

Bubble of privilege

-capital built

On my 18th birthday my dad and myself went to the bank.

I took out 3 low interest micro loans.

These loans went into a locked account with the interest already paid off.

I didn't really understand the powers which dictate the world we live in. I still don't.

My parents would give me some advice, and I would usually take it without fully understanding the implications.

After all, what was the point of taking a loan for the simple purpose of paying it back?

What is the purpose of some imaginary number dictating my worthiness?

I was fortunate to have the guidance and social capital to get ahead from a very young age.

Even when I was not aware of it.

-big fish small pond

When choosing a high school my mom encouraged me -like my sister- to go across town.

she knew I would find success at south, however, I would have greater opportunity elsewhere.

This was when I found myself developing into an academic all star.

I could take any class available on the schedule.

I could play any sport I wanted.

Extra credit turned B's into A's

The scales were tilted in my favor, and I was naive enough to think my success was all because of my own merit.

-blending in

Upon graduating, I left Minneapolis

Off to the land of lumberjacks.

Scalding black coffee,

Frigid fog,

Folk music drifting across the bar.

I quickly found that my brilliance was an illusion.

Mediocre at best,

I never learned to work.

Manipulation was my only skill.

I was just another white kid.

-bubble popped

I felt betrayed.

Lured into a false sense of entitlement, only to be broken down my first semester of college.
the preference I had enjoyed for so long was actually causing me harm!

-wait, racial biases harm everyone??-

First came denial, followed by acceptance. I was privileged.

-Reflecting back

When looking beyond my ego centric lens, I can appreciate a greater injustice.

While I was being told of my brilliance,

Others were being ignored.

When I enrolled in my preferred classes,

Others had to seek alternatives credits.

When I took the Chorski scholarship,

Others were left to pay for school on their own.

While I was being propped up, my friends were often left to struggle alone.

This was no exception. This was the rule.

-Action?

Should I tell my students that they are brilliant?

Is it right to inflate their grades and their egos?

How do I raise my students up while preparing them for the cruelty of an unjust world?

I know! I should push them to be their best selves!

But what is one's best self?

Who am I to fashion myself the white savior, riding in on a grey bicycle preaching a Eurocentric message of success?

-Clueless

I have no idea what is right.
Perhaps one day I will.
Until that day I will:

Continue to educate myself
stay with the times
advocate for our students.

I must 'Pull my socks up' and get to work.
I must find opportunities for my students to discover their voice.
I must help my students see that they are not weak.
With time, they will know that they have the right to be powerful beyond measure.

I will make privilege visible.