CULTURE SHOCKED: THE INTERCULTURAL EXPERIENCES AND INSIGHTS OF RETURNED PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEER EDUCATORS

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CULTURE SHOCKED: THE INTERCULTURAL EXPERIENCES AND INSIGHTS OF RETURNED PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEER EDUCATORS

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DEDICATION

For my parents, Austin and Sharon Smythe, and my wonderful African son,
Mal Harouna Bello

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Title of Study: CULTURE SHOCKED: THE INTERCULTURAL EXPERIENCES AND INSIGHTS OF RETURNED PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEER EDUCATORS

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Abstract: Under the auspices of globalization, U.S. educational institutions are becoming increasingly culturally diverse, raising questions about meaning, ethical relationships, and curriculum. Further, American educators at all levels are experiencing various forms of anxiety and identity crises akin to culture shock in response to this increasing cultural diversity. One type of educator whose insights may be helpful in navigating culture shock experiences is the Returned Peace Corps Volunteer (RPCV) educator. RPCV educators generally teach internationally for two years where they navigate various experiences with culture shock. Additionally, they return to the U.S. to find that their experiences abroad have shifted their worldview, often leading to feelings of reverse culture shock. Sharing their stories of culture shock, reverse culture shock, identity shifts, and pedagogy, four Returned Peace Corps Volunteer educators talk about what it means to live and teach in intercultural contexts both abroad and at home. Using a poststructural hermeneutic framework, participants' stories are analyzed in two separate "readings." While the first reading is more interpretive in nature and attempts to convey the participants' original intentions, the second reading serves a more deconstructive purpose as alternative meanings are considered for each story. The findings of this research suggest that culture shock experiences can have a beneficial influence on both pedagogy and intercultural understanding. However, they also imply that the meaning of such experiences is unstable and shifting, thus rendering any final or ultimate meaning impossible.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

> In the realm of culture, outsideness is a most powerful factor in understanding…A meaning only reveals its depths once it has encountered and come into contact with another, foreign meaning: they engage in a kind of dialogue, which surmounts the closedness and one-sideness of these particular meanings, these cultures…Each retains its own unity and open totality, but they are mutually enriched. (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 7)

In the United States, opportunities for encountering other cultures and other meanings within schools, community colleges, and universities appear to be increasing due in large part to globalization. Globalization has been loosely defined as the "intensification and rapidity of movement and migration of people, ideas, and economic and cultural capital across national boundaries" (Matus & McCarthy, 2003, p. 73). Recognizing that students are part of this movement, projections of elementary and secondary enrollments in the United States are now tied not only to the "internal migration" of U.S. born citizens, but also to the "legal and illegal immigration" of students representing an array of other countries and cultures as well (Hussar et al., 2009, p. 5). In addition, these projections indicate that enrollment in American

public primary and secondary schools is both increasing and becoming more diverse. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics' *State of Education* report (Planty et al., 2009), public elementary and secondary enrollments are expected to climb to a record 54 million by the year 2018 (p. ix). The report also notes that between 1972 and 2007 enrollments of students who identified themselves as white have dropped from 78% to 56% while enrollments of students in other racial/ethnic groups have risen from 32% to 44% (p. ix-x). The movement of university level students across national boundaries has been noted as well. According to the latest available figures, the number of international students studying in American higher education institutions during the 2010-11 school year "increased to a record high of 723,277 students, a 32% increase since 2000/01" (IIE, 2012, *Fast Facts*). These changing demographics signal increasing diversity within American educational institutions and suggest that such institutions hold the potential to become sites of mutual intercultural enrichment.

While I appreciate Bakhtin's optimism in the opening quote, he fails to mention the anxiety, the "various new kinds of identity crises" and "difficult questions about epistemological authority, about how knowledge is produced, represented, and circulated, and perhaps especially about the auspices of curriculum work" (Smith, 2003, p. 36) that often results when culturally different others come into contact on their way to mutual enrichment. For educators, working with increasingly culturally diverse student populations can be especially anxiety-provoking as they are tasked with creating spaces within curriculum that are open to the diverse thoughts and experiences of all students even when those perspectives may challenge their own personal and cultural expectations. For example, in a survey of 641 first year school teachers, when asked to consider a list of 14 proposals and indicate which

ones would be “very effective” for teacher development, “preparing teachers to adapt or vary their instruction to meet the needs of a diverse classroom” was second only to “reducing class size” (Rochkind, et al., 2008, p.15). The report also claims that the “anxiety about dealing with diverse classrooms—the sense of being unprepared and untrained in this area—is greatest among teachers in more upscale communities” (p. 12). As an example, the report cites a teacher who found himself teaching students from 20 different “linguistic backgrounds” in a “historically white” neighborhood (p. 12). Similarly, in a faculty guide for “Teaching in an Increasingly Multi-cultural Setting” produced by Carnegie Mellon University (n.d.), a faculty member notes,

> In the past, I could assume that all or most of my students shared certain kinds of understandings or experiences. With classrooms increasingly made up of students from other countries, or from ethnically identified subgroups within the U.S., I can no longer make any assumptions at all. This is a disconcerting realization for an instructor. (*Contents*, online)

Accordingly, it would appear that the linguistic, ethnic, and cultural landscape of the American classroom is changing as globalization brings diversity to otherwise culturally homogenous settings.

For educators who come from mainstream backgrounds, who have little experience with teaching diverse populations, who may not have ever been a cultural outsider themselves or who teach in a culture that espouses a curriculum of sameness, universality, and standardization, the task of educating students from diverse backgrounds can be, as research indicates, anxiety-provoking. I would argue that the anxiety that teachers experience when encountering cultural differences in the classroom can be considered a form of culture

shock. According to Furnham (2004) the term “culture shock” was popularized by the anthropologist Kalervo Oberg in 1960 to denote, among other things, “surprise, anxiety, even disgust and indignation after becoming aware of cultural differences” as well as “confusion in role, role expectations, values” (p. 17). Although “culture shock” is generally applied to those who travel to a foreign country, the anthropologist Fuchs (1969) and educators Kron (1972) and Kron and Faber (1973) make the connection between teaching and the culture shock teachers experience when “placed in a new subculture (e.g., the middle-class teacher placed in an inner city school, the black teacher placed in an all-white suburban school)” (Kron & Faber, 1973, p. 506). Kron and Faber also noted in 1973 that “Few social scientists have written about [culture shock] and still fewer have applied the culture shock concept to education” (p. 506).

Since that time and despite the widespread globalization that is changing the cultural makeup of the American classroom, there have been few articles that have focused on educator culture shock at the public primary, secondary, or university level. In the last decade, for example, the majority of articles explicitly related to culture shock and education have focused on college students— specifically, international students studying in the U.S. (Gilton, 2005; Godwin, 2009; Zhou, Jindel-Snape, Topping & Todman, 2008), Black students (Torres, 2009), first generation students (Cushman, 2007), “Third Culture Kids” who grew up in a culture different than their American parents now coming to the U.S. to attend college (Hervey, 2009; Huff, 2001), and Adult ESL students (Buttaro, 2004). Only one article dealt with the culture shock experienced by the teacher and it had to do with the acculturation necessary for teaching in the prison system (Wright, 2005). Considering that globalization has paved the way for rapidly increasing cultural diversity in schools, that such

rapid changes can produce anxiety, and that it is the teacher, instructor, or professor who is "faced with the challenge of making instruction 'culturally responsive' for all students" (GreatSchools, n.d., p. 1), I think it is important to understand how educators navigate both the positive and negative aspects of culture shock.

One type of educator with particular experience in dealing with issues related to culture shock, both abroad and at home, is the Returned Peace Corps Volunteer (RPCV) educator. Peace Corps Volunteer educators typically teach English, Math, Science, Health or other subject in schools or universities for two years in a foreign country. As cultural outsiders in those foreign countries, the probability that RPCV educators experience culture shock while teaching abroad is high. In addition, many RPCV educators return home to continue teaching or work in a variety of education-related jobs only to find that their overseas teaching experiences have made them cultural outsiders in their home country, leading to what has been termed "reverse culture shock" (Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963). I think it is therefore possible that RPCV educators' experiences can offer not only insights into issues related to teaching and culture shock, but as cultural outsiders abroad and in some ways cultural outsiders at home, they may also draw upon the experience of "outsideness" which Bakhtin (1986) suggests in the opening qoute is a "most powerful factor in understanding" other cultures and other meanings. Their experiences may also help students and other educators reflect on their own experiences with culture shock. As John Greisberger, the current Director of the International Center at the University of Michigan and Peace Corps Volunteer English teacher in Afghanistan from 1973 to 1975, observed:

> Having crossed cultures, I know what students and scholars experienced when they came to the U.S. I experienced culture shock, the adjustment process, the

> need to understand my new surroundings, and the joy of feeling at home in the new culture. I could empathize with students as they struggled in the classroom, in the residence halls, in the community. (In Wilkie, 2011, p. 29)

While culture shock and reverse culture shock are often presented in somewhat negative terms, research indicates that shock experiences may stimulate personal and cultural awareness. However, there has been little research with regard to American educators' experiences with culture shock and reverse culture shock or how both experiences may inform pedagogy and curriculum.

The purpose of this study is to gain insight into issues related to teaching and learning in intercultural contexts by examining RPCV educators' experiences with culture shock and reverse culture shock. I believe that an examination of the ways in which RPCV educators respond to the experience of culture shock and reverse culture shock may provide openings for other educators to re/consider their own experiences with cultural differences inside and outside the classroom. As an RPCV educator myself, I have found my intercultural experiences to be both shocking and enlightening with regard to what they reveal about intercultural and pedagogical relationships. My hope is not to somehow alleviate the anxiety that educators may experience in the face of cultural differences, but rather to recognize the different ways in which culture shock and reverse culture shock may affect teaching in an age of globalization. In this sense, I also suggest that culture shock and reverse culture shock can be valuable tools for learning, both about oneself and others.

Research Questions

With the above purpose in mind, I answer three main research questions in the current study:

1. Did RPCV educators experience culture shock in their host culture and reverse culture shock in the U.S.? In what ways?
2. Did RPCV educators shift their identities or worldviews through the experience of culture and reverse culture shock? In what ways?
3. How did the experience of culture shock and reverse culture shock influence RPCV educators' pedagogy?

Theoretical Framework

At the heart of the current study is the question of how the self/Other relationship is perceived and acted out personally, culturally, and pedagogically through RPCV educators' experiences. I will explore the self/Other relationship as it relates to the intercultural teaching/learning context using a poststructural hermeneutic framework. A poststructural hermeneutic framework is appropriate for this study because it elucidates not only how the Other is created, but also how the encounter with the Other can stimulate learning, a sense of ethics, and the claiming of human agency. It does this in different ways. First, poststructural hermeneutics calls for openness of and play with the structure through a process of "decentering" which challenges the hierarchy of self over Other. Second, it suggests that meaning is not fixed, objective, and singular but rather changing, subjective, and multiple, implying the need for the re/negotiation of meaning between self and Other. Third, it examines the ways in which social institutions engage in the process of othering, that is, using differences to create and exclude the Other. And lastly, it takes the stance that recognizing the differences between self and Other rather than making the Other over in the

image of the self or silencing the Other has both ethical and educational implications. Each of these topics is discussed below.

To appreciate how poststructural hermeneutics seeks openness of and play with the structure, it is important to understand how western cultures such as the United States are shaped by a structuralist view of reality. Stam (2008) writes that "According to the 'binary opposition' theory of the structuralists, reality is formed by certain theoretical and cultural opposites, often arranged in a hierarchy, which structure reality" (p. 12). Some examples of binary pairs include male/female, logic/emotion, light/dark, clarity/ambiguity, and so on. Within each of these pairings is a hierarchical center whose purpose is to "orient, balance, and organize the structure" (Derrida, 1978, p. 278). In order to achieve a sense of stability, all movement within the structure is directed toward supporting and maintaining the hierarchical center. As such, playing with the structure or changing the structure is not permitted.

In order to open up the structure and allow for play, Derrida (1978) proposes "decentering" (p. 280)—a move that rejects the center's primacy and destabilizes the structure. While this destabilization can produce anxiety, clinging to an inflexible structure based on binary oppositions creates as much anxiety as it seeks to avoid by fixing people into simple dualistic categories that fail to acknowledge the multiplicity of self and Other. Poststructural hermeneutics moves beyond a dualistic view of reality by recognizing the "mutli-memberships, the mutations, the individualizations and the personalization of behavior and conduct, the contraventions, the crossings, the stripes, the alternate routes, and the cultural margins" (Abdallah-Pretceille, 2006, p. 481-482) that challenge dualistic structures. For the intercultural relationship, this involves rejecting the hierarchical privilege of self over Other. It also implies the need to tolerate the anxiety and perceived loss of

control in rejecting this structure while simultaneously locating the "secret place" (Derrida, 1978, p. 6) within the structure that is open to change.

In a related way, Derrida also demonstrates that meaning, like structure, is not fixed, but is open to multiple interpretations. He does this by exposing and subverting the dualistic oppositions in texts, by going below the surface of the text to find "hidden alternative meanings," and by pointing out the "undecidables" or "aporias" within a text which do not "conform to either side of a dichotomy or opposition" (Reynolds, 2010, Introduction). Derrida also proposed the term "différance" (a homonym of the French word "différence") to demonstrate that the meaning of a word "is the result of its difference from other words" and as such "retains relations to ("traces" of) the words that differ from it" (Quigley, 2009, p. 5). This would seem to indicate an important role that difference plays in the creation of meaning and suggests a sense of relationship or interconnectedness between things which are seen as opposites. In the poststructural sense then, meaning is "never fully present" in words or the concepts they signify, rather meaning is "contextual," relational, and infinite, making any final definitive meaning im/possible (Quigley, 2009, p. 6).

This view underscores the slipperiness of meaning and points to the difficulty in assigning meaning to the words and actions of others. For the intercultural self/Other relationship, this signals a need to suspend judgment and assume a position of not knowing the Other. In not knowing the Other, meaning is developed through the questioning of the self and through the negotiation of meaning along with the Other within a specific context. Even then, such meaning is not fixed but subject to re/interpretation at a later time.

Understanding the ways in which social institutions work to structure the self/Other relationship within society and the self is another poststructural theme relevant to the current

study. In *Civilization and Madness*, Foucault (1965) demonstrates how social institutions such as churches, hospitals, and government agencies work in concert to create the Other through the "exclusion" of difference. Foucault relates this exclusion to the rise of leprosy in Europe and explains that exclusion was a means of keeping leprosy "at a sacred" (p. 6) distance from polite society. But even after leprosy began to disappear, both the physical and theoretical structures for excluding difference remained, creating a cultural demand for the exclusion of other differences which could be labeled as madness.

On a more personal level, Wang (2004) shows how the social structuring of the self/Other relationship becomes inculcated both *in* and *as* the self. Through her historical deconstruction of Western Greco-Roman philosophy and Eastern Confucian philosophy, Wang (2004) reveals how a masculine hierarchical structuring of both philosophies creates the feminine Other. She argues that "Due to the cultural demand for feminine invisibility, woman does not really have a self" (p. 46) and therefore anything feminine is seen as Other. In highlighting the ways in which the feminine Other is created socially, Wang (2004) urges the fluid claiming of one's own subjectivity and human agency in response to culturally prescriptive narratives, while recognizing that notions of subjectivity are culturally embedded in their own right. This suggests that while the reach of social structures may be inescapable, one can shift one's response to it and find other meanings within it.

For the intercultural teaching/learning relationship, I think it is important to be aware of how social institutions, including schools, may be engaged in this process of Othering. Likewise, it is equally important to recognize the ways in which the poststructural subject— in this case the RPCV educator— negotiates their culturally-nominated social positions in order to create freer, more complex inter/subjective relationships within the curriculum. I

would also argue that recognizing the subjectivity of both self and Other has ethical implications as both self and Other are released from their object positions and differences between self/Other become valued rather than excluded.

A poststructural hermeneutic view of the ethical self/Other relationship is expressed in Todd's (2003) *Learning from the Other*. Drawing on the work of Levinas, she writes that it is the "break between self and Other where…both the conditions for ethics and the possibility of teaching and learning" (p. 29) are located. Maintaining the separation between self and other involves resisting attempts to change the Other and, as mentioned earlier, not presuming to *know* the Other as one presumes to know the self. In addition, preserving the difference between self and Other (rather than eliminating this difference) allows for the non-violent relationship between self and Other. It also provides the self with opportunities for learning and growth in that difference creates new possibilities and new challenges. Without the difference to self—the Other—the self has the potential to stagnate in a pool of sameness.

This understanding of learning and ethics as connected to the rupture between self and Other has profound implications for curriculum development in a globalized world. Certainly it shifts the role of the teacher and the focus of curriculum which have been primarily concerned with standardization, unification, and the elimination of difference, toward a curriculum that also allows for the non-violent cultivation of and learning from difference. But while the ethical relationship with the Other can help foster this shift, Todd also recognizes that it is the "very anxiety over encountering difference that…provides learning with its fiercest form of resistance" (p. 11). For the current study, however, I believe that the anxiety and resistance over encountering difference in the form of RPCV educator

culture shock and reverse culture shock can also promote learning and ethical understanding in the intercultural relationship for purposes of curriculum development.

In sum, I draw upon a number of poststructural hermeneutic themes in order to frame my study which examines the self/Other relationship from the perspective of the RPCV educator through the experience of culture and reverse culture shock. Specifically, I utilize the concept of the "decentered" subject which rejects the hierarchy of self over Other and allows for openness to the Other. I also make use of the notion that meaning is neither fixed nor objective but rather contextual, relational, and open to multiple interpretations, thus making any definitive grand narratives about self or Other im/possible. In addition, I employ the belief that the fluid claiming of subjectivity and agency is vital to negotiate social hierarchies which work to structure the self/Other relationship by excluding difference. And finally, I draw upon a conception of ethics that involves acknowledging and valuing the differences between self and Other, not only for the development of a non-violent self/Other relationship, but also for the potential it holds for stimulating learning.

Methodology

Overview

Keeping in mind that the purpose of this research is to gain insight into issues related to teaching and learning in intercultural contexts by examining RPCV educators' experiences with culture shock and reverse culture shock, I have chosen narrative inquiry as my research method. According to Clandinin and Connelly (2000) "narrative" or the telling of stories "is the best way of representing and understanding experience" (p. 18). And while the stories

themselves may be informative, the ways in which they are constructed and may be deconstructed are also meaningful, in that

> How individuals recount their histories—what they emphasize and omit, their stance as protagonists or victims, the relationship the story establishes between teller and audience—all shape what individuals can claim of their own lives. (Rosenwald & Ochberg, 1992, p. 1)

Additionally, Fox and Kloppenburg's (1998) assertion that stories are created through "human behavior and social interaction" and that "humans understand themselves through and as interpretive textualizations" (p. 671) also suggests that personal stories are basic to human understanding and have broader meaning beyond the individual.

Drawing on the work of other researchers, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) also believe that stories have the ability to capture a sense of "change" and the "instability" of reality (p. 5) in ways that other research methods cannot. They also note that stories can demonstrate the ways in which human subjects improvise in the face of uncertainty (p. 7) as well as how stories allow for the use of metaphors from various sources to aid in the process of understanding (p. 10). They believe too that narrative provides a sense of "intimacy" (p. 14), a sense of connection between meaning and experience (p. 14), and a sense of "tentativeness" (p. 17) in that the changing nature of reality offers few concrete conclusions. Each of these themes add different dimensions to the ways in which narrative may be utilized as a form of research and understood as a phenomenon unto itself.

As RPCV educators and their shifting intercultural teaching contexts are the topic under study, I note especially Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) claim that narrative inquiry within the education field is concerned with "broad questions of how individuals teach and

learn, of how temporality (placing things in the context of time) connects with change and learning, and of how institutions frame our lives" (p. 1). They also see "teaching and teacher knowledge as expressions of embodied individual and social stories" (p. 4). In this sense, teachers do not simply tell stories they live them through "epiphanies, rituals, routines, metaphors, and everyday actions" (p. xxiv), in specific moments in time, and in relation to other people.

In addition to these themes, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) note some of the tensions between the "grand narrative" and narrative inquiry. These differences help to further illuminate some of the key features of narrative inquiry. They include temporality, people, action, certainty, and context (p. 29-33). These tensions are summarized and paraphrased in Table 1 below.

Table 1. ***Tensions between Narrative Inquiry and the "Grand Narrative"***

Topic	Narrative Inquiry	Grand Narrative
Temporality (location in time)	Events and things located in specific time; past, present, or future	Events and things not tied to specific point in time; considered "timeless"
People	In a process of change	Fixed; essential
Action	Personal history important to understand meaning of actions	Actions seen as having objective meaning
Certainty	Other interpretations possible	Absolute certainty based on causality
Context	Context dependent	Context free
Prime Interest	The person in context	The universal case

All of these themes, taken together, create an image of narrative inquiry as the examination of life experience through the sharing of stories which can be understood as locating the story-teller in personal, social, temporal, physical and metaphorical contexts. The study of stories enables the narrative inquirer to recognize and to the extent possible,

capture a sense of change, instability, improvisation, metaphor, intimacy, connection to lived experience and tentativeness through their analysis--the goal of which is to understand the story-teller as the living embodiment of the story. This is in contrast to formalist and reductionist "grand narratives" which seek to create a sense of certainty through de-contextualization, disembodiment, and objectification and through which personal history, indeed the person, may be considered irrelevant.

I believe narrative inquiry to be a good fit for the current study for several reasons. Narrative inquiry's focus on context and lived experience is directly related to my research purpose of examining RPCV educator experiences with culture and reverse culture shock in intercultural contexts. That stories can capture a sense of the tentativeness and instability of reality, as well as the ways subjects improvise in the face of this instability are also important considerations related to my research aims. Because stories are socially situated, they have implications beyond the individual story-teller. In that stories play an important role in human understanding, I appreciate that stories can provide a sense of intimacy and connection for the research participant, the researcher, and the broader audience. Additionally, I feel that utilizing narrative inquiry within a poststructural hermeneutic framework will allow for richer, more complex multiple readings of both the text and subtext of participant stories.

Participants

The participants for this study are four Returned Peace Corps Volunteers who worked as educators overseas and currently work as educators in the United States. I chose Peace Corps volunteers for the study because, as a former Peace Corps volunteer teacher myself, I

am keenly aware of some of the personal struggles one experiences in trying to understand oneself and one's role as an educator in varying intercultural contexts. The small sample size will allowed me to go into greater depth in analyzing each of the participant's stories. Participants were chosen through a process of purposeful and "snowball sampling" in which research participants are located through social networking (Warren & Karner, 2010, p. 143). As a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer teacher myself, I had access to potential participants through state and national RPCV groups, through the internet networking site Facebook, and through family, friends, and co-workers. My goal was to select participants who served in different countries and come from different socio-cultural backgrounds, if possible, to allow for the gathering of experiences from differing social perspectives. For confidentiality purposes, participants were asked to choose an assumed name for the study.

Data Collection

All of the data were collected during the summer of 2011. Data were collected in three ways: written answers to two writing prompts, open-ended interviews regarding participants' intercultural experiences, and participants' reflections on personal or cultural artifacts. Specifically, I sent each of the participants the same writing prompt via email at the beginning of summer related to their experiences of feeling different in another culture (see Appendix A for general writing/interview prompts). After receiving their written responses, I then spent the weekend in each participant's city or town during which time I gathered 4 hours of audiotaped interview data regarding their experiences living and working as educators abroad and in the United States. During the interviews, participants also shared photos and other artifacts from their intercultural experiences which they used to symbolize

their sense of relationship with themselves and with others. I have made references to these artifacts in my analysis where appropriate. After all of the interviews were completed, I sent each of the participants a follow-up writing prompt, specifically related to teaching in intercultural contexts. I also asked additional questions for purposes of clarifying an answer when necessary.

Data Analysis

Using a poststructural hermeneutic framework to guide my analysis, the data were treated as texts and were analyzed in two separate "readings." The first reading was more hermeneutic and interpretive in nature. This reading focused more on the "significance" and "meaning" that certain aspects of intercultural experience held for the participants for the purpose of creating a shared understanding (Wong, 2005). The second reading was more deconstructive and destabilizing in nature. For this reading, I looked at the beliefs that were "privileged" by the participants in their stories as well as those that were "deemphasized, overlooked, or suppressed" (Balkin, 1995-96, online). For both readings, I used a variety of techniques (described in further detail in the Methodology chapter) in conjunction with various theoretical positions, empirical research findings, popular media views, and my own experiences in order to analyze the texts. By offering a doubled reading of participant texts, I hoped to both demonstrate the value in participants' perspectives and then decenter those perspectives as a way of making a space for other potential meanings.

Researcher Subjectivity

Merriam (2002) notes that within qualitative research it is the researcher who "*is the primary instrument* for data collection and analysis" (p. 5, emphasis in original). This is because the human researcher is closest to research subjects and must therefore remain "immediately responsive and adaptive" (p. 5) throughout the data collection and analysis process. Because of this role and because researchers "come to inquiry with views, attitudes, and ways of thinking" (Clandinin & Connelly 2000, p. 46), it is important to understand the subjectivities that the researcher brings to the research. The awareness and monitoring of one's subjectivities is referred to as "reflexivity" (Hiles & Cermak, 2007, p.1) or "wakefulness" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p.184) and occurs not just at the beginning of research, but throughout the research process. In order to begin the process of reflexivity, qualitative researchers often describe their self-perceived "social location" as a way of helping readers understand the researcher by examining their experiences and assumptions.

Currently, I am a 45 year-old gay white male and a Director of Enrollment Services at a large four-campus community college in Oklahoma where I have also worked as an ESL instructor and International Student Advisor. I grew up on a farm in a small, rural all-white town in Oklahoma. I am the second of three sons. My mother and father are retired state employees who worked for the Oklahoma Turnpike Authority. During my childhood, I attended Southern Baptist church services several times a week. My two most prized possessions growing up were my horse, Sugar-tree, who was both an important mode of transportation and companionship and my stereo which I used to play all the latest hits of the disco era.

I knew I was different from my family and friends at early age. I was confused by the Christian narratives I grew up with which taught me to both love and privilege myself as a Christian (we were the only ones going to heaven) and to hate myself as a gay person (homosexuality was considered an abomination). Additionally, in my home culture, boys were expected to hunt, fish, and play sports. I preferred art, literature, and music. I didn't understand why boys weren't supposed to like art, for example, when I was a boy and I liked art. For me, school was an escape. It was a way to explore new ideas and try new things. Also, by realizing I would never be a sports star, I focused my attention on excelling at school. Eventually, I became class valedictorian, which proved useful for earning college scholarships that would allow me to leave my small town.

In some ways, my life has been a search for and an attempt to appreciate the differences within myself and others. This search led me to attend a Native American Christian junior college, which as neither a Native American nor a Christian by that time, proved to be a unique learning experience. I also had a brief career in advertising that took me to other states such as Arkansas, Hawaii, and California. I worked in the corporate world in Texas and was an English tutor with immigrants for the Literacy Volunteers of America in my spare time. My enjoyment of working with immigrant populations led to teaching English for two years with the U.S. Peace Corps in Cameroon, Africa. I count my two years with the Peace Corps as two of the most challenging, eye-opening, and life-changing years of my life and it is the intercultural experiences garnered during those two years as well as my belief in the transformative power of education that form the major impetus of this study.

While I have considerable experiences working with diverse cultures, as a white male in a society that is structured to privilege white males, at times, I embody mainstream

hierarchical thinking and supposition. On the other hand, as a non-Christian gay male in a culture that to some extent disenfranchises and demonizes non-Christians and gay males, at times I embody otherness and different ways of knowing. Sometimes this sense of otherness is empowering in that it allows me more than one perspective on the world. At times it is disempowering in that I constantly struggle with finding a way to accept my otherness and engage the privileged white male side of myself in productive, ethical, and creative synergy. I can also say that I don't always get this balance right. Sometimes my privilege overrides my otherness. I (Smythe, 2009) wrote about my experience as an International Student Advisor designing an international student orientation for which I created a handout that unintentionally reduced American culture and other cultures to lists of opposing stereotypes that conformed to prevailing American social opinion. I also talked about how I was able to use "decentering" as a means of making a space for drawing out the diverse perspectives of students by asking them about their various experiences with American culture rather than privileging my singular point of view.

Overall, my background, my upbringing and my other mediating inter- and intra-cultural experiences allowed me to bring a unique and hopefully engaging perspective to my research. Some of my challenges as a researcher and a member of the *mainstream* include not objectifying others through reductive thinking and overwriting their voice with my own. I also think some challenges for me as a researcher and a *minority* include not objectifying others through reductive thinking by viewing research participants as victims of society and assuming they lack the agency to act on their own behalf. I need to keep in mind some of the tensions that exist inside me as a doubly-positioned (majority/minority) researcher. I also have to be conscious of participants' perspectives that may challenge my own and be aware

of how this understanding affects both my perceptions and the study. And, because I too am a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer educator, I have to make sure that I do not force others' perceptions into my own framework of understanding or assume that we share meanings.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

To the extent that my study attempts to glean intercultural insights through Peace Corps volunteers' experiences with culture shock abroad and reverse culture shock at home, I begin by situating my study in the literature on the internationalization of curriculum which broadens the discussion of curriculum beyond national boundaries and explores the ways in which globalization shapes both local and global perspectives. I also examine the literature on the Peace Corps with an emphasis on its historical beginnings, its proposed functions, and its challenges, as well as literature specifically related to Returned Peace Corps Volunteer (RPCV) teachers. In the remaining sections, I review the literature on culture shock and reverse culture shock, with particular attention paid to aspects related to self-awareness, identity, learning, and growth.

Internationalization of Curriculum Studies

Since 2000, the International Association for the Advancement of Curriculum Studies (IAACS) has envisioned the internationalization of curriculum studies as both a "worldwide" dialogue regarding curriculum practices and a critique of the uniformity and standardization of curriculum encouraged by marketplace globalization (IAACS, 2010,

online). Gough (2003) further defines the internationalization of curriculum studies as "a process of creating transnational spaces in which scholars from different localities collaborate in reframing and decentering their own knowledge traditions and negotiate trust in each other's contributions to their collective work" (p. 68). Others add that it is geared toward "the promotion of global peace and well-being" (Sook, n.d., online) and point out that such work is "never over, always on-going" (Smith, 2003, p. 46).

Pinar (2000) visualizes the internationalization of curriculum studies, not as an attempt to create a unified or standardized global curriculum, but rather as a "conversation" (p. 5) that transcends national boundaries. He also argues that the internationalization of curriculum studies can work to counteract the "naïve," narcissistic, and "imperialistic" inward focus of the American curriculum (p. 4-5) by seeking to share with and learn from the practices of other educators working on both the local and global stages. I particularly appreciate this notion of curriculum as conversation, in that it suggests that through the sharing of thoughts, beliefs, and feelings from differing perspectives, something unique may be created in the interplay. I also note that such interplay requires the ability to reframe one's way of knowing not as *the* way, but as one of many ways, to trust others and to be trusted, and to recognize that any conclusions about curriculum are never final, making such conversation both on-going and multi-directional.

Within this transnational curriculum conversation, educators and curriculum researchers are voicing their concerns about the ways in which the neo-liberalist market practices that drive globalization are affecting the nature of public education and curriculum. Smith (2003) argues that these practices work to "delegitimize public

education," "commercialize the school environment" and pressure governments and schools into "adopting a human capital model of education" (p. 38). Sahlberg (2004) adds that a key focus of the neo-liberalist agenda is standardization (especially through testing) which pits students, teachers, and schools in competition against one another (p. 67), de-professionalizes teaching, and "narrows curriculum and learning to basic skills in core academic subjects" (p. 76). While responding to these challenges, curriculum scholars are also asking broad questions particularly relevant to teaching in a globalized world: "How can we think globally *without* enacting some form of epistemological imperialism?" (Gough, 2003, p. 63), How can we teach "ethics and a sense of global responsibility that go beyond the bounds of the knowledge economy" (Sahlberg, 2004, p. 66)? And, "How should we address the topics of culture and identity in the organization of school knowledge?" (Matus & Mccarthy, 2003, p. 76). Certainly, there are no easy answers to these questions, but in their asking and in contemplating issues related to the globalization of public education, one gets an idea of the tenuous contexts within which educators operate. While it seems that economic globalization works to standardize the curriculum without regard for local contexts or individual experiences and reduces both teachers and students to economic tools of the marketplace, the internationalization of curriculum studies, as a critique of globalization, works to engage educators in local, national, and international contexts in a dialogic exploration of differences, ethics, culture, and identity through curriculum in pursuit of self-understanding and mutual respect.

Another thread within this conversation on the internationalization of curriculum studies attends to the identity and position of teachers. Speaking at the LSU conference

on the internationalization of curriculum, Pinar (2000) offers the following point of view:

> we teachers are conceived by others, by the expectations and fantasies of our students and by the demands of parents, administrators, policymakers, and politicians, to all of whom we are sometimes the "other." We are formed as well by their and our own internalized life histories. These various spheres or levels of self-constitution require investigation. Locating the process of knowing in the politics of identity suggests escaping the swirling waters created by the demands and pressure of others. The capacity to stand calmly in a maelstrom can come only with the knowledge of other worlds, with living in other realities, not split off or dissociated from the world of work. "Separate but connected" permits us to enter the work world in larger, more complex roles than those prescribed for us, making it less likely that we will collapse upon the social surface, reduced to what others make of us. (p. 10)

This perspective underscores some of the basic assumptions of my study, specifically that teachers are made "other" through the "expectations," "fantasies," and "demands" of others as well as through their own "internalized life histories." This offers a fertile ground for curriculum inquiry in the spaces between and among the fantasies and the lived realities. Also, that the "process of knowing" is linked to the "politics of identity" underlies the belief that what one experiences of the world shapes both one's identity and what one knows of the world, including teacher beliefs about the nature and the delivery of curriculum. Additionally, that "knowledge of other worlds" and "living in other realities" allows one to move beyond the teaching roles created by others and implies that the experience of otherness holds the potential for learning and growth. And lastly, that

embodying an identity that is separate from but connected to the insular world of the school prevents one from becoming immersed in institutionalized definitions of one's role. It also permits drawing insights and developing one's identity in spaces beyond the school walls.

Pinar's (2000) assertion that knowing is connected to identity, that teachers are formed (in part) by their own life histories, and that knowledge of and experiences living in other realities are important for teacher self-understanding begs the question: What life experiences do teachers draw upon in order to teach inter- or trans- nationally? This theme is explored by Merryfield (2000), who examined the lived experiences of 80 teacher educators who were recognized for preparing teachers to "teach for diversity, equity, and interconnectedness in the local community, nation, and world" (p. 430). An important goal of her study was to examine the relationship between the lived experiences of these teachers and how they conceptualize their work as educators. In reviewing the life histories of these teacher educators she identifies a number of experiences that guide them in their teaching. These include experiences of being seen as "different" (p. 432) or as "the Other" (p. 434), experiences that allow them to recognize "contradictions between beliefs, expectations or knowledge and the multiple realities of experience" (p. 439), developing a "double consciousness" in response to experiences of racism (p. 433), experiences with teachers and parents (as children) (p. 434), experiences with students and parents (as teachers) (p. 437-438), travel (p. 434), and living in another country (p. 435-436). Merryfield (2000) also notes that many of the teacher educators in her study experienced "culture shock" at various transition points in their lives and that living abroad was often cited as being the most influential experience for middle class

white teacher educators in their work as multi-cultural and global educators (p. 439). That the experience of "otherness" led to a "double consciousness" and that culture shock and living abroad were key experiences in developing their intercultural understanding (especially for middle class white teachers) helps provide direction for the current study. It also leaves me wondering what the experiences of living and teaching abroad may hold for teachers who do not represent the majority. Additionally, this leads me to explore the relationship between the internationalization of curriculum studies and research on educator study/teach abroad programs more in depth.

In a poll that included 176 higher education institutions in 66 different countries regarding their "practices and priorities of internationalization" conducted by the International Association of Universities (IAU), two of the key findings are that "Faculty are seen as the drivers for internationalization" and that the "Mobility of students and teachers is considered to be the most important reason for making internationalization a priority" (Knight, 2003, p 3). Along these lines, Schneider (2003) finds that study abroad is the top strategy for internationalizing secondary teacher education employed by many colleges and universities across the United States. More recently, Fischer (2008) argues that study abroad programs aimed at college/university faculty members themselves have been posited as a means to "create more-global campuses by cultivating a faculty of internationalists" and such programs are recognized as a "bright spot" in higher education institutions' "otherwise uneven efforts at internationalization" (p.1). These findings underscore the important role that faculty and educators in general play in the area of internationalization. They also suggest that study abroad programs are a key factor in the development of educators' international and intercultural awareness. It should be pointed

out that study abroad is perhaps a misnomer in that such programs for teachers often involve not only studying but also teaching abroad. My subsequent use of the term "teacher study abroad" is used to denote the case in which educators not only travel abroad, but also teach abroad. In that the Peace Corps offers the opportunity to live and teach abroad, I would argue that it too is a special type of teach abroad program, although there are considerable differences in structure, mission, and time spent in the host country. In spite of these differences, many of the experiences and the challenges faced by teachers in foreign environments are silimiar. Therefore, I think a brief review of the research on teacher study abroad, specifically those with a teaching component, can offer insights into the experiences, opportunities, and tensions that RPCV educators face in teaching in foreign environments, as well as what it may mean for the internationalization of curriculum studies.

Sandgren et al. (1999) theorize that educator experiences abroad lead to both self-awareness, defined as a "new or keener recognition of one's thoughts, emotions, traits or behaviors," and social awareness described as a "new or keener recognition of social reality," and that these changes in awareness foster changes in course content, teaching techniques, philosophy of teaching, and/or interactions with students (p. 48-49). Many of the studies reviewed here seem to draw upon this same understanding, that experience is the key to unlocking other ways of viewing and interacting in the world. In general, the experiences that pre and early service primary and secondary teachers in teacher study abroad programs engage in are related to dealing with differences in culture, both outside the school (adjusting to housing, shopping, and travelling) and within the school through differences in curriculum, teacher roles, classroom management styles, school facilities,

and teaching materials. They also sometimes deal with language differences. According to the research, navigating these differences provides opportunities for teachers to challenge mis/perceptions of the host culture, to shift their worldviews, and to develop self-awareness, self-confidence, intercultural awareness, personal and professional efficacy, and empathy for or trust in those seen as culturally different (Brindley, Quinn, & Morton, 2009; Cushner & Mahon, 2002; Escamilla, Aragon, & Fránquiz, 2009; Malewski & Phillion, 2009b; Pence & Macgillivray, 2008; Schlein, 2009; Tang & Choi, 2004; Willard-Holt, 2001; Zhao, Meyers, and Meyers, 2009). Other teachers, reflecting several years later how early teaching experiences abroad affected them in the long-term, also noted that teaching abroad gave them a greater self-confidence as well as a "more flexible sense of themselves and their own teaching" and an "increased comfort and ability to work with ambiguity and uncertainty" in foreign contexts (Garii, 2009, p. 96-97). But, Garii (2009) wonders too how this "increased flexibility" translates to their teaching practices back home (p. 99), a theme I explore in the current study.

Although these studies point to the positive and transformative effects of teacher study abroad, some argue that neither placing people from different cultures in close proximity (Leask, 2004) nor experience by itself (Merryfield, 2000) is enough to foster the ability to teach from an intercultural or transnational perspective. Others contend that educator study abroad can be linked to "neo-imperialism, empire building, and the advance of global economic, cultural, and political systems" (Malewski & Phillion, 2009a). These assertions point to tensions within the study abroad literature. Willard-Holt (2001), for example, found that after teaching abroad for one week in Mexico, one teacher exhibited not just self-confidence, but "overconfidence" saying that they could

now “do anything” and two others appeared to consider themselves “experts on multicultural teaching and the Mexican culture” (p. 514). Other research suggests that some teachers have difficulty making a connection between their experiences teaching abroad and teaching in the contexts of their classrooms at home (Schlein, 2009; Tang & Choi, 2004; Willard-Holt, 2001). And while teacher study abroad is touted as providing white middle class teachers, who represent the majority of the primary and secondary teacher population in the U.S., the opportunity to experience life as an Other (Garii, 2009; Merryfield, 2000; Schlein, 2009), Phillion and her colleagues observe that for some white teachers, the study abroad experience actually “reinforced—rather than challenged—feelings of blessedness and engendered…a ‘revival’ of White privilege” (In Malewski & Phillion, 2009b, p. 53). In the case of minority educators, however, some reported greater acceptance, even popularity in some cases, or experienced less overt racism while teaching abroad than they did in the U.S. (Cushner & Mahon, 2002; Garii, 2009; Malewski & Phillion, 2009; Zhao, Meyers, & Meyers, 2009).

In various ways, these tensions allow both educators and curriculum researchers to examine more closely the “interrelationships across identity, power, and experience that lead to a consciousness of other perspectives and a recognition of multiple realities” (Merryfield, 2000, p. 440). For example, Escamilla, Aragon, and Fránquiz (2009) utilize the tension between US teachers’ “unconscious internalized beliefs about the inferiority of Mexican schools” (p. 275) and the reality they experienced in Mexican classrooms during a study abroad trip, to enable a shift in the U.S. teachers’ thinking about Mexican schools’ ability to provide a good education. Additionally, Malewski and Phillion (2009b) investigate how race, class, and gender shaped the study abroad experience and

the worldview of two pre-service teachers—one a socioeconomically disadvantaged white female, the other a Hispanic male. In both of these studies, the tensions related to identity, power, and experience were generative sources for understanding relationships in "embodied and shifting" (Schlein, 2009, p. 28) intercultural contexts. Therefore, I argue that the tensions between differing perspectives are beneficial and should be incorporated into rather than eliminated from the learning process. In that these tensions develop contextually and relationally, the implication is that they cannot be "taught" through a curriculum of standardization, but rather are "experienced" and can be analyzed in an internationalized curriculum of conversation for both the challenges and the opportunities they may reveal.

The Peace Corps & Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Educators

In this section I offer information about the Peace Corps past and present in order to provide a historical context for the current study. I also present some of the critiques of the Peace Corps, followed by research related to RPCV educators and their insights. According to the Peace Corps (2010) website, as of this writing there are 8, 655 volunteers and trainees working in 77 countries. Of those that are serving, 60% are women, 40% are men, and 19% are minorities. The average age of the volunteer is 28, although there is no age limit. The largest numbers of volunteers work in the Education sector (37%) and the largest percentage of volunteers serve in Africa (37%) followed by Latin America (24%) and Eastern Europe/Central Asia (21%) (Peace Corps, 2010, Fast Facts). The website also indicates that the task of the Education volunteer is to "introduce innovative teaching methodologies, encourage critical thinking in the classroom, and

integrate issues like health education and environmental awareness into English, math, science, and other subjects" (Peace Corps, 2010, Education). To me it seems that the goal of introducing "innovative teaching methodologies" implies the superiority of PCVs' teaching methodology, even though the majority of volunteer teachers are not education majors, lack teaching experience, and have little to no knowledge of the local teaching context (myself included). Likewise, "encouraging critical thinking" suggests a lack of critical thinking in the countries being served. Nowhere is it suggested that the education volunteer should be the learner, but rather a leader and an expert.

According to government documents (in Schur, 2000), the Peace Corps was created through Executive Order 10924, signed by President John F. Kennedy on March 1, 1961. It was later established as an independent agency through Public Law 87-293, approved by Congress on September 22, 1961 (p. 10-14). The Peace Corps' three-point mission, which hasn't changed since its creation in 1961, is "To help the people of interested countries in meeting their need for trained men and women," "To help promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served," and "To help promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans" (Peace Corps, 2008, *Mission*). While, on the surface, this mission points to the somewhat altruistic goals of providing assistance in the form of trained workers to countries in need and promoting cross-cultural understanding in those countries, another more political motive seems to underlie this mission: the use of American idealism to stamp out the spread of communism in developing countries. President Kennedy noted that unlike the U.S., the Soviet Union "had hundreds of men and women, scientists, physicists, teachers, engineers, doctors, and nurses…prepared to spend their lives abroad in the service of

world communism" and he was looking for a way to actively involve Americans in what he saw as the fight for democracy (JFK Presidential Library & Museum, n.d., Peace Corps). Additionally, Schur (2000) believes that Kennedy hoped to "counter negative images of the 'Ugly American' and Yankee imperialism" by sending idealistic young Americans to spread goodwill in Third World countries and "help stem the growth of communism there" (p. 5). This means that the Peace Corps would be used, not only to supply other countries with trained workers or promote cross-cultural learning, but also to create a positive image of America while spreading a decidedly American vision of democracy and freedom. And while Fischer (1998) agrees that the early Peace Corps administration promoted a form of cultural imperialism, he also argues that it is the experiences and the stories of Peace Corps volunteers that challenge that mission as well as the negative stereotypes of people in the non-Western world. Perhaps this is what may be called the "Peace Corps paradox"—that in some ways the Peace Corps, even today, functions to both support and counteract its own neo-colonialist assumptions.

Critiques of the Peace Corps, both at home and abroad, seemed to spring up almost immediately after its inception. At home, in August 1961, the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) were worried that volunteers would be "living under abnormal conditions and encouraged to take part in the life of the nation, tribe, or community…as individuals…Separated from the moral and disciplinary influences of their homeland" and that "serious consequences" would result (in Longsworth, 1971, p.84)—the implication being that the American way of life is "normal" and that volunteers need constant reminding of this normalcy or they may be led astray. Abroad, on the other hand, the Austrian philosopher/Roman Catholic priest Ivan Illich (1968) was

concerned about U.S. volunteers' effects on his adopted country of Mexico. In a speech he gave at the Conference on InterAmerican Student Projects (CIASP), he refers to all U.S. volunteers as "salesmen for the middle-class American Way of Life" and "vacationing do-gooders" who turn up in every corner of the world to "pretentiously" impose themselves and "create disorder" in other cultures, without considering the people in those cultures. He also noted that "The Peace Corps spends around $10,000 a year on each corps member to help him adapt to his new environment and to guard him against culture shock. How odd nobody ever thought about spending money to educate poor Mexicans in order to prevent them from the culture shock of meeting you?" He has a point. While Peace Corps volunteers (myself included) are often heralded as martyrs for a cause, it seems that little thought is given to the damage we may do—inadvertently or otherwise—in the countries we are intended to "serve."

Another critique from the early days of the Peace Corps is that media portrayals of the Peace Corps experience are "too glowing, too glamorous, and too pat" in that they offer an "unvarying image of hardship, of sacrifice," overstate the PCV's potential as change agents, and that the difficulties some volunteers face are often "depressingly ordinary" (*Peace Corps Volunteer*, 1963, p. 4). This is not to say that volunteers do not face challenges or make sacrifices in joining the Peace Corps, simply that media images which present a uniform picture of Peace Corps life, fail to capture the multiple facets of the actual experience. These media portrayals may also lead to unrealistic expectations on behalf of volunteers and affect the ways in which they envision their role.

More recent critiques include Strauss' (2008) contention that the Peace Corps too often recruits young, inexperienced volunteers for jobs overseas for which they are ill-

prepared and as such they fail to offer the kind of assistance that host countries need. He also argues that the Peace Corps fails to properly assess its development efforts. A former Peace Corps Country Director in Cameroon 2002-2007, Strauss (2008) writes:

> This lack of organizational introspection allows the agency to continue sending, for example, unqualified volunteers to teach English when nearly every developing country could easily find high-caliber English teachers among its own population. Even after Cameroonian teachers and education officials ranked English instruction as their lowest priority (after help with computer literacy, math and science, for example), headquarters in Washington continued to send trainees with little or no classroom experience to teach English in Cameroonian schools. One volunteer told me that the only possible reason he could think of for having been selected was that he was a native English speaker. (*Innocents Abroad*, online)

In response, some argue that "The Peace Corps is really more of a cultural-exchange program than an international development organization" (Clark, 2008, online) whose success "should be measured by how many cultural barriers and misconceptions have been cast aside and been replaced with a deeper and more meaningful understanding of the world around us" (Phillips, 2010, online).

In my own experience as an RPCV English teacher in Cameroon, each of the critiques above, as well as their counter-arguments, hold some merit and none alone present a complete picture of life in the Peace Corps. They do however provide certain tensions that RPCV educators *must* and *do* negotiate in various ways. A recurring tension seems to exist between the way RPCV educators' roles are envisioned and portrayed by

others and the actual lived reality of the RPCV educators' experience. The ways in which RPCV educators negotiate this and other tensions are a prime concern of the current study.

Turning more specifically to the literature on RPCV educators, their experiences and insights have been catalogued in three main venues: through research on inner city/urban schools, through doctoral dissertations, and through newspaper and magazine articles. I begin with the research on inner city/urban schools. Immediately after the first groups of RPCV educators returned to the United States, they were assumed to possess certain attributes that made them especially qualified to teach in the inner city, namely, a "sense of commitment, desire to serve, flexibility, understanding and energy" (Daly, 1975, p. 385) as well as "knowledge of developing lands and peoples, their experience with different cultures, their adaptability to new and unfamiliar conditions, their skill in applying knowledge to practical problems" and the willingness to work in "undesirable" conditions (Ashabranner, 1968, p. 40). A more recent article makes a similar claim, suggesting RPCV educators' suitability for teaching in inner city schools because they "have learned how to deal with the economics of scarcity" (Curriculum Review, 1993, p. 20). Ashabranner (1968) also sees similarities between teaching in Third World countries and teaching in inner cities. He writes:

> The volunteer usually must function in classrooms plagued by overcrowding, insufficient and irrelevant textbooks, bad discipline, and negative attitudes stemming from his students' poor preparation, low physical stamina, and weak motivation. He encounters, in short, conditions strikingly similar to those in our

> own blighted inner-city schools: the nation's number one problem in education today. (p. 39)

In his research, Longsworth (1971) finds, however, that there are differences in the teaching contexts, namely that the respect shown teachers in other countries, is not necessarily the case in the American classroom (p. 87). And RPCV educators respond to the classroom management issues they face in U.S. schools in a number of ways including scaling down their expectations of students, finding ways to remain flexible and innovative—even more so than in their Peace Corps classrooms, and quitting teaching altogether (Ashabranner, 1968, p. 41).

In spite of these challenges, RPCV educators have been recruited for at least two notable projects that focus on inner city and urban education: The Cardozo Project in Urban Teaching and the Peace Corps Fellows/USA program. In 1963, the Cardozo Project sought to recruit ten RPCVs to labor alongside social workers in developing curriculum at Cardozo High School in Washington, DC. Their task was to develop "teaching techniques and teaching materials which are meaningful for culturally deprived children" as well as to "determine the kind of teacher-training best suited to urban high schools" (Peace Corps Volunteer Newsletter, 1963, p. 5). In a letter sent to potential RPCV candidates, the principal of the school wrote that the project would determine:

> whether two ingredients—a mostly Negro mid-city school in the center of a disadvantaged area of Washington, and the enthusiasm, creativity, and sense of social dedication which Peace Corps Volunteers have shown abroad—can be put together in a way which will light an intellectual fire and thereby perhaps begin a revolution in American urban education (*Peace Corps Volunteer*, 1963, p. 5).

Later, the Cardozo Project began recruiting other types of teachers besides Peace Corps volunteers and the program eventually closed in 1968 (Daly, 1975, p. 385). Almost two decades later, the Peace Corps Fellows/USA program was started by former Peace Corps volunteer, Dr. Beryl Levinger, to recruit RPCV educators to work in the New York City school system in recognition of their "Innovative and practical ideas about education," their "Sensitivity to cultural differences" and their "Tenaciousness in adverse conditions" (Peace Corps, 2010, on-line). Today, Peace Corps Fellows complete internships in "underserved American communities" in a variety of areas including: Education, Community/Economic development, Business Administration, Public Policy, Leadership, Environmental Affairs, and International political economy and development (Peace Corps, 2010, on-line).

While much of the research, as noted above, is focused on the RPCV educator as especially, if not magically, qualified for teaching in the inner city or urban school, I think it is also important to understand how the RPCV educator might function in public schools in general. The need to work, perhaps more diligently, with suburban and rural teachers in exploring the curriculum from an intercultural perspective is also suggested by a report from the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality and Public Agenda (Rochkind et al., 2008). Through their phone interviews with 641 first-year teachers, they find that in contrast to those teachers who plan to work in "high-needs schools," the teachers "headed for more suburban and working-class schools are just not prepared for the diversity they will find" (p. 12). My study will add to the literature on how RPCV educators function not only in urban schools, but other schools as well.

Scholarly dissertations have also provided insights into RPCV experiences with teaching and living abroad. A Peace Corps wiki (2010) chronicling the "Dissertations relating to Peace Corps" provides an index of 51 master's theses and/or doctoral dissertations written between 1964 and 2008. Nine of these dissertations relate to RPCV educators. Three of these dissertations are particularly relevant to the current study (Cross, 1998; Hammerschlag, 1996; Myers, 2001). In general, these dissertations examine RPCV educator experiences teaching abroad and their effects on teaching at home, albeit in slightly different ways. While Cross (1998) looked at how the Peace Corps experience affected RPCVs personal and professional efficacy, Hammerschlag (1996) and Myers (2001) wanted to learn how RPCV educators incorporated their overseas experience in their teaching. While all of the studies find that the Peace Corps experience increases RPCV educators' intercultural awareness, Myers (2001) and Cross (1998) discover that the effects of the Peace Corps experience were more profound on the teacher as an individual rather than on their teaching. At the same time, Hammerschlag (1996) notes that RPCV educators perceive a more direct connection between their experience and "how and what they teach" (p. 147). Cross (1998), who was the only researcher to perform classroom observations, however, indicates that the increased intercultural awareness that RPCV educators spoke about during their interviews, was not necessarily observable in their teaching. Additionally, the RPCVs in these studies are framed in uniformly positive and glowing terms as "gentle idealists, supporting forms of activism for human rights, and helping people help themselves to build a better future for themselves, their children, and families" (Myers, 2001, p. 21), as having "spirit," a "can-do attitude," and "the ability to triumph in the face of difficult school situations" (Cross,

1998, p. ii.), and as possessing the "traits of altruism, dedication, selflessness" and a willingness to "offer more time than they are paid," engendering jealousy and resentment among some of their host country counterparts (Hammerschlag, 1996, p. 51). Further, despite being labeled altruists, Meyers (2001) discovered that the main reason the RPCV educators in her study joined the Peace Corps was "personal achievement and self-gain" (p.201). In some ways this suggests that RPCV educators are shaped a great deal by the media images indicated in the critiques presented earlier in this section. Some might say that the uniformly positive portrayals of RPCVs, despite what their experiences reveal, points to a gap in intercultural awareness by providing a one-sided perspective and concealing the complicated nature of Peace Corps experiences. I suggest that exploring all facets of Peace Corps experience, both the seemingly "positive" and "negative" aspects, does not detract, but rather adds to that experience.

In addition to this scholarly work, the insights of RPCV educators have also been captured in newspaper/magazine articles across the country. These insights provide snapshots into the perspectives RPCV educators developed through intercultural contact and culture shock. For example, in one article, an RPCV art teacher rethinks the practice of using food in art and other class projects (potatoes for potato stamp prints, macaroni to make designs, Cheerios used for counting, etc.) as "wasteful" after confronting the poverty and starvation that her African students and colleagues face on a daily basis (Brown, 2005). A second teacher speaks about wastefulness after a trip home to the U.S., noting, "My shock came when I returned for a visit in the Christmas holidays. So much waste! The buying of gifts that people didn't need" (Armstrong, 1986). Another talks about the differences in student behavior, stating that "It was kind of a culture

shock…Coming from a place where kids are very respectful to coming here [the U.S.], where kids are disruptive and don't respect authority" (Fernandez, 1999). One RPCV educator developed empathy for internationals coming to the U.S. after she began to "understand a little bit about what it is like to be a minority" in her host country (Nacelewicz, 2002). Another RPCV educator gained insight into American race relations after he reflected on how easy it was for him, a white male teacher in Africa, to lie about one of his African student's assaulting him in order to have the student expelled from the school (Meyers, 1999). And, yet another referred to his first year teaching abroad as a "failure" due to the challenges he faced when he encountered differences in class scheduling, teaching philosophies, and classroom management styles in his classroom abroad (Burnley, 1997). This caused him to adapt his pedagogy to meet both his own beliefs and the needs and the expectations of his host country supervisors, who ranked his second year a success. Certainly, these brief remarks are only a small sample and cannot be generalized as representative of all RPCV educators' experiences or points of view. They do, however, offer various kinds of insights that bridge issues of power, identity, and experience that may serve to inform the current study.

Culture Shock

In this section, I offer some of the ways in which culture shock has been conceptualized and defined, the causes of culture shock, the stages of and emotional reactions to culture shock, the limited research on teacher culture shock, and potential uses of culture shock in the curriculum. According to the literature, the term "culture shock" was initially used by Cora Du Bois in 1951 to describe the experiences of

anthropologists working in the field, but it was another anthropologist, Kalervo Oberg, who later popularized the term and extended its use to include other groups working in foreign countries (La Brack, n.d.; Hart, 2005). In 1954, Oberg referred to culture shock as "a malady…an occupational disease of people who have been suddenly transplanted abroad" with its own "etiology, symptoms, and cure" (p. 1). Along these lines, some have suggested that culture shock is similar to some forms of mental illness (Kron & Faber, 1973; Weaver in Hart, 2005). This categorization seems to focus on the "negative" emotional reactions associated with culture shock. Others, however, tend to emphasize the positive outcomes of culture shock as a "learning experience" (Sitton, 1976) leading to "a state of high self- and cultural awareness" (Adler, 1976). Still, others point out that self- and cultural awareness are not necessarily givens, that "emotional…stagnation" (Garza-Guerrero, 1974), or the development of negative stereotypes of other cultures may result (David, 1971). Taking these perspectives together, perhaps it is safe to say that there are both negative and positive aspects of culture shock, the experience of which holds a least the *potential* for learning and growth.

The most common causes of culture shock for the sojourner in the foreign culture are a loss of familiar cues such as words, gestures, customs, and beliefs (David, 1971; Kron & Faber, 1973; Oberg, 1954), the enormous loss of "love objects" such as family, friends, language, music, and food (Garza-Guerrero, 1974, p. 410), a lack of understanding of other cultures as well as a means to fully communicate within those cultures (Oberg, 1954), and ethnocentrism (Oberg, 1954; Sitton 1976) which Oberg (1954) defines as the "belief that not only the culture but the race and the nation are the center of the world" (p. 6). The literature also suggests additional causes that compound

the experience of culture shock for Americans such as the middle class focus on "practical and utilitarian values" and "work as a means to personal success" (Oberg, 1954, p. 7) rather than relating success to the interrelationships of race, power, and social status, leading to the belief that Americans are "culture-free" (Adler, 1976; Stillar, 2007) products of their own individuality, and therefore able to "adjust to anything" (Adler, 1976, p. 21). In reviewing these causes, it seems that culture shock involves the realization that one's own meaning and value systems are not shared universally. They also suggest that the experience may be especially difficult for sojourners who do not consider their values and beliefs as culturally derived.

A good deal of the literature also focuses on the stages of and emotional reactions to culture shock. Zapf (1991) identifies 19 examples of stage models from 1954 to 1985 (p. 108) and his is not an exhaustive list. Although each model uses different terms for each stage, they tend to follow a similar four-stage model expressed by Oberg (1954) with an initial Honeymoon stage characterized by a superficial fascination with the new culture (p.2), a second Crisis stage when the newness wears off and physical and/or emotional discomfort sets in (p. 3), a third Recovery stage in which the sojourner begins to adapt linguistically and culturally to the new environment (p. 3-4), and a final Adjustment stage in which the sojourner accepts and enjoys the new culture as "just another way of living" (p. 4). And within these stages, the research lists a number of variable emotional reactions to culture shock, including some that are considered "negative" such as frustration, anxiety, depression, anger, helplessness, fears of being cheated, contaminated, or disregarded, and a strong desire to return to the home culture (Adler, 1976; David, 1971; Oberg, 1954) and some that are "positive" such as

excitement, fascination, creativity, a sense of challenge, stimulation, enthusiasm, and confidence (Zapf, 1991). While it is important to be aware of the stages of and responses to culture shock as points of reference, Garza-Guerrero (1974) and La Brack (n.d.) suggest that the models may be too simplistic and too linear in their focus. For example, La Brack (n.d.) writes that these models "did not capture either the apparent "messiness" and unpredictability of the process, nor did they account for cases where it appeared that the stages did not occur in order, were frequently repeated, seemed compressed or blended, or were absent altogether" (on-line). In that culture shock may or may not occur in stages with or without accompanying emotional responses, the research suggests the need to approach culture shock as perhaps a predictable occurrence, yet one that has contextual and individual implications which cannot be predicted in advance.

One might reasonably ask at this point how the study of culture shock relates to teaching and how it may be utilized for educational purposes. Kron and Faber (1973) believe that the "great increase in student and teacher mobility" (p. 507) is cause for examining student/teacher relationships in terms of culture shock. They further argue that teacher performance is "adversely affected by culture shock" and that students also "suffer if the teacher's reaction to culture shock is highlighted by anxiety, frustration, self-doubt, shouting, fear, and other disabling symptoms common to the phenomenon" (p. 507). In the time following Kron and Faber's (1973) article, little (if any) research has dealt explicitly with teacher culture shock within public education, even though the statistics presented in the opening of this paper indicate heightened student mobility leading to teacher anxiety over cultural differences. For teachers in teach abroad programs, culture shock was alternately mentioned in negative terms (Cushner & Mahon

2002), in positive terms as a form of "dissonance" (Tang & Choi, 2004), while a third study found the interplay of both "consonance" and "dissonance" equally meaningful in shaping teachers' experiences (Brindley, Quinn, & Morton 2009). I expected to read more detailed accounts of culture shock in the Peace Corps dissertations I reviewed earlier, however, culture shock was offered almost in passing and there was no real attempt to link culture shock to the myriad experiences and perspective shifts their participants recounted. It is possible that the label "culture shock" may have negative or painful connotations that conflict with the positive image of the Peace Corps, but while I agree that the experience of culture shock may be a painful one, it need not be disabling. I share Adler's (1976) assertion that culture shock is at once a "form of alienation" as well as symbolic of the "attempt to comprehend, survive in, and grow through immersion in a second culture" (p. 14). In short, the so-called disabling aspects of culture shock listed above appear to be an integral part of the process of developing a sense of self and intercultural awareness. The trick is in utilizing rather than fearing or avoiding the "negative" aspects of culture shock to stimulate learning and growth.

In considering how a notion of culture shock may be invited into curriculum in a broad sense, I draw on the literature that brings together the theoretical (Adler, 1976), practical (Sitton, 1976; David 1971), analytical (Archer, 1986) and metaphorical/spiritual (Hart, 2005) aspects of culture shock. From a theoretical perspective, Adler (1976) considers culture shock as a transitional experience indicative of a shift from low to high personal and cultural awareness. Unlike the models which view culture shock as a sickness to be cured, Adler (1976) believes that the final stage of culture shock "is a state of dynamic tension in which self and cultural discoveries have opened up the possibility

of other depth experiences" (p. 18). In order to understand culture shock as a transitional experience, Adler (1976) makes the following four assumptions: Each person experiences the world through culturally prescribed values, assumptions, and beliefs; most people are unaware of their values, beliefs, and attitudes and movement into new environments and new experiences "tend to bring cultural perceptions and predispositions into perception and conflict"; through the resulting "psychological, social, or cultural tension, each person is forced into redefinition of some level of his/her existence"; and "The reorientation of personality at higher levels of consciousness and psychic integration is based upon the disintegrative aspects of personality" (p. 14-15). For the teacher, this implies developing an awareness of and an ability to separate one's culturally nominated and personally modified values, assumptions, and beliefs with regard to cultural differences. It also suggests tolerating and exploring the tensions that such a realization may produce, recognizing all the while that before growth, a certain sense of disintegration and disorientation must be experienced. These are certainly no easy tasks, especially since there is what I perceive to be an American cultural value on avoiding and/or escaping the state of dynamic tension that is key to Adler's (1976) theory.

Focusing more specifically on classroom practice, Sitton (1976) argues that culture shock has largely been ignored in schools. He suggests taking an interdisciplinary anthropological approach to curriculum that focuses on cultural differences despite that a "melting pot dogma, along with the fear of controversy and lack of teacher preparation, has worked to keep curriculum and methods designed to teach about cultural difference out of the classroom" (p. 207). According to Sitton (1976), a foreign culture (or subculture) may act as a "necessary other" providing the "supreme pedagogic strategy for

studying one's own culture and oneself" (p. 209). Within his intercultural curriculum, the primary role of the teacher becomes that of cultural "learner" and only secondarily that of change agent (p. 209). While Sitton (1976) urges the study of "whole cultures" through ethnographic accounts, especially in the Social Studies classroom, he does not indicate clearly how the *experience* of culture shock may be brought into the classroom. In that culture shock may be considered a form of experiential learning, David (1971) believes that the "extremeness of the experience seems to be important in developing self-awareness" because it "takes a severe jolt for many of us to overcome our complacent acceptance of culturally determined behaviors" (p. 47). While I appreciate Sitton's (1976) emphasis on cultural differences, the role of the teacher as cultural explorer, and the self-awareness that culture shock may inspire, I am also concerned that cultures may be presented as simplistic, static, unchanging and that their study at such a level may not advance the learner beyond the Honeymoon stage. I also wonder if the RPCV educator can take on the role of "necessary other" in order to create the culture shock needed to inspire self and cultural awareness, not only abroad where they are necessarily the Other but at home, where they may be expected to support the status quo.

From an analytical perspective, Archer (1986) discusses a self-reflective process for teachers to use in analyzing what she calls "culture bumps" in the classroom. She says that "A culture bump occurs when an individual from one culture finds himself or herself in a different, strange or uncomfortable situation when interacting with persons of a different culture" (p. 170-171). She believes that in recognizing and depersonalizing the uncomfortable encounter with cultural differences in the classroom, the teacher may use the discomfort to open dialogue with the self and with students in order to explore

differences at an emotionally safer cultural level. Archer's (1986) process asks teachers to:

1. Pinpoint some time when they felt "different" or noticed something different when they were with someone from another culture.
2. Define the situation.
3. List the behaviors of the other person.
4. List their own behavior.
5. List their feelings in the situation.
6. List the behaviors they expect from people in their own culture in that same situation.
7. Reflect on the underlying value in their culture that prompts the behavior expectation. (p. 171-172)

From my perspective, Archer's (1986) reflective process is a non-threatening and non-violent method for exploring cultural differences in the self, the classroom, and the curriculum. It also points to the role of underlying cultural expectations as a factor leading to culture shock. The questions she poses may also be useful for analyzing my own participants' experiences with culture shock in their classrooms.

And, lastly, I note a metaphorical/spiritual approach to culture shock in Hart's (2005) linking of the stages of culture shock and reverse culture shock to Campbell's study of the "hero's journey" in ancient mythology (see Table 2, next page). In using the metaphor of the hero's journey, Hart (2005) opens a pathway for understanding culture shock and reverse culture shock in a way that resonates, at least in Jungian terms, deep within the psyche. The myth of the hero's journey spans many cultures and is readily

accessible in popular literature and media. Some examples of the hero's journey in American culture can be found in the *Star Wars* film series, the *Harry Potter* books and films, and in the movie *Avatar*. I would also argue that it is the myth of the hero's journey that underscores the Peace Corps ideology and experience.

Table 2. ***Hart's (2005) chart linking the Stages of the Hero's Journey to the Intercultural Sojourn and both Culture Shock and Reverse Culture Shock.***

Stages of the Hero's Journey		Stages of the Intercultural Sojourn
Departure	Common World	
	Call to Adventure	
	Refusal of Call	
	Supernatural Aid	
	Crossing First Threshold	Honeymoon Stage
Initiation	Road of Trials	
	Supreme Ordeal	Crisis
	The Ultimate Boon	Recovery
		Adjustment
Return	Refusal of the Return	
	Crossing the Return Threshold	Return home
		Crisis at home
	Master of the Two Worlds	Adjustment at home

With regard to culture shock, I note that in Hart's (2005) schematic, that the "Ultimate Ordeal" in the hero's journey is related to the "Crisis" stage in culture shock. According to Hart (2005) it is through this stage that the hero "gains enlightenment through her actions" and is thus transformed. But, quoting Campbell, Hart points out that the process involves considerable pain in order to attain transcendence:

> The agony of breaking through personal limitations is the agony of spiritual growth…finally, the mind breaks the bounding sphere of the cosmos to a realization transcending all experiences of form—all symbolization, all divinities: a realization of the ineluctable void (in Hart, 2005, on-line).

I think it is also interesting that through this process, the hero learns to walk in "both worlds" which may complicate her life once she returns home. In fact, "Sometimes the hero returns and her world does not want what she brings" (Hart, 2005, online)—an issue I address more fully in the final section of this literature review. I feel the significance of this work is to point out the spiritual aspects of culture shock in a way that is easily accessible to teachers and students due to the proliferation of hero's journey myths in the popular media of many cultures. I wonder too if the participants in my study drew upon their own myths and metaphors in order to understand their Peace Corps teaching experience.

Reverse Culture Shock

Unlike culture shock, reverse culture shock (also called reentry shock) appears to be somewhat ignored and under-theorized in the literature even though many consider it to be more challenging than the experience of culture shock (Anjarwalla, 2010; La Brack,

1985; Miller, 1988; Sussman, 1986; Szkudlarek, 2009; Weaver, n.d.). For example, LaBrack (1985) believes that reverse culture shock is under-theorized because it is not seen as a problem and that in some "conservative and hierarchical societies" reverse culture shock is a sign of "disloyalty, subversion, or even mental incompetence" (p. 16). I think it is also possible that some consider reverse culture shock simply a mirror image or extension of culture shock and therefore it needs no further theoretical underpinning. However, the research suggests that while the emotional reactions to culture shock and reverse culture shock may be similar, the causes are somewhat different. Therefore, I begin by reviewing some of the causes and emotional responses to reverse culture shock, followed by a review of the scant literature on teacher reverse culture shock.

One of the most frequently cited causes of reverse culture shock appears to be its unexpectedness and consequently the sojourner's lack of preparedness for the experience (Anjarwalla, 2010; La Brack, 1985; Miller, 1988; Sussman, 1986; Szkudlarek, 2009; Weaver, n.d.). That returnees do not expect to experience reverse culture shock is due to a number of reasons. One reason is the way in which the notion of "home" has been idealized. La Brack (1985) says the thought of "going home" seems to "conjure up images of warmth, acceptance, familiarity, scenes of reuniting, and leave no room for negativity or ambiguity" (p. 4). Returnees may also be unaware of the changes in themselves and their home culture that occurred while they were abroad (Sussman, 1986) and fail to consider that their "self-system and the former social system" have been progressing along "divergent paths" (Jansson, 1975, p. 136). Returnees also expect the people in the home culture to be understanding and supportive, yet may find that friends, family, and colleagues lack interest in their experiences abroad and may expect the

returnee to act “normal” (Sussman, 1986). Family and friends may also show little empathy for the difficulties returnees face upon their return (Weaver, n.d.) or view the returnee’s problems as being due to a willful “refusal to act ‘normal’ and ‘fit in’” (La Brack, 1985). The returnee may be labeled as a “deviant” (Jansson, 1975; La Brack, 1985) and as a “minority” as “defined by those who remained in the group” (Jansson, 1975, p. 137). Adler (1981) adds that xenophobia, or the lack of understanding of and appreciation of foreigners and foreign experience, also plays a negative role in the way returnee’s workplace effectiveness is rated.

In addition, Weaver (n.d.) believes the underlying cause for the difficulties related to reverse culture shock appears to be a breakdown in interpersonal communication. He writes:

> When people communicate, they send messages not meanings. The meanings are in their heads, and the messages merely express them…what would be a message to one person may have no meaning whatsoever to another. Of course, most people assume everyone else pays attention to the same messages they do and that everyone gives the messages the same meaning. (p. 3)

This research points to the seemingly overwhelming mismatch in expectations on behalf of both the returnee and those in the home culture as a major cause of reverse culture shock. Chief among these expectations appears to be the belief that meanings are shared, perhaps due to the illusion that neither the sojourner nor the home culture has changed. The research also points to the home culture’s considerable attempts to divest the returnee of their hard won, newly acquired “deviant” identity. It is the RPCV educator’s struggle with the home culture’s attempts to redefine them and the ways in which they

communicate and obfuscate their deviant identity in their teaching that helps shape the current study.

Some of the emotional responses to reverse culture shock include: euphoria, anger, a sense of powerlessness, a fear of rejection, guilt, pain, a sense of being out of control, frustration, aggression, hopelessness, helplessness, disillusionment, increased sleep, avoidance of others, and a denial of the impact of reverse culture shock (Jansson, 1975; Weaver, n.d.). Weaver (n.d.) also offers that "The increased global-mindedness of returnees is sometimes accompanied by increased intolerance of parochialism on the part of those at home" (p. 8). But, as with culture shock, it is difficult to predict how the returnee will respond or make meaning in any specific context. While the research here paints a somewhat negative experience of reverse culture shock, the opposite is also possible, and more likely there is a mix of both positive and negative experiences that accompany reverse culture shock.

Despite La Brack's (1985) contention that as a stressful transitional experience, reverse culture shock can, like culture shock, be a valuable learning experience (p. 11), I could find no explicit attempt to explore its utility in the public school curriculum. Perhaps this is due to the stigma surrounding reverse culture shock that La Brack (1985) hints at in the opening of this section or perhaps because of the lack of teachers who experience reverse culture shock. For this review, I located only one autobiographical example of teacher reentry (Miller, 1988), but the teacher apparently did not return to classroom teaching upon her return, so it is not clear how her experience of reverse culture shock may affect her teaching at home. Still, her experiences and insights are valuable in preparation for the current study.

Miller's (1988) experiences of reverse culture shock tend to confirm the research presented above. She was unprepared for the force of the reverse culture shock she experienced and felt unable to adequately communicate her experiences teaching abroad, especially to friends who seemed to lack interest in her experiences and simply wanted her to be the same person that she was before. Issues surrounding food and shopping seem to be especially shocking. She speaks of the shock she feels regarding overinflated prices, waste, and excess, and the occurrence of obesity among so many young people. These perceptions are similar to those of RPCVs who indicated in U.S. Peace Corps & Graul (in Szkudlarek, 2009) that some of the most challenging aspects of reverse culture shock were "materialism, waste of goods, indifference of home country citizens, and the fast pace of living" (p. 11). Additionally, Miller (1988) feels "paralyzed" by having so many choices in her market and "immoral" after eating a meal in a restaurant equal to six weeks' salary for a teacher in her host country (p. 15). She also indicates that as a woman who left her 51 year-old husband and two children (who live away from home) to teach for a year abroad, she was criticized particularly harshly. Although painful, Miller's (1988) experiences with reverse culture shock also allow her to challenge some of her cultural beliefs:

> Many basic American cultural assumptions make no sense to me. I do not believe that more is better, that it is wise to borrow now and pay later (or never), or that history has no place in current affairs. I believe that it is socially destructive to pursue policies geared to short-sighted monthly balance and to brazen competitiveness. (p. 21)

Despite the overwhelming cultural force to negate her overseas experience, she refuses to reject her experience as "non-transferable" (p. 22). To overcome her feelings of helplessness, she seeks out the company of others who have taught in her host country, keeps contact with friends in her host country, continues to study and practice the art form that she learned in her host country and helps prepare other teachers to teach abroad. Spending time with others who share both experiences teaching abroad and reverse culture shock at home has allowed her to laugh at other "peoples' insensitivity and superficial questions" (p. 23) and leads her to characterize American life as focused on "Emotionalism," "Expense," and "Ego" (p. 24).

Miller's (1988) narrative evokes her struggle to maintain her double consciousness while her home culture seems indifferent to this heightened awareness and in some ways seems intent on negating it. I think it is important to note however that her initial feelings of shock and paralysis caused her to reflect on her intercultural beliefs and challenged her to develop a creative synthesis of both her foreign and home cultures in her personal life. Yet, missing from her story are the ways in which her experience of reverse culture shock and the resulting insights affect her classroom teaching, a gap I hope to address in the current study.

In sum, my study will add to the literature reviewed above in a number of ways. First, it will add to the literature on the internationalization of curriculum studies by extending curriculum inquiry beyond national borders. Second, it will add to the literature on RPCV educators by offering a more complicated view of their Peace Corps experiences and drawing insights from those experiences related to teaching from an intercultural perspective. Third, it will extend the research on culture shock and reverse

culture shock through their examination in the public school and university context from the educator's perspective—research that has been suggested by others but rarely realized. It will also add to the research on reverse culture shock which some have suggested is an area that is largely ignored and under-theorized. And, further, it builds upon theoretical assumptions that the so-called "negative" experiences of culture shock and reverse culture shock may potentially be considered "positive" signs of learning and growth.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

A major goal of the study was to gain insight into the ways in which Returned Peace Corps Volunteer educators developed intercultural awareness by examining their experiences with culture shock and reverse culture shock as well as the influences of these shocks on their identity and pedagogy. With this goal in mind, I used narrative inquiry as my research method to gather RPCV educator's stories of their culture shock and reverse culture shock experiences. Not only do stories act as a "portal" through which "a person enters the world" and interprets their experience in "personally meaningful" ways (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 477), stories also let "researchers get at information that people do not consciously know themselves" and "allows deeply hidden assumptions to surface" (Bell, 2002, p. 209). In addition, because stories are created through "human behavior and social interaction" (Fox & Kloppenburg, 1998, p. 671), they have broader social and cultural significance (Bell, 2002). By virtue of being uniquely positioned within and between Other cultures and American culture(s), the RPCV educators' culture shock and reverse culture shock stories presented in this study shed light on the personal struggles of educators at the crossroads of cultural differences.

For my analysis, I used a poststructural hermeneutic framework both to examine the

beliefs that participants drew upon in constructing their stories and to "*deconstruct* the assumptions and knowledge systems that produce the illusion of singular meaning" within the stories (Stam, 2008, p. 12, emphasis in original). Therefore I offered an analysis of each story in two separate steps or "readings." In the first reading of each story, I analyzed the story in terms of the participants' original intentions. This first reading was more interpretative in nature to the extent that my goal was to first understand or "interpret" participants' perspectives in light of current research. In the second reading or "re-reading" of each story, I analyzed the story in terms of other meanings that could be drawn from the same story. While the first reading was more interpretive in nature, the second reading was more "deconstructive" in the sense that its purpose was to analyze the "subtext" of each story with the goal of uncovering its "hidden presumptions and prescriptions" (Fox & Kloppenburg, 1998, p. 671) by exposing and then subverting the binary oppositions within the story (Reynolds, 2010, Introduction).

Participants

The main criterion for participation in the study was being a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer who had been an educator both overseas and in the United States. I had originally included a preference for primary and secondary school teachers who had taught before, during, and after their Peace Corps service and for those who had been volunteers within the past 5 years. I felt that by comparing experiences before, during, and after the Peace Corps within the past five years, volunteers might have a greater sense of the shifts they experienced from context to context and that their culture shock experiences might have been more memorable. Through the difficulties of recruiting RPCVs who had been teachers

before, during, and after the Peace Corps within a certain time frame, I broadened the recruitment to include all types of educators (school teachers, college professors, educational administrators, etc.) and for any time period. I found that having a mix of educators actually enriched the study and the memories of culture shock and reverse culture shock they experienced were quite vivid no matter how long ago they occurred.

The participants for the study were four Returned Peace Corps Volunteers who were educators both overseas as part of their Peace Corps assignments and educators in the United States at the time of participation in the study. In addition, two of the participants taught secondary school classes before joining the Peace Corps and the other two participants worked as educators in other countries following their Peace Corps service. A fifth participant began the process of joining the study and later dropped out without any explanation. Two others RPCV educators demonstrated interest in joining the study after the data analysis had already begun and I felt I had already gathered enough data with which to explore my topic. All of the participants were recruited through purposeful "snowball sampling" which involved the use of social networks to locate participants (Warren & Karner, 2010, p. 143). For this study, a professor referred me to one of my participants. An RPCV who saw a posting about my study on Facebook referred me to another participant. A co-worker with ties to a university in another state put me in contact with another participant who in turn referred me to another participant. I did not know any of the participants prior to this study. A brief biography of each participant is presented below.

Joe, Peace Corps Moldova 2006-2008

"Joe" was a 58 year-old Hispanic male at the time of the study. He was divorced with 3 children. Prior to joining the Peace Corps, Joe had worked as an oil field hand for 20 years, competed in karate tournaments as well as managed and taught in karate schools for 15 years, and worked as a private investigator and a bail bondsman in addition to many other short-term jobs. He had also taught at two different high schools after earning a Bachelor's degree in English/Journalism in 2000 (he went on to earn a teaching certificate in 2004). First, he taught Speech at an inner city high school for one year and then he taught Speech and Journalism for five years at a different high school.

When I met with Joe, he was teaching sophomore English at the same high school where he had taught for five years prior to joining the Peace Corps. Joe also noted that the town where he was currently living largely revolved around a "huge" and "powerful" local ranch. The majority of students at Joe's school were the children of the Hispanic ranch workers and the children of newly arrived Hispanic immigrants who lived in a neighboring farming town. Joe also had a few international students, owing to a nearby university that attracted some international families, and he also taught some of the children of the White ranch owners. For his Peace Corps service, Joe taught English as a Foreign Language at a university in an urban city in Moldova, a country in Eastern Europe, for two years from 2006 to 2008. His students at the university were older professional adults, most of whom were women and many of whom had some knowledge of English.

When I asked Joe why he joined the Peace Corps, he said that he "had always had a really restless spirit," that he was "never happy" wherever he was, and that he always felt that he should "be somewhere else because it might be better over there." He also said that after 6

years of teaching, which he described as “sitting and worrying about these kids,” teaching felt “kinda trivial” which I understood as meaning “lacking excitement” since he compared it to his exciting life as an investigator and bail bondsman during which time he tracked down fugitives. In short, Joe believed the Peace Corps would give him the chance to see if teaching in another setting would be “better” or rather more exciting.

Harley, Peace Corps Kazakhstan 1999-2001

“Harley” was a 33 year-old Filipino-American woman was working as an Associate Director of International Programs and Services at a Midwestern university at the time of our interviews. Her job entailed welcoming international students, providing orientations for them, and ensuring they followed the Department of Homeland Security’s regulations regarding international study. She also taught a class called “Transitions” which she described as a freshman experience course to help international students adjust to American culture. The topics she covered ranged from U.S. classroom culture, academic dishonesty, local history, and finding ways to interact socially with Americans, among others topics. In addition, as an educator and a world traveler, she also offered intercultural communication presentations not only for international students, but for local students and community members as well.

For her Peace Corps service, Harley had hoped to be posted in the Philippines since she was familiar with the language and culture, but due to the timing of the next group of volunteers leaving for the Philippines, she decided to accept a post in Kazakhstan which she happily discovered was considered a part of Central Asia. Harley taught English at the primary and secondary levels and held conversation classes for local teachers for two years from 1999-2001. Additionally, she was the first volunteer to serve in the small rural village

where she taught. After completing her Peace Corps service, Harley began teaching English for a private company and taught in Japan (2001-2002), Thailand (2002-2004), Poland (2004-2006), and Kyrgyzstan (2006-2007). Altogether, she lived outside the U.S. for 8 years and returned in the Fall of 2007 to begin a PhD program in Education & Human Resource Studies. Although she said she would have felt comfortable getting her doctorate overseas, she also believed that a degree from another country would not have been perceived as carrying the same weight as a degree from the United States.

In discussing her personal background, she noted that her parents were born and raised in the Philippines and therefore she grew up with many Filipino values and customs in addition to her American ones. She herself was born in the U.S. on the East coast but raised since the age of 4 on the West coast. I couldn't help but think of the symbolism of East meeting West as Harley talked about her experiences living between Filipino and American cultures and her considerable travels in both Asian and European countries as well. When we talked about why she wanted to join the Peace Corps, two significant experiences stood out for her: Travelling to the Philippines and taking care of her younger brother who was in a coma due to a near fatal drowning accident, both since she was ten years old. She said that travelling to the Philippines made her realize that "people don't live the same way as we live in the United States." By travelling to the Philippines, she also began to recognize that although she was American, she was different than other Americans and likewise that although she was Filipino she was different from other Filipinos as well. She said this sparked her interest in learning about different cultures and their customs.

With regard to her brother, she noted that, "all my time from when I was ten, the rest of primary school and the rest of high school, everything was about my brother; taking care

of him." She also said that she attended a university within a short driving distance of home so she could help take care of him on the weekends. She mentioned that she struggled with the desire to leave her brother to go and help other people, but ultimately, she felt that she had a "need" and a "calling" to join the Peace Corps. She also felt spiritually connected to her brother and that she had his blessing to pursue her calling. Her parents were another story. She said they were "pissed" about her joining the Peace Corps because they "worked so hard to get out of that" so that she would not have to grow up "poor and would have all these opportunities." She explained to them it was because she had "opportunities" that others didn't that she felt the need to "give back to the people" who didn't have those opportunities. She added that her parents finally began to accept her decision but only about six or seven months after she had left for the Peace Corps.

Ryder, Peace Corps Kenya 1987-1990

Ryder was a 46 year-old white male who was an Assistant Professor of English at a Midwestern university at the time of the study. For his Peace Corps service Ryder taught English in Forms 1-4 (basically 9th-12th grade) at a rural boarding secondary school in Kenya from 1987 to 1990. His students were the children of subsistence farmers who grew crops mainly for survival. Ryder taught with the Peace Corps for three years and then stayed in Kenya on his own for a fourth year during which time he home-schooled adult non-Kenyan students in English. While Ryder was in Kenya, he also married a Kenyan woman who returned with him to the United States in December of 1991. They subsequently had one child together and a few years later, they divorced. Following his return from Kenya, Ryder also began work on a Master's degree in English which he completed in 1994. After

completing his degree, he took a job as a curriculum writer in Saudi Arabia, but switched to teaching English in a college preparatory program for a large oil company there. He stayed in Saudi Arabia 6 years and returned to the U.S. in 2000. He ultimately received his PhD in Linguistics in the fall of 2008 and began teaching in his current position that same semester.

As Ryder described his life prior to joining the Peace Corps and his reasons for joining it, he began,

> Maybe I should preface this by telling you I grew up in a four room house with no inside toilet…there was no water heater…[the bathtub] hung on a pinning nail from the backside of the house…that's the level of poverty I'm talking about. I'm not talking about working class.

He also explained that his mother left their home when he was very young so that his father, with the assistance of social services, raised him, his three brothers, and one sister. Additionally, Ryder felt that due to his poor upbringing, others had little expectation that he would be successful. In turn, this gave him the desire to "prove people wrong" and to be successful.

Ryder had originally intended to join the Air Force until he discovered that his weak eyesight would prevent him from being a pilot. He offered, "I wanted to get out…I wanted to go somewhere I had never been before and where I'd never known anyone who had been." The thought of travelling was appealing but he couldn't afford it on his own. He says he had always thought the Peace Corps "looked cool." He remembered a specific Peace Corps commercial with a "guy in a t-shirt and a pair of shorts walking up a muddy, slippery hill" carrying a bucket of water on his shoulders while drums were playing in the background. But, it wasn't until his college roommate received a letter from the Peace Corps that brought

the idea of joining the Peace Corps closer and gave him "another possibility…to see the world."

Hyacinth, Peace Corps Kenya 1984-1986

Hyacinth was a 52 year-old white female who had taught English as a Second Language (ESL) at the Middle School Level for 11 years when we met. She had also previously taught ESL for 13 years at the High School level in an American city on the Mexican border following her Peace Corps service and 2 years of teaching 7th and 8th grade Language Arts, 12th grade remedial English, and 9th grade Spanish at an inner city school prior to joining the Peace Corps. When I asked how she arrived at the pseudonym "Hyacinth," she explained that she and her husband enjoyed watching the British comedy *Keeping Up Appearances* and Hyacinth was the main character. Having watched and enjoyed the show myself, I knew that Hyacinth was a snobbish middle class housewife who failed miserably and humorously at her attempts at social climbing—often because neither her richer nor her poorer siblings (or anyone else for that matter) behaved in exactly the way that she believed they should according to their social status. Having spent a good deal of time getting to know Hyacinth (the teacher), I found her to be quite the opposite of her television namesake. Because, Hyacinth's husband played an important role in her Peace Corps experience, I have given him the pseudonym Richard which was Hyacinth's (the television character's) husband's name on the TV show.

For her Peace Corps service, Hyacinth spent two years teaching English in a secondary school in a small town in the central highlands of Kenya. She, like Ryder, taught the children of subsistence farmers and although there was some overlap in the Kenyan

cultural practices they pointed out, their experiences and the insights they drew from them were largely different. When I asked why Hyacinth joined the Peace Corps she explained that her brothers were "hippies in the 60's" and the ideals related to the Peace Corps were "floating around" in the "general consciousness" of the 1970's when she was in high school. She had also been a Rotary exchange student in Australia the year after she graduated high school which she counted as a "really, really positive experience," so she felt "eager" for "another international experience," especially one that was "helpful to others," "adventurous," and "a real learning experience."

Hyacinth also said that joining the Peace Corps would offer the opportunity to meet "like-minded," "adventurous," "fun," people with "similar values" who were "trying to make a positive difference in the world." She added that in the back of her mind, she thought it "would be a great place to meet a life partner" which turned out to be true in her case. Richard was also a Peace Corps volunteer leaving for Kenya at the same time as Hyacinth. While he recalled meeting her during their Peace Corps training in the U.S., she remembered meeting him on the flight to Kenya. She explained that they were seated alphabetically and that due to the spelling of their last names, there was another volunteer in the seat between them. She said, "My last name started with an A, I was sitting next to Cindy [A] who got up and went to the rest room. He was a B, he moved over, it was a 27 hour flight." Even though Hyacinth noted it "was not a done deal," by the time their plane landed they felt a "real connection" to each other and they ultimately married in Kenya three months before their Peace Corps service ended. At the time of my interviews with Hyacinth, she and Richard had just celebrated their 25 anniversary.

Data Collection

The data were collected during the summer of 2011 in three ways: through two to three face-to-face audio-recorded interviews, written responses to two writing prompts, and through the artifacts that the participants shared during their interviews. I had originally wanted to observe each of the educators in their classrooms, however, out of necessity the interviews were conducted during the summer when school was not in session. In general, I spent two days in each participant's town and collected a minimum of 4 hours of recorded interview data with each participant. Due to a storm and the lateness of my arrival in Joe's geographic area, all of the audio-recorded data for his interviews were collected in a single day. In addition to our interviews, we spent time socializing and getting to know each other on a more personal level. Participants also responded to two writing prompts that I sent to them by email. The first writing prompt was sent before I conducted the interviews and the second prompt was sent after all of the interviews were completed. Participants were also invited to share artifacts from their teaching or personal life which they felt were meaningful. For the participants in the study, these included photographs, a video biography, gifts from students, a motorcycle, an earring, and various souvenirs.

Data Analysis

As mentioned in the introduction to this section, I performed two layers of analysis on each of the participant's stories in order to gain insight into participant's growing intercultural awareness and to demonstrate the instability and multiplicity of meaning within their stories. I began my analysis by reading the transcripts from the participants' audio-taped interviews, their responses to writing prompts, and the notes I made regarding the artifacts

that they shared with me. I then located various stories within the interview transcripts/writings/artifact notes and labeled each story according to the four areas of experience identified in my research questions: culture shock, reverse culture shock, identity shift, and pedagogy. Some stories seemed to fit more than one category since there were elements of culture shock and reverse culture shock in stories involving identity shift and pedagogy. Therefore I considered the purpose of the story and the location of the story within the interview to make a decision about how to label the story. I also noted a general unifying theme for each of the stories such as "time," "gender," "corruption," "acceptance," etc. I then choose which stories I wanted to include in the study based upon what each story revealed about intercultural relationships, whether or not I felt the story might be interesting to other readers, and the emphasis that the participants placed on the story through descriptors ("the biggest challenge I faced was" or "the most important thing I learned was," etc.) or by the length of time they spent discussing the story. Some of the stories included in the study were not from the Peace Corps experience but involved other intercultural experiences that were important to the participants and fit the general purposes of this study. I ultimately included five stories or each participant in the study, one for each of the areas identified in my research questions and a fifth story in any one of these areas that seemed particularly interesting.

After choosing the stories to include in the study, I read each story thoroughly and located a more specific organizing theme for each story based on the participants' intent and assumptions. For example, in Ryder's chapter, a story about "time" became "Western Time as Linear/Control and Kenyan Time as Cyclical/Fatalistic," which expressed Ryder's linking of the use of time in Africa to "fatalism" and a "lack of control" over one's life. For the "re-

reading," I located another perspective within the literature and used my own experience in African culture to suggest that African "fatalism" could also be understood as a form of "self-management" and "humility." Therefore, each theme was analyzed in two ways. First I read and analyzed each story from the participant's perspective. Then, I offered a separate "re-reading" of each story as a way of teasing out different meanings and pointing out the paradoxes, the displacements, the "traces" of one concept within its opposite and the dualistic hierarchies inherent in the text consistent with Derrida's deconstruction techniques (Reynolds, 2010; Lawlor, 2011).

Operationalizing poststructural hermeneutic theory as a method of analysis, however, proved no easy task. Without any specific guidelines, I used a number of strategies to aid me in my analysis. One strategy I used was to offer two different readings of the metaphors that participants generated in their stories similar to Koro-Ljungberg's (2004) post-structural metaphorical analysis. One example of this can be found in Joe's metaphor of intercultural experience as "walking on ice" which I analyzed in terms of danger and vulnerability in the first reading and then as part of the process of "learning to ice skate" in which feelings of danger and vulnerability were part of the process of navigating intercultural contexts for the re-reading. Another technique was to shift the focus of the story from one country to another in order to destabilize the internal meanings of certain themes. For instance, Hyacinth focused of male privilege in Kenya and then I switched the focus to male privilege in the U.S. for the second reading by adapting McIntosh's (1989) process for revealing "white privilege" as a way of making "male privilege" more visible in the United States. I also sometimes analyzed a story in terms of its positive and negative aspects such as in Harley's story about her bicultural identity which seemed to offer both challenges and benefits in

some ways. In addition, I looked at different cultural and personal meanings for the same words used by participants as in the case of "caring" and "acceptance" for Joe, "fatalism" and "generosity" for Ryder, "individualism" for Harley, and "sameness" and "difference" for Hyacinth. I also sometimes used two different "lenses" to read and re-read a story. In Hyacinth's story about learning to "weave" people into the fabric of her life, I used a cultural lens in the first reading and a gender lens for the second.

Additionally, for both layers of analysis, I used available empirical research, theoretical perspectives, popular media reports, and my own experiences as an educator and an RPCV who served in Cameroon, Africa from 1996 to 1998 to assist me in my analysis. My goal, as previously stated, was to offer alternative readings of the same experience in order to demonstrate the elusiveness of a single, unified meaning. It was not to inadvertently create a dualistic hierarchy between the two readings or to minimize the participants' views or beliefs by suggesting that other perspectives were more "correct," but to offer various viewpoints that may be more reflective of the range of diverse perspectives of Returned Peace Corps Volunteer educators overall.

Further, by using a post-structural hermeneutic perspective to analyze data I hope to bring theoretical depth to narrative inquiry as well as to enrich theoretical understandings of the experience of culture shock and reverse culture shock. In considering the place and balance of theory in narrative inquiry, Clandinin & Connelly (2000) note that others have criticized narrative inquiry as "not theoretical enough" (p. 42). Although they do not reject theory out of hand, they suggest that the starting point of narrative inquiry is "experience as expressed in lived and told stories" (p. 40) rather than the study's theoretical implications. Their concern seems to be related to the ways in which theory may work to structure or

overshadow experience through theory's privilege over experience within formalistic traditions. Recalling Derrida's (1978) insistence that the relationship between self and Other be understood "from within a *recourse to experience itself*" (p. 83, emphasis in original), I believe that the close relationship between theory and experience within a poststructural hermeneutic paradigm can work to allay this concern, in that it privileges neither theory nor experience but accepts both as parts of a whole that cannot exist completely separately. In fact, I argue that individuals act with certain theoretical intentions in mind. The actions they ultimately take in relation to others and the ways in which they perceive the outcomes, in turn, adds support for their perspectives. Englehart (2001) asserts that attempts to dichotomize theory and practice create a "confusing enigma" (p. 371). She explains,

> Practice is theory-in-place. Theory is practice-to-be, waiting to be enacted. Theory, then, is one's understanding of the world. Practice is the enactment of that understanding. (p. 372)

She also notes that despite the perhaps uncomfortable "marriage" between practitioners and theorists, because of the interdependence between theory and practice "neither divorce nor separation is possible" (p. 372). To that extent, I attempt to demonstrate the connection between poststructural hermeneutic theory and lived experience.

Rigor/Trustworthiness

Research rigor involves the "accurate and systematic application of theory and method" (Dodge, 2005, p. 288). Furthermore, within the qualitative research paradigm, rigor involves "transparency" (Hiles & Cermak, 2007, p. 2) regarding the procedures used throughout the research process, so that the procedures (not necessarily the findings) are

replicable. Moss (2004) also notes that rigor entails developing and following one's own research procedures based on the research context, rather than adherence to others' predetermined research models. For the current study, I have established and followed research procedures as described in this chapter to be consistent with poststructural hermeneutic framework guiding this study. Likewise, these procedures are both transparent and replicable.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) note that "rigor" in qualitative research is referred to as "trustworthiness" and is demonstrated through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (p. 289-300). Establishing credibility involves "activities that make it more likely that credible findings and interpretations will be produced" (p. 300). Credibility was achieved in the current study through triangulation, peer debriefing, and member checks of the interview transcripts. For triangulation, I used three data collection modes—interviews, writing prompts, and artifact reviews—to develop a clearer picture of participants' points of view. I also drew on my own experiences as a Peace Corps volunteer along with empirical and theoretical research to provide a context for understanding the participants' perspectives. For peer debriefing, a co-worker who is also an administrator and adjunct faculty member, read drafts of each chapter and made suggestions for improving the clarity of the study. I also sent interview transcripts to each of the participants for member checks in order to verify that I had captured their intent and to allow them to clarify or add information. Through this process, one of the participants withdrew a section of interview data that the participant did not want to share publicly. Others clarified or added to their perspectives. I also had a few informal social occasions to share some of my findings with two of the participants and elicit their feedback.

The next feature of trustworthiness, transferability, suggests the need that the research analysis yields information that is usable or relevant not only to myself (the researcher), but also to others with regard to case-to-case transferability. Transferability for the current study was developed through a "*rich, thick* description" of the data and its analysis so that there is "enough description and information that readers will be able to determine how closely their situations match, and thus whether findings can be transferred" (Merriam & Associates, 2002, p. 29, emphasis in original). In presenting the participants' biographies, their reasons for joining the Peace Corps, the contexts of our interviews, their stories, my analyses of the stories, and my closing thoughts on the ways in which the stories intersect and their relevance to the field of education, I feel offers a sufficient depth of description in order for the research to be transferable or relatable to other educators and people in other contexts.

The last two concerns related to trustworthiness are dependability and confirmability. These two features are somewhat interrelated in that dependability focuses on "acceptability" of the inquiry process, and confirmability focuses on the internal coherence of the inquiry product (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 318). They are both achieved through what Lincoln & Guba (1985) call the "inquiry audit"—involving a review of notes, records, and/or research journal kept throughout the inquiry process which document how and why certain decisions were made or what assumptions guided the inquiry. During the interview process, I made field notes and jotted down my perceptions which I later wove into the participants' analysis chapters. I also made notes on how I conceptualized certain aspects of the study such as the organization and presentation of the research. I also kept a journal containing my initial thoughts about the research project along with some dates regarding specific events related to the research process. I have consistently returned to these sources of information throughout

the project to verify that I was staying on track and adapting the process accordingly based on my original research intentions.

Significance of the Study

The stories that participants share through narrative inquiry may at first glance appear to be of a purely personal nature. For the researcher, there is a need to draw out the significance within those stories, or what Clandinin and Connelly (2000) refer to as connecting the "I" with the "they" (p. 123). In that the purpose of my study is draw out intercultural teaching insights from RPCV educators' experiences with culture and reverse culture shock, I believe that the significance for the current study may be demonstrated in a number of ways.

First, exploring RPCV educators' experiences with culture shock both as cultural outsiders in a foreign country and with reverse culture shock as cultural outsiders in the home country allows for examining culture shock through a doubled lens. In addition, examining intercultural teaching experiences abroad and at home situates this study in a larger dialogue regarding the internationalization and globalization of curriculum by connecting the local with the global. It also broadens an understanding of culture shock not only as a phenomenon that occurs when one travels to another country, but as indicative of the self/Other relationship at home as well.

Second, this study has practical implications for teaching in a globalized world. This study will hopefully stimulate educator dialogue, reflection, and practice regarding the ethical, non-violent self/Other relationship. This study can also shed light on the ways in which schools and curriculum may work to structure the self/Other relationship, as well as

the teacher's role in such a structuring. In demonstrating that meaning is not fixed, but rather chosen, I suggest that this study may also inspire teachers to claim their own meanings and subjectivities regarding curriculum that move beyond cultural narratives.

And third, by using a poststructural lens to analyze data I hope to bring theoretical depth to narrative inquiry as well as enrich theoretical understandings of the experience of culture shock. In considering the place and balance of theory in narrative inquiry, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) note that others have criticized narrative inquiry as being "not theoretical enough" (p. 42). Although they do not reject theory out of hand, they suggest that the starting point of narrative inquiry is "experience as expressed in lived and told stories" (p. 40) rather than the study's theoretical implications. Their concern seems to be related to the ways in which theory may work to structure or overshadow experience through its privilege over experience within formalistic traditions. For my study, theory will emerge from the data with an openness to poststructural concerns about how the self may be decentered in order to transcend prescriptive cultural rules and allow for the complicated claiming of subjectivity and an ethical relationship with the Other.

In summarizing, this study has both theoretical and practical significance. Not only will the study add to the literature regarding the practice of teaching from an intercultural perspective, but by drawing theory out of teaching practice, I hope to present narrative inquiry research that is academically rigorous and enriched by theoretical understandings. In addition, by researching culture shock and teaching from a doubled local and global perspective, I hope to add to the literature on the internationalization of curriculum as well as demonstrate that the experience of culture shock can be useful for exploring the self/Other relationship in an intercultural curriculum.

CHAPTER IV

JOE: TOWARD A PEDAGOGY OF CARING & CREATIVITY

Joe was a 58 year-old Hispanic male teaching sophomore English at the time of my interviews with him. Joe had also taught Speech at an inner city high school for one year and then Speech and Journalism at another high school for five years prior to joining the Peace Corps. During his Peace Corps service, Joe taught English as a Foreign Language at a university in an urban city in the Eastern European country of Moldova from 2006 to 2008. I met Joe at his home on a hot and dry sunny summer morning. Outside, cotton candy clouds filled the wide blue sky. Inside, we sat face to face with a small table between us in front of two large open windows at the front of his house. As we talked, the curtains floated up from time to time thanks to a gentle breeze and as they moved back and forth, they sounded like soft ocean waves lapping the seashore. During the interview there were also birds chirping, a mourning dove cooing, and cicadas intermittently stopping and starting their engines. It was as if nature was providing both an audience and background music for our interview. Later we also took a short tour of the town where Joe lived and continued our interview at the high school where he taught.

One of the first things I noticed about Joe was that he wore a small golden cross earring. During the interview, Joe referred to the earring as being part of his Christian identity. He noted, “I wear this earring because I’m a Christian…I’m letting people know

this is who I believe in." When I asked him what the Moldovans he encountered thought about his earring, he said they "hated it" because they saw it as a "sacrilegious." Our brief discussion about the meaning of Joe's earring reminded me of a time when I bought a large wooden carved statue of Ganesha, a Hindu god in the form of an elephant, while I was in India to attend a friend's wedding. Upon my return to the U.S., I moved the statue around my house trying to find the perfect spot for it, ultimately deciding it looked best in my guest bathroom. When my Indian friends saw the statue in the bathroom, they were, well, horrified. A god in the bathroom with a toilet!? I ultimately gave the statue to them as a belated wedding present because I realized that while for me the statue was a beautiful work of art, for them, it was a living deity. That these religious objects—the golden cross earring and the Ganesha statue—held different meanings from different cultural perspectives, raise issues of negotiating meaning across cultural boundaries. Who "owns" the meaning of an object? How does one show dis/respect for such objects? Can different meanings co-exist? To what extent am I willing to hold fast to my meaning? As borders open and boundaries shift, these questions become more relevant. Perhaps an important first step in contemplating these questions lies in realizing that other perspectives exist to begin with.

Although Joe addressed a number of themes in his stories, he seemed to continually return to the notion of care—especially how his Peace Corps experiences made him a more caring person and educator. He also emphasized the need to teach students how to be creative so I have titled his chapter *Toward a Pedagogy of Caring & Creativity*. For Joe's chapter, I have included one culture shock story, two identity shift stories, one reverse culture shock story, and a final story about his pedagogy. The first story deals with the culture shock Joe experienced while attempting to learn the languages of Moldova. In the first reading of the

story Joe shared his feelings of vulnerability and sense of danger involved in learning a new language and negotiating a different culture. In re-reading the story I look at the ways in which vulnerability may be considered a strength and how danger might be useful. In the Identity Shift I story, Joe shares an experience in which he discovers a woman who had committed suicide outside his apartment building in Moldova. He also talks about the Moldovan's acceptance of their domination by others and how healing this acceptance was for him. I read this story in terms of acceptance as a lack of resistance and as a form of healing. In re-reading the story, I find that acceptance can actually be a form of resistance but that it is not necessarily healing. In the Reverse Culture Shock I story, Joe talks about how his return to the U.S. made him realize how uncaring and materialistic Americans are. Through his Peace Corps experiences, Joe explains how he became less materialistic and more caring and how he refused to "play the game." In re-reading this story I look at the concept of "postmaterialism" and how one may "play the game differently." In the fourth story, Identity Shift II, Joe discusses how he took on a new Moldovan identity and became more caring, which he related to self-sacrifice. In re-reading the story, I question the notion of taking on a completely new identity and look at caring in terms of self-gain. In the fifth and final story related to Joe's pedagogy, he explains how teaching in Moldova where rote learning was the standard pedagogy highlighted the need to teach his students (both in Moldova and the U.S.) how to be creative.

Culture Shock I: Intercultural Experience as Vulnerability & Danger

Despite his craving for adventure and excitement, Joe thought it was "strange" that he was sent to teach English in Moldova, given that he was fluent in Spanish. He had assumed

that he would be posted in a Spanish-speaking country and would not need to learn a new language. He also felt he could have "done so much more" as a teacher in a Spanish-speaking country because he understood the language and the culture. Nonetheless, he accepted his Peace Corps assignment but his difficulty in learning the languages in Moldova (Romanian and Russian) was an ongoing source of culture shock for Joe.

Ironically, it was because he was often surrounded by so many people that spoke English (his Moldovan English teaching counterparts, his language tutor that followed him everywhere and translated for him, his homestay mother and sister who had studied in the U.S., etc.) that made it "so horrible" to be "alone" when attempting to communicate with Moldovans who did not speak English. Joe said that "Language is such an indicator of who you are" that he felt "extremely vulnerable" because he couldn't learn Romanian as quickly as he wanted to. He said that in the beginning he was only able to use the "most basic of words" like a "small child" and that he talked "like a baby" which was a "very humiliating experience."

When I asked him to describe a time when this difficulty with language made him uncomfortable, he stated emphatically, "if you're asking me was I uncomfortable, my God I was uncomfortable all the time, unless I was in the classroom teaching." He said that in the classroom, if one of the students was having difficulty understanding him, the other students would happily assist by translating in Romanian. He also elaborated that he felt "inadequate" in his ability to learn the language and said that "the whole experience there was sort of like walking on ice…you didn't know when you were going to give way because…you weren't prepared." He added that "not knowing how to communicate is the worst damn thing you can

have…it stopped me from doing a lot of things that I would've liked to do because I didn't know…how to speak to people."

Joe also shared a story about a time in which his difficulty with language added to his sense of culture shock. It was during his first commute to the capital city where, as part of his training, he was to participate in a practice school at a prestigious university. He explained that his language skills at the time were very basic and that although he was "honored" and "excited" to teach at the university, he simultaneously felt "nervous to break away from the group [of other Peace Corps volunteers] and the comfort they gave in familiarity." As he waited for the "rutiera" (a 16 passenger van used for public transport) to arrive, he noted that the villagers were "staring" at him. Once inside the van, people filled both the seats and the aisles to the point that he "was pressed by people on all sides" which made him "uncomfortable" due to the lack of "personal space."

Joe only had a large bill to pay for the trip and he passed it forward with the assistance of the other passengers, but he didn't receive any change back and didn't know how to ask for it. During their first stop, Joe decided to confront the driver in his "best broken Romanian" but to no avail. He felt angry that the driver was ignoring him and trying to cheat him by pretending he didn't know what Joe was saying. He recalled, "I was at a loss. I kept thinking, 'Why in the hell did I come here?' The people seemed so rude and uncaring. I was fuming and I felt so helpless. It was the helplessness that made it so unbearable."

Fortunately for Joe, several of the women from his village began to yell excitedly at the driver, and the driver, giving a sheepish grin, finally returned Joe's change. Joe felt "overwhelmed with gratitude" to the women, especially since they really didn't know him except that perhaps he lived in their village. He felt equally "helpless" in trying to express the

depth of his gratitude so he simply said “thank you” in Romanian. Satisfied that he had finally gotten his change, he waited quietly for the van to depart. But a few minutes later, the van driver announced that he would not be driving them on into the capital. Joe watched as the other passengers quietly left the vehicle and began looking for an alternative van. He said he was “blown away with the fact that [the van driver] just quit driving us. The people there just accepted his decision without even a grumble.”

Once Joe finally arrived at the university, he used his experience as a discussion topic with his students. He wrote, “We had a great time getting to know each other based on the hardships of travel in a developing nation.” He also thought about the women in the van. He reflected that “in the hustle and bustle of getting [to the university], I suddenly realized the women of my village and how much it meant to me. It was heroic efforts like theirs that helped me to decide to stay there.”

In this narrative, Joe experienced some of the classic symptoms of culture shock (Oberg, 1954; David, 1974; Adler, 1976) including feeling “nervous” about leaving the comfort and familiarity of the other American Peace Corps Volunteers, feeling “helpless” and angry about being cheated and not being able to communicate well, feeling “uncomfortable” due to being stared at as well as the lack of personal space, feeling “surprise” at the other passengers’ response to the driver’s decision to quit driving them in the middle of their trip, and ultimately questioning why he chose to be in Moldova in the first place. I was also struck by Joe’s feelings of vulnerability. According to Straub (2009), vulnerability is a part of the intercultural experience and is linked to the threat to one’s identity. He wrote,

> Those who open up towards the Other and the Strange in certain ways compromise the Self…allowing the appearance of "weakness", of vulnerability and mutability to encourage fellow humans in a way scarcely controllable to intrude upon, and interfere with the Self. (p. 220)

In "opening up towards" Moldovan culture through language learning and social interaction, Joe expressed both his vulnerability and the threat to his identity when he described feeling like a "small child," "talking like a baby," and feelings of unbearable "helplessness." Small children and babies are especially vulnerable and dependent on others. Thinking of himself as both helpless and dependent challenged Joe's notion of himself as an independent adult which in turn made him feel "humiliated."

Joe's simile/metaphor of his intercultural experience as "like walking on ice" also spoke to his vulnerability. When someone is "vulnerable", they are "capable of being physically or emotionally wounded" (In Merriam-Webster.com, 2012, online). Similarly, in "walking on ice," there is always the threat of slipping, falling down, and getting hurt. Joe's metaphor seems to express Joe's underlying belief that intercultural experience can be dangerous. In describing his "whole experience" as "like walking on ice" because "you didn't know when you were going to give way," Joe also implied that the danger was ever-present and could occur in ways that were "scarcely controllable" as alluded to in the quote above.

Re-reading Culture Shock I: Vulnerability as Strength and Danger as Useful

> Embracing vulnerability
>
> is to become strength incarnate
>
> to invoke courage…
>
> bare of armor
>
> (Alire, 2011, on-line)

Joe's intercultural experience seemed to draw out his feelings of vulnerability that he perceived in a negative light. However, some research has linked vulnerability to the development of emotional growth through the experience of stressful or traumatic experiences (Murphy & Moriarity, 1976; Updegraff & Taylor, 2000). Jordan (2008) shares the view that vulnerability holds the potential for "real growth" (p. 198) and she challenges dominant views of vulnerability as weakness. She writes,

> Models of strength, both in our psychological theories and in culture at large, emphasize strength in separation, supremacy of thought over feeling, objectification, and instrumentality…While this is supposedly a model of strength, it basically rests on a fear-based model that denies vulnerability (p. 193).

Instead, she argues that in recognizing, "respecting," and "supporting" (p. 198) our own and others' vulnerability (but not over-valorizing it) one moves "toward empathy, true connection, and toward a model of deep human caring" (p. 190), an approach that she calls "*strength in vulnerability"* or "*supported vulnerability"* (p. 194, emphasis in original). I agree with Jordan's suggestion that acknowledging one's vulnerability allows for relating to

both self and others in a different way. For example, in their study of vulnerability in the medical profession, Malterud and Hollnagel (2005) found that when doctors, who were often viewed as "omnipotent, detached, and impersonal," shared their own feelings and experiences of vulnerability with their patients, their patients "appreciated" this sharing and found it to be "beneficial" to their own treatment (p. 348). In re-examining Joe's story through the lenses of relation and connection, I found that while Joe's vulnerability drew out a manipulative response from the bus driver, it also allowed the other passengers to demonstrate their caring and sympathy for Joe. This shifted Joe's perception of Moldovans (at least some) from "uncaring" to "heroic" which in turn encouraged him to stay in in the country. Likewise, in sharing his vulnerability with his students after he arrived at the university, he was able to make a connection with them.

Jordan (2008) also argues that there is a gendered element to Western beliefs on vulnerability and strength which shapes and distorts gender differences. She quotes Miller who stated "In Western society men are encouraged to dread, abhor or deny feeling weak or helpless, whereas women are encouraged to cultivate this state of being" (In Jordan, 2008, p. 193). It is possible that Joe's perception of his own vulnerability was cultured and gendered and heightened his experience of culture shock. I especially noted the way that Joe said it was his "helplessness that made it so unbearable." I would also point out that it was specifically the *women* in the van who, despite not sharing a common language or cultural ties with Joe, appeared to acknowledge and respond to Joe's vulnerable position.

Part of Joe's experience of vulnerability was also expressed in his metaphor "walking on ice." With regard to this metaphor, I note the underlying belief that intercultural experience is dangerous. While I had the distinct impression that, for Joe, the feelings of

danger were negative, I consider the ways in which the notion of danger may be useful or helpful in intercultural experience. Foucault once argued that "everything is dangerous, which is not exactly the same as bad. If everything is dangerous, then we always have something to do" (In Butin, 2001, p. 173). In viewing everything as dangerous, Foucault suggests that there are no definite solutions or final conclusions in the social world and that social relationships are unstable and shifting. This makes labeling the behaviors, the meanings, and the motives of others problematic. Through Joe's experience (in this and in other stories), Joe's labeling of Moldovan culture shifted a number of times between caring and uncaring, making any final conclusion about the culture as one or the other impossible. Viewing everything as dangerous, in a sense, calls for staying attentive and attuned to these shifts and being careful in relationships with intercultural others not to confine them within stereotypical labels.

In re-reading Joe's metaphor "walking on ice," I also used Koro-Ljunberg's (2004) post-structural metaphor analysis technique to locate alternative meanings within the metaphor, namely, "Intercultural Experience as Learning to Ice Skate" and "Intercultural Experience as Un/Preparedness." While for Joe, falling was seen as hurtful and as a failure to be "prepared," in "Learning to Ice Skate," falling down and feeling pain are parts of the learning process. Getting back up and moving past the fear of falling are parts of the process as well. For me, it seemed that it was Joe's fear of falling that shaped his intercultural experience, especially in learning and using a new language. He noted feelings of inadequacy and helplessness when attempting to communicate with Moldovans in general, which in turn "stopped" him from interacting with them at times.

Additionally, when learning a new skill, such as learning how to navigate a new culture, it seems unlikely that one could be prepared in all circumstances. In a way, it was Joe's expectation that he could or should have been prepared that created his feelings of failure. He also implied that if he had prepared for the culture shock, he would not have felt the negative emotions so strongly. In considering "Intercultural Experience as Un/Preparedness," I argue that while it may not be possible to escape the tension, the discomfort, and the surprise of the culture shock, one can learn to accept that one cannot entirely prepare for or know the other culture. One can also learn to recognize and tolerate the discomfort inherent in the shock and find ways to negotiate unshared meaning with intercultural "others." While Joe was unable to communicate well in Romanian, the context and Joe's verbal and non-verbal responses in the situation apparently spoke volumes to the other passengers who came to his aid.

In brief, "walking on ice" in an intercultural sense almost certainly involves slowing down at times and taking small steps toward understanding. It also involves taking risks and perhaps falling down. While the thought of failure may heighten the sense of anxiety and feelings of danger, it may also lead to mutual understanding through a shared sense of vulnerability for which few words are needed.

Identity Shift I: Acceptance as Healing and a Lack of Resistance

In this story, Joe makes a cultural and historical leap back to his roots in the United States during the Civil Rights Movement when both he and his family fought for recognition of Hispanic-American culture and history. According to Joe, by witnessing the way in which Moldovans responded to Russian domination he was able to view his own struggles with

Anglo-American culture from a different perspective. The story began in Moldova just as Joe left his apartment building on his way to work. He was startled to see a dead woman lying on the pavement in front of him. Apparently, the woman had committed suicide a few moments earlier by jumping from an upper floor of his building. From the policemen that showed up on the scene who were very "rough" with her body, to the Moldovan friends who implied she was just some lady "who liked to drink," once again, he was left with the feeling that Moldovans were "uncaring." He clarified that "it wasn't as though they were mean I think that they kind of expected that people would do this. That's the cultural part that got to me. I think they expected it was natural for people to take their life because it was kind of meaningless." He explained further that when Moldova was under Russian rule, everything was provided for them—housing, education, jobs—but that since the Iron Curtain fell, the Moldovans were suddenly left to fend for themselves.

According to Joe, this put quite a bit of power into the hands of shopkeepers, apartment managers, and administrators who would do things like shut the heat off for an entire apartment building if one person didn't pay their bill, refuse to pay people their salaries (teachers included), or kick people out of their apartments at will. What Joe found odd was the Moldovans' response in the face of this power. He says, "They were very accepting you know…they'd say, 'Oh, you know, they told us we just lost our apartment. Why? Cause they said so!' [Chuckles], just like that you know… it was that kind of attitude that left me feeling uncomfortable about the people."

As Joe reflected how unfairly the Moldovans were treated he began to make the connection to how he was treated in the United States during his youth. He explained that just as the Russians dominated the Moldovans, the "Anglos" likewise dominated the

"Hispanics" in the United States. He talked about both his and his family's struggles during the Civil Rights Movement and afterward to have Hispanic history and rights recognized by his home state. He said that his life had been threatened and that his family received flack not only from Whites but Hispanics who did not want them to "stir it up because it causes more problems." He also recalled that he was often told to go back to Mexico which seemed insulting because his family could trace its roots within the United States back to the 15th-16th century. Joe said he was making this connection "to two places" (Moldova and the U.S.),

> to give you the idea that being in Moldova made me realize that the anger that I have for having lived that was not specific to me, that it happens all over the world. And I think that was very good for me, because it was very healing that to know that it isn't that Anglos were mean or anything it's just that whoever wins controls the game. And, so even at my older age, it was very healing to understand that I shouldn't take it so personally—isn't that weird? [Laughs]

Joe's narrative reminded me of a Buddhist story about a girl named Kisagotami. While many versions of the story exist, I first came across it in Aoki's (2005) *Curriculum in a New Key.* It is the story of a young mother named Kisagotami who became mentally distraught over the death of her child. After frantically searching for someone who could revive her dead child, Kisagotami was referred to the Buddha who agreed to heal the child if she could bring him some mustard seeds from a house in which death had not visited. After travelling from door to door she slowly began to realize that there was no house where death had not arrived in some form or fashion. Upon this realization, "her mind cleared" (p. 409). In a similar vein, Joe said it was "healing" to realize that his suffering was not personal, but rather a product of power relations in general which affected many people around the world, not just him. I

should point out that while death is a natural part of life and social injustice is not, the Buddhist story seemed to capture Joe's sentiment of healing through the recognition of the suffering of others in similar circumstances.

Through his experiences in Moldova, Joe also seemed to come to the realization that another response to domination was possible. While Joe and his family fought for their rights and endured both insults and death threats, the Moldovans accepted their situation rather than confront or try to change the system. It was this acceptance that made Joe "uncomfortable" about the Moldovans because Joe had not previously seen acceptance as a viable option in the United States. Yet, by observing a different response to domination—acceptance rather than conflict—a space for re-thinking his own response over what had happened to him in the past was opened up. Joe's story also suggested that learning new responses to strong emotions also make it possible to shift one's identity and/or worldview.

Re-reading Identity Shift I: Acceptance as Resistance & Not Healing

One of the tensions that emerged through Joe's experience with culture shock was the tension between his and the Moldovans' response to what Joe referred to as "domination." In the stories that Joe told, he had been more confrontational in the United States whereas he felt that the Moldovans were more accepting. While Joe did not offer a clear definition of what he meant by the Moldovans' acceptance, the examples he used implied their lack of confrontation, resistance, or emotional response to being dominated by others. Essentially, what Joe described was the Moldovans' "passive acceptance" in the sense that they decided to "go with the flow" because "nothing can be done about the situation" (Morgan, 2009,

online). For Joe, the tension between the two responses was at first disconcerting, but later he found that the Moldovans' style of acceptance was "healing." In re-reading Joe's story I question the implication that acceptance implies a lack of resistance. I also explore the ways in which acceptance is not universally healing.

In questioning Joe's view that Moldovans were unilaterally accepting, I drew on Barbalet's (1985) claim that acceptance does not imply a lack of resistance—rather, acceptance and resistance can co-exist simultaneously. Barbalet argued,

> an acceptance of power does not preclude resistance. Pragmatic or expedient acceptance of power includes a significant resistive element, either because of an absence of interest in the realization of the goals of power, or because of an overt hindrance of its proper operations…Resistance can take different forms, but none are necessarily associated with conflict. (p. 531)

Some key points in this statement are that acceptance can be based on "pragmatic" or "expedient" needs. In other words, one may accept (or resist) based on the context and one's needs in the moment. One may also resist at a later time and in a fashion that may not be obvious to others. Additionally, the goals of domination may be ignored as a resistive counter-measure in that confronting those goals outright may actually give them more force. And because there is no outward conflict or violent act, what may seem like acceptance on the surface may actually be resistance from another perspective.

Building on this view, it seemed that because Joe's style of resistance involved direct confrontation and the Moldovan's style did not, he labeled Moldovans as accepting when it was possible and even likely that they weren't entirely accepting. For example, the women in Joe's first culture shock story directly confronted the van driver by yelling at him when he

failed to return Joe's change, even though later they did not confront the driver when he decided not to continue driving them into the city. One might ask why the Moldovans were resistant in one instance but not another. Joe resolved that seeming contradiction by concluding that Moldovans were accepting, but it stands to reason that if they could be resistant in some circumstances, they could be resistant in other situations as well. Additionally, in their study on behavioral responses to discrimination, Louis & Taylor (1999) suggested that it is difficult to judge another person's response to injustice because one cannot see the "wide variety of potential behaviours [that] are available to the individual" (p.20). As a cultural outsider, it was therefore likely that Joe wasn't aware of all the subtle forms of resistance available to the Moldovans.

In addition, while Joe seemed to find healing in Moldovan acceptance, acceptance did not appear to be healing for the Moldovans. According to Joe, Moldova has the "worst alcoholic problem in Europe." He even showed me a photo of a young man passed out in the park during the daytime and noted Moldovans "wouldn't live very long" because "They would drink themselves to death." He also used the story of the woman's suicide to develop his concept that Moldovans were accepting and that acceptance was healing for him. For me, that alcoholism and suicide were prominent subjects in Joe's experiences in Moldova suggested that Moldovans neither simply accepted domination, nor found it healing. Rather, their response denoted (at least in part) a painful struggle against domination. This seems to lend support to Tuan's (1998), belief that accepting one's domination could be both "burdensome" and freeing—burdensome in the sense that one must live with the knowledge and effects of being dominated, freeing in the sense that one can be free from choosing how to respond to one's dominator(s) (p. 131). That Joe had carried the burden of his own

"domination" at the hands of "Anglos" for so long perhaps made acceptance seem more appealing or freeing and allowed Joe to ignore the ways in which Moldovans struggled against their domination.

Reverse Culture Shock I: Materialism & Not Playing the Game

For Joe, returning to the U.S. "was a lot harder…than going over there." Even though he had read about reverse culture shock, he thought it was "the biggest bunch of bullshit" until he realized it was happening to him. Several times, Joe reiterated that it was difficult to pinpoint why readjustment was so "painful" and "awful." As we talked though, he kept returning to issues related to the American mentality toward work and money and the ways in which his Peace Corps teaching experiences in Moldova changed his perspective.

He began by relating that prior to the Peace Corps he had always been an "hourly guy" who was focused on making money. As a bail bondsman, he said he played on his clients' ignorance of the legal system in order to make a lot of money. However, when he returned to the U.S., Joe recalled "I didn't belong in the U.S. anymore because I didn't have that same kind of 'Let's all go make money, let's see how much money we can make, see who gets the most toys' [mentality]." In addition, Joe felt that life here in the U.S. was "competitive as hell" and that the mindset was that "it's all about the rat race" and making money. He argued that people here are "working just so that they can satisfy their little comforts—their television, their computer, their air conditioning," which seemed wasteful to Joe. He also felt that in turn he was expected, not to save, but rather to be wasteful as well. For Joe, readjustment meant "selling" and "sharpening" himself in order to get a job and "play the game."

In contrast, Joe explained that in Moldova he felt appreciated even though he was being paid very little money. He also saw that Moldovans were able to live without certain material comforts which made Joe realize, "it's not bad being poor." Since earning money to procure material goods was not a focus in Moldova, Joe says the "pressure…was kinda lifted as far as…what you expected of yourself or, or what was expected of you as a…person."

Joe's first response to the discomfort he felt upon his return to the U.S. was to go back overseas. But he said he was tired of running and then returning to face the same problems at home. Instead, he decided that if he didn't want to play the game, he wouldn't "play the game then." So, he began to give up the creature comforts that other Americans seemed to value such as television, the internet, and air conditioning. He suggested that even without these things he was "very comfortable" and noted that when he told other people that he didn't use air conditioning, "they freak out!" and when he explained that he doesn't have a "television, they wanna go through the roof!" He also felt that if he sat and watched television he would be "wasting" his life and that he would "die an old man there watching TV re-runs." For these reasons, he decided to focus on ways to gratify himself such as doing leatherwork, engaging in physical exercise, developing his spirituality through Bible study, and learning to accept both his self and his life circumstances.

That Joe did not expect to experience reverse culture shock upon his return home was a common response, as was his assertion that returning home was "harder" than going to a foreign country (La Brack, 1985; Sussman, 1986; Miller, 1988; Szkudlarek, 2009; Anjarwalla, 2010; Weaver, n.d.). Joe seemed to find happiness in the simplicity of life in Moldova where the pressure was off to make money and the emphasis was on his job (albeit not in the money-making sense), where maintaining personal relationships was valued, and

conserving resources was necessary. Upon his return to the U.S., he found that Americans were concerned only about making money to satisfy "their little comforts," being competitive, and being wasteful. These cultural differences in approaches to work, personal relationships, and materialism caused Joe to feel conflicted. Because of this conflict, Joe decided "not to play the game" in the U.S. and instead, he focused on other spiritual and personal pursuits.

In this vein, Joe indicated that focusing on money and material gain (materialism) was antithetical to maintaining active and positive social relationships. There was considerable support for this perspective in the research literature. Before touching on this literature, I begin by offering Belk's (1984) definition and historical overview of materialism followed by a review of Moeller's (2012) report on how extrinsic and intrinsic value orientations relate to the notion of materialism. Belk (1984) defines materialism as

> the importance a consumer attaches to worldly possessions. At the highest levels of materialism, such possessions assume a central place in a person's life and are believed to provide the greatest sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction. (p. 291)

In tracing the history of materialism Belk (1985) notes that research has placed its origins in Western cultures, variously in 15th and 16th century Europe, 18th century England, 19th century France, and/or 19th and 20th century America. He also points out, however, that many ancient civilizations have dealt with issues related to materialism down through the centuries. Despite these differences regarding the date and location of the emergence of materialism, Belk (1985) indicated that seeking "psychological well-being via discretionary consumption" has become more attainable by greater numbers of people within the past few hundred years,

most notably perhaps in the United States given “Americans' high incomes and relatively low taxes” (p. 265).

Likewise, Moeller (2012) believes that the American drive for “greater material rewards” has steadily increased over the past several decades, so much so that the “pursuit of money and materialism” currently “plays a central role” in American culture (on-line). He argues that this shift toward materialism is the result of a greater emphasis in the U.S. on “extrinsic” rather than “intrinsic” values. In making his case, he draws on the work of three university professors (among others). Kennon Sheldon, a professor of psychology at the University of Missouri, explains that

> intrinsic factors are about personal growth and self-knowledge, connections and social intimacy with other people, and wanting to help the human community for altruistic reasons…Extrinsic goals…are related to money, luxury, appearance, attractiveness, status, popularity, looks, and power. (In Moeller, 2012, online)

In addition, Jean Twenge, professor of psychology at San Diego State University suggested that “Extrinsic values tend to be correlated with narcissism and a high sense of self,” self-gain, and competition. She says that most people mistakenly believe

> We have to be this way because the world is so competitive…They have become convinced that the way to succeed is to become very self-focused, and to get money, fame, and image. However, narcissistic people don't do better…That's a myth. (In Moeller, 2012, online)

And finally, Tim Kasser, professor of psychology at Knox College in Galesburg, Illinois, argues that American capitalism is inimical to the development of intrinsic values in that it requires consumption for its operation and promotes materialism by bombarding people with

"commercial messages" (Moeller, 2012, online). Along these lines, Muncy and Eastman (1998) argue that marketers (and business owners by implication) have a "self-interest in encouraging materialism" and to the extent that materialism "has a negative overall effect on the quality of life," they suggest that the promotion of materialism may be considered "socially irresponsible" (p. 137).

Indeed, many have noted the negative influences of materialism on both the individual and society. For example, focusing on money and materialistic pursuits "makes people less likely to help acquaintances, to donate to charity, or to choose to spend time with others" (Dunn, Aknin, & Norton, 2008, p. 1687); can lead to "possessiveness," "non-generosity," and "envy" (Belk, 1985, p. 268); it may "become addictive, compulsive, or mindless" (Belk, 2001, Effects Section); creates conflicts between "material values and more collective-oriented values such as family cohesion, community ties, and religious fulfillment" (Burroughs & Rindfleisch, 2002, p. 248); generates considerable debt (Stone, Weir, & Bryant, 2008, online); and among married couples, increases perceptions of financial difficulties which alternately has a negative influence on marital satisfaction (Dean, Caroll, & Yang, 2007). For Deiner and Oisihi (2000) materialism also leads to "sacrifices in self-growth, leisure time, and intimate relationships" as well as "happiness" in that it creates feelings of dissatisfaction when materialistic desires are not fulfilled (p. 186). It also holds the potential for "ruining the environment" through the overconsumption of natural resources, the pollution created as a by-product of mass production (Deiner & Oishi, 2000, p. 186), and an overall lack of concern about environmental issues (Good, 2007). Based on their research, Deiner and Oishi (2000) conclude that "the educational challenge is to convince

people that other pursuits may sometimes lead to greater fulfillment than does the pursuit of more money" and material objects (p. 215).

That so many negative outcomes have been attributed to materialism suggests that material *gain* involves *loss* in other areas—relationships, spirituality, environment, finances, and so on. Likewise, in coming to recognize that "it isn't bad being poor," Joe seems to challenge an American cultural perception that being poor is necessarily bad or lacking. It also calls into question the meaning of such terms as rich and poor as well as how self/Other are judged on the basis of those terms.

Re-Reading Reverse Culture Shock I:

Postmaterialism & Playing the Game Differently

In re-reading Joe's story which focused on the negative aspects of materialism, I look at ways in which spirituality may balance out materialism (and vice versa) while still allowing for a connection to the material world. I also note Inglehart's (1971, 2008) belief that achieving some degree of material security ultimately gives way to "postmaterialist" goals of human development. Addressing the relationship between materialism and spirituality, Swati Desai (2010), Director of Psychological Services at Akasha Center for Integrative Medicine, Santa Monica, California, reasons that materialism and spirituality can be used to "balance" each other in the pursuit of a "good and fulfilling life" (online). She advises,

> Allow the practice of spirituality to monitor the greed and envy, which seem to be at the heart of why materialism gets excessive, leaving the world around us a worse place…Use materialism to stay in touch with the realities of daily life,

> recognizing that amassing resources is a source of security, survival and freedom to experience life (online).

Desai also points out that a sole focus on spirituality could lead to "forced austerity, and eventually bitter dogmatism" as well as causing one to "become self-centered and deny the realities of the daily life" (online). Similarly, Belk (1985) claims that the "willful self-denial of material sources of satisfaction" may be related to the "psychopathologies of masochism, self-hatred, anorexia nervosa, and other self-destructive urges" (p. 266).

This is not to suggest that rampant materialism is beneficial, rather that extreme materialism and extreme spirituality may ultimately prove detrimental.

Interestingly, Inglehart (2008) believes that it is the achievement of material security that allows for a "shift from survival values to self-expression values" (p. 10). In 1971, Inglehart theorized that

> value priorities in advanced industrial society will tend to shift away from *materialist* concerns about economic and physical security toward greater emphasis on freedom, self-expression, and the quality of life or *postmaterialist* values. (In Inglehart & Abramson, 1994, p. 336, emphasis in original)

More recently, Inglehart (2008), pointed to some of the trends that appear to bear out his theoretical assertions. These include: a decrease in voting along social class lines and an increase in voting "around lifestyle issues" (e.g. abortion and same sex marriage); the proliferation of various social movements dealing with concerns for the environment, "gender equality," "gay liberation," and other social issues; and a "rise in challenges to corporate power" (p. 142). To Ingelhart's point, there have been recent challenges to corporate and political power most notably in the on-going "Occupy Wall Street" movement

which began in New York in 2011. The movement is described as "a leaderless resistance movement with people of many colors, genders and political persuasions" with the common creed that "We are the 99% that will no longer tolerate the greed and corruption of the 1%" (Occupy Wall Street, n.d., online). Others have also linked the Occupy Wall Street movement to the "conscious-raising" goals and the social importance of Gay rights and Feminist movements (Guatney, 2011).

Regarding the environment, recycling stations are popping up everywhere (including schools and universities) and according to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) (2011), recycling has steadily increased from just 6.4% in 1960 to 34.1% in 2010 (p. 2). That these social movements coexist alongside materialistic pursuits appears to support Inglehart's (1971, 2008) theory of postmaterialist shift to the extent that having a greater sense of economic and existential security seems to create an opening for publicly addressing environmental and human rights concerns.

Additionally, Joe's decision not to "play the game" because he didn't like the competitive focus on making money and materialism in the U. S. suggested that he could escape from participating in the American value system. However, Foucault argued that "one escapes…not by playing a game that" is "totally different…but by playing the same game differently" (In Butin, 2001, p. 172). Therefore, in rejecting what he saw as American materialism in favor of other pursuits, it wasn't that Joe *wasn't* playing the game, he was playing the game from a different perspective than he had before. Both sets of values (relational/spiritual and competitive/materialistic) represent different facets of American culture. That one facet may be emphasized over another does not diminish the existence of

the other. It also means that other cultural values may be emphasized at a later time or in different contexts.

Identity Shift II: Taking on a New Identity & Caring as Self-Sacrifice

In addition to becoming less materialistic, Joe also believed that his experiences in Moldova made him a more caring person. He argued that being a teacher in the Peace Corps meant that you "really have to care." He asked rhetorically if it were possible to spend two years teaching in another country, especially a poorer one, if one didn't care. He explained,

> For one, you're not making any money…that I think was instrumental because for me it was…like, "Are you stupid or what? You've been working all your life trying to make something of yourself and now you're gonna go work somewhere where they hardly pay you?"

He also made a comparison between Americans and Moldovans. He noted:

> ultimately I think I became more of a caring person and, and people in the United States don't care. I don't think they do. I think they care about themselves more than anything else, but I found a lot of people in Moldova that would help each other.

Along these lines, Joe theorized that it was the experience of "surviving as a native" in another culture that made him "a different human being" because he "had to be a different human being to be there." In a sense, Joe had to become a Moldovan—he had "to become them." He said this allowed him to make a "transformation" in which he no longer thought about when he would be getting paid or when school was out because there was little else to do but focus on work and spend time visiting others.

With regard to taking on a new identity, Jannson (1975) explains that those who live abroad and return home are

> confronted not only with a different world from the one he knew, but also with a different identity, in his own eyes and others'. All these changes…compounded by the loosening of social bonds caused by absence, can produce anxiety in the re-entrant and in members of the social system (p. 137).

Joe described his anxiety in the Reverse Culture Shock I story in terms of the "painful" and "awful" feelings he felt after his return to the U.S., as well as his negative views on materialism, waste, and in this story, the lack of caring on the part of other Americans. That Joe's American friends were shocked by his rejection of TV, air conditioning, and other comforts after his return to the U.S. (as noted in the previous story) implies that they experienced some anxiety as well.

Part of the identity shift Joe described was that his intercultural experiences in Moldova made him a more caring person. His perception of his role as a Peace Corps teacher seemed related to the notion of caring as a form of "self-sacrifice" as he pointed out that leaving the material comforts of the U.S. for the poverty he faced in Moldova meant he "really" had "to care." Heathwood (2011) argues that "Self-sacrifice has to do with *actions"* (p. 20) and that an act exemplifies self-sacrifice "only if performing the act makes the agent worse off than he otherwise could have been" (p. 21). Joe noted the monetary sacrifice he made in joining the Peace Corps as a volunteer and in other stories he wrote about the challenges he faced learning a new language and adjusting to a new social system, so in the monetary and comfort sense, he was certainly worse off.

This notion of self-sacrifice is also somewhat formulated as "motivational displacement" in Noddings' (2010) relational ethic of caring. She explains that for motivational displacement, the caring person "puts aside" her or his "own values and projects" and the "motive energy" of the carer "flows towards the needs or projects of the cared-for" (p. 391). In order to complete the caring relation, Noddings (2010) adds, the "cared-for must somehow recognize the efforts of the carer" (p. 391). It seemed that Joe shared a caring relationship with the Moldovans because he felt his role in Moldova was one of self-sacrifice and caring and Joe's caring was ultimately reciprocated. In contrast, although Joe cared about Americans (especially his students as shown in the Pedagogy I story) after his return to the U.S., he felt that Americans were more concerned with materialistic pursuits than developing personal relationships. In short, his caring was not acknowledged by Americans the way it had been by the Moldovans, causing him to feel that Americans were uncaring.

Re-reading Identity Shift II: Adding New Layers of Identity & Caring as Self-Gain

Joe felt that by living as a "native" in Moldova, he had taken on a Moldovan identity and become more caring. In contrast, he described Americans as uncaring and focused on satisfying their selfish "little comforts" through materialistic pursuits. Yet, while I agree that living and teaching abroad can be life-changing, I question the ability to take on a completely new identity, especially one derived from another culture. I also have doubts that it is possible to live as a "native" in another culture or that joining the Peace Corps involves complete self-sacrifice.

Speaking to the notion of identity, Wang (2004) suggested that while living in a different culture may help one "reach another level of the self or add another layer of the self," one could "never be totally different from" what one was before (p. 47). She also added that because identity was characterized by both "nonchange and change," it was "impossible and unnecessary to claim a totally new self" (p. 48). This implies the multiplicity of identity (multiple levels and/or layers) and that living within a different culture may allow different aspects of identity to be emphasized while other aspects are de-emphasized. And, likewise, even though new layers may be added, the old layers remain underneath, making a total conversion of identity impossible. In Joe's case, he seemed to be expressing the desire to highlight the more caring aspects of his own identity and to delimit the more competitive, materialistic, or selfish aspects which he felt were in conflict.

In addition, while it is true that Peace Corps Volunteers are expected to live in similar conditions as their host country counterparts, I don't think it is possible to live as a "native" in the way that Joe suggested. In my own experience, the Host Country Nationals I lived among treated me as part honored guest and part intruder, but I certainly do not think they treated me in completely the same way they treated each other. Likewise, I and the other Peace Corps volunteers I knew responded to our surroundings, not with the knowing of a native, but—even allowing for individual differences—we responded like Americans. That Joe said he felt "uncomfortable" the entire time he was in Moldova in his first culture shock story indicated that Joe did not completely embrace Moldovan culture while there, but that his perceived Moldovan identity developed, in a sense, after his return to the United States.

With regard to Joe's identity shift in relation to caring, he stated that being a Peace Corps teacher meant "you" really "have to care." On second reading, this statement seems a

bit ambiguous in that it doesn't make clear who it is Joe cares about. Is it the Moldovans? Is it himself? That Joe offers his material sacrifice as evidence of his caring is interesting. Using Nietzsche's critique of ethics based on "modes of sacrifice," De Marzio (2009) explores the idea that sacrifice "can actually be a way in which one practices self-care" (p. 169). According to De Marzio, the notion of sacrifice implies turning away from the self and forgetting the self as part of an ascetic ideal designed to make one feel morally "superior" (p. 169-170). In other words, sometimes casting oneself as a caring person may be an attempt to elicit caring on the part of others and may allow the caring person to feel morally justified in their actions toward others or their judgments of others. Further, Kittay (2007) argues that

> Total *self-sacrifice,* the annihilation of the self in favor of the cared for, is neither demanded by the practice of care nor is it justifiable, for one can see that a relationship requires *two* selves, not one self in which the other is subsumed and consumed. (p. 478)

This research suggests that within a caring relationship there is both "give" and "take." In a sense it also calls into question neat categories of "carer" and "cared-for" to the extent that the carer may also be the cared for. Although Joe did make sacrifices in joining the Peace Corps, he also enjoyed a good deal of self-enrichment in return. He learned a new language, travelled not only to Moldova but other parts of Europe, gained a new perspective on the world, became more caring and less materialistic, felt a sense of healing, felt a sense of closeness with others, and overall felt a sense of excitement and adventure. In other words, despite his sacrifice, Joe flourished (DeMarzio, 2009) in other ways.

Pedagogy I: Rote Learning and the Need to Teach Creativity

With regard to his pedagogy, Joe talked about the differences between his style of teaching and the Moldovans' style. Joe explained that the Moldovans used "the Russian method" which "was to memorize all materials presented and there was never any room for creativity." Joe said that this difference initially caused him to think that his students were cheating because their answers were so uniformly alike. He said his students were also "shocked" when he "asked them to write a creative piece" about their own lives. Joe soon realized this was challenging for the students because they couldn't do it "without being told specifically what to do." Joe continued that he ended up doing a lot of writing so that the students could follow his "thought processes." He felt that teaching the Moldovan students to be creative was "the most amazing part because [he] got to open up their minds to other possibilities." Joe also added that he translated the technique to his students in the U.S. because "they have the same problem," especially when it came to answering open-ended essay questions on the year end state-wide exam. He said his students in the U.S. would get a prompt such as "what was the best time you ever had with a family member…and it's too vague for them and they can't seem to narrow it down to something specific." He added that "being in Moldova helped me to realize that if you've never been taught to be creative it's a very…difficult thing to do."

According to Joe, the Moldovan educational system is based on the Russian method of rote learning which focuses on the "accumulation of knowledge" but does not "encourage problem-solving, innovative thinking and creativity" (Fretwell & Wheeler, 2001, p. 2). Surprised by his Moldovan students' inability to write a creative essay about themselves, Joe used his difference in teaching style to open up new learning possibilities, especially in the

area of creativity. Referring to creativity as the "current icon of the educational world" (p. 149), Gibson (2005) notes that an important theme in the field of education is the linking of "creativity to the needs of individuals, where education promises the flourishing of individual potential" through a "concern with the creative needs of individual" students and "the personal growth of their imaginative and aesthetic lives" (p. 153). This seems to fit with Joe's belief that by teaching his Moldovan students to write creatively, he was "opening their minds."

Following this line of inquiry, Ferrari, Cachia, & Punie (2009) describe "creative learning" as

> any learning which involves understanding and new awareness, which allows the learner to go beyond notional acquisition, and focuses on thinking skills. It is based on learner empowerment and centeredness…[and] is seen as opposite to the reproductive experience. (p. iii)

This definition refers to creative learning in much the same way that Joe did, in opposition to rote/reproductive learning. Similarly, Novak and Cañas (2008) make the distinction between rote and meaningful learning and argue that "Creativity results from very high levels of meaningful learning" (p. 5), although they see the "rote-meaningful distinction" as a "continuum" rather than a "simple dichotomy" (p. 4). Further, Gino and Ariely (2011) argue that "Creative thinking allows people to solve problems effectively and also to remain flexible so that they can cope with the advantages, opportunities, technologies, and changes that are a part of their day-to-day lives" (p.3). It seems then that creativity is a positive trait related to personal development.

Joe's realization that creativity needed to be taught and practiced also helped make him more aware of his American student's needs with regard to writing. One of his techniques was to be creative himself and model creativity for his students. According to Sternberg and Williams (in Fasko Jr., 2000-2001), "modeling creativity" and "building self-efficacy" are prerequisites for developing student creativity. Other tips on their 25 point list include: questioning assumptions, encouraging sensible risk-taking, allowing mistakes, and imagining other viewpoints (p. 324). While I agree that these are useful tools for stimulating creativity, they also pose certain risks for teachers and students. It is my experience that few people like to have their assumptions questioned and in many places (including the U.S.) teachers and students may be punished for questioning certain cultural values. Likewise, to the extent that creativity involves risk-taking and making mistakes, this poses challenges for student work that must be graded and approved by another entity—a teacher or an exam board. Westby and Dawson (1995) explore this paradox, that even though teachers may espouse creativity, they do not always appreciate the personality traits associated with student creativity. For the authors, this suggests that "to be creative and still be liked by the teacher, children must also display the properties that make them easy to manage in the classroom" (p. 8). Perhaps then creativity, when framed as risk-taking and questioning assumptions, is not in the students' best interest. In many instances it seems that conformity and compliance with the teacher, the school system, or examination board is what is most often rewarded.

Re-reading Pedagogy I: Rote Learning as Meaningful Learning & Creativity as Cultural Reproduction

With regard to teaching styles, Joe pointed out the Moldovan's use of rote memorization in contrast to his use of creativity. He seemed to cast rote memorization in a negative light by saying that "there was never any room for creativity." On the other hand, he equated creativity with opening his students' minds. For me, Joe's belief in the value of creativity supports a Western cultural perspective. For example, in a European Commission Report for the Department of Education (2009), the report noted that

> Creativity is a powerful catch phrase. In Western societies it epitomises success, the modern, trends for novelty and excitement. Whether linked to individuals, enterprises, cities or regions, creativity establishes immediate empathy, and conveys an image of dynamism. Creativity is a positive word in a society constantly aspiring to innovation and "progress." (p. 3)

In contrast, "rote" learning is defined as "the use of memory usually with little intelligence" and "mechanical or unthinking routine or repetition" (In Merriam-Webster.com, 2012, online). Tan (2011), however, argues that such a "narrow conceptualisation of memorisation, that is, rote learning which leads to nonlearning" (p. 137) is a Western misperception. Through her research on Adult Asian learners, she concluded that "Memorisation perceived from the East Asian culture is more than just rote learning. Memorisation can transcend to the level of understanding and meaningful learning" (p. 137). She also explained how from an Asian cultural perspective, the learners in her study could "memorise and understand simultaneously" (p.138). Specifically, she pointed to both the rote memorisation and understanding one needed in order to grasp the complexity of the Chinese alphabet (p. 138).

This also supports the earlier findings of Kember (1996) who notes that Asian students used understanding and rote memorization techniques strategically in the sense that "Without some attempt at understanding, students would have a limited basis for determining what to memorise" (p. 352). In addition, for Mayer (2002), rote learning can also lead to creativity when "remembering knowledge is integrated within the larger task of constructing new knowledge or solving new problems" (p. 228). To the extent essay writing involves the memorization of letters, sentence structures, certain stylistic rules, and teacher modeling (as in Joe's case), it appears that creative writing also requires an element of rote learning. These perspectives point out that rote learning can also be meaningful and lead to or coexist alongside creativity despite Joe's claim that rote learning did not leave room for creativity. In addition they point to a cultural influence on beliefs regarding the value and effectiveness of learning and teaching styles.

While the perspectives offered above work to counteract a negative view of rote learning, others challenge the notion that creativity carries singularly positive meanings. For Gibson (2005), creativity is a "hurrah word," a happy, rallying word that everyone seems to support yet runs the risk of becoming a rational instrumental self-legitimizing term, that "can be filled with any content and used in any cultural, political or moral context" (p. 149). In other words, its positive surface can be used to conceal its "dark side" (McLaren, 1993; Akinola & Mendes, 2008; Gino & Ariely, 2011). Drawing from the fields of art, technology, science, and history, McLaren (1993) provides that

> In our intoxication with the idea of divine principles, inspiration, and aesthetic characteristics, we tend to ignore the fact that much of human creative effort has been in the service of violent and devious strategems. (p. 137)

Some examples include creative technological advances in weaponry, the creative cruelty of various groups throughout history who have intentionally inflicted pain on other human beings, and the image of creativity gone awry evoked by Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. In this vein, Gino & Ariely (2011) find empirical support for their supposition that the "divergent thinking" and "cognitive flexibility" that characterizes creative thinking may help "dishonest" people to "develop original ways to bypass moral rules" and "reinterpret available information in a self-serving way…when justifying their immoral actions or choices" (p. 5-6). Further, Akinola & Mendes (2008) link heightened creativity with "intense negative emotions" and "mood disorders" such as depression (online). I think the importance of this research is that creativity is not a static term, that it may have different sources, intentions, and outcomes that are not inherently positive, and that it may mean a variety of things to a variety of people, including students and teachers.

Additionally, after exploring the cultural emphasis as well as the positive and negative aspects of rote learning in Asia and creative learning in the U.S., Kim (2005) believes that "each approach has benefits from which the other could learn" (p. 337). Yet, Novak and Cañas (2008) argue that "People often confuse rote learning and meaningful learning with teaching approaches" (p. 4). They say that despite the teaching approach used, the way in which the information is learned depends on other factors including the "disposition of the learner" (p. 4). For educators, this implies that despite their best efforts, there can be no guarantee of outcomes. For instance, one might reasonably assume that with all of the emphasis on creativity, out of the box thinking, and so-called nonconformity in American culture, creativity would be second nature to American students. Yet, Joe observed "they have the same problem" as his Moldovan students and struggled when it came to

creative essay writing. This might lead one to wonder if American culture is as creative as has been portrayed or if what has been called creativity is simply the reproduction of culturally-approved forms of “creative” expression.

CHAPTER V

HARLEY: TOWARD A PEDAGOGY OF NON-PREJUDICE

Harley was a 33 year-old Filipino-American woman who was working as an Associate Director of International Programs and Services at a Midwestern university at the time of our interviews. She also taught a class called "Transitions" which was a freshman experience course to help newly-arrived international students adjust to American culture. In addition, she also offered intercultural communication presentations not only for international students, but for local students and community members as well. For her Peace Corps service, Harley taught English at the primary and secondary levels and held conversation classes for local teachers in Kazakhstan from 1999 to 2001. Additionally, she was the first volunteer to serve in the small rural village where she taught. After completing her Peace Corps service, Harley also taught English for 9 years total in 4 different countries: Thailand, Japan, Poland, and Kyrgyzstan. She is currently pursuing her PhD in Education & Human Resource Studies.

I first met Harley at a local coffee shop in the small Midwestern university town where she lived and worked. As I sat waiting for Harley in the coffee shop, I was slightly annoyed by the people at the table next to me who appeared to be two grandparents minding a child of about three. The grandparents kept saying things like, "What do you want to drink, Bonnie? Bonnie, do you want milk or do you want a soda? Come on please tell us, Bonnie."

And, “What do you want to do after we leave? Do you want to go swimming or do you want to go to the zoo, Bonnie? Come on, sit up and tell us, Bonnie.” For her part, Bonnie didn’t seem to know what she wanted and looked as if she didn’t really care. I thought to myself about how children are often placed at the center of attention in American culture, whether they choose this role or not, whereas in some of the other cultures through which I have travelled, children’s wants and needs are often secondary to those of their parents, also whether they choose that role or not.

As I sat thinking about what Bonnie would ultimately choose to drink and what she wanted to do later, Harley arrived. I admit I was taken slightly off guard when a woman dressed in black leather cycling gear riding a Harley-Davidson motorcycle adorned with miniature skulls pulled up in the parking lot. Moments before she arrived, a balding middle-aged White man resembling me sat down just outside the door of the coffee shop. As Harley approached the shop, I noticed that she was trying to make eye contact with the man, but that he seemed rather reluctant to return her gaze. Realizing that it was not me, she entered the shop and upon finding that I was the man she was to meet, she greeted me with a large, warm hug. We had some coffee and shared a laugh about our mistaken identities—that while she seemed to break a stereotype, I fit mine so closely that another person could be confused for me. Along these lines, Harley mentioned that among her group of friends she was “always the unique one.”

During our subsequent interviews at her office and her home, it became clear that experiencing different cultures and riding her motorcycle were a large part of Harley’s identity. Both her office and her home were filled with mementos of her travels through 50 countries as well as Harley-Davidson memorabilia. She said that what she loved about living

overseas was “the travel, the different cultures of people you meet, the different languages, food, all of that” and that she felt sad that living in the United States she would have to give that up. But since buying a Harley-Davidson motorcycle upon her return to the U.S., she has become a part of a new culture—biker culture. She explained, “I was learning about something new…because just the different culture of being with bikers and symbols, signs, different language, everything that I loved about living overseas and learning about other cultures, I got through this.” She also learned through riding her motorcycle through some 30 plus states (she keeps a map with each state she visits highlighted), about the diversity within the United States. She noted, “I realized from state to state, from North to South, East to West, how it’s very different. There are a lot of different foods, different types of people, different accents, different atmosphere, different restaurants” that she would not have experienced had she not become a biker.

Interestingly, Harley described riding a motorcycle and having intercultural experiences in similar ways. She considered both as experiences that made you “feel” something. In a roughly 9-minute student-created video-biography juxtaposing Harley’s role as an educator and her identity as a woman and a biker, she said that in biking, “You really feel everything that’s happening around you…you feel all the bumps in the road, you experience all the weather…it just gives you a heightened sense of life and travel.” Likewise she said of intercultural experience, “it makes you feel, whether it’s that you feel good or you feel bad, but you feel.” She added that intercultural experience can “really jolt you” because “you start to really feel and reflect on life…who you are…what you believe…what you didn’t believe and what you believe now.” Accordingly, she viewed culture shock and reverse culture shock as learning experiences even though it sometimes took considerable

time and reflection to determine what lessons may be learned from those experiences. She often used the lessons she learned abroad and at home to relate to the international students and the minority students she mentored.

In her stories, Harley often returned to issues surrounding the ways in which her bi-cultural (Filipino-American) identity played a part in her culture shock. Because she felt that some of her shock experiences are the result of racial prejudice and because she uses those experiences to inform her pedagogy, I have titled her chapter *Toward a Pedagogy of Non-Prejudice*. In this chapter I have included two culture shock stories, one reverse culture shock story, and two pedagogy stories. I did not include an identity shift story in Harley's chapter because she seems to have already developed an attunement to identity issues through her early travels to the Philippines and her identity struggles during and after the Peace Corps seem to go beyond those of recognizing the ways in which different cultures may shift one's worldview. In her first culture shock story, Harley talks about the differences in cultural orientations between America (where she was born) which she describes as individualistic, and the Philippines (where her parents are from) which she feels is more collectivistic. In re-reading this story, I question the categories of collectivist and individualist as representing singular concepts and note that national cultures may not easily fit into these categories. Although this story is not directly related to Harley's Peace Corps experience, I feel it expresses an important culture shock experience in Harley's identity development. In her second culture shock story, Harley talks about the visible corruption in Kazakhstan as she wonders how the country can ever develop. In re-reading the story, I look at corruption in a different light and suggest that corruption may coexist with development as in the American example. In her reverse culture shock story, Harley explores the different uses of time in

Kazakhstan where people take time to build relationships and the U.S. where time is limited and people focus on other things, such as watching TV, rather than build relationships. On second reading, I suggest that building relationships can take different forms, even by watching TV, for example. Next, Harley's first pedagogy story deals with the racial prejudice in both Kazakhstan and the United States and how she helped students confront their own prejudices. In re-reading the story, I look at the potential benefits of being bi-cultural and the way in which Harley thrives in spite of the prejudice. In her second pedagogy story, Harley talks about her techniques for cultural adjustment. In the first reading, I examine these techniques through a cultural lens. In re-reading the story, I look at the same techniques from a different perspective.

Culture Shock I: Philippines = Collectivism, America = Individualism

Harley's parents were from the Philippines and began taking her to visit the Philippines when she was 10 years old. Even though she had grown up with Filipino cultural values, going to the Philippines could still be a source of culture shock for Harley. For instance, Harley said she "would always get into trouble in the Philippines" because she wanted to do things by herself but that the Filipinos were a more "collectivist society." She detailed that you couldn't go for a walk by yourself in the Philippines, if you wanted to go for a walk, others would have to go with you. If you were hungry, you had to wait until others were hungry too, eating alone would be considered rude. And as far as watching TV, everyone had to watch the same TV show together in the same room. She said this didn't reconcile with her American upbringing in which you could take a walk or go for a jog by yourself, eat whenever you were hungry, or watch whatever TV show you wanted on your

own TV in your own room. It wasn't that she didn't appreciate and enjoy other aspects of Filipino culture, but that at home, in America, she "would always have a little more freedom." This gave Harley a sense of independence that clashed with Filipino values.

Harley added that her mother also developed her strong sense of independence by explaining to Harley that,

> you're going to have to work twice as hard, not only because you're a woman, but because you're Asian, and…I want you to get the highest degree that you can…I want you to work as hard as you can, I want you to be independent and I never want you to feel afraid to do anything or to go anywhere, or that you have to depend on somebody for something.

So, when her mother complained out how independent Harley was, Harley would remind her mother that she had taught her to be independent. Her mother joked in response, "yeah, but I think I did it too much."

When I asked Harley to clarify what her mother meant when she said that as an "Asian and a woman" she would need to work harder, she explained that as the oldest of nine children and the first child to come to America, her mother had a lot of "expectations that were placed on her" such as being a role model for her siblings and sending back money to help the family. She had also had a Master's degree in Nursing from the Philippines, but it was not "considered good enough" in the U.S. and therefore her mother was paid less and treated differently from American nurses even though they only had bachelor's degrees. Harley also felt her mom was treated differently because of her accent which some Americans associated with not being "as smart or not as knowledgeable" therefore she

always had to work harder to prove herself. Likewise, Harley also worked hard to prove herself in the eyes of others, while striving for independence at the same time.

In this story, Harley pointed out two differing and apparently conflicting cultural orientations: the Philippines as collectivist and the U.S. as individualist. Kulkarni, et al (2010) described both individualist and collectivist orientations as follows:

> *Individualism* orientation refers to an emphasis on individual goals, individual rights, autonomy, self-reliance, achievement orientation, and competitiveness. *Collectivism*, on the other hand, refers to an emphasis on collective goals, collective rights, interdependence, affiliation with the larger collective, cooperation, and harmony. (p. 95)

Noting the importance of understanding individualist and collectivist orientations, Fischer et al (2009) indicate that "Individualism-collectivism (IC) has dominated cross-cultural research…is the most commonly applied construct to explain and predict cultural differences" and is a dimension that appears highly stable across cultural groups (p. 188). They further assert the unlikelihood that people can work toward individualistic and collectivistic goals simultaneously. In addition, although Rothstein-Fisch & Trumbull (2008) believe that "every culture has both individualistic and collectivistic values" (p. 9), they also offer a framework for clearly identifying the traits associated with each type of cultural orientation (see Table 3 below).

The image that this research creates is that individualism and collectivism are powerful constructs in the field of cross-cultural research and that as relatively stable constructs across cultures, they may be easily delineated for the purposes of cross-cultural comparison. For me, as a visual learner, having a list like the one above is especially helpful

in conceptualizing the differences between the two orientations. Likewise, when I read Harley's story, the differences between the Philippines as collectivist and the United

Table 3. Rothstein-Fisch & Trumbull's *Individualism/Collectivism Framework*

Individualism	Collectivism
Representative of mainstream United States, Western Europe, Australia, and Canada	Representative of 70% of world cultures (Triandis, 1989), including those of many U.S. immigrants
Well-being of individual; responsibility for self	Well-being of group; responsibility for group
Independence/self-reliance	Interdependence/cooperation
Individual achievement	Family/group success
Self-expression	Respect
Self-esteem	Modesty
Task orientation	Social orientation
Cognitive intelligence	Social intelligence

(Rothstein-Fisch & Trumbull, 2008, p. 9)

States as individualist became exceedingly clear. All of the individual "freedoms" Harley took for granted in the U.S. such as taking a walk, eating, and watching TV by herself would be considered rude in the collectivist society of the Philippines where she was expected to perform each of those activities as part of a group.

Additionally, when Harley's mother said, "I want you to be independent and I never want you to feel afraid to do anything or to go anywhere, or that you have to depend on somebody for something" she appeared to be instilling in Harley an "individualistic drive to separation, autoarchy, and self-reliance" (Simmel, 2007, p. 68). But in complaining about Harley's over-independence and expecting her to behave in collectivistic ways, her mother

may have been sending a mixed message to Harley to the extent that mingling collectivist and individualist orientations may prove exceedingly difficult.

Re-reading Culture Shock I: Individualism (?), Collectivism (?)

In re-reading Harley's story with respect to collectivism and individualism, there seems to be a fair amount of research that calls into question the stability of each of these constructs. For example, Simmel (2007), demonstrated that the concept of individuality could have different meanings by comparing the "expressive differences" between a "Germanic" and a "more typically Latinate Romanic" notion of "Individuality" (p. 66). He explained that while the Germanic idea of individuality was expressed in terms of the "incomparable deeds of a person," the Latinate concept of individuality "made reference to a general of universal formal principle of some kind" (p. 66). In explaining the Latinate version of individuality further, Simmel wrote that although there were no particular standards for male fashion in Florence, Italy during the Renaissance period, the painted portraits of men from that time period show a certain "uniformity" of clothing style and added that,

> It is this element of commonality, despite all individualization, that in the end leads individuals to present themselves as bearers of a type, with a more or less generalized character or temperament…All individual freedom, distinction and excellence are sought within these limits, and are in fact nothing other than particularly pure and strong manifestations of typical nameable attributes. (p. 66-67)

Simmel's (2007) essay demonstrates that individualism is not a single, unitary category but can be described and experienced in different ways. I think it is especially interesting that in the Latinate manifestation, individuality was experienced in terms of similarity. In present-

day America, this helps explain how one can buy mass-produced products and copy fashion trends as a way of asserting one's self-proclaimed uniqueness.

Other research has examined the extent to which cultures which have been labeled collectivist or individualist actually exhibit behavior or attitudes consistent with their label. Takano & Sogon (2008) discovered no significant differences in the in-group conformity rates (in-group conformity being a trait linked to collectivism) between Japanese and Americans which they believe challenges the commonly accepted view that Japan is a collectivist culture and America is an individualist culture. Additionally, Kulkarni, et al, (2010) cited research that characterized Indian culture as collectivist in some studies yet individualist in others (p. 95). In attempting an explanation, they argue that part of the problem is that individualism and collectivism are seen as "*bipolar, unidimensional*" constructs rather than as "*multidimensional*" (p. 95, emphasis in original). For their study, Kulkarni et al. (2010) surveyed a total of 587 people across 5 countries (Bulgaria, India, Ireland, Israel, and the US) on 7 dimensions related to individualism and collectivism such as beliefs about "competitiveness," "self-reliance," "supremacy of individual interest,"etc. Their findings indicated that people from each of the countries shared a mix of both collectivistic and individualistic attitudes. Interestingly, when compared to the other countries listed in the study, the US scored highest or next highest in terms of collectivism on 5 of the 7 dimensions and next highest in individualism on 2 of the dimensions. Accordingly, the authors argue that their results are "suggestive of the co-existence of competitiveness tendencies and sacrifice for the group" and "It would be too much of a generalization to suggest that individualism as a cultural pattern tends to emphasize competitiveness; and collectivism as a cultural pattern tends to emphasize cooperation" (p. 106). Both of these studies seem to

call into question the way in which collectivism and individualism have been conceptualized as an either/or proposition and accordingly how labels of collectivism and individualism may be misapplied, which in turn influences the ways in which individuals are perceived. This research also calls into question neatly labeled dichotomized lists which reduces whole cultures to a list of decontextualized cultural traits (See Smythe, 2009 for an example of my own challenges in utilizing a dichotomized list during International Student Orientations).

Addressing the need to understand the individual as both individualistic and collectivistic, Bell & Das (2011) argue that

> Culture is no longer monolithic, as in individualistic or collectivistic. The person–culture relationship is no longer one that can be captured by independent and dependent variables. Instead, identities are both social and personal. Dynamic processes take the place of static states. Questions of how identities emerge and are maintained come to the fore. (p. 242)

Instead of focusing on broad cultural categorizations to understand the notion of identity, they look at how identity develops in relation to one's culture through dialogue with the self which is "envisioned as a multiplicity" (p. 244) as well as dialogue with others. Bell & Das (2011) also feel that these on-going dialogues with selves/others create "conflicts or tensions" which can "trigger system reorganization" (p. 244). This suggests that while perhaps different cultures claim (or are judged to have) certain fixed orientations, individual identities are under constant negotiation based on contextual and individual variables, making it problematic to predict how each person relates to cultural values.

Using Bell & Das' (2011) technique to examine the notion of a multiple self in dialogue with self and others in Harley's stories, I first looked at the ways in which Harley

narrated her multiple selves in this and other stories and then I look at how Harley seemed to be shaped by her mother's "independence" narrative. Exploring her multiplicity, Harley sometimes referred to herself as Filipino ("proud that we were Filipino," "being Filipino," and "I'm Filipino"), sometimes not completely Filipino ("not fully Filipino"), sometimes as American ("I'm American," "The American") and also as a Filipino-American ("having been brought up Filipino-American"). She also referred to herself as a "woman," an "Asian," a "PhD" student, an educator/administrator, and a "biker." In addition, she indicated certain roles that she played such as those of dutiful/rebellious daughter (in that she both accepted and rejected some of the responsibilities given by her parents) and caring sister/dutiful son (in the sense that she both took care of her brother who was in a coma and also took on some of his traditionally male duties within the family). These multiple parts of Harley's "self" seemed to appear and re-appear depending on the topic we were discussing.

Additionally, one of the dialogues that seemed to shape Harley's self-understanding was her mother's insistence that Harley, as a woman and an Asian, would have to work harder than others because she herself had had to do so and yet be independent of others. In Cohen (2007), two cultural narratives were identified as driving Asian American women to work harder in order to perceive themselves as successful. The first is Baylor psychologist Dr. Dung Ngo's suggestion that due to "cultural expectations" Asian-American girls are treated more strictly than boys and they feel family responsibilities more acutely (In Cohen, 2007, p. 1). The second, according to California State University Associate Professor Eliza Noh, is the American cultural "myth that Asians are smarter and harder-working than other minorities" (In Cohen, 2007, p. 2). Noh further suggests that although this pressure to work harder has led to high levels of depression among Asian-American women, these women

likewise show "resourcefulness" in locating their own "diverse healing strategies (In Cohen, 2007, p. 2).

For Harley's part, she seemed to both accept and rebel against her mother's notions of responsibility and independence in that she applied the narratives to her own life in a seemingly extreme manner, so much so that her mother stated that she had promoted Harley's independence "too much." In order to challenge her Mother's seemingly cultured narratives, she joined the Peace Corps against her parent's wishes and took up motorcycling, a typically male pastime, when she returned to the States. This suggests a more complex process of identity development that is neither completely cultural nor individual. For de Korne et al. (2007) "individual and national cultural identities…can no longer be viewed as the permanent structured foundation of the self" but rather are based on a "vast array of choices making up myriad cultural identities" (p. 292). Whether Harley choose her various individual and cultural identifications consciously or subconsciously is difficult to say, but she did emphasize different individual/cultural relationships depending on the story she was telling as noted above which indicated that she was choosing between identities (or between facets of her identity) in constructing her narratives.

Culture Shock II: Corruption in Kazakhstan as Survival and a Lack of Development

Harley said that prior to teaching in Kazakhstan, she thought that the "expectations of students were going to be the same" as in the United States. She was therefore stunned to find that teachers would accept bribes to inflate student grades. She said that after the first time she graded student work, the students were upset and demanded that she give them higher scores. Recalling her own experiences when she was a student, she said,

> I remember thinking when I went to school I couldn't go to my teacher and say give me an A, like if the teacher gave me a C, because that was my fault…and I'm not just going to change it because you came in here to ask me, and the next time you come you bring me chocolate, I'm not going to change it again. After that point I realized that that's how it works, that a lot of students get these high marks not necessarily on their own merit, but because that was the system there.

She added that she was especially astounded because the Kazakh teachers would "blatantly" change student grades in exchange for gifts or favors.

Harley did confront her English teaching Kazakh counterpart about why she changed the students' grades. The other teacher explained that it was the "system" there, that if she didn't do it the community would be upset with her, and it was "easier to conform." She also told Harley, "you can come here, do your teaching, be here for two years and you leave, but I don't get to leave, and this is how it is." Harley said that although she "never got immune" to the daily corruption she witnessed nor adopted the practice of changing student grades, her counterpart's statement that Harley "got to leave" made her stop "questioning" and being so "condemning." She also reflected that the corruption at the school was likely related to survival, but she wondered how the community would ever "move ahead" if there was so much corruption.

With regard to corruption in the United States, Harley saw it more in the "realm of politics." Within academia, she related corruption to "dishonesty"—that sometimes educational leaders made decisions based on their personal or financial self-interests rather than the needs of the students. She pointed out that in the U.S. corruption wasn't

> blatantly up in your face…but it's a little more malicious…almost dangerous because it's hidden here, as opposed to there. Like I could see it every day and here it's like hidden in a way, and you're working at a place that's apparently supposed to have the mission to take care of the students and take care of the people that are working for them, but they're just better and smarter at covering it up and hiding real reasons for doing things.

When I asked her how she dealt with this understanding, she said she thought about her Kazakh counterpart and, like her, felt there was nothing she could do about it. Harley also said she felt "helpless" because she wasn't the "one in power" making the decisions.

Harley's story about corruption reminded me of my own struggles with corruption as a teacher in a small village in Cameroon, Africa. At the end of my first year of teaching, all of the teachers and administrators gathered to discuss the standards for passing a student on to the next level. After developing the standards, we discussed each student in detail and each student's name was written in a book along with their overall grades and a notation indicating that they had passed to the next grade level or they had to re-rake the same grade level the following year. This was a long and laborious process and seemed very official. Imagine my surprise when almost all of the students that were required to repeat their grade level had advanced to the next grade level! When I asked about this, the discipline master became very defensive. When I located the end of year grade book and pointed out specific names of students who had advanced despite the notation of "re-take," he exploded. He yelled that Americans always thought they were better than everyone else and that they were always trying to change things. His thunderous voice could be heard reverberating through the tiny open-air school yard for all the teachers and students to hear. I felt like I had started

World War III, set the Peace Corps mission back 100 years, and put myself in physical danger (I imagined African ninjas waiting for me at my house). I seriously considered leaving the Peace Corps since my teaching would obviously make no difference to the development of the country. I even took off a few days to mull the problem over. The students, sensing my frustration, explained that they had paid bribes to go to the higher level and that this was normal. They didn't like it, but it was part of the system. They also said that if I didn't continue teaching, the school would not hire another English teacher and they would be the ones to ultimately suffer. I, like Harley, also confronted my English teaching Cameroonian counterpart about this practice. My counterpart asked me, "Do you think that the students are poorer than me?" In truth, I did, but I was wrong. Even though my co-worker taught as many classes as I did, he was often not paid for his services or paid a fraction of his salary while some of our students had parents that were well-off by comparison. Both my students and the other teacher made me feel selfish and spoiled. Later, I did at times loan students money (through an intermediary student) to pay the bribes they needed to avoid being kicked or kept out of school. Did that make me corrupt as well? I didn't think so at the time.

In her story, Harley linked corruption in Kazakhstan to survival and a lack of development in that she was concerned about how Kazakhs would ever "move ahead" in light of their blatant system of corruption. Her teaching counterpart also noted that bribing teachers was part of the "system." Exploring this link between development and corruption, Leiken (1996-97) wrote that while "In most developed countries, corruption remains a violation of the rules of the game; in many developing and postsocialist countries it is the game itself—corruption is systemic" (p. 61). Adding support for this perspective, Economics

professor Daniel Levy (2007), explained the reasons for his family's participation in corrupt practices (which included bribing teachers, doctors, and government officials) during his youth in Georgia (the Eastern European country not the American state). He wrote,

> First, we had no choice. There was no other way a family could live and survive in Georgia without being engaged in these types of illegal activities. Second…it was *the norm*. Everybody was doing it, and that provided ethical and moral justification for our actions without feeling too much guilt or embarrassment about it. (p. 440, emphasis in original)

For Levy (2007), corruption served a dual purpose—survival and maintenance of norms. Likewise, Harley related corruption to survival and norms in Kazakhstan and while the bribing of teachers violated her "expectations" of how students were supposed to earn grades, for her counterpart, it was clearly the custom.

There was also support in the literature for Harley's assumption that corruption was a detriment to economic and social development. Leiken (1996-97) argued that corruption represented a "hazard to free trade and investment, a threat to democracy and development, and…a danger to national security and public health and safety" (p. 55). For Mauro (1997), corruption could also be tied to lowered economic growth, potential misappropriation of aid for purposes other than those intended, misdirection of talent away from productive work due to time spent maintaining the system of corruption, loss of tax revenues, and inferior public infrastructure and services (e.g. substandard construction of buildings) (p. 87). In addition, Gupta, et al (2002) linked corruption to income inequality and poverty (p. 40). Corruption also seemed to lower the levels of investment and entrepreneurial incentives as well as weaken the judicial systems in some countries (Jain, 2001, p. 72). Further, the International

Council on Human Rights Policy (ICHRP) (2010) argued that corruption was essentially a human rights and social justice issue. Their report, *Integrating Human Rights in the Anti-Corruption Agenda*, focused on the human costs of corruption. Some of the issues they consider are the ways in which corrupt practices in specific cultural and social contexts work to block access to health services, education, clean water, and housing for certain marginalized groups as well as how they promote human trafficking, violence against women, racism, and other forms of discrimination. Certainly, there are bound to be emotional repercussions as well. Based on this research, it seems clear that corruption precludes economic and social development and works to undermine both human dignity and social justice.

Re-reading Culture Shock II:

Corruption in the U.S. as Hidden amidst Development

In re-reading Harley's story on corruption, two things stood out to me—the shift in her moral stance regarding the Kazakhs' participation in corruption and her perception that corruption in America seemed more "hidden," "dangerous," and "malicious." For Leff (1964), a major difficulty in researching the role of corruption in terms of economic development is that corruption "is almost universally condemned" and that the criticism of it, especially when applied to others, "is based on moralizing—explicit or latent—self-interest, or ideology" (p. 8). He also argued that "Foreigners living in underdeveloped countries…have condemned corruption on moral grounds and criticized it as both a cause and a characteristic of the backwardness of these countries" (p. 8). This seemed to be the case in Harley's story. She appeared to take a moral stance against the corruption at her school

and condemned her Kazakh students and colleagues for their participation in it. Although, she did not ever become "immune" to the corruption she experienced, Harley did become less "questioning" and "condemning" of the students and teachers after speaking with her Kazakh counterpart. She also seemed to become more empathetic to their plight after feeling powerless to confront the "hidden" corruption and academic "dishonesty" she experienced later in the United States. Again, this is not to suggest that Harley condoned corruption in any way, but she recognized the challenge of addressing at an individual level and began to judge others less harshly.

In considering the way in which corruption can be hidden, I note Leff's (1964) assertion that condemning other countries and cultures as corrupt can act to serve "self-interest." This implies that focusing on the corruption of other countries can conceal the corruption in one's own country's participation in helping to create the conditions for corruption to occur. I think a poignant example illustrating this concept exists in the economic and social relationship between the United States and Mexico. On January 1, 1994, the United States, Canada, and Mexico signed the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) with the expectation that "trade, employment, and wages" would increase while Mexican migration would decrease (Martin, 2005, p.7). And although trade has increased, illegal immigration has also increased significantly. Uchitelle (2007) explains,

> When Nafta finally became a reality, on Jan. 1, 1994, American investment flooded into Mexico, mostly to finance factories that manufacture automobiles, appliances, TV sets, apparel and the like…[However] Mexican manufacturers, once protected by tariffs on a host of products, were driven out of business as less expensive, higher quality merchandise flowed into the country…As relatively

> well-paying jobs disappeared, Mexico's average wage for production workers, already low, fell further behind the average hourly pay of production workers in the United States… Something similar occurred in agriculture. The assumption was that tens of thousands of farmers who cultivated corn would act "rationally" and continue farming, even as less expensive corn imported from the United States flooded the market. The farmers, it was assumed, would switch to growing strawberries and vegetables — with some help from foreign investment — and then export these crops to the United States. Instead, the farmers exported themselves. (on-line)

Note that the Mexican farmers were expected to "act rationally" despite the threat to their livelihood. Additionally, Hernández Flores & Lankshear (2000) suggest that the unequal power status between Mexico and the U.S./Canada played a role in the agreement as they point out that at the time of the agreement, Mexico "ranked 48 on the United Nations Development Index" while Canada and the United States ranked 1 and 2 on the same index (p. 240). They also submit that the "low wage 'reality'" in Mexico makes it an attractive source of low cost labor but also "undermines in diverse ways the process of developing a well-educated, highly skilled, quality-oriented workforce (p. 241).

This research suggests that NAFTA was an unequal economic arrangement designed to serve (North) American desires for low cost goods and not to serve the Mexican workers' interests. In order to keep costs low, wages and human development were kept at a minimum. While the governments of the countries involved in NAFTA may have agreed to this inequitable arrangement, the Mexican workers who were asked to "rationally" accept their poverty did not. Many chose to "illegally" immigrate to the United States. They engaged in a number of "corrupt" activities to do so, including human smuggling, bribing, and border

crossing. North Americans routinely condemn them for such acts yet seem oblivious as to how their desires for cheap goods and their government's self-interests helped create the conditions for such corruption to occur.

In addition to helping create the conditions for corruption to occur in other countries, there is also evidence that American culture owes some of its own development to corruption. From a historical perspective Bardhan (1997) notes that,

> In the U.S. "gilded age" of 1860s and 1870s widespread corruption of state legislatures and city governments by business interests and those seeking franchises for public utilities is reported to have helped rather than hindered economic growth. (Bardhan, 1997, p. 1328-1329)

More recently, Cohen (2012) argues that owing to a mix of "cultural, political, and economic factors" (including catering to the "interests of the wealthy") that corruption is a "staple of American life" (online). Supporting this assumption, Glaeser & Saks (2006) offer that in the United States between the years 1990 and 2002, "federal prosecutors convicted more than 10,000 government officials of acts of official corruption," leading the authors to assert that "Corruption is not just something that happens to poor countries" (p. 1053). Given that United States is an economically well-developed country and given its apparent widespread corruption both past and present, it seems that economic development can co-exist with corruption but at what social and psychological costs to ourselves and to others?

Reverse Culture Shock I: Clock Time versus Event Time

The first thing that Harley noticed upon her return to home was that Americans had "so much stuff," even stuff they didn't need that was kept in storage buildings. She said this

was a “big eye opener” because she “didn’t remember…noticing that American’s had a lot of stuff” until she returned to the United States. Cultural differences in the way time was utilized in Kazakhstan and the United States also created a sense of reverse culture shock for Harley when she returned to the States. In the following passage, she talked about how life in Kazakhstan was slower and how time was used to develop social relationships. She said,

> I felt like when I was in Kazakhstan, that things were just slower or there wasn’t as much to do or as many distractions per se, so I felt like there was more time to create relationships with people, because there was more free time to just hang out and talk…It wasn’t like looked upon as you’re being lazy or you’re not doing something with your life, but that time together doing something simple, you’re bonding and spending time together and just hanging out…People still worked hard, still got all the domestic duties done, did everything that we still do here…So people would come and stop by and it wasn’t considered like a nuisance…it was just nice, because I knew that I could just go stop over at someone’s house whenever I wanted and I wasn’t going to be interfering with anything, because it was just like they were happy that you were there.

Consequently, when Harley “first moved back” to the U.S., it “kind of tripped [her] out” because she didn’t feel that she could spend as much time with people as she could in Kazakhstan. In the next passage, she explained how the use of time differed in America.

> in the States, I feel that, because everyone is so busy with their family or with work or spending a lot of time commuting in their car, like even just to try to make time to like hey, let’s go and get some coffee, like you have to schedule it. It’s not like there’s some random free time to just go hang out…I was always like

> intruding on their time or I had to be conscious of time and looking at my watch...There was always a definite cut off time, as opposed to just like relaxing for as long as we wanted. I never felt that here in the states…I feel in America that people don't make as much time for these times to build connections or time to build friendships.

In addition, when Harley did try to build relationships with other Americans after her return from overseas, she felt a sense of "rejection" in that most people failed to ask her about her travels abroad. For example, she found it odd that when she mentioned that she had just returned from Kyrgyzstan (her last overseas teaching post with a private company), most people showed little interest in the country or her experiences there. She complained,

> dude, I just said I lived in Kyrgyzstan…and you're looking at me as if I just said something like I went down the street to the store, but then the…person next to me will talk about oh yeah, did you see that show on TV, it was so good, and they'll totally be all animated talking about that, and I'd be flustered, because I'm like you care so much about some stupid TV show, when I'm just telling you where I had just come from and that was of no interest to them.

After receiving the same response a number of times from different Americans, Harley stopped talking about her experiences abroad and began giving the generic answer that she had spent some time living overseas when asked where she had worked or lived previously. She found that people who really cared about her experiences would ask her more questions and then she would give more concrete answers. She also mentioned that she felt she was returning to a place where she was supposed to feel "comfortable" because she grew up here,

“but then at the same time all these things were happening and how I had changed, it was like people around me never changed or never saw outside of their bubble.”

Harley’s story about time reminded me of Michael Ende’s (1985) novel *Momo* which was originally published in Germany in 1973. In the novel, a young homeless girl named Momo turns up in an unnamed city and takes up residence in an abandoned amphitheater. She soon develops friendships with both children and adults through her special talent for listening. She “listens for the words behind the words” which appears to have “magical effects” on those around her who, in turn, begin to listen to themselves and to one another Brotto, n.d., online). Yet along come the “MEN IN GREY” who “live off the stolen time of others” (Brotto, n.d., online, emphasis in original). They convince the adults that they can save time if they work harder instead of wasting it by relaxing with friends or spending time with their children. Eventually, even the children get caught up in the time trap and Momo appears to be the only person left who is immune to the desires of the Grey Men. I won’t spoil the ending, but the shift regarding the uses of time in the novel from having free time to lacking free time after the arrival of the “Grey Men” (big business?) seemed an apt metaphor for understanding Harley’s story as well.

Likewise in her story, Harley seemed to address the different ways that time was allocated in Kazakh and American cultures. According to Gross (1984), the study of time allocation is useful in “cross-cultural” studies because it provides “primary data on many kinds of social interaction and provides the basis for defining social groups by behavior” with regard to “attitudes, values, cultural style, and emotions” (p. 519). Likewise, Brislin & Kim (2003) also note cultural differences in the uses of time and they make a distinction between two types of time allocation, “clock” time and “event” time. They explain that

> A time schedule symbolized as "clock" represents official, formal, and task-oriented temporal concerns. This contrasts with event time, which gives attention to interpersonal relationships among people (p. 365).

They also add that in clock time cultures, the "Emphasis is on time" and being "time sensitive" and the "Schedule evolves around the clock," whereas in event time cultures, the "Emphasis is on people" and being "time insensitive" and the "Schedule evolves around events" (p. 370).

Brislin & Kim's (2003) descriptions of clock and event time appear to mirror Harley's observations about the different relationships to time in Kazakhstan and the United States. In Kazakhstan, the pace of life was slower, there were fewer distractions, people were the focus, dropping by unannounced wasn't seen as being a nuisance, and time seemed to flow from one event to the next without a definite ending. On the other hand, in the United States, the pace of life was faster, people were busy, Harley had to always be conscious of time, felt that she was intruding on other people's time, and there was a definite cut off time for events. Consequently, Harley felt that people in the U.S. didn't make time to build relationships. This suggests that relationships to time are culture-bound and that time systems are mutually exclusive and don't overlap.

Another thing that made Harley feel rejected was that the Americans seemed more focused on "some stupid TV show" than they were in getting to know her. To the extent that Harley implied that TV was a barrier to building social relationships, there was some support for this view in the literature. In their review of time allocation studies spanning the time period 1965 to 2003, Aguiar and Hurst (2007), found that both leisure time and TV watching have increased. They wrote,

> More than 100 percent of the increase in leisure can be accounted for by the increase in the time spent watching television, which totals 7.4 hours per week for the full sample, 6.7 hours per week for men, and 8.0 hours per week for women. This increase in television is offset by a 3.9-hour-per-week decline in socializing (going to parties, bars, etc.) and a 3.1-hour-per-week decline in reading (books, magazines, letters, etc.). (p. 987)

The authors further argued that this change in trends denoted a "sharp decline in socializing" (p. 987). The findings also supported Putnam's (1995) review of historical and longitudinal research regarding civic engagement, club memberships, and social interaction habits. He stated, "TV watching comes at the expense of nearly every social activity outside the home, especially social gatherings and informal conversations…In short, television is privatizing our leisure time" (p. 679). This research indicated that TV watching interfered with and in some way precluded social interaction. That Americans seemed to care about TV shows rather than making time to get to know Harley certainly appeared to be a frustrating experience for her.

Re-reading Reverse Culture Shock I:

Intermixing Clock Time and Event Time through the Use of Media

In re-reading Harley's story, I question the notion that Americans don't take time to build social connections, that America is strictly a clock-oriented culture in which social relationships aren't important, and that TV watching prevents social interaction. Oehlberg et al. (2008) share Harley's belief that busyness and scheduling concerns can interfere with social interaction. They write,

> Urban sprawl…can make travelling to a friend's house for a movie night inconvenient; domestic isolation and scheduling constraints prevent gatherings (e.g. for a mother taking care of young children); and increasing mobility often separates family members (e.g. a child living away from his family to attend university). (p.1)

But they also add that "Sociability is becoming more and more distributed in this context as technology enables diverse remote interactions" (p. 1). Perhaps, then, because of the differing contexts between Kazakhstan and the U.S., the ways of interacting socially took on different shapes. In Kazakhstan, living in a small village with few distractions allowed for long periods of face to face bonding. In the U.S., because of busy schedules and physical distances, Americans use technology and media for the purpose of social interaction. So, it wasn't that Americans didn't make time to interact, but they learned to interact socially in different ways.

With specific regard to television, Oehlberg et al. (2008) claimed that TV watching can "foster multiple forms of sociability" either directly "when chatting with friends and family during a "movie night" at home" or indirectly "when discussing previously viewed programs with colleagues at the office water cooler" (p. 1). Williams et al. (2009) offered similar observations and also gave the example of a study participant who "reported frequently watching shows while texting and phoning her friends as a running commentary on what was being viewed" (p. 25). They also believed that families and social groups used TV and other media to "strengthen their bonds" (p. 25). This appears to indicate that conversations about TV shows were not necessarily about the shows themselves, but served an underlying bonding function. I know that in my circle of friends, we spend time

socializing by watching or commenting on TV shows. I even sometimes text message friends during certain shows (*American Idol*, for example) when I need to be separate from my friends but also want to feel connected to them. And while the television show might be the catalyst for our conversation, other thoughts and observations invariably come up that lead our conversation in other directions. So, when I watch television alone in my home, it may, in fact, be a social act.

In addition, despite the claim that the U.S. is a clock-oriented culture focused on "official, formal, and task-oriented temporal concerns" Americans do also give "attention to interpersonal relationships among people" (Brislin & Kim, 2003, p. 365). I notice, for example, that myself and my co-workers text, e-mail, and instant message friends, family, and other co-workers throughout the day as a means of interacting that is neither formal nor task-oriented. I see some colleagues toggling between work screens on their computers to Facebook and other social media. I see other colleagues taking time during the work day to share family photos, share artwork they have created or purchased, play computer games or games on their cell phones with friends and strangers across the country, and they also discuss the TV shows they watched the night before. Again, it seems that sociality is woven throughout the day in a mix of face-to-face and more long-distance interactions made possible through the use of technology as a means of building or maintaining social relationships. Along these lines it seems that at least some Americans inter-mix facets of both clock (task-oriented) and event (relational) time through the use of media and technology.

In Harley's story, although she seemed frustrated about the focus on TV, the problem seemed more related to a lack of shared experience. In their research on the ways that participants introduced topics into a conversation, Maynard & Zimmerman (1984) noted that

"participants…rely on shared experiences to provide sense and make sense in topical introduction" (p. 305). To the extent that Harley had had nine years of experience living and travelling outside the U.S., I think most people might have difficulty sharing or making sense of that experience at least initially, just as she had difficulty connecting with her friends' shared excitement about television which seemed to bind those friends together. For me then, one question that develops from this story is how to communicate and interact socially with culturally different others despite the lack of shared experience?

Pedagogy I: Identity Shock and Being Treated as an "Extra Foreigner" & "International Student"

In this pair of stories, Harley experienced similar "identity shocks" in both Kazakhstan and the U.S., which she later used to inform her intercultural communication classes. For Harley, moving from a large and diverse city on the West Coast to a small village in Kazakhstan with a population of about 500 people was "a little bit of a shock." She says she not only felt the difference of being an American in Kazakhstan, but also the difference of moving from a city in the U.S. where she didn't necessarily stand out as different to living in a very small village where everybody stared, watched, and paid attention to her every move. But for Harley, it was when the Kazakhs questioned her American identity that gave her the greatest feeling of culture shock. She felt that the Kazakhs thought of her as an "extra foreigner" because even though they knew she was from America, she "didn't look American" to them. She said that because she didn't have "blue eyes, white skin, and blonde hair" she was treated almost as if she were a "fraud" and had to constantly explain her identity and where she came from. She said that it felt like an "attack"

on who she was, what she "stood for," what she had previously felt "secure in" and now she had to constantly "prove" who she was in a new environment where nothing was "comfortable."

In exploring the reason why the Kazakh's treated her this way, she believed their limited exposure to other Americans (recall that she was the first volunteer at this post) and their limited access to diverse media images of Americans (they relied heavily on the TV show *Dallas* for their image of Americans), led them to develop an unrealistic picture of what Americans looked like. When I asked how she handled the situation, she said she did a lot of "repetitive story-telling" about the diversity of people in the United States and explained to them that the limited American television programs they watched were "not a good representation of all the United States."

Harley added that although the Kazakhs did eventually accept her, she's not sure that they ever believed that she was really an American. Despite this, she related that once her Caucasian American Peace Corps friends began to visit her, the Kazakhs began to appreciate her difference from what they saw as "traditional" Americans. She intimated,

> I always felt funny because I felt like how their views had changed and how at one time they were, oh, you're not a real American, we're going to be distant until you prove to us you are, but then when they saw other, what they thought were real Americans, oh wait, we like [Harley] because she understands and she'll eat our food, she speaks to us in Russian, or she does all these things with us because she understands us better.

For her part, Harley didn't blame the Kazakhs for their views because she felt they "didn't know any different" due to their limited exposure to Americans and American culture.

Ironically, Harley had a similar culture shock experience after returning to the U.S. and accepting her current position in a small Midwestern town. Harley said she was surprised to find that even though she was an American, she was often treated as an "international student" because of the way she looked. She remembered in particular getting complimented on her English several times. She explained,

> the first four months when I lived here…I can remember five times at least that I got complimented on my English…people would come up to me and be like wow, your English is so good…where did you study or you're almost sounding just like an American…and I was really shocked. I called my mom and I'm like mom, I don't know where the hell I moved to. They're complimenting me on my English and I was thinking like, dude, I'm from [the West coast]!

She also noted that during community presentations, community members often assumed that she was a graduate student rather than the Assistant Director of International Programs. "Why couldn't it be that that I worked in the office?" she questioned, and "why don't you say, what do you do in the office?" rather than make these assumptions. In answer to these questions, Harley concluded that perhaps the people in this small town either felt "shocked" or "intimidated" by her because the various parts of her identities—Asian, Female, PhD student, biker—didn't "necessarily mix into what a stereotype of a person getting a PhD should be, or a person who's working as an associate director should be, or someone who's riding a Harley [motorcycle]."

Harley noted that when she shared the story above as part of her intercultural communication presentations for international students and also for domestic students at the university where she works here in the United States, that they tended to "laugh" and she was

concerned that they didn't "recognize" the "prejudiced" thinking behind the assumption that she was seen as an international student. Therefore, she engaged the students in various "interpersonal" exercises so that they could

> reflect on some of the prejudices that they have and ones that they may not know that they have, and to try to help them see, at least recognize that just because someone is different or just because you have some sort of opinion in your mind about this person…you can't think about that being true, without getting to know, or figure out what else is behind them.

She also pointed out to them that even though people lived in the same country, their experiences and points of view could be very different. She also confided that learning to negotiate other cultures and the shock(s) she experienced made her feel more "confident," "freer," "more compassionate and appreciative of people," "more open and more loving," and more "curious" about others which in turn allowed her to "relate to people differently."

Harley's story reminded me of the experience of a young woman in my Peace Corps group in Cameroon. Her heritage was African and Native American. She was excited to be going to Africa as a way of affirming her African roots. However, once we arrived there, the Cameroonians referred to her with the same term that they used for all of the volunteers—"nasara" which we had been told meant "white man" or "white foreigner." As we sat discussing this she began to cry. She said that she had had to fight for her identity as a Black woman in the U.S. and now she would have to fight for her identity as a Black woman in Africa. Although her story and Harley's are not exactly the same, they both point to ways in which culture shock can be a shock to one's identity. Within the culture shock literature a number of writers have noted that culture shock can have a strong influence on one's sense of

self (Adler, 1976; Bennet, 1977) because it challenges the "stability" of one's "psychic organization" (Garza-Guerrero, 1974, p. 410). Zaharna (1989), who refers to culture shock as a form of "self-shock," explains further that intercultural encounters are "dominated by unknowns, uncertainty, and ambiguity" and therefore the intercultural context creates a "double-bind of *increased need* to confirm self-identities, with *diminished ability* to do" so (p. 516, emphasis in original). However, the experiences of both my Peace Corps group mate and Harley seem to express something beyond culture shock in that they experienced similar identity struggles in both host and home cultures. While I have certainly had to reflect on notions of identity, I have not had to defend my skin color, gender, nationality, or language ability. Likewise, when the Cameroonians called me "white man" the term fit me so it didn't feel like an attack on my identity, even though I tired sometimes of having the term "nasara" flung at me almost everywhere I went. The point is that for people whose identity draws on two or more cultural backgrounds, they seem to face an ongoing form of identity shock in that whether in the host culture or home culture, they are always in an intercultural context. The notion of culture shock also fails to address the prejudice that underlies certain inter- and intra- cultural judgments.

Similarly, Sonu and Moon (2009), one of whom is Korean and the other Korean-American, write about their feelings of alienation from both their "home" and their "homeland" because they do not fit easily into the categories of Korean or American. They also both share Harley's experience of being complimented on their English in the United States. For Moon, a Korean working in the U.S., he first felt that the compliments regarding his English ability were a "reward" for his hard work in learning English, but after a while, he began to see such compliments as recognition that, despite his fluency, as a failure to

assimilate into American culture (p. 142). Describing her experience being complimented on her English ability, Sonu, a Korean-American noted the seeming "*mismatch*" between her "*Asian face*" and her "*seamless American accent*" (p. 142, emphasis in original). She wrote,

> *A piece of me dies every time I am forced to explain where I learned English. This has not been once, but so many times. Is my face that deceitful, elusive, exotic, betraying? I apologize for almond eyes that hide prickly pear childhoods in the Arizona desert...I'm sorry when my English words become distorted by cheek bones too high and a nose with no bridges*. (Sonu & Moon, 2009, p. 142, emphasis in original)

These authors also draw on Frank Wu's notion of the "perpetual foreigner" to describe the Asian experience in America and to point out the racism behind the apparent belief that Asians cannot also be Americans (whether by birth or by choice) as evidenced by compliments of English ability and questions about one's country of origin (p. 154). The notion of Wu's "perpetual foreigner" recalls Harley's feelings of being treated as an "extra foreigner" and a perpetual "international student." Further, Sonu and Moon's (2009) autobiographical accounts illustrate that despite the perhaps well-meaning intention of compliments on the surface, compliments may also serve to highlight racial differences and underscore racial prejudices.

There is also additional support for the view of Asian Americans as "perpetual foreigners" in America in writings dating back to the first half of the 20th century. In a 1914 publication by the American Sociological Society regarding racial assimilation in American culture, the report notes that the Asian

> bears in his features a distinctive racial hallmark, that he wears, so to speak, a racial uniform which classifies him. He cannot become a mere individual, indistinguishable in the cosmopolitan mass of the population…[but] is condemned to remain among us an abstraction, a symbol…of the Orient and that vague, ill-defined menace we sometimes refer to as the "yellow peril." (In Park, 1928, p. 890-891)

Stonequist (1935) adds that in the American melting-pot, it is the minority groups that are "expected to do most of the melting" (the "adjusting, conforming, and assimilating") (p. 2), but that racial differences compound the problems associated with assimilation for second generation Asian-Americans whom he described as "neither Orientals nor Americans in a full sense" who represent an "undetermined status" (p. 8). This implies the near impossibility of Asian-American assimilation due to racial differences, cultural biases (the "yellow peril"), and the American cultural desire for all people to fit into singularly and narrowly defined cultural frameworks.

Stonequist (1935) also argues that once the bicultural person becomes aware of the conflicts arising from her or his differing cultural orientations, he or she may enter into a "crisis" phase involving "confusion, even shock, restlessness, disillusionment, and estrangement" (p. 10). For Park (1928), this crisis phase is "relatively permanent" and is marked by "spiritual instability, intensified self-consciousness, restlessness, and *malaise*" (p. 893, emphasis in original). For these authors, the bi- and/or multi- cultural experience in America, in general, and the Asian/Asian-American experience in particular, is replete with various forms of prejudice, racism, conflict, crises, and alienation—and that because of racial differences and biases, the feelings of crisis are potentially on-going. It is also interesting to

note that Park (1925) and Stonequist (1935) both use the term "restlessness" in discussing the bicultural experience, to the extent that Harley's need for constant travel both within the US and abroad, seems to exemplify a certain restlessness and a desire to escape the small Midwestern town in which she currently resides.

The culture shock(s), identity shock(s), and the racial prejudice that Harley experienced both in Kazakhstan and the U.S. served as teaching tools for Harley here in the United States. In Harley's case, both the rural Kazakhs and rural Americans called Harley's American identity into question by focusing on her Asian appearance. In the U.S., she felt insulted for being complimented on her English since it was her first language and angered for not being recognized as a leader/administrator which she felt was indicative of racial prejudice. Both cultures seemed to link being American with Whiteness. To have her American identity rejected, not once but twice, was a painful and alienating experience for Harley. Her experiences being treated as an "extra foreigner" and an "international student" also lent credence to her mother's suggestion that as an Asian woman she would have to work harder (see Harley's Culture Shock I Story) in the sense that she had to go to greater lengths to prove that she was American—something that neither I nor other White Americans have to do whether at home or abroad. These experiences gave Harley a "double-consciousness"—an awareness that the White majority does not have (Balfour, 1998)—which she used in her teaching to expose and confront prejudice.

Re-reading Pedagogy I: The (Potential) Benefits of Bi-culturality

Despite the negative aspects associated with being bicultural, such as "identity confusion, dual expectations, and value clashes" (Nguyen & Benet-Martinez, 2007, p. 106)

and “dealing with the implications of multiple racial stereotypes and pressures from different communities” (Benet-Martinez & Haritatos, 2005), there is emerging research which suggests that bicultural people may possess certain skills that are particularly beneficial in a rapidly globalizing world (Stonequist, 1935; Benet-Martinez & Haritatos, 2005; Nguyen & Benet-Martinez, 2007; DeKorne et al., 2007; Friedman & Liu, 2009). For example, Stonequist (1935) wrote that the bi-cultural “individual’s dual contacts may give [her or] him an advantage, making him [or her] a leader…conciliator, reformer, teacher” and “The stimulus of the situation may create a superior personality or mind” (p. 11). This suggests that somewhere amid the tension created by differences, the bicultural person may use that tension in order to flourish.

Additionally, through their interviews with 9 long-term immigrant women (four in the US and five in the UK), DeKorne et al. (2007) found that “identifying with more than one culture” (p. 301) can bring other benefits such as increased understanding of self, others, and home culture as well as becoming more tolerant and an accepting of others yet more critical and analytical at the same time. Benet-Martinez and Haritatos (2005) also suggested a link between bicultural identity and a sense of “openness (i.e., tolerance of and interest in new values and lifestyles) and emotional stability (i.e., resilience, flexibility)” (p. 1022). In addition, Friedman and Liu (2009) argued that two skills that bi-culturals seem to develop out of necessity—adaptability and the ability to connect people and ideas from different cultures—may serve them in becoming stronger organizational leaders.

In Harley’s case, although she certainly felt the sting of racial prejudice in Kazakhstan and the U.S., she also felt that her experiences made her “more compassionate and appreciative of people,” “more open and more loving,” and more “curious” about other

people so that she was able to "relate" to them "differently." Her extensive travels both overseas and in America seem to demonstrate her curiosity and openness to others. Yet, like the women in the DeKorne, et al. (2007) study, she also became more critical and analytical, especially in the area of racial prejudice, which she used to inform her teaching. That the Kazakhs ultimately appreciated Harley more than the other "real" Americans also suggests she was able to develop "assurance" in herself "apart from cultural identification" (DeKorne et al., p. 2007, p. 304). I have also seen other evidence of Harley's self-assurance, her leadership abilities, and her openness in bringing friends, students, and co-workers from differing cultural groups together in order to share a meal, discuss broad-ranging cultural and interpersonal issues, and to play video games involving dancing or simulating a rock band. For Thanksgiving 2011 and 2012, for example, she hosted a group of more than 100 people (international students, friends, and those with no place to go) at her home. In other words, Harley did not let the prejudice she has experienced (and may continue to experience) prevent her from connecting with others or from reaching her goals as an educator and a leader.

Pedagogy II: Cultural Adjustment as "Context" or "Consistency"

Harley also shared with her international students some of the tools she used to negotiate other cultures in order to help them adjust to American culture. In the following passage, Harley highlighted the need to constantly evaluate one's efforts in trying to adjust to another culture. She would explain that she and the other foreigners teaching abroad

> would see if there was something that we did, that we're like oh-oh, that's not going to work, back track, what should we do? We're like oh, wait, that worked this

> time, so we do it again in another situation, oh, that didn't work again, back track, like that constant confusion, and I say there is never going to be a time that you're not evaluating. It's never going to ever be the same, sometimes it might have worked in this situation, but it might not work in another.

She would add that the constant evaluation was "sort of tiring…you'll never know completely the right answer." Still, she told the international students she didn't want them to "be afraid to try" to get interact with American students or teachers and she didn't want them to feel bad after they left the U.S. because they "didn't try."

Harley also had her international students reflect on their comfort level and how far they were willing to step out of their comfort zone in order to participate in their classes or befriend American students. She would explain to the students that "Anything that's new and different" would "never feel comfortable" and that there would always be "a little bit of nervousness and a little bit of anxiety." She also told them it was "good" to feel those feelings in that if "you're always comfortable with things, it's just mundane and nothing ever changes" and these feelings "make you know that you're still alive." She even used the international students' sense of culture shock to help them understand why it may be uncomfortable and "scary" for American students to get involved with them. She said,

> I tell them, think about when you came here when you were trying new food and when you were trying to go to the bookstore or go to Wal-Mart, that was kind of a little bit new and different for you and it's a little bit scary, but you guys have to do it in order to survive, because you need to do that and you're able to overcome that and that shows a lot of strength, just the fact that you're here and you're wanting to do this, but you were still scared…from the [American] students' point of view, like

> they're scared and they don't push themselves to try to explore and experience that, unlike you guys are pushing yourselves to explore and experience things. There's just not that extra push, so it will always stay at a certain level.

Harley would also explain to the international students that they may have to help American students get over their fear by being the first to reach out, otherwise, the Americans may not be willing "to try" to get to know them.

When I asked Harley if she was always able to appreciate the negative emotions she experienced through culture shock, she said that if I would have asked her that during her "first six months in the Peace Corps" that she "wouldn't have been able to show the positive at the end." She said that finding the positive often takes time, distance, and reflection. She also said this was something she discussed with the new international students coming to her university, that "sometimes you have to feel all these negative feelings in order for it to be good, or in order to be positive you have to feel the negative, because it just balances each other out." Harley also noted that it took students different lengths of time, sometimes months, sometimes a year or more, to find this balance.

While Harley felt that cultural differences affected the ways in which International students adjusted to American culture, she felt that "people's perceptions and personalities" also played a part in intercultural interaction. She noted, for instance, that while some international students felt a "disconnect" between themselves and the other American students or teachers, other international students felt that American students and teachers were very approachable and welcoming and so they "were able to integrate and find a way that they were a part of a group." Overall, she felt that one couldn't "generalize" about what would or wouldn't be helpful for students and that one couldn't "force…relationships to

happen." Still, she believed intercultural interaction "doesn't happen…naturally…someone has to be proactive about it and make an opportunity for it."

Helping international students adjust to American culture formed a major part of Harley's pedagogy in her "Transitions" class. Sifting through the literature on cultural adjustment, scholars from Project GLOBE (Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness) which, as its name suggests, studies leadership and intercultural interaction on a global scale, made a link between cultural adjustment and identity. They wrote,

> Cultural adaptability refers to the mental and psychological ability to move from one situation and country to another…The dexterity to adjust one's behavior is a critical requirement. Not everyone can do this; to many people it may bring into question one's own identity. (Javidan et al., 2006, p. 85)

For Maertz Jr., Hassan, and Magnussan (2009), "stress," "discomfort," and "internal conflicts" are created when the new culture demands behavior that is inconsistent with the sojourner's identity, therefore adjustment "involves resolving [these] internal inconsistencies" (p. 67). However some argue that the need to resolve these "inconsistencies" is a Western or European-American cultural preference (Suh, 2002; English & Chen, 2007; Kim, Peng, & Chiu, 2008). Reviewing the psychological literature from the 1950s to the present, Suh (2002) noted that in Western culture "psychological well-being" has unfailingly been linked with "developing and maintaining a consistent identity" across differing social contexts (p. 1378). Suh further argued that the notion of self in East Asian cultures is less concerned with consistency, is more "malleable" and dependent on the context, and is more tolerant of dissonance (p. 1378-1379). English and Chen (2007) related this tolerance for dissonance to the Eastern philosophical concept of "dialecticism" which they explained is "a

system of thought characterized by acceptance of contradiction, expectation of change and dynamism, and holistic perception" (p. 479). Additionally Kim, Peng, and Chui (2008) suggested that Asians may be more attuned to change as exemplified in the Confucian philosophy of "*yin and yang*" which posits that opposing forces (dark/light, evil/divine, etc.) will eventually take the place of the other (p. 113). This implies that an awareness that conditions will change can assist one in tolerating dissonant situations.

While it is not clear to what extent Harley's Asian heritage influenced her philosophy on cultural adjustment, her beliefs seemed to fit more closely with the East Asian paradigm. Her notions of "back tracking" and "constant evaluation" suggested the need to adjust behavior based on the context rather than attempting to maintain a consistent approach to all circumstances. Likewise she implied the necessity to tolerate and appreciate the anxiety and nervousness created by internal conflicts because they make one feel alive. This recalls a passage from Laozi's Tao Te Ching (Hanson translation, 2009) which reads,

> Value your calamities as part of your being…
>
> What makes it possible for me to have calamities
>
> Is treating myself as having a being…if I had no being
>
> What trouble could I have? (p. 63)

Further, Harley appeared to recognize that situations were constantly changing and that perceptions of events or interactions could shift from negative to positive with time and distance. Overall, she noted the need to adjust one's behavior according to the context since the outcomes of one's efforts were not "generalizable."

Yet although these techniques were helpful for Harley during her travels in other countries, adopting or maintaining a contextual self may prove frustrating in adjusting to

American culture which seems organized around the belief in the autonomous, decontextualized self. As Suh (2002) argues, "Within this highly self-centered cultural scheme, it comes quite naturally that the self, the principal source of personal meaning and guidance, needs to be highly organized and consistent" (p. 1378). Further, there appears to be an American cultural belief in a single "right" answer, unlike Harley's insistence that "you'll never know completely the right answer." If this is the case, then it may also beneficial to share the cultural expectation of autonomy and consistency with students and others as a point of potential intercultural conflict.

Re-Reading Pedagogy II: Cultural Adjustment as an Ability to "Flex"

While in the previous section, adjustment to new cultures was related to notions of identity from a cultural perspective. Bennett (1977), however, seemed to blend elements of the cultural perspectives presented earlier and to look at the personal skills that can aid one in the adjustment process. Although Bennett agreed with the research presented in the previous section that culture shock is a "reaction to cognitive inconsistency" (p. 47) and is related to identity, she posits that having a stable identity can both help and hinder the adjustment process. For example, she wrote that in the culture shock experience, which she refers to as a type of transition shock, "the quandary is frequently: 'Who am I?'" (p. 48) and that

> The individual who is most likely to master this situation is the one who has a firm sense of self-identity…However…a strong sense of identity could also be a hindrance if we are inflexible and become threatened too quickly by conflicting stimuli (p. 48).

This suggested the need for both firmness and flexibility during the adjustment process and tolerating or reinterpreting the perceived threat to one's identity.

Additionally, Bennett (1977) drew upon Sargeant's model of psychological adjustment to new environments to suggest the notion of "flex" which she feels "does not imply a surrender of world view" but denotes various "adaptations which may be employed to reduce dissonance in the new culture" (p. 48). Some of these adaptations involved immersing oneself in either the host or the home culture, assimilating both cultures, or selecting and mixing parts of each culture. She further argued that some of the "personality characteristics" that helped promote the ability to "flex" included "self-awareness, non-evaluativeness, cognitive complexity, and cultural empathy" (p. 48). Overall, Bennett (1977) believed that overcoming the need to "flee" feelings of discomfort as well as reflecting on one's own personal adjustment process from prior transition experiences, allowed one to cope more effectively with culture shock, aided one in tolerating intercultural differences, and lead to personal growth.

In revisiting Harley's story through Bennett's (1977) "flex" perspective, I noted areas of similarity and difference. Like Bennett, Harley pointed out that people's "personalities" played a role in their ability to adjust to a new culture. Harley also similarly promoted both self-awareness and cultural empathy when she asked the international students to recall their culture shock experiences coming to the U.S. as a way of relating to the American students' fear of things that were new and different. She also pointed out that while the international students were motivated by survival in a new culture, the Americans did not share the same motivation, which seemed to be Harley's way of depersonalizing any rejection the international students may have felt.

In addition, Harley's perspective on the need to "backtrack" or use various techniques in order to adjust to a new culture, to overcome one's fears, to see that the positive can grow from the negative, and to avoid generalizing, demonstrated a good deal of cognitive complexity. However, while Harley stressed the importance of evaluation during the adjustment process ("there is never going to be a time that you're not evaluating"), Bennett (1977) argued that "evaluation" actually increases culture shock and that "among the first skills we need to develop are the abilities to withhold evaluation, to refrain from cultural absolutism, to accept rather than reject." While I agree with Bennett's (1977) suggestion that learning to accept a new culture is an important skill, it seems unlikely that anyone could accept everything in a new culture (or everything in one's home culture for that matter) without rejecting some part of it. Yet, constantly evaluating every interaction might be "tiring" as Harley noted and may ultimately prove futile. Still, there seemed to be at least some aspects of the "flex" perspective in Harley's own experience and in her pedagogy for helping international students adjust to American culture.

CHAPTER VI

RYDER: TOWARD A PEDAGOGY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

Ryder, a 46 year-old white male, is an Assistant Professor of English at a Midwestern university. For his Peace Corps service Ryder taught English in Forms 1-4 (basically 9th-12th grade) at a rural boarding secondary school in Kenya from 1987 to 1990. He also stayed on in Kenya an additional year and taught on his own. Later, after returning to the U.S. and completing a Master's degree, he taught English in a college preparatory program for a large oil company in Saudi Arabia for approximately 6 years. Although his teaching in Saudi Arabia was unrelated to the Peace Corps, we talked about some of those experiences and I have included references to his experiences teaching there in this study.

I met Ryder in his university office which was small and sparsely decorated except for a few bookshelves filled to capacity, a few older looking rolling chairs that squeaked loudly every time we shifted our weight in them, and a handful of gifts from students and colleagues. For example, there was a braided ornament from a Chinese student, a small paper bag decorated with a face so it could be used as a hand puppet which was a gift from an American student at Halloween, and an international-looking letter holder given to him by a world-travelling colleague. There was also a "jumbo-sized" pink eraser still in its packaging hanging on the side of one of his bookshelves. Ryder explained that it was a gift from an American student in a recent applied linguistics class and that it related to a culture shock

story from Kenya that he told in the class which had to do with the difficulty of shared meaning even in the same language. In the story, two young female Kenyan students asked him for a "rubber." Ryder was shocked that these two girls were asking for a rubber which he thought referred to a condom. When he questioned why they needed a "rubber," they said they needed it to "rub" the chalkboard so they could write on it which made him realize that a "rubber" was the American English equivalent of "eraser." A few days after telling the story in his American linguistic class, a student gave Ryder the jumbo pink eraser that I saw hanging on his bookshelf. Ryder said he kept the eraser hanging there to "celebrate" the fact that someone was paying attention in his class and that it reminded him of the two Kenyan girls whose request made him reflect on how words in the same language could have a "double meaning."

When I asked Ryder how he chose his pseudonym for the study, he explained that Ryder was a character from Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's short story *The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle*. In the story, the fictional detective Sherlock Holmes deduced that a man named James Ryder had committed a crime (in this case he had stolen a gemstone) and blamed it on another person. But rather than sending Ryder to prison, Holmes forgave Ryder and told him to "go forth and sin no more." Remarking on this notion of forgiveness, Ryder (the professor, not the character from the story) noted, "I suppose all people should be punished if they commit a crime but sometimes there's something to be said for being forgiving" and asked, "Don't we all need to be forgiven?" This question lingered with me as I listened to Ryder's stories.

During our interviews, Ryder continually returned to issues of social justice, which he says he developed through his experiences in the Peace Corps and afterward.

He referred to social structures as "hierarchies" and "pecking orders" and alluded to their effects on the lives of stigmatized populations around the world, especially the poor. When I asked if he held certain social justice beliefs prior to his travels overseas, he said that before serving in the Peace Corps, he "didn't know what [he] thought." But, since his return to the U.S., he has decided that "Wanting the world to be a better place is not bad" and that "probably the biggest thing I learned from the Peace Corps" was the world "should" and "could" be a "better" place. When I asked Ryder how the world could become a better place, he said that he didn't have the "solutions" but that the problems were "pretty obvious." He also felt that most people wanted to "know what's right and wrong" because living in the "gray" area between right and wrong made people feel "uncomfortable," yet he believed that "people who think they know what is right and wrong are actually just pushing their moral agenda on me or on others." He added, "I'm aware of these things and I'm constantly…trying to figure out what the right thing to do is. And sometimes it's very frustrating because I don't know. Or I've decided what the right thing is and then I realize I've done something horrible."

I think this brings up an important moral dilemma in an age of globalization—having the desire to help others who are disadvantaged yet discovering that one's efforts have unintended consequences. This implies that there is no single right thing to do. It also suggests that one person alone cannot decide what is best for others. I think that for social justice to be viable, multiple voices must share in the decision-making process.

Because Ryder turned to issues of social justice in nearly every story he told and because it formed such a large part of his pedagogical goals, I have titled his chapter *Toward a Pedagogy of Social Justice*. In this chapter, I have included two stories related

to culture shock, one identity shift story, one reverse culture shock story, and one story regarding his pedagogy. In his first culture shock story, Ryder talks about the differences between the Western and Kenyan perceptions of time and he points out an element of fatalism within the Kenyan approach. In re-reading the story, I draw on other research and my own experiences teaching in Africa to look at fatalism in a new light. In the second culture shock story, Ryder talks about the generosity he experienced in Kenya and the lack of generosity in American culture. Using reports of American generosity and non-generosity in the popular media, I first read Ryder's story in terms of generosity as measurable in dollar amounts or percentages and later, drawing on Derrida's aporia of the gift, reread the story in terms of generosity as an impossible practice due to an underlying component of self-interest within the concept of generosity. In the identity shift story, Ryder expresses his shock at finding homosexual practices in Saudi Arabia which he considered a conservative culture and the condemnation of homosexuality in America which he thought would be more liberal as well as how this shock led him to be more tolerant and supportive of homosexuals. I first read his story in terms of moral hypocrisy at the cultural level and reread the story in terms of the difficulty in using such labels as conservative and liberal or homosexual and non-homosexual. Next, for Ryder's reverse culture shock story, he shares his frustration that while the Kenyan poor exemplify reality, middle class American culture is built upon and in some ways bound by non-reality. In rereading Ryder's story, I challenge these assumptions and look at reality as multiple rather than monolithic. In his final story related to his pedagogy, Ryder discusses the way in which his experience of language stigmatization by other Peace Corps volunteers as well as his Kenyan and Saudi students' experiences of language

stigma by others, led to his realization that standard and nonstandard language usage is tied to social power. In reading the story, I look at the need to affirm and appreciate linguistic diversity in the classroom and in re-reading the story, I challenge the notion of a clear distinction between standard and nonstandard notions of language.

Culture Shock I: Western Time as Linear/Control, Kenyan Time as Cyclical/Fatalistic

Ryder noted that issues related to "time" would sometimes make him feel "annoyed." He said that from an American perspective, "When we're told [a specific] time…and it happens three hours later, we're a little upset." In contrast to the American meaning of the word "tomorrow" as the day after today, Ryder reflected on what "tomorrow" meant in Kenyan culture, "It means sometime in the future. I don't know when. It doesn't mean the day after today."

Unlike Americans who seemed to get "angry" and start "shouting" when things didn't go as planned, Ryder noted that he never saw the Kenyans "get angry" or at least they "didn't register anger" the way that Americans did. When things did not happen at a specified time, Kenyans often said that things would happen "When God wills it." He continued, "Maybe it's because they know that getting upset is not going to change anything" and that sometimes you "have to accept" life as it is. He also felt that the Kenyan's sense of time was related to "fatalism" which he described as a "reflection of living a life in which you know you're not in control." With regard to Americans, Ryder felt that "we think we have more control and that's where a lot of the culture shock comes from."

In terms of time orientation, Gannon & Pillai (2010) argue that while Western cultures prefer a more linear orientation to time, African time is more cyclical (p. 559). Samples (1993) describes the differences between cyclic and linear time as follows:

> Cyclic time is the time image that best applies to nature. Seasons, days, seeds and birth-death cycles are all part of the rhythmic pulse of nature. Linear time is an abstraction. It is the invention of humans who arbitrarily divide up cycles into units…[which] are more addable, subtractable, and certainly more abstract. Cycles on the other hand vary...As a result, they pose problems to those who measure them in linear time…They pose no problems to those who accept cyclic time. (p. 28)

From a linear perspective, it seems that time is "controlled" in the act of dividing, adding, subtracting, and so on, whereas from a cyclic perspective, the control of time is ceded to nature or a deity or deities. Also, as noted in the Samples' quote above, cyclic time poses a problem for the linear thinker because the cycles vary and are unpredictable. For Ryder and other Americans, it was a source of culture shock.

Time issues also provided me with the greatest sense of culture shock in my own Peace Corps experience so I found it easy to relate when Ryder said Americans get upset when given a specific time for some event and then it happens "three hours later." My students, colleagues, and friends also seemed to underscore the sense of "fatalism" or the "doctrine that events are fixed in advance so that human beings are powerless to change them" (Merriam-Webster, 2012, online) noted in Ryder's story. They would often tell me that while a man may make plans, it is God who decides whether or not they will come into fruition. Another popular saying when there didn't seem to be an option or a solution

to a problem was, “Oh well, what’s one going to do?” One of my former students has also noted in our email correspondence since my return to the U.S. that “nothing is sure in Africa,” “time is still not money,” and “I could not do anything to change my destiny.” This student certainly sounds fatalistic and seems to represent the type of fatalism Ryder also noted in his experience.

Re-reading Culture Shock I: Fatalism as Self-Management & Humility

In his story, Ryder associated Kenyan time with “fatalism” as a “reflection of living life where you know you are not in control.” Fatalism is a word I often hear associated with Africa. To me, it has a negative connotation in that when something is “fatal” it causes “death,” “failure,” or “brings ruin” (Merriam-Webster, 2012, On-line). The term “fatalism” also creates the impression of African powerlessness and passivity which is seen as negative in the Western active/passive framework. It seems like an insult and a label applied from outside African culture rather than from inside the culture. In re-reading Ryder’s story, I challenge this notion of fatalism and look for other possible meanings.

I think of what has been called fatalism as an approach for managing one’s negative emotions. For example, Gannon & Pillai (2010) wrote that “fatalism helps people to wait patiently or react calmly” when things do not go as planned (p. 558). In Ryder’s example, when things did not happen as planned he/other Westerners became upset, got angry, or shouted whereas the Kenyans didn’t seem bothered or at least they didn’t express their anger publicly as Ryder noted. It is possible that the Africans were

indeed bothered and angry but they were managing their emotions in a more inconspicuous manner.

With regard to using the phrase “when God wills it” as a sign of fatalism, I recall similar sayings from American culture, such as “I’ll be there, God willing” or “Lord willing.” I also attended a meeting recently in which an administrator at my institution expressed a certain powerlessness in enforcing pre-established rules by stating “That’s just the way it is and there’s nothing I can do about it.” For me, the “God willing” or “when God wills it” sayings can serve as linguistically polite ways of saying “let’s wait and see.” Likewise the phrases “What’s one going to do?” and “That’s just the way it is and there’s nothing I can do” are ways to express frustration in the moment. One cannot know everything that will happen in the future. Circumstances may change. Cultures use linguistic tools to express emotions in indirect ways. If both Western and African cultures use similar linguistic techniques, why is African culture often labeled as fatalistic when American culture is not?

I would also challenge the belief that African fatalism is tantamount to passivity or futility. My African students were neither forced to go to school nor simply allowed to go to school; they worked for the privilege. They grew cotton entirely by hand to earn enough money to go to school. In that sense, there were no passive students in my classroom. They worked hard to get into school even though their money could have gone toward taking care of other necessities. They expressed their hopes and dreams to me in quiet and subtle ways. The African teachers I worked with not only taught, but almost all had little side businesses in order to earn extra money. They had goals and plans for the future but they didn’t share those plans publicly. Everyone in the village

worked to maintain close relationships with others not only just for fun, but also in case they needed help in an emergency. They were generous and social but also frugal and private. In short, the Africans I knew were active when the situation called for it, and likewise quiet and passive when needed. This suggested to me that "fatalism is not complete futility; rather it means dignity in the face of adversity and humility in the event of prosperity" (Gannon & Pillai, 2010, p. 560).

In the first reading of Ryder's story I mentioned a student who claimed he could do nothing about his destiny. That student, who represented one of many, had 18 siblings and grew up without electricity or running water. The school where I taught was not his village, so he and his brother rented a small hut normally used to shelter goats. They ate millet every day for 4 months until they could return to their village at the end of the semester and get more. Sometimes friends or villagers would invite them for meals or to share snacks. This student grew and harvested cotton when he wasn't in school and took on every odd job under the sun to make ends meet and help provide for his siblings. In the time that I have known him, he has suffered numerous bouts of malaria and has had little to no healthcare or dental care. He has also gone on to earn his Bachelor's and his Master's degree. He recently accepted his first government post as a History teacher. He has hopes and dreams and he does everything he possibly can to make them come true. Sometimes he gets frustrated when things do not go as planned. That he says there is nothing he can do to change his destiny is more an act of modesty than fatalism. In an email I received just the other day he wrote "if we just hope without effort we fail." So while it may seem that Africans have a fatalistic vision of the future on the surface, what lies underneath in my experience is something very different.

Culture Shock II: Generosity as Measurable

According to Ryder, the experience of Kenyan generosity made him feel "shame" for American "avarice." In one example, Ryder was invited to the home of his school's night watchman. Ryder wrote:

> When I arrived at his homestead late morning one hot Saturday, I recall the scene rather well. Two mud-brick, cylindrical huts with grass-thatched roofs sat before me. The yard was hard dirt that had been recently swept with homemade hand brooms to make it look well-maintained. A skinny dog greeted me with a wag of a weary tail, and about fifteen chickens ran about clucking and chasing insects. [The watchman] came out of one of the huts and greeted me and welcomed me to his home…He [said] that this was his home and what I saw God had blessed him with. Though what I saw was poverty, I saw [a] man without greed.

Ryder seemed to feel especially touched when the man's wife cooked one of the fifteen chickens he had seen running about the yard earlier, especially since the couple had so few possessions. He said that the generosity he had experienced that day was "a generosity [he] had never experienced in the United States." Explaining his perspective more fully, Ryder offered,

> What I had experienced reminded me of the biblical story in Mark 12: 41-44 about the widow and her giving two mites [a monetary unit of measure during biblical times] in comparison to what all the rich in the temple had given: "For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living." Americans love to think that they give more than others, and monetarily we probably do. However, percentage wise we don't even come close.

> I have never visited an American and had them serve me a meal worth one-fifteenth of their world possessions.

While Ryder felt that Kenyans were much more generous than Americans and that Americans were not as generous as they thought they were, several articles within the popular media have extolled the virtues of American generosity (Tripathi, 2006; Brooks, 2009; Wilson, 2011; Bennett, 2011; Chao, 2012; Klotz, 2012). Wilson (2011) says that the view that Americans are not generous is a distortion of the "media and liberals" who "portray Americans as selfish Scrooges" (online). He makes the case that "America is the most generous country in the world" based on its ranking on the World Giving Index 2011 which was developed by the UK based Charities Aid Foundation or CAF (online). To create the World Giving Index, the CAF (2011) used information gathered through Gallup poll interviews from 153 countries to look at three specific behaviors: giving money to a charity, volunteering, and helping a stranger (p. 2). Although the U.S. did not have the top score in any one category, its overall score earned it the top rank of "most charitable country globally" (p. 11). Using the same measures, Kenya ranked 62nd (p. 36). Further, the United States ranked first on the Hudson Institute's (2012) Index of Global Philanthropy and Remittances, which placed the total amount of American aid to developing countries in 2010 at $165.2 billion (p. 16) which included Official Development Assistance or ODA, private philanthropy (through foundations, corporations, universities, volunteer agencies, religious organizations, etc.), and remittances (described as money sent from "migrants living in the United States to their home countries") (p. 8). These data seem to contradict Ryder's assumptions that

Americans aren't as generous as Kenyans or that the belief in American generosity is misplaced.

On the other hand, just as Ryder asserted some argue that despite giving more in terms of dollars, other countries actually give a larger percentage of their overall economy, often referred to as GDP (Gross Domestic Product) or GNI (Gross National Income) (Somberg, 2005; Riley, 2005; Eisenberg, 2008; Moylan, 2010; Chronic, 2011). Somberg (2005) blames the media for conflating American generosity by making "Americans think they live in an extremely generous country" (online). For example, he contests one article comparing America's and Britain's pledges of aid related to the Indian Ocean Tsunami in December 2004 which notes that America's pledge of $350 million was three times that of Britain. Somberg points out that the article failed to mention that the "U.S. has 5 times Britain's population and six times its GDP" (online). Additionally, in reviewing the aforementioned Index of Global Philanthropy and Remittances (Hudson Institute, 2011), although the U.S. ranks first in giving when looking at dollar amounts, it ranks 12th when looking at percentage of aid in relation to GNI (p. 16-17). When looking strictly at Official Development Aid (ODA) alone, the U.S. drops from 1st to 19th place (p. 6-7). The general impression these data give is that despite the U.S. donating the most money, the money given represents a smaller percentage of its economy, thus making the U.S. appear less generous.

Overall, it would seem that perceptions of American generosity depend upon the scale used to measure that generosity. Because of this, some argue for a dual view of America as both generous and non-generous (Efron, 2004; Benton, 2009; Bravura, 2011; Cohen, 2012). Benton (2009) and Cohen (2012) add that while America is generous in

many respects, it may not be especially generous to its own poor. Offering his British view of American generosity, Cohen (2012), for instance, writes,

> despite America's brutal treatment of its poor, there is an undercurrent of extreme generosity that I personally have not seen in any other country. Americans give an astonishing amount of their own money to charities…On a personal level there is a culture of kindness and understanding that is not manifested on a societal level—a strange contradiction that could have interesting outcomes. (online)

For Ryder, who emphasized his poor upbringing in his biography, it is perhaps this sense of America's lack of generosity toward its own poor that allows him to emphasize the belief that Americans are not generous, while ignoring the other ways in which Americans are generous.

Re-reading Culture Shock II: Generosity as Self-Interest/Impossible

In the previous section, generosity was gauged in terms of measurable dollar amounts or percentages of money given. Ryder even wrote of the night watchman's meal as representing one fifteenth of his worldly possessions. There is some literature, however, that suggests the manner in which aid is offered is equally as important as the amount given (Korf, 2007; Minnicks, 2011; Neild, 2012; Bhala, 2005; Glennie, 2011). Korf (2007), for example, makes the case that the "over-attention towards the virtues of Western generosity" in the media following the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami "produced a humiliating force upon aid recipients" (p. 5) by painting those affected as passive victims, downplaying the victims' own contributions toward self-help, and ignoring their input altogether. He argues further that gift-giving in which "the recipient is unable to

reciprocate" creates "asymmetric" power relations (p. 4) and, following Bourdieu, acts as an "effective practice of symbolic domination" (p. 7) especially when the giver seeks constant affirmation of their generosity or other favors in return. For Minnicks (2011) this suggests the importance of giving in a more discreet manner. Quoting Jesus from Matthew 6:3-4, she writes:

> *So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by men…But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing*. (online, emphasis in original)

In this passage, Jesus suggests the importance of giving without the need to proclaim or be "honored by men" for the giving. Reflecting on the notion of gift-giving and generosity, I can personally think of times when I felt embarrassed or resentful when given a gift if I did not have the means to or felt expected to return the gesture (especially during the holidays). I can also think of other times when I, as the gift-giver, felt hurt at not having my "gift" acknowledged.

In their own ways, both of the authors above point out the problematic of self-interest in the process of giving. According to Derrida's "*aporia* of the gift," it is this element of self-interest that negates giving as an act of generosity (In Korf, 2007, p. 8). Exploring Derrida's position, Barnett (2005) reports that

> As soon as a gift is given knowingly as a gift, the subject of generosity is always anticipating a return, already taking credit of some sort, if only for being generous. This relationship between giving and taking, anticipation and return, therefore inscribes the gift within a circuit of utilitarian exchange that it is

> supposed to exclude. On this view, the ethical content of the generous act is annulled in the very moment of its enactment (p. 10).

Additionally, Barnett argues that for an act/gift to be generous, it could not be "recognised as a gift by either party" (p. 10). This suggests the impossibility of claiming generosity by either the giver or recipient, in that once generosity is claimed, it loses the quality that makes it generous. In other words, by claiming the act as generous, it becomes a tool of self-interest. In Ryder's case, his dissatisfaction with American culture allowed him to deemphasize American generosity while highlighting and perhaps overstating Kenyan generosity. For example, Ryder appeared to indicate that because the night watchman was poor, he could not also be greedy or have self-serving motives in inviting Ryder to lunch. It is possible though that the watchman may have been interested in developing a social relationship with Ryder for reasons that may not have been known to Ryder at the time. In portraying the man as poor, without greed, and as being thankful for being "blessed by God," Ryder re-inscribes the asymmetries of power (Korf, 2007) in a sense, by casting the man as innocent, passive, and righteous (in the biblical sense) and not seeing the man in light of his potential totality. Likewise, he seemed to paint all Americans as greedy and avaricious.

Staying with this theme of self-interest at a cultural level, while I don't think that self-interest is necessarily a bad thing, I do think it is important to recognize how seemingly generous foreign aid to developing countries may be considered a form of self-interest. Neild (2012) argues for instance that because of the "strings attached" to aid, it often becomes "more of a transaction than an outright gift" (online). He suggests that aid is often given in return for supporting political or military interests in other countries and

that reports of American "government philanthropy" dollars includes aid that is "earmarked for military purposes." Likewise food donations actually support "American agribusiness" by requiring that aid be spent on American agricultural products thereby increasing foreign dependence on American goods (online). Somberg (2005) notes too that while large pledges of money may make a country appear generous, those pledges may turn out to be empty promises that do not represent actual aid given. Glennie (2011) also observes that "Aid buys things donors want (such as political support and economic advantage, whether directly for donor businesses or indirectly through policy change)" (online). He proposes that for wealthy countries to become "truly generous" would require more than monetary donations, such as reducing their consumption and adopting fairer tax, trade, and accounting practices. Overall, these writers give the impression that looking solely at generosity in terms of numbers may hide the ways in which giving to others may be tied to self-interests. It also brings into question whether or not one can speak of so-termed generosity at all.

Identity Shift I: Sexuality as Moral Hypocrisy and Social Control

Ryder's culture shock experiences in Kenya and later in Saudi Arabia also made him reflect on issues related to sexuality. He noted in Kenya that men held hands "all the time" and that he "had to learn" that it was not sexual in nature. When I asked how he reacted when Kenyan men tried to hold his hand, he said that he was "freaked out by it" at first and pulled his hand away. But after a while, he said he began to realize that the Kenyan men were not "gay" or "looking for sex," that holding hands was more a demonstration of friendship and human closeness. Later, as a teacher in Saudi Arabia, he

also found that men not only held hands but often kissed as a show of friendship. I should note that although his experiences in Saudi Arabia were not with the Peace Corps I have included the story here because they added to his culture shock and are related to his overall theme regarding male sexuality. Speaking of his experiences in Saudi Arabia, he relayed that "I have been kissed nose to nose by an Arab and it wasn't a homosexual act, it was a gesture of friendship, which is a big change for me." Ryder also reflected that Americans and westerners in general tended to be more "homophobic" and would likely view such acts as homosexual.

Ryder was, however, surprised to discover that homosexual behavior existed in Saudi Arabia despite the social and religious prohibitions against it. He said that before he went to Saudi Arabia, he thought it was a "puritan culture where everybody abstained from everything. Everything is forbidden," especially homosexuality which he understood was punishable by death. He was therefore shocked to find that one of his roommates and some of his co-workers who were from various Western countries had "overt" homosexual relationships with Saudis, Arabs, and other foreigners as well. He said that this "astounded" him because he "thought people would be more afraid to be a homosexual in Saudi Arabia than they are in the West." Yet since he has returned to the U.S., he has a different perspective. He argued, "My concept of America was that it was more liberal and tolerant than it actually is. We are very puritanical" and "very conservative." He added that even though homosexuality is not considered a crime punishable by death in the U.S., he felt that many Americans would "certainly condemn you to death."

Ryder also shared a poignant story in which he had rejected a brother who was gay. His brother was living with him at the time in an apartment inside an elderly woman's residence. One night, his brother was followed to the apartment by some men who verbally and physically attacked him for being gay. The police were called to settle the disturbance, however due to the altercation, Ryder and his brother were kicked out of the apartment. Holding back tears, Ryder explained,

> I told my brother, get…out and don't ever come back, you got me kicked out of my apartment. I don't care what the situation is. Those are probably the most hurting words… At the time I was angry and I meant them, because I was angry, but I didn't realize they would be the last words I would ever say to my brother.

They lost touch after that and Ryder never saw his brother again. Ryder went on to say that it was a "development" for him to overcome his negative beliefs about homosexuality and that through his intercultural experiences in which he worked closely with homosexual men, he had come to think of it as natural as heterosexuality. He also pointed out that homosexuality existed in the animal world and he felt that sexuality was the product of cultural "programming" and "conditioning."

Ryder's story made me think about the notion of "moral hypocrisy" and how it may be understood at the level of national culture. Drawing on Batson et al.'s research, Tong & Yang (2011) describe moral hypocrisy as a "behavioral response driven by the motivation to appear moral and yet, if possible, avoid the cost of being so" (p. 159). An important part of this description is the attempt to "appear" moral in whatever way moral may be defined. Additionally, in their research on the social nature of moral hypocrisy, Valdesolo & David DeSteno (2007) found that "Subjects readily excused other

individuals' unfair acts if these others belonged to subjects' emergent social groups" thus helping to shape "group-level social identities" (p. 690). This suggests that moral hypocrisy can be understood not only in terms of individual behavior, but as promulgated along social and cultural lines as well. In the story above, Ryder indicated how the cultural, moral, and legal prohibitions against homosexuality in Saudi Arabia gave the appearance that homosexuality did not exist there, hence he was shocked to find that it did exist. Being an outsider allowed him to recognize this inconsistency between appearance and actual practice. It also seemed to make him more aware of American moral hypocrisy after he returned to the U.S. in that he argued that Americans are more "puritanical" and "conservative" despite claiming to be "liberal" and "tolerant."

In addition to moral hypocrisy, Ryder also hints at the ways in which sexuality is subjected to social control. DeLamater (1981) believed that "social institutions, primarily the family and religion, are the source of both general perspectives and specific norms that govern sexual expression" (p. 264). He explained that social institutions control sexual behavior in three main ways:

> First, they provide a specific perspective…a set of assumptions and norms that defines reality for adherents and thus serves as a basis for self-control. Second, those who occupy institutional roles will utilize the perspective in interactions, as a basis for informal controls. Third, institutions may have sanctioning systems that are activated when norms are violated; fear of sanction is thus an additional source of conformity by participants. (p. 264)

These three elements of social control appeared to be present in Ryder's narratives. Both killing and condemning homosexuals seemed to be part of the sanctioning systems that

the social institutions in both the U.S. and Saudi Arabia have used to control homosexuals. Likewise, Ryder himself became an unwitting participant in the social control of his brother by rejecting him, even though his brother was the victim of a crime and it was not his fault that Ryder was kicked out of the apartment. I would also suggest that schools, as social institutions, as well as teachers may also be prone to engage in these forms of social control. Likewise, fear of these social controls may lead sexual minorities to suppress themselves through behaviors such as detachment from others, pretending to be heterosexual, and committing suicide.

Re-Reading Identity Shift I: Social Control (?) and the Problem with Labels

While I appreciate Ryder's enthusiasm in fighting social and sexual injustice on behalf of gay people, his position seemed based on a heterosexual/homosexual dichotomy as well as the belief that sexuality could be completely regulated by one's culture. That homosexual behavior seemed widespread and overt in Saudi Arabia suggests that it was in some ways tolerated, that the social controls against homosexuality weren't working very well or weren't strictly enforced, and/or that people's sexuality cannot be completely controlled, especially by governments. Likewise in the U.S., which Ryder branded as homophobic and conservative, there are also pockets of liberality and acceptance. Witness the increase in states which are legalizing same sex partnerships. Look at the increases in religious institutions that welcome and support gay people. Observe that inclusion of gay characters on some of the most popular television programs. And during this writing, President Obama has come out in support of gay marriage. In my own life, I have sensed a shift toward greater acceptance of sexual

minorities in the last few years. However, I am not naïve. Gay people still suffer the effects of social control through suicide, verbal harassment, isolation, depression, violence, and homelessness (GLSEN in Youth Pride Inc., 2010, on-line) both in the U.S. and in other countries. My point is that the picture is more complicated and that there seems to be both pockets of tolerance amid intolerance.

I also question the categories of hetero- and homo- sexual. According to McIntosh (1968), thinking of sexual behaviors in fixed and mutually exclusive categories is problematic. She writes,

> Many scientists and ordinary people assume that there are two kinds of people in the world: homosexuals and heterosexuals. Some of them recognize that homosexual feelings and behavior are not confined to the persons they would like to call "homosexuals" and that some of these persons do not actually engage in homosexual behavior. This should pose a crucial problem; but they evade the crux by retaining their assumption and puzzling over how to tell whether someone is "really" homosexual or not. (p. 182)

She also argued that the term "bisexual" was developed "to handle the fact that behavior patterns cannot be conveniently dichotomized into heterosexual and homosexual" (p. 182-183). I think it is interesting that McIntosh wrote her article in 1968 and at that time there were three socially constructed categories—heterosexual, homosexual, and bisexual. Yet, the labeling has continued. Note the acronym LGBTQQ which stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Questioning. There are other variants with additional letters for other categories as well. Although there seems to be a greater recognition in the diversity of sexual behavior in American culture, there also seems to be

the belief that the totality of a person can be accounted for by an initial or that their emotions and behaviors can fit into mutually exclusive categories.

This research suggests that such characterizations as conservative, liberal, heterosexual, and homosexual may be misleading to the extent that such labels seem to hide the existence of the other concept within those labels. By that I mean, there may be components of both liberality and conservatism in a single country or a single person. Similarly, there may also be elements of both hetero- and homo- sexuality in a single person. For instance, I know people who consider themselves gay who have engaged in "heterosexual" sex and people who consider themselves straight but who have engaged in "homosexual" sex. In those instances, labels seem to serve a more social or political function than to reflect the complexity of actual sexual practices.

Reverse Culture Shock I: Reality versus Non-reality

For Ryder, seeing the "extreme level of poverty" in Kenya added to his "reverse culture shock" in the sense that he was "amazed" at how full grocery stores were even though there were hungry people in the world. He was also bothered by the amount of consumption here in America and pointed out how obese many Americans are. In addition, he felt that as a rich country there "should be no problems" in the U.S. because this is "America, it's the first world." But he did find problems which were especially annoying because he felt that Kenyans, as poor as they were, often did things "better" than Americans. Although he couldn't give a specific example of the type of the problems he encountered, he remembered "feeling intolerance for any little mistake that may have happened." He also suggested that his experiences with reverse culture shock

"probably started some of [his] problems with Americans" in that they seemed to make him more aware and critical of American culture.

Ryder further noted that before he joined the Peace Corps he strongly believed in the Protestant Work Ethic, that "success or good comes to those who work hard," and that poverty was the result of "laziness" or "indolence." While he still believed in the value of hard work, he no longer believed that it necessarily equaled success. He explained that living among the hard-working yet poor people in Africa made him realize that they didn't deserve their poverty but rather their poverty was a circumstance of an unjust social structure. He thought,

> these people [in Kenya] work as hard or harder than anyone I've seen in America. Why are they not where they ought to be? Why do they have less? It's certainly not because of something they didn't do.

In addition, Ryder said he felt like a "freed prisoner" after living outside of the U.S. for a number of years. He explained that most Americans were like prisoners in a cave looking at "shadows" on the wall. They assume these shadows to be real and choose to live "absolutely oblivious to [the] reality" outside the cave (I should note that Ryder's use of the cave metaphor is similar to yet somewhat different from Plato's *Allegory of the Cave*). Ryder explained that

> though [the Returned Peace Corps Volunteer] returns to the cave to explain to erstwhile former cell mates that the images on the wall are merely shadows and that the real world lies above and beyond their imaginations, he [or she] is not only frequently disbelieved but many times found to be the object of the contempt

of his peers who are more than complacent about their lives and do not wish to know more or to seek change (i.e., they embrace willful ignorance).

In making his case that most Americans prefer to live in willful ignorance, he quoted two popular American aphorisms: "If you can't say anything nice, don't say anything at all" and "if it ain't broke don't fix it." He argued that the first saying meant that nobody had "the right to complain" or say something "negative" and that if you cannot point out the aspects of American society that were negative or broken, there was no reason to fix or change anything. Ryder also implied this sense of willful ignorance to explain why some Americans "can buy a five dollar cup of coffee when they know that four billion people are living on two dollars or less a day."

Applying the cave metaphor to Kenyan culture, he said of the poor subsistence farmers he lived among, "They are reality. They're the outside world." He also believed that it was the Kenyan middle class who "are seeing shadows on the wall." Specifically, he felt that it was their conspicuous consumption of certain luxuries (driving cars, "eating at their level") that made the poorer Kenyans "suffer."

According to Kauffman, "exposure to another culture and to other ways of thinking and behaving leads to new ways of looking at one's own culture" (In Voigts, 2008, on-line). For Ryder, this certainly seemed to be the case. Through his experiences in other cultures he gained insights into American culture and a broadened perspective on issues of poverty. This allowed Ryder to reflect on the nature of social structure and how language (such as popular aphorisms and the Protestant Work ethic) is used to support the structure and shape cultural perceptions. Along these lines, Bazerman (1992) believed that "Knowledge…is made up out of words and other symbols, that words are used by

people, and that people have their own concerns to look out for" and can become "imprisoned by the words they use" (p. 61). He also argued too that learning how these words and symbols "function" and "whose interests they serve" exposes the "choice making that lies behind the apparently solid and taken-for-granted world" and "forces us to address the ethical question of our responsibility for our world" (p. 62). Ryder's experiences allowed him to challenge the belief that hard work necessarily equaled success. He also gave examples of popular American sayings which supported a non-questioning and problem-avoiding attitude. He felt this use of language served the Middle class and argued that most Americans preferred to live in "willful ignorance" rather than face or change inequitable social problems.

I was especially intrigued by Ryder's use of metaphors to describe American and Kenyan middle class culture as a "cave" and the people within it as "prisoners" who accept the shadows they see projected on the wall as reality. Through these metaphors, Ryder equated wealth with imprisonment in a shadow world where nothing is real and poverty with freedom and reality. In many ways, the United States seems like a shadow world, especially due to the increase and proliferation of the popular mass media. I recently read a magazine article featuring the pop star Lady Gaga who was talking about a magazine cover upon which she appeared without any makeup. She said "I think that artifice is the new reality" and she argued that the so-called "natural" photo of her looked more artificial than real. She added, "There's this idea that it's all natural, but everything's been staged to look natural" (Eggenberger, 2011, on-line). This seems to indicate that the artificial has subsumed the natural world and the social world is one that has been "staged" or constructed.

Similarly, de Zengotita (2005) believed that American culture has become engulfed in and shaped by media. He explained that "*mediation* means dealing with reality *through* something else" (p. 8, emphasis in original). This implies an indirect relationship with "reality" through other means such as through cell phones, televisions, computers, I-pods, movies, music, TV programs, video/computer games, advertising, magazines, and so on. As an example, one of my best friends, "Julia," has a virtual horse named "Scout." The horse is part of a computer program stored on her I-pad. I watched as Julia called Scout by tapping on a virtual fence surrounding a virtual pasture. The sky was blue and the grass was green and there were sounds of virtual birds chirping pleasantly in the background. I watched Julia feed, exercise, and groom Scout. By taking good care of Scout, Julia earned "gems" which she could trade for horse feed or riding gear. Julia also received updates about Scout through text messages on her cell phone. Everything in the mediated landscape was designed to make Julia feel good and forget the challenges of the physical world. Yet, there seems to been an increasing dependence on media, given that the time and money spent engaging media is steadily increasing (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011) and that media "addiction" (McIlwraith, 1998; Kubey & Csikszentmihalyi, 2002; Seay & Kraut, 2007; Young, 2009; Caldwell & Cunnigham 2010), is also on the rise. This increase in media addiction perhaps signals that many Americans are indeed becoming imprisoned by their need for a mediated reality and that media acts as a form of escape.

In contrast to Americans or middle class Kenyans, Ryder felt that the poor subsistence farmers he lived among were the "reality." They had a direct and close relationship with nature and their survival depended on that direct relationship. Ryder's

classification of them as real and free is supported by de Zengotita's (2005) contention that "We are most free of mediation, we are most real, when we are at the disposal of accident or necessity" (p. 13). To the extent that the poorer Kenyans' survival was tied to nature, which included elements of both accident and necessity, American culture must seem like a shadow world in that the emphasis seems to be less on survival and more on creating the "appearance" of a certain type of social reality. For Ryder, the time and effort spent in attending to the shadow reality also has ethical implications in that it distracts from attending to the survival needs and very real suffering of others.

Re-Reading Reverse Culture Shock I: Reality as Multiple

In Ryder's story, the notions of real and unreal were polarized with poverty cast as "reality" and "freedom" whereas wealth represented a kind of shadowy "non-reality" and a "prison." His linking of the poor subsistence farmers and reality seemed to indicate the view that the physical and natural world was real whereas the social and mediated worlds constructed by Americans were not. Drawing on the psychological work of William James, Schutz (1945) offered a different view of reality. He wrote that "The origin of all reality is subjective, whatever excites and stimulates our interest is real. To call a thing real means that this thing stands in a certain relation to ourselves" (p. 207). But rather than argue for a singular notion of reality, Shutz (1945) argued for the existence of "an infinite number of various orders of realities, each with its own special and separate style of existence" which James called "sub-universes" (p. 207). Some of those "sub-universes" or "subworlds" included:

> the world of sense or physical things…the world of science, the world of ideal relations, the world of "idols of the tribe", the various supernatural worlds of mythology and religion, the various worlds of individual opinion, the worlds of sheer madness and vagary. The popular mind conceives of all these sub-worlds more or less disconnectedly, and when dealing with one of them forgets for the time being its relations to the rest. But every object we think of is at last referred to one of these subworlds. (p. 207)

This gives the impression that there are multiple layers of reality and that although one may interact in multiple realities, it may be easy to forget the existence of these other layers when focusing on a particular aspect of one of those realities. In Ryder's story, the American and Kenyan middle class were portrayed as uniformly in the dark and oblivious to the suffering of others. There seemed to be no room for recognizing the ways in which the middle class could also be generous, insightful, and concerned with the plight of others. While it is true that many Americans live in a mediated reality, it is also true that they care about the well-being of others. Only recently I noted that my middle class co-workers generously and secretly donated enough money to buy two air conditioning units for a member of the contracted janitorial staff when it was learned that her air conditioner went out during 100+ degree heat. I have also seen them raise money for wildfire victims and donate clothing or other goods to the poor both in America and other countries. It seems possible that Ryder's painful experiences growing up in poverty made him feel resentful of the middle class. In many ways I can relate to his frustration, having grown up in a modest, rural, working class home. But it does make me wonder why painful experiences sometimes seem more real than happy ones. Is it because

happiness is fleeting and can be more easily taken away? Is it because pain seems more powerful than joy?

In applying the cave metaphor, Ryder also indicated that the middle class were prisoners of their material desires (in the form of shadows) and that the poor were free by implication. I'm not sure though that "poor" Kenyans would describe themselves as freer in comparison to middle class Kenyans. In my experience working with poor Cameroonian farmers, they certainly felt constrained by the social system. In addition, it wasn't that they rejected the mediated and material world, they simply couldn't afford to engage in it to the extent that the middle class Cameroonians could. One could further argue that the physical "outside" world in the form of nature can act as a "prison" with set laws and boundaries, whereas the imaginative and creative world is freeing in the sense that its landscapes are limitless. If indeed the poor Kenyans were free as Ryder indicated, there would be no need for Ryder to pursue social justice on their behalf.

Ryder also pointed out how language is used to support the social structure and benefit those who do not wish to seek change such as wealthy Middle class Americans. This recalls Bazerman's (1998) suggestion that people may become "imprisoned by the words they use" (p. 61). The examples Ryder gave were "If you can't say anything nice, don't say anything at all" and "if it ain't broke don't fix it." He also challenged the narrative of the Protestant Work ethic that work equaled success. But I would argue that if words can act as prisons, they may also be used to find openings. Popular quotes can be read in different ways. There are also other counter narratives that may be enlisted. The phrase, "if it ain't broke don't fix it" could be read as meaning its opposite as in "if it *is* broke, *do* fix it." In the movie *Steel Magnolias*, one of the main characters adapted the

"say something nice" example by saying, "If you can't say anything nice, come sit next to me," which suggested that she wanted to hear the negative, especially about other people! As far as the Protestant Work ethic that hard work equals success, I have overheard the saying "work smarter, not harder" on numerous occasions which seems to challenge the goal of working hard. The point is simply that other sayings exist and other meanings exist within those sayings. Further that the words used to socially construct reality may be deconstructed in order to create openings for other possible realities to exist.

Likewise, the same media that creates the beautiful images that buffer people from reality can also be used to cast light on reality in new or different ways. Books, films, and documentaries such as *To Kill a Mockingbird, A Passage to India, Schindler's List, And the Band Played On, Spanglish, The Motorcycle Diaries, Gandhi,* and *Getting Justice: Kenya's Deadly Game of Wait and See,* just to name a few, are examples of popular media that have been used to focus on issues related to social justice. This is not to suggest that social issues and suffering do not exist, only that the middle class is no monolithic group, and that words and media can be used to both support and challenge the status quo.

Pedagogy I: Teaching an Appreciation for "Dialect Diversity" as Social Justice

In considering how culture shock and reverse culture shock influenced his pedagogy, Ryder says he sometimes used his overseas experiences to "try to shock" his students by sharing some "provocative" stories in class. He said, "I'm thinking some of

these students are sheltered little children. Let me see if I can shock them out of there." He continued,

> I have to be careful because I want to tell them things that I was surprised by, like the fact that I think that Saudi Arabia is very homoerotic, that astounds people to hear that. I think maybe I would have been astounded prior to my travels.

He also indicated that he needed to be careful when sharing his Peace Corps stories that had to do with sexuality and bodily functions in front of women "Because in polite society you don't talk about these things…despite what people say, men and women are treated differently."

For Ryder, one particular set of experiences with culture shock had a profound influence on his desire to learn about and teach linguistics. It also shaped his critical perspective with regard to his pedagogy. Ryder said that while he was in the Peace Corps in Kenya, he was persistently made fun of for the way he spoke English, not by Kenyans, but by the other American Peace Corps Volunteers. He explained that the other Peace Corps Volunteers imitated and teased him for the way he pronounced certain words in his "Ozark dialect" of English and this hurt Ryder even though the other volunteers may not have intended to do so. Ryder believed that if he had not joined the Peace Corps and met other volunteers from around the U.S., he "would never have been aware that [he] was speaking [an English] dialect…that was stigmatized." Ryder also discovered that some of the Kenyans he knew and some of the Arab students he taught also felt stigmatized because of their language use. The Kenyans felt stigmatized because their "English was not as good as that of the Americans or the British and…their Swahili was not as pure as

that of the Tanzanians." "Paradoxically," Ryder's "rich Arab students felt stigmatized because their local dialect of Arabic was not the pure classical language of the Koran."

For Ryder, these experiences made him aware of "how much people were judged by their use of language." As a result of his new awareness, Ryder changed the way he spoke by adopting a more standard dialect of American English. In addition, he went on to earn a doctorate degree in Applied Linguistics as well as reflect extensively on how language use was socially constructed and prescribed. He said that through studying linguistics, he realized that he "wasn't doing anything wrong at all," that he was "speaking a dialect." He continued, "We all speak a dialect…If we happen to live in a majority we think that our dialect is better than the other one and it's not." Accordingly, Ryder's experiences and insights have allowed him to challenge socially prescriptive rules and language practices through both his research and his pedagogy.

Ryder explained further that he tried to demonstrate in his American linguistics classes how, from a cultural standpoint, behavior is both "learned" and "arbitrary" rather than "absolute" or "universal." He used the shifting notion of "etiquette" and behaviors that are accepted in some cultures but considered offensive in others to make his point. He said that to Americans, eating with one's bare hands may be "surprising" and "offensive" but it was acceptable in many other cultures. He also indicated that for Americans, "slurping soup" was considered "bad manners" but wearing shoes in the house was completely acceptable, yet from an Asian perspective, slurping soup was okay but wearing shoes inside the house was not. Additionally, Ryder also used a linguistic technique called "critical discourse analysis" in which students were provided with a "prejudicial but authentic text" and were asked to "examine how the text abuses social

power, supports racism, [and] upholds inequality." He felt this would help stimulate cultural awareness as well as provide a framework for students to use in their textual analyses in the future. Along these lines, he argued that teaching for social justice promoted "tolerance" and "inclusion," reduced "marginalization," and enhanced "mutual understanding."

Ryder's experience being stigmatized by the other American Peace Corps volunteers for his non-standard use of English suggests that one's own culture can be a source of culture shock. It also points out the link between language and identity which has pedagogical implications for student/teacher relationships in linguistically diverse language communities. Fought (2005) observed that "Language has always helped to signify who we are in society, sometimes serving as a basis for exclusion" (online). Dubrow & Gidney add that,

> Generally, those dialects spoken by people who enjoy social prestige, power, and wealth are more favored than the dialects of people of more limited power, wealth, and social prestige; the former come to be known as the standard dialect. (In Gallant, 2008, online).

In other words, language stigma is not simply about language but is wrapped up in social relationships of power and prestige. The way Ryder spoke was emblematic of his poor upbringing and his lack of social power. The other Peace Corps Volunteers appeared to use this lack of social power to make fun of him. Along these lines, Fought (2005) argues that language stigmatization often acts as a "stand-in" for other forms of discrimination. He writes:

> Indeed, speech is a convenient stand-in for other kinds of stigma that we recognize but do not openly acknowledge. For example, in our society, discrimination based on appearance, race, sex, religion or national origin is TABOO and often illegal, whereas discrimination based on particular details of language use by men or women, people of different religions, people from other countries and so on is often allowed. (on-line)

This indicates how discrimination can take on different forms that may not be readily apparent because they are subtle, symbolic, and socially sanctioned.

Fuertes, Potere, and Ramirez (2002) point out that the school is one of the social institutions where discriminatory language-related practices have been shown to occur. For Godley, et al. (2006), this signals the need to better prepare teachers for teaching in dialectally diverse classrooms. They feel that teachers, especially, can benefit from critical sociolinguistic training because they "are often positioned by institutions, students, parents, and themselves as privileged authorities on language" and because research has shown "strong connections between teachers' negative attitudes about stigmatized dialects, lower teacher expectations for students who speak them, and thus lower academic achievement on the part of students" (p. 31). As such, they envision the teachers' role as one of "social change" in that the "very act of affirming vernacular language runs counter to mainstream language ideologies" (p. 33). Further, they offer a number of tips for teachers to come to appreciate non-standard dialects and to reflect on their own beliefs about language learning. Clearly, the questioning of "mainstream language ideologies" shapes a great deal of Ryder's teaching in his linguistics courses.

For other educators, however, recognizing their own language biases or teaching against the societal grain may pose no easy tasks.

Perhaps one of the strongest shows of support for linguistic diversity in education emerged from the Conference on College Composition and Communication whose executive board published a resolution in 1974 titled *Students' Right to Their Own Language* which "remains the official position statement of the guild of college compositionists on dialect difference" to this day (Zorn, 2010, p. 311). The resolution reads,

> We affirm the students' right to their own patterns and varieties of language -- the dialects of their nurture or whatever dialects in which they find their own identity and style. Language scholars long ago denied that the myth of a standard American dialect has any validity. The claim that any one dialect is unacceptable amounts to an attempt of one social group to exert its dominance over another. Such a claim leads to false advice for speakers and writers, and immoral advice for humans. A nation proud of its diverse heritage and its cultural and racial variety will preserve its heritage of dialects. We affirm strongly that teachers must have the experiences and training that will enable them to respect diversity and uphold the right of students to their own language. (in NCTE, n.d., online).

This resolution seems to articulate Ryder's pedagogical assumptions to the extent that teaching a "standard American dialect" is linked to power and the exertion of "dominance" of one group over another—specifically mainstream teachers over nonmainstream students. It also expresses Ryder's pedagogical goals of promoting respect for linguistic diversity and greater tolerance and acceptance of those who speak

nonstandard dialects. Along these lines, “preserving” and appreciating nonstandard dialects in the classroom is seen as a form of social justice.

Re-Reading Pedagogy I: Questioning the Notions of Standard and Nonstandard Dialects

Despite attempts to clearly delineate the differences between standard and nonstandard English dialects, certain challenges arise. For instance, while the word “standard” implies something that is fixed and measurable, what may be counted as the standard in terms of language is shifting and ambiguous. Addressing the notion of “linguistic change,” Trudgill (2011) notes for instance that because language features can dynamically shift from nonstandard to standard and vice versa, it “is not always possible to say with any degree of certainty…whether a particular feature is part of Standard English or not” leaving some language features in an “uncertain and ambiguous” status (p. 11). This hints at the impossibility of classifying language in any definitive sense.

One of the most wide-ranging linguistic changes is the “internationalization” of English which has “resulted in new contours of the language and literature, in linguistic innovations, in literary creativity, and in the expansion of the cultural identities of the language” (Kachru, 1992, p. 355). For Kachru (1992), this suggests the need to recognize that “English now has multicultural identities” and to think of English, not in terms of its singularity, but in terms of its multiplicity as “Englishes” in the plural, especially within curriculum (p. 357). Kachru’s writings also challenge the notion that any one group has the power and ability to control the use of language. Confronting the notion of language standardization, Kachru writes that due to the “global diffusion of English…the native

speakers of this language seem to have lost the exclusive prerogative to control its standardization" (in Kalickaya, 2009, p. 36). Widdowson agrees and adds that to give sole ownership of a language to one cultural group would "arrest its development" and "undermine its international status" (in Kilickaya, 2009, p. 36). Loss of control over others' language use can feel threatening, especially for native speakers, however, sharing and appreciating language differences holds the potential for creating more ethical intercultural relationships.

Eckert (n.d.) also points out that definitions of standard and nonstandard English are problematic in the sense that even if, for example, "an easterner" and a "midwesterner" were able to rid themselves of their "stereotyped regional features" and both were considered standard English speakers, "their speech will be far from identical" (p. 7). In Ryder's case, that he classified himself as having adopted a standard dialect did not mean that he spoke with an accent that was the same as other standard speakers, only that his language differences had been deemphasized. This implies that even within the so-called standard, language differences still exist and cannot be completely suppressed.

Just as language is neither completely standard nor nonstandard, language stigma is also not meted out in exactly the same ways in the sense that "what is stigmatized is different from person to person…and from place to place" (Fought, 2005, on-line, emphasis in original). Since what might be perceived as stigma shifts from person to person and context to context, I would argue that responses to stigma also vary. Ryder's response to being stigmatized was to change the way he spoke, to study linguistics, and to challenge linguistic rules. I note on the other hand, for instance how some have used their stigmatized language as a form of cultural identity and artistic creativity, as in the use of

nonstandard dialects in rap, hip-hop, and country music. I have also noted that the international students I have worked with over the years have employed a number of strategies to navigate language stigma. While some did try to change their accents, others used humor when confronted with language differences, and some ignored the stigma altogether and went about their business. The point is that language stigma is neither dealt out nor received in the same manner.

In general, it appears that language standardization serves to control and limit linguistic diversity. Noting that what is considered Standard English has more to do with social power and prestige than linguistics, Torghabeh (2007) points out that such terms as "bad English, non-standard English, sub-standard English, or corrupted English" are used to uphold the prestige of native speakers and limit the prestige of nonnative speakers. This implies that the categories of standard and nonstandard have been constructed to serve other functions and have little to do with actual language use.

CHAPTER VII

HYACINTH: TOWARD A PEDAGOGY OF INTERCONNECTEDNESS

Hyacinth was a 52 year-old white female who had been teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) at the Middle School Level for 11 years at the time of our interviews. She had also taught 13 years of ESL at the High School level in a U.S. city on the Mexican border following her Peace Corps service, and 2 years of teaching 7th and 8th grade language arts, 12th grade remedial English, and 9th grade Spanish at an inner city school prior to joining the Peace Corps. For her Peace Corps service, Hyacinth taught English in a secondary school in a small town in the central highlands of Kenya for two years from 1984 to 1986. During her Peace Corps service, she met and married Richard, another Peace Corps volunteer who went to Kenya at the same time she did. At the time of our interviews, they had just celebrated their 25th anniversary.

My interviews with Hyacinth took place at her and Richard's home in the city where they lived. I spent an enjoyable evening sharing Peace Corps and other stories with both Hyacinth and Richard the night before we began our interviews. What I remember most about the interviews was the active atmosphere in which they took place and the seeming ease with which I was integrated into Hyacinth's busy schedule. Interspersed into our two days of interviews were: tending to two turtles which Hyacinth gleefully showed me (and

other visitors) how to feed, attending to one of her children who had had money stolen from them at a swimming pool, meeting with a family of five and discussing how she would be introducing each of them individually (their likes and dislikes, their experiences, the things they excelled at, etc.) at church on Sunday, taking me and an elderly friend to see the movie *The Help*, walking the dog and feeding the guinea pig, taking me along to church and introducing me to some fellow church-goers people who were from the country where I served in the Peace Corps, dealing with an oil stain on Richard's shirt, taking me and two young children from her church to the university waterpark for an afternoon of swimming, and then occupying the children with popcorn and a movie while we completed the interviews in the next room. It seemed like a lot to do in addition to taking care of me and reflecting on events that occurred over 25 years earlier. Yet, Hyacinth seemed to take everything in stride and even reflected how her intercultural experiences helped her learn to "interweave" people into her life without feeling burdened.

I have titled Hyacinth's chapter *Toward a Pedagogy of Interconnectedness* because of her desire to make intercultural connections with and between people from different cultures. In this chapter, I included one culture shock story, two identity shift stories, one reverse culture shock story, and one pedagogy story. In Hyacinth's culture shock story, she discussed the ways in which male privilege was constructed in Kenyan culture and in re-reading this story I looked at the structure of male privilege in America. For her first Identity shift story, Hyacinth talked about the self as a cultural product. For my re-reading of this story, I explored the self as a cultural process. For her second identity shift story, Hyacinth used the metaphor of "interweaving" to refer to the cultural practices of welcoming and hosting others in one's home in Mexico and Kenya. I re-examined these same practices as gendered

practice. For her reverse culture shock story, Hyacinth talked about sameness and difference. In the first reading, she appeared to relate sameness with feelings of competition and felt that many parts of American culture were "directly related to nothing." For the second reading, I look at the conceptualization of difference/sameness at a broader level. And, lastly, in her pedagogy story, Hyacinth talked about her teaching role in Kenya as that of ambassador and in America as that of bridge. In my re-reading of this story, I look at how the roles of ambassador and bridge may create distance in addition to connection.

Culture Shock I: Male Privilege in Kenya

Gender roles in Kenya seemed "disturbing" to Hyacinth at times. She related at least three stories that had gender roles as the focus, one had to do with women's role to "carry" things, another had to do with birth control and a third was related the changing social status of a boy once he was circumcised. In the first story she told, Hyacinth had gone with one of the male teachers to the tea shop to bring back some Mandazis (similar to donuts) for the other teachers back at the school. After they bought the mandazis, the male teacher handed her the bag and said "sorry, men don't carry things in our culture, women carry, men don't carry." She said that although she found that practice "ridiculous," she tried to put it into perspective. She thought, "Really, I was there for the cultural experience, whatever that experience was. I was there to learn and for the most part I did not find myself being overly judgmental. I wanted to know and I wanted to understand."

In another story, Hyacinth talked about how "frustrating" and "sad" it was to see that Kenyan families were so large even though they were poor and growing enough food to support themselves often proved "stressful." Although there was some talk in Kenya about

birth control and family planning, Hyacinth believed that most Kenyans were against it because it challenged the male gender role. She explained,

> family size was connected to a male self-esteem which had eroded in many ways since a more Western culture had emerged there, because men had traditionally been the hunters and did agricultural work. Men lost that role in life. Women maintained theirs as the farmers. So men didn't really have much to do because there weren't many jobs…one of the ways that a man proved his manliness within a tribe was to father many children. That was very frustrating to see people so poor, such large families and the plots of land that people grew their food on, what they were eating, was increasingly becoming smaller because it's passed down, divided between the children.

She also mentioned that at the time when they were in the Peace Corps, Richard had written a "scathing poem" in which he criticized "the family planning attitudes that were supported by the Pope and then reiterated by the [Kenyan] government." He was advised not to share it with anyone, to "get rid of it" or "burn it." Along these lines, for Hyacinth, this story also highlighted the lack of freedom of speech in Kenya.

In the third story, Hyacinth talked about how important male circumcision was in Kenyan culture. She said that around the age of 13 or 14, boys would be trained by village elders in the "ways of being a man." She recounted that after circumcision a boy was seen as a man and was "expected to give up childish ways." This meant that he could no longer make, play with, or even touch anything that was considered a toy. A man also wouldn't hold his children or even "relate" to a child until they were four-years old. With regard to school, Hyacinth noted that becoming a man could cause a few "glitches" because "You could

correct a young man before he was circumcised, afterwards he was seen as adult in the community and he really could not be criticized very much." She went on to say that in performing their roles, women were expected to be very "demure" and not criticize men.

According to Hyacinth, observing and experiencing the gender relations in Kenya was one of the experiences that made her realize how American she was. She said, "My values are very American…I feel men and women have equal rights." She reiterated this a second time during our interview and I asked if she thought women and men had equal rights in America and she replied, "yeah, oh yeah" and then changed the topic.

In this group of stories, Hyacinth explored the ways in which gender was socially constructed in Kenya. Lorber (1994) explains that from birth, human beings are taught how to enact socially constructed gender roles that have little to do with the genitalia one is born with. She notes that a "sex category becomes a gender status through naming, dress, and the use of others markers" and that once these gender markers are conferred on children "others treat those in one gender differently from those in the other, and children respond to the different treatment by feeling different and behaving differently (p. 20)." She also argues that gender roles are "legitimated by religion, law, science, and the societies entire set of values" (p. 21), that "Schools, parents, peers, and the mass media guide young people into gendered work and family roles" (p. 22), and that gender roles are constructed unequally according to "prestige and power" (p. 25). Some of the ways that gender was socially constructed in Kenya, according to Hyacinth, included that men didn't carry things, didn't play with toys, didn't hold small children, and couldn't be reprimanded by teachers or mothers. Men could also express their masculinity by fathering multiple children. On the other hand, Kenyan women were expected to be demure, non-critical of men, and act as the

sole source of emotional and tactile support for their children because men didn't relate to or hold children until they were at least four years old. Both roles appeared to be constructed to support male privilege through social interaction at home and in public spaces including the school. From an intercultural perspective, male privilege was also supported by western religious practice vis-à-vis the Pope's position on the use of birth control which gave male religious authority for the fathering of multiple children despite conditions of poverty.

Gender roles in Kenya were also enacted through work and the division of labor. Lorber (1994) offers that

> As a social institution, gender is one of the major ways that human beings organize their lives. Human society depends on a predictable division of labor, a designated allocation of scarce goods, assigned responsibility for children and others who cannot care for themselves, common values and their systematic transmission to new members, legitimate leadership, music, art, stories, games, and other symbolic productions. One way of choosing people for the different tasks of society is on the basis of their talents, motivations, and competence—their demonstrated achievements. The other way is on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity—ascribed membership in a category of people. (p. 20)

Lorber also notes that the "gender boundaries" must hold "or the whole social order will come crashing down" (p. 25). In Hyacinth's story, she points out that the division of labor in Kenya was based on gender roles where men were traditionally hunters and women were farmers. Changing economic and social conditions threatened the social order by taking away men's gendered work role. Male gender then was displaced and reaffirmed through fathering multiple children as visible evidence of manhood. Conversely, in Hyacinth's "American"

view, men and women have equal rights, which suggests that the division of labor (and assignment of privilege) in the U.S. is not based on gender, but in the other ways described by Lorber (1994) through "talents, motivations, and competence" and "demonstrated achievements."

Re-reading Culture Shock I: Male Privilege in America

In re-reading Hyacinth's story, I question the notion that men and women have equal rights in the U.S. as I examine the system of male privilege that underlies American society. In the book *The Gender Knot*, Johnson (2005) pointed to the difficulty of unraveling male privilege in American culture because it does not take the clear-cut form of oppression that may be more obvious within other cultures. He wrote:

> Openly oppressive systems of privilege like Apartheid in South Africa…provide comforting clarity because it is easy to see who oppresses whom and how it is done. You can always tell one group from the other, differences in privilege are obvious, abuse and exploitation are public, and the entire system is organized around rigid segregation...It would be easier to see how patriarchy works if it fit into this kind of model, but it doesn't. (p. 163)

In other words, even though the examples of male privilege in the U.S. may not be as obvious as those presented in Hyacinth's story of Kenya, it exists nonetheless. I think that by focusing more on the clearly defined examples of dominance and privilege in other cultures allows for privilege of a more subtle nature in one's own culture to remain hidden because it is so easy to say, "Well, at least we are not like them."

Relatedly, Johnson (2005) argues that male privilege in the U.S. has been rendered almost "invisible" because it has become a part of the very fabric and structure of our culture. He writes,

> Because patriarchal culture designates men and masculinity as the standard for people in general, maleness is the taken-for-granted backdrop, making it the last thing to stand out as remarkable. When we refer to humanity as *man*, for example, maleness blends into humanness, and men can enjoy the comfort and security of not being marked as *other*. (p. 155, emphasis in original)

McIntosh (1989) also felt that male privilege was invisible. She argued that male privilege was "unacknowledged," "unconscious," and that people (men in particular) "are taught not to recognize male privilege" within American society (on-line). Interestingly, by reflecting on the ways in which male privilege was systemically constructed and conferred, she began to understand how her own whiteness offered "invisible" privileges. She wrote,

> Thinking through unacknowledged male privilege as a phenomenon, I realized that since hierarchies in our society are interlocking, there was most likely a phenomenon of white privilege which was similarly denied and protected. (on-line)

McIntosh added that as a white person, she "was taught to see racism as individual acts of meanness, not in invisible systems conferring dominance on my group" (on-line). Accordingly, in order to make the "invisible" nature of white privilege visible, she created a list of 26 ways in which white privilege was conferred to her personally. Some of the examples she offered included: "I can be sure that my children will be given curricular material that testify to the existence of their race," "I can do well in a challenging situation without being called a credit to my race," and "I can take a job with an affirmative action

employer without having co-workers on the job suspect that I got it because of race" (on-line). I realize that this discussion of white privilege veers somewhat off of the topic of gender (although I think the two are interrelated) and I appreciate McIntosh's technique for making the invisibility of privilege more visible.

Finding McIntosh's (1989) technique for revealing the system of white privilege both personally and socially illuminating, I decided to give it a try with regard to male privilege. Here goes:

1. I can visit the majority of places of worship in my city and "God" will be addressed in terms of male gender and the sermon will likely be delivered by someone who is male.
2. I can be relatively sure that the next American president, like all others before, will be a male.
3. I can be certain that the founding documents that form the basis of my government were written by men.
4. I can be certain that the majority of lawmakers (senators, representatives, etc.) are men.
5. If I call the police or other law enforcement agencies for assistance, it will likely be a male who responds.
6. I can turn on the TV and find multiple examples in which a man is the leader of a group or a team.
7. I am sure that if I open a history book, the deeds of men (our forefathers) will be represented throughout. (Note: Is there such a thing as a foremother?)

8. I can be aggressive, angry, and competitive without being called a “bitch” or “emotional.” (A female colleague insisted I include this one).
9. I can be relatively sure that the upper administration positions at a majority of schools and universities (as well as in the corporate world) are filled by men.
10. I live in a culture where “all *men* are created equal.”

A female friend and educator also observed that the worst insult for boys/men is to refer to them in feminine terms and/or question their masculinity. Certainly this is not an exhaustive list, but I think it offers a glimpse into the subtly obvious ways in which gender and privilege are structured in the U.S. and also how the feminine is made Other in American society.

For Hyacinth, experiencing the male privilege in Kenya made her feel a greater sense of being American to the extent that she felt men and women had relatively equal rights in America. For McIntosh (1989) exploring the different forms of privilege that exist in the U.S. (male privilege, white privilege, etc.) has had a different effect. She noted that the study of privilege

> has turned out to be an elusive and fugitive subject. The pressure to avoid it is great, for in facing it I must give up believing in democracy. If these things are true, this is not such a free country; one’s life is not what one makes it: many doors open for certain people through no virtues of their own. (online)

While I would not go so far as to say that Americans “must give up believing in democracy,” I think to McIntosh’s point, it does suggest the need to question the meaning of such words as “democracy,” “equality,” and “freedom.”

Identity Shift I: The Self as Cultural Product

According to Hyacinth, her intercultural travels during and after the Peace Corps made her much more aware of how "American" she was. In one example, while travelling through Guatemala she remembered seeing a number of starving dogs in the streets. She thought of this as animal cruelty until she realized that as an American, she had both the time and money to lavish on the care of her pets, unlike Guatemalans. This along with her other intercultural experiences got her to thinking about how culturally-defined her perceptions were. She explained at length,

> We think of ourselves as being unique, we're not. We are a representation of our culture. There are parts of our culture we can reject. I don't have a huge pickup truck. I can choose what political party I want to vote with, for example. I can pick and choose, but I'm still picking and choosing from the smorgasbord that's laid in front of me and it's not the same as the buffet table that a Kenyan encounters or someone from Guatemala encounters. I still am very, very, very much a product of my own culture in ways that I just really would not have accepted. I thought I was much more individually formed, or somehow I was more in charge of who I was, or the values that I have. My values are very American. I feel like everyone should have a free education. I feel men and women have equal rights. I feel the freedom of speech thing.

She also noted how "scary" it was to come to this realization that she was more culturally than individually defined.

In this story, Hyacinth suggests that people are embedded in their culture (or conversely that their culture has been embedded in them) which has implications for the

ways in which people define themselves, their values, their beliefs, and their actions. In essence, she felt that she was a "product" of American culture rather than being "individually formed." In making her case, Hyacinth implies that there are two ways of defining oneself—culturally or individually—even though she indicates that culture has a stronger influence on forming the so-called individual. In making this division, she also appears to cast culture in the role of social structure and individuality in that of human agency. Both notions—structure and agency—are discussed further below.

According to Hays (1994), social structure is often framed as "systematic and patterned," as a form of "constraint," as "static," and as "collective" (p. 58). Social structures are also portrayed as

> primary, hard, and immutable, like the girders of a building...impervious to human agency, to exist apart from, but nevertheless to determine the essential shape of, the strivings and motivated transactions that constitute the experienced surface of social life. (Sewell, 1992, p 2)

That social structures are reproduced by individual actors is evident in the observable patterns of social relations individuals engage in, whether or not those individuals are aware of or wish to participate in this reproduction (Sewell, 1992, p.2). One of the ways cultures work to reproduce social structure is through the values they emphasize. Schwartz (n.d.) notes,

> These value emphases express shared conceptions of what is good and desirable in the culture, the cultural ideals. Cultural value emphases shape and justify individual and group beliefs, actions, and goals. Institutional arrangements and policies, norms, and everyday practices express underlying cultural value emphases in societies. (p. 2)

These perspectives highlight the rigid, patterned, and somewhat hidden nature of social structures, as well as the power of structures to shape—either consciously or unconsciously—the relationships in which individuals and groups participate. This is achieved through the reproduction of value emphases and supported by "policies, norms, and everyday practices." Some of the American value emphases—or structural girders—that Hyacinth began to recognize through encountering different cultures included her beliefs about the proper treatment of animals, her beliefs about certain freedoms (speech, education), and her belief in female and male equality.

In contrast to social structure, human agency implies "freedom," and is "contingent and random," "active," and "individual" (Hays, 1994, p. 57). It has also been linked with "selfhood, motivation, will, purposiveness, intentionality, choice, initiative, freedom, and creativity" (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998, p. 2). While Hays (1994) points out the "privileged status" that "*individual* freedom" holds in American culture, she also notes the "long history of social order" in the U.S.—an expression of which is the "modern privileging of science" (p. 59) as the search for structure in the life-worlds of people. Others question if individual freedom is even possible. Sommers (2007), for example, argues that in order to think of ourselves as individuals with "free will…we would have to be *causa sui*, or "causes of oneself" which she argues would be "*logically* impossible" (p. 61, emphasis in original). She explains,

> We are aware of our desires and our volitions and that they cause our behavior. But in most cases we are ignorant of the causes or motives behind the desires and the volitions themselves. Thus, as reflective and self-conscious creatures, we have developed this view of free will, this idea that certain volitions have no causes or

> hidden motives—that they derive from us, from the self, and only there. We believe we are *causa sui* because we don't know what else could have caused our volitions. (p. 64)

In addition to suggesting the one cannot be the source of their own making, Sommers also observes that it is the "phenomenology of decision-making" within the "immediate moment" that creates the feeling of freedom (p. 62). In other words, society provides choices and the "hidden" motivation behind making those choices in order to create a sense of freedom in the individual. Therefore, in some ways, no matter what one chooses, one is still supporting the structure. As an example of this concept, Hays (1994) points to Willis' research with a group of working-class school boys who used their "agency" to reject school norms by misbehaving in class. On the surface, the boys seemed to be resisting the social order, and yet their behavior served to "reproduce and further solidify both their working-class culture and their own position as members of that subordinate class" (p. 63). This suggests that even in one's attempts to escape the social structure one may actually be serving it.

The above theory and research suggests that despite the American cultural appeal of "individual freedom" as an expression of free will or human agency, Americans—as Hyacinth notes—are both culturally-constructed and culturally-bound. Hyacinth also challenges the notion of individuality as the practice of free choice in that despite being able to "pick and choose" it is one's culture that provides the "smorgasbord" or "buffet" from which the individual chooses. In this regard it would seem that culture not only structures what may be thought of as social "reality," but it also structures individual responses to that reality. A "scary" realization, as Hyacinth argues, indeed.

Re-reading Identity Shift I: The Self as Cultural Process

In re-reading Hyacinth's story, I look at ways in which agency and structure are constructed, relational, and indicative of identity as a *process* related to culture(s) and not entirely a *product* of culture. Arguing from a clinical psychological perspective, Lefcourt (1973) argues that "freedom" (agency) and "control" (structure) are "both illusions" and "inventions of man [people?] to make sense of his [their?] experience" (p. 417). He also points out that "Whether people perceive themselves as free or controlled in their actions is a constructive process and not a 'given'" (p. 417). At the same time, he notes that both "illusions" have consequences and that both illusions can be de/constructed and challenged. He writes that one

> could easily counter the individual's vision of free choice by referring to the effects of public relations, mass media, and man's susceptibility to influence others…On the other hand, clinical psychologists often encounter individuals who believe they are helpless pawns of fate or other persons…[which] is often judged to be inappropriate or obstructive. (p. 417)

This suggests that the boundaries of individual experience are drawn in relation to the interplay of freedom and control and may be constructed differently even among people within the same culture. It also seems that freedom is contingent on the existence of control. Echoing and expanding this view, Sewell (1992) makes the case that "human agency and structure, far from being *opposed*, in fact *presuppose* each other" (p. 4, emphasis in original). Using Gidden's notion of the "duality of structure," he calls attention to how structures have changed throughout history and "how historical agents' thoughts, motives, and intentions are constituted by the cultures and social institutions into which they are born" and yet how these

same agents "improvise or innovate in structurally shaped ways that significantly reconfigure the very structures that constituted them" (p. 5). In other words, cultures have the potential to shape people and people have the potential to shape cultures.

Just as Sewell (1992) encourages the rethinking of structure as more dual and relational, Emirbayer and Mische (1998) argue for a vision of agency as contextual, relational, and situated in time. They "reconceptualize" human agency as

> a temporally embedded process of social engagement, informed by the past (in its habitual aspect), but also oriented toward the future (as a capacity to imagine alternative possibilities) and toward the present (as a capacity to contextualize past habits and future projects within the contingencies of the moment)…As actors move within and among these different unfolding contexts, they switch between (or "recompose") their temporal orientations—as constructed within and by means of those contexts—and thus are capable of changing their relationship to structure. (p. 963-964)

This view recognizes that humans can draw upon multiple temporal modes (past, present, and future) from which to reconstruct meaning in order to shift their understanding of self in relationship to the structure. For example, during periods of stress I have found that time and distance allow me to rethink my initial reactions to situations that caused the stress in the first place. Knowing this, I try (but don't always succeed) to hold off on any definite judgment making. I also think revisiting the past can guide behavior in the present by reclaiming forgotten knowledge or by recognizing and breaking with tradition in order to move in a new direction. Likewise, envisioning the future can guide decision-making in the present. One method that encourages teachers to explore this notion of temporality in their own lives and

which holds possibilities for teacher agency is Bill Pinar's (1975) method of currerre. For this method, Pinar suggests that when teacher's carefully examine their biographical past, present, and (imagined) future and analyze the relationship between the three, teachers may take on a "new vantage point" (p. 2) from which to view their present circumstances in a manner that encourages them to "move on, more learned, more evolved than before" (p. 15). Taken together, the preceding theorists offer a messier and more complicated view of the relationship between agency and structure—a relationship shaped by human perception, human inter/action, temporality, and context. They also suggest that humans play a role in the process of building the structures that shape them and likewise that they have the power to reconfigure those structures in turn.

Hyacinth's point that we are "represenations" and "products" of our culture and can only "pick and choose" from the "smorgasbord" that our culture provides us implies that as members of one culture, one cannot eat at other tables. Adler (2002) disagrees. He argues that the technologies associated with globalization now make it possible for the interconnection and blending of cultural elements. He also notes that "A new type of person whose orientation and view of the world…is developing from the complex of social, political, economic, and educational interactions of our time" which he refers to as the "international," "transcultural," "multicultural," or "intercultural" individual" (on-line). He explains,

> What is new about this person, and unique to our time, is a fundamental change in the structure and process of identity. The identity of the "multicultural," far from being frozen in social character, is more fluid and mobile, more susceptible to change, more open to variation. It is an identity based not on "belongingness"

> which implies either owning or being owned by culture, but on a style of self-consciousness that is capable of negotiating ever new formations of reality…he or she is neither totally apart from his or her culture; instead, he or she lives on the boundary. To live on the edge of one's thinking, one's culture, or one's ego…is to live with tension and movement. (on-line)

Tillich (In Adler, 2002), called this place of tension and movement a "third area beyond the bounded territories, an area where one can stand for a time without being enclosed in something tightly bounded" (on-line). Using Hyacinth's food metaphor, Adler's and Tillich's perspectives suggest that one can eat from a global buffet where sharing and mixing is possible—that one "negotiates" among and draws sustenance from different cultural elements both within and outside of those provided by one's home culture. By living at the boundaries of cultures and drawing on one (or more) other cultures, the concept of what one's "culture" is, becomes enlarged.

In reflecting on these notions of structure and agency as relational, contextual, and temporal, and the possibility of creating a "third area" between cultures, I note an example of one "third area" that Hyacinth and her husband Richard seemed to create and recreate every evening at their dining table. Hyacinth explained to me that practically every night for the past 25 years since returning from the Peace Corps, she and Richard eat their dinner by candlelight just as they ate by firelight during their time in Kenya. This simple habitual act connected them with Kenya across distance, across time, through past, present, and future, and created a space that was neither wholly Kenyan nor wholly American. This suggests that beneath the placid waters of cultural conformity, currents of uniqueness and individuality are at play.

Identity Shift II: Interweaving as Cultural Practice

Something profound that Hyacinth said she "learned" from her "international" experiences, was how to integrate others into her life. In this regard, she viewed American culture as more "formal" whereas Kenyan and Mexican cultures offered more "openness." In explaining the cultural differences in relating to people, Hyacinth talked about her Mexican neighbor in the border town where she and Richard lived after their Peace Corps service ended. Hyacinth began,

> she'd be making enchiladas, putting them on my plate, mopping, sweeping, taking care of children, people coming, people going, but I was welcome there and she wanted me to eat with her, and she wanted to talk with me, but not just me, anyone, anyone who was there; her family, her friends, her neighbors. There was an openness there. It was the same in Kenya. It's like sit at my table in my kitchen and I'm going to mop, okay. Life goes on. I felt so comfortable with that. It's like you're not stopping your life because I'm here. Your life continues and I'm just woven into the fabric of your life, but I'm not an inconvenience…There was something really affirming about that. I didn't stand out, nobody necessarily spoke to me in English…they didn't speak English anyway, but nobody made any grand effort on my behalf… It wasn't about language, it was just being woven into the fabric of somebody else's life.

In contrast, she said that in the U.S.,

> we're so formal. We're busy. You call for invitations. American culture is different. I would never think I could say hey I'm lonely, I don't want to eat by myself tonight, I'll go see what my neighbors are having. That would be the farthest thing from my

> mind. You call a week in advance. It just would never happen. That's not an American thing that we do. It's different, we're busy. I'm not even home. Nobody could come to my house at dinner time and expect to find me here, I'm probably somewhere else. I'm at yoga. I'm here, I'm there.

For Hyacinth, her Mexican neighbor's and her Kenyan friends' openness and ability to integrate others into their everyday existence without "interfering" with the work that needed to be done was so surprising because it was "radically different" from the way she was raised. Hyacinth noted that when she was growing up, her family's "home really wasn't open to other people, it just was not. It was very formal and very nicely done, and very graciously done, but mainly for ourselves." Despite her more formal upbringing, Hyacinth "appreciated" how good she felt in the intercultural contexts she experienced and therefore organized her own life with a certain sense of openness and informality when possible.

I also noticed this sense of openness and interconnectedness in the Cameroonian village where I lived during the Peace Corps. It seemed that no invitation was ever needed and people were not only welcomed to visit and/or receive others, this was an expectation. I also recall getting scolded during my first year by my principal for not attending a party at his house held in honor of his wife who had won some type of government education award. I had heard that she had received an award, but I hadn't received an invitation to any party and I barely knew her. How was I supposed to know I was required to attend a party? I was also politely scolded a few times when there would be impromptu meetings held after school that I missed. Nobody invited me to the meetings so I didn't show up. I often asked my Cameroonian teacher counterparts, "How did you know there was going to be an

unscheduled meeting?" Their reply, "We just knew." They were certainly interwoven in each other's lives, but I, on the other hand, felt like a stray thread.

Hyacinth's use of the metaphor of "interweaving" gives the sense that Mexican and Kenyan social networks were "joint, interactive" (Wilce, 2004, p. 3), "unified complex system[s]" (McDaniel, 2010, p. 7), and "relational" in the way that "each individual strand interacts with others to form an integrated whole" (Meltzoff, 1994, p. 15). On the other hand, she described American culture in terms of formality, busy-ness, and being self-occupied. These descriptions seem to mirror the ways in which the "self" is understood from different cultural perspectives. While Western self-construal has been described as "individualist, independent, autonomous, agentic, and separate," the self in other cultures has been described as "collectivist, interdependent, ensemble, communal, and relational" (Kashima, et al. 1995, p. 925). Triandis (1989) uses the terms "ideocentric" (self-centered) and "allocentric" (other-related) to characterize the people in those cultures respectively. He also referred to an earlier study he helped conduct in which "ideocentrics" reported that "they are concerned with achievement, but are lonely, whereas the allocentrics report low alienation and receiving much social support" (p. 509). In the U.S., Hyacinth indicated that if she were "lonely" or "hungry," visiting her neighbors "would be the farthest thing from [her] mind" and that she would likely be occupied with other pursuits such as yoga during mealtimes anyway. On the other hand, she expressed appreciation for the system of interweaving employed in Mexican and Kenyan homes in that she felt "welcome," "so comfortable," "not an inconvenience," and the experience was "really affirming." These reflections seemed to point to a difference in social interaction with Mexican and Kenyan cultures highlighting "allocentric" values and the U.S. as more "ideocentric."

Re-reading Identity Shift II: Interweaving as Gendered Practice

As I re-read Hyacinth's story, I began to notice how the person who was doing the mopping up, the sweeping, the cooking, the taking care of children and entertaining a seemingly steady stream of visitors was ostensibly a woman. In addition, I began to recognize the similar roles that women in my village performed in Cameroon, as well as the women in my own family spread across Arkansas and Oklahoma. I also recalled that it was Hyacinth who took care of and connected various individuals and groups throughout out time together. In their study comparing cultural and gender differences regarding dimensions of individualism, relatedness, and collectivism, Kashima, et al. (1995) found that gender was a better predictor of "relatedness" than the collectivism/individualism construct used to label various cultures, with women across 5 cultures largely reporting greater degrees of relatedness than the men across those same cultures. This suggests that gender and not necessarily national culture is the basis for the notion of the relational self. Building on the writings of Gilligan and Miller, Surrey (1985) asserts that

> Our conception of the self-in-relation involves the recognition that, for women, the primary experience of self is relational; that is, the self is organized and developed in the context of important relationships…[which] makes an important shift in emphasis from separation to relationship as the basis for self-experience and development. (p. 2)

Hyacinth seemed to appreciate the relatedness that the women in the other cultures displayed and she expressed feeling comfortable and connected though not the center of attention. She also didn't try to claim her individuality and was happy that she "didn't stand out." In

addition, she tried to implement the other women's practices and approaches to social relationships whenever possible in her own home in the United States.

Returning to Hyacinth's metaphor, the practice of "interweaving" appears to rest squarely on the shoulders of women. For Hyacinth, the role of weaver seemed to be an empowering one. According to Shoichet (2007), the classical writers Homer and Ovid used the weaving metaphor to "challenge the conventional idea of womanly virtue in the classical world" and "recast women in a role that emphasizes their social influence rather than their deference to authority" (p. 23). She writes,

> both poets…invert the weaving metaphor, using an activity traditionally emblematic of feminine virtues (such as modesty, chastity, and obedience) to symbolize female resistance to the mores of a social patriarchy. (p. 24)

For example, Homer told the story of the wealthy and newly widowed woman, Penelope, who was socially expected to remarry soon after her husband's death. Instead, Penelope used the excuse of weaving her husband's death shroud as a respectable way of staving off remarriage. Penelope's technique was to unravel everything at night what she had woven during the day so that the shroud would never be completed. In other examples, "The weaver records events *as she wishes to record them,* wielding power not only over which information is told, but how it is told" (Shoichet, 2007, p. 25, emphasis in original). This implies that the act of interweaving, the ability to connect with and care for others out of choice, can be an expression of women's power.

Reverse Culture Shock I: Sameness as Competition and the U.S. as Un/Real

For Hyacinth, returning to the United States involved "so many aspects of life" such as meeting Richard's family and vice versa, deciding on where to live, and finding jobs that "there wasn't really a lot of time to reflect deeply on reverse culture shock." She explained that noticing cultural differences and reflecting on them "lasted a long time…really in the years." One thing that she did notice immediately, much like other volunteers, was the "overwhelming" variety of goods at the grocery store, especially with regard to cereal which had its own dedicated aisle with what seemed like hundreds of choices, whereas in Kenya there was only one choice of cereal. But it was another topic that Hyacinth discussed—"banter," or "small-talk," and its relationship to the notions of sameness and difference that I found most interesting.

Hyacinth felt that sometimes she wanted to have conversations with a little more substance but that in the U.S. "with people you don't know very much, the kind of conversations that people have can be draining" and she didn't like the "tension that it required." She explained that most conversations where "superficial" or "banal" and tended to leave her feeling "intimidated" or "inferior" because she didn't play some of the social "games" as well as others or they might make her feel "redundant" or bored if the person was too similar to herself. She added, "That kind of banter, that kind of detail doesn't seem interesting to me and maybe if you talk to an international person, their details may be equally as banal and mundane, but they're different from mine, so they seem more interesting." She also noted that "ultimately it has something to do with not feeling completely at ease with your own culture" or finding your own culture "boring."

When I pointed out to Hyacinth that there must have been boring conversations in Kenya, she recalled going to parties in Kenya where much of the talk centered on farming which tended to be "mundane," repetitive, and lacking in "variation." But she also pointed out a difference. She argued that the seemingly routine discussions about farming in Kenya,

> are significant conversations to have because it means my family is living, my animals will live, my children will live, or they won't. It's right there. It's what life is about… It's important.

Conversely, she believed that in the U.S., "So much of our world really is directly related to nothing" and it was difficult to be interested in anything for very long that didn't seem "important."

For Hyacinth, the experience of being different in other cultures was also a means for feeling "special." She first experienced this when she was an exchange student in Australia just after she completed high school and also later in Kenya with the Peace Corps. She explained,

> When I was in Australia…I didn't feel awkward where I had in the South growing up… because I was special, because I was an international student. So, people had something to talk to me about, so there was kind of this specialness. So that kind of helped me not feel quite so shy, not so awkward. Then I had the Kenyan experience, again similar, you're special because you're from the United States, you have something to talk to people about…So there's this thing about being special, but also there's an awkwardness…You know, you're vulnerable, so people help you. It's like, I don't know how to get around in the market, so people help you get around in the market.

Accordingly, it seemed that for Hyacinth, difference could stimulate intercultural interest and connection in ways that sameness could not.

As a shy and awkward child growing up in a small, nearly all-white town in Oklahoma, I could certainly relate to Hyacinth's story. The social system I grew in appeared to work to insure that everybody did the same things, liked the same things, and thought about things in the same way. It seemed boring and limiting to me because once one mastered life in a small town (which didn't take too long), there really wasn't much left to learn. It was also painful to the extent that I was different in ways that system couldn't seem to tolerate. Yet travelling among other cultures seemed interesting and thought-provoking and I found acceptance and sometimes appreciation for my differences. I did find it odd though that living in rural Cameroon seemed more tolerable than living in rural Oklahoma. People talked about basically the same issues—religion, politics, each other's daily happenings, sports (in Cameroon, mainly during World Cup season), food, etc. and, like Hyacinth, some of those conversations that I likely would have found boring back home seemed more interesting by comparison. Hyacinth's story made me reflect on why some people find sameness comforting while others draw strength from difference and diversity.

In the beginning of the story, Hyacinth related sameness with conversation that could be "draining," required "tension," and left Hyacinth feeling "inferior." She also said she didn't play social "games" as well as other Americans. In looking more closely at the game metaphor, on one level, playing games can be fun and exciting, but on another level, they can be tense and draining especially if one doesn't appreciate competition. Most games have winners and losers and losing may give one feelings of inferiority. Although Hyacinth suggested that vulnerability in other cultures could provide openings for connection,

vulnerability under competitive conditions might feel threatening instead of bonding. Games also have rules that must be understood and followed by all the players. When all the players look and sound alike, it is easier to lose the sense of individuality that is otherwise highlighted through the contrast of differences. Differences, in a sense, open a door to uniqueness and because the rules of the game are not shared between culturally dissimilar players, there exists the possibility of reshaping the rules to fit the needs of players. To me it seems that the feelings of competition and not being able to play the game as well as others made Hyacinth feel like an outsider in American culture and allowed her to seek connections with others outside American culture.

On the subject of difference, one difference that Hyacinth pointed out was that in the U.S., "So much of our world really is directly related to nothing" whereas the Kenyan world was directly tied to nature, life, death, and reality (a similar sentiment was expressed by Ryder who also taught in Kenya though at a different time). Her view seems to equate survival and closeness to nature with reality, whereas distance to nature and social construction seemed tied to the unreal. Yet, while Hyacinth lived among Kenyan farmers who worked closely with nature and their survival was greatly affected by climactic change, illness, etc., the Kenyan social practices Hyacinth described in other sections in relation to male privilege, pedagogy, religious beliefs, political beliefs, and interpersonal interactions were all social constructions that weren't tied to a "natural" reality. Hyacinth also talked about the Kenyan shift away from farming toward a more western-style economy. To this extent, Kenyan culture seems to be a mix of both the "real" and "unreal" (as described by Hyacinth) and in a process of change.

Expressing a Buddhist “middle way” perspective of reality and non-reality, Cheng (2001) writes of the fallacy of “subscribing to the appearance of things in change as real” as well as “holding things as absolutely unreal or empty” and offers that “We simply have to stay unattached and non-clinging” (p. 449). This suggests a view of the world as constantly changing, the impossibility of making a firm distinction between the real and unreal, and the need to let go of such distinctions altogether. I think this may be challenging from a western perspective which is founded on the “notion that any given thing either is or is not. It exists or it does not exist” and by extension is real or it isn’t (Olson, 2001, p. 116). Yet, one could argue that western culture is constantly changing as well and its complete story has not yet been written.

Re-reading Reverse Culture I: Conceptualizing Sameness and Difference

In re-reading Hyacinth’s story, I looked more closely at sameness and difference at a conceptual level. In her story, Hyacinth constructed sameness in terms of boredom, redundancy, and discomfort. Difference, on the other hand was more interesting and made Hyacinth feel special. Speaking to the notion of sameness and difference, Olson (2001) writes that,

> The duality of sameness and difference is an underlying principle of classification as we construct and practice it in Western culture. We try to group similar things together and separate them from things that are different. This principle is taught at an early age. In children's books and television shows, we learn to identify "which of these things is not like the other"…Once we learn to view the world in this manner, classification that groups similar things together seems to be an almost natural or

> innate way of organizing things. Indeed, for those of us who have been acculturated to identify sameness and difference, we find classification an extremely useful arrangement. (p. 115)

Certainly within Western cultures the same/different construct has been used to explore issues related to race, gender, sexual orientation, physical ability, pedagogical style and various combinations of these categories (Harris, 2000; Nagel, 2002; Benjamin, 2002; Tucker, 2003; Cammissa & Reingold, 2004; Epstein, 2004; Mackie, 2001; Clarke, 2002; Woodhams & Danielli, 2000; Broady, 2004). Olson (2001) notes though that there is a problem in classifying things (and people) as the same or different in that they may be the same in some ways and different in others. Additionally, Young (1995) argues that as cultures begin to intermingle they take on a greater sense of "hybridity" and that this hybridity "makes difference into sameness, and sameness into difference, but in a way that makes the same no longer the same, the different no longer simply different" (p. 25). For Benjamin (2002), this calls for "straddling the space between the opposites" of sameness and difference in ways that do not value one side while deprecating the other (p. 182). This research implies that people are a mix of sameness(es) and difference(s) at both individual and cultural levels which in turn seem to defy simple categories of different/same.

In Hyacinth's story, she seemed to associate positive experiences with difference and negative experiences with sameness, yet although Hyacinth was similar to other middle class American White women in some respects, she was different in other ways and it was this difference that was discomforting. Additionally, even though Hyacinth was outwardly different from the Kenyans and Mexicans she knew, it is possible she shared similar interests with them despite being from different cultures—including a desire for intercultural

connection. This implies that judgments of sameness/difference may be superficial or related to associated positive or negative experiences and that one *constructs* and *chooses* (Olssen, 1996) the differences and similarities one wishes to focus on in the process of interaction and meaning-making. Hyacinth even hinted at this herself when she noted that her views on sameness and difference may be related to not being completely satisfied in her own culture. In other words, different and same may be convenient categorizations for other types of associations that may have nothing to do with either category.

Pedagogy I: Teacher as Ambassador and Bridge

In describing the teacher/student relationships in Kenya, Hyacinth generally felt that there was a "formality," "coldness" and a "distancing" that "interfered with intimacy in teacher/student relationships." Conversely, she described the teacher/student relationship in the United States as more "relaxed, happy, jovial," "warm," "intimate," and more balanced with regard to teacher/student closeness and discipline. She felt teacher/student closeness "enhanced" teaching rather than distracted from it because students "want to please someone who cares about them." Of her Kenyan students, Hyacinth lamented that "even after two and a half years I didn't feel that I knew my students well. I certainly didn't know what they were thinking. I didn't know the issues of their hearts. They respected me. We had a pleasant relationship, but not a close relationship." She added that within such a formal relationship, the teacher couldn't "accomplish the same things" as she could in a close relationship.

Two factors that seemed to add to teacher/student distancing in Kenya were student punishment and testing. Hyacinth recalled that students who were late to school were required to lie on the ground and have their feet beaten and that at other times they would be

subjected to "very brutal beatings" as a form of punishment. As a teacher she was expected to "beat" the students as well and this made Hyacinth "very uncomfortable." On one occasion, she remembered that her head mistress insisted she "strike a student with a stick" for either being disrespectful or not completing homework, and that if she didn't she would "never be taken seriously and all teachers do that here, and it's really essential that you do." In that instance, she gave the student a very light "tap" on the shoulder but she preferred to use another form of punishment, having students kneel for a class period, because even though it may be humiliating it "wasn't violent." She argued, "I could use that without feeling guilty about it, but those kinds of things I felt like fostered this real extreme respect and the real extreme respect interfered with intimacy in teacher/student relationships."

Another thing that seemed to distance teachers and students was testing. Hyacinth explained that students were focused on passing their National Exams in the hopes of going to university, either in Kenya or the United States. Accordingly,

> Students did not want you to waste their time. They wanted solid, consistent, test driven instruction. They wanted to pass a test and if you can help them do that, that was good…any kind of relationship building…that was frivolous…was outside their focus…They were very focused, because their future was passing that test and in terms of being inculcated, that was part of their reality and you didn't get in the way of that.

Hyacinth also pointed out that even though the state where she was currently teaching, like most states in the U.S., was "very, very, very test driven," the focus that Kenyan students had on passing their exams was much greater by comparison. She noted too that in Kenya, even if a teacher was sick and no adult was present in the classroom "students continued with an

assignment on their own without a substitute" and class would be taught by "two student leaders, a boy and a girl."

Hyacinth also talked about the different roles she performed as a teacher depending on the context. While she conceptualized her teaching role as an "ambassador" in Kenya, she saw herself as making and being a "bridge" for students in the United States. In Kenya, she noted that some of the challenges she faced in teaching were that "the subtleties and nuances of their system were unfamiliar" to her. Along these lines she wasn't sure that her teaching had made a difference in the lives of her Kenyan students. She said, "I don't think that my teaching was somehow magic or they got something so different from me than they could have gotten from a regular Kenyan teacher. Kenyan teachers were very good, *very good*, and they understood the system so well." Instead, she felt her role to be that of "ambassador" for the "United States" and perhaps "Western culture." She explained, "People could meet someone who was real and pleasant and living a life similar to the lives that they were living." In this role, Hyacinth did feel she made a difference. She concluded, "I think it was a good experience for us all. It was broadening for them in a way, and for the teachers to have contact with someone from someplace else in the way those things are broadening for us all."

In enacting her role as ambassador, Hyacinth felt it was important to match the Kenyan pedagogical style while she was there as closely as possible. When I asked if she ever "challenged" the system by teaching in a manner that was more comfortable for her, she said that she didn't. She reasoned,

> I was there to move along with the culture that I found there, and…I stood out so much being White and being American and being Western. I didn't want to be any weirder than I was. I tried diligently to work within their system and what they knew

> and what they expected and they were up against something really different, and that was passing the [national exam] and their life and their future did rest on that.

In short, even though she didn't always feel comfortable with the Kenyan teaching system, she felt it was in both her and her students' best interest to adopt Kenyan pedagogical practices as closely as possible.

In the United States, on the other hand she saw her teaching role as that of "bridge." She wrote the following passage as a final reflection on her pedagogy and interestingly, she wrote it in the form of a prayer with an "Amen" added at the end. She wrote,

> I probably did not do anything that changed the world while I was in Kenya with the Peace Corps. I have probably done lots of tiny things that changed the world in small ways since I have been back. I think having your teacher year after year say, "I love Africa and its people. Let me tell you why" has been eye opening for students. I have been able to share a lot of intimate details about the place and its people and animals. Also, I think I have been able to welcome Africans from all over the continent to our small [sic] community because of a connection I had a long time ago. I can make a bridge. Also, I have been a bridge for African students. I have been able to share an enthusiasm for a place that often gets a lot of sad and true press...bring another side. Of course, all PC volunteers do this. We can't help it. But it makes a difference… Africa has so much beauty and there are so many incredible cultural aspects. It is good to instill respect and appreciation when possible. Maybe it helps break down stereotypes or maybe it will peak someone's interest in the place…here I am talking to you about an incredible experience that touched my life deeply 25 years later. So in

> the end, we do (as a people) at times, influence each other. So, let it be in positive ways. Amen

For me, Hyacinth's articulation of her teaching role as that of making and being a bridge, as well as her brief reflection on her Peace Corps experience overall, seemed a touching tribute to Peace Corps volunteers everywhere. She expressed so easily what I have felt about my Peace Corps service but could not put into words.

Overall, Hyacinth's discussion of her pedagogy spoke to the notion of distance and closeness in the teacher/student relationship. While she felt that the teacher/student relationship was enacted through distancing in Kenya, she indicated that teacher/student relationships in the U.S. were indicative of closeness and warmth. The metaphors she used for her teaching role in both Kenya and the U.S.—"ambassador" and "bridge" respectively—emphasized her role in connecting the two cultures.

Beginning with the "ambassador" metaphor, Murphy (n.d.) describes the ambassador role as follows:

> When foreign ambassadors arrive in a new country, they do not start telling people what to do. They look, listen, and learn…Good ambassadors are eager and humble learners who approach the country's inhabitants as essential teachers of key cultural beliefs and practices…Like good ambassadors, effective practitioners fit their approach to the people instead of trying to fit the people to their approach. (p. 211)

Hyacinth's story seems to reflect the qualities of a "good" ambassador as described above. She recognized that there were "subtleties" and "nuances" within Kenyan culture that she did not understand. She deferred to the other Kenyan teachers who were "*very good*" and "understood the system so well." She also decided she "was there to move along with the

culture" and "tried diligently to work within their system and what they knew and what they expected" rather than try to challenge or change the system. In short, she adapted to the Kenyan system rather than expect it to adapt to her.

In reflecting on the bridge metaphor, I think the notion of connection stands out most clearly. A student-teacher participant in Bullough and Stokes' (1994) research on teaching metaphors, also used the teaching metaphor. She noted that,

> Although no single word can sum up what I want to be, the word "bridge" covers part of it. I want to be able to create a bridge between the content and the lives of the students. I want some aspect of the class to personally touch and engage each student.

This student-teacher's desire to bridge the content and student lives in a personally touching way reminds me of Hyacinth's comment that

> having your teacher year after year say, "I love Africa and its people. Let me tell you why" has been eye opening for students. I have been able to share a lot of intimate details about the place and its people and animals.

Hyacinth seems to be utilizing her close relationship with students to make a bridge to Africa so they may see Africa from a different yet familiar perspective. In this sense, she is connecting curriculum with both their lives and hers.

However, Aoki (1991) questions a purely instrumental focus on the bridge metaphor. He offers that "Bridges…are not mere paths for human transit; nor are they mere routes for commerce or trade. They are dwelling places for people" which invite "educators to transcend instrumentalism to understand what it means to dwell together humanly" (p. 439). Aoki's bridge bids one not to move across but to linger and to live together in spaces

between cultures. During the weekend I spent interviewing Hyacinth, I watched as she invited others to share time and space together in humanly gratifying ways. She was our connection; the bridge that brought us all together while she simultaneously created a space for us to dwell humanly and happily together.

Re-reading Pedagogy I: The Ambassador as Distance and the Bridge as Separation

I must admit, I was surprised to hear that Hyacinth did not share a close relationship with her students in Kenya. During the weekend that I spent interviewing and accompanying Hyacinth through her daily activities, she seemed to be so close and connected with everybody we encountered. In contrast to Hyacinth's experience, I often felt closest to my Cameroonian students despite the formality, the importance placed on testing, and the corporeal punishment that also punctuated the Cameroonian school system. I was so close to the students that the Cameroonian teachers would sometimes sarcastically tease me by referring to the students as my "friends." They acted as if I broke the rules by crossing the student/teacher divide. But I didn't really know the rules or what students thought or expected of me, so I asked them. In each class, the students and I discussed what they expected of me and I shared what I expected of them. Their first request was always, without fail: "Do not beat the students!" which I never did. Whenever I was asked to do something I didn't want to do (such as teach a class of 125 students in the heat of the late afternoon for a second term), I claimed my volunteer privilege and I flatly refused.

The students and I also often shared confidences and jokes. The 8th graders had science class before mine and wanted to know ALL of the body parts in English, along with their functions, to which I obliged without batting an eye. I also assisted when the school

accountant, a Cameroonian man, would come to my class to collect tuition from a student but couldn't tell one student from another in my classroom of 60 plus students, and I, knowing that the student was sitting in my class but not able to pay just yet, would tell the accountant that the student wasn't in class that day. Sometimes I even loaned students the money they needed to bribe school officials so that they could stay in school and the students always paid me back. On the other hand, I would also return students to their classes when they tried to skip school and go to the village market on Thursdays since they had to walk along the same route I took to school. When I was leaving Cameroon, one of the 8th graders whose English was fairly well-developed, came to me and said "We know that you love us!" and I thought, "How did they know?"—I never told them.

I think it is interesting that Hyacinth saw her role in Kenya as that of "ambassador" which may have actually added to the sense of distancing from students. In Angel's (2004) research on metaphors for educational leaders, the role of 'ambassador" was described in terms of "dispassionate aloofness" (p. 14). Further, in a study of the metaphors generated by Malaysian university students regarding the roles of their language teachers, Nikitina & Furuoka (2008) noted that one student's use of the "ambassador" metaphor indicated a "greater degree of "power distance" in the teacher-student relationship" (p. 202) in that an "ambassador is a person of an elevated position…coming from a different country and culture" (p. 198). It is not clear from Hyacinth's story if being an ambassador was a guiding metaphor for her teaching or was reflective of the distancing from students she felt as a teacher in Kenya. Either way, the term "ambassador" could also be seen as one of distancing in addition to closeness or connection.

Likewise, as I think about the metaphor of teacher as bridge, I think about how despite connecting distant shores, bridges may also work to maintain the separation or at the very least emphasize the separateness of things rather than the closeness. Strack (n.d.) writes that "Bridges can metaphorically link opposing ideologies…or accentuate perceived differences" (p.1). But while Hyacinth seemed to see teacher/student distance as negative, other teachers note the importance of distance as a form of self-preservation. For example, one teacher noted,

> I put emotion into everything I do during the day. You leave kind of drained at the end…I used to come home and sob and be so upset, and I've had to distance myself. I just had to because I had to protect myself. (Aultman, Williams-Johnson, & Schutz, 2009, p. 641)

Accordingly, Aultman, Williams-Johnson, and Schutz (2009) suggest that not having some distance "may lead to burnout or neglect of other important areas of teacher's life" (p. 642). It would seem, paradoxically then, that the very conditions that demand closeness also require a simultaneous distancing in order to maintain a teacher's connection to self.

In addition, while Haycinth felt her distance from her Kenyan students was limiting and that the closeness she felt with her students in the U.S. allowed her to accomplish more, Hargreaves (2001) notes that there is "no ideal or optimal closeness or distance between teachers and others that transcends all cultures" (p. 1061). For his study, Hargreaves interviewed a mixed group of 53 Canadian elementary and secondary teachers and identified five "distances" that teachers must negotiate when they and their students come from different cultural backgrounds. These included sociocultural distance (which "leads teachers to stereotype and be stereotyped"), moral distance (linked to emotional expression and

goals), professional distance (related to teacher authority), physical distance (tied to interaction or the lack thereof with students' families), and political distance ("bound up with notions of power and powerlessness") (p. 1062-1072). This work appears to suggest that the efficacy of any teaching approach is related to the social and cultural context as well as the relationships between the people within that context. Further, the same teacher beliefs and techniques may not be transferable from context to context. It also implies that the teacher must find her or his own way to bridge the distances.

CHAPTER VIII

HARMONIES, CONTRASTS, & COMBINATIONS

> Our days are a kaleidoscope. Every instant a change takes place in the contents. New harmonies, new contrasts, new combinations of every sort….The most familiar people stand each moment in some new relation to each other, to their work, to surrounding objects. The most tranquil house, with the most serene inhabitants, living upon the utmost regularity of system, is yet exemplifying infinite diversities. (Henry Ward Beecher, 1869, online)

> Life is like an ever-shifting kaleidoscope - a slight change, and all patterns alter. (Sharon Salzberg, n.d., online)

The stories of RPCV educators offer a kaleidoscope of images, set into continuous motion through experiences of culture shock and reverse culture shock. Their stories are multi-faceted and shed colorful light on global and local teaching contexts. The patterns they create offer insights into what it means to live and teach interculturally both abroad and at home. Using Narrative Inquiry as my research method, I drew out RPCV educators' stories related to four broad areas: culture shock, reverse culture shock, identity shift, and pedagogy. Four RPCV educators participated in the study and five stories were presented for each

participant. Further, each of the stories was analyzed in two ways using a poststructural hermeneutic framework. I first offered an interpretive reading of each of the RPCV educators' stories which supported each participant's point of view. This was followed by a second reading of each story in which I shifted the focus of my analysis to other meanings within each story. By shifting the kaleidoscope, the patterns of each story were altered revealing a diversity of meanings beneath the "regularity" of each story's surface.

Through their stories, the participants expressed the ways in which they navigated intercultural differences and conceptualized their work as educators. For this section, I begin by drawing out six themes relevant to intercultural understanding and the internationalization of curriculum studies as they bring some of the issues that frame intercultural and pedagogical relationships worldwide into clearer focus. These include themes connected to gender, power relationships, temporality, metaphor, home, and traces. Second, I offer a review of the research questions in light of participants' experiences. And third, I consider some of the implications of the study, followed by the limitations of the study, and directions for future research. In each of these sections, I consider some of the *harmonies* or the ways in which the participants' lenses seem to align and convey a similar perspective, the *contrasts* where the participants' perspectives diverge and indicate differences, and the *combinations* where bringing the differing lenses together helps to create new meanings within each of the themes.

Findings

Gender

All of the participants made references to gender and alluded to gender-based inequalities. According to Cole (2009), "In almost every culture, 'being' 'male' or 'female', however that might be interpreted, is used to 'define' people…[in ways that] inevitably involve inequalities" (p. 3). Likewise, each of the participants spoke of gender inequalities that affected themselves or others, both overseas and in the United States. For instance, in his struggles to become a more caring teacher in the U.S., Joe argued that although female teachers could demonstrate closeness with students, male teachers had to be careful and "watch that line." For her part, Harley believed she had to work harder than others because she was a woman and Asian. This was a powerful belief that was shared and passed down from Harley's mother. Ryder also suggested that "despite what people say, men and women are treated differently" and he hinted that women gained unfair protection from the social system which required men to demonstrate restraint or politeness when discussing certain topics with women. And lastly, Hyacinth pointed out the ways in which male privilege was constructed in Kenyan culture and I re-read her story by thinking about the ways in which male privilege was structured in American culture.

Further, Chodorow (1974) proposed that "in any given society, feminine personality comes to define itself in relation and connection to other people more than the masculine personality does" (p. 44). She felt that these differences were related to the socializing processes involving gender identity development through which boys develop a masculine identity as a "denial of attachment or relationship" and the "devaluation of femininity on both

psychological and cultural levels" (p. 51) whereas girls were expected to accept a caring and nurturing role. The image Chodorow (1974) created was that men's identity was marked by rejection of emotional attachment which was seen as an expression of the maternal or feminine role. Women's identity, on the other hand, was defined more by acceptance of the maternal role and relation to others. There was some evidence of these gendered differences not only in the stories that participants told, but also in the way that I, as researcher, was hosted by each of the participants in their town or city. With the male participants, who were both single at the time, the interview experience was centered upon them somewhat exclusively. On the other hand, both of the female participants planned gatherings in my "honor" and introduced to me to other connections (students, educators, friends, church members, significant others, etc.) that were important in their lives.

Additionally, both men talked about growing up within largely male households with brothers—in Ryder's case, his mother left the home when he was a young child and Joe said that he grew up with a "hardcore" group of guys and that caring was not a part of his early life. Harley and Hyacinth, on the other hand, shared stories about their mothers or talked about the ways in which their mothers influenced their perspectives. I also noted gendered differences in Hyacinth's and Joe's perspectives on vulnerability related to their intercultural experiences. Miller wrote that in western cultures, "men are encouraged to dread, abhor or deny feeling weak or helpless, whereas women are encouraged to cultivate this state of being" (In Jordan, 2008, p. 193). For Hyacinth, being vulnerable was a way to enlist help from others, but for Joe, being vulnerable was described as a horrible state of helplessness.

The male RPCV educators' envy of women's social position and their feelings of anger, powerlessness, and/or vulnerability, could be considered, as Johnson (2007) points

out, a paradox of patriarchal power and tied to issues of control. Johnson notes especially that within patriarchal societies, maintaining self-control and controlling others as objects is considered a hallmark of a "real man" and signifies male privilege (p. 201). Yet consequently, when men are not in control they can begin to feel powerless, vulnerable, and emotionally disconnected from others and themselves (p. 202). Since intercultural engagement, culture shock, and reverse culture shock can heighten the feelings of being out of control and challenge socially-constructed masculinity, intercultural interaction may lead men to greater attempts at self-control, attempts to control others, emotional and social withdrawal, expressing feelings of powerlessness and anger, and focusing on women's perceived social power. It may also give men a new awareness and allow them to rethink issues regarding their interpersonal, pedagogical, and social relationships, as was the case with the male participants in this study who reconsidered their relationships to others to differing degrees. Women also play a role in maintaining this socially-engineered gender boundary and are expected "go along with male privilege, to prop up men's egos, and to compensate men for what male privilege costs them as human beings" (p. 200). In other words, women are expected to take on the role of emotional support and serve as emotional gatekeepers. Yet, they may or may not conform to societal expectations. Since both men and women are disenfranchised in the process and both have a vested interest in resisting systems of control, I would argue that addressing gender issues both intra- and inter- culturally requires both men and women who offer a variety of cultural perspectives to work together if any challenge to the patriarchal system(s) of control is to be meaningful. This does not mean that these challenges will take the same form, only that their needs to be broad input from people with differing points of view for deeper and more complex understanding.

Power Relationships

Each of the participants also negotiated issues of power within their stories. From a Foucauldian perspective, "power is productive; it is dispersed throughout the social system, and it is intimately related to knowledge. It is productive because it is not only repressive but also creates new knowledge (which may also liberate)" (Peters, 2005, p. 437). While I doubt that there can be a complete liberation from the social structures in which we co-operate, there seemed to be liberating aspects in the participant's negotiation of power relationships. I also appreciate the dual notion of power as having the ability to repress and liberate. In one story, Joe compared the Anglo-American domination of Hispanics to the Russian domination of Moldovans. As a Hispanic-American growing up in the 60s, he fought for Hispanic civil rights by directly challenging the social structure. In Moldova, he observed a more "accepting" than "confrontational" response which he believed was "healing" and he tried to foster a sense of acceptance within himself. For Ryder, having his non-standard dialect of Ozark English mocked by other Peace Corps volunteers as well as his observations of how perceptions of language use affected the lives of his Kenyan and Saudi students, gave him the desire to adopt a more standard English dialect, earn a doctorate in linguistics, and fight for social justice through his pedagogy and participation in various social movements. Clearly, he has used the social system that appeared to repress him to gain deeper knowledge in order to challenge the same system.

In Harley's case, she had to deal with issues of racial prejudice, both in Kazakhstan and the U.S., because her Asian appearance did not seem to fit with the Eurocentric image of America. Although these experiences frustrated and angered Harley, she continually worked to understand the reasons behind the prejudice and to educate others about both the racial

prejudice and the racial diversity within the United States. For Hyacinth, when she was confronted with gender bias in Kenya, her response was to focus on her own purposes. Although she found the inequitable gender practices uncomfortable and ridiculous, she explained that she was there in Kenya to learn about their world, not to change it. Along these lines, Hyacinth seemed to adapt to and work around any structural barriers she faced.

Accordingly, it seemed that each of the RPCV educators negotiated power in different ways: through shifting from a confrontational to an accepting stance (Joe), through personal and professional social critique (Ryder), through constant evaluation and educating others (Harley), and through focusing on one's own goals while simultaneously fluidly adapting to the social structure (Hyacinth). Taken together, these perspectives appear to indicate that negotiating power involves elements of both acceptance and resistance. Participants' stories also suggest that negotiating power relationships in the intercultural context is more complex as intercultural actors engage power structures from the home culture while simultaneously trying to determine their position in the power structure of the Other. Additionally, the power shifts they experience in other cultures may be more ambiguous, tenuous, and contingent as meaning is continually renegotiated.

Time

Referring to time as "the silent language," Hall (1980) wrote that "Time talks" and "speaks more plainly than words" (p. 1). He also noted though that one's use of time sends unintended messages and leads to "difficulties in intercultural communication" (p. xv). Further, he argued that a key reason for exploring the use of time as a culturally-related value was that "we must learn to understand the 'out-of-awareness' aspects of

communication…[and] must never assume that we are fully aware of what we communicate to someone else" (p. 29). The ways in which time was culturally structured also spoke to the RPCV educators in this study. In Harley's case, the use of time spoke to the ability to nurture close social relationships. While she appreciated sharing long periods of uninterrupted time with others in Kazakhstan, she felt that the busy lifestyles and the lack of shared face to face time with Americans prevented the development of close relationships. I argued though that because of the differing contexts, in the U.S., close relationships were maintained at a distance through social media. Similarly, Joe explained that in Moldova, time was spent building social relationships or focusing on one's work, but in the U.S. he felt that time was used to focus on materialism, satisfying one's "little comforts," and watching television—causing him to decide he didn't want to play the American game. I re-read his story in terms of post-materialism, through which material security created the conditions for non-materialistic pursuits and allowed one to "play the game differently."

For Ryder, he linked the use of time in Kenya to fatalism and a lack of control in the lives of Kenyans which I re-read in terms of fatalism as a form of self-management. In addition, for both Hyacinth and Ryder, the time and effort spent on survival in Kenya made Kenyan culture seem more real, whereas the lack of time and effort spent on basic survival needs by Americans (specifically Middle Class Americans and Kenyans in Ryder's case) was suggestive of non-reality. While I re-read Ryder's story by pointing out the possibility of multiple realities and layers of existence, for Hyacinth's story I referred to a Buddhist teaching to suggest that life is neither completely real nor unreal and that one has to remain "unclinging" to either side.

In brief, the ways in which time is structured and utilized appears to be an important means of communication. Time appears to strongly influence perceptions of what is real and what is not. It also seems to highlight the relative importance placed on interpersonal relationships. That participants' stories expressed both similar and different perspectives related to the use of time suggests the potential for both misunderstanding and learning. Accordingly, the ways in which time influences intercultural understanding deserves further exploration.

Metaphor

Each of the participants also used metaphor to describe their intercultural experiences. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) describe metaphor as "principally a way of conceiving of one thing in terms of another" and its main purpose is to facilitate understanding (p. 36). In addition, they suggest that metaphors not only describe prior experience, they help create a conceptual reference for guiding future action. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) also argue that metaphors create new meanings by highlighting and emphasizing certain experiences while masking and suppressing others (p. 141-142). From a poststructural hermeneutic perspective, new meaning is also created by unmasking and examining the suppressed experiences in addition to those that have been highlighted.

As such, for each of the metaphors participants used to describe their experiences, I suggested other possible meanings through my re-readings. Some of the metaphors generated by the participants included Hyacinth's metaphors of "interweaving" (as a cultural practice) to describe the ways people from other cultures hosted people in their homes and her metaphors for teaching as "ambassador" (in Kenya) and as "bridge" (in the U.S.) to describe

positive and interconnected relationships with students. In my re-reading, I proposed that the notion of "interweaving" was a gendered practice and required distance to become viable. Likewise I noted that the metaphors of "ambassador" and "bridge" could also suggest power distance and separation respectively. Hyacinth and Joe also utilized the metaphor of "playing the game" to suggest the negative and in some ways silly or childish aspects of social interaction, which I re-read as offering ways to "play the game differently" and viewing games as "fun."

Other metaphors included Joe's description of intercultural experience as "walking on ice" because of the danger and feelings of vulnerability. Another example included Harley's description of feeling like an "extra foreigner" in Kazakhstan because she was not perceived as a "real American" due to her Filipino heritage. Additionally, Ryder described RPCVs as "freed prisoners" owing to the fact that they have had a chance to step outside the "cave" of American culture and get a new perspective on socially-constructed and mediated "reality." Further, for each of these metaphors, I have offered separate re-readings in previous chapters.

That each of the participants utilized metaphors to describe their intercultural experiences suggests the importance of understanding how metaphor is used to create intercultural meaning and likewise how metaphor can shape intercultural understanding. Lakoff & Johnson (1980) argue, for example, that metaphor can help communicate across cultures, given that one has

> enough diversity of cultural and personal experience to be aware that divergent world views exist and what they might be like…[in addition to] patience, a certain flexibility in world view, and a generous tolerance for mistakes, as well as a

> talent for finding the right metaphor to communicate the relevant parts of unshared experiences. (p. 231)

Through his cross-cultural research on the use of animal metaphors, Taki (2011) cautions however that metaphorical meanings are not universal and are most often interpreted from one's own cultural paradigm. Still, understanding how one's metaphor(s) may be used and perceived differently by intercultural actors holds interesting possibilities for learning about the way meaning is generated in the intercultural relationship. Likewise, understanding how educators use metaphor to describe, guide, and modify the ways in which the conceptualize their pedagogical practices offers deep insight into their beliefs and experiences.

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Home

Noting the relationship between home and travel, Mallett (2004) suggests that "ideas about staying, leaving, and journeying are integrally associated with notions of home" (p. 77). This seemed to be the case for the participants in this study. Their early experiences of home not only provided an impetus for leaving home, they also shaped participants' experiences of culture shock and reverse culture shock as well. For instance, Hyacinth recalled feeling awkward growing up and that her childhood home was rather formal and not "really open to other people." Through her travels, she found that journeying into other cultures made her feel special. She explained that cultural differences gave her and others a reason to start conversations with each other and to learn from one another. After she returned from the Peace Corps and lived for a time on the Mexican border, Hyacinth felt a sense of stifling sameness among other Americans and rejected the formality of her upbringing in favor of the openness she learned from both Kenyan and Mexican women. She

also found her conversation with other Americans boring and limited and less tolerable than some of the boring/limited conversations she had in Kenya. When I asked her why this was, she argued that even though discussions in Kenya were often limited to issues involving crops or the weather, those conversations were invariably tied to survival unlike those in the U.S. where most conversations were "directly related to nothing." She also noted that in living in Kenya and on the Mexican border she felt that she was "constantly learning" something just by being there and that conversely she has "moved here [to her current city] and…learned [practically] nothing." Overall, she surmised that "maybe people who thrive in the Peace Corps, who really like it, who really are affected by it, maybe are people who in some way want to leave their own culture or don't feel completely at home in their own culture, and they want to try something else."

Similarly, before leaving for the Peace Corps, Joe described himself as a restless spirit who was never happy. He said he joined the Peace Corps because he wanted some excitement and wanted to see if he could be happier somewhere else. In discussing his childhood, Joe talked about the racial prejudice he experienced as a Hispanic teenager during the civil rights era. He also mentioned being raised in a largely masculine household in which "caring" was rarely displayed. Accordingly, Joe seemed to evaluate each shock experience both in the Peace Corps and after his return home in terms of caring. When he returned home, he expected Americans to be more caring than he found them to be and that they were more consumed by satisfying their personal comforts than with helping one another. This made him feel that he had in some sense become Moldovan and he decided that he no longer wanted to play what he called the American "game."

Likewise, Ryder talked about his painful childhood growing up poor with a conservative father and an absent mother. One of his main reasons for joining the Peace Corps was to have an experience that few Americans (at least no one that he knew of) had ever had. Both during the Peace Corps and after, he linked each story about culture shock and reverse culture shock to negative features of American culture, especially those surrounding issues of social and material inequity. He also found it frustrating that Americans made so many "mistakes" yet were still much more prosperous than the poor, yet generous Kenyans whom he suggested often "did things better." For Ryder, teaching abroad acted as a temporary escape from the American social structure and he described returning home as re-entering a "cave" and a "prison" where most people did not want to hear anything negative about American culture.

And, finally, Harley mentioned feeling different from her friends growing up because they didn't seem to have all of the same responsibilities that she did which included working in the family business and taking care of a brother who was in a coma from an early age. Some of her culture shock in Kazakhstan was related to feeling "isolated." She said she didn't expect to feel as isolated as she did from the other American Peace Corps volunteers who were from different parts of the U.S. and were so culturally and personally different than she was. She felt in many ways more culturally similar to the Kazakhs that she lived with. And, yet, she felt isolated from the Kazakhs because even though there were Kazakh friends and families she was close to, she said it was "still not my home" and "still not my family." She also found freedom travelling through other countries and learning about other cultures overseas, so much so that she was fearful about returning to the United States. She eventually returned to the States after nine years so that she could earn a doctorate degree which she felt

would be respected more than if it were from a university overseas. After she returned home, she was surprised that few people wanted to hear her stories from abroad and that they didn't have much time to share with her in general. This was a shock to Harley because she felt that home was a place where she was "supposed to be comfortable." She recreated a sense of freedom by learning to ride a Harley Davidson motorcycle, becoming a member of biker culture, and experiencing the different cultures that make up the United States.

For these participants, leaving home seemed to offer the opportunity to find at least some of the things that they felt were lacking at home: the chance to feel special and to learn both about and from people who were culturally different; a stronger focus on personal relationships than on materialistic pursuits; insights into the nature of social structure and a voice with which to advocate for social justice; and, a greater sense of confidence and freedom through living and travelling among other cultures. Perhaps, it is the sense of personal growth and (temporary) escape from the (American) social structure that made returning home all the more disappointing. Further, it was the inherent ambiguity in the intercultural relationship (the inability to know the rules), that required the renegotiation of identity and allowed the participants to partially recreate themselves in other cultures in ways that challenged the American status quo. In other words, in a foreign culture one has to create a space for oneself whereas at home, it seems that the space is already created and requires significant effort to reform that space.

It is also possible that participants reserved their strongest critiques for home because the notion of home seems more permanent and far-reaching than the brief respite from it. In my experience it is often easier to tolerate something negative or find it more interesting when one's identity is not drawn from that place. Home seems to define one and stays with

one wherever one goes. Further, when home fails to live up to certain expectations, e.g. as a place where one should feel comfortable or a place where things should be more equitable, error-free, and caring, in some ways the disappointment is felt more strongly. Along these lines, some researchers (Moore, 2000; Manzo, 2003; Mallett, 2004) argue for the need to reconsider notions of "home" that often focus only on positive attributes (warmth, comfort, security, safety, refuge, etc.) in order to create a more nuanced and complicated image of home as both negative and positive. In doing so, Mallett (2004) also suggests the need to recognize that just as home may carry negative connotations, that likewise "danger, fear, and insecurity are not necessarily located in the outside world" (p. 72).

With so much movement and change in the world today, perhaps this signals a need to resist relying on a notion of "home" to create the illusion of comfort and security—to take on life wherever it is found and in the manner it is found, to find ourselves at home in homelessness, and to withstand the need to have our identities bounded by space, time, and place. It may also be useful to develop what might be termed a "wildflower" mentality. How does the song go? "When a flower grows wild, it can always survive. Wildflowers don't care where they grow" (Parton, 1986, *Wildflowers*).

Traces

My analysis of participants' stories revealed that the words that the RPCV educators used to describe their intercultural experiences, carried "traces" of other words, concepts, and meanings. In Derridean terms, trace is the "absent part of the sign's presence" and because "all signifiers will necessarily contain traces of other (absent) signifiers, the signifier can be neither wholly present nor wholly absent" (Prasad, 2007, online). Stated another way, words

(signifiers) gain partial meanings from other words that do not appear to be present in the word itself. For example, the word “happy” draws on the notion of “sad” and “not sad” (and other words) to help create its meaning, thereby leaving traces of sadness within happiness. In Western culture, however, the presence of happiness is intended to preclude the sense of sadness within. Further, since words carry traces of other words and because meaning is constructed contextually and temporally and is not fixed, one can never arrive at a complete or final meaning (Sarup, 1993).

That traces point to the inability of language to convey complete meaning is, however, not necessarily a bad thing. By recognizing both the incompleteness and the multiplicity of meanings within words (even those meanings that appear to be absent) creates possibilities for reimagining the ways in which meaning and experience is communicated. For example, two of the volunteers used the word ‘vulnerability’ in describing their intercultural experiences. Joe referred to vulnerability in terms of painful helplessness and Hyacinth suggested that vulnerability was a means to invite helpfulness from others. My analysis drew out traces of other meanings such as vulnerability as an indication of strength when not taken to the extreme. I also noted that demonstrating feelings of vulnerability in a competitive culture could lead to feelings of powerlessness and rejection. Additionally, I pointed to the ways in which the participants referred to vulnerability in a cultured and gendered manner. Other examples included finding traces of emotional self-management in ‘fatalism,’ meaningful learning in ‘rote learning,’ and commonality within ‘individuality,’ to name a few. By recognizing that words carry traces of other words and connections to other meanings allows for seeing the world in a more multiple and complex fashion. It also reminds that when using words in a singular sense, there are other attached meanings that

may not be apparent on the surface, but likewise cannot be completely erased, avoided, and hidden.

From an intercultural perspective, understanding that words do not communicate complete and shared meanings implies that meaning must be negotiated rather than taken as granted. However, the negotiation of meaning is shaped by power relationships and often the meaning-making process serves to legitimize the meanings of those in power. Along these lines, it is important to understand how in the intercultural context how 'whiteness,' 'maleness,' 'heterosexual-ness' and 'American-ness" confers power to educators who are members of those dominant social groups and likewise how power and the circulation of power shapes meaning in turn. Contemplating what is absent or missing in one's thinking and speech provides directions for learning, growth, and seeing things from a broader perspective. Yet, inviting new and different meanings into one's midst—especially those of marginalized groups—may feel threatening, empowering, healing, may inspire guilt, or all of these in different measure. I would further argue that the ethical challenge is to remain open to the experiences and understandings of others while simultaneously resisting the temptation to force one's perspective onto the experiences of others. For educators, this means inviting sometimes painful knowledge into the classroom and working to recognize and appreciate the multiplicity in both self and others. It also suggests the need to be aware that each meaning has its own shadows or its traces.

Review of Research Questions

Building on the experiences and insights of the RPCV educators in this study, for this section I consider some of the general answers to my three research questions. For each of

the questions, I summarize and highlight some of the participants' experiences and impressions that stood out to me as especially useful for developing intercultural understanding. Each question is presented below.

1. *Did RPCV educators experience culture shock in their host culture and reverse culture shock in the U.S.? In what ways?*

All of the RPCV educators in this study experienced culture shock and reverse culture shock in varying degrees and in ways that were both different and similar. Most notably was that experiences with culture shock and reverse culture shock provoked powerful questions about the nature of "reality" for the participants in this study. Through their experiences the RPCV educators began to question and struggle with issues related to race, gender, citizenship, social relationships, and the uses of time and materials. These struggles also led participants to feelings about what was "real" and what was "unreal." Reality seemed tied to close and immediate relationships with nature and other people. For example, participants often described their Peace Corps countries as more real than the U.S. to the extent that the struggles in those countries were those related to nature and survival. They also suggested that spending time and physical space with others, especially to share a cup of tea or meals with no invitation required, was indicative of reality and helped ameliorate but not necessarily remove feelings of culture shock. Non-reality, on the other hand, was related to distant and mediated relationships with nature and others. Participants most often described the U.S. in these terms as they pointed out the ways in which the U.S. seemed more unnatural, dehumanizing, and abstract. This seems to be a common experience among

Americans who teach abroad and return home. In my own case, I remember a conversation with a fellow Peace Corps teacher while in Cameroon during which we described the U.S. as a kind of unreal 'Disneyland' where everything seemed designed to conceal the reality within. Additionally, my analysis of participants' stories suggested multiple, coexisting realities in each culture which were masked by the dualistic labels used to describe different cultures, people, and behaviors.

Although culture shock and reverse culture shock both led to the questioning of reality, they seemed to have worked in different ways. Culture shock experiences were more memorable and generally stood out to participants more explicitly than their experiences with reverse culture shock. Reverse culture shock was expressed more in terms of recalling negative feelings and awareness of American material "excess" than in specific experiences. Perhaps this difficulty in pinpointing experiences with reverse culture shock is one of the reasons why it has been less theorized than culture shock (LaBrack, 1985). However, it occurs to me that culture shock seemed to provide opportunities for growth by challenging participants' cultural perceptions, opening up their identities, and expanding their worldviews. Further, these experiences may have stood out more because they occurred in foreign locales and were unique in the life history of the participants. Reverse culture shock, on the other hand, appeared to represent a challenge to the participants' newly opened identities and represented taking a step backward as well as a return to a country that did not appreciate the new identity. At least one volunteer framed reverse culture shock as returning to a prison and two others talked about how they focused on more personal pursuits such as spiritual study, artwork, and motorcycle riding in order to recapture the feelings of freedom they experienced in other cultures.

In this vein, culture shock and reverse culture shock were also emblematic of a shift in the power relationship between RPCV educators and American culture. It seemed that the RPCV educators travelled overseas as privileged representatives of U.S. culture tasked with educating the 'Other.' They were given the illusion of living as natives in their host countries despite receiving their salary consistently and on schedule, despite twice yearly medical check-ups, despite the ability to be air-lifted or transported off post in case of danger, and the ability to leave the country permanently at any time they chose. As this study demonstrated, RPCVs were often (not always) shown great warmth and care by host country nationals. RPCVs in general have also consistently reported that they learned more from the people in their host countries than they actually taught. As the RPCV educators experienced multiple culture shocks and acculturated to their respective countries, they became more aware of the ways in which culture worked to shape their perceptions of self and Other. They also began to develop a sympathy and appreciation for different cultures and different people. In the process, they seem to shed some (but not all) of their privilege. After they returned home they began to realize that they had become the Other and that their newly-modified identities were scarcely appreciated. I have alluded to this as the Peace Corps paradox in a previous chapter—that the privilege conveyed to Peace Corps volunteers is a form of neocolonialism yet through their experiences in marginalized countries, RPCVs begin to question and challenge neocolonialist perceptions.

2. *Did RPCV educators shift their identities or worldviews through the experience of culture and reverse culture shock? In what ways?*

Culture shock and reverse culture shock experiences stimulated identity shifts within the participants which revealed a growing awareness and critique of their American identities. Some of these critiques were related to what the participants perceived as American materialism and waste, the pursuits of personal comforts while ignoring social injustice, and maintaining formal/distant social relationships. This stood in stark contrast to the poverty yet generosity and social connectedness they experienced in each of their Peace Corps locales. This sparked an awareness of their host country counterparts and themselves in ways that most had not experienced before.

In addition, these identity shifts seemed to be part of an on-going process as participants negotiated and continued to re-negotiate among different cultural perspectives. Three of the RPCV educators in this study reported being marginalized in some way before joining the Peace Corps—one due to his poverty, another owing to his Hispanic heritage and his efforts in fighting for Hispanic civil rights, and the third because of her bicultural Filipino/American identity and her status as an Asian and a woman. The fourth RPCV educator also mentioned feeling awkward and not completely comfortable in American culture from an early age. Each of the RPCV educators' carried these understandings with them during their Peace Corps experiences and throughout other intercultural experiences in multiple countries before and after the Peace Corps. They also re-negotiated those understandings in light of the new awareness they gained through their experiences with culture shock and reverse culture shock.

For instance, Joe renegotiated the anger he felt as a Hispanic teenager growing up in the U.S. during the sixties as the need to be a more accepting and caring person/educator in the present. He attributed this shift to his culture shock experiences in Moldova both inside

and outside the classroom. Interestingly, Joe alternately described Moldovan culture as uncaring, caring, uncaring, caring, and so on. He also mentioned that seeing the Moldovans' suffering and acceptance of Russian domination was healing, especially since it was so different than his own confrontational response to Anglo-American domination. After he returned home he began to think of himself as Moldovan through his rejection of materialism and his longing for the closeness and caring he experienced in Moldova. However, through my analysis I contended that the Moldovans' acceptance was superficial in that it hid the painful struggle against domination as noted in Joe's references to Moldovan alcoholism and suicide. For me, Joe's story suggests that while developing intercultural awareness can be healing and help to integrate various aspects of the self from different points in time, it is also important to avoid projecting an image of the self onto the Other such as by claiming that acceptance of domination is positive or healing for others. I would also argue that for intercultural experience to be deeply healing and integrative involves recognizing that cultures and people have both positive and negative aspects dynamically intertwined (both caring and uncaring) rather than as discrete traits (either caring or uncaring). Further, that focusing only on the positive does not diminish the presence of the negative.

In Harley's case, she had travelled to the Philippines and began noticing cultural differences at an early age. During both her early and later travels she focused on developing strategies to help her navigate these cultural differences. As such, she seemed to have less difficulty adjusting to or appreciating cultural differences both during her Peace Corps service and afterward. Her culture shock experiences, unlike the others, seemed to highlight issues related to her bicultural identity and the attempts of both host country nationals and other Americans to focus solely on her Asian appearance in categorizing her identity. As I

have come to know Harley more and more, I am aware that that both internationals and Americans continue to question her American identity even today. Because her identity seems to have been opened up by multiple intercultural experiences, I think of her identity shifts more in terms of identity shocks. Despite these identity shocks, she says that her intercultural travels have made her a more open and loving person. For me, Harley's identity shock stories point to the ways in which society attempts to shape identities by divesting individuals of their multiple identities. Her story though also demonstrates resistance to these attempts and suggests both resilience in the face of prejudice and a refusal to become paralyzed by that prejudice.

For Ryder, who spoke about his early life growing up in poverty, his identity shift began by being teased for his nonstandard English dialect by other Peace Corps volunteers. This made him aware that he spoke a marginalized dialect. As he travelled among Kenyan and Saudi cultures, he began to notice how language use influenced the ways in which people perceived others and themselves. He began to change the way he spoke and went on to earn a doctorate degree in linguistics after returning to the United States. He also used his culture shock and identity shift experiences in the classroom to advocate for linguistic diversity and social justice. His story highlighted the powerful role that language plays in shaping personal, social, and intercultural judgments. I think it also spoke to the ways in which one can translate their marginalization into a tool for promoting socio-cultural awareness and justice.

And lastly, in Hyacinth's case, she talked about how she felt awkward as a child and how traveling to other countries and experiencing different cultures made her feel special. International/intercultural travel seemed to act as a temporary escape for Hyacinth. Through

her intercultural travels she became increasingly aware of how her identity was a product of American culture. I think for mainstream, middle class, white educators this is an important and valuable recognition. I would argue though that this recognition is only part of the picture—that individuals, especially those in the mainstream, also have the ability to influence the social structure but to do so means to forego comfort. As a white educator who feels out of place in American culture myself, this is something I struggle with at times—wanting to be accepted, wanting everyone to be happy and comfortable, and at the same time wanting to bring awareness of the ways in which American culture causes pain and suffering to me and others. In order to meaningfully challenge my American identity, I have to be strong enough to invite discomfort and relinquish complete acceptance in order to stand up for myself and others. Along these lines, Hyacinth's story reminds me/us that recognizing an American identity without challenging that identity can work to maintain the status quo.

In brief, each of the volunteers connected their identity shifts with their intercultural experiences that took place before, during, and after the Peace Corps. They renegotiated their identities through the experiences of culture shock and reverse culture shock, but many times these shifts unfolded years after the original shock. To me this suggests that culture shock and reverse culture shock do not simply occur as distinct, isolated incidences but have implications that span time, space, and multiple cultures. This suggests that RPCV educators' identities are not fixed and singular but fluctuating and kaleidoscopic. In addition, while some of the identity shifts noted in the study promoted growth, healing and socio-cultural awareness, they also created feelings of tension and distancing from self and others. In other words, the shifting of identities which appears to be inherent to prolonged intercultural engagement is a dual experience—at once both comforting and discomforting.

3. *How did the experience of culture shock and reverse culture shock influence RPCV educators' pedagogy?*

The shocks and the shifts that the RPCV educators experienced appeared to nurture their pedagogical practices both abroad and in the United States. In particular, RPCV educators' shock experiences highlighted their pedagogical relationships with students and other educators as well as provided content for their teaching. For instance, one of the culture shocks Harley experienced in Kazakhstan was related to student bribes and teacher corruption. Although she never got used to the corruption itself, she became less judgmental after sharing her concerns with her Kazakh counterpart and her counterpart pointed out that it was easy for Harley to judge when she got to leave after two years. Harley also continually reflected on the strategies she used to navigate various cultures and the culture shocks she experienced. She used these strategies to mentor and assist international in the United States so that they could move past their fears in order to engage Americans so that when they left the U.S., they could do so without any regrets that they hadn't tried. Interestingly, she asked them to recall their own painful experiences with culture shock as a way of helping them understand why American students might be afraid of engaging people from another culture. Harley also shared her experiences being mistaken for an international student, being asked where she was 'really' from after explaining that she was American, and being complimented on her English even though it was her first language. Although her international students often found this humorous, she pushed them to consider the prejudice behind those suppositions. Along these lines, Harley used her similarity to international students and

American minority students to mentor them through their culture shock experiences. My only worry for Harley is that in holding so steadfastly to her American identity that she may create further prejudice toward her Filipino heritage by seeming to ignore it. I also wonder if those moments when she is being questioned about her identity can be used to educate those asking the questions. I think an interesting response to such questions might be: Why do you ask?

Ryder used his culture shock experiences to advocate for social justice both in his teaching and his research. In particular, he worked to shock his American university students out of their comfort zones by sharing some of his culture shock experiences related to poverty, suffering, linguistic discrimination, and sexuality in his classroom. He especially drew attention to the differences between the middle class and the poor and the ways in which prescriptive rules were used to control the poor and hide social injustice. For me, it seemed that Ryder focused on the distances between social groups—their treatment, the judgments made against them, their social standing, differences in power, etc. in order to invite culture shock into his classroom. My only concern is that the social groups he referred to were so completely dichotomized that there was no room for differences within the categories he mentioned (poor = good, middle class = bad). He also implied that the social structure was securely fixed and that the poor were helpless to effect change in their lives. But as his own personal story suggests, he himself had struggled through poverty and linguistic marginalization in order to become a linguistics professor. This begs an important question: How to recognize marginalization without fixing the self and others into marginalized identities and maintaining the social hierarchy?

While Ryder used the perceived distances between him and his American students to create discomfort and culture shock in the classroom, Hyacinth took a different approach.

She struggled with the distance in the teacher/student relationship in Kenya. She also felt, however, that it was in her Kenyan students' best interest to respect Kenyan teaching practices and not rock the boat even when she found those practices to be personally distasteful as in the example of corporal punishment/student beatings. This made her appreciate the close relationships she had with students in the United States and she felt that the more closely she could relate to students, the better she would be able to help meet their needs. Further, she used the metaphor of 'ambassador' to describe her teaching in Kenya, which seemed distant and formal yet pleasant. And, she used the metaphor of 'bridge' to describe her teaching in the U.S. because of her goal to help her students connect with and visualize a more positive side of Africa. I wonder, as an educator, if it is necessarily helpful or even possible to always maintain close relationships with students. Likewise, I wonder if it is possible or helpful to remove every trace of negativity from the classroom. I would argue that learning to explore and deal with negative experiences and emotions together are important parts of the educative process. This is not to suggest that one should not promote positive energy, only that one cannot escape negativity by ignoring it. Further, focusing only on the positive aspects of a person, a culture, or a pedagogical practice paints a picture that is not only flawed and misleading, it is potentially dangerous as well.

And finally, Joe used his culture shock experiences as discussion topics in order to connect with his adult students at the university where he taught in Moldova. Through his classroom teaching experiences in Moldova, which included a student's angry response to his "blunt" teaching style, he reflected on the anxiety that learning a new skill could inspire. On further reflection, he also reasoned that students were more important than the lessons he was teaching and that he needed to focus on ways that he could demonstrate caring as a male

teacher. In addition, he found that in Moldova students struggled with creative writing assignments due to the cultural emphasis on rote learning. After his return to the U.S., he realized that American students also struggled with creative essay writing—suggesting to him that creativity doesn't come naturally, that it has to be taught. For me, recognizing that the classroom is an emotionally charged space and that lesson plans may need to be deemphasized in order to attend to those emotions is a valuable insight. However, I also think that anxiety in the classroom can be a useful tool and may actually signal struggle and growth. I also question what is meant by 'creativity' to the extent that what is often considered creative follows certain cultural rules.

Overall, each of the RPCV educators brought their experiences with culture shock and reverse culture shock into their classrooms in different ways. Yet, I also noted a few trends. It seemed that for the RPCV educators who taught at the middle school and high school levels in the U.S., their goal was to create a caring environment that focused mainly on the positive and establishing close relationships with students. For the RPCV educators who worked and taught at the university level in the U.S., they encouraged students to critically examine some of their culturally prejudicial beliefs and experience some of the negative shocks that they had experienced. Perhaps this is due to the differing cultural expectations for each of those levels. However, recognizing that both perspectives have merit I suggest bringing both the positive and negative aspects of intercultural experience and understanding into the school at all levels.

Implications

One of the main implications of this study is that experiences with culture shock and reverse culture shock can provide educators with opportunities to develop greater intercultural and self-understanding. Experiences with culture shock and reverse culture shock do this by generating an awareness of cultural issues that "can come only when one lives through the shock of contrast and difference" (Hall, 1980, p. 30). For the RPCV educators in this study, culture shock and reverse culture shock experiences provided them with insights that shaped their identities and enriched their pedagogies. In particular, experiences with culture shock and reverse culture shock appear to have stimulated a more critical outlook on culture and society and a more sympathetic response toward culturally and socially marginalized groups. Participants' stories also underscored the ways in which the tension created by intercultural differences can stimulate learning and help educators shift their worldviews which has been recognized as an important skill in the 21st century (Davies, McNulty, & Maddox, 2011).

This also highlights the important role intercultural experience plays in the development of culturally sensitive educators. For educators with little intercultural experience, developing intercultural awareness, as this study suggests, involves purposefully seeking out intercultural experiences, making oneself open and vulnerable to culturally different others, tolerating intercultural tension and discomfort, and experiencing and reflecting on feelings of otherness. In other words, "To learn to see, to hear, to be mindful of other people, to learn to be alert and open…calls for a recognition and experience of otherness, experience that is acquired and that is practiced (Abdallah-Pretceille, 2006, p. 478). While teaching with the Peace Corps for two years may not be practical for most

educators, there are other educator study/travel/teach abroad programs that may be completed in a semester or over a summer. If international travel poses a problem, exploring other cultures or the relationship between two cultures within the U.S. can also help shift one's perspective. For a more detailed look into one educator's journey to develop intercultural awareness that did not involve the Peace Corps, see Malloy (2009).

There are also implications for educational administrators and policymakers. As globalization brings widespread cultural diversity to the American educational landscape, the need to develop policies and practices that recognize and ethically support this diversity is an urgent concern. Weaving intercultural insights into the U.S. education system at all levels can help to broaden and internationalize the curriculum where the goal is to value and learn from differences as well as to become a member of an equitable global community that resists standardization and sameness. The culture shock and reverse culture shock experiences of RPCV Educators can help inform these policies and procedures by demonstrating the ways in which curriculum is a cultural act and can create culture shock for international faculty and students in the United States. For example, one RPCV Educator in this study noted his culture shock when he realized that he spoke a stigmatized dialect of English and made a case for supporting linguistic diversity. Interestingly, as an educational administrator here in the U.S., I have worked with students and faculty from other countries who use various dialects of English. They argue that the U.S. educational system, especially when it comes to English composition courses and English language entrance tests, privileges only one form of English. Given the growing multiplicity of "world Englishes" (Kachru, 1992) and the trend in American education at all levels to continuously tout an appreciation for diversity and

participation in a global community, it would seem that recognizing linguistic and other forms of diversity in educational policy and practices are important endeavors.

Additionally, this study may be helpful in the training of other Peace Corps Volunteers or other overseas educators on issues of culture shock and reverse culture shock by helping them prepare for, navigate, reflect on, and share their own shock experiences. Particularly, this study demonstrates that for Peace Corps volunteers, culture shock and reverse culture shock were experienced as parts of an on-going process rather than as discrete incidences. In many cases, the RPCV Educators interpreted their experiences with culture shock and reverse culture shock through life experiences that occurred long before joining the Peace Corps and long after their return home. Along these lines, it seems that each educator experienced culture shock differently depending on her or his other life experiences. Further, this study also indicates how culture shock and reverse culture shock may be experienced as a heightened form of identity shock by bicultural and minority RPCVs. By reflecting on Harley's experience in this study, bicultural and minority volunteers may be better prepared for the additional layers of identity shock they may face overseas and at home.

Another implication is that language plays a significant role in shaping intercultural and self-understanding and that by deconstructing language, other meanings may potentially flourish. For example, the dualisms that structured participants' language often hid the diversity and multiplicity within their own experiences and the experiences of others. Along these lines, words have the potential to both reveal and to hide meanings and can mean different things in different contexts. This suggests that meaning is not stable, especially in

an intercultural sense, and therefore needs to be negotiated rather than imposed and assumed as shared.

Further, I argue that by recognizing and resisting the stereotypical dualistic categories used to describe one's own and other cultures also carries ethical significance for the intercultural relationship. For educators, this suggests the need to question (and help students question) the labels, hierarchies, categories, and dualisms within the cultural narratives espoused by social institutions and those promoted in popular media, not to mention those found in educators' own language and teaching! This also implies the need to rethink the ways in which words, behaviors, and silences are often conceived of as having a singular and durable meaning and to find and create new ways of communicating that acknowledge that words and actions may simultaneously express a multiplicity of meanings. One example includes Aoki's (1993) curriculum language of "both and" which acknowledges the multiplicity and interconnectedness of meanings and avoids the "either or" thinking that works to create such dualisms.

Another implication is that the strategies used for the poststructural hermeneutic analysis in this study may bring greater depth to educational research. One of the specific strategies I used for uncovering the diversity of meanings within the RPCV educator's stories was to dig beneath the words that participants' used to label experience (vulnerability, fatalism, corruption, generosity, and so on) and then question those labels. Another technique involved locating the dualistic hierarchies that participants used to structure their stories (collectivist/individualist, sameness/difference, reality/non-reality, creativity/rote learning, etc.) and then drawing on research to point out the ways in which the words/concepts that structure those categories failed to adhere to their respective poles and suggested other

meanings. I also utilized the inherent ambiguity within the metaphors that participants generated in order to reinterpret their stories (walking on ice, teacher as ambassador as bridge, extra foreigner, freed prisoner, etc.). At times, I also compared participants' experiences against my own experiences in the Peace Corps. My goal was not to re-inscribe dualistic hierarchies by offering a diametrically opposed re-reading of participants' stories, but to draw out other facets of meaning within their experiences. Certainly, this is not an exhaustive list, however, educators and education researchers alike may benefit from using these techniques to explore various layers of meaning in their teaching and their research.

And perhaps on a more interpersonal level, this research signals the need for caring intercultural advocates. Each of the RPCV educators spoke of people in their Peace Corps countries whose doors seemed always open to them to share time, space, and a meal. In Joe's case, a group of women—strangers on a bus—challenged a bus driver who seemed intent on cheating Joe out of his change. Harley and Hyacinth spoke of sharing meals and spending time with others with no invitation needed. And Ryder was touched by the generosity of the poor people he worked among in Kenya. In my own case, on my first day at my post in a rural Cameroonian village, as I sat wondering what to do next—tiny brown hands reached through the bars of my windows presenting me with corn, mangos, some bananas and other food. These children (or more likely their mothers) seemed to recognize that I was a stranger and that I might be tired and hungry after a long journey. As I developed friendships, I found that my Cameroonian friends listened to my stories, helped me through my adjustment struggles, and challenged my perceptions, but they never tried to change me or persuade me that I was wrong. We talked about world politics. We celebrated births together and mourned the deaths of friends and neighbors. We also laughed and danced a lot. My next door

neighbor, a young woman, plopped a baby in my hands at every opportunity she could which made me feel connected to the village and its people.

But for the RPCV educators in this study, the U.S. was not an entirely welcoming place. Some found that other Americans did not want to hear their stories (especially those related to social justice) and that people were more focused on buying things or watching TV than making time to build relationships. In response, two of the participants retreated into silence and focused on other pursuits such as cross-country motorcycle travel, another developed his anger into a form of social critique, and the fourth focused on building a life with a new husband she returned with from the Peace Corps and short bursts of travel outside the United States. In their reverse culture shock stories, they noticeably did not mention caring advocates who helped to welcome them back into American culture as they did in their culture shock stories. In working with numerous international students, I often hear similar stories of feeling disconnected from Americans. Of course, this is not the case with all RPCV educators or international students as many personal and contextual factors come into play. I would simply argue that one cannot know one's own culture until one experiences it as an outsider and demands from it some measure of understanding and mercy.

It is my hope that in sharing RPCV educators' intercultural experiences and using a poststructural hermeneutic framework to re/interpret those experiences, other educators are able to locate possibilities for reimagining intercultural relationships within their own lives and in their teaching. For me personally, this research has offered the chance to reflect on the ways in which I construct and express meaning, the ways in which I consciously and unconsciously support/challenge socio-cultural beliefs, and the ways in which I relate to cultural and individual differences, both in my "self" and in others. Certainly this has

enriched my educational perspectives as a teacher and an administrator as I reconsider issues of power, control, openness, privilege, gender, etc. It has also created a greater recognition of points of potential intercultural tensions and hopefully a similar ability to bring those tensions out in the open for discussion—even when those tensions are uncomfortable to myself or others. This research has also allowed me to combine my voice with those of other RPCV educators and to demonstrate that although we shared a certain kind of experience, there were differences in the ways in which we understood those experiences. And, perhaps most enjoyably, this research has allowed me to wander back through time to my own Peace Corps sojourn in Cameroon to rethink and appreciate my own intercultural experiences and the people who made those experiences possible.

As my thoughts meander back to my first few weeks in my Cameroonian village, I remember thinking initially (as Harley did) that although the people in my village seemed friendly enough, the children were not my children and the families were not my family. I felt like a stranger in a strange land. But each day I came to realize that despite outward appearances, these were *my* children and these families were *my* family and that I was a part of something larger than myself. In this vein, the author Scott Hunt (2002) offers that,

> As we grow in awareness of one another – whether two people beginning a romance or two disparate and far-removed strangers taking an interest in the other's culture – a wonderful thing begins to happen: we begin to care for the other as if the other is part of us. This is the magic of life that our ancient teachers have bid us to see; the invisible filaments of interconnectedness that bind us together in love and appreciation. (p. 1-2)

How differently our educational work proceeds when approached through

interconnectedness, love, and an appreciation for differences! And what an important role that teachers both past and present, whether well-seasoned or newly appointed, play in making the invisible threads of interconnectedness more visible. This seems especially true when "we," as teachers, come to realize that all children are our children—each different parts of our selves—parts that have a different skin color, a different way of speaking, a different religion, a different style of living, a different gender, etc. For it is somewhere amidst the play of all these differences within ourselves and between others that the most beautiful images of the kaleidoscope can begin to take shape.

Limitations of the Study

One of the limitations of the study is the small number of participants. Accordingly, the study would benefit from the inclusion of additional RPCV educator perspectives in order to offer greater variety and add depth. Additionally, as the study relies on RPCV educators' self-report alone, additional data collection through teaching observations, questionnaires sent to family members and students, and focus groups with other RPCV educators, could also provide greater triangulation. However, since the purpose of this study is not to discover a singular objective meaning but to explore meaning as multiple and changing, the variety of participant backgrounds in this study have led to rich and complicated data.

Future Research

In the interest of promoting further cross-cultural understanding, there are several directions for future research. First, examining the Peace Corps experience from the perspective of Peace Corps host country students and host country educators can enrich our

understanding of the intercultural relationship by offering different perspectives. Second, to the extent that the RPCV educators' stories deal in part with the evolution of their intercultural understanding across time, using a life history approach may be a useful method for exploring the development of educator beliefs more broadly across time. Third, since the RPCV educators in this study alluded to the ways in which American culture has become a mediated reality, looking at the ways in which media shapes intercultural understanding from an American perspective holds interesting and timely possibilities. And lastly, to the extent that gender seemed to be a primary lens through which participants constructed their identities, an examination of the intersection of gender and intercultural awareness may prove enlightening.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: General Writing Prompts/Interview Questions

1. Please write/talk about a time you experienced feeling different in another culture.
2. Please write/talk about a time when you experienced a cultural conflict related to your pedagogy.

Appendix B: IRB Approval

Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date:	Wednesday, April 20, 2011
IRB Application No	ED1158
Proposal Title:	Culture Shocked: The Intercultural Experiences and Insights of Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Teachers
Reviewed and Processed as:	Expedited

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved Protocol Expires: 4/19/2012

Principal Investigator(s):

Jon Smythe	Hongyu Wang
7634 E. 58th Pl.	OSU Tulsa 2444A Main Hall
Tulsa, OK 74145	Tulsa, OK 74106

The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

☒ The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period of one calendar year. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of this research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Beth McTernan in 219 Cordell North (phone: 405-744-5700, beth.mcternan@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,

Shelia R. Kennison

Shelia Kennison, Chair
Institutional Review Board

VITA

Jon Lee Smythe

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Thesis: CULTURE SHOCKED: THE INTERCULTURAL EXPERIENCES AND INSIGHTS OF RETURNED PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEER EDUCATORS

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Completed the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy in Education: Curriculum & Social Foundations at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in December 2012.

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Experience:

Director of Enrollment Services, Tulsa Community College, Tulsa, Oklahoma, January 2008 to present

International Student Advisor/DSO, Tulsa Community College, Tulsa, Oklahoma, June 2003 to December 2007

English as a Second Language Paraprofessional, Tulsa Community College, Tulsa, Oklahoma, August 2001 to June 2003

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