Whiteness: my journey towards awareness of my whiteness

A Dissertation submitted as part of the Post Graduate Diploma in Process Work Exams

May 2023 (Processwork UK)

By Helen Stone, Advanced Phase 2 student, April 2023   Word Count 21,652

Acknowledgements

Thank you to Arnold Mindell for founding Processwork, and so helped me be interested in unfolding difficulties.

Thank you to Lungile Hazel Nkosi-Hill for your directness and for modelling the power of being real and related, and thank you to all who are securing change through your teaching and writing and challenging and modelling, including Anup Karia, Raggi Kotaq (Kotaq), Olufemi Hughes, Professor Robin Kelly (Kelly) , Lennox Thomas (Thomas 2015, 2018), Diane Wong (Wong), Reni Eddo Lodge (Eddo Lodge) , Layla Saad (Saad), Resma Menakem (Menakem) , Shakil Choudhury (Choudhury), the team at BRAP[1], the people at Anima Leadership[2] and Racial Justice Collaborative[3].

Thank you to all my teachers of Processwork, each of you combines a beautiful mix of heart, intellect and skill to never leave people alone.

Thank you Jean Claude Audergon, for your incredible teaching and for being real, I did not realise how much courage it takes to be real at the time, especially when it might not be easy for the person to receive. Nor did I realise how very important it is. Thank you for being you.

Thank you to Arlene Audergon, for your passion and commitment and for showing the way so beautifully.

Thank you to Stanya Studentova for your strength to stay being you and your trust that I would one day be able to become more me.

Thank you to Pat Black for relating to the part of me that can do it, when all I could connect to was feeling a mess, and for sewing coins into my clothes.

Thank you Andy Smith for weaving logic into magic in order to make a path for me and others.

Thank you Sonia Slany for bringing a group of us together to work on our whiteness when you were dying.

Thank you El Davies for taking on the additional bi-sitter duty of supporting me to write this, it would have been overwhelmingly lonely without you.

Thank you to my buddies at 'The Book Group with a Difference', we are crossing our edges together and what is emerging is beautiful.

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[1] For further information see their website, https://www.brap.org.uk
[2] For further information see their website, https://animaleadership.com
[3] For further information see their website, https://www.racialjusticecollaborative.com

Dedications for Teresa

For everyone who has been put down and left behind.

May we come together and shine.

For Sonia Slany

Thank you for showing me how to live, in the midst of your dying process..

INDEX

CHAPTER 1   Introduction

What is my dissertation

I used to think that as a white person I was normal and people of the global majority were different. Oddly, although I was aware that my skin colour is white, I was not aware that I was white. This dissertation describes my journey towards awareness of my whiteness, a journey I am still on.

I use autoethnography and processwork as methodologies to both describe my journey and to help build my awareness.

The journey is an important one, because my lack of awareness added to the lack of awareness of other white people, and a system that is set up to favour white people and discriminate against people of the global majority, perpetuates toxic racial dynamics (dR-works p36 and p25-6). When I didn't know I was white I was content to leave the work of securing change to people of the global majority. Now, following in the footsteps of people of the global majority who brought me to awareness, including Anup Karia, Lungile Nkosi -Hill, Raggi Kotaq, Olufemi Hughes, Professor Robin Kelly, Lennox Thomas and Diane Wong, and through their writing Reni Eddo Lodge, Layla Saad, Resma Menakem and Shakil Choudhury and those from dR-works, I see how important it is for white people to talk to other white people about whiteness and to take a dynamic role in changing ourselves.

As I write the above paragraph I am aware that I am careful how I word what I write. I want to use my power to effect change, but this is close to taking a 'white saviour' role

(Cole), where white people wade in to 'rescue' people of the global majority. In this role white people :-

- fail to recognise the power of people of the global majority,
- use power in a patronising way
- don't understand the dynamics of the situation they are wading into
- are disinterested in their impact.

At times I have done all of the above. However, too often I have attempted to absent myself completely in order to try to avoid using my power badly. My fear of getting it wrong (see perfectionism dR, dR-works p28). My fear, my edge (Mindell and MIndell 2020, p27), meant I didn't show up. Throughout this dissertation I try to show up with awareness, and understand the way I am being white, I am interested in my impact and continuing to learn. I am sure I will be getting it wrong at times here, but I do have power as a person and as a white person. The question is am I prepared to learn to use it to effect change in me and in other white people and in the systems in society? The answer is 'yes'.

My colleague and friend Lungile Hazel Hill corrects me, 'It is not wrong Helen, it is a lack of awareness', as she models strong, direct power use. I am grateful for her correction and for her modelling of how to use power.

My journey has felt very messy, with breakthrough moments of understanding, I write of my journey in the hope that it reduces the size of the edge to other white people changing.

My writing comes from a place of strong feelings, because I am part of a system that causes real pain to people of the global majority. It felt very important to me to write

personally, to be real, to be congruent, and this means at times using colloquial language. For example, I use the words 'pissed off' to convey my anger, I have been socialised to constrain myself, to use formal language in my writing, to fit in with hidden norms (Hashamdar and Rafi 2018 p623-4). These hidden norms included not noticing how white people have been causing damage to people from the global majority, my journey to being aware of my whiteness has involved moving away from being constrained by the socialization process (Fairclough p 22) and this is reflected in my language use. This dissertation is about identity, seeing self and others clearly, people of all ethnicities being seen clearly . This is an 'us' process, which started before me and will finish after me, a process which will create a space for each of us to be ourselves.

At times I unconsciously wanted to shock the reader, because as someone waking up to the shocking injustices that as a white British person I had benefited from (and still do), I wanted to evoke a reaction, to disturb the status quo. At the start of my journey towards awareness I was angry with myself and other whites, and as you read this dissertation I imagine you will be able to notice this energy at times. I have tried to frame it when it comes up, to use my power consciously rather than unconsciously, to take care of where my words land. At times I use racialised language to describe 'whites', lumping whites together as a group, just as people of the global majority have been lumped together. A Processwork friend helped me to slow myself down at the points when I do this, as I did this I went past my guilt and anger and picked up the part of me that I had left behind, the part of me who is in shock. As I slowed down I felt sad about the way we humans treat each other inhumanely, I picked up my sensitivity.

At times I capture some of my reactions during the writing, I am including them in text boxes alongside the writing I was doing at the time they emerged. I realise they interrupt the flow of reading, but I include them because within the Processwork

paradigm everything is interconnected (Mindell, 2000, p250) , so my subjective experience when writing reveals something that can be unfolded to add meaning (Mindell 1985b, p27). I would have preferred to only write of my reactions when I had been able to unfold the meaning within them, however, to do so would leave something out, and my journey has involved noticing what I don't understand and revisiting it later. The 'not knowing' is valued by Processwork (MIndell, 2000, p198) and as a phase in dismantling racism (dR p42)

I have been supported in the writing process by a small, diverse group of my colleagues, currently just over half of us are people of the global majority. We are all writing and supporting each other to write. In due course we intend to publish a book. I am grateful for their support and feedback, they have helped me to stay with and value writing personally.

Prior to writing I had been supported by my colleague, Sonia Slany, who brought together a group of white people so we could discuss and process our racism and educate ourselves, without re-traumatising people of the global majority.

Overview of structure
 In this chapter I write about why I am writing about whiteness, who I am , who I am writing for, methodology and ethics.
In chapter 2 I write an autoethnographic narrative of my journey to becoming more aware of my whiteness.
In chapter 3 I introduce the concepts of Processwork, and the Processwork tools I will use to go deeper and wider than my autoethnographic narrative.
In chapter 4 I start applying the tools of Processwork to my journey towards becoming more aware of my whiteness.
In chapter 5 I continue the application of Processwork tools to whiteness

I include an appendix in which I visit my non white identity, so my heritage is not gobbled up by my whiteness.

Why am I writing about whiteness?

I am writing about my whiteness, because me being unconsciously white sustains racial dynamics which have a negative impact on others. I notice my anger rising at the sheer enormity of the negative impact, I notice I harness my anger to help me push forward, and that in this moment I need to use a strong image, even if it shocks, because colluding with the status quo is damaging. By becoming more aware of my whiteness I become aware of how I unconsciously have my knee on the neck of people of the global majority.[4] I have just finished working with a young woman who was taught by her family and society that she would never be good enough because she was the darkest one in the family and in her community, she sees her white friend having an easy path through life because she is deemed to be pretty, people come closer to her white friend, responding to her with warmth and openness.

I am aware that I also have had an easier path. I am pissed off by the injustice of this. Reesma Menaken writes that the time of acting without awareness from a place of white supremacy has gone, "…you can't look away anymore. You have to choose"…you can move through the clean pain or you can continue to feed each other

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[4] This is a reference to Derek Chauvin, a white police officer, who killed George Floyd. I include 2 references chosen with care, the first is the Department of Justice in the USA, this is the system acknowledging what happened (Department of Justice 2022). The second, a piece in the Guardian conveys something of George Floyd as a whole person, and the importance of accountability (Guardian 2021). In Processwork one of the questions to ask is 'How is this process happening in the moment?'. When I came to write I realised that my unaware whiteness, my unaware and unrelated power use is part of the restrictive dynamics on people of the global majority, and that me staying unaware helps perpetuate the dynamic. I use a shocking analogy, which in the Consensus Reality realm (Mindell and Mindell, 2020) is unfounded, but it is a dynamic in Dreamland (Ibid). However I am again using power unconsciously, this is a snapshot of a moment of the racial dynamics, a moment where people of the global majority are related to as overpowered by systemic racism and a prejudiced white person, and unable to throw off the attacker. Yes there is some 'truth' in my shocking analogy, and I use the power it evoked in me to drive forward to write, but on the way I fall into another manifestation of whiteness. In the moment, as I realise how I am Chauvin, I am horrified by my power, my invisible social power (Choudhury, p85), so I don't even notice my unconscious belief in the moment that I am more powerful than people of the global majority. I flip flop into being a white supremacist.

the bitter, poisonous fruit of the trauma tree (Menakem p294-296). The more I become aware of my whiteness, the more of the bitter fruit of white supremacy racial dynamics I see around me. I am ready to have a good long look now, I am ready to move through.

I am writing to become more conscious and to change my internalised 'white is better' conditioning. I am using Processswork to help me build awareness of myself and the field. Maybe my sharing this with you will be of use to you, but does this bring me dangerously close to the realm of 'the white saviour' (Cole)? Maybe this is me meeting my own need to submit a dissertation, centralising my own needs, profiting from the work and suffering of people of the global majority. Even here at the start of my dissertation I meet my critics who say you are well intentioned but self serving. My reply to them is

- I am glad you are here to help me have a wider perspective
- there is something cold and dismissive in how you talk to me, I like it better when people receive what I say warmly, this is what I am used to because I am white (and middle class, but although the intersection of class is highly relevant to rank dynamics I will not address it here because of space limitations, see the dissertation by Caroline Baille (2020) for more on class)
- you leave me feeling unclear and not knowing what is right
- feeling clear about how people are likely to respond to me is part of my white privilege
- my feeling that I might be attacked even when I speak with a positive intent is no longer part of my regular experience. I imagine someone of the global majority saying 'welcome to my world'
- I want to welcome different ways of looking at things, deep democracy (Mindell and MIndell, 2020, p19)
- although I want to welcome deep democracy I do feel a little fragile because I could be attacked, but I don't want to disappear, this is incredibly important, I

> need to pick up my strength and keep going and I need to be kind to myself and warm rather than trying to dominate and exploit myself

- you are right in one way, one way to look at this is me profiting from writing about my whiteness

- another way to look at this is that I am investing in change by writing about my whiteness. There are plenty of other things I could have written about. Writing about this is about my commitment to changing myself, not rescuing anyone.

Who is writing?

I notice I am already polarised as I begin to write about who is writing this dissertation.

First writing   I am not writing with any sense of superiority,

Then   I am writing as someone who wants to be a 'good' white person,

Then   I am writing of my inferiority

I do believe all of the things that I have written above, but as I write I don't realise how I am polarising the field; superior - inferior, good - bad. This reminds me of the 'find the racist' game that Edler (Edler p189) writes of as a distancing behaviour (in DR p39).

I am a white racist, I am unconscious of how I am white and I want to be part of effecting change within me and within other whites and within institutions and systems in the UK. As can be seen by my 'false starts' above, I am still in the midst of the white culture of individualist thinking (dR p33) and not yet automatically thinking of myself as part of an 'us', as part of an emerging wholeness, where we together work out how to move forward. I am also sure that at times I will be unconsciously acting and thinking in a superior way. I still have a long way to go, but I am getting there thanks to the input of many people of the global majority who have, like Reni Eddo-Lodge, kept going through all the barriers and hurts created by my lack of awareness and the lack of

awareness of other whites, to talk to me and other white people about racism (Eddo-Lodge location 19-115).

For this understanding to evolve I had to learn not to simply disappear into my white fragility (Di Angelo), which emerges at the edge, in other words when I am challenged or faced with making changes. In Processwork our resistance to changing our identity or understanding of the world is called an edge, I will write more about this process later (Mindell and MIndell 2020, p57)

Once I realised I was racist and this is a white problem, I needed to write and to keep writing and speaking, because I and the other whites need to pick up our responsibility for the problem and because it doesn't cost me so much to talk to whites about my racism and our racism. I can play my part in a collective action for change.

I am writing from the place of being pissed off with myself and with us whites. It is this energy that helps me to stay present or return when I start to have trauma response. I am pissed off at the injustice, I am pissed off by the amount of damage we whites have caused.

I am the one who is interested in learning and growing, and who is interested in the world becoming more whole. I want to be part of this movement to raise awareness and promote change (Ellis et al, paragraph 25).

I am read as a white, middle class, British woman. I was brought up by white British parents. My birth father is Irish, living in London in the UK. My birth mother is Palestinian. My birth mother also lives in London. They are married, and I have been in contact with them since 2008. I used to use my heritage as a way to bypass my

responsibility for the toxic racial dynamics. But whatever complexities life has brought me, I certainly have white privilege.

I use the word British quite a lot in this dissertation, its meaning varies at different times. Britishness is another very complex area, generally by the word British I mean anyone who self identifies as British, so this would include my friend who was born in Hong Kong and lives in Hong Kong, but it would not include my Welsh friend who does not identify as British. In this dissertation I often use the phrase 'we British', or 'the British' in the context of taking account for harm that has been done in the past or is being done now, in these instances I am referring to the different countries which make up Britain, and the ruling elite, who in the past led the country and led colonisation. I would like to be clear that I am not referring to people's ethnicity when I use the word British.

When I am with someone I can simply use their own language for themselves, here I had to decide what language to use, so I decided to use the words 'people of the global majority' to describe people of colour or 'non-white' people. By the words 'people of the global majority' I mean people who identify with an ethnicity from indigenous peoples from the Americas, Oceania, Asia or Africa. In this I follow Sanah Ahsan in departing from making white the default position (Ahsan p45).

Who am I writing to?

I am writing to the one who is interested to hear of my journey towards awareness.

I am writing to the part of me who needs an explanation to understand more of the journey I have been through and I am going through.

I am writing to the one who understands better than me how this process is the dreaming emerging in me and through me. I imagine they will find this process familiar.

As I write this dissertation I think I am writing for everyone, yet I also wonder if I am actually unintentionally writing for my white colleagues. But, even though I know that white people need to talk to other white people about whiteness in order for there to be change, I am writing for everyone. I feel that writing only for white people would miss something important. White people, like me, have been acting as if we are not doing anything damaging, and we have been covering up (Tharoor, p174, p269 , Humphrey, Wikipedia contributors), we have said one thing in public and other things behind closed doors. I write this for everyone, so people of the global majority can see me and evaluate what I am doing if they wish to.

Reaction during writing 1.

17/7/22

I take a break from writing, my youtube algorithm takes me to watch the Stellenbosch University Choir. a mixed race South African Choir singing Baba Yetu, The Lord's Payer https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PCa8RxaOPW8 in Swahili at a Welsh at a music festival in Wales. While my head is wondering about cultural appropriation, my body is weeping. This performance touches me deeply. I read comments on the video including Kevin Gw in 2021 "it's soo cool to hear foreign people sing perfectly in your mother tongue like that" and Clare Soit in 2022 "This song is giving me goosebumps. As a native Kiswahili speaker from Kenya, I couldn't be more proud of our language and culture". I am one of over 700, 000 people who have watched (Stellenbosch University Choir (2018)).

I follow my body, into my heart, I am in the world and relationship channel, (Mindell and Mindell, 2020 p10), one of many people of different races, unified through love in

the moment, the realm of the sentient, I am touched. I feel pain and I feel healing, I feel much gratitude.

Yet there is so much complexity here too, colonialisation imposing a Christian faith, translated into Kiswahili in East Africa, and taken by American Christopher Tin, who was influenced by African music, and who received a Grammy Award for his Baba Yetu. Cultural appropriation or appreciation? Collaboration or exploitation? I don't know, but the award was Tin's and the income from the music is his. It is much harder to find performances of Baba Yetu by people in East Africa on Youtube (African Solar Rise Gospel Choir.). Here are the roles of who and what is valued? What is taken, extracted? Who profits? Who is unseen? What divides and what unites?

For me, until we whites have understood our whiteness, until we have taken account for the damage we have caused to people of the global majority, until we have processed our trauma and taken account for the trauma we have caused and started to relate in a healthy way with people of the global majority such painful tangles are likely to taint even something apparently simple like watching an uplifting song. So I had better return to the main body of this dissertation .

Reaction during writing 2, I don't know what it means, but include it as a valuing of what is not known yet.

14/7/22 As I am about to get up to go for a run then write my dissertation I have this numinous experience[5]. It starts as a density in my heart chest, it is

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[5] This reaction is a form innerwork. Innerwork is core to Processwork, including noticing information or signals, then enabling them to unfold, by being interested in them and their message. It is helps to follow them in the medium or channel in which they present, in this example the signal I notice is a sensation which feels 'numinous' or stronger than other sensations, so I begin to unfold by being interested in the sensation. See more in Working on yourself alone Mindell (2002b).

heavy, I recall yesterday's people from my Personal Development Group recognising the absence of nurturing relationships in my life, I wonder if this is loneliness but I am with myself, so not alone, or is it sadness? I follow it in the channel it emerges.

I have a sense of something, weight? I feel suctioned to the earth, density, I am super heavy. I notice 2 mechanisms, suction and my weight going down. I don't know what it is for… it feels particularly dense in my heart and belly. Images come; sticking plaster - old-fashioned fabric cut to size, the earth turning and g force . I should be running or writing about whiteness. I recall the childhood dream of flying (over my edge to power), this is staying on the ground[6]. Am I going over my edge to earthing or my edge to doing nothing or what? I know if the colonialists had done nothing things would be better, I don't know what this means but I will watch out for heaviness as I know that if this is an emerging pattern it will repeat.

The quality of suction is like the feet of a fly walking up the wall, I notice as I walk barefoot on the wooden floor with warm feet I feel it again, I am fascinated. I know I have more to do to unfold from this signal, so I am hesitant to include it here. This is a place of writing about knowing. However, I am encouraged by Arny Mindell, (following on from Carlos Castenada, following on from an indigenous elder Don Juan) describing our desire to 'know' as a barrier to following what is (Mindell 1993, p140, Castenada 1968). Maybe one day I will understand what this means, maybe you already understand it.

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[6] Following on from Jung, Processwork sees our childhood dreams as containing patterns which can guide us through our lives (Mindell and Mindell, 2020,p 22 and p25). See more on page 51 below.

Methodology

I thought I was just going to mention my choice of methodology in passing. I was drawn to writing autoethnographically, I was going to reference Moustakas (Moustakas) and then explain how using Processwork would deepen and widen my understanding. But then it suddenly clicked how very important methodology is.

Whiteness is about power use, and methodology has too often been part of a behind-the-scenes-white-curriculum, justifying white supremacy, a mechanism of institutionalised racism (dR p10). 'Science' generated a body of 'truth' which became part of the justification and part of the means of colonialisation. Ethnographers' work was used to form negative stereotypes of people of the global majority and used by colonialists to divide and conquer (Johnson, 1981, Fisher, pp159 -160). Research gives more weight to opinions and decisions, and can inform policy. The power of science was used to justify whites'[7] claim of superiority over people of the global majority. White ethnographic researchers, with a white sense of superiority and with a confident air of authority, entered the cultures of others, claimed an objectivity and insight, and wrote authoritatively of their findings. (Ellis et al, paragraph 2) . Some of the white ethnographic researchers would have been unaware of how their whiteness influenced what they saw and their research results.

In one of the first conversations I ever had with my birth father, Brendan, he asked me 'Do you think the mind can ever study itself?' and he proceeded to tell me about the

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[7] As I reread my dissertation I am picking up on some of the times I use the word 'whites', I don't want to eradicate my language use as it is part of my journey towards awareness. But I don't want to just leave it hanging as that leaves it unprocessed. Here I am influenced by the spirit of those 'scientific' times when white people thought in terms of 'blacks', and did terrible things. I am angry, I am deeply upset, I hate that ignorance and its impact. In the moment I don't feel empathy with these white people, I don't feel respect for them, and I am not picking up my own ignorance, I am being one sided. By the time I get to the end of writing this dissertation I have been profoundly influenced by Shakil Chouhury's generous scientific approach and I am softer towards myself and other whites, while being very clear of the need to effect change.

philosophers who tried to answer the question, and his own conclusion that it is impossible. In spite of the impossibility, in this dissertation on whiteness I will endeavour to study my whiteness, first by using autoethnographic writing as a method, and then by using Processwork.

Autoethnography is a transparently highly subjective, heuristic, qualitative method of study, so in using it as a methodology my subjectivity is transparent. As a white person I am studying my own culture and writing autoethnographically, I don't take power over another, I study from within my culture and aim not to appropriate or exploit others. You, the reader, can know that this is my story and evaluate whether it adds to your understanding of whiteness.

In Chapter 2 I use autoethnography in a personal narrative. I use reflexivity and introspection to focus on my emerging awareness of the experience of being white, and a mix of vignettes from my own experience and relevant literature (Ellis et al, paragraph 20). I hope to invite you to be alongside me, to enter into my experience as my identity emerges.

I follow a line of white women using autoethnographic writing to help themselves and others pick up their whiteness. Like Mahoney I didn't see how I was part of a racialised world (Mahoney pp308). Like Pennington, I go all the way into my personal, very subjective experience of becoming aware of my whiteness, not modelling right thinking, but modelling opening up about my messy actual journey (Pennington). Like Frankenberg's interviewees, my whiteness was a self-invisible norm that I benefited from even though I didn't know it (Haraway).

In my autoethnographic writing I have endeavoured to go over my edge to write with a quality of reflexivity, and introspection, however I am very aware I write from what I

identify with, my primary process (Mindell and MIndell 2020, p57). So, in order to broaden and deepen my understanding, I go on to use Processwork as a methodology. I like what Processwork brings to the reflective process, with its tools to help us go beyond writing and thinking about the 'I' and towards the 'not I', or our secondary process (Ibid, p68)

In heuristic research and in Processwork the different iterations, help the process clarify. The processes occurring in me, the writer who is a fractal of the whole, are part of that clarification, so as I write I am aware of the atmosphere, my dreams, my ease or dis-ease, my edges and the flirts which come in (Siver, 2006, p398).[8]

Reaction during writing 3,

> 21/7/22 Dream I am going through a station car park to turn round, I am doing an arc, another car is also doing an arc it is too close, glances the side of my car, we both stop, at first I think there is no need for insurers, but then I look and I see a lot of the side of my car is damaged, part of the damage made a pattern including green and pink, of figures dancing and my roof is buckled. I shift my perspective and become the other car, my peer Carol picks up and names 'close' and I cry. Is this relevant, if so how?

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[8] The concept of fractals enables us to simply understand complexity. Arising from physics, this concept conveys how even in what seems to be a chaotic system, the interaction of a relatively small number of variables, can generate emerging patterns which repeat at different scales in the system, and these patterns are the same when you analyse them into smaller and smaller parts (Baranger), for example a snowflake.. Baranger beautifully uses the creation of a croissant to explain more. "It is chaos who manufactured the fractal." (Ibid p16) So, knowing I am within a system under the influences of variables, which generate a fractal pattern in me, and in society, I treat my experiences as emerging properties of a complex system, seeking awareness by the whole. I will explain more in Chapter 3.

ETHICS

I am aware that although I am the subject of my writing, I am writing of things that arise in relationship with others. I have consulted with the people concerned in order to give them choice as to how they are referred to and to acknowledge how they feel about what I have written and offer them the space to talk to me and tell me their story. Where I make a reference to people who I can not trace, I have protected their privacy by being vague about identifiable features.

CHAPTER 2   Autoethnographic writing

Part 1 Waking up

White privilege is the fact that if you're white, your race will almost certainly positively impact your life's trajectory in some way. And you probably won't even notice it." (Eddo Lodge location 1056)

As I sit in front of my computer about to write about my whiteness I feel blank. I connect to myself more deeply, I feel shock, it grinds me to a halt. I decide to go with this halt. An image comes to me, I am no longer alone in my room, I am surrounded by representatives of the millions of people of the global majority who have been killed directly and indirectly by white prejudice.

I am surprised to feel relieved. I have many half written versions of this chapter on my computer, this time I won't be alone as I write. I am so moved. I could expect people to be angry with me as a white, and many people may be. Anger is a natural response to the death and suffering caused by whites[9]. Yet my feeling in this moment is of being supported to write, being supported to write of my journeying to increased awareness of my whiteness, of the toxic racial dynamics which favour whites and attempt to distort and misrepresent people of the global majority. [10]

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[9] Here is another time I use the word 'whites', I am very angry with myself and other white people, I don't feel respect for white people, I want to shock, I want to wake unaware white people up.

[10] Here are some of the places you can read about the creation of whiteness and its negative impact, and its part of the mechanism of colonialisation; Shakil Choudhury's 'Deep Diversity', Reni Eddo-Lodge's 'Why I am no longer talking to white people about race', Layla Saad's 'Me and my white supremacy workbook', Reesma Menakem's 'My Grandmother's hands', Shashi Tharoor's 'Inglorious Empire' and 'The dismantling racism workbook'.

My journey has often been messy and uncomfortable. At times I have been absent, or stayed present but felt overwhelmed and useless, or felt confused, or been complacent.

I want to take you back to some of the moments of big learning on my journey

….I am in a large group in a seminar, I am sitting on the floor feeling numb, I can see the woman in front of me is waiting for a response, that one of us white people in the group should speak, but I have no idea what should be said. I feel ashamed that I don't know what to say. I want one of the other whites to know what to say. I wait and I hope, and feel into the gap. I remember what it feels like to have spoken in a deeply personal way in a group and to need someone to step up to make a reply, and the horribleness of having no one answer - as if I hadn't spoken, or as if what I said was too far from what is normal to be heard. I know my silence is impactful. My internal critic comes up, and further knocks me out. Meanwhile the woman in front of me is alone and angry and upset. I am angry with myself for being absent. I don't know what to say. I don't want to stand up to say that 'I don't know what to say' because I don't want to be criticised for my lack of knowledge, I don't want to say the wrong thing and the people of the global majority, people I had chatted with at the coffee break, to be angry with me. So I use my white privilege to be silent, to choose to sink into the background and be part of the silent majority in the room, and I feel shit about myself because I know this is the wrong thing to do.

The facilitator steps in, holding the space, framing that it is not ok for whites to leave the people of the global majority to do the work for whites, it is not ok to sit back and expect to be taught. Still I and the other whites are numb and absent and ashamed. Other people of the global majority step forward and speak, they speak of their anger and of their pain, they explain things that us whites hadn't really thought about. I hear of the pain of partition, I hear of the head of a family being called "The Garden Boy'' in

front of his family and the impact of that humiliation upon him and his family. I hear of the internalised impact of past traumas on people of the global majority and of the current impact, both from external and internalised misrepresentations, from ignorance and prejudice.

I don't understand how I can be so knocked out. I have already done a lot of awareness raising. I had learned from Maya Angelou's account of the impact of racism upon her (Angelou), I had learnt from reading Sobunfu Somé (Somé) , and from hearing Rokia Traoré's powerful lyrics (Traoré), I had learned from Maureen Reddy's journey to awareness of her unconscious whiteness (Reddy) . I read Jane Elliot's study (Elliot) and attended a training on diversity by Pat Black and Andy Smith's Diversity Matters training (Black and Smith), so I knew that unconscious bias matters and can have a very concrete impact on people's lives. So I had immersed myself in a different portrayal of Africans within the images of Africa and Africans and quotes from African tradition, proverbs and philosophers within African Wisdom 365 Days (Follmi and Follmi). Yet here I am knocked out, useless.

Fast forwarding a few months I was bewildered again. I was on another course, this time a course on facilitating conflict. All I wanted was to be nice and supportive and to learn. This wasn't going well. I started to wonder why I was on the course, all I wanted to do was avoid conflict. It was an 8 day course, by lunchtime of day 2 I just wanted to go home. I was pissing people off every day, I didn't know what I was doing to piss people off, but they kept picking fights with me. In the afternoon it got worse.
We are taking it in turns to use our newly learnt skills to facilitate mini groups, us group members are role playing conflict for our peer, Lungile, to practise facilitating. I am curling up and into myself, I am overwhelmed, wanting to hide from the conflict. I am no longer role playing, I am in an old trauma. Then all of a sudden Lungile is speaking to me, holding me to account. I am not safe, I need to bring myself to the room now. I

try to wake up amidst the chaos, but nothing makes sense… I am trying to work out what I had done wrong, what is happening? A tutor comes over to help us. Now the group isn't role playing the conflict, the last thing I want is conflict with Lungile, but the conflict is here anyway. I am scared, conflict isn't safe, people will take sides, turn on me, judge me, I want to avoid conflict, I want to avoid a scene. I don't understand.   I do my best to put into practice what I have learnt. I know that if I sincerely try to understand Lungile and put into words my understanding of her, and if I do my best to put into words my own perspective there will be some progress, however small. But all I know is I don't understand anything. This time the spotlight is on me, opting out is not an option. I step up and do my best.

 I wish I could tell you of me saying something wise, or insightful, or at least tell you more of what had happened, but because I never quite got it, I can't explain what happened, but I do know that it had something to do with me absenting myself, and that Lungile, a black woman from South Africa, was holding me to account rather than empathising with me when I was triggered. Now I do realise that as a white woman it was pretty new for me to be noticed or to be accused of something, or to be feeling scared that I might be attacked. I know til this time I had an un-languaged understanding that if I got into bother people would be likely to help me, take my side. I had no idea how privileged I was to have had this experience, to be able to make this presumption.

I am no longer bewildered by the examples above. Both times I was not aware of how I was 'being 'white', nor how I was in the midst of racial dynamics. It's not that I now know everything, but I do have a good basis to start working out what is going on.

On the evening of day 2 I did something. I had opted out of being interested in the impact of me being white upon others in the world. I just took the status quo for

granted. My disinterest allowed me to stay in my " privilege and happier view of the world" (Audergon, p179). My disinterest perpetuates the injustice, is a new injustice (Audergon p47), and inflames people (Audergon, p 44-45).

I sit down and start reading and reading about the colonialisation of South Africa, I read and read and read. I felt sick. Like pulling on a loose thread on a jumper I keep following, broadening out to other countries in Africa and through to Asia (I am still pulling on this thread). Til now I hadn't questioned that the British were about fair play, standing up for the underdog, respect and tolerance, and were bringers of democracy,

I have an instant change in perspective. I realise that in our group with Lungile earlier on in the day I had been triggered into a difficult time in my past, but what would it be like to be one person in a community who had all been traumatised? Not just one trauma, but trauma after trauma. When those with the power to stop it were the ones who were causing the trauma. Who could you turn to when you are attacked and brutalised, or when your home and lands were taken? Who would be able to help when all around you are all struggling with their own trauma? I understand the strength required to survive this, the individual and collective strength. I understand that the consequences of the past are still rippling out in the communities, some consequences more hidden than others.

I wake up. I no longer feel entitled to be understood. I realise that I can not expect to be centralised, even though I have personal experience of trauma, that there is something much bigger that needs attention. I had been so used to the 'informal rule' in groups being that people who were triggered into their personal trauma were given priority to speak. Useful as that is in many circumstances, in a room of 80 people, in which the majority were white this was repeatedly pushing racial dynamics off the agenda; majority rule. Being polite was following this rule, we whites didn't even notice that this

was 'our' self appointed, self serving rule. We didn't even notice the 'us' and 'them', we whites even thought we were being fair and reasonable, it was the obvious way to organise things, it was normal. By having it as an unspoken rule we were using our power to keep the status quo, we were signalling we weren't interested in the suffering we whites had caused and are still causing. If we deigned it so, we might even use our self appointed power to spend some time looking at colonialism.

day 3

The following day I did understand the racial dynamics. It was almost a repeat of what had happened with me. In a whole group session a different white woman had been triggered. It was so much easier now it wasn't me in the midst of the process. On the one hand an individual white woman whose personal trauma had been triggered, on the other hand a Black African woman from a whole nation traumatised by white oppressors and abusers. The white woman, like me, had an unconscious white supremacist attitude, unaware of her privilege, unaware of her sense of entitlement. Her sense that she was entitled to be heard helped her to stand up against the injustice that she experienced as happening in the moment when she was challenged.

Having done my reading I could see this unfolding, I kept wanting to get to the front of the group to talk gently to her, to explain ' I know it feels unfair, I know you are hurting, I see your strength in being able to stop the whole group, but it is inflaming lots of us because right now the focus needs to be on the millions of people we whites have hurt, right now we need to listen and take account for what we have done. You and I can talk after the group "

This is the weird thing, even though we whites have so many privileges we can still feel ill equipped to cope with perceived injustice, or being judged, or getting it wrong, or not knowing, or being attacked. Though when I think about it,it isn't weird at all, because the self awarded privileges don't make us better people, or more skilled, or better at handling difficult situations. Contrary to our unconscious white supremacist rhetoric and internalised beliefs, we aren't superior, even though we have given ourselves a leg up in society, even though we have taken a head start in terms of positive expectations for ourselves, even though we have taken more than our share of the world's resources. We whites are privileged and scared, and ill equipped, and self centred, and unaware, and clumsy, and hurtful.

I know this is a complex and hot area; the intersectionality of privilege and disadvantage. I know my white friend from a mining area, who lost relatives down the pit, who was looked down on because of their accent, and whose parents did not value education, didn't get as much of a head start as many other whites, nor did my white friend whose mum was a drug using sex worker who never showed up for them. I know a tough journey through life can make us stronger, an earned rank [11]rather than an awarded rank (Mindell and Mindell, 2020, p64). I also know that it is also complex for me to talk about whites as a whole, of course some whites aren't scared and they are aware and they aren't clumsy. In writing this I have chosen to lump us whites together, I do so consciously because we whites invented the concept 'black' to lump together many different peoples. (dR p9-13).

The facilitators are trying to help, I feel very uncomfortable, I want us to make it right now, I don't like sitting in this unease.

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[11] Here I am talking about psycho-social rank

Feeling uneasy like this is so unusual for me, another privilege, usually I feel like I belong. I am used to feeling 'right/good', I try to do right by people, ringing to apologise if I forget a friend's birthday, yet this is centuries of oppression and it isn't just history. Even though I hate it, this white supremacy is embedded in me.

I sit in this unease.

I realise there won't be a resolution. It feels so shit that there is no acknowledgement, it feels shit that there is no change in dynamics manifesting in the moment. Us white people need to change.

PART 2   Realising I'm white

I am white and I don't even know what that means, I am just me.

That is how I might have left it if it wasn't for seeing the damaging dynamics playing out in the training groups I was in. If I hadn't seen the pain caused by me coming from my unconscious whiteness I would not have known I had a problem, nor that I am the problem until I work on raising my awareness and changing.

I am not an initiator, I am following the path set out for me by people of global majority heritage :-

"take a clear look at the different multifaceted aspects of white supremacy and how they operate in both subtle and direct ways within you, and within others " (Saad, p 14).

I am deeply grateful to Reni Eddo-Lodge for writing 'Why I'm no longer talking to white people about race'.(Eddo-Lodge). I was changed by reading her book. I am deeply grateful to Layla Saad for her 'Me and my white supremacy workbook', helping me bring to awareness my white privilege step by step (Saad).

Being white would be irrelevant if whites had not sought advantage by pushing the 'other' down in order to feel superior and so self- award privileges, it would be irrelevant if whites hadn't taken, hadn't colonised. The dynamic of pushing the other down to become more powerful pre-dates colonisation and includes white people exploiting and mistreating other white people (Kelly, Menakem p58-61[12]). However this was taken to a new level when the divide and conquer tool of colonisation took land and assets, destroyed communities living in a sustainable way, imposed a hierarchy of worth, with a system of government, policing and a legal system to back it up (Tharoor, Chapter 4). White upper middle class people were at the top and those with the darkest skin at the bottom. The systems of education, media and even religion backed up this world view, white is better was the message (dR p9-14).

Of course the divisions were distortions, founded on prejudice, discrimination and ignorance. Everyone of us is valuable. Yet these distorted dynamics are all around us. Since their origins were unnamed those of us who have extra might even think we have it on merit, and those of us with lower status might think we are worth less because we are treated as lesser. It is to the benefit of the status quo for those on the receiving end of the prejudice and unconscious bias to be left to feel the problem is them.

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[12] Many people have written on this, including Timothy Morton (2016) who describes this 'othering' as a cultural emergence which extends more widely than whiteness.

The ranking of us all is so very present in us and our structures. This ranking is not just outside of me, I am the ranker, it is in me, in my thoughts and the way I perceive the world. This automatic ranking is morally abhorrent, it gives rise to eugenics (dR p11).

I wish I was living on a planet where we are all valued for who we are[13]. To get closer to this dream being a reality I need to change myself, to interfere with the way my mind is operating

This isn't easy, it is happening all of the time yet it is hard to notice my whiteness. At first I was resistant to noticing, even in the safety of my own home. I find it easier to identify with where I am disadvantaged compared to others, I feel very uncomfortable acknowledging where I have had an easier ride than other people, where I have been given a boost up, let alone noticing when I am relating to others and the world in an unconsciously white way.

As I started to write about my whiteness I had a strong pull to be seen as a whole person, I wanted to be sensitive to the whole of me, including the challenges I faced. Initially I resisted this pull because this is a very sore spot - so many people haven't been seen because of their race - it felt preposterous to start off by centring myself. I wanted to 'do the right thing' and go straight into writing about how I am in receipt of self-awarded privileges as a white person. Part of me wanted to stop being so self-serving and move forward, another part of me was being evasive. The more I pushed, the less I achieved. I was stuck.

Then, as soon as I recognised that I couldn't force myself through, when I reacted to myself as a whole human being, things shifted instantly. I used the wheel enclosed in

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[13] Peggy Natiello (2001) writes beautifully of the benefits of getting away from the myth of scarcity in power, and the benefits of a non hierarchical world in Chapter 6 of her book ,The Person Centred Approach; a Passionate Presence)

figure 1 to map the intersectionalities of me (included after the references)[14]. As I map myself I soften, my caring feelings for myself and for all of us came up, I become present in a new way. I move from using my power to try to dominate in order to achieve -the white coloniser role, which depletes- to using my power to be interested and join what is, including my feelings.

Oddly, in order to write about my white supremacy, myself as the one who damages others, I needed to first to empathise with the ways I have been damaged. This is another hot spot (Mindell and Mindell, 2020, p39) because we whites did not empathise with the many people and cultures we damaged. We whites disregarded and still disregard the wounds we inflicted with our attacks, with our theft, with our toxic prejudice, and with the legal barriers, structural and economic barriers we put in place, along with the negative expectations arising from our negative preconceptions. Whites never saw 'the other' as a whole person, nor their community as a whole system.[15]

Normal and superior

For most of my life I have been going around *"just being me"* unconscious of my skin colour, unconscious of my race, no-one giving me a second glance, people with my skin colour in my school books, fairytales reinforcing that white is beautiful, stories and news around me announcing time and time again that white is better, text books written by whites who don't credit their inherited knowledge from black and asian and

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[14] In the late 1980s in order to expose the full impact of discrimination upon black women Kimberlie Crenshaw wrote of the intersection of race and sex (Crenshaw). This was in response to a Court who were looking at layoffs of Black women who had said they could either look at the impact of race discrimination or sex discrimination but could not address the impact at the intersection of being discriminated for being both Black and women. Here I use the phrase ' intersectionalities of me' to describe a map of both the intersection of the different historic and current aspects of my personal and social identity, the discrimination, disadvantages and privileges I have been / am in receipt of.

[15] Again I am using the phrase whites, here I am so disappointed and sad and angry about our white power use, my power use, that I speak of 'whites' in the moment not seeing use whites as whole people, but as the host of this toxic role.

indigenous people's wisdom, text books that were written by people who could afford to write because they were profiting from slave labour and the pillage and exploitation of other countries.

I used to have a sense of moral superiority when people spoke of other countries where bribes were needed, until I read of the payments we British imposed on everyday activities when we moved into someone else's country: Government sanctioned extraction of money (Ndaba, Ndlovu, Etherington, Tharoor chapter 1).

As Professor Robin Kelly says, a small number of British people first exploited their own people and then exported the exploitation to those in other countries (Kelly), along the way putting down those they were exploiting. First putting down the 'working class' in Britain and then putting down the people from other countries, inventing meaningless self serving non-sense to justify the mistreatment and exploitation. I did not inherit 'civilisation', I inherited hypocrisy and self deception from which I have benefited in so many ways. I am ready to stop self deceiving.

Being brought up in Britain I have been privileged in so many ways. When I rewatched Mary Poppins (Stevenson), a movie for children, I was shocked by how the income from colonial exploitation is described as legitimately reaping the benefits of our wise investments, and earning our increased status. There is even a jolly little song in the movie about investing very little (tuppence) and receiving big returns, "Soon you'll see that it blooms into credit of a generous amount semiannually, and you'll achieve that sense of stature as your influence expands to the high financial strata" (Sherman and Sherman).

The benefits from exploitation are woven into the British economy and infrastructure. I hate that I have benefited directly from the exploitation, from slave labour. [16] I am privileged, my intention is to hold myself accountable for the way I use this privilege. We whites gave and give ourselves more advantages, then think we are superior. We have rigged the game (Choudhury, p112)[17].

> "*White privilege is the fact that if you're white, your race will almost certainly positively impact your life's trajectory in some way. And you probably won't even notice it." Eddo Lodge (location 1060)*

My perspective on the world comes from other whites who reinforce my view, so I unconsciously think of it as right and normal and even superior.

I am deeply grateful to the people of the global majority who have run courses that helped me to get my head around this automatic thinking within me. I had a particularly big shift on a course run by Diane Wong and The Racial Justice Collaborative (Wong). One of the black facilitators was speaking about how they could tackle a relative who was saying things that reinforced the lighter-skin- is- better perspective, and also speaking about changing their own internalised white superiority perspective around their appearance. My reaction was *Wow, I didn't know you have to wrestle with this too. I thought it was just me as a white person. I thought it meant I am a bad person that I have these thoughts, even though every day I work on un-conditioning myself*.

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[16] The UK benefited by trillions of pounds from colonialisation, some of this money funded free schooling, and the building of the railways. Benefactors built schools and Universities, the boost the British economy got from colonisation and the slave trade is enormous, including the compensation paid by the British Government to slave owners when enslaved people were emancipated (Centre for the study of the legacies of British Slavery).
The railway network is one of the many many parts of the UK which were boosted in this way. (Research Excellence Framework, BBC Radio 4)
[17] Choudhury describes a group exercise he runs to show young people how society is rigged to favour white people, the winners don't realise they won because the game was rigged (Choudhury, 2021, p112.)

I should have already known that prejudice is internalised, I should have had the courage to be ready to speak about my own prejudices and conditioning, and my first response to someone speaking about the massive negative consequences of living in a racist society should have been more empathic. However, in response to their leadership I felt lighter and I felt freer to speak as a white woman who has prejudices and work out how to change myself and talk to others, I felt like I had been given permission to be openly my flawed self.

I am very moved by the generosity of all of those who have supported me to change. Instead of repeating the harsh pattern of colonialisation they have used their strength with sensitivity. I can still hear Diane Wong in my ears encouraging me to simply notice when I catch myself in the midst of a racist response, and calm myself and accept myself (Wong). I am also learning to use Reesma Menakem's 5 anchors to help me get away from these automatic body reactions (Menakem, p167-8).

Having read Reni Eddo-Lodge's 'Why I am no longer talking to white people about race', and worked through Layla Saad's workbook (Saad), and attended quite a few courses (Kotaq, Wong, and Kelly), I used some questions to help me surface what it is to be white in order to move me away from unconsciously being a passive recipient of privilege towards being able to be consciously white:-

First, in order to help me be aware of the many times when my life is easier because of my white skin colour,
"I know I am white when ……"

Second, in order to help me notice when I am actively using the self awarded privilege of being white,
" I know I am being white when I ….."

Third, in order to help me notice how I am actively using racial differences to exclude some people and include others

" I am creating insider outsider / outsider dynamics when I …."

I have put my answers later in this chapter to give white readers chance to think about their answers.

While I was studying, fellow students of the global majority kept getting triggered by the unaware whiteness of fellow students and the curriculum, and suggested the white people got together to talk about whiteness, and to challenge each other when we were unconsciously being white. We did this and it helped me a great deal.

I still get confused about how to be sometimes, for example, the time when I racialised a colleague at work when I chose to talk to them about discrimination, I was kicking myself afterwards, but then later they spoke to me about a dilemma where racial prejudice was an aspect, so maybe that was ok after all? It's not that I always get it right now, but that I don't get knocked out in the same way. I notice that I am getting more irritated by the world now, spending more time writing to the BBC about times when I hear white presenters failing to understand their whiteness, challenging friends, seeing the bias in shop assistants. I don't want to be 'the white saviour', but I do need to challenge myself and other whites. I know I will keep working on this for the rest of my life.

MY ANSWERS

PASSIVE RECIPIENT OF WHITE PRIVILEGE

This is how I know I am white, as a part of the majority in Britain I don't get made aware that I am white often, so this is my checklist to help me know that when I think these things that although they are my 'normal', they are happening because I am white in a culture that favours whites ……

I know I am white when :-

I don't think skin colour matters

I know I am white when I walk into a new group and the other people look like me

I know I am white when I take for granted that I can often disappear into the group and only feel noticed when I feel safe enough to speak

I know I am white when I am usually interviewed by people of my skin colour

I know I am white when I don't get tense / irritated when white people ask me 'where are you from?

I know I am white when people don't treat me like something exotic to be curious about

I know I am white when I don't have to wonder whether colour prejudice is getting in my way of me; getting good grades, getting a job or promotion, forming easy relationships with colleagues or getting an exchange in a shop, or getting the right change from £20, or making friends

I know I am white when I expect to be seen as an individual rather than as a representative of all whites.

I know I am white when no-one gives me a second glance when I am on a walk in the countryside or on the beach or when I walk down the street or into a shop.

I know I am white when I think civilisation began with the Greeks and when I think Freud and Jung founded psychology

I know I am white when my race doesn't cross my mind when someone doesn't reply to an email

I know I am white when books are almost always about people of my skin colour and written by people of my skin colour

I know I am white when my parents didn't tell me I'll have to work twice as hard to get on because of prejudice

I know I am white when I know I my skin colour won't cause me to be : searched, pulled out of a queue on the way to an entertainment venue or in an airport, or verbally abused when I am walking down the street.

I know I am white when I don't cringe when someone with my skin colour is acting anti-socially or drawing attention to themselves, or showing their lack of knowledge.

I know I am white I don't notice where my skin colour is easing my path through life

I know I am white (and middle class?) when rules and organisations usually seem fair and I expect to be treated fairly

I know I am white when it is unusual for someone with my skin colour to be attacked or killed by the police

ACTIVELY BEING WHITE

I know I am being white when I have no idea how I am playing out centuries old racial dynamics in this moment.

I know I am being white when I am disinterested in the history of colonialisation.

I know I am being white when I …. *I start to falter because class comes in here and because the intersectionality of race and gender and class mean there are degrees of advantage, so I can't be as unequivocal, so I guess I need to be as personal as possible - I think the 'I know when I am white list' will apply to all whites in the UK*

I was being white when I spoke about being disconnected from my heritage without even giving a moment's thought to my fellow student not knowing what her heritage is because her ancestors were taken from their home country and enslaved.

I was being white when I didn't think of how racial dynamics make it harder for my colleague's teenage son to just be himself.

I was being white when I expected to be heard

I am being white when I feel entitled to speak

I am being white when I feel sure of my rightness

I am being white when I get extra authority because of my skin colour

I am being white when I feel entitled to be treated fairly and I will assert power because I am confident and I know I will be backed up, I know I can turn to the rule book / laws / manual when I feel I am treated unfairly in order to remedy this error.

I am being white when I am so used to my needs being central that I find it almost impossible to step away from the way 'things are done' when someone points out something I had never even considered, which seems non sensical, and even attacking of the way we have been doing things.

I am being white when I complacently believe my white tutors will have insight and will be doing things 'right', even when they are challenged by those with both knowledge and lived experience of toxic racial dynamics.

I am being white when I don't notice that other people usually include me as an 'us' rather than as 'other', and I maximise the chances of this by shifting my emphasis to accentuate my similarities when meeting people for the first time so I can fit in.

I am being white when I believe I am superior in my way of thinking or my religion or in the way we organise things, 'we do things right'.

I am being white when I receive the benefits of cultural appropriation in the curriculum without question, for example, mindfulness or in a yoga class or in the meditations in The Journey (Bays). And when I enjoy music or food from across the globe without a thought for the appropriation behind it.

I am being white when I overlook the barriers that hold others back, and overlook that I am part of maintaining those barriers, and then feel good that I am helping the people, who I am inadvertently holding back.

I am being white when I think I am being good or helpful by becoming more aware of being white

I AM CREATING INSIDER OUTSIDER DYNAMICS when

- I notice you only because of your hair, skin colour, food, accent,
- I ask you where you are from
- I feel more comfortable with people of my skin colour and treat them as normal, even though I know it makes you more of an outsider
- I am the first member of my family born in the UK but I am treated like an insider because of my skin colour, I act as if my family have been here for generations, and when I speak to you I forget I am less British then you
- my body gives subtle signals tensions and eye contact differences upon first meeting you that indicate you are an outsider

- as I walk down the street or into a room your ethnicity is likely to be the first thing I notice about you
- my language subtly indicates my 'us' 'them' thinking. I try to hide this as I think my thinking is wrong, and because everyday I am working to change my thinking, I think this hiding is useful in one way because this 'lizard brain thinking' isn't all of my thinking, (Menakem,p229) but I know this hiding creates murky waters for you, and can create a difficult dynamic where you pick up a funny atmosphere where a number of us whites are acting less congruently around you
- my expectations of how you behave are influenced by your ethnicity in ways I am not even aware of, and these expectations can make it harder for you to be you
- when I am challenged to be more aware around my whiteness I sometimes turn to people like me for understanding and support, and find it easier to have conversations about my unconscious prejudices and biases with other whites

I AM SUSTAINING THE STATUS QUO IN OUR INSTITUTIONS when:

I am being complacent about structural discrimination when I don't even question the structures in society, when I think that there will be fair provision of education, policing, justice, and housing

I am being complacent about structural discrimination when I believe the police will protect others as well as they protect me

I am being complacent about structural discrimination when I think that unconscious bias does not impede people's ability to get a job

I am being complacent about structural discrimination when I think the intake system to the good local school is fair because it prioritises those who live nearest

I am being complacent about structural discrimination when I am challenged and I believe my perspective is 'right', and I turn to others of my skin colour who reassure me that I am right.

I am being complacent about structural discrimination when I don't question the choice of what has gone into the curriculum

I am being complacent about structural discrimination when I believe skin colour is irrelevant to the health care I receive

CHAPTER 3   Introducing Processwork tools and skills

 In this chapter I introduce the concepts of Processwork, and the Processwork tools I will use in the next chapter to go deeper and wider than my autoethnographic narrative.

Conversation with Ruth, my daughter, 30/7/22

> *It isn't a thing, it isn't based on anything*. Yes. *It is only a thing because people think it's a thing*. Yes, in one way it's like the particle wave experiment, it only becomes a thing if there is someone there to trigger it. It reminds me of the experiments Shakil Choudhury talks of (p73-4), where even oblique references to race alter achievement. Even though these dynamics play out, we as individuals are still ourselves, whites aren't superior because of the self awarded privileges, but frequently receive a lift, and people of the global majority aren't lesser because of whites' self awarded privileges, but the negative expectation can impact negatively on performance, which adds to the barriers built by prejudice, bias and reduced opportunity due to socioeconomic factors. We need to change the dynamic, so we can all be more fully ourselves.

This helps me see how beautifully the tools of Processwork help describe and work with the complex dynamics which are in the atmosphere, and get constellated.

I have been brought up to discount our interconnectedness, to experience life as an individual, as if I could be separate from societal and cultural dynamics of the past and the present. In Processwork 'the field' refers to the interconnectedness between places and people. We can't see the field, yet it moves us; in cultural, social, environmental, emotional, and physical ways (Mindell and Mindell 2020 p32). I am not just an individual, my feelings, thoughts and actions tell me about my context and positionality

within the field. I can bring awareness to the role I am in, and even switch into other roles. The processes I experience are a product of the field, part of what is emerging now.

I remember being taught how Processwork was about processes not static points, the metaphor used was the journey, not just the railway stations (Schuitevoerder p32). I didn't really understand, and even 15 years on I am still working it out, but I do see that all of us are in the midst of processes which are dynamically responding to each other. An image comes to mind of a contemporary dance, some approaches are more welcome than others.

Processwork is aiming to bring awareness to processes. Arny Mindell and his colleagues tailored language and tools to help us think about processes and welcome them consciously (Mindell, Arnold (1985a), (1987), (1988), (1989), (1992), (1995), (2000), (2001), (2002a),(2002b), (2007). Mindell, Arnold and Amy, (1992), Mindell, Amy (1994/2001), Audergon (Audergon) , Diamond (Diamond) , Goodbread (Goodbread), and other books and articles). There are many beautiful explanations of Processwork, (including Diamond and Spark Jones, 2004, Siver, 2005) this is my own description.

The presumption in the model is that we are part of a constantly evolving wholeness, and that the wholeness is seeking to know itself. Events aren't treated as random, but rather part of the emerging wholeness. Since we are human and part of human culture, there is only a small percentage of the oneness that we identify with as 'me'.

Arny Mindell calls the part of the oneness we identify with our 'primary process' and the parts of everything that we think of as 'not me' he calls our 'secondary processes' ((Mindell and MIndell 2020, p57 and p68). Clearly there are many processes that we

don't identify with happening at any one time, some of them are closer to our identity and some are further away.

If we thought we were everything we would have no sense of our boundary, our own limits, the edge of ourselves, this would be very overwhelming to our brains, so we are creating a boundary between the 'me' and the 'not me' which is what Arny describes as an edge, Some of this boundary or edge we generate actively and some of it is generated by intergeneration and cultural dynamics. We have edge beliefs, which sustain our boundaries. These edge beliefs are in effect a regulator of what we notice as ourselves and what we experience as 'not us' (Ibid p27).

Returning to the presumption that the wholeness is seeking to be known, there is a dynamic dance between the edge beliefs and the disavowed wholeness. We could say that the unknown parts of us are seeking to be known. Mindell was a physicist who had trained as a Jungian psychologist, he had learnt that the night time dreams bring us these secondary patterns that can help us know ourselves more fully, and then he noticed that body symptoms also brought the new patterns to us (1985a). Mindell noticed that the emerging secondary processes bypass our edge beliefs in our dreams and symptoms. Mindell designed language and tools to help bring awareness to the dance between the primary process, the edge and the emerging secondary process. Here I introduce some of the concepts and tools of Processwork.

Channels (Mindell and Mindell 2020, p10) . By subdividing the ways that we receive and send information into the visual, auditory, proprioception, movement, relationship and world channels, Mindell helps us to become more aware of the way we are dancing between our primary, and secondary processes and to understand our edges. Our primary identity will have less awareness in some of these channels, which makes

it easier for our secondary process to be received and expressed in these channels, it bypasses our edge beliefs. In the same way that Jung invited the dream to be interpreted on its own terms, Processwork invites the secondary process to be experienced as a 'thing itself', rather than making an interpretation, so rather than making an assumption about what, for example, a backward movement means to a client, the Processworker might simply notice the backward movement and invite the person's attention to the backward movement, the idea being to welcome the emerging secondary process by creating the opportunity to 'unfold' the signal from the secondary process in its presenting channel (Mindell, 1985b, p27). Once the message has been received it is likely to spontaneously shift into other channels.

At any one moment we are all giving out double signals, the ones from our primary process that we either know about, or if asked would identify as fitting with our identity, and ones from our secondary process, which we don't notice at all or think of as being an altered state caused by something like an illness or a medication.

Our edge beliefs orchestrate our lack of awareness about parts of ourself. The aim of Processwork is not to help the secondary process overcome the primary process, but to notice, relate to and support the whole person, respecting their edge beliefs, and to help raise awareness.

Arny Mindell introduced 4 phases as one way to represent the dance between the part of us that wants and needs the status quo, and the part of us that is seeking change (Mindell and Mindell 2020, p55). The aim of a facilitator is not to push people through the phases, but to be aware of which phase someone is in. In phase 1 we are content with the status quo, not at all interested in change, in phase 2 our everyday identity is disturbed by something or someone. In Processwork the disturbances are seen as teleological not random, as part of the emerging wholeness seeking our attention, and,

when understood on their own terms, as bringing something useful to us. However when in phase 2 we are not interested in changing, we have an edge to change and would like the disturbance to go away, at this point our primary identity and edge beliefs are needing to be related to and to become more known. In phase 3 we are interested in change, and stepping into our secondary process, a dialogue between our primary and secondary process can be part of this phase. In phase 4 we are again content, but this time a contentment based on being everything, rather than not being interested.

I notice in the above explanation I was running out of language, because I needed to bring in Processwork's differentiation between different levels from which we can experience the world. Processwork differentiates between 3 equally important ways of experiencing the world (Ibid p16, p24, p30)

1. Consensus reality.
2. Dreamland
3. The essence or sentient

The consensus reality is the reality that most people would agree exists. Here if I put a ball on a slide it would roll off to the bottom of the slide.
In dreamland the ball, the slide, the fluidity with which the ball ran down the slide, and gravity are all roles, if I chose to I could step into those roles, and experience the world in a new way, and become more fully myself. In this realm the people I talk about are my secondary process, containing a pattern I don't identify with. In this realm the past emerges in the now in order to be processed. In this realm the atmosphere of a place contains information which tells us of ongoing processes. In this realm a butterfly bumping into the window is not disconnected from what is happening in the room, it is

a world channel signal waiting to be unfolded. In this realm signals emerge as information sent from the wholeness seeking to be known, waiting to be unfolded.

In the essence or sentient realm there is detachment, earthly restrictions don't apply, primary, secondary, edges don't exist in the same way, instead there is the oneness or the wholeness and a sense of timelessness. Conflicts and stuckness can exist in dreamland, whereas shifting to the sentient realm the separate roles do not exist, and so neither does the stuckness. Phase 4 contains this essence quality. When not accessed as a way to avoid processing dynamics of trauma, injustice, hurts and anger, accessing the sentient realm supports profound shifts and emerging wholeness. When we are in this realm we may feel lightness, a sense of space, we may feel slower, sometimes having trance-like experiences. Here away from edges and fixedness, beyond the sense of being an individual, in touch with something much bigger, and more universal, new much needed perspectives and qualities emerge. When someone speaks from this realm there can be atmosphere changes, a sense of oneness, a sense that one person is speaking for many, and new insights. This is a very powerful moment in a group's process. Processwork offers innerwork tools to help access the sentient level which supports the emerging wholeness (see Redwood).

Yet when people are speaking from different dimensions conflict can be exacerbated, for example, if someone is speaking of oneness, when others want a commitment to a consensus reality change to address injustice.

As I said earlier all of us are in the midst of processes which are dynamically responding to each other. I see how when, for example, two people meet, a dynamic arises spontaneously in the moment. Even when we are simply planning to meet a dynamic arises. I see how each person's personal and collective experiences are part of that dynamic, as is the atmosphere in the place we meet. I see how each meeting

brings an opportunity for what is seeking resolution to come to the fore. I see how Processwork's dynamic theories and tools help us facilitate such fluid and dynamic arisings. I see how wise it is for the Processwork insight and tools to be based on us, the facilitators, being inherently part of the dynamic. We are part of the whole, we are a fractal, containing the patterns of the system we are in, so when we do innerwork we are doing work for the collective too (Siver 2006, p324). Since we are part of the system, when we go over an edge we help the system, whether that is by bringing others to their edge, or whether it is reducing the size of the edge.

One way to facilitate is to follow signals in their channel, noticing what is primary, what is secondary, where the edge is, what the edge beliefs are, what channel they are in, where the channel shifts happen, what happens if the original channel is returned to, helping primary, secondary processes and edges to relate to each other.

Another way to look at processes is to see them as roles emerging from the whole, those of us who are nearest to a role occupy it, it comes into awareness and interacts with other roles. Facilitation involves trusting what is emerging, framing to help raise awareness of what is happening (Mindell and Mindell 2020, p34), noticing the roles behind the positions, changes of atmosphere, including framing 'hot spots' when tensions rise at the edges (Ibid, p39), and 'cool spots' when there is even momentary relief or resolution (Ibid p17), noticing edges to completing interactions between the roles, facilitating people to go all the way in polarised dialogues, helping people understand what is at the edge, noticing when role shifts happen, supporting people to go over edges, identifying and representing ghost roles (Ibid, p36), that is roles that are at play but unnamed, or those that are at play through their absence, and noticing when role shifts happen and when new dynamics arise.

Ghost roles can include TIme spirits (Ibid, p49), that is dynamics from the past that are unresolved and need to be addressed in the now.

The facilitator aims to understand the process structure, that is the dance between what is emerging and the everyday identity and the edge beliefs. This awareness helps people relate to the emerging process, as well as unravelling the edge beliefs. Also, because the facilitator is part of the system, if they do innerwork to go over their edge, the system's edge, this can both model the pattern over the edge, and can help people go over their edge, or understand more about their edge and their primary process.

The facilitator is aiming to use their 'second attention' (Ibid, p67), their ability to be aware of their own inner experiences as well as being able to step outside their own perspective and be aware of the signals from outside them, their knowing that they are part of the whole system, and what is happening for them will be part of the whole. The facilitator is aiming not to leave people alone, so they can join people in a role, or represent a missing role that they have identified.

The interactions between people are influenced by what Arny Mindell called rank (Ibid, 64-65). Each of us have our own rank matrix, our own unique mix of high and low rank. Our rank matrix shifts moment to moment depending on the context we are in and who we are with. There are different forms of power that people have, whether personal, hierarchical, social, or psychological or spiritual rank. We can earn rank or be awarded rank, we can be conscious of our rank or unconscious. Being unconscious of our rank or feeling awkward about having rank, and trying to hide it would leave us, ' double signalling' (Ibid p21-2), that is sending unconscious information in our body signals, which in this case could be felt as a sense of superiority which puts other people down. On the other hand, someone can consciously use their rank to generate an atmosphere where the power becomes a resource for the 'us' to use. Understanding

the rank dynamics between people can help us understand what is happening at edges and hot spots.

I turn now to what I could have started with because it is so fundamental to Processwork, Deep Democracy (Ibid, p.19) whereas democracy hears the voice of the people, but goes with the majority, in Processwork the voice from the margins is precious bringing in something the system as a whole needs, even when the majority is disturbed by it. Arny Mindell calls the disturbance the "X" energy (Mindell 2017,p81), an innerwork of first engaging with the energy of the disturbance and then accessing the deepest parts of ourselves to access the sentient realm, allows the Universe to move us, revealing a quality that can unlock the system from its cycling, as it can bring a particular quality which is disavowed by the wider community, in other words, help the community to cross an edge.

There is much more I could write about Processwork, but for the purposes of this dissertation the final part I will write about is myths. Following on from Jung, Processwork finds that our repeating childhood dreams contain our life myth, and by revisiting the different aspects of the dream we can know ourselves more clearly, the presumption being that we are all of the different parts of the dream, so unfolding the different patterns in the dream can guide us through life. This is another dynamic living and evolving process, " as we know these patterns better and they come together and re-entwine or blend or meld in different ways. (Smith)" Similarly organisations have guiding myths, in the consensus reality realm they can be found in the way the organisation came to be founded, and in the organisation's ethos, mission statement or values. (Mindell and Mindell, 2020, p22 and p55, Returning to the dreams or mission statements can help us to recentre and find our way.

SImilarly our daytime 'high dreams' contain patterns that guide us, these are free of worldly restrictions and can be beyond our edges. When we aren't following the high

dream patterns, when our edges manifest critics and doubt, we can end up in our 'low dream' (DIamond and Jones p 120, Mindell 1995 p199). Deep democracy is about being interested in both the low and high dreams, as each are rainbows taking us towards pots of gold when followed with interest.

CHAPTER 4   Using Processwork to understand more

In this chapter I draw upon the concepts of Processwork outlined in Chapter 3 to deepen and widen my understanding of my journeying towards understanding my whiteness and my part in racial dynamics.

Going over my edge to receive support

In Chapter 2 I start with blankness:

"As I sit in front of my computer about to write about my whiteness I feel blank "[18]

I am at an edge , my primary process is to want to study and write about my whiteness, I want to do inner work and worldwork. But actually part of me is scared of getting it wrong, a mix of my low self confidence, my fear of contributing to perpetuating toxic racial dynamics in the moment, my fear of people being angry with me, or me hurting someone by saying the wrong thing, there are big feelings here from centuries of oppression and trauma. These are my beliefs at the edge, so part of me is wanting to absent myself and stay quiet, stay safe and at ease.. This is my personal edge, and many white people in my society feel this way, so it is a collective edge. There are rank dynamics here, in the moment I am feeling low rank, but I also have high rank. I have social rank because I have been awarded many privileges because I am white, and I have built psychological rank from coming through life challenges, but at this moment, I am identifying with my low rank.

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[18] Thank you to feedback from Andy Smith, 'blanc' or 'blanche' in French is white

At this moment I am stuck at the edge. My privilege includes having a choice as to whether to look at my whiteness, I could walk away, but I have lost my innocence about the consequences of unaware whiteness (Baldwin in Menakem, p293). I am in phase 3, I know I am the problem, I know I need to change, there is no longer a sense of comfort for me in staying absent because I feel a connection to all of those who are on the receiving end of white unawareness, on the receiving end of white bias and prejudice. Walking away is more secondary for me now, but my blankness is a form of walking away.

I have a spontaneous channel shift into the visual channel. We know that certain channels are more occupied by our primary identity, which makes it harder for us to receive information that is different from our primary identity. The internal visual channel is my least occupied channel, it is very unusual for me to have any images in my head. As in communication theory there is information in the system that wants to be received, it wants to bypass the edge created by my identity (Diamond, 1987). My internal visual channel being very empty means that the message in the visual channel is quickly received by me. To my surprise my secondary process is 'being supported'.

Even when I receive the visual information in the form of people of the global majority who have been killed by whites, part of me is shy to accept the image. I am worried that I am creating an image to let me off the hook. I am worried that I am being stereotypical, I do not want to presume to have support from other people's ancestors. I am worried that I am another white who has pulled in people of the global majority to take care of me. I am scared that people of the global majority will be angry with me for co-opting images of their dead ancestors to help me. These things are valid concerns, they are all ways in which whites have appropriated what is not ours. And I have a long term edge to receiving support and a long term edge to being me, lest people get angry with me. I realise that my edge has popped up again.

 I decide to go over my edge, to risk taking this image seriously, to take seriously what is emerging from the sentient level. I use a 'lucid dreaming' process, a sort of concentrated mindfulness to follow what is arising, trusting it will help me away from my everyday way of thinking (MIndell, 2001, Chapter One). I dialogue with them:

> "Thank you for being here. I feel supported by you and humbled by your generosity of spirit. I am so sorry we did this to you and your people. I feel you are in relationship with me, I no longer feel alone. I can write about being white now. "

> In this moment I step over to the role of those people of the global majority killed by whites.
> " We are strong, it is time for change now. Some of us were alone when we died, others died together, we know what it is to be alone. It is time for us to be an *us* now to make change. Bring yourself as you are, let's do this together"

> I step back to being Helen and reply to those killed,
> " I am not worthy to be your ally, but I can do this with you. Thank you."

Until the moment of this image arriving I am being organised by my edge beliefs, I am stuck and self obsessed. Being self obsessed is a hot spot, I am being white, in that I am only interested in me, while only identifying with my low rank. I am also being stereotypical about how people of the global majority might respond about my writing about my whiteness - people will be angry with me. My imagination about how people might feel is not relating to actual people. I am being white, which in this moment means staying in my own world, feeling critical and angry with myself and other whites for what we have done and perpetuate. But I am unaware of how I am cycling and

tangled. I am in a process which is cycling; stuck at the edge. When at the edge processwork suggests helping roles to go all the way, or interactions to complete, or representing ghost roles. Fortunately the ghost role came to me, in this moment literally ghosts, the ones who are encouraging and have come to support me.

The dialoguing unfreezes me, feelings come.

As I write I weep, how can these people who were so abused be ready to help me, a white woman? What a beautiful heart they have. I weep, I grieve so much richness lost, so many people impacted. I want to come together with other people to grieve, it does not feel sufficient to do this on my own. We need communities of us to grieve what has been lost.

In this iteration, I watch Army Mindell's short video on the phases in the process of change (Mindell, 2019), and thanks to his support and modelling of the patterns in the 4 phases, the field changes, the atmosphere changes, I change, and I shift into phase 3, I cross my edge to valuing what I am doing. I become encouraging and supportive of myself. Something relaxes in my shoulders, my breath deepens, I feel my feet on the ground. My belly relaxes. My heart lightens.

Iteration 3

This is an interesting point, as there are several edges clustering, my fear of people being against me, my edge to picking up my own side, and my edge to valuing myself. These are my edges and they are part of the system. Here picking up my own side is alien to me, I have to go over my edge to pick up my side - to value myself- as opposed to being against myself (internal conflict). Going over my edge temporarily brings me to a little cool spot, but things heat up in multiple ways, I need to do more dialoguing with my primary process, which is what I do next. It also brings the

system to an edge because there is more work to do, billions of people have been under-valued by whites, millions have been killed, and I am focusing on the individual level rather than relationship or societal level. Again there is a pull towards relating, not just doing this on my own.

This lightening is brief, valuing myself for doing this work feels wrong. This is another hot spot, I have white privilege and I am simply working at changing so I don't cause as much harm to others, I am late in coming to realise what I need to do. I am self critical again, back in my primary process.

I step back into seeing myself from the position of those who were killed. *Don't you see, you have slipped back into trying to do this all on your own. We are all precious to be valued. " to deny the sacred in the Other is to deny it in oneself." (Johnson, 2005)*

Before I slip back into self criticism again I will return to Processwork tools, this time cool spots. Cool spots arise at a moment of temporary resolution, or shifting awareness or understanding. Taking time to notice what gives rise to the cool spots is very helpful to becoming more aware of emerging processes.
In the dialogue above these processes seem to be part of building the cool spot

Generosity of self - reaching out to not leave someone alone

Being seen and connected with

Being valued

Us   We

Iteration 4

I am grateful to Sue Milner, my second assessor, who invites me to revisit this moment of feeling supported by people of the global majority, but this time to stay in the sentient dimension, to let the Universe move me.

10th April 2023
I revisit the image, I notice my feet on the ground, my breath slows, I let myself go blank, I feel that my room is full of people, I hear the hum of people speaking in different languages, I smile. A feeling of warmth comes. I let myself be moved, I sway, words leave me, I am slow, I feel heavy. I follow this sense of weight, I let go. I am on the floor, I feel so heavy. Incredibly heavy, heavier than I have ever felt before. I come to an edge, what does this mean?

I go back to the moment of feeling supported. Once again I ground, this time using the movement channel to help me, picking up a gesture to represent my everyday self, standing with my head curled in, and a gesture for the people of the global majority, standing with hands slightly out to the side, palms forward. I notice my feet on the ground, bring my awareness to the deepest part of myself, and let myself go blank, letting the universe move me. From here I play with the 2 gestures, until a new quality emerges. In this new position my head is up and back slightly, my chin rises a little, and I am standing, very upright, my cells feel relaxed but alive. I am flooded with light and strong intimacy, I feel very open, I come alive, I feel an intimate and delicate aliveness, I feel ease, beyond the roles, I am in the realm of the sentient. This open, relaxed, alive ease feels so different from my contracting in response to the traumas, and fears and closing away which emerged in Dreamland. This new quality from the sentient is vitally needed, it is for all of us.

29th April 2023
I revisit the moment of feeling supported. Instantly I feel blown away by warmth and love, the tension leaves my body. I invite myself to become more precise , if I didn't use the phrase blown away? My head goes backwards, leaning against the support of the chair. As I follow this my chest opens, my heart opens, I feel ease, I feel oneness, My sense of time changes, and my sense of space changes, there is suddenly so much space, in my chest, in my head, my everyday sense of drive leaves me, I am being, not doing. Everything is possible from here..
I breathe, the feeling of warmth in my heart is so soft and light. I realise I was at an

> edge to the feeling of warmth when I was feeling 'blown away.
> Now I breathe in the experience I call 'warmth', I become warmth. The rhythm of my breath becomes like the sea lapping on the shore. From here wholeness simply ripples out, is inevitable.

As I review my writing about my journey to awareness of my whiteness in Chapter 2 I notice another cool spot

> *"One of the black facilitators was speaking about how they could tackle a relative who was saying things that reinforced the lighter-skin- is- better perspective, and also speaking about changing their own internalised white superiority perspective around their appearance. My reaction was Wow, I didn't know you have to wrestle with this too.."*

I noticed a similar response in me when Shakil Choudhury writes in his book Deep Diversity about his own moments of getting it 'wrong' (Choudhury, p17, p60, p78) I again have a sense of relief, I feel a cool spot.

As people of the global majority write personally of their own internalised racism they help me in a variety of ways. They generously name this as an 'us' problem, which 'we' can work on together, this does not leave white people alone with the problem.

I will return to cool spots later in this chapter.

Returning to my writing in Chapter 2

"…. I am sitting on the floor feeling numb, I can see the woman in front of me is waiting for a response, that one of us white people in the group should speak, but I have no idea what should be said. I feel ashamed that I don't know what to say. My internal

critic comes up, and further knocks me out. Meanwhile the woman in front of me is alone and angry and upset. "

This is where the process stalls. I create a hot spot by my absence. I am the missing witness (Audergon p179). I create a new injustice by not taking accountability.

> "Many conflicts cycle at the point that someone or some group cries out in outrage about a past injustice, and the group who was involved in carrying out this past injustice does not acknowledge what it has done, or individuals within that group may know nothing about it. Or, it is felt to be irrelevant because it is in the past. At the moment of denying a past injustice, a new injustice is committed. " (Audergon p44)

The past is happening again. I am the white person being knocked out. This is white fragility (Di Angelo), this is me and the system at an edge to change. As the whites stall, of course this ramps up feelings of frustration and anger for people of the global majority, because this is an old story repeating, white people saying they want to change but not changing. This is a hot spot.

I understand the hot spot more now, thanks to the Dismantling Racism Workbook (dR). People of the global majority start to raise their expectations that we whites will change since we white people have been sending out signals by saying that we want to change - these are from our primary identity. But we whites are double signalling by not actually changing, for example, we stay silent, we don't actually change. We are holding on to our white privilege to stay silent :

> "People of Color often begin to hold renewed hope that the organization might become more responsive to their strengths, needs, and wisdom; white people often begin to question what once seemed certain, particularly when it comes to

their assumed power in the organization. As People of Color's expectations for the organization begin to rise, particularly as a framework for racism begins to be clarified, they may assume that white people know what to do and are nonetheless choosing to perpetuate racist attitudes and behaviors. As white people sense that the framework requires some change in attitudes and behaviors, they may become either hypersensitive or hyperdefensive, particularly as they sense the expectation that they should behave and believe differently while not knowing exactly what to do." (dR p42)

So on one hand people of the global majority are feeling angry, frustrated, feel that once again whites are expecting us to do all the work - the whites expect to sit back while we educate them, and desperation because if these well meaning whites aren't going to change are we expected to continue to have less agency and power? While on the other hand we whites[19] are at an edge, not knowing what is happening, or what to do, and don't realise how we are being racist in the moment. Our identity is feeling threatened, we sense the expectation to change but we feel stuck, fearful that we will be attacked, hypersensitive and hyper defensive. We are unsettled as we are no longer in control of the organisational norms (dR p42). We are thinking of ourselves as individuals, not realising that we are also " situated in a social role which has …benefited from privilege in relation to another role" and "we are imbedded in certain roles with history and its corresponding privileges and suffering" (Audergon p21).

There is rank complexity here, the white people, who have high social rank in other settings stemming from self awarded white privilege are identified with our low rank in this moment. We don't have awareness of what is happening, we feel unsure of

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[19] When I am using the phrase 'whites' here I am racialising us whites. Something that does not often happen to those of us who are white. I am solely identifying us by our skin colour. I am generalising, to such a high degree that the role of the white person is not at all filled out. Whereas in the coffee break we were individuals in a group who happened to have white skin, in this moment to me it felt like we were the 'whites'.

ourselves, uncertain, fragile, defensive, and vulnerable, fearful that we will make a mistake and be criticised or ridiculed or attacked. We feel fragile and defensive (Choudhury p147).

Whereas the people of the global majority, who due to prejudice and unconscious bias in other situations may have lower social rank, in this moment have high rank; are leading, aware, articulate, have clarity, expertise, lived experience, and psychological rank.
We whites are numbing out and not taking accountability and generating the hot spot.

What I missed in my autoethnographic iteration was the change that came from the facilitators holding the space and framing the hot spot and what was happening. My guilt stopped me recognising what did happen as a result of the framing and holding. We did sit at the hot spot. Something subtle seemed to happen, some people of the global majority were wanting to be heard, the traumas from the past were needing to be heard. The white people were actively present. Some people of the global majority made a conscious choice to speak of their past traumas and their family's past traumas. Arlene Audergon describes the power of people making a choice to speak and people making a choice to listen (Audergon 180- 181). We listened deeply, we were moved and new connections happened. There was still much more to do but something profound had happened, we were moved.

Generosity of self - reaching out to not leave someone alone   Being seen and connected with   Being valued   Us   We

I stall briefly in my writing, and decide to draw upon the new energy from the cool spot, to help me consciously move on, once again there was the cool spot energy,

This not leaving anyone alone includes me not leaving myself alone.

In this iteration instead of coming from an unconsciously self critical place and knocking myself out, I consciously pick up the disturbing quality, the critic, to shift more sharply into criticising myself and the white British, for what happened in the past and is happening now, and holding us accountable. In what follows I am focusing on picking up accountability for being white and more specifically being white British.

In Chapter 2 I wrote that,

> "*I had opted out of being interested*"

I am the white British person who chose to leave the past in the past. I was content to use my privilege to think it was over (Audergon, p38).

I feel critical of myself for 'forgetting', for overlooking, for being unaware, disinterested, for treating white British behaviour as history, not relevant now. I understand that this forgetting is part of white culture and part of the culture of the 'victors' who forget those they have injured. My journey towards awareness initially went like this :-

> The past ? I guess there will be one
> The past, it was bad but it's over now.
> We white British did bad things in the past, but we are in a post race era.
> I feel guilty, and frozen and, unsure of how to respond, I am frozen

From my white central mainstream perspective, my forgetting left the perpetrator role as a ghost role, and also left those who were damaged as a ghost role. I was party to a cover-up which froze the events of the past. Those in pain were left alone, and the

perpetrators were left alone with their version of pain, and the resolution could not happen, instead the dynamics of hurt kept cycling in the background, stopping us becoming an 'us'.

This awareness of *why* I am remembering changes my experience of remembering, by which I mean that remembering in order to do my part towards us becoming an 'us', helps me go through the painful process of discovering what the white British did. In the first iteration I became swallowed up by guilt and I was being angry towards myself and other whites as a result of what I was discovering. I was unconsciously seeking out the' bad whites' so I could be angry with them, which was getting in the way of me accurately picking up my part in creating and sustaining toxic racial dynamics.

I now know about many of the bad things we white British did, and the things I and other whites do now. I see the consequences of what we did, both in the past and in the now. It was horrific and I see it is not over. As a white British woman I am ready to stand to hold myself accountable for the things we white British did, and do. Speaking personally, I see how my behaviour and thoughts, my unconscious use of the white privilege, and my forgetting the past are ways I sustain the status quo, and continue to be a perpetrator. I am deeply sorry. I will work at changing myself and other whites.

Continuing with this conscious sharp criticism of myself and picking up accountability as a white British person, I will now name 4 shocking examples of the things we British did that caused enormous pain in order to help us acknowledge and feel and then move forward[20].

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[20] Each example is horrific, had a massive impact upon people and punctured a different aspect of the British identity I used to have.

- Having taken their land white British people tortured and killed people, including the Mau Mau, the British covered up and then we forgot what we did ((Humphrey (2018), Newsinger, Wikipedia contributors).

- Having forced people in India to grow opium, the British in the form of the British East Indian Company, pushed opium into China, even when the Chinese Government made it illegal (Tharoor, p207).

- The British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, chose to export grain from India so the British could build up their stocks, knowing the crops were needed by starving people in India, saying "The famine was their own fault, he said, for 'breeding like rabbits'. " Almost 4 million Indians died. In the official reports and reviews of famines the British covered up what had happened and then we forgot what we did (Tharoor p161-2).

- On a more individual level, many, many people of the global majority in the UK have been attacked by whites in the UK, including the killing of a 24 year old black seaman Charles Wooton in 1919 by a white mob . Wooton had served in the Royal Navy in the war, the mob threw him into the dock and pelted him with bricks until he sank under the surface, (Eddo-Lodge location 272, Olusoga p450). Even though the police were present at the attack no one was prosecuted. As a result the Assistant Head Constable wrote to the Under Secretary of State asking for permission to intern or repatriate the Black population in Liverpool (2000-3000 people) , because of the public "enmity' against the black population (National Archives). There are many more recent examples of inaction by the police.

I find these examples deeply shocking.

I am sorry that we did these and so many other things that hurt people, that each of these things was Government sanctioned or overlooked. I am sorry that we as a nation have not acknowledged the pain we caused, not apologised officially, nor shown contrition, nor paid reparations. We should have done.

Reaction during writing

> I attempt to keep writing, but I can't just push on. I feel into a deep sorrow in my heart for what we did and what we do. I pick this up as an inner work. I follow the heaviness down, and go down to the ground, as I do so I have a spontaneous channel shift, and become a brick, with a sharp edge, settling on the sand, I become still. I feel the softness of the sand, holding me. I pick up both the quality of being held and the quality of the sharpness. I need this sharpness to keep writing.

Instead there has been a breathtaking level of institutional cover up. I believe most white British people do not know about the atrocities because they were hidden. Where there is trauma we split, part goes on, and part is stuck in the past (Audergon, p200). The white British establishment, the British national identity, continued as if the British did nice things, while the British nation continued to profit from crimes against humanity (United Nations) and exclude and abuse people due to their ethnicity. I was brought up in the UK, believing the self-deceptions, believing that the British could take the moral high ground in condemning world leaders for their inhumanity. Yet accepting the truth, split off by the terrible traumatic events of the past, is needed for us to reconnect, to find a way to return to life as a nation (Audergon, 200-1). No wonder I have an edge to being white. I do not want to be associated with these horrors, yet I am, and if I don't pick this up in me and if I am not part of changing our identity I am

colluding with the status quo continuing. My work to becoming aware of being a white British person has different levels, at the personal level, as I listed in Chapter 2, I needed to accept I am not the person I thought I was, and that my lack of awareness of my whiteness has a real impact on others. On a national level I needed to accept the deep pain we white British have caused to so many across the globe and at home, grieve for and with others, and grieve the loss of the old identity.

This work is urgent as this not just something that happened in the past, people of the global majority are still being killed, including the following people who died in the UK as a result of the use of force during detention, Christopher Alder in 1998 (Working Class) , Gareth Myatt in 2004 (Howard League) , Jimmy Mubenga in 2006 (Hemmings), Olaseni Lewis in 2010 (Lewis), and Rashan Charles in 2017 (Charles). Even where the inquest finds there was an unlawful killing, a criminal conviction has not followed.

This denial of what happened, this failure to take accountability, the detachment from the shocking impact has left institutions recreating themselves in a prejudiced and biassed way. The report from the Inspectorate of Constabulary in 2021 gives the statistics of institutional racism and points out the cultural cost (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, 2021). The institutional racism in the National Health Service (NHS) is putting people of the global majority at risk (Waters) and is part of driving ethnic minority doctors out of the NHS (British Medical Association). No wonder our systems are structurally and systemically racist. Shakil Choudhruy points out that people follow the lead from the top. (Choudhury p39). No wonder white people as a whole are unaware of what has happened, the lead from the top has been that nothing happened. I have been unconscious of my white privilege, I know my skin colour will not affect the way I am treated by British institutions.

Fortunately the rise of the Black LIves Matters group and other people of the global majority have refused to let the Status Quo continue, fortunately Anup Karia, Lungile Nkosi -Hill, Raggi Kotaq, Olufemi Hughes, Professor Robin Kelly, the team at BRAP, and through their writing Reni Eddo Lodge, Layla Saad, Resma Menakem and Shakil Choudhury and those from dR-works have challenged me to change and supported me to change. Fortunately Processwork offers me a pattern to help me change. I notice that although there is still much for me to do and to be done I am changing by my growing awareness, helped by my recognition of the cool spot themes which are the much needed patterns or attitudes that are part of changing the system.

Generosity of self - reaching out to not leave someone alone

Being seen and connected with   Being valued   Us   We

" Acknowledging events creates some shared version of history between perpetrators and victims, no matter how horrible, which is also aimed at avoiding the revision of history and the long term damage this can cause to individuals, community and societies. Telling the story, telling the truth also suggests the necessity for many voices to be heard and multiple truths to be told. Telling the story is a process of reckoning, taking stock, remembering, including and moving forward."(Audergon p38)

Before I end this chapter I will pick up the cool spot processes again. Throughout his book, Deep Diversity, Shakil Choudhury has metaskills of inclusion and gentleness. Metaskills are the qualities of the individual, their way of being and they change the atmosphere, they bring in the much needed patterns and are part of creating cool

spots (Mindell and Mindell, 2020 p48). Choudhury is using his high rank to help us the reader change, his dedicated innerwork changes the field. Even after the prejudice he experienced and witnessed, and the anger and overwhelm he had felt, he was able to find a way towards warmth and compassion. In his emphasis on the physiology and automatic processes behind prejudice and unconscious bias (Choudhury, Chapter 3) Choudhury shrinks the critic by explaining othering people comes from the hard wiring within the brain and the way that being in society automatically programs our brain to quickly learn to favour those like us, and be wary and hesitant around those who are different.

I again see these processes as present in the cool spots he creates :

Generosity of self - reaching out to not leave someone alone

Being seen and connected with

Being valued

Us   We

Looking at the cool spot qualities helps me to see how Shakil Choudhury creates an 'us', which helps me realise how far my own process was far from his approach. I was being critical of myself and other whites, I was thinking we were wrong [21]. What we British whites did to so many people across the globe caused so much harm to so

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[21] After I had written this I realised that my behaviour matches the list of white behaviours in The Dismantling Racism Workbook (dR works) which lists all of these behaviours as white; perfectionism p28, defensiveness p29, only one right way p 31 fear of open conflict p32 either or thinking p32, individualism, right to comfort, p35, once again I was unconsciously being white.

many people, my logic went - we did bad things, so we are bad. This was freezing me, taking me out of relationship, creating a bigger gap between me and people of the global majority, instead of relating I was inside myself feeling guilty.

Menakem and Kelly with remarkable generosity bring in a cool spot when they speak of the levels of violence and cruelty that whites directed at people of the global majority following on from white on white cruelty, and that this way of behaving was then being exported (Menakem *p58-61*, Kelly). Again this brings relief. I feel like I am reading a story, identifying with the 'baddie' and hoping that there will be some redemption, that they will turn out to be good; that I will turn out to be good. [22] In these moments when Choudhury and Menakem and Kelly speak I feel hope. Once again they offer the cool spot qualities:

Generosity of self - reaching out to not leave someone alone   Being seen and connected with   Being valued Us We

Menakem and Kelly with their understanding of history and roles, and their generous offering of the context for the white violence on people of the global majority create a shift in me. They create a new shared understanding, they are leaders, historians writing a new history, they do not stir things up to create division, they take time to include details that make a bridge for everyone to understand the context of the horrific white violence upon people of the global majority. They go over the edge in the system to seeing the other person as a whole human being. This helps me move past my edge, to move on from being stuck in my own guilt. As I follow their lead into a shared understanding of history, I become more available. My attention shifts away from my guilt to feeling for the other, I become ready to take account for what I and other whites have done. I am ready to witness and freed to relate.

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[22] This after a lifetime of receiving positive messages as a white person, being able to identify with positive white role models around me and on the media, where white people were the good guys. As opposed to the continuous and severe misrepresentation of people of the global majority in the media.

"Where there are relationships, people begin to care about the sustainability of community, and to dare to believe that it is possible. Groups transform as they begin to identify not only with one point of view, but also with one another, the whole of their interaction and its creative potential. "(Audergon, p40)

I am a fractal of the whole, I am helped by others and by the cool spot themes. As I change, others change. (Lorenz, Robb, Winn)

CHAPTER 5   Further application of Processwork

I have been writing during the 2022 Women's Euros Football Championship, I had joined millions of people watching the final, like the players I was soaking up this special moment, aware that something had changed in society. I couldn't quite put it into words, but Musa Okwonga did (Okwonga). Okwonga was there in the crowd, on his journey to the stadium and during the match he noticed and connected with the many small signs that there was a new sense of community in the coming together of fans from different nations. Okwonga was able to language what was happening at this moment where the old and the new exist. Okwonga remembers the women who were told 'No', grieves the loss and celebrates the new sense of community,

> for every "girl who never had the chance, I thought: you did it, you all did it. No matter what happens, no matter what investment the game gains or fails to get, you have changed everything. You have shown what is possible, and you have done it on your own terms." Okwonga 2022

 Generosity of self - reaching out to not leave someone alone
Being seen and connected with   Being valued   Us   We

As I read Okwonga, it clicked, his writing from the place of us, his capturing of the sentient in the moment made a doorway for me too. The values I was taught the British stand for; fair play, standing up for the underdog, respect and tolerance, and democracy which were exported to the colonialised countries, is the myth of the British. Processwork, following on from Jung, values these myths as containing something important to guide us, something bigger than us. These qualities are the high dream of the British, our greatest ideal, these qualities have inspired many and go beyond ethnicity. Here I am using British to mean anyone who self identifies as British.

Yet it has already been established that the British colonial behaviour completely departed and departs from these ideals, we have fallen into a 'low dream' , 'we are inconsequential', our accomplishment was self deception. No wonder it is so easy to feel low, hopeless, angry, bitter, resigned, and impotent (Audergon p17).

I was brought up with the high dream, it was in the attitudes of those who built the curriculum and fed it to me in lessons at school, in the media, in the beliefs of those around me. Part of me felt proud to be British[23]. Now I am in the low dream, I am part of an identity which has devastated so many lives, communities, cultures and lands, which has belittled and restricted and hurt and killed. I feel low.

Yet this low dream can also evoke the determination to change things. The pattern of how to change is familiar, it is in the high dream values of fair play, standing up for the underdog, respect and tolerance, and democracy. Maybe the British are good in parts. We just need to put in the work to live up to our ideals.

Maybe I can use the low dream to evoke my determination to change, and use the high dream, the myth of the British as a guide, not as a self deception.

I will end this chapter with the guidance from Arlene Audergon:

> " Becoming aware of ourselves rather than being pulled into acting them out unconsciously. Becoming aware of ourselves around our high and low dreams, what are our deepest feelings and beliefs about humanity? It means trying to live

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[23] The concept of British is complex, with a long history, with many who are in the UK not identifying as British. Both historically and in the present day the British identity has been imposed on people including in Wales, Scotland.

by these ideals, encountering inner and outer difficulties along the way."

(Audergon p18)

CHAPTER 6   Conclusion

Processwork as a methodology

I notice that as I came to conclude my dissertation I wanted to write only about my increased awareness of my whiteness. I was going to skip over what Processwork brought to my reflective process. Yet without Processwork I would not have even a fraction of my current awareness. So before I write about learning about whiteness I will look at the way Processwork as a methodology helped me to learn and helped conclusions appear. I will take time to appreciate how world changing it is, when combined with people who are interested in change.

I would like to acknowledge the heart and spirit of Processwork, which comes from a place of interest in Deep Democracy, from the role of the one who is interested in what society marginalises, who society marginalises. This interest already makes a difference. Again and again groups are run with the intention of creating structures where issues which affect so many people can emerge, be engaged with, unfolded and wholeness can emerge. Within these groups the skills and metaskills of the facilitators and the sharing of Processwork tools with the participants helps to create a container where it is safe enough for risky topics to be addressed, so what needs attention can emerge. Showing up in this way means that people are not left alone with the tensions in society which cause pain and suffering, and that society as a whole can be enriched by things which initially present as problems. I am moved, this is so needed.

Processwork-in-action created the experiences which I could then grapple with in my autoethnographic writing and in subsequent chapters.

I will begin by giving some examples of how Processwork's approach and tools, combined with the skills and metaskills of the facilitators helped emerging issues to come to the fore to receive attention, how it enabled people to have sufficient trust to talk about risky topics.

For example, it is useful for there to be mechanisms or tools which help people to engage with edgy topics that are usually kept in the background. These tools help people to have patterns to help them at their edges. Processwork's 'hot spot' language is one such pattern. Having awareness that certain interactions create hot spots and that if we are at a hot spot it is useful for us to slow down and complete interactions, helps people to stay at the edge even a little bit longer and for more awareness and new things to emerge. In this context people of the global majority in the group I was in took the risk to speak of difficult things, overcoming oppressive white dynamics, and setting off a cascade of change. My writing is part of that cascade of change, and throughout I have been inviting myself to stay at my edges even a little bit longer, and things have emerged.

Similarly Processwork's understanding that change will happen when interactions between polarised roles are completed helped us stay with things when they were hard, and to stay with things that were incomplete, appreciating that these would be a step towards completion. For example, me staying engaged with the unresolved when I didn't understand what happened with Lungile, and again when in my writing around my use of the phrase 'whites'. .

So much happens and needs to happen in relationships and groups. Processwork tools helped awareness emerge of differing aspects of what washappening. So for example, having a language to bring awareness to the rank complexity helped me to

have more awareness of what was happening at the hot spots, and this extra awareness changed me and changes me and changed the system. So often stuckness shifts with awareness.

Processwork's systemic approach includes having a language of roles, helping awareness of dynamics. This has many advantages, For example, noticing the impact from the role of the absent one, the ghost role, when someone speaks of an injustice and there is no response from the group who created the injustice. It made a massive difference when the perpetrator role was not left as a ghost role, so people weren't left alone with their pain, and the dynamics could stop cycling.

Knowing that, as they are roles, past dynamics repeat in the now helped me to be more aware of that way I was being, the role I was in. This awareness already changed things, helped me to choose to hold myself to account, which acknowledges the realness of the problem rather than denies it. For example, understanding that processes will be happening in the moment helped and helps me to keep noticing when I am once again in the white supremacist role.

The concept of cool spots helped me to notice emerging qualities and welcome them, and to support the work to deepen.

Processwork concepts constantly tipped the balance for me in my awareness raising. Understanding when I was at an edge helped me to stay at the edge, to slow down and feel and to let the unknown secondary processes in. Having a language for double signalling helped me towards awareness of the different parts of me, preparing me to be interested in investigating beyond my primary process. Having a set of tools which enable what is happening at hot spots to be brought into awareness helped me to stay engaged with the process, rather than going into a frozen trauma response. Starting from a premise of being a fractal of the whole, of things being interconnected and the value of 'not knowing' all helped me learn. Understanding that I have a primary identity and at times I will need to be on my side in order to move forward helped me to slow down, for example, when I made my intersectionality wheel. When I had taken my side

I was free to leave it behind and move to phase 3, and take the other side. Understanding I have a primary identity, and edges to being white helped me to let go of my old ideas of who I am.

My journey to awareness of my whiteness

The process of writing this dissertation has changed me, I now racialise myself when I am with people of the global majority. This is a subtle yet freeing change. It is hard to describe the difference so again I will give an example. I went down to the kebab shop late at night to celebrate the end of my dissertation. I was very aware of my whiteness and my age. I felt slightly vulnerable, and very happy that I was noticing my whiteness, and not focusing on the ethnicity of those in the shop.

I am still not fully aware of how I am white, but I do know that there are things I will be doing, and ways I will be seeing that are very much coming from my unconscious white thinking and behaving.

I used to think that certain things in the way I behave, in the way I think and the way I understand the world are 'normal'. Far from being normal, these are ways to take and keep power over others in order to keep the benefits of 'my position' in society.

This 'position' is not earned, the hierarchy in society is not based on a meritocracy. I know that the bias towards white people is backed up by resources, including power and finances and status, taken from others and by pushing others down.

I know that if I want to be part of a change I need to change my inner workings and my behaviour and raise my awareness. I know that the changes I make are recognising how the world actually is, it isn't me helping people of the global majority.

My journey toward change involved numbness, bewilderment, confusion, frustration, fear, guilt, sadness, disappointment, anger, being against myself, understanding myself, and then relief. Throughout I had a desire to keep active and learning. I had many different edges to cross. None of these changes would have been possible on my own. It has been the generosity of spirit and strength and leadership of others that have made my journey possible, this generosity is all the more remarkable because it is in the face of prejudice and bias. I am deeply grateful.

By making these changes not only do I step away from the hidden pressure to be worth more than I am, to be better than others, and realise that it's OK to just be me. I also un-blinker my eyes and meet people as they really are, the world becomes a richer place, and I become one less barrier to much needed change.

I will keep reflecting on my part in racial dynamics for the rest of my life. This is only the beginning.

I am more aware of my whiteness now, and I am very aware that I have a great deal more to do. This is a lifetime's journey.

One of the biggest changes I notice is that now I am more able to be with the 'not knowing' - a more comfortable place now I am not trying to be a white supremacist. I recognise I don't have all the answers, but I will continue to show up with integrity and openness, and endeavour to be of use. I know along the way I will make mistakes, and people will confront me. Whereas before this would bring me to a stuck place, now I

recognise that this process is necessary, that this is part of how we become an 'us'. I am ready to say I've got it wrong, and to learn. I am part of us working together to make changes; Deep Democracy.

Perhaps a bigger shift is my shift from anger with myself to understanding. I am deeply grateful to Shakil Choudhury for the deep innerwork he did that enabled him to write Deep Diversity, moving levels from dreamland to consensus reality, using science to repair, the neuroscience to explain that because of the way our brains are hardwired, they quickly learn to favour those like us, and be wary and hesitant around those who are different (Choudhury). This shift in levels to the practical naming of the mechanism of prejudice, generates a sense of agency for me, there are practical actions to do to address it. Reading this helped me to be less against my whiteness, helped me to shift from painfully and angrily calling myself and other white people 'whites', to seeing the whole white person. In no way does this lead me to dilute my strong emotional response to what we white people have done and do, but it does help me to soften and get closer to offering myself and other white people the cool spot qualities.

The cool spot qualities that came from the people of the global majority's leadership. This 'we' is so very important to the building of our new future, a place where we are all supported, a place where each of us is seen for who we are, a place which belongs to us all, where we all receive and contribute, a place we can all be proud of. I am a fractal of the whole guided by our high dream, helped by so many people who have done this work before me, and the cool spot qualities

Generosity of self - reaching out to not leave someone alone
Being seen and connected with
Being valued   Us   We

Helen Stone

I am interested in receiving your responses, here is a google doc where you can let me know https://docs.google.com/document/d/1X4L9p0KEaEM60gZrm27nOiZE989n-0HGsi0hXLQ1DTs/edit?usp=sharing or you could email me privately at helenstone.counselling@gmail.com

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Smith, A., (2022) Tutor feedback on this dissertation 10th September 2022 " its not just about knowing but about living and evolving as we know these patterns better and they come together and re-entwine or blend or meld in different ways."

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Figure 1 The intersectionalities of me. I entered high rank near the centre and lower rank towards the edge. Taking time to write when something hit a sore spot.

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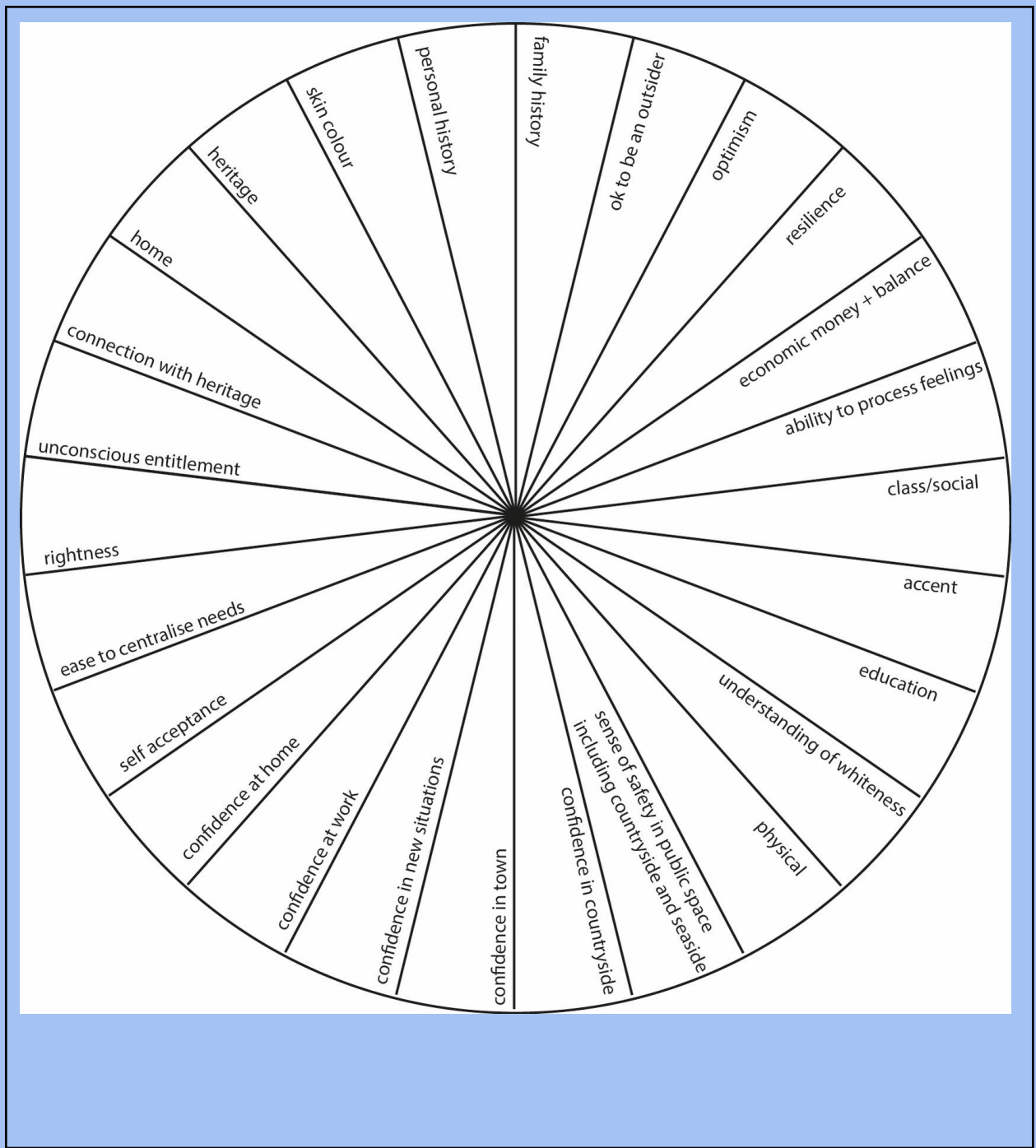
Appendix 1 by way of an epilogue

My birth father, Brendan, is walking down the street in Hampstead, London, the police stop him, and beat him up. As he tells me this story he speaks with detachment, as if looking onto what happened. His interest is in how he knew just exactly how to react to reduce the length of the beating, too vocal in his expression of pain and that would encourage them, too stoic and that would enrage them. He couldn't tell me how he did it, but he did feel in control the whole time. One of the police officers took some burgling implements out of his pocket and pretended he had taken them from Brendan's pocket. Brendan said this confirmed what others had told him, it was routine police practice in London. He was used to being stopped by the police simply because he was Irish, he says simply "that is the way it was ", back in the 50's when the signs said No Blacks, No Irish, No dogs.

Brendan says he wasn't anti-British, "being 'roughed up a bit didn't matter", he was well used to hard physical contact, and throughout he was interested in seeing what made the British tick.

Similarly when he was called up to the British Army he knew just how to be discharged, playing upon the British stereotype of the Irish. He appeared to be trying very hard to march in time with the other soldiers, but consistently marched just off the beat. We are all laughing, this is how he got one over on the British, even though he apparently had low rank. To have shown he wanted to leave would have led them to keep him in. Brendan knew about systems and second attention way before I did.

At 13 Brendan tried to run away to England to be a goalie for one of the football teams, a few years later he did manage to get to England, but being a goalie wasn't an opportunity open to him, so he took a series of low paid labouring jobs, he enjoys heavy work. In his spare time he used his knowledge of politics and history and his understanding of systems to write books and pamphlets with my birth mother .

My birth mother, Angela, was born in Jerusalem, Palestine, to an Arab Christian father and a Vienese mother who had converted to Christianity because she was angry that rich Jews had helped other rich Jews leave during World War 2. Angela was born in the year that both of her grandparents were killed in concentration camps. When Angela was 5 the Naqba happened, the family fled first to Cyprus and then when she was 8 to Britain. The family tried to fit in, but Angela was called 'Blackie'. When she asked her mum 'what am I?' her mum hissed, 'you are English'.

The unspoken part of Angela's mum's reply was, 'you are white'. By the definitions of whiteness of the times neither Angela nor Brendan was white, but I certainly am. Like many from dual heritage I miss knowing more about my heritage. Like many from dual heritage who are adopted I miss having a personal introduction to my non-white culture.

My time in the Children's Home was lengthened because I wasn't completely white, but was shorter than it would have been if I had been browner. My adopted father had spent time in Egypt in the war, and, desperate for a child they had written in their letter to Barnados that they would consider a child with Arab heritage. I am very happy that they did.

My birth parents were still married when I found them, having spent many of the intervening years in the middle of a war zone in Belfast, publishing pamphlets that managed to anger both sides, suggesting amongst other things, that the British mainstream parties stand for election in the North, rather than letting sectarianism rule.

I like them, I am very sorry that they didn't bring me up, and I am sorry that I don't speak Irish or Arabic or Austrian. I have tried to fit in with Irish and Asian culture, but although I am interested, I will always be an outsider.

I don't deny my heritage, but I am British. Angela's mother would be pleased with how well I fit in.