Pay attention to what is behind the curtain:

Interrogating whiteness using contemplative practices in graduate management education

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Abstract

This chapter details the instructional experiences of a group of graduate students, who are emerging Human Systems Intervention practitioners- men and women who self-identify as white and work in organizational, community, and educational leadership settings. I outline a series of learning experiences that supported a group of MA students to uncover white supremacist thinking in their work- their approaches to intervention and their mental models regarding effective organizational or community functioning. Using contemplative practices to dig out oppressive, invisible dimensions of white identity, we examined how our whiteness shaped and warped how we enacted our work in community and organization development. We did this by reflective reading, meditation, contemplative arts, deep listening and storytelling, singing and music, and ceremony. This chapter illustrates how higher education can address a fundamental mental model and world view that influences how social responsibility is envisioned and how issues of social justice can be advanced within graduate professional education through socially responsible teaching and learning strategies and activities.

Keywords: community and organizational development, contemplative pedagogy, contemplative practices, graduate education, higher education, learning strategies and activities, management education, professional education, self as instrument, social justice, social responsibility, teaching and learning, whiteness, white privilege, white supremacist thinking

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I acknowledge that this piece was written on unceded Indigenous lands which are the birthplace of the Kanien'kehá:ka, Wendat, and Algonquian/Anishinaabeg Nations. I also want to acknowledge generations of ancestors developing and sharing contemplative practices such as meditation from Asia and East Asia, lectio devina from early Benedictine scholars, and many others.
We have not arrived here without following in the footsteps of others.

It was Tuesday, November 8, 2016. I was sitting in my son's apartment in Toronto, after having a lovely dinner at a neighborhood Peruvian restaurant. The owner chef had regaled us with tales of learning to cook when he was a boy, and how he had come to Canada. I had spent the day at a workshop entitled *Engaging white privilege in the workplace*. During this experience, I witnessed, yet again, the harm of white privilege, enacted by well-meaning individuals. Racialized and Indigenous People, and their concerns, were sidelined, while the self-identified white[1] people in the room performed and centered their all-too-familiar feelings of guilt, defensiveness, and fragility when white privilege is named, expecting Racialized and Indigenous participants to act as teachers. One of my commitments this sabbatical year was to more

[1] I intentionally use lowercase for *white*, *whiteness,* and *white supremacy,* and capitalize terms that refer to Black, Brown, Indigenous, or Racialized People. I do this to draw attention to the deeply politicized concept of whiteness, its dominance, and to decenter its influence. I am following this trend established by scholars such as Patel (2016), Bhattacharya (2019), and the editors of the journal *Decolonization, Indigeneity, Education, and Society*.

effectively address these issues in my teaching, and what I had observed during the workshop underscored the importance of this work.

As we settled in to watch the results of the Presidential election, he and I talked about the alarming tenor the discourse had taken, the growing presence of white supremacy in the Canadian electoral process, and the increased incidents of overt and violent racism, anti-Semitism, Islamaphobia, and neofascism worldwide. We talked about the growing visibility and boldness of racism in North America, and how this trend, always apparent to Black, Brown, Indigenous, and Racialized People, was just becoming crystal clear to us. As we turned our attention to the mounting election results, we felt horrified.

Now, I am not naïve. I grew up as a white woman in racially segregated Philadelphia. I remember the fire bombing of houses when Black families attempted to move into my white neighborhood, and the racial slurs used by family members. I did not think that one African American President would create a post-racial society, but was just beginning to understand the extent of the white supremacist backlash. I am also not gullible enough to believe that this was not a significant issue in Canada. I witnessed the painful and horrifying stories from Indigenous people concerning the Canadian residential school system. But the depth of the hate and rage these results signified staggered me.

Perhaps this event could provide a much-needed opening? I returned to Montréal the next day, determined to take action.

Issues of whiteness in Graduate Education

Frankenberg (1993) defined whiteness as multi-dimensional. First, it is a location of structural advantage and race privilege. Secondly, it is a standpoint, a place from which white people look at themselves, at others, and at society. And thirdly, whiteness refers to a set of cultural practices

that are usually unmarked and unnamed that determine a wide range of values, beliefs, actions, and norms. Culture influences how we think, learn, live and behave. As a set of normative cultural practices, whiteness "is visible most clearly to those it definitively excludes and those to whom it does violence. Those who are securely housed within its borders usually do not examine it" (pp. 228-229). Whiteness is more than pigmentation; it is a set of power relations. Racism is a multidimensional, highly adaptive force designed to keep these power relations in place.

While individual whites may be against racism, white privilege still guarantees that they benefit from the distribution of resources controlled by their group (DiAngelo, 2018). This distinction between individual prejudice and a complex coordinated system of institutionalized racial power is fundamental to understanding our deeply internalized sense of white entitlement that we are either not consciously aware of, or can never admit to ourselves. When confronted with this privilege and entitlement, we tend to deploy various sorts of discourses on race (Dickar, 2000) to minimize the significance of these differences. We may avoid the issue by simply not "seeing" race and denying the power relationships embedded within those differences. We may place the onus of success and failure on individuals, not institutions and social structures, thereby blaming victims of structural oppression for their failures. And/or we may deflect any allegations of racism by clinging to our other marginalized identities, thus avoiding confronting problematic attitudes, feelings, and actions, e.g. I can't be racist because I am an oppressed woman. These discourses serve to reestablish hegemonic norms rather than challenge them, and draw upon racial ideologies designed to keep whiteness in a dominant position.

Moreover, Crenshaw (1997) argued that rhetorical silences of whiteness, i.e. intentional and strategic discourses where the power of whiteness is invoked but its explicit terminology is not, illustrates how white people can choose to deal with or ignore racism. This means that for the

majority of white people who choose to avoid antiracist commitments, their discourse and practices maintain and advance racist ideologies not only through what is not said, but also what remains absent (Carrillo Rowe, 2000). Such silences sustain "color blindness."

Notions of whiteness, privilege, and rhetorical silences help to support white supremacy culture. Now, the average white person tends to think of white supremacists as white-hooded individuals burning crosses and terrorizing Black People in the southern US in the 1950s and 1960s. Recent events indicate that this is as current an issue as ever- white supremacist culture is alive, well, and thriving (Stack, 2019). The rally in Charlottesville, the violent attacks in Charleston, Pittsburgh, Utøya, and Aotearoa New Zealand are examples of the extreme end of this toxic spectrum. However, white supremacist culture can be more subtle and pernicious. It is a culture that supports the idea of whiteness as rightness, of colonial ways of doing business, exploiting and despoiling the environment, and creating dominance and subjugation social hierarchies. And being immersed in culture, it is something to which we become oblivious.

Therefore, if we in higher education (HE), especially in the fields of management and organizations, are committed to, and have a responsibility about, promoting social justice, we must tackle systemic oppression on multiple levels simultaneously- intrapersonal, interpersonal, community, institutional, and structural, since these levels actively co-constitute each other (Freire, 1986; Gutiérrez & Lewis, 1998; Pyles, 2009). Systems thinking suggests that change in one area will ripple into others. However, little work has been done in this area.

Brazzel (2007) acknowledged social justice as a key part of organizational development (OD) practice, but also noted that OD textbooks yield few listings for social justice concepts and dynamics. He accounted for this because the work "is hard and often uncomfortable work" (p. 21). Though Litwin (2014) situated her discussion in OD and community development (CD)

projects abroad, it is important to recognize that the legacy of colonialism and structures of white supremacy and oppression are home grown issues. Dominance power dynamics (Oshry, 2007) can be triggered by our whiteness and our inherent ways of seeing, working, and being in the world shaped by our whiteness- for example, that we have superior knowledge, skill, and insight that positions us to *know better* how to proceed in change initiatives than members of a particular system. OD and CD consultants have an obligation to be aware of their own internalized oppressing mindsets in order to shift their stance from being part of the problem to helping to facilitate solutions.

Contemplative Pedagogy in HE

HE can promote profound personal and social awareness, allowing individuals to grow in the fullest way possible. When HE is approached as integrative, transformative, and communal, it allows us to examine the deeper question: what world shall we create together? This question is salient given the issues we face: poverty, climate change, environmental injustice, inequality, oppression, violence, and forced transnational migration. Contemplative pedagogy (CP) is one adaptive response to these turbulent times. It involves teaching and learning methods designed to foster multilayered insight, awareness, and concentration (Barbezat & Bush, 2014). Activities are designed to quiet the mind and cultivate deep calm, focus, and awareness of the present moment, and, when undertaken regularly, develop compassion and a cognizance of the interconnectedness of all life (Center for Contemplative Mind in Society [CCMS], 2011). Ideally, the insights that arise from the mind, body, and heart in contemplative states reveal what has meaning in our lives.

But CP should not result in merely navel-gazing. Weger, Hooper, Meier, and Hopthrow (2012) demonstrated how mindfulness exercises reduce the impact of stereotypes that trigger feelings of threat. Others have connected CP to activism and social justice (Baugher, 2014).

Lueke and Gibson (2015) have shown that CP reduces implicit age and racial biases, as measured by implicit association tests. Magee (2016) outlined how educators may increase their capacity to understand the impacts of race and color, minimize implicit bias, improve student performance, and better promote the interests of justice in a diverse society by working to incorporate and blend two important pedagogical trends: the theory and practice supporting inclusive, identity-safe classrooms, and CP in teaching and learning.

In my own instructional practice, I use CP to shape curriculum that hones a student's sense of *self-as-instrument* to increase interpersonal strength as change management consultants. Self-as-instrument is "the conscious use of one's whole being in the intentional execution of one's role for effectiveness in whatever the current situation is presenting" (Jamieson, Auron, & Shechtman, 2010, p. 5), and is a prime asset in realizing helping OD and CD relationships. Activities help students to develop deeper recognitions of consciousness, choice, shadows, agency, behavior patterns, and intentionality. My stance is that the greater students' awareness of these dimensions of self, the better chance they have to effectively manage themselves for the benefit of others. If these dynamics operate below the level of awareness, and go unmanaged, they may, at the very least, be unhelpful or, at worst, result in harm. "It is not an option but the cornerstone of our work. The OD consultant's ability to fill a wide range of roles depends upon this use of self" (Cheung-Judge, 2012, p. 44). Therefore, CP seemed a good start for interrogating how whiteness might limit a consultant's ability to help shift systems into healthy, more affirming, and socially just dynamics.

A Curriculum to Interrogate whiteness

Context

The graduate program in Human Systems Intervention is designed to provide expertise for

future leaders and consultants who are interested in facilitating change processes within human systems. Its approach embodies a socio-ecological perspective, the interwoven relationship that exists between the individual and the environment. A distinctive feature is the use of the cohort learning community model. Students are given the opportunity to shape a learning community, designed to maximize the benefits of experiential inquiry (Reilly & Mcbrearty, 2010). This learning methodology allows for the integration of theory, values, and skills in practical application. Knowledge extends to understanding and intervening effectively in social processes, developing the capacity to shape environments, and chart the impact of transformative processes on environments and self (Reilly & Mcbrearty, 2007). Self-as-instrument is a core competency within the program. Students participating in this parallel curriculum self-identified as white, claimed diverse gender expressions, ranged in age from mid-twenties to mid-forties, and had been working in the field for a minimum of three years.

Curricular Experiences and Activities

The purpose of this parallel curriculum was to shift the gaze from Black, Brown, Indigenous, or Racialized individuals and focus on our own mental models (Senge, 1990), behaviors and actions as white consultants that serve to perpetuate and reinforce oppressive structures within systems. To create this contemplative curriculum to interrogate whiteness in a compassionate climate, I drew upon the Tree of Contemplative Practices (CCMS, n.d.) for a range of different types of practices. See Figure 1.

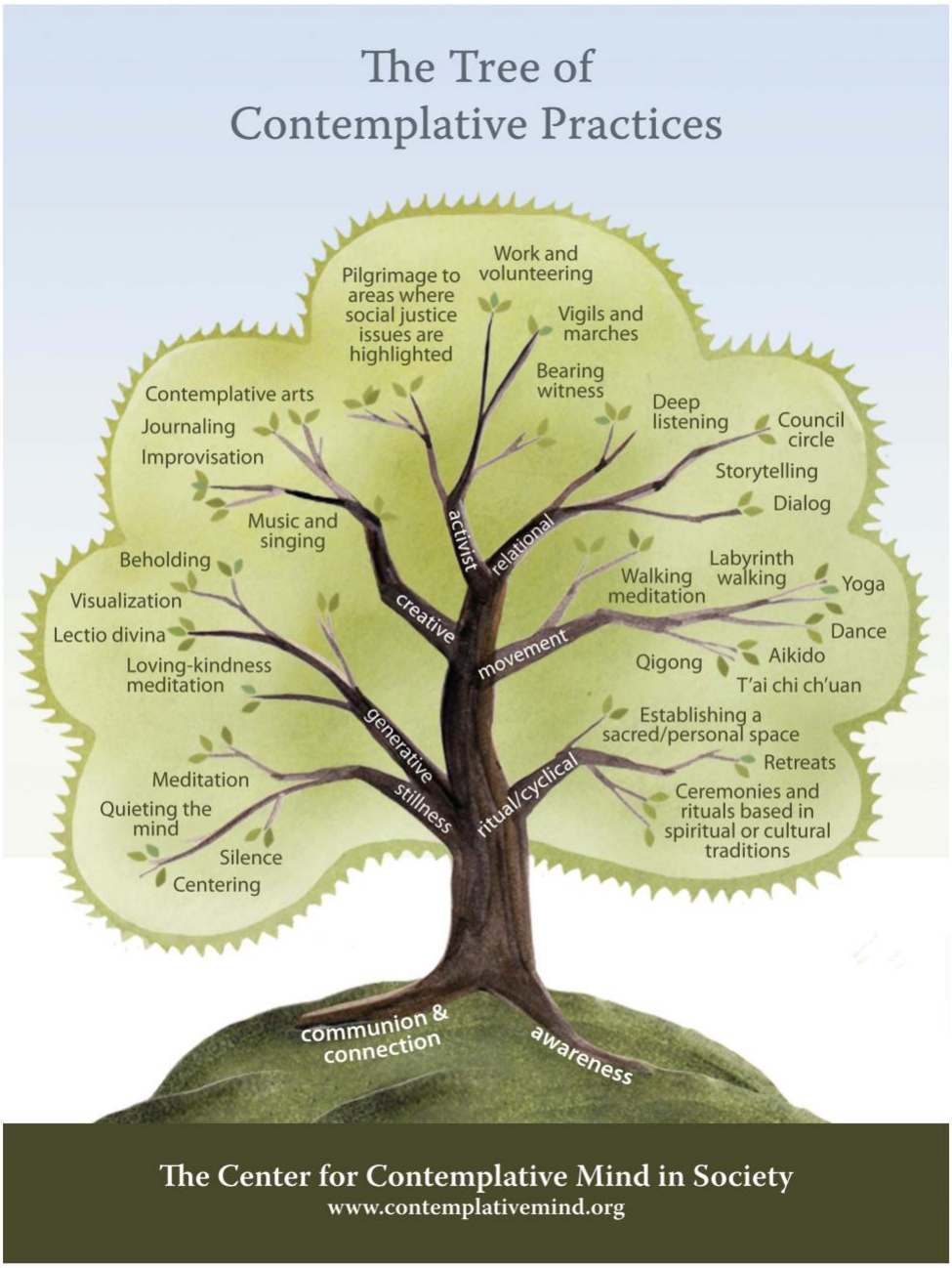

Figure 1. The Tree of Contemplative Practices illustrates contemplative practices currently in use in secular settings.

Identifying white supremacist Characteristics

The first step was to highlight the prevalent yet invisible nature of whiteness and white

supremacy that infuses organizations. I did this by drawing upon the characteristics of organizational white supremacy culture as identified by Okun (2001). Table 1 delineates these characteristics.

Table 1. *Characteristics of white Supremacy Culture* (Okun, 2001).

Characteristic	Definition
Perfectionism	Little appreciation expressed for the work that others are doing; pointing out how the person or work is inadequate.
Sense of urgency	Tasks must be accomplished yesterday.
Defensiveness	Spending time/energy protecting power, as it exists; criticism of those with power is viewed as threatening/inappropriate.
Quantity over quality	Things that can be measured are more valued than things that cannot.
Worship of the written word	Not taking into account or valuing other ways in which information can be shared.
Paternalism	Those with power think they are capable of making decisions for all.
Progress is bigger, more	Success is always bigger, more, regardless of the cost.
Only one right way	Only one right way to do things; once people are introduced to the right way, they will see the light and adopt it.
Either/or thinking	Things are either/or, good/bad, right/wrong, with us/against us.
Power hoarding	Power is finite/limited; there is only so much to go around.
Fear of open conflict	Scared of expressed conflict; try to ignore it or run from it.
Individualism	Little experience or comfort working as part of a team.
I'm the only one	If something is going to get done right, “I” have to do it.
Objectivity	Emotions are inherently destructive, irrational, and should not play a role in decision-making or group process.
Right to comfort	Those with power have a right to emotional/psychological comfort; can scapegoat those who cause discomfort.

Culture is powerful precisely because it is so pervasive. The longer you swim in a culture the

more invisible it becomes, making it difficult to name or identify problematic mental models. Okun contended that these characteristics are damaging because they are implicit and unsuspectingly form the foundation for norms and standards. They are damaging because they promote colonialist and white supremacy thinking which shapes behavior and policy. “Because we all live in a white supremacy culture, these characteristics show up in the attitudes and behaviors of all of us- People of Color and white people. Therefore, these attitudes and behaviors can show up in any group or organization” (para. 2), regardless who leads them.

I placed each of the characteristics on a sheet of newsprint, and taped them to the wall of the classroom. During a gallery walk, the students placed check marks on each characteristic that resonated with them as an issue with which they struggled. After the students had completed this activity, we debriefed it, examining which characteristics had the most marks, and what that might mean when working as an agent of change. I presented Okun’s framing of the characteristics (2001). We then had an intense discussion about the roots of these dynamics, how we have experienced them, and most importantly, how we perpetuated them in the past and present, and what we have seen as the impact on ourselves and others, especially Black, Brown, Indigenous, or Racialized individuals. This discussion was often painful, since it involved acknowledging that what looks normal to white folks in organizations is, in fact, systemic forms of racism (Lopes & Thomas, 2006), and how we all served to maintain this structural oppression. These insights functioned as touchstones that we would revisit throughout the year.

Meditation, Mindfulness, and Stillness

Meditation, mindfulness, and stillness are ancient practices that foster internal reflection and awareness in order to deepen experience and meaning (Barbezat & Bush, 2014). Mindfulness, in particular, is useful as a tool for understanding and unlearning habits of mind (Mezirow, 2003)

that are the result of patriarchal and white supremacist systems of socialization, and to cultivate a deeper compassion for those who are oppressed and marginalized by these systems (CCMS, 2011). Berila (2016) noted that oppression does not operate on merely an intellectual level, but is painful and embodied. Authentic conversations about oppression are hard. These practices, if used appropriately,[2] can enhance present-moment awareness, increase self-compassion, and strengthen a person's ability to self-regulate.

After acknowledging the ancient traditions being drawn upon, each session would begin with a short period of quiet stillness. Students were given maximum freedom: they could close their eyes or have them remain open; they could focus on their breath or a nature sound recording; or they could just remain quiet. The only directive was that they could not disturb others. This would last approximately 15 minutes. Students reported that this practice allowed them to become fully present in the moment, leaving behind the cares of the day. It also increased their bodily awareness, which provided important feedback to them about their emotional reactions during the challenging discussions, assisting them in emotional self-regulation. Additionally, stillness improved their ability to engage in deep listening, a relational CP.

Generative Experiences

Generative CP fosters thoughts and feelings of compassion (Griswold, 2010) and self-reflection that lead to a greater understanding of the ways in which whiteness permeated our actions and mental models. For this we used lectio divina, a Benedictine tradition that calls one to study, ponder, listen and meditate as a response to sacred texts. I based our approach on a

[2] There is discussion among those who use contemplative practices in classrooms to develop a trauma-informed approach (Treleaven, 2018). For those who have experienced trauma, paying focused, sustained attention to internal experiences may result in survivors finding themselves overwhelmed by flashbacks and heightened emotional arousal. Therefore, a significant number of students in an average HE classroom would not benefit from this practice since they are survivors of trauma (Reilly & D'Amico, 2011), unless modifications are implemented.

process outlined by Mesner, Bickel, and Walsh (2015).

> *Before coming to class, please engage with the reading of the week in 3 reading phases, in this order*:
>
> *Reading 1 Lectio* ("settling and shimmering")- Sit in silence with the text and simply let it sink in.
>
> *Reading 2 Meditatio* ("savoring and stirring")- What word/phrase/idea stands out for you? What is unsettling? Let this emerge organically.
>
> *Reading 3 Oratio* ("slowing and stilling")- What is evocative or resonant for you?
>
> *Write down some of your thoughts for our discussion*.

During our session, we would share some of the arisings that emerged, and then focused on the final part of the process as an ending for the session.

> *Reading 4 Contemplatio* ("summoning and serving")- What is your call to action?

The scared texts we used were McIntosh (1990), DiAngelo (2011), Okun (2001), and a section on organizational change in Lopes and Thomas (2006). We would also share relevant podcasts, blogs, and webinars, e.g., Chatman's webinar (2014) on social justice awareness.

Students reported that reading and rereading in this slower, more receptive way changed their relationship to the text and the ideas contained within. Each reading allowed something new to be revealed. This lead to connections between these ideas and their life experiences, creating a more profound interrogation of the self, their relationship to whiteness, privilege, and oppression.

Creative Activities

Creative CP uses art, music, or writing as vehicles for reflection to increase awareness of the

inner self (Griswold, 2010). We focused on doll-making and creating found poems.

Doll-making. Dolls appear in all cultures worldwide. Though they are the world's oldest toys, dolls were first used as sacred totems in spiritual rituals (Young, 1992). They have the power to soothe or provoke, comfort or unsettle. Doll-making has the transformative power to stir memories, stimulate the imagination, strengthen identity, and offer solace (Feen-Calligan, McIntyre, & Sands-Goldstein, 2009). They can allow individuals to work intuitively and symbolically, bypassing customary cognitive processes in order explore the unspeakable (Porter & Rippin, 2012). Bennett (2010) identified *thing-power*- that things do stuff, make a difference, and "become the decisive force catalyzing an event" (p. 9). Things have a power that call out to us, giving us an opportunity to respond. It was this *thing power* that I wanted to harness in order to creatively interrogate whiteness.

Early in the year, I brought to class a collection of blank doll forms made from white muslin, along with a variety of other materials- cloth, yarn, thread, needles, buttons, sequins, fabric paint, hot glue guns, etc. I followed the sequence of events mapped out by Rippin, an experienced arts-based organizational researcher (Gayá Wicks & Rippin, 2010). I invited students to make a touchstone, using the blank doll form as a starting point, to represent their notions of their own whiteness. First I asked them to engage in a 10-minute period of free writing (CCMS, 2011), a process that brings one into the moment. Done in silence, this was to help them quiet their minds and concentrate their thoughts on this particular idea. After this period of uncensored exploration through writing, they spent the next hour creating their doll, drawing on the materials provided. As is common for adults using arts-based methods (Reilly, 2015), students were critical of their own artistic abilities. I reminded them that the doll was not an art object, but a material response to the conversations we have been having about whiteness, privilege, and white supremacy,

enabling us to access a different way of knowing.

Figure 2. Dolls exploring whiteness.

At the end of the hour, I asked them to spend another 10 minutes writing as a way of reflecting on the process and product of the doll-making exercise. They could write about the doll, to the doll, as the doll, or about the process of making the doll. We then debriefed the entire experience.

One of the tendencies that I had noticed in our conversations was that whiteness was often used as the central standard by which all things were compared. This is because we as whites are

rigorously taught to see our perspectives as objective and representative of reality (McIntosh, 1988). This blindness allows us to view ourselves as universal, representing all of human experience. We develop an unracialized identity

> an inability to think about [w]hiteness as an identity or as a "state" of being that would or could have an impact on one's life. In this position, [w]hiteness is not recognized or named by white people, and a universal reference point is assumed. [w]hite people are just people. Within this construction, whites can represent humanity, while [P]eople of [C]olor, who are never just people but always most particularly [B]lack people, Asian people, etc., can only represent their own [R]acialized experiences. (DiAngelo, 2011, p. 59)

Since they were asked to concretely represent whiteness, they by-passed this notion of whiteness as universal. It permitted them to render visible embodied notions of privilege without creating comparisons with Black, Brown, Indigenous, or Racialized People. "Making a doll within a creative circle made up of other people, they begin to discover their own stories in the shapes they are forming" (Light, 1996, p. 10).

Journaling found poems. After our discussions using lectio divina, we revisited the sacred texts, composing found poems that resonated most strongly with us at that moment. A found poem is created by taking words, phrases, and whole passages from other sources and reframing them as poetry by changing the spacing, order, and/or lines (Butler-Kisber, 2010). Found poetry is an imaginative reconstruction, a compressed, concise, yet complex, representation of a text. Creating a found poem signifies a union between the text author's voice and the student's evolving perspective. It captures and illuminates the wholeness of meaning and interconnections of thought (Glesne, 1997), bringing the reader even closer to the text in a unique way, yielding fresh insights. The following

is my found poem constructed from DiAngelo's work (2011).

My white fragility

I live in an environment surrounded by

protective pillows.

Insulated,

accruing privilege and status

comfortable,

fragile

skirting challenges to my racial understandings,

rarely using the words "white" or "overadvantaged" or "privileged."

***They* have problems, not us.**

I already had a *class* on this.

I already know *this*.

Resisting the challenge of internalized dominance,

the stress from an interruption to what is racially familiar.

Refusing to directly acknowledge the dynamics of racial discourse,

noticing the racial locations of racial others,

but not myself.

Discuss this freely amongst yourselves.

This guarantees that racial misinformation circulates.

My perspectives will be left unexamined.

And I avoid building the stamina

to sustain conscious and explicit engagement with race.

The impact of creating found poems allowed students to steep themselves in the readings even further, distilling an essence. It was a way to keeping their ears, eyes, heart, and mind alert to their struggles- to connect to the reading and personalize each text in a form that lasted, but could also be revised.

Relational Experiences

Relational CP is a powerful contemplative process when a group of individuals relate to one another by engaging in respectful interactions that connect their hearts and minds (Rendón & Kanagal, 2017). We focused on deep listening and storytelling. These methods go hand-in-hand.

Deep listening. Deep listening is a way of hearing in which one is fully present with what is happening in the moment without trying to control or judge it (Barbezat & Bush, 2014), using both the heart and mind (CCMS, 2011). Deep listening required students to witness their thoughts and emotions while maintaining focused attention on what others were saying. Such listening encouraged receptivity to new perspectives, insight, meaning making, and the development of compassion. It was a useful tool that challenged them to abandon the conversational norms of planning responses, interrupting, advice-giving, overtalking, and taking inferences to be fact, resulting in having the speaker feel unheard. When students engaged in deep listening, they were able to also reflect-in-action (Schön, 1983) on their own self-concept and realize how infused they were with systems of oppression.

> Rather than immediately shoring up our self-concepts when they are challenged, this mindful practice allows us to sit with the uncertainty and discomfort that arises in that moment, and learn to probe, explore, and question what is happening for us, what function those defensive mechanisms serve, how they manifest in our body, and whether they let

> us open up or close down. (Berila, 2016, p. 106)

Storytelling. Stories have power. "'You can't understand the world without telling a story,' the Anishinabe writer Gerald Vizenor tells us. 'There isn't any center to the world but a story'" (as cited in King, 2003, p. 32). Stories are embedded with maps on how to navigate life. They are medicine- told one way, they can transform and heal; told another, they can injure. Some of the stories that students told were about stumbling through life on the shoes of privilege. Others were about bumbling attempts to talk to other whites about racism. Many of the students recounted the painful recognition of the extent of white supremacy in Canada. The rest of the students would try to listen deeply, though they would challenge each other with loving intent. Storytelling gave them the opportunity to link what they were reading and thinking to their lives, past and present (and they did call each other in[3] on their *white savior* stories). Stories gave them concrete, vicarious learning experiences, bundled with response pitfalls and possibilities for future action.

Ritual and Ceremony

Rituals cut through and operate on everything besides the "head" level. Used in the context of CP, they can help unify the group, forming a cohesive bond and sense of communion, or serve as a collective sigh from the discomfort generated in a session (CCMS, 2011). "The purpose of any ceremony is to build stronger relationships or bridge the distance between aspects of our cosmos and ourselves… ceremony allows us a raised level of consciousness and insight into our world" (Wilson, 2008, p. 11). During our sessions, we tried to create an atmosphere of community. We shared food and drink. We spent time collectively cleaning up afterwards. A sense of shared

[3] The difference between calling in and calling out is that calling in is done with compassion and patience, with the goal of allowing mistakes in order to radically unlearn everything we have been configured to believe is normal (Trần, 2013). Calling in specifically involves people we want to be in community with, people we have reason to trust, or with whom we have common ground.

hospitality, even in a classroom, set a guest-host relationship instead of replicating hierarchical student-teacher power relationships. The welcoming atmosphere served to build stronger relationships to weather the frequently tense and painful discussions.

Activist Intentions: Translating Reflections into Actions

Activist CP helps students to become engaged in the community around them, and increase their participation in advocacy work (Griswold, 2010). An essential theme of every discussion was being able to translate insights into concrete actions, so that this curriculum could support student achievement of personal goals. As our closing ritual, we devoted at 30 minutes to this inquiry. Not only did this inspire two students to implement changes in their own workplaces, it also sparked the creation of a draft document on participatory action research principles that began to address white supremacist culture, and the identification and inclusion of more resources, ways of knowing, and appreciative assessment for inclusion within the graduate curriculum.

Conclusion

As any gardener knows, planting a seed does not guarantee its growth. There are additional factors that are necessary for any living thing to flourish. So, was this parallel curriculum a success? As with any change process, time will tell. However, this instructional experiment did yield a salient learning about trying to interrogate whiteness in a graduate education context. Cultivating self-awareness about the internalized roots of white supremacy, patriarchy, and colonialism is a trying task, rooted in cognitive, emotional, and physical states of being. Being in the present moment helps, but this must be done within a climate of care. However, self-care is not sufficient (Dockray, 2019). This places the onus of compassion on the individual person who is in most need of care. Nakita Valerio, a Toronto-based community organizer and researcher,

suggested practicing community care, i.e. people leveraging their privilege to be there for one another in various ways. "Community care can look like a lot of different things… It can be as simple as reaching out to somebody over text when you just need someone to talk. It can be someone grabbing groceries for you or… somebody coming and doing your dishes and watching your kids while you're grieving" (para. 11). Valerio compares community care to an extended family, people who are intimately connected and routinely perform acts of compassion on behalf of one another. So, in order to do this excavation, doing it in community is not only critical, but vital.

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