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RESEARCHER TRAJECTORIES, INTERSECTIONS, AND MULTIPLE CONSCIOUSNESS

ABSTRACT: This chapter is a reflection on the places and spaces that have shaped my research and my writing. The chapter highlights my research trajectory as a researcher and academic at a university in British Columbia, Canada. Researcher positionality is a key concept in considering my researcher journey. This chapter takes a journey that is highlighted by family history, being Chinese, a settler, and a non-Indigenous researcher working with Indigenous peoples. There are tensions as well as learning experiences that are the results of working in research. These evolve into my awareness of triple consciousness, intersectionality, co-researcher relationships, and how I move forward as a facilitator for change.

As a woman of colour and researcher, I examine the multiple locations that have affected my research experiences. The lessons learned from my engagement in different research projects sheds a light on how one can go forward meaningfully, making choices, as a researcher and concurrently navigate community and academic spaces. My research context draws from a focus on diversity, social justice, anti-racism, community-engaged research, and research relationships. This has led me to becoming an activist-researcher.
KEYWORDS: positionality, narrative, story, multiple consciousness.

Introduction

I am a researcher. My research focuses on story, narrative, autobiography, and the use of the subjective. I acknowledge that research is not neutral: my identity, values, beliefs, experiences, and social location affect my choices in research, who my collaborators and co-researchers are, and how I interpret the stories of participants (Campbell & Wasco, 2000). Research is engagement and interaction with participants, engagement with the stories of participants, taking into account respect for people, ethical relations and understanding the elements of power within research (Tarleton & Heslop, 2019). As a researcher, the experiences I have and share are a part of what shapes my research trajectories. This chapter is a reflective narrative considering the 'place' and space that has shaped me, my research, and my writing. The researcher position is an epistemological question: I began my research journey to understand what I know, 'how' I come to have knowledge, self-knowledge, and the influences that have contributed to my identity and knowledge.

The process of self-knowledge is one of alchemy. Self-knowledge is interwoven with self-reflection and the narrative act. As a researcher I reflect on my own experience

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(Formenti & West, 2016). Even as I write this paper, new insights are gained in the process of reflection. My understanding of myself as a researcher is in motion and evolution. This chapter begins with a discussion of my research positionality, including a background of my family and university influences. I will discuss the learning, tensions, and epiphanies that arose as a result of being engaged in research projects. The last three sections of the chapter are my synthesis and thinking about my own researcher evolution: triple consciousness, co-researcher relationships and the boundaries to research.

Researcher positionality

Identity is a key concept in considering my researcher positionality. Identity is developed individually and socially (Adams & Marshall, 1996), and is an ongoing process. Individual researchers develop a sense of their identities through their histories, and this influences their everyday lives, their research trajectories and interactions. Thus, identity is constructed through a number of forces, including social and personal experiences such as my heritage, my culture, my family, and the people around me.

My narrative begins with my family, where I have been influenced by my race, culture, gender, and class. I am a third generation Chinese-Canadian, and I am fortunate to live and work on the territorial and ancestral lands of the Indigenous[1] peoples of Canada. The use of the term Chinese-Canadian is sometimes contested as a hyphenated Canadian. Notably, English immigrants would rarely call themselves 'Anglo-Canadian'. Yet, Canada is a country of immigrants and I acknowledge that Indigenous peoples were and are the First Peoples of Canada. My grandparents came to Canada at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, migrating to a country that they believed would give them better chances for their lives. My own cultural and ancestral roots have given me a view of culture within a values framework: the importance of family, respect for elders, and respect for the hundreds of years that have gone before me. While I am Canadian, I broadly understand myself as Western and North American within a cultural context; knowledge is multi layered. These layers are subject to change as there are more research and social experiences added to my life history.

We were four girls and two boys, but it was our two brothers who were more valued in the family, as is typical in the Chinese tradition. My parents were agreeable for the

[1] First Nations peoples or First peoples is one of three groups that fall under the umbrella category of Indigenous peoples. First Nations people are part of a 'Nation' in which they typically reside in their own communities and remain connected to their culture and language. However, this description is not absolute. The other two groups under the category of Indigenous are Inuit and Métis peoples. Inuit peoples are people of the Arctic and most typically remain living there. Métis peoples are of mixed ancestry comprised of Indigenous and European descent. Early Métis peoples in Canada were the result of inter-relations between Indigenous people and French settlers.

young women in the family to be educated in higher education, but it was not expected. They ultimately hoped I would marry. The family did not hold me back from my goals; they accepted that I would pursue my education. My brother spurred me on to get my doctorate. It was a surprise to the family when I decided to pursue doctoral studies.

I grew up speaking English only. My parents spoke English to me and to my siblings. I later understood that this was chosen by my parents as a path, to ensure that we did not have a Chinese 'accent' and to give us the best chance for acceptance in the school system, and among our peers. My parents believed that assimilation was necessary to survive in a dominantly white Caucasian society. However, my parents spoke Cantonese to my grandparents. Both sets of grandparents spoke very little English, so I was unable to communicate with them, except for a few basic words and phrases in Cantonese. However, it was important for us to have brief conversations with my grandparents, in Victoria, British Columbia, where I grew up. Sadly, I had less interaction with my grandparents in Vancouver, where my mother's family was located. Grandparents were respected as our elders and the matriarch and patriarch of the family. At the same time, my parents did not want us to lose our connection to our cultural heritage. Thus, as a child, I went to what was called 'Chinese school' to learn some Cantonese language. This was a common practice for my siblings and my cousins, to attend 'Chinese school'. My brothers and sisters had varying experiences with the teachers and some of us dreaded the idea of going to another class after our day had ended in the mainstream school. I was not a good language student at the time, and this is something that I regret in adulthood.

I sometimes wonder if my grandparents felt any loneliness at not being able to talk to me and my siblings when we were children. I regret that some of my grandparents' stories have been lost because of the language barrier. In recent years as a researcher, I have become more acutely aware of the issue of losing language. Language is connected to our heritage and for some people, to their identity. In my most recent research (2015 to 2021), I have been working with Indigenous peoples and I have become aware of *Halq'eméylem*, the language of the *Stó: lō* Peoples, who live in the traditional *Stó: lō* territory in the Fraser Valley. This engagement with Indigenous peoples has been a unique chance for me to gain a different understanding about the meaning of language and its connection with history and culture. The work with Indigenous peoples has made me reconsider the importance of language. Even as we profess to live in a multilingual society, English is dominant, and the primacy of English is instilled in us at an early age.

I grew up in a working-class family, so there was no sense of the privileges that were normative within the white, middle, and upper classes. My family ran a Western 'diner style' restaurant that was founded by my paternal grandfather in the 1920s. It was established before 'Chinese food' was popularized in colonial Victoria. My father

and uncles continued with the joint ownership and running of the restaurant after my grandfather died. My grandmother continued to influence the restaurant as the family matriarch. My father was the dinner chef. We were located in the main part of the city, three blocks away from 'Chinatown', and we were close to our friends and relatives. There were parts of my home city where only white people or people of British European heritage could purchase property[2]. This was a readily accepted norm in the mid-20th century in many places in Canada. Many neighbourhoods became preferred by various racial and ethnic groups. Some of these neighbourhoods were ghettoized. Fortunately, we lived in a racially mixed and accepting area where we grew up with neighbours consisting of many intersections of race, ethnicity, and class.

As a descendent of immigrants, I call myself a settler. Being a settler is in relation to the Canadian context of the First Peoples of Canada. The populations of Canada are largely settlers, as we are descended from immigrants, or are immigrants ourselves. I was not always comfortable with the term settler. Being a settler, and naming myself as such, acknowledges that the Chinese came to this country to work and live. We did not create this country, although my ancestors helped build it, by working on the national railway in the late 1800s. I use the term settler to also come to terms with and acknowledge my colonial past. Our settlement affected the way in which the First Peoples lived at the time, as we were 'intruders' in our settlement. The history of Chinese peoples' settlement in Canada is mixed with colonial experiences, racism, and discriminatory practices by the ruling European colonizers.

A significant part of my work has been influenced by my understanding of the history of Chinese peoples and Indigenous peoples in Canada. I was aware of the Head Tax and the Chinese Immigration Act[3] in Canada, which were both enacted before I was born. Both my great grandfathers worked on building the Canadian railway which was completed in 1885. It was well known that Chinese men were recruited to work on the railway as cheap labour. Subsequently, both my grandfathers paid the Head Tax to enter Canada and paid the tax to have their brides to come from Hong Kong and China to marry. The 1923 amendment to the Chinese Immigration Act, known as the 'Exclusion Act', which barred Chinese people from entering Canada, was instituted after both my parents were born in Canada.

[2] In the lower mainland of British Columbia, there is a settlement named "British Properties" which was established in 1931 as a 'whites only' property, in the municipality of West Vancouver. No Asians, Africans, or Jewish peoples could purchase land in the British Properties at the time. A revision of the Land Title Act in 1978 eliminated the ability to discriminate against racial and ethnic groups, although informally the practice continued for many years afterwards.

[3] The Head Tax was applied to Chinese people entering Canada beginning in 1885 as part of the Chinese Immigration Act, and after completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway. The Chinese Immigration Act was amended in 1923 to ban Chinese immigration into Canada, rather than tax immigrants. The Act of 1923 is sometimes called the Chinese Exclusion Act.

The Indian Act of Canada has shaped the colonial history of Indigenous peoples and settlers. My increased awareness of the history of Indigenous peoples arose as a result of my work, firstly as a social worker in the 1970s and 1980s, and secondly as an educator beginning in the 1980s. It was then that I became mindful of being non-Indigenous in the Canadian context. This culminated in numerous research initiatives with Indigenous researchers, and work within First Nations communities since 2014. As a researcher, I am regularly reminded of being non-Indigenous by some of my Indigenous colleagues, and therefore I am viewed as an outsider. I am also an outsider because I am non-white, and I was born in the context of a dominant Eurocentric culture. Canada is a country that emerged from colonialism, and we live the legacy of this colonial history every day. These elements of my identity and my history have contributed to my work and my life, even when I was an early educator and did not have the awareness of the life history that I was living through.

As a researcher, I have changed over the decades, beginning with involvement in cultural and anti-racist research and developing an identity as a social justice activist. The influences of social justice, the saliency of colonialism and the effects of colonialism have played a role in my researcher-awareness. I realized that many of us, researchers and co-researchers, lacked knowledge, even though as academics we would often lay claim to being 'knowledgeable'. This realization resulted in my own humbling experiences as a knowledge-seeker learning about Indigenous ways of knowing.

I identify as a feminist. Growing up in a colonial city in Canada, I never dreamed of becoming an academic. A Chinese family assumed a young woman would get an education, get a job, marry, and have children. That traditional trajectory did not happen to me. My feminism grew out of education and intersected with my racial history. I identify as a 'woman of colour' – and my feminist space is different from white privileged feminism. As a feminist, woman of colour, and a researcher, my interests have been within the genre of qualitative research, the importance of narrative, and the untold stories. I have been influenced greatly by bell hooks (2000) and Patricia Hill Collins (2001) in their Black feminist work. A focus on intersectionality and the marginalization of women is a call to me about silence and voice, margins and centres, and the spaces for transformation.

My positionality as settler, Chinese-Canadian, non-Indigenous researcher, and a feminist has shaped my research and teaching interests. My knowledge of racism and sexism became more prominent during my masters and doctoral studies and evolved into a commitment to social justice and community building. During my doctoral studies, I was interested in issues of diversity (*i.e.*, race, gender, able-bodiedness, homophobia, xenophobia, inequality, and intolerance) in the college and university system. This led to me to conduct a study in a university college of educators who were actively thinking

and working on issues of diversity. I was interested in how these individuals came to the position of being active in the work of diversity.

As a university researcher, I began my research journey in 2006, examining diversity and social justice issues (DSJ) that were important among educators in the university system. This was funded research that lasted over three years[4]. This research enabled me to conduct interviews in three universities in Canada. The participants were white, racially diverse, Indigenous, and allied with political and social focuses such as the labour movement, disability issues, and issues of homophobia. Following the completion of the DSJ research, I worked with two colleagues and conducted a small study from 2009 to 2011. The research objective was to examine the responses of students to courses that focus on racism. Students were asked how they handled difficult conversations and how they dealt with the tension that can surround understanding racism (Chan, Dhamoon & Moy, 2014). Since I had been engaged in anti-racism work since my early adulthood, this study was an opportunity to further explore how we talk about racism.

In 2011, I collaborated as a co-researcher in a study focused on language interpretation services provided to clients in the child welfare system (Maiter et al., 2017). Due to geography and the distribution of racial-ethnic populations, my research was primarily with workers who had Punjabi-speaking parents in their caseload. The 2006 and 2011 studies gave me a better understanding of race, and my role in researching race.

My focus as a non-Indigenous settler has been more prominent in the last ten years of my work with *Stó: lō* Peoples and Indigenous Nations. This work began in 2014[5] and continued to 2021 in researching youth suicide prevention with four Indigenous Nations in British Columbia. This project came to be known as Land Based Resiliency (LBR) due to the focus on land activities (Chan et al., 2019). Since the work on LBR ended in 2021, I have continued to work with Indigenous Nations, in a legacy project which has maintained a focus on suicide prevention and keeping youth healthy.

I conclude this section by considering class, which is a transitional identity. While I grew up in a working-class family, as a social worker, I worked with working poor and marginalized families for most of my early career. As an academic, I achieved a higher status and privilege, acquiring my doctoral degree and a position in the professoriate. However, I am aware that my class and other social positions are vulnerable with time, with age, changes in income, and changes in physical ability.

Intersectionality is key to understanding my positionality. Race, genders, class, sexuality, ability, and social justice are interconnected. This resonates with Critical Race

[4] This study was funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) of Canada: Research grant #410 2006 1269.

[5] The grant writing began for the project in 2014, while the project was funded in two phases by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR grant #33785) from 2015 to 2017 and 2017 to 2022.

Theory (CRT) where intersectionality acknowledges that we are not independent or singular identities, and our actions are intersectional. We do not live, study or work in isolation (Khan, 2016). I suggest that intersections are what we live with and work with every day. Intersectionality is akin to thinking about power as being everywhere and as a circulating force (Foucault, 1977). Intersectionality is within our narratives and our experiences as a circulating force.

Learning, tensions and epiphanies

As a graduate student, I was interested in life history and biography, and this came out of a cultural tradition of storytelling that was rooted in my grandparents and my father. My doctoral work with Linden West (West, 1996) engaged me in thinking about my own story. One of the first things Linden asked me to do was to write my story and situate myself in terms of why I wanted to conduct the research of my choice, and how my story influenced my work. The shift to narrative and life history as a method was a fundamental change in my life, as a researcher and within my personal life.

My father was a storyteller. Every story he told had a meaning beyond the narrative. These stories were often about life lessons and learning. My father often focused on the collective strength of the family, but he did that by giving me metaphors such as a bundle of chopsticks which represented strength in numbers. My father was a community--minded elder and was always engaged in listening to stories of others or telling his own tales. He talked about the many ways in which the family and community were important to him – and he did this through story. As a child and young adult, I did not really understand the importance of story and how it shaped us as a family.

My father and uncles told us about the collective experience of the family baking and delivering the bread for a Potlatch that was outlawed by the Canadian government[6]. The Potlatch was a cultural, celebratory practice of Indigenous peoples. By baking bread and supporting the Potlatch, my father's family (primarily my grandfather) were breaking the law. My father was a teenager when this activity occurred, but the family all remembered it as a story of community connection. I interpreted this story to be an example of alliance between two cultural groups, although I am not sure that my father viewed this as building allies at the time. It was a story vested in a community connection.

[6] The Potlatch was outlawed through the Indian Act of 1885. This was part of the process of Canadian assimilation, to eliminate cultural practices and traditions of Indigenous peoples. The Indian Act was amended in 1951 to allow for the Potlatch to be practised again.

One challenge to myself as a researcher is how to continue to engage; to stay connected to the world outside the academy. Community connection is part of my research. This is vested in my commitment to diversity, social justice, and anti-racism.

Diversity, social justice, and race: figuring it out

My university career in the professoriate began in 2004 after completing my doctorate in 2001, working as a post-doctoral fellow for three years, and having worked in the college system for roughly ten years. The first major research grant I held as a sole researcher focused on diversity and social justice (DSJ) from 2006 to 2009, which I noted earlier in this chapter. In this work, I immersed myself in interviews with university professors and administrators to understand their notions of diversity, how they engaged in this work, and why it was important to them. This study was mirrored later during my sabbatical where I conducted a similar study in the United Kingdom and two European countries (Chan, 2022).

The DSJ research gave me the confidence to dig deeper in the interview and narrative process. It also allowed me to engage in discussions that were reminiscent of my doctoral research narratives. I was able to ask once again: "Can you tell me a story about that?". The ability to ask that question with research participants gave me a breath of life that I had not felt for several years since the completion of my doctoral studies.

The study also laid open the academic life that has many tensions to it, and are often left undescribed, with untold stories. Thus, concurrent with exploring the topic of diversity and social justice, I was also becoming familiar with what it could mean for me as a university researcher and how that would affect my academic journey. This research with university professors and administrators gave me a better view of the tensions that lay before me as a new academic. There would be expectations of obtaining grants and publishing. While I was familiar with the rhetoric of publish or perish, this research engaged me *viscerally*. It opened up burgeoning questions of whether I could influence change within the consumer and managerial discourses that I was a part of, in the university system. Would it be possible for me to affect change in a system that was exclusionary and dysfunctional, while my position in the university amounted to less than ten years at the time? Would my research be valued if it did not meet some metric of the professoriate? These questions remained with me as I built my research reputation and the respect of colleagues. The answer to these questions was to 'keep on', as Linden would say, pursue my research and teaching goals, and keep focused on what mattered to me.

In 2009, I began work on research on teaching about race in the classroom (Chan, Dhamoon & Moy, 2014). This was a pivotal research experience for me. While the key

objective of the research was to explore how students responded to 'difficult content', such as race and racism, the salient work came in our analysis of the interviews, where we understood ourselves to be subject to interpretation by our students as racialized women. The specific outcomes of the analysis were important to my learning, in the process of working alongside women of colour co-researchers and working through the narrative interviews. As a result, I saw more clearly the tension that resides in researching race, how participants and collaborators engage with issues of race (Twine & Warren eds., 2000), and how it affected myself and others personally.

Our research on teaching difficult content led us to understand that we were 'read' by students in our roles as instructors. We described these in a number of themes: "Instructor as book", "as tour guide", "as puzzler" and "as s*** disturber and catalyst" (Chan, Dhamoon & Moy, 2014). More than ten years after completing this study, I reflect on how research participants can be influenced by the researcher and the research relationship. Furthermore, research can be the focus of 'difficult content' in unanticipated ways, both for research participants and for the researcher.

As a researcher, I could also be a "s*** disturber and catalyst". The idea of projecting perspectives onto researchers is not new and is frequently part of developing participant--researcher interrelations (Mey & van Hoven, 2019). This research taught me that I had to be flexible (Pain & Francis, 2003), be able to read the signs of discomfort or tension in research participants and try to act accordingly.

Working collaboratively with women of colour continued in 2011, in the study of language interpreters in the child welfare system. This helped me think about language again, and the potential loss of language (Maiter et al., 2017). Moving forward, in the last five years I have continued research and writing with women of colour (racialized women). Two recent studies were autobiographical reflections in their approach. I worked with two colleagues to write our narrative reflections about our participation in an anti-racism network (Arora, Chan & Sivia, 2022). I collaborated with one colleague in our reflections and analysis of diversity leadership, where we considered our own experiences of difference, race, and what it means to be a leader within the university (Chan & Sivia, forthcoming, 2024). My research on diversity and social justice, and subsequent studies on race, language, and diversity leadership have helped me think more consistently about my roles as a researcher in the context of 'difficult content', researcher relations, and the importance of race and difference within my research.

I understood, as early as 2009, that my interests were taking me into difficult territory, and yet my work on race and ethnicity was cemented by the different research studies I completed. I sought only projects that would fulfil my interest in changing systems and organizations within a context of marginalized peoples. By opening up

discussions, I believed it would be possible to give voice to research participants and shed light on the challenges that faced them in their lives.

Land-based resilience

The role of storytelling has grown through my work with many different groups of people and expanded through my recent research with Indigenous peoples (Chan et al., 2019), in Land Based Resiliency (LBR) research on suicide prevention. In the LBR work, we focused on youth within *Stó: lō* communities, their wellness, cultural identity, and primary suicide prevention. We referred to primary suicide prevention as mental, cultural and spiritual wellness.

The research activities were intended to build 'resiliency'[7] with youth, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and community members. The activities were documented through the teaching of stories and the journalling of the researchers. Our journalling helped us think about whether we made connections with youth, and how we have also rubbed up against the rough edges of our history, and our colonial past. During the early years of the project, we were also developing our own critical consciousness and relations with the youth and the communities. It was essential that we be reflective about what we did, how we affected the youth and the people in the community.

The land-based activities were varied and included hikes, plant and medicine gathering, overnight camps, tree identification and uses of cedar, understanding concepts of fishing and hunting and canoeing. We added other land-based activities as the project grew, depending on the youth and their interests. These activities provided immersion experiences and built on the inherent strength of Indigenous culture. For some youth, this meant talking more about cultural identity before going out onto the Land. We wanted the youth to gain self-confidence and feel grounded as part of an Indigenous community. Elders participated in many of the activities as the guides and teachers. As part of learning about story, we held a workshop with youth, and they used stories to talk about a history, their lives, the land that they live on, and to make "ancestral and contemporary connections to place" (Corntassel, Chaw & T'lakwadzi, 2009: 137). Through this workshop, youth were able to tell their stories orally and through digital media.

Language was also part of the learning. Working with Indigenous youth in LBR engaged them in learning some of the local language. Most youth no longer speak or understand their Indigenous language: in this case *Halq'eméylem*. The university where

[7] Resilience can be debated as a definition, but for our purposes, we meant it to be a way of gaining strength and capacity within the youths' identity and own Indigenous Nation.

I worked became committed to the work of learning and teaching *Halq'eméylem* in the last decade. However, at the time of writing this chapter, the language is at risk of extinction. There is only one elder who is fully fluent in speaking, reading, and writing *Halq'eméylem*. Since 2015, my research and engagement with Indigenous youth has included the reclamation of culture and learning the language.

This land-based resiliency was a research 'project', but more importantly and broadly it was the work of sustaining wellness within our cultural communities. The place for the work was in the connection to the land, psychologically as well as geographically. This has a particular meaning: being on the land – being able to breathe, listen, be mindful and walk amid the trees and the land (Chan, 2021).

While I have been with youth, one of the most prominent memories is the time spent with cedar: cedar[8] is a life force. The research team took a workshop on the importance and meaning of cedar. Cedar is what builds homes and provides a roof, a place to sleep, clothing, protection, and is a medicine. I appreciate the teachings about cedar because it is foundational to learning with youth and about culture.

As a non-Indigenous person of Chinese heritage, I was privileged to work in a research and healing project in collaboration with Indigenous families, youth, Chiefs, and elders. My own cultural roots gave me the values of family, respect for elders, and respect for the hundreds of years that have gone before me. Culture, I have discovered, has similarities and differences. Upon self-reflection I recall my early years where I had little ability to communicate with my grandparents because of language. This was part of a cultural loss.

As an academic who is a non-Indigenous person of Chinese heritage, I may be perceived to be in collusion with the hegemony of colonialism and white power. This point has been directed to me by some Indigenous colleagues who call themselves 'warriors'. Being a warrior for these colleagues has been stated to me in terms of fighting for the preservation of culture, the land, history, and the future of their people. The concept of the warrior and fighting for preservation of territories and retaining title of the land pre-dates Canadian confederation (Findlay, 2020; Ince, 2022). There is a 'war' to be fought in order to retain self-governance and resist colonialism.

Confronted by the criticisms of the warrior, I struggle with the perception that I am part of the hegemony of white colonial power. Am I in collusion by working within the university? Can I be in a viable position of changing the status quo by working within an institution? These are challenging, debatable, and unresolved questions. Nevertheless, I have come to believe that change is possible within the university. I am part of the

[8] For *Stó: lō* peoples in the Fraser Valley (Canada), cedar is spiritually important. I was told that cedar represents protection, healing, spirituality, and daily life (Ritchie, 2016).

university, yet I retain some sense of hope. However, this is the challenging context of the institutionalization of power and the maintenance of the status quo that dominates all of us who propose change from the margins. Ultimately, change has to occur within society. I believe that potentially the university can influence such change.

In my work, I talk about being allies (Arora, Chan & Sivia, 2022), with those groups who are marginalized, racialized, and often more oppressed than myself. I want to be a good ally, but this is an uncertain place. There is much to learn, to reflect on, and there are places where there are pain and sorrow. So much has happened in history that I had nothing to do with as an individual, yet I am a part of it by virtue of my ancestry and history in Canada. As for the present and the future, I *can try* to do something about that – as a facilitator, as a learner, as a sojourner, and in a respectful relationship.

The learning is about listening, respect, reconciliation, and healing. For me, this means I can work towards having a place that contributes to healing, and to focus on primary prevention. The LBR study used the terms primary prevention to ensure that we focused on prevention rather than reaction and illness. Health is about healing and healing is about connection, understanding, and re-establishing what has been known and is known by the elders and ancestors. All of these considerations contribute to my work as a researcher as well as a community citizen.

The concept of two-eyed seeing was used to inform the LBR research team. The concept is shaped by Elder Albert Marshall (Bartlett, Marshall & Marshall, 2012) who provides us with the notion that we cannot simply learn from one eye, or one perspective which is normatively Western. Rather we can have one eye that is about Western knowledge and ways of knowing, and one eye that is informed by Indigenous knowledges and Indigenous ways of knowing. For me, two-eyed seeing informs us in terms of being racialized and non-racialized, of experiencing class and privilege, and ways of being more inclusive and collaborative in research. Two-eyed seeing is important because we have non-Indigenous and Indigenous people working for the team. As a non-Indigenous researcher, I was paired with an Indigenous researcher or collaborator so that we could learn from each other and from our two sets of eyes.

The work that we did in LBR created a self-reflective critical space. My own reflections and inner conflicts (Chan, 2020a; 2020b) revealed contentions and challenging issues about working and being in the project work – as non-Indigenous and Indigenous workers. We continue to build relations (Wilson, 2008), referring to elders, Aunties and Uncles, and situating ourselves in the difficult spaces of being insiders and outsiders. We are building our own capacity and attempting to build capacity with our youth: to find ways to connect, learn and grow. This lesson is one that I am humbled by.

Developing triple consciousness

W.E.B. Du Bois (1996) has informed my life with the concept of double consciousness. Du Bois wrote about the concept to help us understand that African Americans have a double consciousness about being Black and having to live in a dominant white society. Internal surveillance is required to live a double consciousness (Foucault, 1977). This is what shapes me, as a person of colour living in white society. This consciousness speaks to me as someone who lives with the 'two-ness' of double consciousness: "one ever feels his two-ness, an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two un-reconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder" (Du Bois, 1996: 7). I am not Black, so my experience is by no means comparable to the experiences of African Americans, but I understand what it means to think in two realities. More than one hundred years after Du Bois, there is a broader acceptance that we live with dual or multiple levels of consciousness. Racial, cultural and ethnic groups live and work within multiple realities and within what we continue to see and to call dominant white society. My research work with Indigenous peoples has added a triple consciousness to my way of being and working. I am Chinese, I am a non-white person living in a dominant white society, and I am a non-Indigenous person.

Multiple consciousness is related to the concept of "two-eyed seeing" encountered earlier on. As a non-Indigenous person, in the LBR work I worked alongside an Indigenous researcher, who gave her eyes to what we did and how we planned. I gave my 'eyes' to the vision of how we moved forward in a respectful way, although it could be challenging at times.

Knowledges have been contested over the course of time in the academy. The example of "women's ways of knowing" (Belenky et. al., 1986) is a good reminder that it has taken time to accept that knowledges can be challenged. However, it is complex to accept different knowledges into our ways of practising research. Complexity became more normative for me as I used different sets of 'eyes' to see perspectives. I have *had to* come to terms with my historical attachment to ways of doing, and work on seeing multiple views and truths.

Developing triple consciousness has also affected the way I consider myself as a woman and feminist. I am not man; I am not trans. In relation to ways of being, the triple consciousness casts identity wider and wider the more I consider it. Triple consciousness is always there, even when I am not aware of it. For me, this means the taken for granted internal surveillance that is normalized. I am also aware that individuals of particular privilege have limited double consciousness and are unlikely to engage in triple consciousness. This multiple consciousness makes us aware of more

complexities and intersections. It makes me aware of genders, not male, not trans, being heterosexual; aware of class status, aware of able-bodiedness, not disabled, vulnerable to injury, and only temporarily able-bodied.

The co-researcher relationship

My triple consciousness and the importance of a feminist, narrative, social justice framework has led me to work with specific researchers. Our work must be collaborative, and equal. In my early years as a researcher, I was finding my way and my identity. In that process, I realized that I could not work within a masculinist framework where there were strong 'power over' dynamics. Upon completion of my doctoral studies, there was always a testing of research relationships and what might come of working jointly on a research program. Although my doctoral and postdoctoral supervisors were exemplary men of social justice orientation, I have come to realize that these are not common in the academy. This is a troubling realization. However, this has led me to consolidate my position of who I will, and will not, work with.

Ultimately most of my work is co-constructed with women of colour, Indigenous women, and on occasion with men who have an understanding of race, genders, immigration, or class. The work I have done with Indigenous researchers has given me a different view of how a research relationship can be as a co-researcher. Our two-eyed seeing in research is a dynamic alchemy in motion and growth.

The co-researcher relationship also means that we present and discuss our subject--object relations differently. Together we often present with a story that gives an example of how the research has been shaped. In 2019, I presented on Indigenous language and the loss of language (Chan & Hardman, 2019). Most of the presentation was quotes from an elder who is the last remaining speaker of *Halq'eméylem*. My co-presenter who is a *Stó: lō* woman could not be at the conference, but she was fully represented in the presentation as my partner. In a later presentation, I used the picture of a weaving that was woven for our project by an Indigenous elder (Chan, 2020a). The weaving represented our research, our story and our analysis. New ideas come from an evolving way of presenting (and that has been a benefit to me) co-researcher relationships.

Drawing lines, understanding boundaries

Over time, I have come to consider myself an activist and a researcher. bell hooks (1990) eloquently argued that the place in the margins is a place of freedom, where it provides/is a space for "radical openness". This place of freedom is a place for activism and advocacy. Activism from the margins is something that racialized and gendered groups

in the academy live and work with on an ongoing basis. hooks has influenced me for several decades with her writing about the margins, voice, Black feminist thought, spaces of autonomy and self-determination. This awakening occurred during my doctoral studies but grew as I continued on my academic journey into a university. The influence of hooks has meant making choices in teaching, research, and community work.

Stéphane Couture (2017) provokes us into thinking about being an "activist-researcher", as many scholars become more involved in social justice work, being politicised in our academic and personal lives. I have found myself in this role and in the identity of an activist. During my early tenure at the university, I was the co-founder of our anti-racism network; a network that still exists today after fifteen years. This was the focus of my writing with two colleagues (Arora, Chan & Sivia, 2022), where we discussed lessons learned about safe space, taking up space, a sense of belonging, and working with allies.

Thus, for me to engage in research that is activism means working with community collectives and the tangible realities of racism, oppression, and colonial hegemony. I believe that my working with Indigenous communities in suicide prevention, and multiracial communities has been a creative and developmental collaborative and engaged research path. I am drawn to feminist work that considers the life stories of racialized women. Consistent with feminist research, this research is intended to grapple with the issues and engage in transformation.

My own researcher self has changed and shifted as a result of my work with narrative, engaging with racialized populations, working alongside Indigenous researchers and community elders. The subtle unconscious assumptions that I have had about research have been challenged time and time again. I hope that my partnership with others has helped us both learn along the way, and that it has not been an extractionist relationship. Researchers can help empower each other as well as disengage from old models of truth.

I believe that research can be an act of activism. Drawing from my work with marginalized populations, I am continuously challenged to question the boundaries of academic work, what counts as reporting and what counts as research. My current work calls on me to be an activist researcher, whereby I am working with a research team to create spaces for voice and openness (hooks, 2000) while consistent with our research and project aims. The work as activists requires researchers to challenge the dominant hegemonic discourses of funders and organizations that have the power to support or dismiss the meaningful work that is done.

Working for change within a university has its tensions. In my recent research, this has meant a challenge in dealing with some of the bureaucracies of accounting and finances. While I comply within the required guidelines of any grant, the bureaucrats

may take liberties in their interpretations of how money is spent, and how guidelines are interpreted. I have had many discussions with financial officers about the ways in which they interpret and control grants. In this way, the academy is complicit in this discourse when evaluating research and scholarship. This is a tricky business for any researcher and community collaborator.

I am a feminist and social justice activist who has found a voice in this work over a long journey. I did not always have voice, just as I did not always have the ability to tell stories or understand the effect of my colonial past. Coming to voice was a development – as I established myself as a researcher in the professoriate, as a university administrator – and has made the power of my speech stronger.

In 1995, I wrote a paper entitled 'Spaces for Diversity' as part of my early doctoral work. This later was part of my doctoral thesis. The paper included a poem that was foundational to my thinking about what I wanted to do in terms of social justice and inclusion. It still holds true today, as a part of my role as a researcher and an activist.

I am a child in a small room.
Next to me is a large room with many children in it.
I am alone.
I want to get into the large room.
I search for a doorway.
It's not easy to find.

I am a child in a small room.
Next to me is a large room with many children in it.
I don't want to be alone.
I hear them playing and talking.
I search for a doorway.
I find a way to get into the large room.

The large room is filled with noise and people and books.
I am scared. I am curious.
I play with some of the children.
Some of them yell at me.
They call me names.
They hurt me.

I am back in the small room.
It is safe in this room.
But I am alone, and so I go back to the large room.
When they call me names and hurt me,
I try to protect myself.
The pain is still there.

I am a young woman in a small room.
I have some friends that visit me.
These friends look like me.
These friends have their own small rooms as well.
We share our common pain.
We comfort each other.

I am a young woman in a small room.
My family is here with me from time to time.
I keep pictures of them with me for times when they are not here.
I go back and forth to the large room.
It is important for me to be in the large room.
I hope I won't be hurt when I am in the large room.

I am a woman in a small room.
I have more friends that visit me here.
I believe that the source of knowledge and power is in the large room.
I need to be in the large room.
I try to go into the large room and make changes.
Some people in the large room laugh at me.

I am a woman in a small room.
I realize that these two rooms can no longer exist.
I talk to my friends that look like me.
I talk to the people in the large room.
We have to build new rooms together.
We need to build a new place to live.

(Chan, 2001; 2007: 253)

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