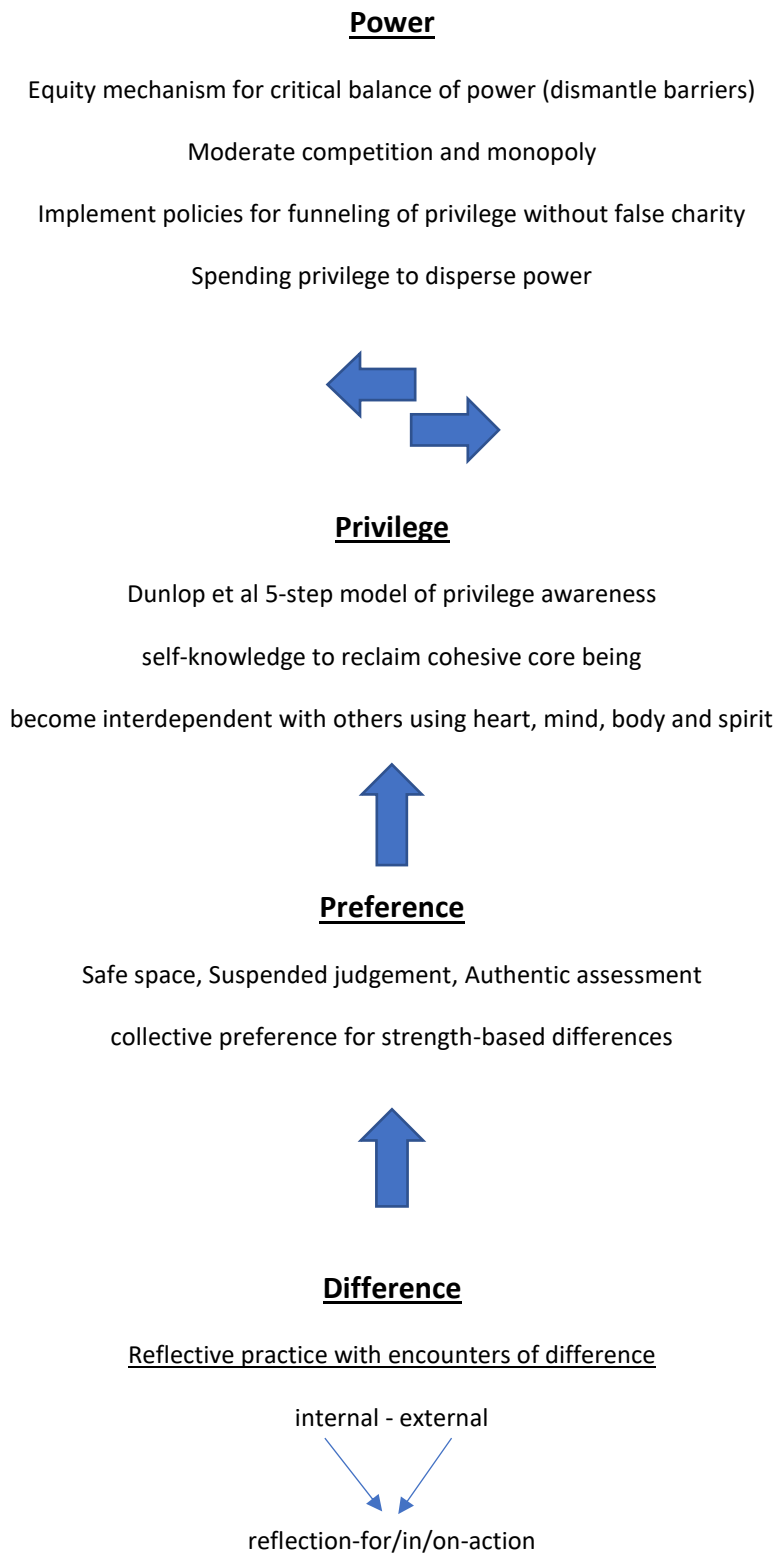


Figure 12. Locating reflective practice of the 3-3-3 model within the
Privilege as Practice Model for privilege sharing

Instinctively, I began intentionally entering spaces where there were distinct differences of situations that I had previously ignored as unimportant or irrelevant in my life. In a study on friendships in ethnically and socially diverse populations, it was found that sustained encounters of difference played an important role in lessening prejudice and increasing competencies in negotiating and manipulating power imbalances with friendships being the successful outcome of such encounters of difference (Neal & Vincent, 2013). I didn't know about these studies at that time and in the absence of academic knowledge (privilege), I used my own instinct (cohesive core being) which was guided by honest intentionality to become aware of my situation. I could critically shift privilege and gain a more authentic way to proceed with inputs from the diversity I was increasingly surrounded with.

I started volunteering with various organizations. I learned to ask how they wanted me to be a part of their efforts and not assume that I knew how to do it. And now, after two and a half years of university, I understand that I learned to not prescribe my way as the right way.

As I got to know more people with similar intentions, I was further supported in my path to become more human and be part of the diverse ways of being in the world. These new friends included me in their work which was reducing barriers to well-being for many who have been silenced in the rapid development of our country. I was asked to run programs at homes for abandoned elderly, lead groups of volunteers in engaging children at orphanages to support their reading abilities. I joined various independent and governmental groups and made friends with people from all walks of life and many became like family. These spaces that I intentionally entered and some that were intentionally created offered a sustained encounter of difference that made visible my privilege and my

location within systems of privilege. In noticing my privilege, I was also able to see how the unearned advantage I had was connected to the systematic marginalization that silenced and made unseen the inequitable plight of others who were not part of the privileged groups.



Figure 13 Discussing with children and parents from ethnically diverse backgrounds about children's rights to well-being through the social enterprise - Power2Kids, Malaysia



Figure 14. With early childhood educators conducting a workshop.



Figure 15. Sharing session with local church youth group on managing the Child Friendly Space for emergency response after Typhoon Haiyan in the Phillipines.



Figure 16. Preparing coconut milk for traditional Malay beef 'rendang' with an Uwan or Malay elder.



Figure 17. One of the many hiking trips through hills, rainforests and other wilderness with friends who were enough for one another, a new experience for me.

The endogenous expansion of the authentic self – being a part of love

The world around became a part of me as I became a part of it in a ‘cycle of mutual constitution’ of interdependent self-construal (Markus & Kitayama, 2010, p.420). I have to emphasize that even though I had agency over my actions, I didn’t control its outcomes because outcomes were dependent on all participants not just myself. Uncertainty was a new normal. I ceased existing as a detached and individual person and acknowledged that my self-concept and my well-being was interdependent with others. In them is a part of me and in me is a part that belongs to others.

The connections I found during these encounters of difference could be divided into two levels which are conceptualized as a transcendental level of connections (knowledge of unveiling) and social levels of connections (knowledge of practical conduct). Transcendental level of connections are metaphysical relationships with divinity or sublime entities or the cosmos and social level of connections are relationships between human forms and nature. The transcendental connections could sometime occur with the social connections. The possibility of both levels of connection made the act of intentionally entering these spaces of connections a spiritual act as well as a relational act. I had to bring into these spaces, my truest core being which is the basis of my authentic sociality without the trappings of the habits of privilege such as superiority, arrogance, prescriptive solutions, selective preferences of differences, economic efficiency and expediency. This authentic state felt like a kind of freedom for me. The freedom to be many ways of being which is an endogenous expansion of the self. This endogenous expansion of self was able to facilitate more connections as I code-switched (Choi, 2017) more swiftly. I was like a computer that could access a library of world views, values, multiple intelligences, forms of communication and all shared knowledge that offered new ways of connecting, relating and thriving with others. This ability to code-switch is

explained as empathy projection and reciprocity between differences (English, 2016) which is a 'pedagogic imagination' (Britzman, 1991) that educators can use to support reflective exploration within the in between space of learning. There is limitless possibility to co-create meaning in this environment. The endogenous expansion of the core being is one of the outcomes of the process of privilege awareness and is an important outcome for educators to become more connected with children and develop an Image of the Child, professional judgement and authentic assessments that truly reflect the voice and will of children.

Courage is very much needed in order to be in a state of authenticity because it is also a state of vulnerability which depends on mutual trust to maintain it in the mutual effort to find new ways of existing. Kahn (2005) notes this process of finding new ways other than the privileged view of liberalism in western society, "is not a work for the faint-hearted liberal who lacks the ability to push him or herself beyond the polite boundaries of rational discourse, on the one hand, and the individualism of interest on the other" (p.18). Indeed, to be in the state of authentic self to find new meanings takes much courage which is measured by the level of personal vulnerability.

In my state of authentic self, others were able to become part of me and I could become a part of them through many versions of friendships and attachments which made us visible to each other and facilitated acts of caring. The more I cared, the more visible the others became and the more they mattered. Did I become more visible in the world as well? It must have been because it was easier for people to understand my visions. The others and I became visible to each other and mattered to each other. In this environment of mutual mattering, it was possible to create new meanings and rename the

world (Freire, 2000). This caring and mattering was a way we committed to each other in creating new ways of existing together. Freire (2000) describes this courage to enter these spaces as vulnerability of authentic beings to commit to each other's well-being as love.

The interdependence made me a part of that love.

Art as relational practice

The spaces of sustained encounters of difference also held within them many in between spaces that was filled with non-physical dimensions of being such as emotions, cognitions, personal schemas and spirituality that intertwined within and between participants as we intentionally became connected and interdependent. The experiences in this environment of diversity helped to evolve the way I existed in the world. The different parts of me (qalb/heart, nafs/body, aql/mind, roh/spirit) became more cohesive and my actions became the culminated expression of the cohesiveness of my core being as it attunes to the world around – my authentic self. It is possibly easier to share this experience by conceptualizing each parts of me as having its own voice. These voices, when individualized and compartmentalized, have separate independent conversations but when they were cohesive and interdependent, the voices came together like a choir. Andrea R. English (2016) elaborates this phenomenon as an artistic 'third voice' which is conceptualized by Nussbaum (1997) as the uncertain outcome of the meeting of alternative ways of thinking and previously unforeseen possibilities.

The physical expression of this internal cohesiveness was most clearly observed in my dancing of an ancient traditional Malay dance. If I was cohesive internally (authentic state), the dance would emanate an energy that would synchronize with all the energy from everyone around it. The ego self would be sacrificed to become one with others.

Dewey (1934/2008) describes this as a process of 'taking in' that is 'more than placing something on top of consciousness over what was previously known. It involves reconstruction which may be painful' (p. 48). In some moments while dancing it felt like a certain knowing or more of recognition of energies from the past converging with the present and the future in the space of the dance. The self is lost and found at the same moment. It was a transcendental experience that cannot be explained rationally.

The dance itself is supposed to be a healing ritual and an appeasement for the spirits of the sea. Maybe well-being is more than just physical health, but also the experience of a third voice that is an outcome of spiritual and social connections. Many other dance forms have similar purpose of transcendental healing through metaphysical connections such as the Jingle Dance of the First Nations in Canada (powwow.com). In many churches, singing is an act that seeks transcendental connections for spiritual healing and well-being.

The rituals or acts of connecting within the safe in-between spaces of learning may be different for different people. For me it was dance. Others may find it in the act of writing like Walt Whitman, some find it in wilderness (Wilson, 2011), some find it in their travels as Ibn Batuttah (Mackintosh-Smith, 2003), some may find it in teaching (English, 2016) and some find it on the narrative arts (Bochner & Ellis, 2016). In the state of authenticity, we become interdependent and able to become part of reality. And, at this point of being, Jalal al-Din Rumi explains that one can find divinity or sublime power within "his own fundamentals (asl), his soul." (Oda, 1975, description), making this relational practice of authentic connections with others a transcendental phenomenon.



Figure 18. Dance as my personal medium for social and transcendental connections.

Education as part of humanity

The courage to become part of humanity is not just a social or critical act but also a transcendental act of love and sacrifice (Freire, 2000; Kahn, 2005). It is with love and sacrifice that we find the courage to transcend the boundaries of prescribed existence and find within it our authentic truth. This will inevitably evolve the way we exist personally and professionally. On a professional level, ECE educators who care for the youngest of our children in educational institutions and ECE leaderships hold an immeasurable importance in experiencing this process of humanization that will evolve our Image of the Child, our professional judgements and the way we assess the growth of children. Components of professional practice in early childhood education which include the Image of the Child, professional judgement and authentic assessments as elaborated by the 3-3-3 model in

Figure 3 will be greatly enhanced by the thorough and exhaustive process of privilege awareness to humanize the profession in a way that honours the voices of children and their diverse connected environments.

Sustainability as a path to humanity

On a personal level, I started to change and my relationship with my children also changed. I stopped hyperparenting and started instead to just be present in their lives. We slowly and intentionally transitioned to a simpler life that was more sustainable and debt free. Sustainable family economy and being debt free meant that the income from my work was more than enough and I had time to be with my children.

I understood that my privilege was connected to effects of the 'capitalist society' and its material world. I knew that the economy was the basis for my racial and class privileges and I knew that the economy had to perpetually expand and it did this through its systems of loans and interests. In order to be in control of my privilege, I had to separate it from the influence of the capitalist economy of loans and interests. We moved to a smaller house in a lower income area, I bought a cheaper car, I settled all my credit cards, we ate simple homecooked meals instead of dining out at fancy restaurants, picnic at public nature reserves and we embraced unbranded clothes and hand me downs. All these new behaviours helped get rid of loans and interest payments which are compounding oppressions.

These changes allowed me new existential freedoms. Financial sustainability is able to critically shift privilege for those with privilege. It removed the reach of exogenous prescriptions of economic colonisation on my personal life and personal spaces. It removed barriers to my ability to be present and make authentic connections with my children.

Essentially, I bought time by adjusting habits and evolving my privilege. On a professional level, educators should have this ability and space to spend time and make meaningful connections with children in their classes. Teachers' pay, benefits and expectations should be sustainable and give them the safety, space and time to make truly authentic connections with themselves and with the children under their care.

I took every opportunity to internally and externally reflect the best I could (in, on and for actions) and found that I wanted for my children to be free to live their authentic selves where the energy of their core being (heart, mind, body and soul) are in balance and cohesive. The authentic self that engages with the world from this energy of core being will manifest kindness, compassion, love and intentional actions that bring well-being for the themselves and others. I believe that the time and existential freedom to build safe spaces for connections were important in seeing myself as part of others and vice versa, as I wrote in my introductory poem,

That in others is me, in me are others,

Expansion of core being as resilience in children

My children and I started hanging out (Garfat & Alexander, 2014) and enjoying each other's company. We watched movies, played, biked, swam, cooked and did many other things together but nothing that required competition. During these hangout sessions, we engaged and shared our thoughts, ideas, fears and joys. I told them stories about growing up in my father's garden, they told me stories about their video games and our conversations would continue. It was a way to include their voice and participation and according to Garfat et al (2018), "inclusion is an interactive and an environmental

consideration” (p. 19). I believed that these hang out sessions were important in their process of becoming or undergoing (Dewey, 1916/2008) as “we are who we are because of the innumerable reciprocal interactions we have had...” (Garfat & Alexander, 2014). And, being present enabled me to be a part of their becoming.

Garfat et al (2018) proposes a framework of Being, Interpreting and Doing (BID) as a process of connecting to support growth, change and learning. These hanging out sessions were consistent with the BID framework of relational practice and I believe are not only limited to Child and Youth Care practice but also as a way for parents to parent their children where the relationship itself is the mode of parenting. I found the space and time to encourage my children to pursue what interested them as my Image of The Child changed to see them as capable of knowing their core being. It didn’t have to be a major lifelong project, it could be just a small activity. I told them that it’s OK to change your mind, it’s OK to make mistakes, it’s OK to not know everything. Uncertainty is the opportunity to co-create meaning (English, 2016). My professional judgement on how to teach my own children evolved. I became as my father was as I stood aside to give my children their space and time to connect within themselves and with the world. Mistakes and risks were part of learning.

My son taught himself to bake, to grill and to cook traditional recipes using social media platforms. Cooking also gave my son a medium to connect with his aunts, uncles and grandmother who were more than happy to share cooking secrets while they cooked together. It was a medium for connections for him. My daughter became a youth advocate with UNICEF and learned about child and human rights. She met other youth advocates and learned together from talks, workshops and seminars. She learned to interview the vulnerable youths and document their voice through short videos. This is what play looked

like for my teenagers. “In play, children also experiment with the world, discover how things work and learn to interact with others.” (NSELCF, p.26). We intentionally lived in the space of differences – diversity.

It was the same process for my younger children except their world was a little smaller – in and around the house. However, the physical space did not restrict the spiritual space they entered when they played. This spiritual space of play is boundless because they are in the state of imagination which English (2016) explains “brings us from known and visible, towards the unknown, invisible and uncertain that lies beyond our immediate ways of thinking and being, helping us dwell in these spaces of uncertainty as spaces of learning.” (p. 1054). They were truly experiencing another world of boundless space and time and for them it was as true as I was standing there. Play is not just a tool for learning but it is also the expansion of the core being. Play is the manifestation of an endogenous development in children.

My children were able to showcase their strengths (authentic assessment) and they were part of their own assessment through our version of Being, Interpreting and Doing framework. Our hang out session became the collaborative process for authentic assessment which guided planning for further learnings. We became a homeschooling family and stepped out of the formal schooling system so my children can learn in their unique ways. When their core being is cohesive enough my older children entered highschool in Canada. My son graduates with High Honours while my daughter takes extra time and combines online classes, correspondence classes with regular classes. She will complete highschool after the summer and at the moment is an honour student in high school. BID is a framework that supports internal expansion of core being in children and

this expansion of core being gave my children the resilience that was missing from the prescribed teaching in their schools.

Suspended judgement as a result of evolved Image of The Child

Basically, as part of the outcomes of the 5-step process of personal privilege awareness (trigger, grappling, personalization, divided self, resolving disequilibrium), I “chilled out” in my new non-prescriptive mode, which was influenced by my understanding of my adult privilege and as part of my effort to create safe spaces for my children to grow and develop. Chilling out was my way of suspending judgement and it made my children feel safe enough to express themselves and to seek interdependence with me when needed. I trusted them and felt confident in their abilities to hang back and just be present as an open resource. As I watched my children play in their own ways, I felt I did not have a right to disturb them with teaching moments to build their character in a certain way that is not authentic. My Image of the Child had evolved from seeing children as undeveloped empty vessels (Freire, 2000) that needed to be filled up with all kinds of learning that I could facilitate to seeing children as complete beings with their own capabilities to connect and understand the world. I stopped ‘teaching’ them on top of unparenting them.

I remembered how my father stayed in the background while I befriended plants and animals in his garden. He didn’t tell me how to pick the rambutans and throw them down from the tree or how to climb the trees or how to sit with worms. He trusted me and believed that I would make the connections needed to expand my understanding as my core being interacted with the world. The freedoms helped the child in me relate to nature and know them in my own way. By the time, I learned Biology, Chemistry and Physics in high school, I understood the concepts easily because they were all part of my experience in my

father's garden. Concepts cannot be taught as a curriculum lesson, they need to be experienced and play offers the opportunity for such experiences (NSELCF, 2018).

As my Image of the Child evolved, so did my judgements on the decisions I made, in regards to my children. They ended up with lots of uninterrupted play time that supported the growth of their authentic selves. As an extension of their play and our hang out sessions, we started to go on budget traveling trips to widen their experiences of the world. We would look at maps and they would get to choose where they would like to go. My children would learn from the world around as we travelled.

An accepted Muslim hadith, which are collections of examples of the Prophet Muhammad, encourages traveling as a way of learning (Mackintosh-Smith, 2002) and in heeding this hadith we travelled as musafir (travellers) with no specific plans nor aims but to be open and to learn all we can. My younger children were 4 and 5 years old when they started to join us on our travels. It was good practice for all of us at remaining open while living and thriving with uncertainties which was a characteristic needed for finding new meanings and connections. During our travels, we met many people who shared stories with us and were kind to us and some have become like family to us. It reaffirmed my belief that there was a lot of humanity in the world despite being taught otherwise in my process of becoming privileged. But, the most important observation that has come out of all our travels was that there is so much knowledge in people that are not acknowledged by privileged systems. Diversity in ways of being is truly an invaluable library of knowledge that hold much possibilities for innovations and adaptations for sustainable and humane ways to thrive.

My children have inherited some privileges such as being Malay, family privilege networking, travel experiences and eclectic education but they also know their core

strengths. They are able to shift their privilege and we are still learning together how to do this better and be a part of a wider interconnection of friends and beings who care for each other. I hope that the way they have grown up will give them the ability to share their privilege and live interdependently with others in humility, kindness, compassion and love.



Figure 19. Boh Tea Plantation, Cameron Highlands, Malaysia



Figure 20. Tonle Sap River, Cambodia



Figure 21. Sand dunes, Vietnam

The impact of evolved professional judgement

The internal changes within myself soon brought changes externally as well. As the director of my own childcare centres, my relationships with my staff changed. The prescribed professional SOP (standard operating procedures) for the way to interact with each other were cancelled. We were not mere professionals, we were beings relating with one another. Each person is unique in their ways of being and a universal professional guide to behaviours was a barrier to the expression of those ways of being. The only rule emphasized was to be kind to one another. I began to get to know my staff personally, get to know their families and their life outside of work as well. It was not an easy journey as I was used to being detached as a matter of professional ethics. It seemed like all my education had been a training to become a detached individual through the culture of banking model education (Freire, 2000) and its examinations. I fluctuated back and forth between being detached and being kind but I maintained my intentionality of reducing power gaps in our relationships.

While the internal changes happened within me, I began to see how my professional judgements in the childcare centre, affected more than just physical living, more than just material needs. It affected the being or the spirit of children. The environment affects their way of being in the world, and vice versa, in a perpetual mutual constitution (Markus & Kitayama, 2010). This evolved image of the Child affected my professional judgement and made me reflect more deliberately before deciding how to proceed with day to day management of children and families at our centre.

Kindness as reflecting with varied perspective

My reflections-for-action became more sophisticated as I learned to view situations from various perspectives. It helped me maintain the intentionality of my actions. This intentional reflections with many varied perspective was a kindness to others.

Many centre policies for children and teachers were revised with input from staff, children and parents. The process of privilege awareness softened me, made me kinder, more considerate and also more vulnerable. Kindness and compassion are the kryptonite to the oppressive, prescriptive and rigid habits of my privilege. However, the kryptonite cannot be transplanted (exogenous development) and need to grow out of expanding awareness of each person's personal situations. Kindness, compassion, and love are endogenous developments and a manifestation of the expansion of the core being and its sociality of authentic self.

I began implementing a few key changes in my childcare centres and attended a government supported conference on social enterprise business model to restructure our organisation. On its webpage, MAGIC Malaysia, explains that social enterprise is a

registered business entity “that proactively creates positive social and environmental impact in a way that is financially sustainable”. Three major areas of focus in a social enterprise that was elaborated by MAGIC Malaysia at central.mymagic.my were:

1. Social Mission – explicate clearly a social/environmental issues for community
2. Business model – provide a product or service that is needed
3. Target Beneficiaries – to improve or help specific groups or causes in the community

I had to join many social enterprise discussion groups before I could articulate the three areas of focus for my children’s centres. Now, as I write the last parts of this thesis, I understand why it was so difficult. I could not see my privilege and so, I could not see how my privilege made life challenging for others. For example, for efficiency and expediency, fees were collected by term at our centres. It gave us financial fluidity to purchase whatever that was needed in bulk at reduced prices and gave us resiliency in emergencies to continue to pay and retain teachers and staff. The financial security the company provided helped retain talented teachers and staff. Parents paid four months of fees in a maximum of two instalments with 10% reduction if paid in full. It was a very logical and reasonable arrangement to me. However, after incorporating the social enterprise business model, we switched to monthly payment of fees. The enrolment increased to full capacity with more on waitlist which indicated that the previous termly payment schedule was challenging for at least 40% of families. It was to become the beginning of my habit of recognising nagging discomfort (which I now know as triggers) and of reflecting with varied perspective before making decisions.

Kindness as humble listening

As part of changing to a kinder business model, I practiced listening as part of the way to dialogue with the community at our centre. It was not the usual kind of listening, it was a humble listening that was without judgement. It was difficult for me to practice humble listening because I needed to trust the parents and trust is not a characteristic of my personal privilege. However, I had made a decision to adjust my privilege and this was part of it. "Faith in people is an a priori requirement for dialogue" (Freire, 2000, p.90) and without trust there could not be true dialogue with staff, children, parents and families.

Kindness as catalyst for organisational humanization

After slowly learning to reflect with varied perspective and practice humble listening to hold dialogue with staff, parents and children, I found that harsh policies were not necessary for the efficiency of our business operations. Instead of harshness in policies, we included prayers of kindness and gratitude before and after activities, which were suggested by parents. These new collaborated policies of kindness resulted in the staff becoming more motivated and parents becoming more supportive of the teachers. There was more trust in each other as everyone began to be heard and seen.

As I reflect on it now, the policy of kindness was a catalyst to the process of humanization at every level of the organisation. As varied participants within our organisation collaborated to interpret the world and make new meanings (Stuart, 2009), innovations and adaptations were created for collective well-being and mutual thriving (Theunissen, 2017).

Management and Leadership

In my quest for more understanding of how to manage my early childhood centres, I took time to read more and learn more. How should I lead my staff and parents on a similar path of becoming aware of the impact of personal privilege on children? I found that during the early 20th century, management started appearing as an extension of company leadership. The main function of management was to ensure order and stability through “unidirectional authority relationship” (Northouse, 2018, p.13) which was a top-down prescriptive relationship. In order for this system to work, everything must go according to plan and various contracts would be used with punitive measures if not honoured, to mitigate risks. The culture of having to know everything before embarking on a project was part of the privilege culture and it was possibly the main reason I struggled to unlearn the need for certainty in outcomes. It became clearer that the concept of management was created to enforce exogenous development in the workforce that would ensure efficiency and expediency which would result in being the best and monopolizing markets. This is manifested in prescribed ways to think, plan and act. In my early childhood centre, we had a template for documenting goals for educators’ development. Educators are urged to be clear on their goals and explain steps to reach those goals. These goals are often needed to teach children skills that will prepare them for standardized testing in schools – school readiness. My educators were sent for many trainings on how to set goals as part of their professional development. It was all part of the banking education (Freire, 2000) that chiselled away at the cohesive core being of educators which then trickled down to the way they were with the children under their care. My role was managing, which now feels more like organisational policing, these exogenous prescriptions on educators and children. In Nova Scotia, similar processes are found on the implementation of ‘Quality Matters’ which are in conflict with many parts of the NSELCF. ‘Quality Matters’ places the 3-3-3 CCEP in the

top of Privilege as Practice model as shown in Figure 5 which facilitates the homogenization of educator abilities.

The concept of management was marketed as skills of leadership and sold through education. Children were taught as I was taught to become good managers and develop these pseudo-leadership skills to become 'leaders' with a good life of privilege. On the contrary, true leadership was "distinguished by motivating intrinsically, creative thinking, strategic planning, tolerance of ambiguity, and being able to read people," (Northouse, 2018, p 14). True leadership embraces the varied possibilities of endogenous development in others. On the contrary, management exerts an exogenously prescribed development on others that silences the core being. Therefore, management skills are not leadership skills. And, my efforts in becoming aware of my privileges have been largely an effort to undo years of prescribed management skills.

My leadership style started to change from a top-down management style (homogenizing effect) to a bottom-up (differentiation effect) shared leadership that Northouse (2019) terms as Authentic leadership and described as "transparent, morally grounded, and responsive to people's needs and values." (p. 222). My leadership was not to police milestones in professional behaviour but to inspire the imagination that is "a central human capacity, which helps us navigate experience and address our 'blind spots' in a way that incorporate others" (English, 2016). I began to inspire the humanization of my organisation and all within it.

Conclusion

Malaysia and Canada are over 12,000 kilometers apart. Yet, both share many similarities. Both countries share a history of colonisation by western imperialism, are multicultural and embraced liberal capitalist economic ideologies as they became independent. Privilege that is based on this common history exists in Malaysia as it exists in Canada. Privilege culture and systems have colonised or is colonising education in both situations. Even though the racial groups that are privileged are different in the two countries, the path to become privileged is similar because the ideologies behind this privilege is the same.

My journey of becoming aware of the privilege in me and its accompanying marginalization has been a journey into myself. The vulnerability that was needed for this inward journey has been for me the most courageous act in my life. As I researched how I became privileged, I faced past hurt and trauma that I had kept deep in the recesses of my heart. I discovered how privilege culture silenced the voice of my core being which was the choir of my heart, mind, body and spirit. My personal privilege silenced 'the cohesive child' within me.

In an effort to heal and reclaim my cohesive core being, I had to also journey outward into the world. The path led me on a process of becoming aware of the structures of my personal privilege. This process of inquiry within this thesis has helped me to understand the historical, political and social structures in the world that enabled my privilege and the process also facilitated a sobering understanding of how that privilege was connected to the marginalisation of others.

Data for this thesis, was collected through autoethnography and guided by a 5-step process of personal privilege awareness (Dunlop et al, 2007). The data was interpreted against the framework of Privilege as Practice (Kolan & Sullivan TwoTrees, 2014). The framework elaborates how educational practices of Image of the Child, professional judgement and assessments (3-3-3 CCECEP) that are dominated by underlying beliefs of economic fundamentals contribute to the phenomenon of 'the fractured child'.

According to the framework of Privilege as Practice (Kolan & Sullivan TwoTrees, 2014), selective preferences of privilege such as the use of math and language as predominant ways to learn (Gardner, 1984) contribute to the fracturing of children's core being and marginalizes children's other ways of learning. The use of math and language is not a random selection but is based on economic efficiency. It interfaces seamlessly with standardized exams and enables standardized exams to be accepted as credible and accountable assessments to determine the potential economic worth of a child. When the educational practices of Image of the Child, professional judgement and assessments (3-3-3 CCECEP) are located at the top of the Privilege as Practice model, the power of privilege enables the phenomenon of 'the fractured child' to become normalized (standardization of childhood), embedded (implicit bias) and unseen (privilege oblivion).



Power

Ability to dictate narrative

Fear, Uncertainty and Doubt (Frost, 2020)

Homogenizing effect

(top-down
narrative)



Privilege

high grades

acknowledgments

scholarships and awards



Preference

- 1) Selective preference of abilities (Math and language abilities)
- 2) Homogenization of childhood (standardized exams)
- 3) Embedded privilege oblivion (independent, individual, competitive, objective)



Difference

Diversity in ways of being

'The Cohesive Child'

Figure 22. The normalization of 'The Fractured Child'

Nova Scotia is at the brink of situating educational practice at the top of the Privilege as Practice model influenced by its top 1% income earners. The province is poised to embrace global competition and monopoly as part of the underlying economic beliefs (elaborated in the beginning of this thesis) of its educational reform and seek to standardize school environments that will make the phenomenon of 'the fractured child' an embedded norm as seen in Figure 22. Any professed commitment towards including the well-being of children from diverse backgrounds become unattainable as can be seen in the Malaysian experience.

The way we know what we know influences our way of being in the world. The process of becoming aware of my personal privilege was a humanizing process for me. And, as many others have said before me, humanization is itself an act of courage (Freire, 2000; Kahn 2005; Habermas, 2002). It has taken a great deal of courage to write this thesis to explicate the role of privilege in the marginalisation of children in their process of becoming educated.

The whole process of writing this thesis was made easier by the methodology that was used. Various forms of art are experiences of knowing that take in differences and involve transformation of the self (Dewey, 1934/2008). Ellis (2004) asserts that autoethnography is a form of narrative art that honestly strive to make meaning of memories and experiences. Autoethnography was selected as the methodology for this thesis because it offers a safe space where imagination can help find ways to empathize and create a 'third voice' (Nussbaum, 1997) that is not the voice of participants but is instead a new voice of co-created meanings (Dewey 1916/2008; English, 2016). The art of autoethnography has proven effective for me in uncovering layer upon layer of privileged

socialization that insulated a traumatized inner self. Autoethnography is a formidable process to become more aware of cloaked (Phillips & Lowery, 2018) personal privilege. I would like to propose a personal privilege awareness mentoring program for pre-service educators based on the information found in this thesis. The mentoring program can be incorporated as a practical strategy for developing reflective practices in educators' training. The conditions needed in a mentoring program for educators to become aware of personal privilege would include:

1. Safe spaces that extend (Ahmed, 2012) and include all participants
2. Suspended judgement for internal and external reflections
3. Sustained encounters of differences
4. Increased ability for code-switching
5. Acts of kindness, love and honouring

These five conditions helped me reclaim the strength of my cohesive core being and authentic self. It changed the way I experienced the world and the way the world experienced me. Personal privilege awareness has the capacity to transform educators' professional judgement and Image of the Child to support an opposite narrative for the development of 'the cohesive child' as shown in Figure 23.

Power / Strength

Kindness, honouring, love (interdependent self-construal)

Innovation and new ways to thrive together

**Privilege / Accessibility**

collaborative well-being

accommodative policies

affordable education

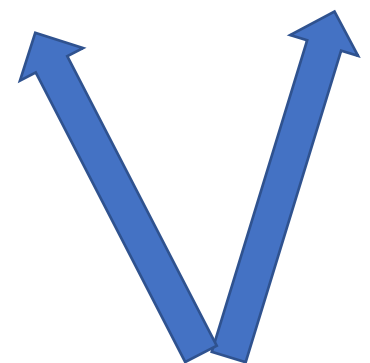
**Preference / Support**

- 1) Multiple abilities (Gardner, 1983, Bronfenbrenner, 1986)
- 2) Differentiation of childhood (strength based assessments)

**Difference**

Diversity in ways of being

Sustained encounters of difference



Differentiation effect
(bottom-up narrative)

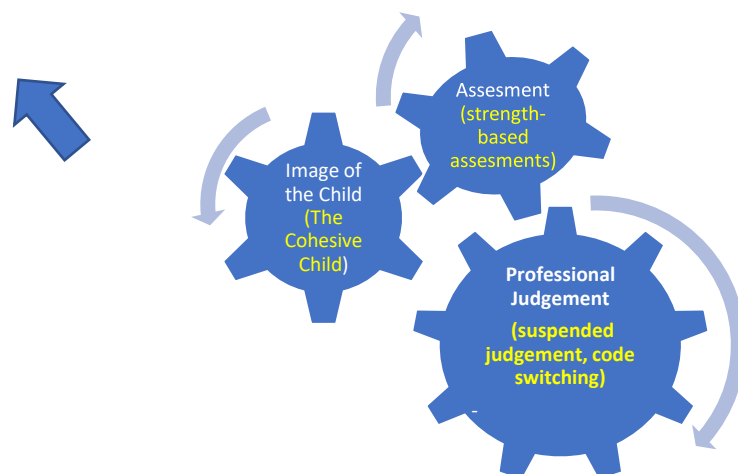


Figure 23. The development of 'The Cohesive Child'

In ending this most incredible journey, I acknowledge that I have so much more to learn. However, I hope that the knowledge that has been discovered in this thesis regarding the process of personal privilege awareness and the reclaiming of my cohesive core being have given readers information on the conditions needed for this process on a personal basis and as part of the development of professional judgement in pre-service training of child and youth care practitioners, especially early childhood educators. There is no standard prescribed way for this process which leaves it open to the outcomes of collaborations and willingness between all involved. Knowledge and abilities are in people and should be sought through respectful engagement with them. My research offers a glimpse of the engagement process needed for liberating educational inertia (Ahmed, 2012) and for holding a critical balance on personal privilege to facilitate the reclaiming of the voices of diversity in personal and professional life. Differentiation in core beings hold the possibilities of empathetic innovations for our collective thriving. Privilege can become a resource for equity and each of us as an oppressed being have the agency to ignite the process of humanization.

References

- Abdul Aziz, R. (2012). New Economic Policy and the Malaysian multiethnic middle class. *Asian Ethnicity*, 13:1, 29-46, DOI: [10.1080/14631369.2012.625692](https://doi.org/10.1080/14631369.2012.625692)
- Abdul Khalid, M. (2014). *The colours of inequality: ethnicity, class, income and wealth in Malaysia*. MPH Publishing
- Abdullah, M. N. & Mohd Noor, A. (2015). *Unplugged: #WillYouStillBeAMalaysianIn10Years?* Petaling Jaya: Sedania Corporation Sdn. Bhd.
- Al Ghazali. (2015). *The book of knowledge: the revival of the religious sciences, book 1* (K. Honerkamp, trans). Fons Vitae. (Original work published 1853)
- Ahmed, S. (2012). *On being included: Racism and diversity in institutional life*. Duke University Press
- Ahmed, S. (2014). *Willful subjects*. Duke University Press
- Akhtarkhavari, N., & Lee, A. (2016). *Love is my savior: The Arabic poems of Rumi*. Michigan State University Press. doi:10.14321/jctt19631nt
- Allen, G. (1989). A smoldering race issue. *McLellan's Magazine*, 2 (27), 14. <https://archive.macleans.ca/article/1989/2/27/a-smouldering-race-issue>
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. W H Freeman/Times Books/ Henry Holt & Co.
- Bartlett, C., Marshall, M., & Marshall, A. (2012). Two-Eyed Seeing and other lessons learned within a co-learning journey of bringing together indigenous and mainstream

knowledges and ways of knowing. *Journal of Environmental Studies and Sciences*.

2(4), 3-27. DOI: [10.1007/s13412-012-0086-8](https://doi.org/10.1007/s13412-012-0086-8)

Black Learners Advisory Committee (1994). BLAC report on education: Redressing inequity – empowering Black learners. <https://www.ednet.ns.ca/docs/blac-report-education-redressing-inequity.pdf>

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1986). Ecology of the family as a context for human development: Research perspectives. *Developmental Psychology*, 22(6), 723-742.

Brown, C. (1970). *Sĕjarah Mĕlayu; or, Malay annals*. Oxford University Press.

Chang, H. (2008). *Autoethnography as method*. Routledge.

Bochner, A. P. & Ellis, C. (2016). *Evocative Autoethnography: Writing Lives and telling Stories*. Routledge.

Choi, J. (2017). *Creating a multivocal self: Autoethnography as method*. Routledge.

Clark, A. & Moss, P. (2011 [2001]). *Listening to young children: The mosaic approach* (2nd ed.). National Children's Bureau.

Csizmadia, A., Kaneakua, J. P., Miller, M. & Halgunseth, C. (2013). Inter-racial socialization and its implications for ethnic minority children's adjustment in middle school. *Journal of Communication Research*, 5(2), p. 227-242.

Convention on the Rights of the Child. (2020). Retrieved 11 July 2020, from <https://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention>

Deakin Crick, R., & Joldersma, C. (2007). Habermas, lifelong learning and citizenship education. *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, 26(2), 77-95.

Derman-Sparks, L., LeeKeenan, D., & Nimmo, J. (2015). *Leading anti-bias early childhood programs – a guide for change*. National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (2018) *Capable, Confident, and Curious: Nova Scotia's Early Learning Curriculum Framework*. Province of Nova Scotia.

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. (2018). *Educators Guide to Capable, Confident, and Curious: Nova Scotia's Early Learning Curriculum Framework*. Province of Nova Scotia.

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. (2018). *Quality Matters Consultant Templates for Self-Assessment, Quality Improvement Plans, and On-Site Consultation*. Province of Nova Scotia.

Dewey, J. (1916/2008). Democracy and education. In J.A. Boydston (Ed.), *The collected works of John Dewey: The middle works*. Southern Illinois University Press.

Dunlop, M., Scogin, J., Green, P., & Davi, A. (2007). White students' experiences of privilege and socioeconomic disparities: toward a theoretical model. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 13 (2), 19-30

Ellis, C. (2004). *The Ethnographic I: A methodological novel about autoethnography*. AltaMira Press

Ellis, C., Adams, T. E., & Bochner, A. P. (2010). Autoethnography: An overview [40 paragraphs]. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 12(1). DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.17169/fqs-12.1.1589>.

- English A. R. (2016). John Dewey and the role of the teacher in a globalized world: Imagination, empathy, and 'third voice'. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 48:10, 1046-1064, DOI: [10.1080/00131857.2016.1202806](https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2016.1202806)
- Evans, K. (2019). The invisibility of black girls in education. *RCYCP*, 32(1), 77-90
- Freeman, J. (2019). What Keeps Us from Relational Child and Youth Care? *Relational Child and Youth Care Practice*, 32(4), 6.
- Freire, Paulo. (2000). *Pedagogy of the oppressed. (30th anniversary ed.)* Continuum.
- Frost, G. (2020). *The Attack on Nova Scotia Schools*. Formac Publishing Company Limited
- Garfat, T. & Alexander, C. (2014). Beyond attachment: mattering and the development of meaningful moments. *Relational Child and Youth Care Practice* 27(3), 26-30
- Garfat, T., Freeman, J., Gharabaghi, K., Fulcher, L. (2018). Characteristics of a relational child and youth care approach revisited. *Child & Youth Care Online*, (236), 7-45.
- Gardner, H. (1983). *Frames of mind: The theory of multiple intelligences*. Basic Books
- Gharabaghi, K. (2017). Why are we so white? *CYC-Online* (120), 6-10
- Gordon, G. (2014). Well Played: The Origins and Future of Playfulness. *American Journal of Play*, 6(2), 234-266.
- Guo, S. (2013). Citizenship, immigration, and lifelong learning: toward recognitive justice. In Nesbit, T., Brigham, S.M., Taber, N., and Gibb, Tara., (Eds.), *Building on critical traditions: Adult education and learning in Canada* (pp.319-329). Thompson Educational Publishing
- Habermas, J. (1984). *The theory of communicative action*. Beacon Press.

Habermas, J. (2002). *Knowledge and human interests*. Beacon Press

Hall, E.T. (1976). *Beyond culture*. Garden City, NJ: Anchor Books/Doubleday

Hays, Chang, and Dean (2004). White Counselors' Conceptualization of Privilege and Oppression: Implications for Counselor Training. *Counselor Education and Supervision*, 43 (4), 242-257. <https://onlinelibrary-wiley-com.ezproxy.msvu.ca/doi/abs/10.1002/j.1556-6978.2004.tb01850.x>

Hedlund-de Witt, A. (2014). The integrative worldview and its potential for sustainable societies: A qualitative exploration of the views and values of environmental leaders. *Worldviews: Global Religions, Culture and Ecology*, 18(3), 191-229. <https://doi.org/10.1163/15685357-01802009>

Heldke, L. & O'Connor, P. (2004). *Oppression, privilege and resistance: theoretical perspectives on racism, sexism, and heterosexism*. McGraw-Hill.

Hyland, N.E. (2010). Social justice in early childhood classrooms: what the research tells us. *Young Children*

Ibrahim, Z (2017). *I, too, am Malay*. ZI Publucations Sdn. Bhd.

Igbu, S., & Baccus, C. (2018). Critical Theoretical Approaches to Intentional Relational Praxis. *Relational Child and Youth Care Practice*, 31(3), 57-70.

Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, & Mojaddedi, J. A. (2004). *The Masnavi, Book One*. OUP Oxford.

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent (2018). The Transformative Power of International Zakat. http://media.ifrc.org/innovation/wp-content/uploads/sites/9/2018/08/Kenya_case_study_2018_003.pdf

- John, P. (2018). *How far to nudge?: Assessing behavioural public policy*. Edward Elgar Publishing Limited.
- Johnson, A. G. (2006). *Privilege, power and difference* (2nd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Jones, K. (2014). "A Time of Great Tension": Memory and the Malaysian Chinese Construction of the May 13 Race Riots. *Berkeley Undergraduate Journal*, 27(2).
<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/87n7c529>
- Kahn, P. (2005). *Putting liberalism in its place*. Princeton University Press
- Khalid, M. (2014). *The colours of inequality*. MPH Distributors Sdn. Bhd
- Kolan, M. & Sullivan TwoTrees, K. (2014). Privilege as Practice: A Framework for engaging with sustainability, diversity, privilege, and power. *The Journal of Sustainability Education*, vol. 7, Dec 2014. http://www.susted.com/wordpress/content/privilege-as-practice-a-framework-for-engaging-with-sustainability-diversity-privilege-and-power_2014_12/
- Leyden, J., & Raffles, T. S. (1821). *Malay annals*. (Early Western books on Asia.) Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown.
- Mackintosh-Smith, T. (2002). *The travels of Ibn Battutah*. Picador
- Malaysia (1971) *Second Malaysia Plan, 1971–1975*. Government Printers.
- Markus, H. R., & Kitayama, S. (1991). Culture and the self: Implications for cognition, emotion, and motivation. *Psychological Review*, 98(2), 224–253. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.98.2.224>

- Markus, H. R., & Kitayama, S. (2010). Cultures and selves: A cycle of mutual constitution. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 5(4), 420–430. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691610375557>
- Marsiglia, F. F & Kulis, S (2009). *Diversity, oppression, and change: Culturally grounded social work*. Lyceum Books
- Maslow, A. H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review*, 50(4), 370–396. <http://psychclassics.yorku.ca/Maslow/motivation.htm> [Crossref], [Web of Science®], [Google Scholar]
- Maxwell, K. & Chesler, M. (2019). White Student Comfort and Conflict in Experiential Racial Dialogues. *Journal of Experiential Education*, Vol. 42(3) 249–263.
- McIntosh, P. (2020). *On privilege, fraudulence, and teaching as learning: Selected essays 1981-2019*. Routledge
- McKinlay, L., & Ross, H. (2019). *You and Others: Reflective Practice for Group Effectiveness in Human Services* (2nd ed.). Pearson.
- McLaughlin, N. (2004). *Out of wonder: The evolving story of the universe*. Veritas.
- Milner, A. (2016). Kerajaan: Malay political culture on the eve of colonial rule. SIRD
- Minister's Panel on Education. (2014). *Disrupting the Status Quo: Nova Scotians Demand a Better Future for Every Student*. Halifax, NS: Province of Nova Scotia.
- Mizzi, R. (2010). Unraveling researcher subjectivity through multivocality in autoethnography. *Journal of Research Practice*, 6(1), Article M3. <http://jrp.icaap.org/index.php/jrp/article/view/201/185>

- Mullaly, B. & West, J. (2018). *Challenging oppression and confronting privilege: A critical approach to anti-privilege theory and practice*. Oxford University Press.
- Murray, K. (2017). The violence within: Canadian modern statehood and the pan-territorial residential school system ideal. *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 50(3), 747-772.
- Neal, S., & Vincent, C. (2013). Multiculture, middle class competencies and friendship practices in super-diverse geographies. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 14(8), 909-929.
- Noor and Pickup (2017). Zakat requires Muslims to donate 2.5% of their wealth: could this end poverty? The Guardian. https://amp.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2017/jun/22/zakat-requires-muslims-to-donate-25-of-their-wealth-could-this-end-poverty?fbclid=IwAR33mUV5Eaz30so1nzPJEYIN1x8Z5e_ybs5zXqn6kTjRZ6baTb_8PqiDMil
- Northouse, P.G. (2019). *Leadership* (8th ed.). SAGE Publications
- Nussbaum, M. C. (1997). *Cultivating humanity: A classical defence of reform in liberal education*. Harvard University Press
- Oda, Y. (1975). The religious thought of Rumi. *Japan Science and Technology Agency*. 18(1), 27-41. DOI: 10.5356/jorient.18.27
- Phillips, L. T., & Lowery, B. S. (2018). Herd invisibility: The psychology of racial privilege. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 27(3), 156–162. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0963721417753600>
- Pilarska, A. (2014). Self-construal as a mediator between identity structure and subjective well-being. *CurrPsychol* 33, 130–154. doi:10.1007/s12144-013-9202-5

Ramadhan, T. (2016, June 7). *Fitrah | Ramadan Chronicles 1437/2016* [video file].

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=142&v=Q2WS_Rby-sg&feature=emb_title

Rodriguez, Richard. (1983, c1982) *Hunger of memory :the education of Richard Rodriguez : an autobiography*. Bantam Books,

Russell, K (2017.) On open access, the politics of citation, and generous scholarship.

Canadian Journal of Environmental Education 21: 5–12.

<https://cjee.lakeheadu.ca/article/viewFile/1529/858>

Schon, D.A. (1987). *Educating the reflective practioner: Toward a new design for teaching and learning in the professions*. Jossey-Bass.

Statistics Canada. (2017). High income tax filers in Canada.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25318/1110005501-eng>

Statistics Canada. 2017. *Nova Scotia [Province] and Canada [Country]* (table). *Census Profile*.

2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001. Ottawa. Released November 29, 2017.

<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>

Stuart, C. (2013). *Foundations of child and youth care* (2nd ed.). Kendall Hunt Publishing Company.

Storring, T. (2019). *High income trends among Canadian taxfilers, 2017*.

<https://novascotia.ca/finance/statistics/news.asp?id=15165>

Thaler, Richard H.,Sunstein, Cass R. (2008) *Nudge :improving decisions about health, wealth, and happiness*. Yale University Press

The Nova Scotia Commission on Building Our Economy (2014). Now or never: An urgent call to action for Nova Scotians. <https://onens.ca/img/now-or-never.pdf>

Theunissen, S. (2017). The interface between global hegemony and cultural marginalization : agency, education and development among indigenous peoples. [Doctoral dissertation, ST. Mary's University].
[https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/13ed/7547e06ba6bf572deaec7f269c3abe6bc958.p
df](https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/13ed/7547e06ba6bf572deaec7f269c3abe6bc958.pdf)

Thomas, M. (2012). *Violence and colonial order : Police, workers and protest in the European colonial empires, 1918-1940* (Critical perspectives on empire). Cambridge University Press.

Wallerstein, I. M. (2004). *World-systems analysis: An introduction*. Duke University Press.

Whitman, W. (2005). *Walt Whitman's Leaves of grass: The first (1855) edition*. Penguin Books.

Wicks, P. (1971). The new realism: Malaysia since 13 may, 1969. *The Australian Quarterly* 43(4), 17-27

Willis, A. (2011) Re-storying wilderness and adventure therapies: healing places and selves in an era of environmental crises, *Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning*, 11(2), 91-108, DOI: [10.1080/14729679.2011.633375](https://doi.org/10.1080/14729679.2011.633375)

Wilson, Shawn, (2008). *Research is ceremony: Indigenous research methods*. Fernwood Pub.

Young, I. M. (1990). *Justice and the politics of difference*. Princeton

Ziafati, N. (2020). International students 'financially struggling,' demand lower tuition fees amid pandemic. The Chronicle Herald.

<https://www.saltwire.com/news/provincial/international-students-financially-struggling-demand-lower-tuition-fees-amid-pandemic-452122/>