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

of

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MN (University of Victoria, 2009)
BSN (University of Victoria, 2007)

“Re: Turning the gaze: Racialized nurses’ insights into their nursing education in Canada”

School of Nursing

Friday, April 20th, 2018
10:00 a.m.
Clearihue Building
Room B007

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Carol McDonald, School of Nursing, University of Victoria (Supervisor)
Dr. Marjorie McIntyre, School of Nursing, UVic (Member)
Dr. Jo-Anne Lee, Department of Gender Studies, UVic (Outside Member)

External Examiner:
Dr. Tania Das Gupta, Department of Equity Studies, York University

Chair of Oral Examination:
Dr. Astrid Pérez Piñán, School of Public Administration, UVic

Dr. David Capson, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies
Abstract

In Canada, nursing education and practice are enacted in the context of a white settler nation-state. As part of their mandates, nursing schools uphold concepts such as multiculturalism, equity and diversity, however studies in North America reflect that the reality contradicts these directives and suggest that nursing schools are hegemonic white spaces. This study challenges this white hegemony, through the gaze of racialized nurses. Through in-depth interviews, ten self-identified racialized nurses shared narratives looking back at their experiences in nursing school, and their accounts indicate how they faced the complexities of learning within environments where systemic racism is enacted.

Using a women of colour feminist approach, this study asked the following question: What are the experiences of racialized nurses in nursing education programs in Canada? Intersectional analysis was used to examine and address the multiplicity of experiences that emerged from the interviews. Racialized nurses’ narratives reveal complex experiences with the following prevailing themes: Othering, the white gaze, navigating white spaces, accent as marker, always proving myself, and racism impacting health. Beyond racism, participants’ experiences were also affected by the intersection with other markers of difference while in nursing school, such as gender, religion, class, and age. Participants identified that they were seen through a white gaze while in nursing school and engaged with this study as an opportunity to challenge and resist the systemic structures of racism they encountered. The findings point to the reality that nursing schools are permeated by systemic structures of white privilege and racism, due to a legacy of colonialism and imperialism, and those structures have a severe impact on racialized students. Furthermore, this study indicates the need for critical evaluations of nursing schools, about the enactment and maintenance of racist practices of exclusion and marginalization of racialized students.