



University
of Victoria

Graduate Studies

Notice of the Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

of

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MA (University of Victoria, 2013)
BA (University of Waterloo, 2009)

**“Living in the in-between as an Ismaili Muslim woman: An
autoethnography”**

School of Child and Youth Care

Thursday, April 26th, 2018
9:30 a.m.
Clearihue Building
Room B019

Supervisory Committee:

Dr. Daniel Scott, School of Child and Youth Care, University of Victoria (Supervisor)
Dr. Carmen Rodriguez de France, School of Child and Youth Care, UVic (Member)
Dr. Mehmoona Moosa-Mitha, School of Social Work, UVic (Outside Member)

External Examiner:

Dr. Mary Gergen, Department of Psychology, Penn State University, Brandywine

Chair of Oral Examination:

Dr. Heather Buckley, Department of Civil Engineering, UVic

Abstract

This autoethnographic research project explores how a first-generation Canadian *Ismaili Muslim*, grapples with the tensions of belonging and identity while living in the in-between spaces of multiple social locations. Using an intersectional third-wave feminist approach, a method I term “third-wave dervish”, I metaphorically spin in a similar manner to a whirling dervish’s dance. Each spin provokes a round of critical reflection grounded in a node of intersection. Throughout the dance, how each nod of intersect – religion and spirituality, geographical location, ethnicity and culture, and gender – implicates the in-between spaces I find myself located within, on the periphery of, and wavering between is explored. Narratives from my early years, adolescence, as a young adult in a graduate classroom, and as a young practitioner serve as data. For the first time, during re-iterations of memories, experiences of being minoritized and racialized are acknowledged and begin to challenge gender binaries, offer insight into how I unknowingly negotiated and navigated complex social spaces. Personal experiences and reflections are then translated beyond the self to offer insight into how human and social development practitioners can use the key findings of how a brown-bodied female moved through childhood, adolescence, and young adulthood. The dissertation offers suggestions for practitioners to actively engage in, understand, and respond to children and youth’s verbal and non-verbal responses to experiences they are having. In addition, the text outlines the benefit of and ways in which practitioners may encourage difficult conversations with clients who are minoritized, and how to foster safe spaces for children, youth, and young adults to explore their sense of belonging and identity.