Privilege Diary

1. **Religious Holiday Bias**
   1. Description
      1. In many classes in school certain holidays are accepted as statutory holidays or holidays where it is acceptable to miss school or work. In the peel region is it expected that if students are missing specified holidays then they may miss school for spiritual purposes. In grade 8 a students missed school for Diwali, the religious holiday fell on the day of a test. The class the student missed was run by a white female science teacher. When the student returned they were questioned about the validity of this test and ultimately was accused of skipping so the test was given a mark of zero. When another student later in the year missed school because of Hanukkah, the student was not interrogated and the student who celebrated Diwali became very upset.
   2. Analysis
      1. This incident happened because the teacher possessed a cultural and religious bias which caused her to discriminate against a student. The teacher most likely did not realize the bias they possessed or the discrimination they were committing. The teacher had an unconscious bias towards the perceived culture and religion. They most likely honestly believed that their religion’s holiday was fake, since they have a Eurocentrist point of view and see their culture as superior. This is also somewhat connected to racism. The white Jewish student was allowed to miss school while the South Asian Hindu student was questioned. This may be because Judaism is progressively becoming affiliated with European and white culture while Hinduism is seen as foreign and possibly barbaric. This is a cultural and societal issue, the European world is one that emphasizes Christianity and other “white” cultures like Judaism or Atheism, schools are not in session on Easter, Christmas but they are on Diwali or Eid al-Adha. This is a large issue in modern society, people are being forced to make a choice between their professional life and their spiritual life which is a choice that no one should be forced to make, that is privilege.
2. **Gender Privilege in Robotics Club**
   1. Description
      1. As the president of robotics club I have noticed gender discrimination and privilege is quite common but infrequently discussed. The club is made up of predominantly male students with a small minority of less than 10 females. These females experience constant discrimination and are pushed aside because of their gender. Many of these females are experienced and are hardworking but they get oppressed because the males believe that they cannot do the work to the equivalent or a higher caliber to a male. One situation occurred where an experienced grade 11 girl was helping a team with their robot when a grade 9 male student said they did not require help but then later called on a grade 11 male student for assistance.
   2. Analysis
      1. A lot of the discrimination that the females experience is one where the males truly believe that the females cannot work as hard. Society has created the gender role that males are the people who should be in engineering jobs and that it’s for masculine strong men. There is a male privilege where females have to work even harder to achieve the same status as a male would. Many females consistently show more skill and dedication then males but still are not given that same social status within the club. This connects directly to modern day society where women are paid less on average at the same job, this may be because as mentioned the employer views the female employee as one who does not work as hard as the male employee. This discrimination can have extensive negative effects on women including psychological, social and economic issues. This topic of differing perspectives of people’s work ethics also relates to race. The media has perpetuated this idea that South and South East Asians are supposed to be hard workers and brilliant while Africans are supposed to be stupid and lazy. These stereotypes are not true but much like based on gender these groups of people have to work to a different extent to get the same status.
3. **The Perception that all Sex Offenders are Male.**
   1. Description
      1. In the second week of 2017 I remember walking to the restaurant The Works one day with some of my friends when I noticed there was an adult approximately 30 year old male, one approximately 10 year old girl and one approximately 6 year old boy playing in the park. I remember wondering whether I should say something, whether I should confront the adult male in the park. I did not confront the people in the park but when I arrived at the restaurant I asked my friends what they had thought of the people in the park. My friends mentioned that they had thought the same thing, those who had seen the group of people felt there was something wrong. Many of those who thought that there was something wrong and they debated many of these people failed to recognize the implication that this association caused and did not realize the bias they held.
   2. Analysis
      1. This perception is pervasive in society, it is generally thought that when a sex offender is mentioned that they are male. The media portrays males as dominators and sexual deviants. This stereotype can be incredibly damaging especially for fathers. This stereotype creates a feeling of distrust and much like this scenario, people may unconsciously feel that the female is a better caregiver than the male. This privilege also connects to fear of homosexuals, though the stereotype is disappearing much of the media has created the image that homosexual people are sexual deviants and are dangerous because they may sexually abuse children. These two types of discrimination can be very damaging to these individuals, they may be confronted while others do not, they may be rejected a job when working with children or they may not be trusted around other people’s children because of who they are. Though this discrimination is very harmful it is often not blatant, as represented in the story people do not realize that they are discriminating against males they simply see it as though that individual is potentially dangerous and fail to see the full picture that these judgements are based off biases. It is human nature to group people together so if the media is telling the individual that a significant amount of sex offenders are males then the brain will make these associations which can create positive and negative effects. The harsh reality that two different people can be doing the same thing but one is perceived as a cold blooded sex offender and one is seen as a caring mother is a perfect example of privilege.
4. **Class Privilege in Access Education**
   1. Description
      1. From my experiences with living in two different areas with different socioeconomic conditions I have found that the quality of education can differ greatly based on where a student lives. As a child I used to live in a poorer community with a higher than average amount of crime and from that community I have developed friendships that I still hold today. I later moved to the Port Credit area which tends to contain those of a higher class and a lower crime rate. When I arrived in Port Credit, I moved schools and the change was quite dramatic, my class sizes were instantly smaller, there were more extracurricular activities and there were a lot more amenities. My friends and I still keep in contact with my friends from Toronto and when we discuss school, we both share shocked reactions. My friends are taught things that I have learned last year while I am learning things that they have never heard of, they rarely use computers in class and their tech courses are severely outdated.
   2. Analysis
      1. Class privilege is something that is rarely discussed and especially not in reference to education because it is thought that educations standards are universal, however they are not. The goal of education for many people is to get a better life than their parents had but this becomes especially difficult for poorer students since their education is stunted inhibiting their ability to escape from poverty. Karl Marx developed the idea of Conflict theory, a way to interpret events based on the conflict between two groups of a different power status. By using Marx’s conflict theory it can be identified that the reason the poorer citizens are receiving a poorer education is because that is the goal of the ruling class, to suppress those who are struggling and keep them in this endless cycle of poverty for the benefit of the wealthy. The entire education system favours the wealthy by providing them with a better education because the wealthy are the main funders of the education system. This privilege also correlates along racial borders. Often those communities that are poorer and therefore receive a lesser education are predominantly consisting of African Americans. Due to the racist tendencies in Western society African Americans have become disadvantaged and therefore poorer which has resulted in many African Americans living in these very poor conditions together. Overall education system is divided based on economic class as well as based on race and certain privileges are given to individuals based on what groups they fall into.
5. **Sexual Promiscuity Perception based on Gender**
   1. Description
      1. What I have noticed especially between high school students is how the number of sexual partners a person has had is viewed differently based on their gender. When a female has had multiple sexual partners or appears to talk to multiple males she is labeled as a slut or whore. If a male has had multiple sexual partners they are labeled as a player or a pimp. The females are labeled with negative adjectives while their male counterparts are labeled with positive adjectives. This causes women to feel the need to deemphasize or hide their romantic relationships they have while men will emphasize and exaggerate them.
   2. Analysis
      1. There is a malicious attitude in society that attempts to shun women for being sexually promiscuous while praising the men who are. This attitude originates from the media where it is constantly announced that men are dominant while women are docile and are the caregivers of children. Men in society are expected to constantly reinforce their masculinity by being promiscuous while women are forced to constantly reinforce their femininity by being more docile and less promiscuous. This can have severe negative effects which can be extremely difficult when dealing with a relationship. The male in a relationship is almost encouraged to cheat because if they act to loyal then they may appear as too feminine while women are expected to submit and be overly loyal to their male counterpart because that is what a feminine person is supposed to do. This topic connects well into heterosexism. In society these roles are forced onto people because it is expected that it is normal to be heterosexual. For many this is not the case, many in society feel in a strange state they feel pressured to fit into these roles however they are not heterosexual so cannot fit these roles. Homosexual men are shunned because they are not sexually promiscuous and do not sexually desire women while Homosexual women are shunned because not desiring a man is seen as not feminine. Men have the privilege to be open about their sexual promiscuity while women do not.
6. **Religious School Public Funding**
   1. Description
      1. One rarely debated topic in Canadian politics is the existence of public funding for Roman Catholic public schools. In Ontario there are two publicly funded school boards the secular one and the one based on Roman Catholicism. The Ontario school system provides public funding for Catholic schools but fails to provide public funding for schools based on other faiths and religions. The system benefits those who are Roman Catholic and prioritizes one religion over another.
   2. Analysis
      1. The government policy of prioritizing Roman Catholicism over any other faith is damaging and encourages discrimination based on religion. Giving only Roman Catholic schools public funding validates that religion as one that is superior to others and creates the idea there is an official state religion. This system perpetuates that there is one right culture in this ever expanding multicultural nation and creates the idea that the other cultures are not really Canadian. This religious privilege is connected to white privilege. The establishment of an official state religion corresponds to the establishment of an official state culture, in this case the state is announcing that the white culture is the right culture and thus deserves public funding. The white culture is receiving benefits that other cultures do not and is therefore attempting to convert the population to the white culture. The policy attempts to socialize young children into believing that Roman Catholicism is superior to other religions so it can create a more homogenized society. These policies are very subtle yet very effective at attempting to get a group to conform to certain values and to enforce religious privilege.
7. **The Racial Bias in modern products.**
   1. Description
      1. When purchasing products it becomes clear that there are certain racial markets the producer sells to. When purchasing a Band-Aid it supposedly is supposed to match the skin color of the user so as to remain subtle however what about those who have a darker skin tone the Band-Aid will not match their skin tone. When purchasing a doll or a toy nearly all the characters are white, Barbie dolls are white, Gi-Joe is white and so many more. When purchasing most products such as shampoo or make up the model is almost always white unless the model needs to be a certain skin tone to fit the purpose of the product. I noticed that on almost all the product packages or products I own they all marketed to those who were white, there was no product I owned that attempted any diversity at all.
   2. Analysis
      1. In western society all the products are marketed towards those with white skin. The marketing towards people with white skin creates the idea that being white is somehow superior to being of a darker skin tone. If all someone sees as their symbol for beauty is people with white skin than that person will begin to associate beauty with white skin. This is especially effective at young ages, since all the toys and dolls are people with white skin than those children will associate positive things with white skin somewhat like classical conditioning. This can be incredibly damaging for young children with darker skin tone because they may begin to associate their skin color with something bad and that they need to change their skin color to be good. This idea of feeling your skin color is inferior can be incredibly damaging mentally and physically, some people may even attempt to change their own skin color through dangerous procedures such as skin bleaching. These beliefs in a superior race make up the ideas of racism and shadeism which are often used to oppress and force people to conform to a certain ideal. The time of slave owning and Jim Crow laws is over in the west however it has not disappeared it has simply evolved, society­­­­­­­­ has found a more subtle approach to oppress racial minorities and give the white man power through white privilege.
8. **Gender Privilege according to Appearance**
   1. Description
      1. Something I have witnessed in society is the different expectations of appearance that is put onto genders. Women in society are expected to constantly be maintaining a certain weight, wearing attractive clothing and wearing makeup. Men in society have a much lower expectation, men can allow their weight to fluctuate, they do not need to dress in attractive clothing, and they do not need to apply makeup. The only thing men have to do is maintain personal hygiene. Women on the other hand face significant stigma if they fail to strive for perfection and no matter the situation are expected to meet certain appearance standards that do not apply to men.
   2. Analysis
      1. The male dominated culture of the western world has caused women to be subject to many oppressive and wrong principles including the idea of beauty standards. The gender roles where the male is the worker and the dominator gives power to the male over the female who is supposed to be submissive and attractive. The media has perpetuated these gender roles and has caused them to bombard people on a daily basis. Throughout the media including in movies and tv shows, the women are always portrayed as attractive and thin which creates this idea in a woman’s mind that this is how they are supposed to look. It creates the idea that women are supposed to spend significant amounts of time to attempt to perfect their appearance. While men do not have this issue, throughout the media in casual settings the man can wear whatever they want and in fancier settings they may wear a suit but little preparation is required. This topic relates to the topic of differing expectations of sexual promiscuity based on gender, in both cases men and women are expected to do things differently based on their gender. These two topics are very interesting when combined because they verify the media’s conflicting messages and ideals for women in society. Society expects women to always be focusing on their appearance so as to attract men however women are never supposed to talk about their sexual relations or they may be called a slut. Society has created these contradictory ideal which make it so the female gender role can never truly be filled, meaning women will be perpetually working to fill these roles for the benefit of men. Men have the privilege to not worry about their appearance without stigma while women do not have that luxury.