

Honouring Our Grandmothers: Towards a Curriculum of *Rahma*

Muna Saleh
 Concordia University of Edmonton
muna.saleh@concordia.ab.ca

Abstract

In this paper, I engage in autobiographical narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Saleh, Menon, & Clandinin, 2013) into my embodied, intergenerational knowing (Cruz, 2001; Waheed, 2013, 2014) and stories of experiences alongside my Palestinian grandmother, Sittee Charifa (Allah yirhama). Foregrounding our familial curriculum-making (Huber et al., 2011) alongside one another, I interweave storied moments alongside Sittee and poetry to illuminate the many ways Sittee taught me to live a Curriculum of *Rahma*. I engage in this work in the hopes of making visible educative (Dewey, 1938) possibilities of co-composing curriculum alongside children, youth, families, colleagues, and community members that honours different ways of knowing and being. In ways that honours (the poetry of) our grandmothers.

Keywords: Intergenerational, Muslim women, Familial Curriculum, Curriculum Studies, Autobiographical Narrative Inquiry

*Did you want to see me broken?
 Bowed head and lowered eyes?
 Shoulders falling down like teardrops,
 Weakened by my soulful cries?*

~ From “Still I Rise” by Dr. Maya Angelou (2015)

*Grandmother,
 the alchemist,
 you spun gold out of this hard life,
 conjured beauty from the things left behind.
 Found healing where it did not live.*

~ Warsan Shire, in Beyoncé’s “Lemonade”

In this paper, I draw upon my embodied, intergenerational knowing (Cruz, 2001; Waheed, 2013, 2014) and stories of experience alongside my Palestinian grandmother, Sittee Charifa (Allah yirhama¹). Interweaving poetry and storied moments, and foregrounding our familial curriculum-making² (Huber, Murphy, & Clandinin, 2011), I narratively and

¹ Translated from Arabic, this means “May Allah have mercy on her.”

² Drawing upon Lugones’ (1987) notion of “world”-travelling, Huber et al. (2011) reconceptualized curriculum-making as occurring within two worlds: familial and school curriculum-making worlds. The authors argued that while school curriculum-making is recognized and accepted as a place where curriculum is composed, familial curriculum-making (the curriculum that is composed within familial and community places) is not often recognized as an equally important place of curriculum-making.

autobiographically inquire (Clandinin, 2013; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Saleh, Menon, & Clandinin, 2013) into my stories of experiences alongside Sittee's. I do so to illuminate the many ways Sittee taught me to live a Curriculum of *Rahma*, and in the hopes of making visible, educative³ (Dewey, 1938) possibilities of co-composing curriculum alongside children, youth, families, colleagues, and community members in ways that honour different ways of knowing and being.

Okri (1997) highlighted how “one way or another we are living the stories planted in us early or along the way, or we are also living the stories we planted – knowingly or unknowingly – in ourselves” (p. 46). Sittee's teachings continue to live and grow in me, and shape the stories I live *by*, *with*, and *in*⁴ as a Muslim/Palestinian/Canadian woman, mother, researcher, scholar, teacher, and as an intergenerational survivor⁵ of forced displacement (Saleh, 2017, 2019a,b). The Curriculum of *Rahma* – an Arabic word that is often translated as ‘mercy’ – that Sittee composed and lived alongside me is infinitely more complex, ethical, relational, and profound than simply signifying ‘mercy.’ The root of the word رحمة (*rahma*) is رحم (*rahm*), or womb. Thus, *rahma* is also understood by many Arabic-speaking and/or Muslim individuals and communities as being strongly related to nurturance, compassion, and love. However, in our familial curriculum-making, Sittee continually reminded me that love and compassion inherently dwell alongside equity and justice. Thus, for us, living and embodying a Curriculum of *Rahma* is an act of radical love (hooks, 2001; Lorde, 1984/2007; Lugones, 1987) and relational resistance (Saleh, 2017, 2019a,b) against inequitable structures, processes, and practices.

On (the beauty and pain of) Remembering

The scent of grapefruit brings you back to me.

The taste of olives too.

How can remembering both sustain and pain me?

Do our minds hold memories? Our bodies? Souls?

How can my memories keep your light alive? Keep me connected to you?

To Falasteen and the stories of our people?

What happens when all our memory holders are gone?

Who will keep our stories alive?

I hold you close with my memories.

Because of them, I know you are holding me close too.

~ Poem I wrote in honour of Sittee, December 2019

³ Dewey (1938) differentiated between ‘educative’ and ‘miseducative’ experiences; an experience can be miseducative if it “has the effect of arresting or distorting the growth of further experience” (p. 25). An educative experience, in contrast, encourages the growth of further experience.

⁴ I draw upon a narrative conception of identity (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) in noting that we live *by* stories. We also live *in* stories – in the midst of ever-unfolding personal, familial, intergenerational, social, cultural, temporal, linguistic, institutional, and other narratives (Clandinin, 2013). Morris (2002) helps me to understand that living *with* stories is an ongoing process of living in relation to the myriad narratives we are always in the midst of.

⁵ In using the term “intergenerational survivor,” I draw inspiration from Young's (2005) discussion of the “intergenerational narrative reverberations” in relation to first and subsequent generation survivors of Canada's Residential Schools.

*And when great souls die,
after a period peace blooms,
slowly and always
irregularly. Spaces fill
with a kind of
soothing electric vibration.
Our senses, restored, never
to be the same, whisper to us.
They existed. They existed.
We can be. Be and be
better. For they existed.*

~ From “When Great Trees Fall” by Maya Angelou (2015)

Sittee passed away on July 18, 2018. *Allah yirhama*. It is very hard to write these words, and this paper, in the midst of continued grief at my/our profound loss. However, I do so to honour her life and light, and to try—if imperfectly (because words can never truly convey the brilliance of her light)—to give a sense of the profoundly beautiful and educative teachings she lived and composed alongside those blessed to have been alongside her. Teachings I have come to understand as her Curriculum of *Rahma* that I believe we might all do well to strive to learn and live by in our classrooms, schools, and communities. In the following sections, as I think with and inquire into the many stories Sittee planted in me, I am also thinking with Audre Lorde’s stunning beautiful words:

The quality of light by which we scrutinize our lives has direct bearing upon the product which we live, and upon the changes which we hope to bring about through those lives. It is within this light that we form those ideas by which we pursue our magic and make it realized. This is poetry as illumination, for it is through poetry that we give name to those ideas which are—until the poem— nameless and formless, about to be birthed, but already felt. (Lorde, 1984/2007, p. 36)

Lorde insisted that “poetry is not a luxury.” Rather than being reductively understood as words upon a page, she (re)conceptualized poetry as profoundly embodied, experiential, and intergenerational. She understood poetry as a way of dreaming forward that which is not yet realized, of living possibilities into existence. As a relational way of being and becoming.

Like Lorde, Neumann (1998) insisted that words alone can never adequately convey the embodied and experiential—especially the traumatic. She questioned and troubled what is (de)legitimized as history by inviting readers to journey with her as she inquires into how individual and collective memories (of trauma) shape lives intergenerationally. Neumann asserted that, as the daughter of a father who survived the Holocaust, her late father’s stories of horrific Auschwitz experiences continue to live in her and shape(d) her life, scholarly work, teaching, and understandings. She stressed that, while immeasurably difficult, this embodied, intergenerational knowing can be educative:

I want to turn the lens of my thinking—and our thinking—to acknowledge what has been and to see more clearly what *can* be. I am concerned with shaping the context of human

understanding—how we know the world—largely because I think that it, in turn, shapes what we pursue and how we choose to pursue it. (p. 427)

With these words and thoughts in the periphery of my awareness⁶, I turn my attention to the stories that Sittee (re)told and (re)lived⁷ alongside me—and the profoundly beautiful poetry she composed, lived, and embodied—as she taught me to live a Curriculum of *Rahma*.

(Revisiting) Sittee's Stories of Being Uprooted⁸

*My body is a story
a remembrance in the making
sit here next to me love
and I will tell you its tale.*

جسدي قصة
اجلسي بجانب حبيبي
الذكريات التي أعيشها، سأرويها لك

*I am happy that my knees are limber once again
allowing me to travel across this earth
but, in truth, I sometimes long for the ones I was born with
the ones that played in, and sought refuge from, the land flowing in my veins.*

إنني سعيدة لأن ركبتي
تستعيد حركتهما وتساعداني على السفر حول أنحاء العالم
ولكنني أتمنى بعض الأحيان
لو أن ركبتي اللتين كنت العب بهما في الارض التي ولدت فيها، وهربت منها

*These eyes, ya bintee⁹, are clouded not with the burden of rain
For healing saltwater has oft showered these pores
but with the memory of loved ones from times past
forever alive in the lucid landscapes of my dreams.*

⁶ I chose these words with purpose, for as Mary Catherine Bateson (1994) so beautifully noted, I know that if I look very narrowly and hard at anything I am likely to see something new – like the life between the grass stems that only becomes visible after moments of staring. Softening that concentration is also important – I've heard that the best way to catch the movements of falling stars is at the edge of vision. (pp. 103-104)

⁷ Clandinin (2013) explained, The terms – *living, telling, retelling, and reliving* – have particular meanings in narrative inquiry. We understand that people *live* out stories and *tell* stories of their living. Narrative inquirers come alongside participants ... and begin to engage in narrative inquiry into our lived and told stories. We call this process of coming alongside participants and then inquiring into the lived and told stories *retelling* stories. Because we see that we are changed as we retell our lived and told stories, we may begin to *relive* [Emphasis added] our stories. (p. 34)

⁸ As part of my doctoral dissertation (Saleh, 2017), I wrote this poem for Sittee (Allah yirhama) to represent (Ely, 2007) the stories she shared with me over time—many of which were centered around her experiences of violent displacement and making a life as a refugee in Lebanon. My mom helped me to translate the poem into Arabic. However, as always, some meaning and nuance is lost in the always incomplete travel between languages.

⁹ Arabic for 'My daughter.'

عيناى يا ابنتى ليست مملوءة بالدموع
ولكن بذكرىات الاحباء
الذين يعيشون في احلامي كالغمامة

*The faint borders written across my belly
were stroked by giving life to eleven beloveds
don't be sad, my love, that only nine walk this land
for there are two beautiful birds waiting for me in Jannah insha'Allah.*

الخطوط المرسومة في بطني
علامات حملي احدى عشرة مرة
لا تحزني، تسعة منهم يمشون على الارض
وطائرين منهم ينتظروني في الجنة إن شاء الله

*These lines engraved on my hands and around my eyes
were ploughed with hard work
turned by working the earth, in cleansing waters and generous sun
as I nurtured love with the fruits of my labour.*

خطوط العمر المرسومة على يدي،
وعيناى حفرهما العمل الشاق في الحقول في الصيف الحار
لتربية الثمار التي انجبناها

*Every strand of silver is a wistful celebration
of life danced in sweet defiance
to hard-hearted dictators and expectations
playfully reminding me to stay soft and fluid.*

الخصل الفضية في رأسي
هي احتفال لي لأنني تحديت الصعوبات في الحياة
من الناس والحكام
ولكن تذكرني بأن أبقى طيبة ومملوءة بالفرح

*Let not the bullet lodged in my back grieve you my child
I am at peace with it
for alongside pain came the knowledge of your father
and without his life you would not be here to grieve.*

لا تحزني علي من الرصاصة المغروسة في كتفي يا ابنتي
انها دائما تذكرني، أنه من ألمها علمت بحملي بوالدك
الذي من دونه لم تكوني لتولدي وتشاركيني حزني.

*Ya habibty¹⁰, smiles and laughter etched the grooves around my mouth
joyful witnesses to a blessed life
for I sit, here, now, embraced by the memory of different times, places, and people
telling one beloved, of many, my body's - for now - story.*

يا حبيبتى، الإبتسامات التي رُسمت حول فمي
شاهدة على الحياة المباركة التي اعيشها، وعشتها.
فأنا هنا، اجلس، أروي لمن أحب الذكريات التي عشتها،
والتي تعانقني عن قصة جسدي.

Re-reading this poem I wrote for Sittee as part of my doctoral dissertation (Saleh, 2017) and that I was blessed to be able to share with her before she passed, I resonate with Neumann's (1998) haunting words as she pondered the horrific Auschwitz concentration camp memories that her father shared with her:

How can words begin to capture what is not of this life? And how would those of us who are of this life even begin to comprehend that other place, that other time, that other form of being? How much of the other's experience can we know? How far can empathic imagination stretch? (Neumann, 1998, p. 249)

Much has been written about how educators within school and/or familial curriculum-making contexts might approach subject matter imbued with what Britzman (1998, 2013) termed 'difficult knowledge' (for example, see: Britzman, 1998, 2013; Garrett, 2017; Gaudelli, Crocco, & Hawkins, 2012; Rodríguez & Salinas, 2019; Stanley, 1999; van Kessel, 2019). In the field of education, difficult knowledge is often understood as "the teacher and student encounter with the painful and traumatic curriculum that represents history as the woeful disregard for the fragility of human life while seeking to create new meanings from the ravages of humanly induced suffering" (Britzman, 2013, p. 100). Engagements and entanglements with difficult knowledge, that call on learners and teachers within curriculum-making places to "create new meanings from the ravages of humanly induced suffering" (p. 100), include teaching and learning about the rise of Nazism and the Holocaust, slavery, racism, homophobia, colonialism and (continued) injustices against Indigenous peoples, among too many other historical and ongoing actions, processes, events, and stories that illuminate how we can be individually and collectively shaped by, and implicated in, everyday evil(s) (van Kessel, 2019).

My earliest memories of encounters with difficult knowledge was when Sittee (Allah yirhama) came to live with us in the fall of 1990¹¹. I was approximately ten years old when I first learned that Sittee was forcibly displaced from Palestine, alongside all members from both the maternal and paternal sides of my family, in 1948¹². Over the years, Sittee often recounted her

¹⁰ Arabic for 'My beloved.'

¹¹ I delve into more of these stories in my doctoral dissertation (Saleh, 2017).

¹² This is a significant year for Palestinians. Sa'di and Abu-Lughod (2007) described how the *Nakba* (Arabic for 'catastrophe') of the 1948 War, where 88% of the indigenous Palestinian population became refugees after their land was confiscated, has become "the demarcation line between two qualitatively opposing periods" (p. 3) for Palestinians. That is, Palestinians often use the *Nakba* to differentiate their experiences *before* Israel was created in 1948 from the harsh ones *after*.

long trek north, and away from our home in Palestine, with my Jiddee¹³ and extended family, and the many painful moments and horrific events they encountered as they sought refuge, until they finally settled in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley. She often recounted not only the excruciating trauma of violent displacement (including being shot in the back as she fled the only home she had ever known), but the piercing injustice and indignity of statelessness she endured as a refugee in Lebanon. Indeed, by the time Sittee joined us in Amiskwaciwâskahikan/Edmonton, she and her children were (and are) still considered "refugees" in Lebanon, despite having made a life in there for over forty years before joining us on Treaty 6 lands.

Humphries and Khalili (2007) asserted, "The 'history-telling' (Portelli, 1997) of Palestinian women—all those grandmothers, mothers, aunts, and mothers-in-law—has quietly imbued generation after generation of Palestinians with concrete, tangible, and colorful details of life and loss in ways not recognized or understood" (p. 207). Sadly, the rich oral (her) story-telling tradition our Palestinian (fore)mothers/sisters, the women survivors of the Nakba, has often been eschewed or erased in Nakba histories (Humphries & Khalil, 2007; Sayigh, 2007; Shalhoub-Kevorkian 2010). Sayigh (2007) stressed, "Truly to challenge the silencing of the Palestinian narrative that Edward said so tirelessly criticized, internal differences need to be written into the unwritten collective story" (p. 136). She argued that Palestinian women's Nakba (her) stories have been marginalized because history is too often "defined as knowledge of events, from which experience, especially women's experience, is rigorously excluded" (p. 138). Although individual and collective memory is widely recognized as "an active, ongoing, and relational process through which meaning is created" (Humphries & Khalil, 2007, p. 207), there is a traditional and ongoing erasure of women's stories of Nakba experiences, a refusal to acknowledge their (her)storytelling as profoundly embodied, experiential, and political acts of (re)telling and (re)writing history.

For many, including we who have been raised with our grandmothers' Nakba (her)stories, "The Nakba became a constituent of Palestinians' sense of identity not only because of the scale of their loss, but also because it generates new catastrophes that scar each generation afresh" (Humphries & Khalil, 2007, p. 153). As the poem I wrote for Sittee at the beginning of this section makes visible, Sittee did not shy away from sharing the difficult knowledge of violent displacement, injustice(s), and discrimination threaded throughout her stories with her (grand)children. However, she did not share this difficult knowledge with me to make me despair, but to make me more wakeful to the stories that I will need to know to live in more (radically) loving (hooks, 2001; Lorde, 1984/2007; Lugones, 1987) and relational ways. Sittee was able to artfully negotiate the tensions of, and spaces among/within/between, reality(ies) and possibility(ies). Here, I am reminded of Stanley's (1999) tensions at being asked "Daddy, what are Nazis?" by his eight-year-old child, and how he ultimately decided to honestly respond to this question because,

Education is the only solution that I know to these dilemmas. Education, understood not as technique or training, not as schooling, but as part and parcel of "the engagement of being human" Education understood in this way is rarely easy, often dangerous, but through its dialogue with others always affirms our humanity. (Stanley, 1999, p. 41)

¹³ An Arabic way of saying 'grandfather.'

Similarly, Sittee knew that her stories of violent displacement should not be silenced, ignored, or erased. She—either implicitly or explicitly—knew that she needed to share these stories to keep the memory of what happened, and the educative possibilities of what can/should be, alive in subsequent generations. Like Stanley, Sittee knew that she needed to engage with difficult knowledge in our familial curriculum-making, but did so in ways imbued with *rahma*, in honest but hopeful ways that “provide[d] [us] with reasons to embrace life and its possibilities” (Stanley, 1999, p. 41).

Although forever alive within her, Sittee’s excruciating stories of the violence of displacement and discrimination were not the only stories she (re)told and (re)lived alongside me and other loved ones. Almost ninety years old when she passed, Sittee’s knowing was intersectional and complex; it included embodied and experiential knowledge of heartache alongside joy, pain alongside triumph, discrimination alongside love, violence alongside strength, despair alongside faith and hope. Her stories were brimming with an ability to see beyond the world(s) she inhabits, partly because a part of her was forever in Palestine (just as surely as Palestine was forever alive in her), forever on roads away from and towards home, forever making a new life as a stranger in strange land(s). Through her Curriculum of *Rahma*, Sittee taught me that just as pain and trauma can pass from generation to generation, so too can love and strength.

As the next section elucidates, despite—or perhaps because of—her traumatic and painful experiences, Sittee did not turn away from (the pain and suffering of) others. She held the beautiful fullness of her humanity, and the humanity of others, close in the light of her Curriculum of *Rahma*. For she had learned (and taught me) that our humanity is interconnected with and made more full alongside the humanity of others.

Intergenerational Stories (even of trauma) as Educative

your novels.
the classic novels of a minutia. i have no interest in.
pale. in comparison to the novels of my world.
the novel of my mother.
the novels of my grandparents.
the articulate novels of how my people walk down a street.
the novels i have been reading my whole life.
 ~ “Classic” by Nayyirah Waheed (2014, p. 39)

I was close to ten years old when Sittee (Allah yirhama) planted a life lesson that continues to live and grow in me. She was sharing some of her stories growing up in Falasteen, and – as usual – her stories shifted to her experiences fleeing her village in terror at the news that the new Israeli army was heading to the village. She and my grandfather had heard rumours of mass massacres of entire villages, and they didn’t want to wait to see if the rumours were true.

She always ended these stories by saying, “I wish we never left. Being a refugee was even worse. But Alhamdulillah for everything.”

At one point, I said something akin to how I wish that Jewish people never discovered Falasteen. I will never forget how she looked at me, obviously disturbed by my words, and said [translated from Arabic], “Muna, Jewish people have always been in Falasteen. They are our cousins, friends, and neighbours. There is bread and salt between us [we broke bread together]. You will find good and bad in every person and group of people.”

Reflecting on Sittee’s faith-based, Palestinian, intergenerational, familial curriculum-making alongside me and others, I resonate with Cindy Cruz’s assertion that

our production of knowledge begins in the bodies of our mothers and grandmothers, in the acknowledgement of the critical practices of women of color before us. The most profound and liberating politics come from the interrogations of our own social locations, a narrative that works outward from our specific corporealities. (Cruz, 2001, p. 658)

As part of her Curriculum of *Rahma*, Sittee repeatedly warned against what I now appreciate as being closely related to Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s conceptualization of the ‘single story.’ Adichie (2009) elucidated that a single story is created when people and places are reduced to a single construct. She stressed, “So that is how to create a single story, show a people as one thing, as only one thing, over and over again, and that is what they become.” As a Muslim/Palestinian/Canadian woman in hijab¹⁴ composing a life on Treaty 6 lands, I have intimate knowledge of single stories of who I am and/or “should” be (Saleh, 2017, 2019a,b).

My doctoral research, a multiperspectival narrative inquiry alongside Canadian Muslim mothers and daughters, illuminated how these dominant and reductive narrativizations of Muslim women¹⁵ are individually and collectively unhealthy¹⁶. However, our stories also foregrounded the many ways we engage in what I termed *relational resistance* to single stories of who we are and/or “should” be as Muslim girls/daughters and women/mothers.

To undergird my doctoral research alongside the mother and daughter co-inquiry, I engaged in an extensive autobiographical narrative inquiry (Clandinin, 2013; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Saleh, Menon, & Clandinin, 2014) into the intergenerational stories I live *by, with, and in*—as well as into the ones that continue to live in me and shape my curriculum-making beliefs and practices. My inquiry included delving into the many stories

¹⁴ While many scholars are careful to differentiate between the terms headscarf/veil and hijab – arguing that the concept of hijab is infinitely broader than a piece of fabric meant to cover a woman’s hair, I use the terms headscarf/veil and hijab interchangeably. I do this purposely because this is the term many veiled Muslim women use to refer to their headscarf/veil. However, the concept of hijab includes a requirement for men and women to observe modesty in demeanour and dress. The headscarf/veil is considered a form of hijab, and Islamic scholars from diverse Muslim communities differ in their opinions as to whether the headscarf is required to fulfill hijab for women.

¹⁵ In my dissertation, I wrote: “Muslim women – especially veiled Muslim women – are often storied by the media and in literature as any combination of the following: poor, uncivilized, oppressed, meek, exotic, suspicious, less-than, and primitive” (Saleh, 2017, p. 38). Also see: Abo-Lughod (2013); Bullock and Jaffri (2000); Sensoy and Marshall (2009, 2010).

¹⁶ In my (Saleh, 20017) discussion of this, I drew upon Lugones’ (1987) conceptualization of lack of health:

So, though I may not be at ease in the “worlds” in which I am not constructed playful, it is not that I am not playful because I am not at ease. The two are compatible. But lack of playfulness is not caused by lack of ease. Lack of playfulness is not symptomatic of lack of ease but of lack of health. I am not a healthy being in the “worlds” that construct me unplayful (p. 14).

Sittee shared with me—including memories and experiences alongside her neighbours of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim faith (who lived near her Palestinian village and surrounding areas).

While she was outspoken about the ongoing: injustice and violence of forced displacement, mistreatment of Palestinians, and the colonization of her ancestral home, Sittee would not tolerate anyone single-storying her beloved Jewish and Christian neighbours (or their communities). I believe this is partly because of her faith-based conviction that all of God’s creation is worthy of love and care, and partly because she, too, has intimate knowledge of being single-storied as a woman/Muslim/refugee/Other. Those of us who have experienced and lived the pains caused by others’ essentialized constructions of us, including our personalities and identities, know all too well how damaging and long-lasting such reductive narrativizations can be.

Towards (a radical love with) a Curriculum of *Rahma*

*I write these words with your shawl wrapped around me,
the one you gifted me with in your last days,
the one I reach for when I need your embrace.
The one that reminds me of how blessed I am to have grown in your light.
Alhamdulillah ya Rubb.*

~ Excerpt from a poem I wrote in honour of Sittee, December 2020

My experiences with Sittee’s Curriculum of *Rahma* resonate with Lugones’ (1987) discussion of “coming to consciousness as a daughter and ... as a woman of color” (p. 3). In her discussion of what she conceptualized as “world”-traveling with loving perception, Lugones explained that “a ‘world’ need not be a construction of a whole society. It may be a construction of a tiny portion of a particular society. It may be inhabited by just a few people. Some ‘worlds’ are bigger than others” (p. 10). Lugones argued that it is possible to negotiate a multiplicity of worlds because one “can ‘travel’ between these worlds and one can inhabit more than one of these ‘worlds’ at the very same time” (pp. 10-11). Lugones asserted that ‘world’-traveling with loving perception¹⁷, characterized by a playful, loving spirit, is what allows us to remember ourselves while appreciating others, is what “enable[s] us to *be*” (p. 8), as we traverse between, within, an among the ‘worlds’ we inhabit, and those inhabited by others.

However, while “world”-traveling with loving perception was central to her curriculum-making, the type of love that Lugones (1987) discussed, and that Sittee lived and embodied in her Curriculum of *Rahma*, could never be described as simple or purely sentimental. Sittee’s love was rooted in faith, action, justice, and equity. It was a radical(ly hopeful, profoundly embodied, enacted, and relational) love of the kind that hooks (2001) described when she wrote, “To begin by thinking of love as an action rather than a feeling is one way in which anyone using the word in this manner automatically assumes accountability and responsibility” (p. 13). Although

¹⁷ For Lugones (1987), arrogant perception, in contrast to loving perception, is characterized by a judgemental, corrective, and/or colonizing spirit. Lugones stressed that it is impossible to ‘world’-travel with arrogant perception without ultimately endeavoring to colonize that ‘world’—and its inhabitants.

Sittee's love was imbued with a spirit of compassion, playfulness, and joy, it was also undergirded by truth-telling and possibilities-imagining. As an ongoing act of resistance, it was inherently political, for Sittee recognized, "To know love we have to tell the truth to ourselves and to others" (hooks, 2001, p. 48). The ways that Sittee lived and composed curriculum with all who were blessed to know her testifies to this beautiful assertion by bell hooks:

Those of us who have already chosen to embrace a love ethic, allowing it to govern and inform how we think and act, know that when we let our light shine, we draw to us and are drawn to other bearers of light. We are not alone. (hooks, 2001, p. 101)

Lorde (1984/2007) asserted, "For women, then, poetry is not a luxury. It is a vital necessity of our existence. It forms the quality of the light within which we predicate our hopes and dreams toward survival and change" (p. 37). As I continue to reflect upon the many stories Sittee planted in me, I think of how blessed I am to continue to be shaped and inspired by her light and the profoundly poetic ways she engaged in co-composing her Curriculum of *Rahma*. The graceful strength of Sittee's life and curriculum-making affirms: "Poetry is not only dream and vision; it is the skeleton architecture of our lives. It lays the foundations for a future of change, a bridge across our fears of what has never been before" (Lorde, 1984/2007, p. 38). In trying to represent the beautiful poetry of (some of) Sittee's life and her Curriculum of *Rahma*, I hope to have honoured her. I simultaneously hope to have illuminated educative possibilities of engaging in (more) radically truthful, hopeful, and loving ways alongside one in another in familial and school curriculum-making worlds. Because our homes, classrooms, schools, communities, and world(s) would be greatly enriched if we more consistently honoured our intergenerational knowing ... particularly the educative poetry of our grandmothers.

*My grandmother's hands recognize grapes,
the damp shine of a goat's new skin.
When I was sick they followed me,
I woke from the long fever to find them
covering my head like cool prayers.*

~ From "The Words Under the Words" by Naomi Shihab Nye (1998)

*Now you understand
Just why my head's not bowed.
I don't shout or jump about
Or have to talk real loud.
When you see me passing,
It ought to make you proud.*

~ From "Phenomenal Woman" by Dr. Maya Angelou (2015)

References

- Abo-Lughod, L. (2013). *Do Muslim women need saving?* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Adichie, C. N. (2009, July). *The danger of a single story* [video file]. Retrieved from: http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story.html
- Angelou, M. (2015). *Maya Angelou: The complete poetry [Kindle eBook]*. New York, NY: Random House.
- Bateson, M. C. (1994). *Peripheral visions: Learning along the way*. New York, NY: Harper Collins.
- Britzman, D. P. (2013). Between psychoanalysis and pedagogy: Scenes of rapprochement and alienation. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 43(1), 95-117. doi:10.1111/curi.12007
- Britzman, D. P. (1998). *Lost subjects, contested objects: Toward a psychoanalytic inquiry of learning*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Bullock, K. H., & Jafri, G. J. (2000). Media (mis)representations: Muslim women in the Canadian nation. *Canadian Woman Studies*, 20(2), 35-40. Retrieved from: <http://pi.library.yorku.ca/ojs/index.php/cws/article/view/7607/6738>
- Clandinin, D. J. (2013). *Engaging in narrative inquiry*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Leaf Press.
- Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F. M. (2000). *Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Connelly, F. M., & Clandinin, D. J. (1999). *Shaping a professional identity: Stories of educational practice*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Cruz, C. (2001). Toward an epistemology of a brown body. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 14(5), 657-669. doi.org/10.1080/09518390110059874
- Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and education*. New York: NY: Simon & Schuster.
- Garrett, H. J. (2017). *Learning to be in the world with others: Difficult knowledge and social studies education*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- Gaudelli, W., Crocco, M., & Hawkins, A. (2012). Documentaries, outtakes, and digital archives in teaching difficult knowledge and the Vietnam War. *Education & Society*, 30(2), 5-25. Retrieved from: <https://doi.org/10.7459/es/30.2.02>
- hooks, b. (2001). *All about love: New visions*. New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers.
- Huber, J., Murphy, M. S., & Clandinin, D. J. (2011). *Places of curriculum making: Narrative inquiries into children's lives in motion*. London, UK: Emerald.

- Humphries, I., & Khalili, L. (2007). Gender of Nakba memory. In A. H. Sa'di & L. Abu-Lughod (Eds.), *Nakba: Palestine, 1948, and the claims of memory*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Lorde, A. (1984/2007). *Sister outsider: Essays and speeches*. New York, NY: Crossing Press.
- Lugones, M. (1987). Playfulness, "world"-travelling, and loving perception. *Hypatia*, 2(2), 3-19. doi:10.1111/j.1527-2001.1987.tb01062.x
- Morris, D. (2002). Narrative, ethics and pain: Thinking with stories. In R. Charon & M. Montello (Eds.), *Stories matter: The role of narrative in medical ethics* (pp. 196-218). London: Routledge.
- Neumann, A. (1998). On experience, memory, and knowing: A Post-Holocaust (auto)biography. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 28(4), 425-442. doi:10.1111/0362-6784.00101
- Okri, B. (1997). *A way of being free*. London: Phoenix House.
- Rodríguez, N. N., & Salinas, C. S. (2019). La lucha todavía no ha terminado/The struggle is not yet over: Teaching immigration through testimonio and difficult funds of knowledge. *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing*, 34(3), 136-149.
- Sa'di, A. H., & Abu-Lughod, L. (Eds.) (2007). *Nakba: Palestine, 1948, and the claims of memory*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Saleh, M. (2019a). *Relational Resistance: Canadian Muslim mothers and daughters (re)telling and (re)living our stories*. Journal of the Motherhood Initiative for Research and Community Involvement (JMI).
- Saleh, M. (2019b). *Stories we live and grow by: (Re)telling our experiences as Muslim mothers and daughters*. Toronto: Demeter Press.
- Saleh, M. (2017). *Stories we live by, with, and in: A narrative inquiry into the experiences of Canadian Muslim girls and their mothers* (Doctoral Dissertation). University of Alberta. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.7939/R3JH3DG7R>
- Saleh, M., Menon, J., & Clandinin, D. J. (2014). Autobiographical narrative inquiry: Tellings and retellings. *Learning Landscapes*, 7(2), 271-282. Available at: <http://www.learninglandscapes.ca/>
- Sayigh, R. (2007). Women's Nakba stories: Between being and knowing. In A. H. Sa'di & L. Abu-Lughod (Eds.), *Nakba: Palestine, 1948, and the claims of memory*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Sensoy, O., & Marshall, E. (2009). "Save the Muslim girl!", *Rethinking Schools Online*, 24(2). Retrieved from: <https://www.rethinkingschools.org/articles/h1-save-the-muslim-girl-h1/>
- Sensoy, O., & Marshall, E. (2010). Missionary girl power: Saving the 'Third World' one girl at a time. *Gender & Education*, 22(3), 295-311. doi:10.1080/095.4025090328945

- Shalhoub-Kevorkian, N. (2010). Palestinian women and the politics of invisibility: Towards a feminist methodology. *Peace Prints: South Asian Journal of Peacebuilding*, 3(1), 1-21. Retrieved from: <http://wiscomp.org/peaceprints/3-1/3.1.2.pdf>
- Shihab Nye, N. (1998). *Words under the words: Selected poems*. Portland, OR: Eight Mountain Press.
- Stanley, T. J. (1999). A letter to my children: Historical memory and the silences of childhood. In J. Robertson (Ed.), *Teaching for a tolerant world, grades K-6: Essays and resources* (pp. 34-44). Retrieved from: https://www.edugroup.at/fileadmin/DAM/eduhi/data_dl/SoundMusic_Nazis.pdf
- van Kessel, C. (2019). *An education in 'evil': Implications for curriculum, pedagogy, and beyond*. Cham, CH: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Waheed, N. (2013). *Salt*. San Bernardino, CA: Createspace.
- Waheed, N. (2014). *Nejma*. Charleston, SC: Createspace.
- Young, M. (2005). *Pimatisiwin: Walking in a good way – a narrative inquiry into language as identity*. Winnipeg, MB: Pemmican Publications.