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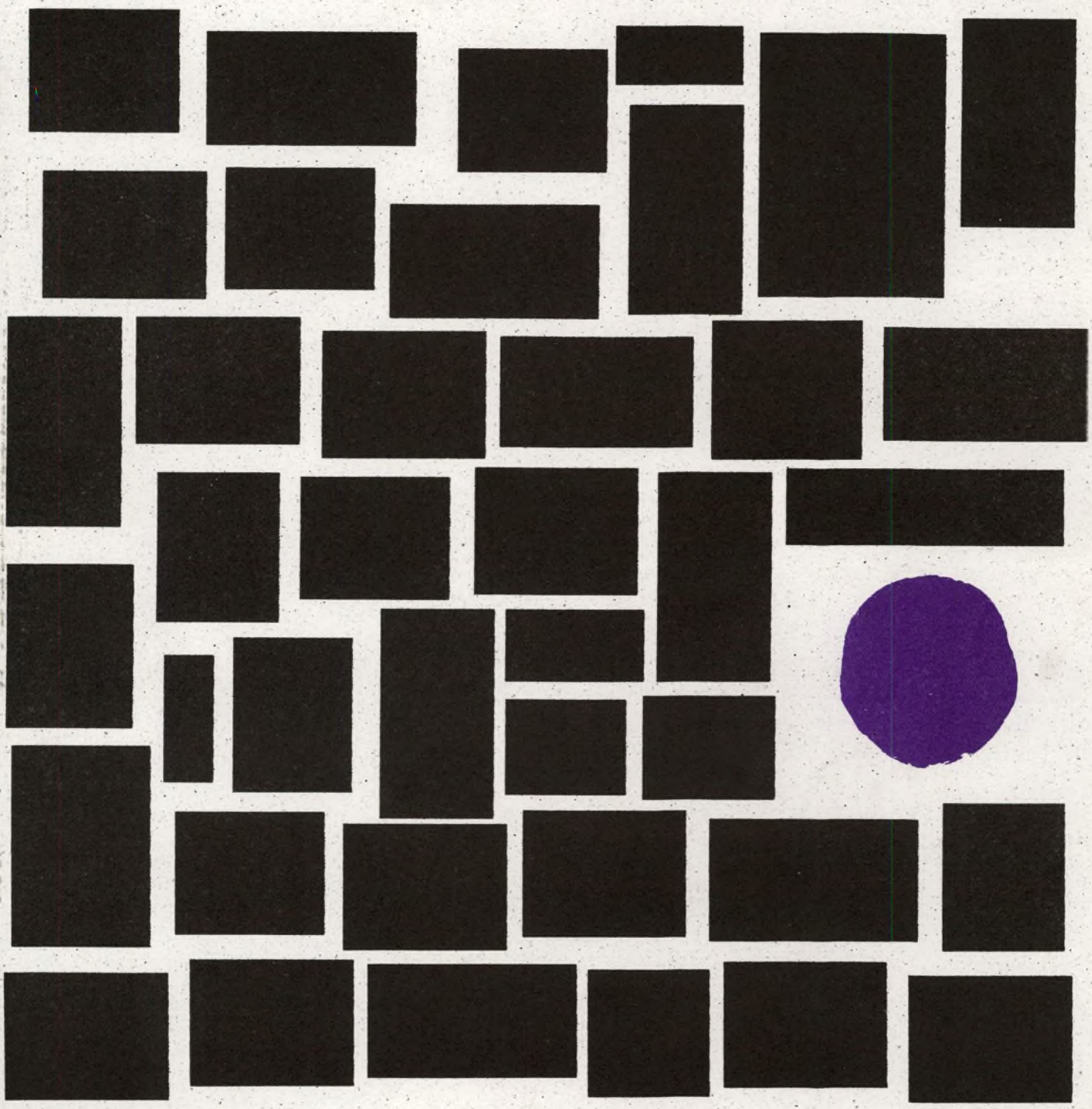
REFLECTIONS:

NARRATIVES OF PROFESSIONAL HELPING



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REFLECTIONS:

NARRATIVES OF PROFESSIONAL HELPING

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REFLECTIONS' purpose is to publish narratives, personal accounts that describe and explain the process of helping others and shaping social change over time. The journal seeks to build a literary tradition and a record of wisdom for critical study and fruitful discovery. It encourages stories that convey a sense of immediacy, portray practice across diverse populations and capture the range and variety of strategies and systems within the helping professions. Priority given to articles that provide new understanding of practice. The journal publishes stories of professional helpers such as ethicists, psychotherapists, community organizers, case and group workers, policy makers, family and child practitioners, health and mental health care providers; and educators, researchers, and administrators in the helping and academic professions.

REFLECTIONS' central theme is narrative inquiry of professional practice. It publishes personal accounts of professional action designed to aid and support human and social development. The stories have a literary presence, offer new perspectives on practice, and demonstrate the conceit of failure as well as success. The narrator explains the reasons for the action and freely identifies the mistakes made in the practice. The purpose of the narrative is not to demonstrate achievement; rather, it is to capture the experience.

THE NARRATIVE STRUCTURE. A narrative is a story worth telling. Narratives are personal stories that give readers a fresh perspective about the practice of change. Written in a temporal sequence and or within a thematic structure; narratives recount the helping process. Narratives are explored within a contextual frame and supply a rich textual description of the experience: they take into account time, place, action, persons, behavior and interaction. Narratives explain and describe events; results; conflicts; complicating actions; and how, why, and what was done. In narratives the writer evaluates the experience, whether or not there is a resolution. Some narratives end with a coda, that is, a perspective on what occurred.

WRITING INSTRUCTIONS AND SUBMISSION: Manuscripts are peer reviewed. Articles appropriate to the journal's purpose are reviewed anonymously by members of the Executive and Editorial Board. Articles are accepted based on their contribution to practice knowledge. Publication decisions require about four months.

1. Authors are expected to use the most recent APA publication format.
2. The manuscript length depends upon the temporal sequence of the event.
3. Include on separate page a brief abstract written in the same style as the narrative.
4. Place identifying information such as name, affiliation, address, phone and fax only on cover page.
5. Send (3) printed double spaced hard copies of the manuscript to the editor.

Upon acceptance of the article for publication one (1) copy on disk in ASCII, WP or Microsoft format (for IBM compatible or MAC and one(1) hard copy will be requested. Submission of narrative poetry and photography is encouraged.

Names of persons and organizations mentioned in the articles published in REFLECTIONS **have been changed to protect their privacy.** REFLECTIONS **disclaims responsibility for statements, either fact or opinion made by contributors.**

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REFLECTIONS:

NARRATIVES OF PROFESSIONAL HELPING

VOLUME 3 SPRING 1997 NUMBER 4

LOSS OF HOMELAND: INSIGHTS OF 'STRANGERS'

A SPECIAL ISSUE

GUEST EDITORS: GOLIE JANSEN, MARIAN AGUILAR

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the journal people read!

THE CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY PRESS, LONG BEACH, CA

HONORING JAMES J. KELLY

James J. Kelly, the producer (as in movies) of *Reflections*, has left the position of Director of the Department of Social Work, CSULB, to become Dean of the School of Health and Human Services, California State University, Los Angeles. This issue honors Jim for his extraordinary support and belief in *Reflections*.

He reads each issue from cover to cover, often discussing the different narratives with the editor, the faculty, and his partner Robert; he tells his colleagues from all over the world about the journal and sends copies to our University President raving about it; and whenever he gives a public speech, always he tells the audience that *Reflections* is wonderful, has great stories, is sorely needed, and has made important and significant contributions to the profession.

Jim has been and is the most enthusiastic voice for *Reflections*. After we had published our first issue, Jim told us that when he and the faculty had agreed to fund *Reflections*, he had no idea what it was going to be like. He took a leap of faith that narratives about practice could form a scholarly journal, even though its writing and design did not follow the traditional form of professional journals. Jim followed his words with the financial support that has allowed the journal to flourish.

Beyond all this, Jim's charisma, talent and power never interfered with the publishing of the journal. We intend to publish his "Brief Reflection," sometime in the last quarter of the 21st century.

The Editors

INSIDERS AND OUTSIDERS

by Paul Abels

It is perhaps prophetic that this issue is dedicated to narratives dealing with the stranger. The stranger is usually an outsider, someone new, not part of our way. Being a stranger, an outsider reflects ideas which camouflage the feelings we have all experienced from time to time, but which are difficult to define without presenting examples from our lives, experiences often shielded in an armor of silence because of the pain the feeling imprinted. Often our first thoughts of "outsider" brings to mind the immigrant, the alien, the isolate. But being an outsider has universal consequences which cover the range of human experience.

The week that this issue went to press was one that potentially illustrates both the clarity and paradoxical nature of the concept "outsider." It was a week in which Princess Diana, Mother Teresa, and Viktor Frankl died. Each in his/her way were outsiders, each reached our insides. Each of them exposed us to important attitudes, actions, and commitments which make the idea of outsider a fiercely creative, but potentially malignant force.

We are patterned to think, and reasonably so, that "insider" is synonymous with power. By that definition, Princess Diana started life as an insider. She was born to a prestigious family, which had both wealth and influence,a family used to being on the inside. That is, until she entered the "royal" family where she remained an outsider subject to rejections, embarrassments, and a "subject," bound to the rules which favored males and regulated females to traditional positions. The story of her life is now open to all who care to read about her or watch TV. She refused to accept the roles and rules that would have opened the door to her becoming the quintessential insider. She became an outsider, attempting to forge her own way. She used her charm, beauty, and wealth, to help others, and became a reference for many others who were attempting to break free of the cultural rules which put a stranglehold on their lives. Her death revealed the immense power that her "outsidedness" had contributed to countless people, a mere reflection of which was exhibited by the world wide remorse following her death (accompanied by public ridicule of the silence of the "insiders").

Mother Teresa was truly a holy woman. It may be strange to say that made her an outsider, for she certainly wasn't an outsider to the street people in India and the places where she worked to help the poor. But as a Catholic nun in a predominantly Hindu and partly Muslim nation to her credit, and to India's, she overcame being an

outsider, scaling the restrictive borders. She certainly was out side the mainstream. "Saint of the Gutters,"awarded a Nobel Prize, and she was honored by the Pope as a "woman who marked the history of the century." She started a new order of nuns, developed helping centers throughout the world, and brought out the best in many of the people who became involved in her work. Her dedication to aid the poorest of the poor made her an extremely creative and welcome "outsider." At Princess Diana's funeral, in her hands was a copy of a bible given to her by Mother Teresa.

Viktor Frankl was an outsider from birth. He was born a Jew. Jews through the centuries have been the outsiders, living in strange lands and worshipping in strange ways. As long as the countries' monarchs offered protection, they could exist, but on the margin. When their usefulness waned they were pushed out, to be strangers, outsiders in another new country. Frankl's ancestors' assimilation into the country of his birth did not make him an insider. It was not enough to save his father, mother, and pregnant wife from death in the Nazi death camps. Even in the camps, inmate 119104 remained an outsider, refusing to give up and working hard to convince hopeless prisoners that there was a reason to keep living. His mental health contributions grew from his belief in the power of self determination and that it was essential to practice the art of living, even in the camps. His contributions outlived the horror, leading to the development of an approach to helping which he called logotherapy and to the writing of his influential book *Man's Search For Meaning.* It is now in its 73rd edition and translated into 24 languages. He might have believed that it matters not whether you are stranger or an outsider What is important is how you live your life.

The articles in this issue bring home the intensity of the pain and the feeling of strangeness of those treated as outsiders. Some believe they will always be seen as, or feel like, strangers. We can only reflect on these stories as a sample of what immigrants and aliens feel when they are constantly being singled out as different, as problems, as people not to be trusted, to be denied certain rights, to be held in limbo while others, the insiders, determine their fate.

It would be an honor to the three who died if we could erase the malignant idea of "outsider" (even if just from our own minds) and welcome the stranger. And, it wouldn't be a bad idea either, to eliminate, universally, the idea of "insider" as well. □

Dear Editor,

Alcoholism Treatment in Norway: The American Way

In her article "Doing Alcoholism Treatment in Norway: A Personal Reminiscence"[Vol. 3 #3 (97)] Katherine van Wormer asks how such crazy activities as she describes can happen in Norway, a country where even selling a used car is regulated.

In the 1980's Norway had for a few years a conservative government that opened up health care for privatization. Institutions like Gjovikseter, or Vangsaeter as it is called, (I don't see why the author protects it by using a fictive name) are a result of this. The township politicians allocate the tax money spent on helping fellow townsmen and women that have problems with alcohol. The private clinics depend on this money. Kai, the leader at Vangsaeter, has to convince the township politicians that his clinic does well. He also has to convince the drunks that he is their salvation, so that they can put pressure on their township politicians to pay for them. He had better be good because he asks for 7 - 8000 USD for six weeks of treatment, while the government institutions only ask for 1500 from the home township of their patients.

In her paper van Wormer is unhappy with Kai being more concerned with PR than with running his institution in a better way. Of course, Kai is very concerned with PR- more than with anything else. He survives because of that, and only because of that. Kai is able, through his PR, his kidnapping of clients, his performances on TV, his hold on followers, to maintain a public opinion that he is doing good. First of all, he is selling the Minnesota Model for treating alcoholics. He underlines that the Model comes from America. Norway is one of the most Americanized countries in Europe; and Norwegians buy what comes from MacDonalds, Hollywood or Minnesota without asking any questions. Kai recruits Americans to work at his institution and he refers to them as experts of the Minnesota Model. (The fact that van Wormer got the job at Vangsaeter before she even had heard about the Minnesota Model probably shows that being an American was more important than being an expert.)

Furthermore, the Model is coupled to alcoholics that have come to new conclusions and turned "totalics." Norwegians love that because it is the same as good Protestant piety. Nothing is better than a repentant sinner! And even better, many of these sinners are rough people from the working class, or lower, who have really turned bad to good for themselves and for others. But they do not want to be portrayed as saints, since that probably would scare many potential clients. Kai in the article was taken to court because of sexual harassment, but this is the kind of man he wants to be in his message to the potential clients he appeals to in the media- "Stop drinking and your sex life blooms! Stop drinking, but not sinning. You can still smoke." The sum of vices is constant; we have to maintain some.

The critics of the private clinics are many. The government clinics are very frustrated by the work Vangsaeter and other such clinics do, as the government clinics receive many patients who have become much worse after they have spent all the money on Kai and his ideas, particularly patients that have a more complicated pathological picture than Kai wants to see. Kai's message, however, is, "Don't call them sick, they are just drunk. The government just helps them to find excuses for their drinking." Such statements appeal on TV.

When he talks to media, Kai is very clever in telling the Norwegian public about the successes of his institution, about how many more persons than the government institutions he has treated successfully. And he always brings newly saved persons who know how to tell about their former lives and their new lives. In the debates on TV, the opposite side,

the government institution, is, at least in the debates I have observed, represented by professionals who can't hide their attitude towards these private clinics and therefore act a bit arrogant. This behavior loses against Kai's rough rhetoric. Furthermore, professional secrecy prevents the government clinics from presenting clients who have been helped by them.

Within the health sector, and especially among those working with alcoholics, the craziness of places like Vangsaeter is very well known, but they seem to have given up fighting against them. The government has enough patients, as they have long waiting lists, so if Vangsaeter is there for some, and since they are successful in their PR, convincing the public (and many within the government) that they are doing well, they are left alone and even protected. The health administration at the national and at the county level does not accept the work of these clinics. But at the level of township, where there is extended authority in deciding on the use of their own money, they have hope in Vangsaeter and such. They are close to the problems with their alcoholics, and are in desperate need of doing something to help them and their families.

They act on this problem when they send their drunks to Vangsaeter. The local politicians look at the TV debates, and they read the colorful press full of salvation testimony from alternative medicine and from Vangsaeter. No one asks for proof. The health sector does asks for evidence, but they are organized in a different department than social welfare, which is too busy to ask for quality as long as there are patients who are happy to go to places like Vangsaeter, and who furthermore promise to stop drinking if they are given the money to go.

Kai's concern is to have his straw into the government resources that are allocated by the local politicians. No one really knows if, and how many, are helped by his Minnesota Model. But according to van Wormer's paper he is willing to fight to protect his interests, even using methods we thought only could happen within the Mafia business like you have in America. □

Frode Storaas, Bergen, Norway
(*Is a professor of Anthropology at University of Bergen*)

Dear Editor,

I have read widely in the fields of medical history and "alternative" medicine for almost three decades. For the past several years I have taught an interdisciplinary general education course, "Alternative Media," which addresses how the communication arts have affected fields in the sciences and social sciences; one of my four model research modules in that course addresses the health arena, And so it was with great interest and delight that I read the Winter 1997 "Healing" issue of *Reflections: Narratives of Professional Helping* - The Special Editors for that issue, Nancy Rainville Oliver and Lyda Hill, are to be great;y commended.

During the middle decades of this century, the concept of what even constitutes scientific knowledge greatly narrowed, albeit mistakenly, in the minds of many people including most allopathic western medical practitioners. So it is little wonder that notions about what constitutes healing narrowed even moreso. The inportance of the arts, the spiritual, and other arenas in the realm of healing were often denigrated, or at best, simply ignored. It is becoming increasingly imperative that awareness be focused —as the "Healing" issue of *Reflections* does via its narratives-on the continuum of healers who have been able to reach back in time, across cultures, and/or across disciplines to provide holistic and highly successful approaches to health. Happily, there is now a rapidly growing trend of interest in and use of alternative and holistic healing therapies amongst

the general awareness on the part of even many allopathically trained Medical doctors. The *Reflections* Special Editors have brought us a cutting edge look at healing.

I read with particular interest the "Reflections on Meadowlark" by Dr. Evans Loomis and the accompanying interview with Loomis by Nancy Oliver. I have long been aware of the marvelous healing experience that was Meadowlark. And I have been casually acquainted with Dr. Loomis. Oliver has made an especially fine contribution in focusing attention on the work of this man, a pillar of the holistic healing thegeneral public and a spreading awareness on the part of even many allopathically trained medical doctors. The Reflections Special Editors have brought us a cutting edge look at healing.

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Dr. Saundra McMillan
(Is Associate Professor, Department of Film and Electronic Arts, Californial State University at Long Beach.)

There were several typos in Gila Cohen Davidovsky's "Finding Hope Among Shattered Dreams" (Vol. 3/#3,'97). On page 48, the last sentence should continue, "...are giant steps for such a traumatized community." Page two should read, "that evening I went into rapid labor." Also, Gila's name was mispelled in the table of contents.

We attribute the errors to changes in the typesetting routine and have chalked them off as learning experiences. We hope that this will not occur again. All of us including our marvelous authors and readers look forward to a more perfect presentation.

LOSS OF A HOMELAND:
Insights of 'Strangers' For Teaching and Helping

"I see you're from Urbana (University of Illinois), but where's your voice from?" This question asked in an elevator at a CSWE conference jolted my awareness. For a long time I have avoided taking a look at who I am, I can pass as a (white) American, work hard to fit in a foreign academic world...yet my voice keeps giving me away. I am different. I am a foreigner." (Diary fragment, Golie, 1990)

Time will never erase who I am. As a friend used to say to me "if you are not certain you are Black all you have to do is take a mirror and look at yourself and you will have had a 'Black Experience.'" All I have to do is listen to myself and look at myself in the mirror and I have a "Latina experience." It is an experience that is half Mexican and half American. It is the color of coffee with cream. Yes, Cafe Aloud. It is the experience of being both at home and a stranger at the same time. (Marian)

By
Golie Jansen and
Marian Aguilar

Golie Jansen, Ph.D., is Assistant Professor, Eastern Washington University, WA

Marian Aguilar, Ph.D., is Associate Professor, University of Texas at Austin.

Displacement provides unique opportunitites for new vision
Janet Wolff. in: *Resident Alien* (1995)

Being born outside the United States or having lived on on the borderlands offer an enduring awareness of being a stranger. The idea for this special issue was born out of curiosity about how social work educators or practitioners have come to live with their felt or assigned outsider/foreigner status. Educators and practitioners in the helping professions are increasingly committed to a focus on diversity in working with clients of different ethnicity/color and national origin. What seems to be missing are the insights of faculty and practitioners themselves in terms of what it means to them to be different and to be an outsider.

This issue explores in a variety of voices and narrative forms the profound experiences of people who for different reasons leave their homelands and who temporarily or forever feel 'strangers' and 'foreigners' in the U.S. The importance of this exploration is to challenge the generalized assumptions and ideas of what it is to be a foreigner/ stranger. Like all narrative work, from the deeply personal and unique stories of persons of different national backgrounds and experiences of 'foreignness' universal themes emerge that invite a new understanding. The stories told by practitioners and educators may be understood as the 'lived' experience that may challenge or deepen understanding of theoretical concepts such as biculturalism, assimilation and acculturation created in the dominant cultural discourse. One may ask, is 'adjustment' i.e. assimilation/acculturation an external or internal phenomenon?

Being a foreigner or stranger means different things to different people. Coming from a different land, having a different cultural heritage and language implies a knowing of a place where the mind's eye can go, where landscape, customs and people make for 'roots,' where something is left behind. It forces those who leave all that

behind to ponder the meaning of re- or dislocation, and the loss of a homeland.

Being an outsider does not have to relate to being a foreigner. The experience happens to everyone in different contexts, and the feeling can be as profound and discomforting as the experience of being a stranger in a different land. For instance, feminists—especially feminists of color—offer a critical discourse about being an outsider. (Anzaldua, 1987; Hooks, 1990). The exploration of similar 'outsider' domains could be insightful (and perhaps the topic for another special issue). For this issue we choose to understand and limit contributions from those authors who were outsiders because of national or indigenous origin.

We, as editors, have our different experiences with being a stranger and in fact were strangers to each other. We recently met, at the Doctoral Reunion of the School of Social Work, University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign where both of us received our doctorates: Marian in 1982 and Golie in 1992. After presenting at the reunion colloquium, we talked to each other informally and exchanged insecurities about doing public presentations. English for both of us is a second language. We discovered that we had something in common: presenting in public makes us nervous; words come to mind in our native language and we cannot "find" the right English words. We shared the experience of recognizing that when we are under stress, languages compete in our heads! And a language that represents more than words! It's what Gloria Anzaldua writes about 'voice:

> "Foreigners/strangers must learn a foreign tongue—standard American English—, a language laden with alien ideologies which are often in direct opposition to those in our own cultures. To speak English is to think in that language, to adopt the ideology of the people whose language it is and to be 'inhabited' by their discourse" (*Making Face, Making Soul* (1990). p.xxii).

What does being a foreigner/stranger mean for us? We both fit labels of being bilingual and bicultural. Golie is still a Dutch citizen, a foreigner, labeled as "permanent alien" by immigration laws. She came to the United States in 1987 as a single woman, the only member of her family ever to immigrate. She was trained in Holland as a "cultural worker;" a degree from a School of Social Work (group work/ community organization), a popular degree in the early 70s. She worked with high school drop-out youth and later as an activist and organizer in Third World solidarity movements. She also worked in Papua, New Guinea training the first women to be village development and agricultural extension workers. Marian is not a foreigner in the strict sense, but has experienced being a 'stranger' as a first generation Mexican American on her mother's side with close ties to the borderlands. Her 'stranger' status is deeply rooted in the stories of oppression and discrimination of being Mexican American. What follows is the result of an interchange we had about the question: what does it mean for us to live with the loss of a homeland?

Marian:

" I guess because I come from a distinct set of parents I begin there. For my father the oppression he suffered engendered in him a welcoming stance to any stranger, whether it was an American who was Black or someone from another country. This did not come easy. It was a life-long experience beginning with being stoned, receiving a concussion in first grade from White fellow students that did not accept Mexican Americans in their school. At twelve, he was shot in his leg for playing in the White kid's park. Instead of becoming bitter, he learned compassion.

I also embody the teachings of my mother, who was born in Mexico and who suffered the ravages of discrimination, being deprived of an education. She was brought up in a French Lousiana/Texas border town, where Mexicans were little more than cheap labor. In her first three years in grade school she was punished for acts she did not know she did because she did not understand the language. She left school after third grade. Years later, when I returned to the area to obtain her records for citizenship, all records of Mexican children attending the school at that time had been destroyed.

This childhood experience led my mother never to speak English to us; she never wanted us to forget where we came from. She wanted us to appreciate and be proud of our Mexican roots and culture. It became her avocation that her children integrate the best of both cultures: the Mexican and the American. I am a product of that and that is my orientation.

As Gloria Anzaldua (1987) relates, people who live in the borderlands straddle two cultures and learn to be at home in both without betraying one or the other. Sometimes it is comfortable being in one or the other, and sometimes it is not because it demands making difficult choices depending on the particular moment; there are many moments everyday that demand this. For instance, will I pronounce my last name so that someone can understand it, or will I pronounce it as it is supposed to be pronounced in Spanish? Am I courteous to a cashier who just followed me around the jewelry section of a large department store to make sure I would not steal the jewelry? How will I respond to the head of a program who refuses to allow me to teach a course he feels someone of my background is not capable of teaching?

Neither the passage of time nor the earning of a Ph.D. erases the experience of being a stranger in your own land. I guess that is the challenge to celebrate life with all that it brings. My teaching is a constant journey toward modeling respect for difference and celebration of difference.

Marian's voice as a 'stranger' and woman of color is different from Golie's, who experiences alienation and loss of a homeland by coming from a different country.

Golie: When I lived in Urbana, I naturally befriended many women from all over the world who had lost their homeland: women from France, South Africa, India, England, Turkey, and I am sure that not all, but a great deal of the affections and affinities had to do with being a foreigner. We would often talk about 'home' and discuss the loss of it as more than the loss of a place, or family or food. Of course, we discussed the liberating parts, such as in my case: "If I had stayed in Holland, I would have never dreamed of getting a Ph.D." or, our friend from India, "I would have been forced to marry a man chosen by my parents." Yet, despite the appreciation for the opportunities and freedoms, there was also always an inexplicable recognition of something that is hard to put in words. 'Loss' did not capture it, nor did 'nostalgia' or 'yearning.' I still cannot put my finger on what it means, after years, to speak of home and a homeland. I still tell my American family and friends that I am going home, meaning home to Holland. Then, when I go, home to my country and home place, after nearly 20 years, I sometimes feel more a visitor. I am confused; I am seen as 'stranger.' Once in the bank in my small home town, the teller started to speak English to me when I spoke to her in Dutch. Yet, long before the awareness of the significance of place was introduced as "sociology of place," I always noticed a peculiar feeling... driving from Schiphol Airport until about 15 kilometers from my mother's house, I would start feeling different, like the opening of the heart. I feel lighter, I breathe easier seeing the familiar farmhouses, grassland, cows, pretty little towns, and winding river, bordering the town with the imposing cathedral. Schama (1993) claims that there is a genetic level recognition of landscapes. If families have lived long enough in a certain place, i.e. have 'known' the landscape, than it feels like home. Going home is more then going home to family and friends.

Being a foreigner for me carries ambivalence about what the United States represents to me and to the rest of the world. Unlike many refugees and immigrants who flee oppression or poverty, the United States— 'the land of freedom— does present problems for me. What about (social) justice? I am very aware as an instructor that this ambivalence informs my teaching. For instance, as I teach "Introduction to Social Welfare" to undergraduate students, I bring a perspective of questioning the U.S. social welfare system. I discuss the tension between the values of freedom and equality in the context of comparative social welfare policies and how that affects thinking about human rights. Often giving personal examples of how I grew

up in my family, we talk about what it would mean for families in the US to live in a country with family allowance, universal health care, subsidized child care, housing subsidies, and generous student loans, which, (before 'retrenchment' became a buzzword) was the reality in many European countries. In helping students to critically analyze the underlying values of social welfare policies, many come to see the American model as coming up short. I remember one very young student raising her hand during some of those discussions saying:" If they can do that in Europe why can't we do that here? Aren't we the richest country in the world?"

It would be hard to claim that the way I teach a "Community Context of Practice" class soley is informed by being a foreigner, but I give much attention to discussing with students the meaning of community for our personal lives. How does the nature of the communities we live in and the presence/absence of positive connections play a role in our lives and the shaping of our identities? What represents community to us? Having lost the 'familiar,' language, customs, and people that made up community in a homeland, may increase sensitivity to the importance of community in a new land.

Another piece of being a foreigner is the attraction to other foreigners, both in my personal life and professional choices I have made. For ten years I was involved in working and doing research with South East Asian refugees, especially with refugee women. I learned that being a social worker with an MSW degree is less important than being seen as a good helper. I had to be willing to build relationships, be like a friend, and I would be treated likewise. It made me feel different in the presence of these women, who, like me, struggled with language, adjustment, and acceptance. With them, differences felt comfortable and brought up mutual curiosity and acceptance. Working with these women forever changed my views about what really matters in the helping profession, not the degree you have, but the kind of person you are.

How then do I resolve to live with the loss of a homeland? I take comfort in the wisdom of others who were strangers and teach us through their examples and words:

When you accept the state of being a stranger, you are no longer a stranger. I have been an exile when everything around me seemed strange and everybody was a stranger. Once I accepted that I did not have to belong and I didn't have to be part of the world, then I was free to be part of it. There was a paradoxical relaease of the spirit. The world became mine when I was not longer holding on to it. (Satiate Kaman, 1995, p.8).

What does it mean for others to be a foreigner? What is the experience of being a stranger? The contributors to this issue all offer different voices; they speak of pain and despair, of yearning and resolution. Not all came from foreign shores. An indigenous person invites us to live ourselves into the meaning of "foreignness" experienced from the perspective of sovereignty. Loss of a homeland, far or near, always invites reflections on the political, the personal and the professional. It is not just national origin that makes the difference: family life, class, gender, sexual orientation and skin color all inform the sense of self that is foregrounded by a 'foreign' name or status, even when one's passport may show U.S. citizenship.

Reactions to the meaning of losing a home land vary. In our conversation with Gisela Konopka about contributing to "Brief Reflections" in this issue, she responded: "I'm not sure about this, it is different for me, I am not yearning for my homeland. The Nazis took it away long before I could claim it." For others, the deepening of one's own understanding of self as a "stranger" in terms of national origin comes out in relationship with clients or choices about who to serve with grant monies. In the most moving case it reveals understandings of oppressor/oppressed dynamics that evoke the healing of the self and soul. For some, there is the yearning for "home" that does not go away. The familiarity with the foods, the customs, the taken-for-granted communication patterns and the questions raised when moving to a new land never seem to end. But also, the continuous reflection on the questions "who am I, and where do I belong?" leads to the expe-

rience of gradually living into the answers, finding accommodations and even 'heart' felt solutions. These narratives tell about the vicarious journey into the search for meaning of being a foreigner/stranger, into the shaping of an indivisible personal and professional self in a new land.

Ultimately the meaning of being a foreigner/stranger is the question of identities achieved in lived experience that, because of another national origin, remain different from native born U.S. citizens. This experience we believe, influences the work we do as helpers and educators. It may not necessarily represent a different practice or pedagogy from those who are not foreigners, yet for some their particular approach to practice and teaching may have developed because of being foreigners. However, we as outsiders may look with a different lens at the world we live in now and at the one we came from. It helps us to ask questions differently and perhaps to develop different visions about teaching and helping. Hopefully it helps us understand what others feel when they see themselves as outsiders. Being an outsider/ stranger may challenge us to transform the dualisms that terms like outsider/ insider, foreigner/national imply. We may respond more intently to efforts and movements that call for both the recognition of difference and inclusion/solidarity with the strangers in our midst. □

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WHICH CANOE ARE YOU IN?
A VIEW FROM A FIRST NATIONS PERSON

This narrative discusses the meaning of "foreignness" from the perspective of an indigenous person. Issues of sovereignty and citizenship in Native Nations are discussed as they influence my decisions and actions as a social worker and educator. Compatible areas and conflicts between my professional and Lakota cultures are discussed.

By
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Centuries ago when the first Europeans came to the Americas, the indigenous people or people of the First Nations were watching them. Decisions had to be made about the new arrivals. Should they be greeted with friendship or hostility, chased away or allowed to remain? After generations of observations, the leaders made a decision: the newcomers would be allowed to stay, but their lives must always be separate from the First Nation's people. The lives and values of the newcomers were so vastly different from those of the indigenous people that it was clear that no one person could successfully live up to the standards and practices in both societies. This philosophy of parallel cultures was commemorated in the Two Row Wampum Belt which depicts two canoes traveling down the same river.

To travel the river successfully, you need to be in one canoe. Anyone who attempts to travel down the river with one foot in each canoe is headed for disaster and will inevitably end up in neither.

This story constitutes part of the teaching base of the Haudenosaunee, a confederacy of First Nations people who had some of the earliest contact with European settlers. The story tells us that you can be White or Indian but not both. While some researchers who conduct empirical studies of bicultural identity may see the world through a different lens, many people see a lot of truth in the story. What follows is my story of teaching social work from the Indian canoe. There was a time in my life when I tried to have a foot in each, but I have since learned that it is impossible to balance while standing in one canoe, much less two. Nevertheless, I do continue to reach across the water.

My story of "foreignness" and its implications for my work as a social work educator is a bit different from the stories of others. When most people think of foreigners, they tend to think of people that

immigrated to the United States from other places, not citizens of indigenous nations that have been displaced and/or surrounded by the United States. I have found that many people in the United States have sense of community, support, and cultural continuity. I discussed my dream and five-year plan of buying some land and beginning to build on my husband's reservation in spite of the difficult commute to get to work that this would mean. This dream is strong but I still find myself reaching out across the water toward the other canoe in an attempt to do it all. The five-year plan includes getting tenure at my university first, then feeling freer to move farther away from the school to the reservation.

Clearly, Indian people and Indian reservations do not exist in a vacuum. It is not realistic for most of us to live in complete isolation from the United States, nor is this necessarily the desire of some Indians. However because Indian Nations continue to exist as sovereign entities, many of us still feel our primary (and sometimes exclusive) allegiance is to our own nations.

Issues of displacement and cultural marginality: Sometimes I fall in the water and try to dog-paddle.

I live outside of a reservation and therefore within a state. I work for a state university but politically and culturally I am a foreigner in the United States. The land that I live in is filled with people from cultures different from my own. This takes on additional meaning when at one time the whole continent was populated with indigenous people. Now we are so out numbered that many people are oblivious to our very existence.

Being on a Lakota reservation brings both strange and familiar feelings. A few years ago I was driving across the country at the time of the annual Oglala Pow Wow. I decided to stop and stay awhile. It felt right to be visiting this home where I had never lived. The dances and drum beat were familiar and comforting. The announcer kept the audience well-informed of the day's events, that is, those people who spoke Lakota were well-informed of the days events. From my perspective I was the only one in this world (that should have been my world) who did not understand the language. I speak only English, leaving me marginal in this, my own home. Perhaps I've managed to get in the canoe only to discover that everyone has a paddle but me.

Land is central to the culture, identity, spirituality, well-being, and survival of Indian people. Living where I do, far from traditional Lakota territories, makes it difficult to maintain my identity as a Lakota person. I, like many other urban Indians, find it necessary to travel "back home" periodically for renewal. Unlike many other spiritualities, most Indian traditional ceremonies cannot be transported to other regions. My traditions require that certain things be done in certain places and at certain times. There are seven places that are sacred to the Lakota people within our traditional territories, the most famous being the Black Hills. In order to maintain my own well-being and that of the Lakota people, I have now made a commitment to return "home" at least once a year.

This year I was unable to return to South Dakota, which caused a severe spiritual and moral crisis. Long before the time appointed for my return, I made a commitment to do a presentation at a social work conference (a commitment prized quite highly in my school as important on the road to tenure). I had not attended the conference for the past two years because it conflicted with the time when I needed to go home. This year since the two commitments were in different weeks, I made plans to go to the conference. A long, drawn-out illness left me with little stamina. Up until the last minute, I convinced myself that I could do both, but this proved to be unrealistic. I never would have knowingly chosen to do a presentation at a social work conference over my spiritual and cultural commitment. Reaching out over the water toward the

other canoe, I ended up with a face full of water and a heart full of regrets. As a guideline for this narrative, I was asked to address the personal meaning of cultural marginality. Forced assimilation of Indian people has, in some cases, led to questions of identity and cultural marginality. Within my family there are people who have accepted the values of the dominant society and are reluctant to have anything to do with anything or anyone Indian. However, as a social worker I prefer to address issues from a strengths perspective rather than one of marginality. Looking at issues from a deficit perspective tends to reinforce weaknesses rather than strengths. In spite of the genocide that has been actively practiced against Indian people, we still exist as distinct cultures and nations. Resilience has led to survival against all odds.

My grandparents grew up at a time when they saw very little future in being Indian. My grandfather was born nine months after the massacre at Wounded Knee, often cited as the last gasp of Indian resistance against the encroachment of the United States. Assimilation was seen as the only alternative to extinction. My grandparents preferred not to talk or think about being Indian.

A few years ago I was visiting my grandmother. In her 90s she was still able to live in her own home with the assistance of a home care attendant. My first day there the attendant commented several times on my phenotypical features and how "Indian" I looked. My grandmother kept silent. The attendant seemed to need some explanation, and since none was forthcoming, began to tell us some convoluted story with religious overtones of how American Indians had traveled to many continents in ancient times, which explains why some people look Indian. My grandmother preferred not to disclose her ethnic identity and concealed it whenever possible. For her it must have felt like a matter of survival. I respect her feelings but I feel differently. I am proud of my culture and my heritage (perhaps in part because I live in a time when this is relatively safe). My writing, my speeches, my community commitments, and the way in which I present myself all proclaim my pride in the resilience of Indian people. There was a time when our languages, religions, and cultures had to go underground rather than be destroyed. Some things were lost and many people experienced painful conflicts over what it meant to be an Indian, but we have survived and our cultures continue.

During times when I lived outside of an Indian community, I tended to feel more marginal. The discomfort that I feel when surrounded by people speaking my language, which I have difficulty understanding, is far outweighed by the sense of community and belonging. Each time I return to Lakota territory, I understand a little bit more of our traditions, culture, and language, and who I am as a Lakota person. Most American Indian traditions tell of people who have been lost and will return. As a returning person the journey is difficult, but there are many who await me with open arms. Community in this sense is much more than a geographical entity. A sense of the group as a source of identity is a prominent feature of many Indian cultures. In community I belong. Any sense of past marginality evaporates.

Assaults on sovereignty: They're trying to sink the canoe!

This is a time when indigenous nations are facing increasing assaults from states and from the federal government. Attacks on sovereignty take place as outsiders seek resources on Native land. Recently, the U.S. Supreme Court held that the state of New York has a right to tax the sale of cigarettes and gasoline to non-Indians on reservations. This is in direct opposition to rights guaranteed under treaties. It limits the sovereignty of the nations within New York's boundaries by forc-

ing them to collect someone else's tax. When the state attempted to enforce this decision, it greatly damaged the primary economic base of these nations, further hindered self-sufficiency, and led to violent confrontations between state police and indigenous people on Indian land.

This is not the first time that the inherent sovereignty of Native Nations has been under attack. The 1950s was known as the "termination" era. Termination was a legal process by which the U.S. federal government took steps to end its responsibilities to many Indian nations such as the Klamath and the Menominee. The process legally dissolved the existence of Indian Nations in the eyes of the United States. After termination the people of those nations were left with no treaty rights, no health benefits, no social benefits, no reservation lands. After termination the federal government completely denied the Indian status of thousands of people. With this step federal policy went beyond ignoring indigenous nations as represented by the Indian canoe. This policy set out to destroy the canoe all together so that its existence would no longer be an issue. Although the termination era took place before my birth, I still feel the wounds of this attack on Indian people. I am left with the fear that although new policies may have different names, such attacks will come again.

Termination was promoted as a progressive policy. It was justified by the argument that Indian people had "advanced" to the stage of being ready to participate fully in the United States. Markers of this readiness to assimilate can include involvement in the political processes of the United States. After all, if everyone is in the U.S. canoe, there is no need for an Indian canoe.

According to the federal government, keeping an Indian identity was seen as holding on to poverty and a wide variety of social problems. I see this very differently. In reality, termination is closer to extinction than to an end to social problems. If our canoe is destroyed, some may successfully make it to the United States canoe. Many others will be lost in the process. Some Native Nations such as the Menominee were able to successfully advocate for a reversal of the legal termination process. Others are currently fighting for federal recognition.

Cultural identity and professional issues: How to keep balanced in my canoe while surviving in social work academia.

My culture and sense of who I am as an Indian person shapes my values, beliefs, and behaviors. It shapes these both as a human being and as a social worker/educator. My ideas about respect and responsibility guide my interactions with clients and students. I do not lecture at my students; rather, I guide them and facilitate discussions based on my own learning. I believe that they are capable of taking responsibility for their own learning. This is a value from my culture based on beliefs about respect, responsibility, and non- interference with the choices of others. Clearly, however, the Lakota do not have a monopoly on these values. My education at Antioch College was a major force in shaping my philosophy of teaching and learning. At times it is difficult to sort out whether my style as a social work practitioner and educator is more influenced by my culture of origin (Lakota) or my professional culture (social work). I suspect that both play significant roles.

Although my professional and cultural values are sometimes compatible, this is not always the case. Perhaps the most noticeable area of conflict between my culture of origin and my professional culture comes around political involvement as an extension of advocacy. There is no question in my mind that advocacy is one of the core values and traditions in social work. I have found myself in the role of advocate many times. In this day and age, more social workers are attempting to influence political processes and are seeking political office. My advocacy does not and cannot extend into this area.

As an indigenous person with strong values around sovereignty, I believe that it is not my role to paddle the U.S. canoe. My political participation in the outside would undermine the internal roles that indigenous people have to play within their own societies. Paddling the U.S. canoe would take me out of the Indian canoe, leaving mine adrift or at least without my in-

put. While not all Indian people share this view, many do. I point out that although I live right across the river from Canada and the political processes within Canada do have implications for my life and well-being, I do not vote there either.

In contrast, for me it is possible to advocate for the needs and rights of Indian people by trying to influence outside governments through external processes rather than internal processes such as voting. This type of external advocacy is less likely to conflict with sovereignty principles. For example, Indians of many Nations have had ongoing rallies, protests, marches, and demonstrations in an attempt to prevent exploitation of Native resources by non-Natives at Big Mountain in Arizona, and to prevent the destruction of the Cree homeland by Hydro Quebec in Canada. Many non-Natives have also joined in these important struggles.

Solidarity and support: Joining hands across the water.

Social workers and other interested individuals often ask me what they can do to help Indian people. I encourage advocacy around state and federal policies. Indian Nations do not exist in a vacuum. Federal and state policies do affect Indian people, often in a negative way. Political advocacy is an important role that can be played by those who empathize with Indian people. Non-Natives can act as watchdogs against paternalistic intrusions by federal or state governments into indigenous programs, institutions, and societies. During the recent conflicts between the state of New York and First Nations' people mentioned earlier, many non-Indians showed their support by participating in rallies, making speeches, and pressuring their political officials. Notable support came from religious coalitions and the Nation of Islam who stood in solidarity with demonstrators against the state-imposed tax. To paraphrase one social worker;"There is a debt which can never be paid. Those of us who have come to this country from elsewhere will always be in your debt and we should all do what we can to show our support for your rights."

Educators have a role to play in teaching their students about the unique position of indigenous people in the United States. For general background on sovereignty and Indian issues, educators may want to become familiar with books such as *The State of Native America: Genocide, Colonization, and Resistance*, edited by M. A. Jaimes (1992). Although we share a legacy of oppression with other groups of color, because of our history and our indigenous status, some of our issues around assimilation and citizenship are unique. *Social Services in the Ethnic Community* (Iglehart & Becerra, 1995) compares and contrasts how different ethnic populations, including indigenous people, were treated in the early history of social work. Additionally, educators in the helping professions can help students to understand how the unique position and history of indigenous people have led to the creation of specific federal policies and agencies designed to meet their needs. One of the most frequently discussed policies is the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 which attempted to remedy the alienation of vast

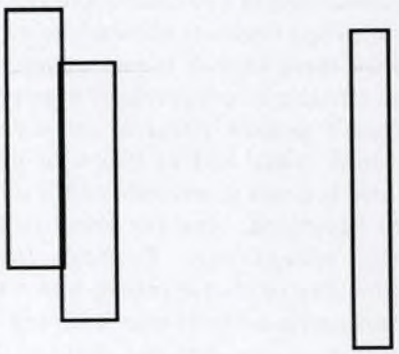
numbers of Indian children from their families and communities. Many articles in social work journals examine the Act itself and the sovereignty issues around it. Finally, it is strongly recommended that educators use the power of stories to teach about Indian issues. People from many indigenous traditions use stories as a primary teaching tool. Many books, short stories, and poems describe the experiences of Indian people. In my classes I assign

students to find a fictional work by an Indian author, read it, critique it, and identify it's implications for social work. I also take time in class to read the poem *Being Indian is...* by the late Ruben Snake. It is a brief poem filled with joy, sorrow, and humor. It is a wonderful springboard for talking about the multifaceted experience of being Indian.

Conclusion

In my experience, issues of citizenship and of foreigness are not only ignored but often do not even occur to other people in the United States. Helping professionals, educators and other interested people can begin to understand issues of citizenship of indigenous people by listening with an open mind and an open heart. Indian people who feel strongly about sovereignty and who choose not to be U.S. citizens should be taken seriously rather than brushed off and dismissed as out of touch. It is not that we are seeking to go "back to the blanket" or make unrealistic attempts to reclaim our past. Sovereignty is an issue that has been here since non-indigenous people first came to the Americas. We existed as members of independent, sovereign nations then. We exist as members of independent sovereign nations now. The least that others can do is to respect that fact.

My life is a journey which has taken me from the canoe that my grandparents placed me in to the canoe of my ancestors. For me, at this time, the canoes are close to each other. I reach out to the United States canoe in my roles as a social worker and a social work educator but as I find myself choosing the Indian canoe more and more, this type of reaching out increasingly upsets my balance. Part of the reaching out that I do now, especially around struggles and requirements of



social work academia, I do in the knowledge that a time will come when I will be required to put more of my energy into paddling the canoe of my own people. As I age, my community responsibilities grow. To be balanced and centered requires looking in, not reaching out. I have made a choice that not all Indian people make, nor is it the right choice for everyone. I have chosen and continue to choose the canoe that is right for me.□

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DISCOVERING A NEW MEANING OF HOME

When I first came to the United States to study social work over a decade ago, I considered my entire being as German, including family, friends, and just about everything else of importance. While I had previously ventured beyond Germany, I never doubted that Germany was my home. Today, I have discovered a new meaning of home, which questions whether identity can ever be completely defined through nationality. This essay explores the evolution of my home from beginnings in early post-war Germany to the present, and how this process has shaped my outlook on teaching and practice.

By
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Have patience with everything unresolved in your heart and try to love the questions themselves as if they were locked rooms or books written in a very foreign language. Don't search for the answers, which could not be given to you now, because you would not be able to live them. And the point is, to live everything. Perhaps then someday in the far future, you will gradually, without even noticing it, live your way into the answer.

- Rainer Maria Rilke, Letters to a Young Poet

"Have patience with everything unresolved in your heart"

Born in 1951, I grew up in Leutkirch, a small town nestled in the foothills of the famous Alps in southern Germany. As a young girl, I used to observe the Alps and ponder what lay beyond those snow-capped peaks. What did life have in store for me? Would I ever venture past that seemingly impregnable barrier of towering stone? The Alps projected a dual frame of reference: while the majesty of the Alps confined me to my hometown, they also sparked an incredible curiosity for undiscovered worlds.

Early post-war Germany fostered a keen awareness of class and gender. The profession and social status of a child's parent, usually the father, generally determined whether a child would go to the university or a trade school. The higher the social ranking of the parent's profession, the more likely the child would attend university. The gender of the child played an additional role in deciding how far the child would progress up the ladder of education. A girl simply had less possibility of attending university than a boy. Being one of three daughters and having a father who worked as a carpenter practically ensured that my lot in the world would be shaped by the famous three K's of German society: *kinder*, *kueche*, and *kirche* (children, kitchen, and church). However, this likely fate never appealed to me, and I continually harbored thoughts of trekking across the Alps.

The region around Leutkirch was predominantly Catholic, and the only other religion was Lutheran, a faith more prevalent

in northern Germany. A strict segregation existed between the two religions in the 1950s. Schools formed on the basis of religion, beginning at kindergarten. Parents frowned upon their children mixing with those practicing the other religion. Religion, however, did not create the only boundaries between peoples. War refugees from east Germany moved into the Leutkirch area and also experienced isolation, even though they were Catholic. It was not until the children of refugees and differing religions began associating with other children that the walls of separation began to crumble.

An inevitable theme confronting those growing up in post-war Germany was the Holocaust. What had happened to cause Germans to wage war against Jews and other groups? As a young person born after the war, I continually wondered what part older Germans had played in this horrible genocide. Were all Germans guilty, even those born after the war? Our questions were met with silence. Older Germans diverted attention away from these issues by minimizing their knowledge of Hitler's genocide. Schools failed to present classes about the Holocaust. This denial by Germans to accept personal responsibility or contribution to the horrors of genocide sparked unrest among German youth.

As their American counterparts did during the 1960s and 1970s, German youth rebelled against those in positions of authority. However, while many of the American protests were directed against the ongoing war in Vietnam, the clash of German youth with authority stemmed at least as much from a questioning of the recent past as the present.

Many young Germans, like me, personally felt much guilt for what had happened to Jews and others persecuted by Germans. Yet, it was my parents' generation that had actually participated in events culminating in the Holocaust. Did not the guilt rightfully belong to that generation? Without acquiescence in racist policies by older Germans, the Nazi government would never have perpetrated the murder of millions. Perhaps to compensate for the failure of many older Germans to acknowledge responsibility for the Holocaust, I, like many younger Germans, experienced sorrow for the victims. That sorrow frequently led to our resentment of German society and what had happened during the Nazi period.

"And try to love the questions themselves as if they were locked rooms or books written in a very foreign language..."

Seeking a respite from the melancholic environment in Germany and yearning for an exotic undertaking, in 1975 I accepted a two-year stint in Malaysia as an administrative assistant with the German Volunteer Service, an agency modeled after the U.S. Peace Corps to assist less economically developed countries. When I first arrived in the capital city of Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, or KL as the locals called it, the cultural differences overwhelmed me. Nothing appeared as it was back home. Architecture, clothing, food, customs, everything presented a new sensation. For the first time, I encountered diverse ethnic groups—Chinese, Indian, and Malay—all living together but not always in racial harmony. The Malays occupied most positions in the government and promoted policies that discriminated against Chinese and Indians.

In Malaysia, I experienced first hand the remnants of 19th century colonialism and the more subtle version of late 20th century colonialism. The former British masters of Malaysian society had left behind an elitist class structure built upon expansive rubber plantations, elegant hotels, and daily gin and tonics. Modern day colonialists from Europe and the United States introduced Malaysians to assembly line hamburgers, pretentious soap operas, and finely tuned sweatshops. Like their British predecessors, the neocolonialists extracted as much as they could from the locals, while endowing them with as few benefits as possible. Multinational corporations operated in Malaysia with neither environmental constraints nor organized labor, allowing easy exploitation of land and people.

As a White European, I

often experienced a privileged status because of the lingering social castes implanted by years of colonialism. For example, Malaysians in charge of restaurants, transportation, and other services would frequently motion me to the head of a long waiting line of locals, all because of my skin color. This special treatment made me uneasy and created an automatic separation between local residents and me. While I did not feel that I occupied the role of an oppressor, I recognized that, from the viewpoint of locals, my mere presence frequently placed me in the category of the rich, White European.

Gender considerations added another layer to the social structure. Malaysians promoted marriage much more than Germans did. For instance, if a young Malaysian woman chose not to marry, other Malaysians would often view her as an outcast and look down upon her. At that time, single women in Malaysia also felt inhibited to venture out alone in the evening for fear of being seen as prostitutes.

During my two years in Malaysia, I experienced a unique interweaving of elements: ethnicity, class, gender, colonialism. I gained a clearer vision of how one group can exploit another, regardless of place. Not only did I view the West as economic oppressors of Malaysia, but I also saw how one class or gender could dominate another within the same society.

Upon my return to Germany in 1977, I encountered an unexpected lack of interest about my experiences in Malaysia. People did not want to dwell on neo-colonialism and Malaysian culture. Yet, the lack of response to my Malaysian experiences helped to alter the way I now viewed my homeland. I realized how economically developed countries, such as Germany, exploited less developed countries as a means of maintaining their high standard of living. I also felt that my own home had as many, if not the same type of, social problems as Malaysia. Why should I travel to some exotic place to help solve or even contribute to problems when perhaps I could play a more constructive role at home? I wanted to work toward social justice and decided to become a social worker.

In 1978, I enrolled at the School of Social Work in Mannheim, Germany where the curriculum emphasized law, policy, and community organization. At Mannheim I gained inspiration from Paulo Freire, a Brazilian who taught that social work education and practice are not neutral. According to Freire, the client is the expert on his or her environment. By listening to the client describe the environment, the social worker gains specific information that can be used in developing a particular program.

Using Freire's concept of involving the client in developing a program, I participated in an adult illiteracy program where clients who could neither read nor write lived in government housing projects. No textbooks existed with which to teach the clients, and our goal was to develop written materials from discussions about the group's experiences. One Gypsy woman talked about her life in a German concentration camp and liberation by the Americans. A single mother talked about her struggles in making ends meet. After listening to clients, we incorporated their stories into written exercises to help the group learn how to read and write.

Upon completion of my practical studies in Mannheim, I looked at the job market in Germany, which had recently undergone severe cutbacks in social programs. Hiring of social workers was low priority and I recognized that employment prospects were not favorable. One day, while making my regular round at the school bulletin board dedicated to job announcements, I spied a poster advertising Fulbright scholarships to study social work for one year in the United States. Reflecting upon the limited employment outlook in my homeland, I applied for the scholarship. I had no definitive objective in mind when applying for the scholarship; I simply wanted the opportunity to travel abroad and see how another country dealt with its social problems.

When I received the Fulbright scholarship and learned that my destination would be the University of Tennessee at Knoxville (UT), my mind drew a blank. The only images I had about Tennessee were Elvis and Memphis. I had not even heard of Knoxville. On August 31, 1983, I landed in

Knoxville, with three pieces of baggage: a suitcase of clothes; feelings of excitement, curiosity, and fear; and memories of home.

"Don't search for the answers, which could not be given to you now, because you would not be able to live them."

My initial impressions of Knoxville and its amazing contrast to Germany overwhelmed me. Not expecting the stark cultural differences that I had experienced in Malaysia, I was caught off guard. Taking in my new surroundings was like

learning a new language. People had a different way of communicating than people back home. They seem to talk more slowly and place more emphasis on politeness. Architecture and the layout of buildings also differed greatly from what I was used to in Germany. I found the concept of drive-through banks and fast-food restaurants alien. Why did people not get out of their cars and walk? The very idea of drive-through restaurants and huge shopping malls in sprawling suburbs floored me. In Germany, aside from not having the facilities and space for such monstrous creations, we simply lacked the mental state even to dream up these inventions. I wondered, too, why there were so many new buildings, with older ones demolished or left to deteriorate. Outside Knoxville, in rural Appalachia, I also saw economic poverty unknown in Germany. Poverty anywhere is disturbing, but is even more so in countries such as the United States where an abundance of wealth exists alongside the poverty. I was unaccustomed to the subtle messages contained in political speeches, films, conversations, and advertising that all Americans could attain wealth if only they worked hard enough. Poverty was the fault of the individual because he or she had not tried hard enough to escape economic deprivation.

After beginning classes at the University of Tennessee, I discovered that the focus of instruction was not on community organization but clinical social work. This emphasis on clinical social work did not exist in Germany and conflicted with what I had previously learned as the mission of social work, which was casework and community organization. In Germany, psychologists performed the bulk of clinical practice, and I was unsure whether social workers should also be doing clinical work.

Compared to universities in Germany, UT was vastly different. At UT, professors carefully structured classes and taught precisely by a plan. In Germany, a more independent system of study prevailed. Students usually had more freedom to determine their own study. For instance, professors frequently allowed students to choose a topic of interest and write a paper for the class grade, with no intervening exams. However, professors at UT were much more accessible than those in Germany. Students here could converse with professors and find a mentor. In Germany, professors kept their distance from students.

While I appreciated many aspects of UT, I missed the political discussions to which I was accustomed. I felt students here were hesitant about voicing opinions on political issues to the extent we did in Germany. As a social work student during the Reagan presidency, I had expected students to be more outspoken against the anti-welfare policies promoted by President Reagan. In Germany, students expressed their views on everything imaginable and often demonstrated against unpopular policies.

Different cultural backgrounds also played havoc with my emotions. When someone would ask me, "How are you?," and I honestly responded how I felt, I discovered that some people would walk away. I soon learned that the socially correct answer was to say "fine," whether I felt fine or not. Initially, I found this disappointing because I wanted to express how confused, scared, and homesick I felt. Another unpleasant experience would occur when Americans shared their knowledge of Germany with me. I wanted to talk about the Germany I knew but found that Americans generally knew only about beer halls in Munich, cuckoo clocks, and World War II.

I soon realized that to Americans I represented a stereotyped image of Germany. Often in conversations, talk about the war seemed to appear out of the blue. We could be discussing ice cream and then a comment would be made about Nazis. I could only guess as to why the person raised the topic because the subject arose out of context. In many cases, I did not know whether an American harbored animosity, blame, or simply curiosity when he or she started talking about the Germans and the war. Naturally, the topic of the war was not new to me. However, in Germany, the context of discussions about the war differed significantly. My generation carried the burden of trying to come to terms with what our homeland had done to others. Our conversations examined the evils of war and how Germans could have participated in genocide. Americans with knowledge about the war frequently commented briefly on Hitler or, if someone had actually been to Germany, about the great job Germans had done in rebuilding war-torn cities. Americans seemed unaware of the immense emotional turmoil occurring among my generation because of the war.

Aside from their superficial comments about the war, some Americans ventured forward with their versions of what Germans were like. One acquaintance told me that she thought Germans were domineering, stern, and humorless. The director of a rape crisis center told me that I could not counsel clients at the center because of my accent.

Fortunately, during my first year at UT, I had a mentor who listened, validated my experiences, appreciated differences, and encouraged me to overcome a strong urge to return home. I appreciated this support, which helped me cope with occasional feelings of futility when interacting with Americans.

To counter feelings of homesickness, I sought those from other lands to exchange experiences about living away from home. As "internationals," we discussed existing in two worlds, being part of both but not completely part of one. We initially fell into the trap of comparing our home country to the United States, but soon realized that this sort of comparison never seemed to capture the essence of what we were seeking.

As time passed, I experienced a growing fondness for the Appalachian region. The spectacle of tree-covered countrysides and hazy blue mountains cast a fascination upon me. I admired the community and hospitality of people in Appalachia, who always seemed to manage with few material resources. I now wanted to stay longer in this intriguing land, so different from home.

I had already extended my one-year Fulbright scholarship to two years so that I could finish my master's degree. After having received my master's degree in social work, I applied to the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service for a visa that allowed "limited practical training." It permitted me to work in the United States for one year as long as the job corresponded to my field of study. However, after the one-year term of the visa, I would most likely have to return to Germany. Under terms of the Fulbright scholarship and U.S. immigration law, I was legally required to return to my home country for two years after practical training. Because of that limitation on my expected stay in the United States, I found interviewing for jobs difficult. A standard interview question was, "Where do you see yourself three years from now?" I answered honestly, "In Germany" which certainly did not help me obtain work. Because I could not find work, I grew desperate and hurriedly applied for entry into the Ph.D. program of health education at UT. By enrolling again at UT as a student, I was allowed to postpone the two-year home residency requirement.

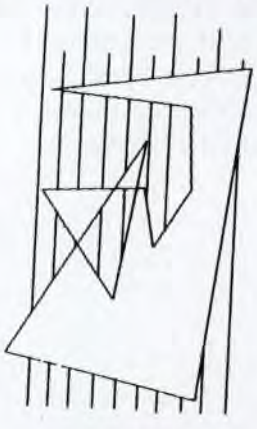
Putting to rest my visa fears for a while, I reflected upon my decision to enter a Ph.D. program. In the entire genealogical history of my family, I would become the first woman to graduate from a university and obtain a Ph.D. I had never imagined that this would be an outcome of my originally planned, one-year stay in the United States.

In 1989, I received my Ph.D. and reached the six-year

mark of my stay in the United States. I seriously questioned my sense of belonging. Did I belong in Germany or the United States? Where was home? I no longer felt so certain that Germany was home. I experienced feelings of sadness, betrayal, guilt, and confusion. I missed family and friends in Germany. Whether I stayed in the United States or returned to Germany, I would suffer incredible loss and could not bear the thought of either. The more I explored the question of home, the less certain I was of where I belonged.

"And the point is, to live everything."

Deciding against a return to Germany, I once again applied for the visa status of practical training, which also allowed me to postpone that seemingly inevitable return back to Germany. This time,



however, I had wised up when responding to the customary question by a prospective employer: "Where do you see yourself in three years?" Instead of responding, "In Germany," I simply told the interviewer that I wanted to work as long as I could for that employer. This slightly more sophisticated response seemed effective. I soon had full-time employment with the social service agency called Project Against Sexual Abuse of Appalachian Children (PASAAC) in Knoxville. This state-funded project provided counseling and treatment for sexually abused adults and children and perpetrators of sexual abuse. Clients generally had few financial resources and lived in rural areas of Appalachia.

In group therapy, survivors related what had happened to them, sometimes with words and sometimes with designs and images. Some clients drafted poems to help convey the magnitude of harm afflicted upon them. However, some clients were better able to express their stories initially in picture form. By using images, clients often were better able to grasp the meaning of their experiences, which could not always be stated in words. For example, one client first described sexual abuse in pictures that reflected different roles of family members, the milieu of the home, and actual incidents of abuse.

As I listened to their stories, I found myself asking, as I had previously in post-war Germany, "Why does evil happen?" Answers were as elusive as they had been in Germany. For instance, a client might show a picture of her family that had severely abused her. No outward trace of evil appeared in the picture. Yet, behind the facade of nondescript faces lurked a dark and ominous force. Clients sought understanding and meaning as to what had happened. Where was justice in life? Why had these things happened to them?

As the group sessions progressed, I used an exercise that aided the clients to reflect upon the past, the present, and the future. This exercise prompted them to speak about the hellish past of sexual abuse, the profound effects of that abuse on their present lives, and their desires for the future. While I had not experienced the same past trauma as my clients had, I realized that certain experiences harbored universal themes, especially loss and search for meaning in a person's life. This common ground began to form the basis for a new meaning of home, one that no longer separated people into an us and a them.

"Perhaps then someday in the far future, you will gradually, without even noticing it, live your way into the answer."

In 1994, after having recently suffered a deep loss from the breakup of a close relationship, I felt a need to change my environment. I applied to universities for a teaching position and, within a short time, accepted a position as assistant professor at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. Packing my few material belongings into a U-Haul truck, off I went into the unknown world of

Southern Illinois.

A short time after I began teaching, to my surprise the question of whether I would stay in the United States or return to Germany lost significance. I saw home as something completely different than a geographical location. I now viewed home as a composite of many emotions and ideas. Home refers to a state of mind intimately linked with the person, not a specific place. I can be at home with friends, in places of nature, in sacred spaces such as cathedrals, or in bustling cities. Home does not require the concept of always and forever, but of now. Home allows a person to embrace differences in people and places, without feeling required to choose a particular group or location over another. Home has no nationalistic borders. For instance, at the 4th World Conference on Women in Beijing held in 1995, women from every corner of the world gathered to celebrate and communicate shared struggles. In the midst of this diversity, I was at home.

I now feel more able to apply my experience to teaching. As a person from a different country and culture than my students, I try to convey in my classes the importance of viewing social work from different perspectives. Last summer, I established a class in international social work for my students that I taught in Austria, Germany, and Switzerland. A primary goal of that class was to instill into students the benefits of learning about other ideas and places and to free social work from its cultural myopia.

Through my links with social work educators in other countries, I am further involved in the area of international social work education. In Lithuania, I recently collaborated with colleagues in presenting a seminar on child abuse. I am also working with a colleague from the School of Social Work in Mannheim, Germany, on a comparative study of policies and practice toward child neglect.

I am now in my third year of teaching at Southern Illinois University. With the help of colleagues, I survived U.S. immigration, which graciously provided me with the coveted "green card" and resident alien status, all without having fulfilled the two-year "home" residency requirement.

My newly discovered concept of home provides ample space for a variety of challenges in teaching and practice. Home is an ongoing experience, with no finite borders. I am now content knowing that, although I sometimes yearn for aspects of German culture, I no longer struggle with the question of where I belong. □

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PRIVATE LIVES, PUBLIC SELVES: REFLECTIONS OF A JEWISH SOUTH AFRICAN

Homeland is a psychological space which is separate from, yet inextricably connected to, geographical space. In these reflections, I tell parts of my grandfather's story, and those of my own, to show that homeland is a multi-layered term incorporating aspects such as my Jewish ancestral past and the country of my birth, South Africa. These stories serve to introduce my presentation of a person I helped, who profoundly affected my ability to deal with the trauma of dislocation. He allowed me into his private world of emotional torment and led us both towards the discovery of a "homeland" within.

By
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I was born in 1961, in South Africa, the country where my grandfather found freedom. In 1990, I left South Africa for the United States in search of freedom. For my grandfather and me, freedom meant different things. My grandfather left Neuenstadt, East Prussia, to escape from waves of anti-Semitic pogroms and to evade conscription in an army where Jews were used exclusively as cannon fodder. He arrived in South Africa in 1912, by way of Brighton, England, where he had served for a year as a butcher's apprentice and had learned to speak English.

Unlike my grandfather, who left his country in order to avoid conscription, I reluctantly chose conscription in order to stay in my country. My only other option would have been to emigrate, as so many of my friends did. I subsequently left South Africa to escape the psychological effects of two years enforced service in the South African Military. This brutal army of White men, which had been designed to maintain and protect the political system of apartheid, had so stripped me of my identity that leaving seemed to be the only way of recovering my sense of self.

Both narratives—my grandfather's and mine—are equally relevant to my clinical practice, as they are embodied in me, incarnated as memories, and expressed through my interactions. It is not possible for me to present *one* coherent narrative which will constitute my reflection of "loss of homeland." Homeland is a psychological space which is separate from, yet inextricably connected to, geographical place. By telling parts of my grandfather's story and those of my own, I hope to show that homeland is a multilayered term, incorporating aspects such as my ancestral past, the country of my birth and the country in which I have settled. Each layer provides a different vantage point for the recognition of the multitude of identities which constitute who I am, hence, a multitude of narratives that can be told. I have chosen specific stories which I hope will serve the case narrative which follows.

Thirteen years after his arrival in South Africa, with limited financial resources and only two years of formal education in a yeshiva (in East Prussia), my

grandfather was able to establish a general store on the slopes of the Village Deep Gold Mines, which was situated on the outskirts of Eastern Johannesburg. A sign above the large entrance to what we called "grandpa's shop" had the following painted words, long faded by the sun, but nonetheless legible:

NATIVE SHOP
Proprietor M. Nossel
Established 1925.

The store consisted of a butchery, an "eating house," a section for general goods such as candy and cigarettes, all of which occupied one large space, and a separate section for haberdashery (items for men such as hats, shoes, suits, and handkerchiefs). My grandfather ran the butchery and eating house. His customers were Black "migrant" workers—"natives" who received special permits to work on the gold mines. They came from many different regions of South Africa and spoke a variety of languages, including Xhosa, and Zulu, South and North Sotho, all of which my grandfather learned to speak. The mineworkers called my grandfather *Makosi* (a term of deference, referring to *elders*) because of his particular skill at breaking up fights, which occurred especially on pay day when the miners drank *skokjaan*, a powerfully intoxicating drink made from fermented pineapple skins.

I didn't spend very much time at my grandfather's store, except to run inside to tell him that we were waiting for him. It would be on Saturday afternoons that my father and I would drive to the store to pick him up and take him to our house in the suburbs. I remember hurrying into the shop holding my nose to block the strange, musty smell of cow-dung floors and the stench of offal stew which boiled in a large cauldron in the kitchen behind the butchery. I remember rows of mineworkers sitting at long, stainless steel tables, bent over tin plates, eating, drinking and talking loudly in languages I could not understand. After peering into the glass counters of chewing gum and candy, I'd run back to the air-conditioned Mercedes-Benz and wait for grandpa to come out, while listening to *Forces Favourites* and news reports of the war in Angola, which were broadcast every hour on *Highveld Radio*.

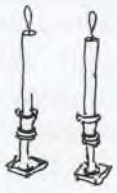
When we arrived at our house, my grandmother would often pry ticks (from the animal carcasses) off my grandfather's head. "I wish you'd leave that filthy place," she'd say. "I'm surprised the health inspector doesn't shut the place down." She had long hoped that my grandfather would leave "the mines" and follow other upwardly mobile immigrant Jews who had set up business in the city center.

In 1976, consternation and violence spread across South Africa. In the two months following the Soweto eruption, some eighty Black communities experienced civil strife. My family, who were becoming increasingly worried about my grandfather's safety, persuaded him to sell his store. At age 84 and almost blind, he was still

chopping carcasses on a fifty-year-old butcher's block. In all those fifty years, he had never been harmed nor robbed, except by his British-born business partners who operated the haberdashery section and periodically stole money from the cash register. My grandfather never returned to Neuenstadt, which is currently in Lithuania. He is buried in Johannesburg.

When I was nineteen years old and a student at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, an older cousin cautioned me against any political, left-wing student activities. "Remember," she said with a sense of foreboding which was as old as my consciousness of being Jewish, "as Jews we are second class citizens in this country. We can't afford to make trouble for ourselves. We are lucky to have it so good. We must be as inconspicuous as possible." Our Judaism was a private matter presided over by my grandfather and father. It was not for demonstration in the secular (largely Protestant Christian) public, where the major points of differentiation between people were skin color and language. Judaism was imparted at the private Jewish day school where I received my entire pre-university education

and learned to read and write Hebrew. It was celebrated at the Friday night dinner table, where my mother lit candles and my father recited blessings, and it was remembered, during the solemn holiday of Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) and Yom Hashoah, the day in which the Nazi Holocaust is commemorated. These were private rituals, observed in our home, or amongst other Jews in the synagogue.



I was unexpectedly forced to confront my public Jewish identity in 1988 when as an able- bodied White man I entered the South African Defense Force. After ten years of deferments, during which time I had qualified as a clinical psychologist and had set up practice, I yielded to the pressure of the "call up papers" which had relentlessly followed me since age 15. In the moment that I arrived at the military railway terminus and saw the scores of young White men who were soon to become South Africa's soldiers, I realized that my life was to change irrevocably. And in the twenty-seven hour train ride from Cape Town to boot camp in Potchefstroom, it did.

I was surrounded by eighteen year-old recruits reeking of cigarettes and fear. I was in the proverbial bad dream from which I feared I would never awake. The boot camp was a continuation of the nightmare. In the very first hour I was yelled at by complete strangers, who issued contradictory instructions to go this way then that. And the words were in Afrikaans, the language that had conjugated apartheid, the language that I, as an English speaking citizen, had been compelled to learn as a "second language" since elementary school. My attempts to be inconspicuous were betrayed by two strong statements of protest that were more visceral than they were conscious, in that my body simply refused to do them: I could not march nor fire the rifle that had been issued to me. Despite these assertions of individuality, these expressions of resistance, I nonetheless feared that I would be stripped of everything that was private, my memories, my history, my use of my own body. I was convinced that the officials would be able to eavesdrop on my secrets, if I thought them too loudly, so I tried to hide. But it was not possible to hide. One of my secrets was already out that I was a Jew. I had been identified in the first hour as they called out the seventeen Jewish names in a camp of four hundred and sent us to a separate dining mess, where we were served Kosher food. Despite my determination to be insignificant, a private identity had been exposed and was suddenly public.

While there were no overtly belligerent responses from the boot camp officers towards the Jews, I was always aware of their hostility, which was often times expressed in ostensibly legitimate actions. For instance, since we Jews had our Sabbath on Saturdays, we were ordered to clean the toilets on Sundays when the bulk of National servicemen had the day off. We were the only group to be singled out for such duties. However, the hostility was finally realized as an incident one evening, when three of my fellow Jewish conscripts and I were returning bulky food trays from our dining mess to the camp kitchen. It was dark along a particular corridor, and we were unable to see one of the training lieutenants walking towards us. In the process, one of us accidentally brushed against him, also failing to stand to attention. The lieutenant's response was instantaneous: "Fucking Jews!" he bellowed. "I hate the fucking Jews!" He spoke in English, though we all would have understood those words in Afrikaans.

One of the Jewish servicemen, Sam, a lawyer trained at Cambridge University in England, strongly objected to the lieutenant's outburst and told me that he was taking the matter further to "higher authorities" at Army headquarters in Pretoria. He made a formal complaint to the Commanding Officer, and sought the guidance of his father, a well known Cape Town attorney. While I agreed in principle with Sam's actions, I did not overtly support them. I was afraid of becoming too conspicuous. I anxiously awaited what I was convinced would be a sudden vindictive retaliation—the mobilization of the forces against us, all the

forces of hate and power, a deadly combination especially for us Jews. But there was no retaliation. Sam's father had influence in the government. And within a few days, the lieutenant apologized to the Jewish servicemen, a fact that was quickly established throughout the camp. It was nonetheless an uneasy resolution as the hatred went underground and was delivered in whispers and hateful glances.

In 1990, three months after my discharge from the South African Defense Force, I left South Africa. It was forty- five days after Nelson Mandela's release from Pollsmoor Prison. Mandela's liberation promised a country in which personal and political freedoms would finally be possible. Though this was a moment I had dreamed of, I was nonetheless driven by a compulsion to escape, and to distance myself from my military experience. It was a compulsion I could not fully comprehend. I did not turn to look at the faces of my father, mother, and brother as I walked through the international departure gates at Jan Smuts Airport in Johannesburg. I was determined not to feel anything. Like a somnambulist, I undertook the move to America.

I had been led to New York by a series of coincidences. By a stroke of good luck, I managed to procure a job as a caseworker at a diagnostic treatment center for adolescents. Most of the clients were "minorities" who had been remanded by the courts on account of problems such as truancy, violence, and drug selling. The job was a means to an end, I told myself, as I girded myself against any experiences that might have evoked my own emotions. At first it seemed that the work at the clinic would suit my needs. The adolescents seemed angry, sullen, and distant. And I was removed, preoccupied by artistic pursuits and titillated by the myriad distractions that New York City offered. I was not moved by the stories I would hear during case presentations, stories of rape, violence, abandonment, and suicide. Emotionally, I was numb, asleep. I longed for home, assuaging the pain by assiduously following the articles about South Africa that appeared on a daily basis in *The New York Times*. On the 20th of June, the day of my 29th birthday, I participated in the ticker tape parade that welcomed Nelson Mandela to New York. It was like a dream in which the present and past were peculiarly merged in a place which was utterly foreign, yet felt familiar in a way I could not name. I was awakened from my dream about one year after my arrival by an adolescent male I shall call Ben.

Before I ever met Ben, I learned that he was a 14-year-old African-American who hated White people. I learned that he'd been brought to the family court by his mother, Ms. Green, after he had assaulted her lover, John, who was Italian-American. Ben's antagonism towards John had been developing into threats of murder. I learned that Ben had been suspended from his school for being in possession of a knife. I learned that he had a history of violent behavior at school. One report was that he had pushed down an elderly female school teacher. Ben had been referred for a psychiatric assessment as a result.

Ben resided with his mother in a nearby city housing project. Also in the house was Ruth, a 3 year-old little girl who was the product of Ms. Green's relationship with John. From the report of the court liaison, I learned that Ms. Green had divorced Ben's father, Tom, on account of his affairs with other women. Tom had subsequently become addicted to crack. For three years, Tom had episodically presented himself at Ms. Green's residence, begging for food and shelter. I learned that one such visit had resulted in a conflict in which Tom had slapped Ms. Green and spat in Ben's face.

I had never met Ben, but I was filled with trepidation at the prospect of meeting him. I feared his response to the fact that I was a White male. Moreover, I feared his discovery that I was a South African. I had been in the custom of revealing my national origin to my clients. But in Ben's case I hesitated because I was afraid of the possible violence of his response.

The person I feared was constructed from the data I had received with an admixture of fantasy. When I first saw him in the diagnostic center dining room, the actual Ben was sitting alone. He was a robust, well developed youngster, with a handsome face and shaved head. His coat was still on, and

he was leaning back in his chair with his legs stretched out in front of him. Staring straight ahead in a blank gaze he said loudly, with obvious restraint: "I'm not eating anything here. I'm not talking. I hate White people. And I hate the Black ass dicks who work here. Acting like slaves."

Ben was assigned to me as it was determined that he needed a male worker. To my surprise he willingly followed me to my office, but upon entering, was immediately belligerent. He complained about the Black staff: "What's the matter with these people? Can't they see they're being used by the White man?"

I asked what he meant. "They were slaves," he said, "now they treat their own people like slaves. No one bosses me around, tells me what

to do."

I asked Ben if he was actually complaining about the clinic routine. Grudgingly, he agreed, then changed his mind: "You don't understand, it's a Black thing."

"Is that because I'm White?" I asked.

"Yeah, what do you know about us Blacks, with your big houses and your big cars and your good lives?"

I told Ben that neither of us could ignore the fact that his skin was Black and mine was White. I told him that apart from the color of his skin, there were many things about his life I would be unable to understand, and that it would be his job to help me understand. I made it clear that trying to understand him was going to be my job. I agreed that we came from different backgrounds and had different life experiences.

"In fact," I said, "I come from South Africa."

He was interested in this revelation. "You mean the jungle?"

"Yes, the jungle," I said. "But not only that..." I asked if he knew anything else about South Africa. He shared some knowledge about apartheid.

"America's the same," he said, almost reassuringly. He wanted to return to the conversation about the jungle. He said life in the projects was like life in the jungle: "You've got to be violent in a high crime area or you'll get your ass kicked." Ben told me of his "addiction to fighting." He related the events that had preceded his admission to the diagnostic center. He said it was all John's fault. They had an argument over a game. This developed into a physical altercation in which Ben had struck John. Ms. Green had called the police to intercede.

Once reminded of this event, Ben launched into a tirade: "I hate John. He's an Italian. They eat like pigs. They're lazy bums. They can't get good jobs. They mess things up for decent Americans." Although Ben seemed to be filled with rage, his voice was moderate and his tone fairly neutral, considering his words. Although I was satisfied that we had established something of a rapport, I was unnerved by this first meeting with him. I questioned the possibility of his being psychotic and was eager to obtain his past psychiatric records. Since Ms Green had not signed our information release form, I phoned and asked her if she would come to the center. She was unable, and I decided to drive to her residence. I was accompanied by Ben and a milieu counselor who drove the van.

Ben was reluctant to accompany us, but entered the van nonetheless. After a few moments of driving, he said to me: "You know something, you're crazy to trust me. You should put handcuffs on me. I'm dangerous. I could do anything. You don't know us Blacks," he said. "Violence is our religion." I was very concerned that Ben's warnings were not in vain. I tried to calm him. I assured him we would be returning to the center. "You just want to see the way us Blacks live," he said. "You expect us to be civil to you. You take us, change our names. You give us slave jobs. Put drugs into us. Put us on public assistance. Make us live like pigs."

As we approached the housing projects, Ben warned us: "If anything happens to you, I'm not going to do anything. This place is violent. You're coming at your own risk. It's not

for people like you." He told us he was embarrassed to be seen with Whites. My impulse at that point was to return immediately to the center. I was frightened by Ben's threats and by his warnings. I was frightened by the ferocity of his words. I felt that the situation was out of my control and that it could easily become violent. I was walking as I was having these thoughts, though, following Ben up the pathway to the building entrance. I'd never been into these projects before, though I'd passed them many times on the bus. But I'd never imagined going inside. They were rather like the Black townships outside Johannesburg, which seemed remote but were actually close by. Places into which I never ventured. Places which contained different lives.

The lobby and elevators were liberally sprayed with graffiti. There was a strong stench of urine. Ben said, "See how us Blacks live?" and he escorted us to his mother's apartment. He did not greet his mother as he entered. The apartment was sparsely furnished. Ms. Green showed me gashes in the walls and doors, the results of Ben's rages. She showed me a television set with a smashed screen and a frying pan bent out of shape. She told me that John had left when he learned that Ben was coming. "He was afraid Ben would get violent again."

Ben accused his mother of putting John's needs before those of her children. He accused his mother of "getting rid" of him by placing him in the diagnostic center. "I had to leave. Why not your stupid Italian?" At this, Ms. Green began to cry. She said she had raised her children to live together with all races. Ben responded with anger: "That's what she does. She cries. She wants me to feel sorry for her." Again, Ben seemed to be in a rage. He lifted a chair from the floor and held it above his head: "I'm cruel," he said. "I like to fight. It's territorial. It's a war thing." At that point, I urged Ben to return to the van. On his way out the door, he warned his mother not to visit. He warned her to get a bodyguard for John: "I'll be back to get him."

On the journey back to the center, Ben spoke spontaneously of his roots. He said his mother was a Black Puerto Rican. His father was from Georgia, directly "from the slave boats." He said he couldn't trace his roots properly, because his people were stolen. He spoke of indigenous Americans being tortured and killed, of the injustice of White domination. Then

he said something I had not anticipated. He said something about Jews. The Jews, he declared, had deserved to die. Hitler was his hero. And he was sorry that Hitler had not been successful in killing all the Jews.

I had been prepared to account for being White. I had been prepared to account for being South African. However, I was not prepared for this. I attempted a neutral tone. I told him Jews had been oppressed and had been forced to leave their homes. They had been humiliated and murdered. I compared the experience of the Jews to that of Black people in America.

"But the Jews deserved it," was Ben's reply. We drove the rest of the way in silence.

Upon my return to the center, I rushed to the office of my supervisor, an African-American man. I related the events of the home visit, including Ben's comments about the Jews. He asked me if I told Ben that I was Jewish. I said I had not.

"Do you think he knows?"

"I don't think so."

"What if he does?"

"He cannot possibly know," I said.

I found this line of questioning intolerable. It felt to me like an interrogation from whose answers I could not escape. I was a Jew whether or not I identified myself as such. By attacking the Jews, Ben had attacked me. He had plundered my heritage. He had violated the memory of my grandfather, to whose survival I owed my own life. He had desecrated the legacy of my grandfather's siblings who remained in Europe and had perished in Nazi concentration camps. For the moment in time that he applauded

Hitler, Ben had become the persecutor, the oppressor. He had become the object of my fear. He had become my boot camp lieutenant.

My supervisor suggested that by succumbing to my fears of Ben, I might be communicating an inability to contain his rage, his fear and whatever it was that had engendered his identification with the violently omnipotent. He suggested that I tell Ben not only of my heritage but also of my reaction to his comments in the van. While this suggestion made sense to me, it contradicted my preconceived ideas of therapy ideas about self disclosure, about distance, about power.

Nonetheless, I asked Ben into my office and told him just how upset I'd been by what he'd said about the Jews. I told him I was Jewish. Ben was startled that his words had affected me so deeply, and admitted that he "didn't even know anything about Jews." We spoke about the power of words, about their capacity to harm and their ability to repair what has been broken. This made sense to Ben. He began to come to my office daily, revealing to me the painful details of his private life. He recognized that his hatred had more to do with feelings about individuals than with racial prejudice. Beneath the surface of his angry public persona was profound private suffering. Ben described the pain of "losing" his father to crack and the anger of learning of his mother's relationship with John only after she was pregnant with his child. He recounted the hurt of not really knowing where he came from.

These were Ben's private stories. By the telling them he allowed me to enter his profound experience of isolation, of displacement, and of fear. For both of us, it was an experience of shame and terror, of feeling ancient wounds inscribed in lost homelands and remembered in our bodies and in our interactions with each other. Thus did Ben also lead me to the frightening awareness of my own dislocation from my past, from my self. He bore witness to my claiming of my Jewish identity, unlocking my fear, making it possible for me to publicly declare my most fiercely guarded secret—my identity as a gay man. In this foreign country, so far from the place where I was born, I was thus led by an unexpected guide through homelands within homelands, and finally to a new homeland within.

On June 26, 1995, four years after meeting Ben, something decisive happened to my identity as a gay man. I participated in an international march on the United Nations, whose purpose was to affirm the human rights of gays and lesbians worldwide, and to demand that the United Nations provide protection for gays and lesbians who are the victims of human rights violations. Among the sixty countries represented was South Africa, once again part of the world after a thirty-four year exile from the community of nations. Together with at least a hundred other gay and lesbian South Africans, I marched behind the new flag of the free South Africa, behind a banner whose bold words read: *Gays and lesbians for the New South Africa.* I finally marched for my country. I marched for the past that had been forgotten. I marched for the memory of my grandfather who found freedom in life, and for his brothers and sisters who never did. I marched for the mineworkers whose faces I had never seen, for the people who lived and died for the liberation of South Africa. I marched for the gays and lesbians in South Africa, for the new South African constitution which outlaws discrimination on the basis of race, religion, gender, and sexual orientation. In the streets of Manhattan, amidst the jubilant cheering of thousands of witnesses, ten thousand miles away from homeland, I found a home in which I was free to claim—without fear—the many identities which constitute who I am: White, Jewish, Gay, South African, resident alien... □

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CALL FOR NARRATIVES: SPECIAL ISSUE
THE DANGERS TO POOR CHILDREN: THE CONSEQUENCES OF WELFARE REFORM

Studies by the department of Health and Human Services and the Urban Institute predict that the new welfare laws will push a million children into poverty. This will drastically alter the nature of welfare by eliminating any entitlement to assistance. An article in the N.Y. Times noted "...recipients are required to work, and the law requires a five year life time limit on aid. Some states will use their power to develop innovative ways of providing work for adults and services for children. But all the incentives are there for them to cut assistance, impose shorter time limits and use Federal Block Grants to free-up state funds for more politically palatable programs.... Public monitoring of state programs to determine their effects of children is essential. The law needs to be strengthened to require more detail in state welfare funds, more public information on how states are using money and more tracking of and reporting on the well being of children...those who receive assistance and those denied it or cut off from it."
(M. J. Bane. Nov. 10, 1996. Section 4. p.13)

DUE DECEMBER 15, 1997

WE SEEK STORIES (NARRATIVES)

- **On your success and failure in influencing state legislative welfare plans;**
- **On how you tried to influence the way your state allocates welfare funds;**
- **On tracking and reporting on the welfare of children;**
- **The work you did to protect children;**
- **You may have succeeded or failied our interest is to influence the discourse on the affects of "Temporary Assistance to Needy Families" through personal accounts of helping professionals working with adults and children affected by Welfare Reform.**

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TIGER'S ROAR:
EMBARKING ON THE VOYAGE OF A SOCIAL WORK DOCTORAL PROGRAM

This article is the author's narrative of her transition into a doctoral program of social work as a point of departure to illuminate recurring themes of seeking connection and dialogue with sojourners. Through the intense self-reflexive Korean "talk-story," the ongoing self re-construction with personal history is described. Strengths emerging from experiences of a loss of homeland from intercountry adoption and healing paths remain invisible without the compassionate commitment of sojourners. The gifts of this evolving talk-story emerge in the form of unanswerable questions for cultivation. As client, consumer, and practitioner in a doctoral program of social work, the author situates these questions as necessary for understanding the "helping professional" roles.

By
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Introduction

In my country of origin, Korea, tigers have always had a special place in the hearts of the people. "Having had to share our habitat with the most terrible animal from time immemorial, we spun myths and tales around the tiger that made it our friend, guardian, and mentor. We refuse to regard a being of such noble form and marvelous strength as a mere rapacious beast. We infuse into the tiger nobility, magnanimity surpassing human beings, and laughter" (*Tiger, Burning Bright*, 1992, p.7). Ancient Koreans believed that the tiger was the messenger of the Spirit of the Mountain and thus a bearer of good fortune—a spirit to be respected instead of feared.

Gus Lee's recent novel *Tiger's Tail* (1996) situates the metaphorical tiger as the American antagonist. His preface offers the fable, "Hungry men hunt the tiger, but brave men pull the tiger's tail. In Asia, the tiger is America." I have appropriated the tiger as an ideal type (Weberian sense) archetype for my life journey in America. I am at once Korean and American. The tiger emerges from experiences of relinquishment by my Korean family at the age of 15 months and loss of homeland through adoption into an American family at the age of 22 months. What my life journey reveals is the emergence of sojourners without whom connection has been impossible. The loss of homeland, whether internally or externally imposed, is met pervasively and persistently in the socially constructed relationships of adoption and discrimination. Transforming loss of homeland into the skills of humanizing, inclusionary social work practice is the evolving challenge. The transition of adopting academic activity in a doctoral program is the current, temporary disjuncture where all life experiences collide. To make sense of this new territory, I

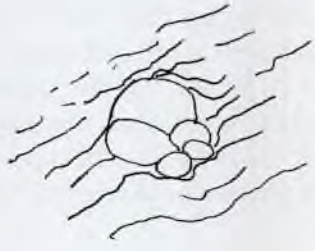
must roar the message of a Korean tiger while I dare to pull the tail (tale) of my American one. This "talk-story" is a process of integrating two tigers into a unified voice as it attempts to negotiate a Western defined path of a doctoral studies program in social work. The Asian talk-story is more than mere language and communication. Talk-story is more than generational relationship, presentation of self, and cultural lifestyle. Talk-story is life as humanly felt, experienced, understood, and expressed. Talk-story leaves more unanswerable questions than explanation. Those unanswerable questions are gifts. Those gifts dissolve temporal demarcations of existence and present abstract images from concrete words. These are for contemplation. Talk-story unravels, weaves, and flows themes of being and becoming among seas of cultural familiarity. These are for cultivation. I offer this talk-story to *Samshin Halmoni*--the Korean Taoist grandmother spirit—for blessing.

As Mary Chamberlain states in her introduction to *Writing Lives* (1988, p. ix), "the spoken word is forced into a literary strait-jacket not of its choosing and for which it was never intended." Talk-story struggles to exist in a Western world of reason and rationality. The tension between my Korean tiger and an American tiger is metaphor at a meta-level for the lived experiences of Korean adoptees' loss of homeland. Chamberlain calls for the motivation to change to be at the heart of any writer. She claims, "writing exposes not only the self, but a self-view of the world, and the energy it requires is too charged to be confined to a single act of creativity. Creativity rarely confines itself to writing, but spills over into the very circumstances of lives; into politics, or education, into a desire to make the writer's world, and that of others, more humane" (p.ix). That is the mission of and hope for my tiger's roar.

Talk-Story of the Novice Doctoral Student

It is late summer in the Rocky Mountains. Engaging in my beloved pastime of river kayaking, I notice the prominence of smooth rocks and boulders as the water flows ebb. The tiger arouses in joy. I love these rocks. I can choose to dance and play around them or float along with the current, trusting years of experience and skills. These are familiar risks, dangers, and companions which are easily navigable. If I trust it, water is supportive in its flow. If I fight it, water will dominate and overpower me.

Other thoughts interrupt my river trip. I have wanted to travel the path of a doctoral program for ages. My Korean tiger hungers for education. A door has opened and soon I will embark upon the new route of a doctoral program in social work—with unforeseeable rapids and obstacles to be negotiated as they appear. My internal battles will emerge full blown along this path which will ask of me to trust an unknown process. Self-doubt begins to seep into my sense of well being with questions of the Western temporal future. I allow these ruptures of self-efficacy and self-competence to flow through me as I complete my river journey. *"Dear granddaughter, have no fear. I am with you always. You are good and strong. Be brave."*



Orientation day for the new class of doctoral students in social work. I walk into a sea of White male and female faces. This group of eight students is now my new family with whom I must join in some way on this new educational journey. Blood pressure and internal temperature rise rapidly. I quickly clamp down on my breaths in an attempt to control my heart's thunder. Anxiety and a flood of familiar thoughts, emotions, and experiences surge over me like a massive tidal wave. How do I stop myself from drowning? Meditative mantras replace shallow breathing to help restore my equilibrium.

Our doctoral program director enters. This gentle Native American's calm and quiet demeanor attempts to reduce the students' fears of the unknown. He launches into a summary of the emphasis, requirements, and expectations of this particular program. His words embody a Western scientific ra-

tionalist paradigm. In no uncertain terms, this doctoral program of social work intends to produce Western social scientific researchers capable of rigorous study. Hope for connection with his unique journey in academia fizzles. My spirit trembles with the beginnings of what I recognize. I want to run away. I feel the presence beside me of an American ghost which appears and reappears with each new educational journey.

"Flat Face, Jap, Chink, Gook, Nip." These are the terms of endearment bestowed upon me, growing up in a sixties segregated town in Illinois. These names from my childhood peers continue to haunt me in my nightmares. As the first Asian in a small farming community, I found my destiny was to negotiate with the sharply divided Black and White residents a new pattern of "race relations." My every attempt to reject this honored role was thwarted, especially by the ghost.

When I was five years, old, the ghost was a mean-spirited witch who punished "bad" questions and wrong behavior with shame, humiliation, pathological labelling, "detention time," daily memos to my parents, psychological referrals, and public ostracization. My Korean tiger's roar was interpreted by those in positions of authority and power as deviance. Questions of "why" were not to be tolerated. For the witch, "Why" implied potential for non-conformity. My voice changed from a whisper where no one believed me to silence where no one heard me. Why is the ghost angry with me? Why did the ghost knock the wind out of my tiger's roar?

When I was 12 years old, the ghost became a hyper-vigilant prison warden who rewarded "good" questions and good behavior with increased opportunities for demonstrating the correct set of skills. The prison warden befriended my confused parents who learned how to give rewards in response to my correct assimilation. My actions became my currency and necessary passport into the true and only world, made up of hypocrisy and fear. I learned that I must not have a voice. I learned that I did not want a face. All that remained was a thinking mind. I learned that to be alive meant being just a mind supported by a body to be shaped, formed, written upon, and programmed to perform expected proper functions with no reference to culture or gender and devoid of power and self. I discovered that learning was my means to survival. I am a very good learner.

In my freshman year of college, I learned that the true and only heaven lay accessible through manipulation of the American language. My witch and prison warden had been transformed into the sacred cow of Western science from which I would receive nurturance as I climbed the democratic hierarchy of educational success. It is here where I was formally introduced to and invited to participate in the dance of "Western civilization." I have not been able to exit or change this formal dance.

My four year initiation into "higher" education was profound. Born into an Eastern culture and raised in a Western culture,I learned that my truth has been markedly polarized and politically disempowered from how truth has been defined and valued in America. My Asian identity and emerging sense of self have been challenged continuously in all interactions, personal and political: "You are not logical. Rewrite your thinking. That is not right or true! Your perception is distorted; your memory must be aborted. Schizophrenic child, this is who you are!" In a battle to survive (it is the Korean sense of self that battles to survive) the conscious negotiation of my Korean sense of self with Western ideologies fled underground.

Navigating a poisoned waterscape filled with submerged mines of ignorance, fear, and subtle intimidation, I met the first of many significant others, those mentors who through their commitment and continual "conscious use of self" became sojourners of the human soul. These sojourners nurture my tiger spirit, continue to speak to me of community, connection, and change, and serve as exemplars of how loss can become gain in a chaotic world of pain. My first sojourner, a Chicano Marxist sociologist, created space for me to fly beneath unassuming skies reflecting my own truth! If I listen carefully, I can still hear him whisper "everything is possible, believe in yourself Elizabeth."

Week one of the doctoral program. Happy Birthday, Elizabeth. When you were born, among the many gifts your Korean family gave you was a beautiful name—Kim Jin. You had a father who loved you beyond words. You remember delicate details: his warm watery eyes; his handsome porcelain chiseled face; the sound of his gentle, joy-filled voice; the smell of softly ironed white shirts; and a deeply ingrained

sadness that you could not fathom nor erase. He fed you. He held you close. He nurtured your mind, body, and tiger spirit. He held you among the moon and stars—and then gave you away to the world.

In Korea, birthdays are milestone events when individuals take time to stop and pay homage to their ancestors, the ones who gave them life. Whom will you honor today as those who give you life? Whom will you take time for to stop, remember, and give thanks? The dead ones whose fading memory no longer sustains you? After losing first your Korean family through relinquishment, your Korean culture through adoption, and your American family through death, the world continually asks you to re-create family and identity for yourself. How can you do this alone in non-reciprocal relationships?

On this day I am forced to ask myself the painful question—who is my family now? Who will provide the support necessary to face the challenges of a doctoral program in social work? Will it be those friends who have survived the attrition forces of major life changes? Will it be my doctoral program peers who seem to perceive my silence in class as stereotypical Asian stoicism, passivity, and elitism? *America, you value freedom of speech; Asia, we value freedom of silence* [Chu, 1990]). Will it be the doctoral teaching staff who are limited by Western curriculum, personal economics, and university philosophy in their advocacy for creative, critical, and different thinking? How do I reach out in hopes of connection and belonging? How do I lend my tiger's roar to others?

Week two of the doctoral program. Welcome to Economics 101 and prepare yourself for a shock! It has just now come to my attention that the award of a full-time Graduate Research Assistantship has reduced the amount of financial aid loans I am eligible for and from which I initially based a realistic budget for living. Re-evaluating my budget for full-time enrollment, I discover I have more subsistence needs than resources. Panic and confusion set in. A few quick breaths reboot my system to functional. How have other doctoral students managed?

"I have my spouse who supports me and makes it possible for me to study." "I have a full-time job which allows me to flex my work schedule so I can take classes." "I have my parents who are helping me financially for the next few years." "I have my ethnic community which provided me with financial support." My losses of homeland, community, and family punctuate the privilege these peers access in external resources. I inhale. Suddenly, I am bombarded with their questions intended as support. "Didn't you plan for this?" Yes, but life happens. "Aren't there minority scholarships in the program?" No. "Aren't you eligible for financial aid?" Yes, but it's not enough. "Don't you have family to help out?" No. "Can't you find extra work?" Not without withdrawing from full-time study. "Is this the right time in life for you to be in full-time study?" Perhaps the universe is sending me an answer.

Must one be economically privileged before making a commitment to a doctoral program? Does one acquire economic privilege as a result of completing a doctoral program? What exactly is valued 'being priced' in doctoral programs? Professors' time? Access to libraries and databases? Permis-

sion to participate in prescribed study? Enhanced status and prestige? Loss of income, competence, and independence? Who am I in this doctoral program? Am I client, consumer, creator, or promoter of inflexible, repressive social structures? Who am I to become along this desert river's journey? These existential questions transform abstract logic into concrete fear. Tiger stirs defensively in fear's presence.

Current attention to multi-culturism, rather than increasing understanding of difference, mystifies real class division. Recruitment issues for greater minority representation which revolve around financial resources and allocation seem to intensify the antagonism felt by members of the majority. "Every minority I've known has always had a free ride in education. That's America." Had my peers ever asked me directly, I would have freely told them that I have never in my history received any financial benefits for being Korean, working class, or academically exceptional.

C'est la vie capitaliste. A Korean fierce independence, not a Western rugged individualism, forces me to compensate for this unforeseeable crisis of inadequate support. I sell my vehicle for a "beater" Flintstonemobile and squirrel away the proceeds for the hard winter ahead. I pray that I experience no major health needs, that the gravity furnace doesn't levitate, and that my small 75 year-old "fixer-upper" home will provide adequate shelter.

Up to this point, I have prided myself on my ability to commit to and pursue my education with foresight and planning. Personal responsibility, self-esteem, and courage fade in the mirror of a non-reciprocal environment. The financial support question looms as a threatening dark cloud which hovers over this stretch of my river. There are no guarantees on the river or in life, only commitments. How do I maintain commitment to this path? Who is willing to offer a commitment of sustained support to me? How do I create a community of support which will sustain a commitment to this life's journey?

Week three of the doctoral program. I am unable to flow. There is no current, yet. There are swirls and eddies and deep undercurrents which keep me stuck in this stagnant pool of water. The extremely Westernized curriculum, lack of primary sources, outdated materials, and lack of diversity in both coursework and student population intensifies a dry, sterile, rigidly prescribed technical social work research program. I cannot afford to take an elective course in another department to keep my spirit alive. I wonder how my spirit will survive.

Korean roots dictate that I dare not disclose my pain to the doctoral program. "*Dear granddaughter, hold to your heart always our ancient saying: you must not step on even the shadow of your teacher (Handbook of Korea,* 1987, p.443)." *Samshin Halmoni,* how can I pull the tiger's tail when you place academia safely outside the realm of critique and self-reflection? I must trust my grandmother's spirit now, since I do not trust my path.

In both Korea and America, institutions do not exist to serve the needs of individuals. I must accept this as my present reality. This has always been my reality. I close my eyes and my body remembers. Face up, bound and paralyzed in a noisy sea of cribs, I scream infant roars of grief and confusion only to have my tears, cries, pain, and needs met with silence. I was invisible in this poverty-stricken orphanage in Seoul. I imported malnutrition,

starvation, and failure-to-thrive symptoms with me to America as permanent evidence of institutional agendas.

Overwhelmed with memories of loss, I reach out to my spiritual brother, a fellow Korean adoptee. His voice of understanding creates the safe space I need for being. Simply being. "I know this journey is painful. Have faith. Remember, out of the muck and mud in which the lotus plant grows emerges a beautiful blossom which is you. It is also the throne upon which Buddha sits. Allow the seed of the lotus plant

to germinate out of your heart. Be patient, be vulnerable, be strong, be who you are, an individual who has weathered much in her journey but who has in the future an incredible transformation journey to yet experience. Love, Fellow Sojourner." I exhale, exhale, exhale.

Week four of the doctoral program. Academic activity is now my current social work practice. I have been allowed entrance to access an elite position in pursuit of a doctoral degree. To reap the rewards of such a privileged position, I must write in the legitimated, academic, depersonalized voice of "objectivity." I peer into this dark and narrow tunnel to see no glimmer of hope, no space for expression of my full humanity. I feel stripped down and cored out, nothing more than a hollow skeleton which must grin and dance and tap along a treadmill void of individual meaning. My face is thin and withdrawn. My clothes hang on me two sizes too large. Inadvertently, my presentation of self has become metaphor for this journey's meaning. I have turned into the ghosts of my past. How do I transform myself to free myself from history?

Week five of the doctoral program. A peer announces before a mid-term statistics exam that a student has discontinued the program. All mouths drop open and my heart slams shut. Thank you, Buddha, for sadistic statistics which impose a convenient wall around this heart. Exam question number one hits me dead center, one way Chi Square, "goodness of fit" test. What irony. We use this test every day we struggle through this program. I hear my peers' own questions echo deep within my mind. "Is this the right place for me? Is it failure to choose to leave this obedience training? How long can I endure? What could I have done to offer more support? Her fears were the same as mine. Her doubts mirrored my own. I've lost connec-

tion with another student. I've lost connection to my human self." I gaze into the eyes of my peers seeking mirrors to my soul.

Kasa for Samshin Halmoni
My tiger stirs angrily.
She wakens reluctantly.
She growls and snaps at me to say:
kill the ghosts, NOW.
Recapture tiger spirit.
Where is self affirmation?
"Defeated?"
By who?
Where is tiger's roaring compassion?
"Frozen with eyes sealed shut."
Where is tiger's roaring dance of anger?
"Forgotten."
And yet I hear a growing roar of outrage.
Why?
My tiger's roars are deafening.
My breathing suffocates me.
My heart is pounding loudly.
My tiger's roars are deafening.
I cannot see the river.
I cannot see the river.
Stop!

Week six of the doctoral program. Our doctoral program director has required of our class a representative for the doctoral committee meetings. Discussion among my classmates reveals, for reasons of time and energy, that they have excluded themselves from fulfilling this role. I am by default the "elected" doctoral student representative, the chosen one. Thrust into the unwanted role of leadership, I decide to transform this moment into opportunity. May it benefit those I serve. I welcome this chance to form connections with my peers. May I embrace the meaningful tasks of facilitating communication, advocating for adult learners, and creating community with competence. I can see the river's bend.

Week seven of the doctoral program. During a class break, I had the chance to walk with another student. Sharing poignant memories from our past, we discovered the great significance our names hold in being connected to our world. "Several years ago I went to Europe and found an entire community of my surname. This is in striking contrast to my family's isolation in rural Nebraska where no one shared our surname; I was alone. Elizabeth, in this small village in Europe where I could not speak the language, I felt I had come home."

I vulnerably retold my story of discovery that I, too, have a "real" name which connects me to this world. A year ago, a Korean friend offered to translate my adoption papers which were written in Korean.

Searching for any clues to connections to a birth family, she noticed the name, KimJin or "Jinny," which had arrived with me to the orphanage. This information contradicted my adoptive parents who recited a ritualized adoption story lullaby of, "You were named Jeanine Kim in an orphanage by an American. The great stork ship of Korea brought you to us where we gave you your real name." Tears relieve the flood of grieving over losses imbedded in a name. KimJin is a very real connection I retain to my birth family, to Korea, and to my truth. "What's in a name" runs deep within connections to homeland. Thank you *Samshin Halmoni* for this moment of connection with my peer. We are not alone in our pain and recovery of loss of homeland.

Week eight of the doctoral program. My Anglo peers are angry with this school. They protest against assignments which demand that students identify for themselves their personal ideology and theoretical paradigm. They squirm uncomfortably with the requirement of identification. Absorbing these violent reactions, I struggle to join with these broken hearts who seem to have been challenged for the first time to take a stand for themselves. To thine own self be true. The call is for social workers to "know thyself" so that the potential for iatrogenesis diminishes. What is it about declaring identity that seems threatenting? Floods of thoughts stream through my consciousness. Could it be that making an assertion of self holds the potential for accountability and responsibility for one's choices, actions, and privileged positions? Could it be that identifying one's values, beliefs, and assumptions reiterates our human limitations? Could it be that reappropriating self requires acknowledgment of, and thus the need to heal from, old wounds of personal history?

Week nine of the doctoral program. In this doctoral program, competition for talking space feels antagonistic. When I speak without the intention of interruption, silence falls. Dialogue turns into soliloquy. I hear my heart thunder. I slow my breathing down. My peers offer no comment on my comments. My social work professors whose roles are to facilitate equal exchange in the classrooms harden into silent monolithic edifices, seemingly oblivious to classroom dynamics. I remain distinct and apart from the chorus of Anglo academia. What is this voice, this voice, this voice?

Echoes of kindergarten ring in memory. My babble of curiosity was muzzled. I became a conditioned experiment to be controlled. "Silence, Elizabeth! Raise your hand in class!" Acknowledgment and permission were prerequisites for visibility and voice. My eyes betrayed what my ears heard. Teachers dedicated to my Americanization reserved a freedom for Anglo children to speak without sanction. Talkstory, please change these painful spiraling repetitions of time.

It has been my karma to be a "token" minority—the only Asian in class. "Elizabeth, YOU tell us about THE Asian experience." I shed this distasteful honor for I cannot speak for a multiplicity of experiences. I can only advocate for multiplicity. As the only Asian-American in a social work doctoral student population of 40, my position precariously straddles a razor's edge of marginality.

To speak of the persistence of societal racism invokes heated dissent from my peers. Their views would obliterate the concept from all discourse as the prescribed method of eliminating this social problem. My peers do not believe there is cause for discussion given prevalent U.S. laws institutionalizing non-racist equal opportunity. My identity and thus integrity of voice is challenged with every word. Strangled, I struggle just to breathe. Think.

The educator and policy analyst Byron Kunisawa (1994) claims that "we can't change systems as individuals; we can influence how systems affect other individuals." Kunisawa bases this claim on his historical research identifying the U.S. (and British) model for dealing with exclusion as <u>more</u> exclusion—the development of separate systems of service. The politically correct polemic of diversity with all its vagaries is addressed with our American systems' designs of omission. Our systems are unable to resolve social problems quickly; therefore, we have historically created a culture where problems become *normal*, tolerable. What was once unacceptable becomes

"fact of life." Gloria Yamato (1988) echoes Kunisawa's sentiments and writes that "racism is pervasive to the point that we take many of its manifestations for granted, believing 'that's life'...We become so numbed to racism that we don't even think twice about it, unless it is immediately life threatening." (pp.3-6) My heart sinks at the possibility of racism gone underground, especially in social work.

I hear the whispers of my American Indian soul brother. "Elizabeth, I forbid you to minimize your reality. Trust your disjointed self. Return to your integrity. Honor your kaleidoscope of pain. Refuse to remain silent. KimJin, remember who you are. I send you prayers of healing strength and rain." Dear sojourner, when will life not be so hard? "When you accept that life is hard."

Last week of the first trimester. We debrief and reflect upon the last 10 weeks. Our initiation into a doctoral program of social work has been lonely, isolating, and alienating. We have just engaged the struggle with the question: How do we create paths of meaning? We are burnt out and stripped bare, exhausted of all resources. It feels as if we've been through war.

I long to share my talk-story with my peers. I long to acknowledge their discomfort when meeting others from culturally diverse backgrounds and thus learning "about ourselves in unexpected ways, perhaps uncomfortable ways" (Kayser, 1995a). My peers are uncomfortable to gaze inside mirrors not of their own creation, the mirrors which "otherness" holds up. This clash of realities is an unwanted experience for those who have been sheltered among privileged dominant ideologies and experiences. How can my tiger's roar lift up and soothe their pain?

My most constant companion reminds me I do not talk-story without the intensely felt presence of the personal. This Slovenian American poet's twenty-four hour struggles with my uniqueness involves a well intentioned endeavor to extinguish in particular the tiger's raor of pain. He experiences freedom and safety to share his anger in moments where "skin differences" situate him as a White minority and impose the human unwanted feeling of exclusion. His resitance to giving empathy for an anger from a *life long lived* situation of difference and loss deflects my history of external responses which diminshed and minimized intolerable de- humanizing social relationships. He holds up the majority's mirror in his attempts to alleviate such perceived suffering. Glaring eyes penetrate back to me asking "How do I release myself from this mirrored trap—It has been hard to hide my marginal status, or "stranger in a strange land," as conferred upon by members of the United States. It has been painful to be the one who is continually commanded through overt and covert non-verbal communication to include and accept others. ifference and loss deflects my history of external responses which diminished and minimized intolerable, dehumanizing social relationshis. He holds up the majority's mirror in his attempts to alleviate such perceived suffering. Glaring eyes penetrate back to me asking: How do I release myself from this mirrored trap—a finely meshed barbed wire dam stretched taut and deep across my river. him as a White minority and imposes the human unwanted feeling of exclusions. When will I be free of this importunity from non-reciprocal relationships? How does one heal from embedded barbs of oppression?

This new path has been fraught with disappointment.

Overwhelmed and verging on self-doubt, I have asked of myself, what must I change? This is dangerous when asked in isolation. When thrust time after time into a remembered history where my memory and truth were iatrogenically evaluated as bad, wrong, and harmful to others, survival instincts forced me to distance myself in order to hold fast to what is meaningful. Talk-story has transformed this painful pattern. When I feel empty and void of self, when there seems nothing left of self to change, sojourners step in and remind me I have nothing in the world to lose. My heart expands and my sense of self

increases. *"Dear granddaughter, what creates distance in others? What are the multiple wedges of separation? Could it possibly be pain?"*

In pain my tiger roars "Don't touch my heart!" when in truth my tiger yearns for touch and comfort. I close my eyes and breathe in validation to the tiger's painful outrage. I exhale to expose outrageous wounds. The cleansing air of truth, both stings and heals. May these tiger's roars of ancient pain be given relief through reconnections:to self, to others, to meaning. May my tiger's ears be sharp to other's pain. The tiger's roar attempts no harm, only equal, humanizing sanction. The tiger's roar will not be silenced.

In *A Different Mirror*, Ronald Takaki (1993, p.16) borrows from the poet Adrienne Rich in asking, "What happens when someone in authority describes our society and you are not in it?" Takaki believes that such an experience can be disorienting—"a moment of psychic disequilibrium, as if you looked into a mirror and saw nothing." Throughout my present "tour of duty" in a doctoral program of social work, I have sought mirrors looking for my human truth. I feel like an ethereal tiger ghost whose spirit is unwanted as it stalks along the secluded haunted ivory tower halls. Yet, there is hope for changing this life as lived. This talk-story will change again and again; the conflicts and crises will blur into clarity and kindness. The present will be reinterpreted so that the pain of exclusion and loss of homeland yields to possibility.

Concluding Thoughts

I am keenly aware that as I choose to adopt the American definition of the role of professional social worker, I am caught between many different and at times opposing ideologies or "self-conscious systems of values" (Ephross & Reisch, 1982, p. 275). I have been blessed with sojourners of my s(e)oul who position themselves as political minorities and who have become expert interpreters of multilevel realities. My survival has depended upon these teachers, mentors, and guides who empower me to discover my own abilities for the continuing negotiation of different cultures and their respective value systems. My social work practice demands that I remain awake (conscious use of self) to ideological effects on my practice. I struggle to achieve harmony among my poetry, politics, work, and personal life. Ann Withorn (1984, p.82) states that not to accomplish this courts personal disaster and the danger of performing harmful work.

I also am unable to escape the realization that my own history and experiences impose myopic lenses of perception. Loss of homeland, whether through adoption or otherwise, creates situations of penetrating grief which color lifelong paths. Prejudice, discrimination, bigotry, racism, and all forms of repressive acts against others are insidious aspects of an environment which give one (of perhaps an infinite number) clear messages of exclusion. For an international adoptee, the challenge is to not only reconstruct a complete human sense of self, but also to continually transcend institutionalized messages of exclusion at all levels of experience. This is profound. The experiences of relinquishment and adoption and racism are in continuous dialogue with each other. I refuse to be pathologized for the pain which this dialogue imposes upon me. I fully embrace my journeys of healing which require at times that I stand alone, excluded from others' understanding.

Not having been given the opportunity to command a language appropriate to my Korean sense of self, I continually reposition myself today in American society with the realization that I am a Korean who has chosen to intervene in (be present to) the role of social worker with people who choose American philosophies, American ways of knowing. Even the process of familiarizing myself (i.e., formal education) with knowledge foundations based on American ideologies has been tenuous, slow, and discouraging. I have been asked to "learn" using Western language, to perform within Western pedagogies, and to act promoting Western definitions of success. I am wedded to this reality. My tiger's roar of reality is healed with John Kayser's (1995b, p. 20) reintroduction of the social work value of a "community of learners" which must involve reciprocal relationships, positive valuing of differences,

and the willingness to be held accountable to self and other. Therein lies hope. May my heart remain accountable, compassionate, clear, and open to you.

Elena Featherston writes in the preface to *Skin Deep* (1994) of re/membering as a form of resistance which is a life-affirming and self-defining act. For Featherston, "re/membering is a cry of defiance in the face of that which would steal our past, predetermine our future, cut short our present, challenge our humanity, render our lives meaningless, and make us invisible" (p. vi). It is important that my memories are voiced before they are lost forever and with them an essential part of my history. It is my hope that my tiger's roar can add to a life lived through words instead of left as an echo into a silence of ancient frailty.

My life's work as a social worker attempts to articulate moments in a non-linear journey of re-membering a little bit of Seoul through the tiger's roar (the social reconstruction of self)—a metaphor for a social work practice problem, an example of a healing path for international adoptees. Cynthia Ozick (1989, p. 283) believes that through metaphor, "those at the center can imagine what it is to be outside... we strangers can imagine the familiar hearts of strangers." May it be so.

The gifts I have received from this evolving talk-story emerge in the form of unanswerable questions for cultivation. These questions dance around issues of identity and connection. As client, consumer, and practitioner in a doctoral program of social work, I embrace these questions as necessary for understanding our professional roles. These questions are what we impose upon and demand from our clients. I offer these gifts from a loss of homeland to my ever-expanding community of learners. Who are our families now? How do we reach out in hopes of connection and belonging? How do we lend our tigers' roars to others? Who are we in a doctoral program of social work? Who are we to become along our river journeys? How do we transform ourselves to free ourselves from history? How do we create paths of meaning? May these gifts enrich our evolving social work practice.

This tiger's roar ends with "*mianhada,*" the Korean expression which embodies *both* the emotions of regret and gratitude. "I am uncomfortable *and* thank you for being kind." *Samshin Halmoni, mianhada.*

Author Note

Every Korean talk-story is the temporal resulting blend of many voices and personal histories. I wish to thank mentors Ron Nydam and Jeff King and colleagues Andrea Cubelo-McKay and William Dieterich for listening to this narrative. Special gratitude must be extended to John Kayser for his kind and thoughtful presence as sojourner. John's critique of early drafts of this manuscript was most helpful in clarifying the narrative structure and authenticity of voice of this talk-story. These graceful sojourners' talk-stories continue to enhance and broaden my own. □

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POETRY
By JANICE FINNEY

Without A Map

Lines are easily drawn
in sand; meridians as invisible
as meaning. What is meant
by departure? Unexpectedly
we're left without boundaries
by the South China Sea.
Privacy at stake, tempers swell
and the unrelenting sun
exaggerates the importance
of a moment's space.
Lickety-split time nicks in,
turns the horizon into a finish line
and we return to I, sitting alone
in an equipped kitchen,
discombobulated
by the faucet's surge.
The window is an open sea
to watch after—
noon wintertide rise, froth
from the Chicago snowfall,
while scanning meaning.

By Rote

My name is Heng Teng.
I am born in Cambodia
in 1942. In 1947,
there is a war when I am
little boy. We fight VietNam.
North VietNam. Ho Chi Minh.
In 1954, there is another war
and they sign Geneva Peace.
In 1969, there is another
war. Americans bomb. In 1975,
the communists take over
my country. In 1979 I escape
to Thailand. In 1981, I come
to America where you teach me
to put my feelings in simple words
and you treat me like I am simple.

Janice Finney is a poet and playwright living in Chicago. Her poetry has appeared in several small presses:*Korone, Poetry East, Sojouner, Oyex Review, Thorntree Press Anthology,* and *Emergence.* She worked with the the Southeast Asian refugee community in Uptown Chicago for 15 years, and most recently worked for 3 years with Habitat for Humanity serving a large group of immigrant families.

FROZEN FETA CHEESE LASAGNA WITH CRUSHED HOT PEPPERS

I, a foreigner! It sounded so strange. A foreigner is a person born in a different country. Despite having lived in the United States for more than a decade now, by this definition I will always be a foreigner. In this narrative, I share with you some fragments about growing up in India and how I became a foreigner in the promised land, my experiences of being a foreigner in my adopted home, and how being a foreigner influences my teaching. I will end this narrative with a few words about how I am transforming myself into the hyphen between Indian and American and its implications for my teaching and scholarship.

By
Mahasweta M. Banerjee.

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Constantin Brancusi

A few days ago, I called a Latina client to set up an interview related to starting a micro-enterprise. A young boy answered the phone. I introduced myself to him and asked for his mother. I heard the boy yelling loudly: "Mom, a foreigner is on the phone!" It felt very strange to be called a foreigner. I was on hold for a few minutes, and was ruminating over the strangeness of being called a foreigner, when I heard the boy call out again with urgency in his voice, "Moom! A foreigner is on the phone for you."

I realized I had almost forgotten that I was a foreigner because in social work circles where people are only too aware of diversity, no one openly calls me a foreigner. Politely, I am referred to as an international faculty member. After the phone call, I paused to ponder the new label: a foreigner. I, a foreigner! It sounded so strange. A foreigner is a person born in a different country. Despite having lived in the United States for more than a decade now, by this definition, I will always be a foreigner. It occurred to me that the young boy honestly said what I had always believed was Americans' first reaction to me—a strange name, a different accent—a foreigner. In this narrative, I will share with you some fragments about growing up in India and how I became a foreigner in the promised land, my experiences of being a foreigner in my adopted home, and how being a Foreigner influences my teaching. I wil end this narrative with a few words about how I am transforming myself into the hyphen between Indian and American, and its implications for my teaching and scholarship.

India: Life at my parent's home

Growing up in Calcutta, Delhi, and Bombay—all metropolitan cities of India—I never imagined I would eventually live in the United States, let alone Lawrence, Kansas. I was born in post-independent India in a traditional Bengali home in Calcutta. I grew up listening to exhilarating stories of how the male members of my family were involved in the long

struggle for freedom from colonial rule. Other stories glorified the value of national freedom and pride in nationalism. My family members inculcated in me a strong value base in Bengali culture and heritage. I was reminded how all progressive things in India, such as science, literature, music, religion, and politics, were rooted in Calcutta and Bengal. (Calcutta is the capital of the state, West Bengal. I refer to West Bengal as Bengal because prior to independence West Bengal and East Bengal, later Bangladesh were one state. Even today, people from West Bengal are called Bengali.) I was taught to be a proud Bengali. Isn't it ironic that a proud Bengali and an Indian today lives in America, primarily a land of White people?

In my family, there were different types of White people: Britishers who oppressed us had to be resisted, but Americans who had never ruled us were to be admired. In fact, there was much to learn from Americans considering the tremendous technological progress they had made within such a short national history. My father studied at Princeton University, and later he and my mother traveled all over the United States. As a child, I heard so many interesting stories about Americans from my parents that I imagined Americans as very open, friendly, and creative people. But my father made it very clear that once enough had been learned, one had to go back and contribute one's talents to India.

During my early childhood, my father very carefully and progressively selected a rather expensive private school for me that taught secularism and multi-culturalism instead of an Anglo or a Bengali school as was the custom. Anglo schools were primarily Christian schools that used English as the medium of instruction and imparted Christian ways of life. Bengali schools, on the other hand, taught classes in Bengali and grounded students in Indian culture and heritage. My father wanted me to learn English while maintaining a firm grounding in Indian culture. Despite strong opposition from his elders, my father sent me to a school where I soon learned to be bi-cultural. I could operate comfortably both at home where we only spoke and did things Bengali, and at school, where we could only speak in English with girls from all over India who spoke many different Indian languages. In retrospect, my home grounded me in Indian culture and my school broadened and opened up my mind.

At home, I learned what it meant to be a good Bengali woman. I was raised in a patriarchal family system where authority, power, and gender roles were clearly demarcated. My brother and I were taught some universals such as respecting elders and accepting authority without question. But, I, the girl, was taught to be humble, obedient, submissive, courteous, and dignified. My father tried to rectify my sister's and my misfortune of being born girls by telling us that we were all very special. He would say that I was very special because I was the oldest, my sister was very special because she was the youngest, and my brother was very special because he was the only son. If daughters were special, I couldn't understand why my brother always got the largest shrimp or the chicken leg when our cook supervised our meals and I demanded equal distribution. He complained to my mother that I was disrespectful of him and that I was a willful child. My mother always disciplined me for having a mind of my own and often told me that I would have a very difficult time at my in-laws' if I didn't learn to eat what I was given and do as I was told. Double standards for boys and girls never made any sense to me. Early in life, I figured out that some privileges such as higher

education abroad and property and wealth would not be bestowed upon me naturally; they were all reserved for my brother. I never valued wealth, but I wanted to go abroad and study. This would be possible only if I excelled in my studies and obtained a scholarship. I did excel in my studies but there was never any recognition of my academic accomplishments. That I would do well was taken for

granted.

Instead, I was exposed to such womanly things as sharing and caring for others and especially giving charity to poor people. Every Sunday morning money was given to poor people and when I was about six or seven years old, I was given the responsibility of distributing the money to all who came to our home to beg. People who begged for a living made me very curious at an early age. I wondered where they lived and why they had to beg. Then, there was a lot of emphasis on being a well-rounded woman by learning to embroider, paint, sing, play a musical instrument, and decorate. Religion was important and when I was about eight years old, my grandmother inducted me into the Hindu ways of worship. Under her tutelage for four years, I learned numerous Sanskrit mantras to pray to the gods and the goddesses. In retrospect, these mantras taught me what was to be valued in life and my purpose in life: to be a good woman whose only identity in life was that of a daughter, a wife, and a mother.

On the other hand, through the Bengali literature, music, cinema, and theater which flourished at home, I was exposed to other ways of living and thinking. Sometimes I felt torn between being a good Bengali woman that was constantly ingrained in me and the possibilities of freedom and expansion that existed in the literature and the arts that I could taste only as an observer. It seemed only men were privileged to write fascinating books, act in delightful dramas, and play enchanting music. The women who accompanied men whether in movies, theater, or dance recitals were unfortunate beings working for a living rather than pursuing their talents. Good women were passive receivers rather than active participants in the arts and literature. I couldn't accept the dogma of Indian womanhood but didn't know then how to create a different life for myself.

Ah! To be in Delhi: The first taste of freedom.

I tasted freedom for the first time in my life when I was sent to Delhi for my undergraduate years. Soon, I realized that I was not a typical Bengali. Very comfortably, I fit into the culture of Delhi where I happily mixed with non-Bengali people, ate different food, wore different clothes, and spoke almost fluent Hindi. The major lesson I learned about myself during these three years was that I loved working with people. Upon completion of my bachelor's degree in Psychology, I moved to Bombay for a master's degree in Social Work. *That* was the first time in my life when I decided something major for myself: I wanted to be a social worker. Becoming a social worker was the best thing I did for myself—I grew and changed tremendously.

Introduction to social work.

I studied social work because I found the theoretical orientation of psychology, especially Abnormal Psychology, inadequate in helping people lead happy lives. In my young life, I had not experienced any major upheavals which pushed me to become a social worker. Additionally, at that time, I had no ideological foundation that urged me to rectify injustice in society. Initially, all I wanted to do was to make a few people happy as happiness was important to me. Because of my background in psychology, I specialized in Medical and Psychiatric Social Work with the intent of working with troubled families.

A few years ago, I was at a diversity training workshop in Lawrence, Kansas, where the facilitators asked us to form groups based on how we identified ourselves. Several groups such as "gays and lesbians," "African Americans," "single mothers," were formed. One group of women called themselves "juice moms," meaning women who were primarily wives and mothers waiting at home for their family with juice, but in their spare time did some social work. I had a hearty laugh at that group because originally I was to be a "juice mom."

In my family (meaning extended family), women did not work outside the home for pay. Period. Women volunteered and did good work outside the home, but they did not earn a living. Men earned a liv-

ing. In fact, the story goes that when my father was born, an astrologer said that this boy will work all his life. Apparently, there was utter disbelief in the family because no one in the family, men included, worked for a living. They were born into wealth and did not labor to make money. However, my father *did* work for a living for the major part of his life because the zamindari system of land ownership was abolished in free India. Over time, my family adjusted to men working, but it was unthinkable that I would work for pay.

I had changed over the two years when I studied to be a social worker. I wanted to go out and work but could not if I remained unmarried. My marriage was arranged with an electrical engineer who had lived in Germany for some years. Off I went, despite serious reservations, to live my "real life"—life did not begin until marriage. My in-laws were not as traditional as my parents and encouraged me to find work outside the home. I averted being a "juice mom" by getting married.

Professional social work experiences.

As I started to look for work as a family therapist in Calcutta, I realized that the reality of Calcutta was considerably different from that of Delhi and Bombay. Poverty, unemployment, and political unrest were rampant in Calcutta. Over time, I realized that a micro focus on individuals' mental health could not scratch the surface of the turmoil that existed in Calcutta. Nonetheless, bent on being a therapist, I first volunteered for some time with the Calcutta Samaritans where I got opportunities to work with troubled families. Housed next door to the Calcutta Samaritans was Cathedral Relief Services (CRS) where a social work cohort had just resigned. She encouraged me to interview with the CRS and I was offered a position. It was then that my career as a social worker and life as an adult begun.

CRS worked in 25 slums in Calcutta where mobile health clinics were run and some financial assistance was given to people. My supervisor had recently joined CRS and was unhappy with providing only health care services. She wanted to organize slum dwellers around pressing issues such as housing. I learned community organizing and development from her. Initially, I was in charge of one slum where I did a needs assessment. Later, through focus group meetings I learned that residents did not need health care as free health care was available nearby. Instead, residents wanted an elementary school within the slum and skills training for adolescent girls so they could earn a living, and men wanted jobs. Residents were asking for the basics and not the frills that CRS could provide.

I was able to create each of these services during my two-year tenure at CRS. I convinced the CRS authorities to provide cash for buying building materials for the school. Local residents provided sweat labor to build the school. We hired local residents to teach children and enrollment increased sharply over time. CRS hired a specialist to teach handwork to young girls; classes were held in the afternoon in the school building when classes were out. CRS sold the crafts and paid the trainees. But, getting jobs for men was the most difficult task as unemployment has always been very high in Calcutta. The concept of micro-enterprise was not so popular in the 1970s. Nonetheless, that is exactly what I did. I connected local residents with banks so they could get a loan. Where necessary, I connected residents with industries so they could get technical expertise in starting their own small business. Three residents started micro-enterprises: one sold snacks, another sold groceries in a marketplace, and a group of men started their detergent making factory in the slum. I felt gratified at being able to make some difference in the lives of local residents.

Work was going smoothly when a sudden thunderbolt struck us. One day, the slum residents received an eviction notice from the local government. The notice stated that residents had built their homes illegally and were being ordered to vacate the land en masse within

a short time. It was frightening for both the residents and myself. That was when I learned advocacy and lobbying. I approached legislators with residents and pleaded for a stay order. Over time, we were able to get a court order to rescind the prior order. The slum exists even today although residents have lost some land.

On reflection, those were glorious days. I learned, grew, and changed tremendously. I had a sense of mission and accomplishment. My greatest sense of accomplishment came when I was asked to work as an organizer for all 25 slums. With the help of other social workers, we organized leaders from all the 25 slums to create a platform through which their voices could be heard. The leaders decided to have a fair to make Calcuttans aware of slum dwellers living there and to sell various crafts made by slum residents. The fair entitled "Who are We?" received a lot of media coverage and was a great success. I resigned my extremely satisfying job at CRS because my husband decided to go to New Zealand. Trained to be a dutiful wife, I followed him.

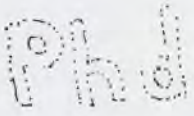
Coming to America.

It was not my idea to come to the United States; my husband coaxed me to take the GRE and to apply for admission. As usual, he was tired of living in the same country for long. We had returned to India less than three years back. Indeed, living in one country for three years was extremely long considering we had lived in three very different countries, India, New Zealand, and Qatar, and had traveled throughout the northern world during a ten-year marriage. I enjoyed visiting different countries but was tired of moving around so frequently. I wanted to settle down to a home, a job, and bringing up our child. Nonetheless, as usual, I acceded to my husband's wishes. Because our marriage was not working very well in India, I thought a change of environment, free from family interferences, might save the marriage. I enrolled at Washington University in St. Louis; my husband joined me a few months later. The plan was that our five year old daughter would come as soon as we got a somewhat settled.

Hah! Who said, "Man proposes, God disposes?" It does not matter but the most unimaginable happened. My husband got admitted in to an engineering program and received an assistantship, but disliked the hard work and decided he had had enough with the United States. It was time to pack up and go home—one more time. He declared that he was going back to India the week of my finals in the second semester of my Ph.D. course work. I felt pushed to the edge of a cliff. It seemed that if I took the reckless plunge and went back to India, I would die; if I decided to stay atop the cliff, by myself, I would die too. I opted to stay atop the cliff, hoping to survive somehow.

Survival mode.

Commitment is very important to me. I had committed myself to getting a Ph.D. degree, had invested my life's savings in coming to America, and could



not return without completing my work. So I stayed back. Eventually, our marriage fell apart. I was devastated. I didn't know how to live life without a husband. I kept hearing the old record of my mother's and grandmother's voice telling me the main reason for a woman's existence: be a good wife and mother. Could I possibly survive by myself?

Alone, frightened, rejected, and deeply sorrowful, I continued with my Ph.D. program at Washington University. I kept in touch with my daughter weekly over the phone and visited Calcutta annually. Swallowing tears, I told my beloved child to smile and be brave. Then, my father had a stroke and it was too much for my mother to take care of both my father and my daughter. Thus, I brought back a nine year old who had spent almost half her life away from her mother. It took tremendous work to regain a child's love and trust. Slowly, carefully, I picked up the tat-

tered, scattered pieces of my life and continued to live. At least there was one major reason to exist: I had to take care of a child I loved deeply. My daughter prodded me to finish my work quickly and get on with life. Before long, I completed my Ph.D. degree, got myself a job, and moved, not to India, but to Kansas.

Why live in the United States?

When I came to the United States, I did not plan on staying here. I had a high ranking job with a well-known voluntary social service agency in Calcutta. We had numerous state and federal contracts as well as foreign grants for programs, trainings, and social research. We had just started a two- year social work graduate education program, and I was fully in charge of it. I enjoyed my work and vigorously promoted the new social work school. Thedean of a premier social work educational institution in India was my mentor in theis venture. I had everything going for me. There was no need for me to come and live in the United States. I gave all up because I wanted to save my marriage, but failed at it miserably. After my marriage disintegrated, I lost the option of going home. My family did not want me back.

Shortly after moving to Kansas, I was startled when an African-American colleague pointedly asked, "Why are you here?" I couldn't give a truthful answer because I was still grappling with my failed marriage. Even today, it's very hard for me to discuss the real reason why I stayed here and did not go back as was expected of an international student. Many Americans don't understand why a marriage break up would close my doors to India. They ask: "Is divorce legal?" Sure, divorce is legal. Indian women have many rights; in fact, they have the right to abortion, which is still hotly debated here. "Well, then, why can't you go home?" they wonder. I couldn't go back home because marriage is sacrosanct and divorce is not accepted *in my family*. I stayed in America because I needed a safe place to hide from the microscopic scrutiny and the ever-stretching tentacles of my super-critical social system that blamed me squarely for the marriage breakup. I know I tried my best. Today, they want me back. But it's too late.

A New Life in a New Place

My heart cried for India, but I made the United States my home. While in St. Louis, I trained my eyes to see poverty. Poverty is relative, and compared to the stark poverty in Calcutta, poverty was non-existent here, but horrific in relation to the rest of America. I wanted to go back to Calcutta because I felt an obligation to serve people there. Poor people needed me there more and I could make a difference there but not here. It seemed there were lots of social workers here who knew how to serve clients. America did not need me. So long as I could not identify with Americans and accept America as my home, I did not have anything to contribute to America. Yet, I had to stay here and supposedly contribute. It was extremely difficult to make new beginnings when my soul was in Calcutta. It took interactions and reflections to heal, to figure out who I am, and to be who I wanted to be.

How Americans respond to me

There are exceptions, and I can immediately recall a few faces of men and women who extended themselves fully to me, but generally speaking, it was much harder to get to know White Americans. People of color, on the other hand, made the effort to reach out to me. But before I knew what was happening, again with a few exceptions, a wall existed between us. Thus, developing strong friendships with Americans was not easy. I have struggled with this issue for a long time because I wanted as many good friends as I had at home. I have not succeeded. Recently, I compared my friendship circle with that of my daughter's and noted that she has many very good friends. Thus, I concluded that age and stage in life, not race or nationality, are related to the friendships I have been seeking. Establishing strong, deep, loyal friends requires a lot of nurturing, effort, and doing many things together. Adjusting to the pressures of living in America, I did not have the luxury of time that I had in India for friends. Nonetheless, I have wondered

whether Americans would have responded to me differently had I stayed here temporarily. With all the anti-foreigner feelings that have been fermenting here, it seems that once Americans knew that I wanted to stay here and stake out a future for myself *in their country*, the ball game became very different. Here, I will share some memorable experiences—positive, negative, and mixed—through which slowly I figured out my identity and began the process of transforming myself in desired ways.

"Do you have a shorter name?" is an almost universal first question when I meet an American. I don't get offended by the question because I know mine is a rather unique name and difficult even for Indians. Many years back when I was in New Zealand, people asked me the same question. Then, I was younger and more willing to go the extra mile. I had agreed to being called "Maha," but it almost felt schizophrenic to be called by part of my name. When I had to learn so many different and new names and say them correctly, I wondered why my hosts couldn't extend the same courtesy and call me by my name? Since then, I have stuck to my given name. Not merely "great" (Maha) or just "white" (Sweta), but Mahasweta which despite its racist connotation is one of the 108 names of the Hindu Goddess of Learning.

After working through the hurdle of my name, I often deal with other barriers that come with being a foreigner–my accent, my clothes, my food habits—in short, my identity which is tied to my cultural heritage. Other than being difficult by insisting on being called by my given name, I am rather accommodating with Americans. I have learned that Americans are most comfortable with people they are familiar with. So, I have modified some of my English pronunciations of words such as schedule, route and class to sound American, and have learned to use American phrases such as "mail a letter" rather than "post a letter." Also, I always wear appropriate American clothes when I meet people for the first time. Later, if I feel more comfortable, I wear my Indian clothes—sarees and salwar kameez—and my "bindi" or the dot on my forehead. Many compliment me on my beautiful sarees, and some even ask me when I am going to India next so I can bring back a salwar kameez for them. Everyone asks, "What does the dot on your forehead mean?" I have fun explaining, "It's just makeup—like lipstick. It doesn't have any spiritual or religious significance for me." If appropriate, I also pull the bindi off my forehead and stick it on my friends' forehead. Most enjoy it.

"What is your caste?" and "How come you are not a vegetarian?" are two often asked questions. People in general like to classify others to simplify life. We all have many stereotypes about people. I resist disclosing my caste when asked directly or indirectly because the only purpose such information can serve is to pigeonhole me. Also, it seems that Americans believe all Indians are vegetarians. I grew up eating fish, meat, and eggs and my chaste Brahmin caste permits it! It is sacrilegious to eat beef and pork, but fish and mutton are permitted. Many Americans don't realize that a vegetarian diet among Indians is tied to regions of India. Bengal has many rivers and Calcutta has a large sea port. Fresh fish is plentiful and an integral part of our diet at home and has nothing to do with caste or being Indian.

"Tabasco sauce with hamburger? You gotta be kidding!" remarked a friend when I encouraged her to try it. Unlike Indian women, I dislike cooking and often eat out. When eating with an American friend, if I am sufficiently comfortable, I ask for Tabasco sauce or crushed hot pepper to add to my hamburger, lasagna, or beef stroganoff. Some look at me in utter disbelief! I encourage many to try their food with Tabasco sauce to add flavor to the bland American cooking. Some daring folks do; others laugh at me. They can laugh for all I care because like my name, my accent, and my gorgeous sarees, I can't give up my taste for hot, spicy food. I am willing to adapt to eating frozen feta cheese lasagna for lunch, but I must add to it the crushed hot pepper which sits in the top drawer of my desk.

One day, a female White colleague and I were discussing welfare reform. I mentioned that poor people could start a micro-enterprise with a small loan and then use the savings from such small businesses to build their

NO, THAT IS NOT GOING TO WORK. YOU ARE NOT AN AMERICAN, YOU DON'T KNOW HOW THINGS WORK HERE.

own assets. My colleague's prompt response was, "No, that's not going to work. You are not an American, you don't know how things work here." I was stunned! I felt hit below the belt. I became silent temporarily, but have thought through this incident since then. After much self-examination, I know that I was not being arrogant and superimposing a policy option for Americans. All I did was discuss an idea. Despite a great deal of intellectual openness, and strong commitment to rectify injustice, she over-reacted. It seems that because many social workers are paid professionals, they can not think beyond what works for them: job training and wage employment. Also, it is possible that my colleague felt threatened by a novel idea that has much potential; evidence is mounting up that micro-enterprises work for poor people in the United States. Consequently, I had to be put down with a major weapon: I am not an American. How could a non-American possibly come up with a policy option for Americans? Only America, the super power, has the right to fix other nations' problems.

Others are not so overt about my not being an American. Nonetheless, sometimes I have noticed that when I am rather comfortable with my colleagues and am enjoying some discussion, suddenly someone chimes in and starts discussing old American music or films that I have not heard or seen. Bingo! I shut up because I am not a part of that American history. It seems that these are subtle ways of excluding me from a conversation. Lately, I've felt tempted to say, "Hey! Let's discuss things I am more familiar with. What do you think of Ray's film Agantuk--The Stranger?" I have come to the conclusion that power plays an important role in social interactions and always will be used against me by some. Even social work faculty have a long way to go with embracing human diversity. Folks reading this, please don't stop talking with me. The editors asked me to revise and address race relations and discuss *my* true feelings and reactions to these situations.

"You took up an American's job!" said an African-American student in class. I was shocked at the animosity of his comment. I retorted, "There was a national search for this position. I was considered the most suitable person for the job." Those were the early years of my tenure as a faculty member. Now I wonder why I had to give such an explanation. Others—students who have known me for a couple of years, faculty members from other departments, and prospective funders—have asked me when I will finish my Ph.D. or how my Post Doctoral work was going. I interpret these remarks to mean that I, an Indian woman, could not have a Ph.D. or be a faculty member at an university. Traditional Indian modesty prohibits me from flaunting my degree beside my name and is misunderstood as frailty here.

And then, there are those colleagues and students who don't consider me a foreigner! Some acknowledge that I am different, just as no two Americans are similar, but my difference does not come in the way of establishing relationships. I have found that this group of people either had prior experience with foreigners or have an intellectual maturity that enables them to be open to people who are different from them. I feel most comfortable with this group. They are my dear

friends. When I have oppressive experiences, I process them and try to get over them. Often, a sense of humor and taking an observer stance helps me handle many difficult interactions with Americans. So long as acceptance from all Americans was important for me—a legacy of my upbringing—I could have been hurt. Now I know many Americans will not accept me. But, it is no longer my problem. Do all Indians accept me?

A Bengali Woman in U.S. Academia

Do I teach differently because I am a foreigner? My first reaction was to say, "No. I don't do anything differently. I am fully myself as a teacher." Well, there lies the catch. If I am fully myself then I must be different because I am a foreigner. So, I did some serious thinking. I realized there are some universals about my teaching just as there are some unique aspects to my teaching. I teach both of the research sequence classes as well as the macro component of the Human Behavior and the Social Environment(HBSE) sequence. Both are required courses and students especially dislike research. When I was asked to teach these courses rather than courses in the administrative sequence, which I had taught before and on which I had done extensive research, I felt shafted by the administration. As usual, I took up the gauntlet and proceeded to do the best job. I had experience working as a macro practitioner and doing extensive research. So, I blended my theoretical knowledge with my practical experiences in teaching these courses. As I learn best by understanding theory and then applying it to practice, I follow the same philosophy in teaching where I discuss concepts and theories and require students to participate in simulations and actually work on a research project from beginning to end. In terms of the broad cut on content and method of instruction, I don't do anything differently except show a videotape of my research in a slum in Calcutta to address diversity. But some of my teaching techniques are different.

There are times when I emphasize my difference, and there are times when I build bridges by focusing on our common humanity. Earlier, I used to routinely announce on the first day of class: "If you have difficulty in understanding my accent, please stop me immediately and ask for clarifications. Likewise, if I don't understand something you say, I'll ask you to repeat." Acknowledging up front that both parties may not understand each other helped bridge our differences and led to an open atmosphere for learning. Over time, through close observation of students' eye expressions, I have realized that most students easily understand what I say. So now, I don't make such a routine announcement. But I continue to maintain close eye contact with the entire class. A very simple action such as eye contact which is rooted in my great desire and serious attempts to be clearly understood pays off in various ways. Through eye contact I can easily tell where students are in terms of their learning, and it makes each student feel special and valued. Also, it helps a great deal in establishing relationships.

Moreover, because I want to be accepted by all students, I expend tremendous effort in making sure all students know they are accepted by me no matter where they are in terms of their learning. I never move on to new concepts until I have ascertained that the entire class has understood what has been covered. I realize this process can be frustrating for students who want to jump ahead and learn more and for students who don't really want to be in class. I make it clear that I am there to teach everyone and not a select few students. I have observed that this approach helps pull the entire class together.

Does my cultural background rooted in gender, power, and authority issues play a role in my teaching? Male students are a rare breed in social work classes. I enjoy discussing issues with male students in my HBSE classes because they bring a different orientation to their questions and comments. Sometimes they are more rigid than women, and at other times they challenge me because I am a woman. Overall, I enjoy them. Perhaps, I am a little more courteous to male students than my role requires. Although as a sign of respect teachers are never addressed by their first name in India, and I found it extremely hard to call my professors by their first name, I now routinely tell my students to call me Mahasweta. From my teaching evaluations, it appears that power and authority are not major issues with regard to my teaching. However, some students believe that I am disrespectful of them because I push them beyond the mundane and the routine. Also, they dislike it when I tell them not to obsess with grades but to learn for life—another legacy of my Indian heritage. However, I used

to get very surprised when some students asked me to decide for them because my parents' stories had led me to believe Americans were fiercely independent people. Over time, I have realized there is a whole normal distribution with regard to students' self-direction and ability for independent thinking.

One of my major issues with studying in America was questioning authority and critiquing others' work. In India, we were taught to accept authority without question. It took a great deal of effort on my part to read between the lines, recognize the gaps, and raise questions. I am still growing in this area. So, I marvel at students who can ask opposing questions in class. I don't feel threatened by these questions; rather I admire such quick-thinking and questioning minds. If I have an answer or a possible answer, I share my thoughts; else, I affirm the validity and thoughtfulness of the question and try to come up with an answer or recognize a gap or contradictions in our knowledge base.

Moreover, I have realized that although relationships are critical in creating an atmosphere conducive to learning, relationships by themselves are not adequate in being repected as a teacher. Command and mastery over subject matter are imperative in gaining respect from students. Translating complex concepts into simple language requires a great deal of mastery over the subject matter. Unless I understand the concepts clearly, I cannot explicate them easily. I see myself leaning as a teacher rather than being the expert. I know students test me to see if they can raise questions to which I will not have answers. Over time they have realized that I can answer most questions to their satisfaction. Mastery over a subject matter also helps in building a reputation. I have heard that now students recommend me to new students. Overall, I believe I am an effective, albeit foreign, teacher.

Concluding thoughts

Transforming myself from a submissive Bengali woman to an independent faculty member at an American university has been a long journey. How am I accomplishing this transformation? Reading, thinking, writing, experiencing, distancing, and reflecting have helped in various ways. Watching some films, especially "Schindler's List" and "Heaven and Earth," taught me that my pain was minuscule in relation to what others have endured and overcome. And meditation, chanting, and reading the Bhagavat Gita allow me to get focused and accept my life. But, a meeting with the dean of my school turned out to be a critical juncture in this process of change. When I was floundering with carving out an area for my research and scholarship—both of which were as fragmented as my life then—she very simply said: "Find out who you are and be yourself!" What? I didn't have to live up to anyone else's expectations of me? I could be myself? It was the most liberating experience in my life. At the same time, I was afraid of being free: Who am I? How can I become a person in my own right? The Dean empowered me to consciously work on liberating myself. Slowly, I started to reconnect with myself, working through the chasm that existed between the person who had left India hoping to go back one day, and the person who worked as a faculty member in America unable to go back to India.

What are the implications of the focal exemplar—the unique process of personal transformation—for teaching and scholarship? It is hard for me to address this question as I am still working on it. It seems that my metamorphosis does not impact what I teach, but certainly it has affected my relationship with students. By sharing appropriate life experiences, I encourage students to dream of a future they may not have envisioned for themselves personally and professionally. Moreover, the encouragement and kindness bestowed upon me, a poor graduate student, by some of my professors at Washington University allow me to emulate them every time I hear that a student is juggling personal life, work and school. Always I go the extra mile to help them in various ways, such as making extra time or scholarship recommendations or providing research assistantships.

A very few times I have shared my story of abandonment the week of my finals when students have disclosed similar issues in their life. In-

variably, they ended by saying, "And, you survived!" I added, "Not only will you survive, you will thrive."

With regard to scholarship, earlier, I did a bit of disaster preparedness and response effectiveness, a bit of organizational effectiveness, and a bit of child support personnel's training effectiveness. My soul was not in them as I was still debating between somehow going home, perhaps by not getting tenured, and staying here. I was restless as long as I could not reinvest the fruits of my American education in India.

As a first step, I got a grant to study the Interplay of strengths and constraints in thelife of slum dwellers in Calcutta." Going back to Calcutta, and working with people I had cared about since the age of six,I somewhat healed the wound that had been festering for a long time. Later, I replicated a similar study among public housing residents in Kansas City.

In America, we obsess extensively about differences among groups, so I thought perhaps there were major differences between poor people in India and in the United States. However, while interviewing welfare recipients, I realized how similar poor people were with regard to their dreams and aspirations as well as their barriers and constraints in the two hemispheres.

It was then that I was able to integrate a little more intellectually and emotionally to living and working here. This study confirmed my earlier belief: people are people. It did not matter whether I worked with people who were poor in Kansas City or in Calcutta. We have different names, skin colors, accents, languages, culture, and heritage, yet we are all of the same human race. Poor people here deserve all my care and attention. As I am integrating more fully with my true self, my research and scholarship also are becoming more focused on community economic development.

Before ending, I will tell you about a major test that I had to pass. I felt a great deal of tension when I applied for a grant to start a micro-enterprise loan program. I was torn between the desire to split the grant into loans for people in Calcutta and people in Kansas City. Once I got the grant, I realized that I could not do both because the loans would get watered down tremendously if the money was split between the two countries.

So I decided to start the micro-enterprise program with welfare recipients in Kansas City. Once this dilemma was resolved, it felt as though I had finally severed the umbilical cord that tied my soul only to India. In the meantime, my daughter, who had made life worth living earlier but craved annual visits to India, has become so much of an Indian-American that I cannot visualize her being happy in India. So, for our sake, America is our home. I am the hyphen between Indian and American. I will continue to live and grow in the United States which has unshackled me and where one day I will fully actualize my maximum potential. And I will keep my ties with India, my dearly beloved birth land, which has shaped me so powerfully and has hurt me so immeasurably. I will contribute my best talents both to America and to India in the years to come. I will cheerfully bite into my frozen feta cheese lasagna with crushed hot peppers. □

-HUMAN DIGNITY-
ALL LIVES ARE CONNECTED TO OTHER LIVES

By
Gisela Konopka

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To tell what social work in the United States meant to me, I have to say where I came from. I am a child of World War I, of deprivation of food and fuel--of the revolution against monarchy and class privilege. I grew up in the city of Berlin. Life was filled at that time with the struggle for justice for all people expressed in political action, literature, theatre, and the arts. As an adolescent I belonged to a youth movement that loved nature and spent days, evenings, and nights discussing how the world could be made better. Gandhi was my ideal. I had friends from many nations, various races and different occupations[1]. After the "Abitur" (examination for entrance to the University), I went to Hamburg to work in a factory. I learned what it meant to be unemployed, to struggle for workers' rights, to see the plight of poor mothers and to experience the boredom of factory work.

After about a year of this I entered the University of Hamburg to study education, psychology, history, and philosophy. It was exhilarating to be able to read and to learn from very dedicated and advanced thinking professors such as Will Stern. He taught us, for instance, that an IQ was not an absolute indication of intelligence but was also related to the way in which environment impinged on the child. My field work was teaching in the working quarters of the city and seeing children who had been beaten and others who had come from parents who cared.

The two theses I wrote were related to history and education. One was "Education Done by the Jesuits, Critically Observed," and the other was "Church and Natural Sciences in the Middle Ages." My studies gave me a strong background in history, philosophy, and what it meant to influence young people. I also spent a summer working in a large co-ed delinquency institution which had the most thoughtful and imaginative practices in working with delinquents.[2]

This was not considered social work but social education. Did I know about social work? Yes, the good and the bad of it. The bad I had experienced as a child in Berlin. A social worker stood in our little store and

watched to make sure that my mother would give only staples, not enjoyable food, to people on welfare. When she left, my mother always asked the customers what they really wanted, and usually added some chocolate for the children.

The good: I had a friend who studied in the Pestalozzi Froebel School, which was a very progressive school of Social Work. She worked with children of poverty after school hours. I loved working with her, playing with children, and helping them to learn how to bake, to read, and other such things.

The Nazis came to power just when I passed my University examination. There was no hope for employment in the schools for me because I was Jewish and an anti-Nazi. We in the labor movement knew even before the Nazis came to power

about the terror that we had to expect. We had distributed leaflets against them and we worked with unions in the hope of preventing their ascension. Yet they did come to power and our underground work started. I learned about courage to overcome fear and to expect, as it seemed to us, certain death and torture.

I spent a short time in a concentration camp. After release, with difficulty I got out of Germany, into Czechoslovakia, and then into Austria and continued to fight against the Nazis. After the "Anschluss," I was again, for a short time in a prison in Vienna. I experienced there not only anti-Nazi fighters, but also women who were in prison only because they had no money.

With the help of the Underground, I got to France. I worked as a maid and cleaning woman (a good lesson for a future social worker). I was there during the outbreak of the war. I finally lived hidden by French farmers.

All this moving from one country to another, from one language to another, from certain customs and foods to another, was therefore not a new experience in coming to the United States. In 1941 on a slow boat, separated from everyone I loved and with no money, I arrived in the United States. I will not continue talking about the months in New York. I will only say that I again experienced social work in its good and bad aspects: very kind and thoughtful interviewers, great help with clothing, yet also a few social workers who had no understanding of what it meant to be in such a situation.

A friend suggested that since I had a university education I should continue working on getting an American degree. I thought of teaching, but the person who interviewed me about that told me that there were enough unemployed teachers in America and that they didn't need any foreigners.

Then, a friend suggested social work. Oh, no! I would not go into a profession that policed poor people- so I thought. This friend said that something new had been added into social work. It was called "social group work." It meant working with young people in youth organizations, with neighborhoods, and with delinquent children. That certainly interested me. There was a new school in Pittsburgh. There I started. The studies, teachers, and students were exhilarating.

There was Gertrude Wilson, who helped me to gain a new insight into a philosophy which did not consider concern for the individual and concern for the group contradictory, but a very important combination. Participation was a key word in this field. There was Marion Hathaway, who showed us that justice for *all* is important and that social workers can and should work on social policy. There was Ruth Garland, who taught case work with respect for the client. There was Gladys Ryland, who taught us that *talking* with people is not the only medium to help but that one can use art, such as music and painting.

My co-students were from various racial backgrounds and came from many parts of this huge continent. When my husband was drafted into the American Army after the United States joined the fight against the Nazis, I roomed with a colleague from Montana, who had grown up with Native Americans. I certainly saw the human relations problems of the United

States, especially the disastrous treatment of African Americans. Social work was definitely in the forefront against such injustice. My second year field work was with a child guidance clinic which served children of all races and backgrounds, poor and well-to-do. Langston Hughes came to the University to read his poetry, and I still have his poetry book that he signed for my husband Paul and myself.

I saw terrible injustices everywhere, but I always felt that I could fight them and that I was in a profession which confirmed the basic philosophy of the dignity of each human being. I had colleagues who worked with me. My life had not been interrupted by going from Europe to America. The basic sense of purpose in my life had been strengthened.

After my degree I worked at a child guidance clinic. Because of the demands to tell about my work and my thinking, I began to write, especially about children.

When I came to the University of Minnesota, I spent my first summer in our state delinquency institution. I saw atrocious practices, a destruction of the human spirit. Problems were not different here from other parts of the world. My experience in Europe became valuable. I worked on change, I wrote about it, and I developed a group work sequence to improve work in the community and in various institutions. My outlook was always international and interprofessional. I knew that social work alone could not save the world but that one had to work with many others.

In the 1950's I was asked by the American Government to return to Germany for a few months. I was to help develop work with youth to counteract the horrible influence of Nazi philosophy, to evaluate existing delinquency institutions, and to help develop new approaches in work with disturbed children. In Germany I represented, to those who had been anti-Nazi all during the Nazi period, somebody who had stood up with them and therefore someone who did not generalize about all Germans. I also represented the United States and a profession that believed in respect for every human being, even though this wasn't always put into practice. For German social work, group work was an approach to human beings which allowed them to be individuals but also asked them to be part of a "whole" and to solve conflicts by respecting people with different opinions. It actually helped to change work with young people not only in social work but also in education, in corrections, and in work with very disturbed young people.

It is this philosophy that brought me all over the world by request from countries such as Brazil, India, Thailand, Korea, and Japan. My articles and books became widespread and translated into many different languages. In the United States my basic philosophy, which stressed respect for everybody, open-mindedness, and courage to stand up for rights for all people, was not only accepted, but actually, a large part of my new profession appreciated it and welcomed my contribution.

I did not feel alone. I was part of a profession and a movement. Besides the vast international endeavor, I tried to widen social group work contributions into other fields, such as child welfare, and especially institutional treatment, student governments in universities, and prisons.

In social work education I ventured to strengthen the teaching of philosophy and history.[3] My special concern for adolescents drove me to start an interdepartmental, community, and university related Center at the University of Minnesota, the Center for Youth Development and Research. In moving from Europe to America, my life, at least professionally, was not interrupted. Its basic aim and connections were deepened and I was allowed to share them with others.

There have been changes over the years. Some parts social work-from my view--have lost the great tradition of "philosophy translated into practice," have narrowed it to "technique," and have sometimes turned a mistaken "professional" approach into treating people like puppets. But we can still combat this.

I would like to end this short view of my professional life by repeating the comments I made a few years ago in receiving the Martin Luther King, Jr., Humanitarian Award in Minneapolis: Alan Paton, who often stood often alone against apart-

heid once wrote, "It is my own belief that the only power which can resist the power of fear is the power of love."

Fear is the base of hate and we have to help our young people not to be afraid. If their life is only grey and ugly, fear mounts. We have to let them see that variety in people is enjoyable. It enriches life. How awful it would be if we had only one kind of flower, one kind of tree, one kind of bird, etc. How boring it would be if all people looked alike. Variety gives life the vibrance we need. But we also know that all human beings have much in common.

Let us be gentle with our young ones instead of constantly criticizing and chiding them. We will have less violence. Let us give our young people joy and beauty and stimulation instead of dreary places in which to grow up and no experience of the beauty of the arts, poetry, music, and dance.

And--finally--give them HOPE again. The sullenness I meet often comes from the feeling that there is nothing to look forward to. We can't lie to them about the harsh reality in which many of them live. But we can let them become strong in the knowledge that they can be part of shaping a better future. From the day the Nazi spit in my face and I sat helplessly in a cell, I learned to say to myself, "I may die here, unknown, unsung. But I may come out and then I'll be there!" Let me say this better with the words of the great poet, Langston Hughes:

We have tomorrow
Bright before us
Like a flame.

Yesterday
A night-gone thing,
A sun-down name.

And dawn - today

Broad arch
above the road
we came.

We owe it to Martin Luther King, Jr., and to our future to continue building this broad arch of common humanity. □

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REFLECTIONS ON A DIFFERENT LIFE:
Am I a Stranger?

By
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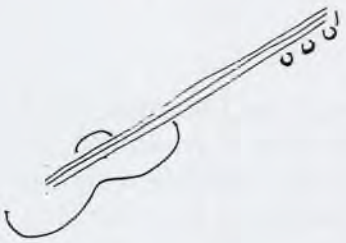
I was asked to write some reflections for this issue on "strangers" and their professional insights. After nearly forty years in this country — albeit with a few detours was I still regarded as one? This would be an interesting topic for reflection. Did I perceive myself as "a stranger?" Was "stranger" the proper word? Was "the other" a better one? Did I represent a "stranger" in the sense of a foreign perspective or did I view myself as espousing views that were unique or "eccentric" in the sense of ex-center or outside the center or mainstream? Obviously I was now a United States citizen but was I an American in thought and in deed? Was I "the other" American? A foreign American?A Latina/American? Was being a stranger an issue of birth, ethnicity, citizenship, or personality? Even though people in other countries, including my own, often thought I acted as an American, I was still, in some way, different. Outside the United States, my dress and assurance tagged me as an American but my style and concern with the "social image," I had been told, denounced my Mediterranean roots. When I spoke Spanish, my carefully articulated language identified me as coming from a provincial, remote place. Onlythe connoisseur, hearing a particular singsong quality to my speeck, would suggest one of the more distant mountain provinces of Argentina.

As a professional, I can be nothing else but an American trained social worker. Yes, perhaps my view of the profession has always been somewhat on the fringe, a little outside the mainstram. I always felt that social work's extreme efforts at professionalization and maintenance of often artificial boundaries did not serve us well. From my early days in practice, I believed social work was an approach or method of helping, not a content area. Our content was the arts, the humanities, value commitments, and the wisdom of the ages. When I was in practice, if we related to a social work technology at all, it was contained in what we fondly labeled the Biestek Cathechism, "to begin where the client is."

Years later, as a member of our professional board, I felt we were becoming too concerned with business, with safeguarding specializations and constituencies while perhaps abandon-

ing our more global humanity. As an educational leader, I often felt that some accreditation rules were too stringent and curtailed program creativity. I wanted social work to be an art, an in-



spirational call more than a technology. I wanted social workers to "create" a work of the helping art with every intervention, not duplicate responses through pre-set formulae. I shared Howard Goldstein's belief that mental health or social adjustment was not conformity but "the acceptance of personal responsibility, [the] willingness to experiment with new ideas and make personal choices and [the] capability for ethical dissent without harm to or resentment of the other person" (Goldstein, 1996:69).

Yes, I guess I was a rebel, a voice from the fringes, the periphery, rather than the core: a stranger in many ways. But, useful as introspection can be, why was I being singled out to discuss my "otherness" in an academic journal? Would such an exercise be worthwhile? Encouragement came from the words of Mary Catherine Bateson who, in *Peripheral Visions*, talked about learning from strangers. . .

> *...that person or group that inhabits the imagination and, loved or hated, seems profoundly and significantly different. Whether negative or positive, the presence of the other leads to self-consciousness and puts familiar ways of being into question. Sometimes the other is the opposite sex, sometimes a minority group, sometimes even a distant culture described in terms that counterpoint one's own.* (Bateson, 1994:21)

And, although self-consciousness per se is not the only road to understanding, after the initial friction that is often generated by the meeting of different customs and world views, it is possible to arrive, in the end, to better understandings.

Childhood and Teenage Years

I was born in a very small town in northern Argentina. This was a particularly determining factor in my upbringing and in my outlook on life, since at the time I was born, the difference between *core* and *periphery* in many South American countries, including Argentina, was quite marked. My hometown was a small northwestern town where strong Spanish-colonial and Inca heritages — which we always referred to as *Quichua* — were proudly proclaimed. Attachment to Indian rituals and traditions were evident among the members of the agricultural classes, whose spoken communication drew heavily from the *Quichua* language and whose history and mores were rooted in the culture of the *Altiplano*. The *Calchaquíes*, a tribe that had inhabited the fertile valleys, influenced the growing practices of a large section of the western part of the province. Indian languages and traditions were also integrated into the spoken Spanish and the lives of many members of the upper classes, who cultivated an attachment to both as a strong form of "criollo" identity.

My father was a stranger in the town; my mother came from a well entrenched family in the agricultural valley. I grew up between the marked differences of my mother's and father's ways. Neither my mother's nor my father's family were particularly wealthy, as wealth is judged today. It was an issue of history, attachment to the province and roots in the agricultural North of Argentina versus the industrial South that contributed to their different ways of looking at the world.

On reflection, I was probably more influenced by my mother's family mores, the idea of "Pride of place."At a time when entertainment was family bound, house *folklore fiestas*, aform of non-intentional but effective culture maint-enance ritual, were common.

Children learned from the beginning that a well developed sense of the "social ,

learned very quickly that the "self" was fundamental to their survival. Our super-ego's were strongly formed at home, church, and school, while our ids were reduced by the fear of the consequences of bad behavior. Girls particularly, who had to rely on a totally unblemished reputation to survive in the small townway in which they presented themselves in everyday life was important for success. From the time I was in elementary school, I took lessons in *declamación*, now probably quite a forgotten art, which combined public speaking and theatrical interpretation of poetry and song. This introduction to art determined my valuing the beauty of words and the magic of the dramatic. Clearly, great value was placed in my circle on verbal ability. Mine was a society of tales and songs, where natural and supernatural domains were intertwined, a society reminiscent of Isabel Allende's *House of the Spirits*. My interest in how cultural constructs determine our realities is clearly grounded in the context of my childhood.

At the age of fifteen I came to the United States as a high school exchange student. My American family, as I then called it, was a fairly traditional family in what was then a small town on the eastern seaboard. There was little difference between the moral familial responsibility much emphasized in my family of origin and moral and communal responsibility emphasized in my adopted family.

As I had done in my hometown, my American sister and I walked to school every day. If I felt like a "stranger," as I guess I sometimes did at school, it was as a unique and valued one.

One area of frustration for me was that my high school placed low value on the Spanish language. All of my newly made school friends studied a language at school, but none studied Spanish. The general belief was that French or German was more useful and prestigious. In the United States of the late 1950s, it was apparent that to study Spanish was not the mark of high literary status I had been brought up to believe the language of Cervantes deserved. All of the "college bound" students took French or German, while those who on the surface were not as ambitious were in the Spanish classes. Was I, by implication, not a valued stranger?

In retrospect, my disappointment reflected what I instinctively must have perceived as the devaluing of a history or a culture. It would take me many years to learn about the history of Spanish cultures in the United States and to give a name to what then I had perceived more with a level of surprise and sadness than with anger.

Going to University

When I returned home to attend university, my imagination was captured by the" word." I was enamored with languages. I had cultivated the facility not only for the spoken word, but also for the study of foreign languages. Throughout my high school days, both in the United States and in Argentina, I took every opportunity to study and practice those languages with which I had become acquainted. Did I love the sound of foreign tongues because, once learned, that knowledge conquered strangeness?

I enjoyed the subtleties of the English language. I had attended a bilingual school since I was about seven years old and had a great desire to achieve not only proficiency but full command of the English language. Additionally, I enjoyed challenging myself and others to finding better ways to express ideas, to figuring out new ways of constructing sentences, to discovering the existent and nonexistent reasons for the patterns of the language. I had also studied Italian and had taken some lessons in German. Languages Languages were my fascination. They spoke of exotic places, of new cultures, of new ways of telling stories and definitely, they provided new tools for exploring human idiosyncracies.

But alas, I had been "destined" for the law. I had been told since childhood, by relatives and a favorite lawyer-uncle of mine, that I was a natural lawyer. So, when I returned

from the United States, I took on the study of law while at the same time continuing the cultivation of languages. Shortly thereafter, I realized that the law, at least the way in which it was taught in Latin America at the time, did not suit my creative interests. Financial pressures compounded the problem. Access to many careers was limited in my small rural town, a matter that clearly stressed our peripheral identity. Within a short period of time, by interest as well as necessity, I devoted myself the study of languages.

I was convinced that every polyglot was a world citizen. Those who had command of other languages, it seemed to me, held the universe in their hands. My friends, the children of recent immigrants or immi-

grants themselves, were, in my view, admittedly strange and exotic; they represented the gamut of foreign tongues. I was fascinated by their sounds and experiences. I became involved in a number of student exchange programs that highlighted the value of "the other" and emphasized that it is possible for strangers in the world to articulate differences and even work together in situations intimate enough to produce friction while, at the same time, solving common concerns.

Shortly after finishing university, through one of my many friends I received an invitation to come to the United States. While I returned to the United States not with the idea of staying but rather of adding to my language experiences, circumstances led me in a different direction. The early 1960s, shortly after Sputnik, were a wonderful period for language instruction in the United States. Most high schools and even some elementary schools had become oriented to the teaching of foreign languages. They had wonderful facilities and were also very interested in qualified teachers who could teach the many students who had become eager learners of foreign languages. A chance meeting led me to an interview and I soon found myself as a high school teacher in the United States.

Once again I was immersed with people who loved foreign cultures since I was part of the language department. Those were the early days of integration in American high schools. Although the high school where I taught had only a handful of Black, or Negro, students — as was then the term — and an even smaller number of Black teachers, two of them were in the language department. The language department was the best example of what diversity could be. The language teachers enjoyed each other's company, learned from each other, and appreciated and valued each other. Every one of us exhibited a certain "smugness" about our ability to transcend the barriers of parochialism and discrimination through languages.

It is, of course, hard to tell whether the reality I recall today was the reality perceived by those who were not as fortunate as this small group of foreign language teachers. We dreamed of an America where all people would join hands to create the Tower of Babel that this country was meant to be. I guess we believed with the poet Glancy that we build a world with what we say, that words make the path on which we walk (Norris, 1996: 154). Were we utopian? Were we removed from the real world? Clearly we were, but our idealism was fueled and it fueled lofty goals.

My European Years

Shortly after living in the United States, I moved to Europe where my language education was to continue. I spent some time in Spain, the land of my ancestors, then a very poor country with very generous people. I studied briefly in Italy, a country I came to enjoy in spite of its then painfully uncomfortable student boarding houses. I was strange and different in these places, but I was confident in my strangeness; these were countries of emigrants, not immigrants, where strangers evoked memories and comparisons of those who had left.

My language career took a turn in Scotland where I met the person who later became my

husband. Though I arived as a student, the transition from understanding a culture to adopting or marrying into a culture seemed to me part of the natural course of life. Bateson(1995) speaks of similar events and feelings when she married in Iran. Yet, such transitions require much learning, total immersion in the culture of the "other," and changes in one's status from observer or stranger to participant who adapts to and adopts the new cultural milieu. My first job in this very different and austere land was as an elementary school teacher.

As we experience moments of our lives, we are unable to tell why pain or discomfort may be experienced by those living on the borders between the native and the foreign. On reflection, one realizes that the native experience takes for granted behaviors and responses to most situations while the experiences of the stranger bring to the fore a different level of awareness of the self and others. It is only today that I recognize the challenge I had undertaken s when I married and settled to start a family in such a distant land. Engaging in the daily routines that are second nature to the native are a challenge to the stranger who must navigate with intuition as a compass. Every event is a new road to be explored and thus the "stranger" develops a resiliency and gusto for living which often escapes the native.

Becoming a Social Worker

My husband was a brand new social work graduate when we met, but it was not until I was substituting in a school for delinquent boys that I became more acquainted with what social workers did. As I worked as a teacher with delinquent boys, I recognized that much of what I was attempting to teach them was probably difficult to absorb, not because of lack of intelligence or an innate lack of desire, but rather because fundamentally more important issues were occupying their minds. It was not just poverty that affected them but family turmoil, or the ups and downs of a very difficult and exacting society. Furthermore, corporal punishment was an acceptable disciplinary measure in Scottish schools at the time. Surely, I thought at that point, a social worker must be better equipped to handle these challenging children!

My interest in helping children with personal difficulties by becoming a social worker was further kindled by

my own efforts to fully grasp the intricacies of another culture and country. The physical demands of living in the Scotland of the 1960s were extraordinary; the difficulties met by most young couples in securing appropriate housing, and managing budgets and eventually a pregnancy were significant.

A few years later after moving back to the United States, I found myself again working in a school for delinquent boys. In the mid 1960s, adjudicated delinquents came from a variety of environments. Some were poor; some were not. At that time, persistent school truancy was considered delinquent behavior. Thus the children that I encountered had the gamut of difficulties of adolescent adjustment. I remember, to this day, Ricky, an eleven year old who, having been brought handcuffed by a sheriff, "promised" me not to run away while I walked him to his cottage if I allowed him to follow me rather than to walk with the sheriff. Of course, in my "school teacher fashion," a promise made was to be interpreted as a hopeful learning event and I agreed. Ricky took off with enormous agility and speed leaving me speechless in the middle of a plowed field between the reception area and his cottage!

After working as an intake caseworker in that school for a number of years, somebody suggested that if I truly wanted to continue working with children in these circumstances, I needed to become a "master level caseworker." So, in the late 1960s, with my years of experience as a teacher and as a caseworker with delinquent boys, I marched on to school of social work.

My route to social work was not a linear one. I did not necessarily plan to be a social worker, but social work

emerged as a possible career as I attempted to find better answers to challenging problems. It was purely coincidental that I was directed to get my MSW. No one spoke of golden opportunities; it was just a way to improve my skills and to keep a job.

I was lucky to live near Bryn Mawr College where a group of progressive women had established in the 1930s the School of Social Administration. I was accepted at Bryn Mawr where my law, language, and teaching backgrounds were viewed as an asset by a kindly intake director. By that time, I had children of my own and felt confident in my parenting. I was in an environment that was, by and large, accepting of women — since the college *raison d'etre* was the education for women. The daily responsibilities of managing a family, and a rigorous program taxed and occupied all my time. I was with a small circle of women in similar circumstances, and the sense of "strangeness," if I felt any, was neither apparent nor acknowledged. My schedule was totally consuming and I simply moved from activity to activity as most mothers of young children do.

I thought that my law background might help me in the community organizing track, but alas, the lead instructor in my interview made it sound as if community organizing was unsuitable for women with young children. Off I went into the more measured and psychologically oriented casework track!

I never thought of myself as anything other than a Latina woman, but the words and consciousness of Latinismo as a condition were still not publicly articulated. The Civil Rights movement, which brought tears admiration to our eyes, was still focused, in that traditional Pennsylvania enclave, primarily, if not exclusively, on Black Americans. The Chicano movement seemed to be then focused on the West Coast. As I can now recall, Freire's conscientization literature entered the stage in the U.S. toward the end of my Bryn Mawr years.

There was one event in my second year placement which, though miniscule, must have been significant for I still remember it quite clearly. It pointed to my "strangeness." The family service agency where I was placed was located in a building of precarious construction. My stern supervisor called me one day to point out that my "voice" could be heard across the walls. Were the walls too thin or the insulation too inadequate? No. My voice was too distinct, I enunciated too much, my modulations needed to be changed; native speakers did not utter every distinct sound! — a true statement of a trait that foreign speakers find hard to acquire. At that point I recognized that my differences could become a liability. Interestingly, it was the clients to whom my supervisor had assigned me who appreciated some of my traits and greatly helped me to transcend criticisms. After two years, with my resonant voice, my enunciating and my differences still intact, I graduated from Bryn Mawr with a shiny MSS.

The Years of Conscientisaçao

One of the first organizations I joined shortly after my MSS was the Rural Social Work Caucus. As soon as I learned that there was a group of social workers interested in bringing to the fore an awareness of the rural condition, I was ready to jump on the bandwagon. Since I had been born on the periphery, in a country where centralism and urbanism were rampant, my most vivid memories of being on the fringe were connected to the rural condition. My school and university experiences in Northern Argentina had been heavily influenced by the marginality of the place where I grew up as compared to the rest of the country. My memories of the periphery were that had the proud people of the province not "made a cult" out of being "from the country and the mountains," I would have probably felt more keenly than I had the consequences of rural isolation. Rural people deserved advocacy and I was ready to join the cause.

Armed with my rural identification with small town

Pennsylvania, I was very outspoken on the issue of rural marginality not only in the U.S. but also in other parts of the world. By then, my research on the history of the rural movement in the United States had aquainted me with the common elements of rural marginality throughout the world. I became fascinated with the writings and photographs documenting the struggle of rural families during the Depression years. I also found profound meaning in exploring the lives of many rural pioneers, particularly rural women who may have been considered strange or eccentric in their time. They often left comfortable families to join "back to the land" or Country Life movement of the 1930s and 40s; they had settled to the different ways of life than those their families had anticipated for them, or they espoused new and non-traditional ideas Josephine Chapin Brown, Josephine Strode, Louise Cotterll, and Mattie Call Maxted were all strangers in their own land, and I was intrigued by their "otherness."

Freire's proposition that consiousness of one's condition is a prerequisite for empowerment grew out of a rural reality. As I became more aware of the the rural condition, I became more aware that whatever was unique in me was also apart of my Latina-rural identity.

My aim continued to be to convince others of the worth of my cause and my rural proposals and to offer to others my Latina way of looking at the world with "honey instead of vinegar." If one could be clear and articulate– as a woman, a rural citizen, a Latina, a non-native– I had thought others could not but succumb to the reasonableness of one's cause. In retrospect, my introduction as a teenager to a worldwide consciousness of understanding heavily determined my approach to change. I had been part of a movement of world peace as gentle as its ancient motto: "Walk together, talk together, all ye people of the world for then and only then shall ye have peace." My teaching experiences as a foreign language instructor, and the influence of Quakerism which surrounded me in Pennsylvania, had all added to my utopian ideals. Yes, I was aware that in a rich country like the United States, the distribution of resources was a major concern and that people did not always fight fairly or cleanly when resources were at stake. But, in my mind, I still believed that a convincing, reasonable, and diplomatic approach would conquer those difficulties.

Perhaps my rural life and my somewhat sheltered experiences in small town Pennsylvania were not preparing me fully for the world that I would eventually face. However, idealism was comforting and sustained my efforts and commitments.

Joining the Academy in Social Work Education

I was "disconvered" into social work education--as I jokingly like to say--by a student. I had as a supervisee the school setting where I worked as a practitioner, an eloquent Black man before he entered the School of Social Work. Again, my ability to articulate messages probably appealed to hes sense of "the word." His was the sulture and tradition of Garvey, Du Bois, and King; my interest in the spoken word was not strange to him. He recommended me as a speaker for one of the yearly field instruction meetings at this university, and thus I became acquainted with social work in academia. It was by chance that I got my first academic job. That first job make me realize that, in fact, I coiuld do well in the classroom. Social work education would become my next career move.

It is not possible to focus on the progression and growth I experienced through nearly twenty years in social work education. My doctorate in Curriculum Theory gave me the tools to think about social work education rather broadly and even differently. Perhaps from the beginning. I prepared myself to speak from the fringes of multidisciplinarity. Even today, my interest is in making sure that we offer students a broad view of life rather than a narrow perspective on helping. I continue to believe that what is important in social work is not so much the prescriptive steps we might transmit to our novices,

but the commitment to improve the human condition. I am convinced that the best of social work is aided by our inventiveness, our ability to be proud even "at the fringes." It is the marginality of social work that makes us strong; as Kathleen Norris has described, the margins are "those places in the ecosystem where, as ecologists can tell you, the most life forms are to be found" (Norris, 1996: 64).

In a world that emphasizes the material over the spiritual, the concrete over the imaginary, the scientific and technical over the artistic, social workers by-and-large have strange or inappropriate responses. The social work as a cause and calling is really quite unusual and eccentric if judged by today's standards; it has always attracted those at "the fringes" and continues to welcome people whose fit is uncomfortable in the other arenas of endeavor.

When I became dean, my uniqueness took on a different twist. While the stranger as a peer can be easily tolerated, the stranger as a leader offers different challenges and is differently confronted. Women frquently encounter this problem when they accept positions of leadership. African-Americans, Latinos/as and other minorities are fully familiar with the idea of stranger, whether in business, the sciences, or the professions. In my case, every trait that I had considered valuable and successful pointed to my otherness as a leader. I was clearly outside the pack and, while such a stance can be valuable, it can also be a vulnerability.

Coda

I was in the United Kingdom when Sonia Leib Abels, *Reflections* editor, comments on my manuscript reached me. She wanted me to add some "answers," perhaps some "endings" or closure" to the questions I had posed at the outset. She was interested in the reader learning how I now felt: "Was I, after all, a stranger? Was I "the other?"

Sonia's comments reached me the week when the world news was dominated by Princess Diana's and Mother Teresa's deaths. Additonally, the British news was dominated by the matter of the Scotish referendum on a separate parliament.

The first two sad issues fueled discussions of "otherness;" the last one stirred feelings about the value of the fringes. Thinking about the lives of both women affirmed my conclusion that "otherness," whether consciously felt or unconsciously experienced, gives individuals determination and stamina, for they live with interdeterminacy and fumble differently. Have I concluded whether "otherness" is a matter of birth, ethnicity, or personality? No, I have no real conclusions, but in my case, it is probably a matter of all three and many more factors interacting in equal measure. As to being a stranger in the culture of the United States, before venturing such an answer, one would have to determine what "is" the culture, clearly an almost insurmountable challenge. But do any of my traits, whether speech of intellectual stances, single me out as "other?" Probably yes.

The recognition of my differences does not worry me, but condescension or rejection because of these differences does. For, above all, I still believe fringes can be areas of unique worth. The magic of the fringes is the very certainty of uncertainty; the knowledge that from those frayed, uncertain edges one can touch and be touched by others even though one might never truly belong. □

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"DEAR NARRATOR:"
THE UNTOLD STORY OF A MANUSCRIPT REVIEWER

The communication between narrative author and manuscript reviewer is itself a story but one which usually remains hidden and untold. As the initial representative of the intended audience of the author's narrative, the reviewer's comments and critique often shape the author's original account, helping in the transformation of a life-story from private experience into public narrative. Because we never have direct access to the experience of others, the reviewer's work (ideally) helps to bridge the gap between the primacy of the author's immediate, authentic, lived experience and the meaning-making work of future readers who will look to the narrative for moral lessons to apply to their own lives. However, a profound challenge to this transformative work may occur when differences in life experience, gender, race/ethnicity, and culture exist between author and reviewer. This article provides one example of this usually hidden work.

By
John A. Kayser

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Recently, I came across a copy of a letter I wrote to a colleague who had asked me to pre-review a narrative manuscript draft, intended for *Reflections*, prior to formally submitting it for publication. In re-reading the letter, I was struck by the fact that—like a narrative—it told more than I (as author) was initially aware of:

First, the letter provided an example of what is usually hidden—how representations of one individual's life experiences become shaped and transformed by the process of attending, telling, listening, writing, analyzing, and reading narratives (Riessman, 1993). Of necessity, these activities involve others, such as reviewers, editors, and eventually the readers. This pre-review letter, therefore, provides a rare opportunity to examine the normally private communication between narrative author and manuscript reviewer. (I hasten to add, the letter is my own viewpoint about narratives, not a statement of this journal's editorial policy. The editors of *Reflections* and other reviewers may see things quite differently.)

Second, the letter provided an opportunity to examine what is implicit in reviewing manuscripts—the impact of cultural differences between author and reviewer in understanding an individual's personal experiences and life-story. In the formal peer review process, the author's identity remains anonymous (although sometimes identifying characteristics can be inferred or deciphered from the narrative subtext). Yet, typically the identity and cultural characteristics of the manuscript reviewer, who may exercise a profound influence in shaping the form a manuscript ultimately takes, is completely obscured. However, because I am personally acquainted with this colleague (a former student), and know that we differ in race/ethnicity, gender, country of origin, age, and other key life experiences, I can reflect upon my own efforts to understand someone else's experience. By transforming this letter into a public narrative of its own, it becomes possible to scrutinize the degree to which a reviewer's work either facilitated or obscured the original

narrative of an author's life-story experiences.

Third, because of the incredible power of my colleague's narrative, I attempted to pull together (in a more coherent form than usual) some specific suggestions about how to strengthen the manuscript. These suggestions may be helpful to others similarly engaged in the development of their own narrative manuscripts.

With the consent of my colleague, an adaptation of my original letter is shared below. I have attempted to broaden it, using the convention of "Dear Narrator," in order that the letter may address some universal aspects of writing narratives of professional helping. The article ends with some concluding reflections about my own work as a narrative reviewer.

A Letter to a Colleague

Dear Elizabeth:

Thank you for thinking of me when you decided to share this powerful and challenging life-story. This narrative demands that your voice be recognized and your experience be heard. I am honored by the opportunity to serve as a resource in your continuing personal and professional development.

From your paper, I realize that you are in the midst of the conflict and crisis that your narrative is recounting. I don't mean to be insensitive to the issues you're facing at present. However, I have focused my comments below on a number of issues about your "talk-story" which I hope might be helpful to you in preparing your manuscript for publication submission. (Perhaps some of these comments might also have some practical usefulness in dealing with the current struggles, since a narrative perspective suggests that "changing the life-story" is one way to change "the life-as-lived.")

There are a number of both technical issues related to the narrative format as well as substantive questions about content that I would like to raise. These comments are not meant to diminish the authenticity of your experience, but rather to suggest some ways that your story might be heard more clearly and responded to more deeply by future readers.

Technical Issues:

I think that the manuscript, in its present form, is not yet a fully formed narrative—although it is very clear that there is an important story needing to be told. Some specific issues about the narrative format to consider:

1. In a narrative, there typically is a "plot" (comedy, tragedy, drama, etc.) or story line which describes dramatic action and dialogue between the narrator (self-in-the-present), protagonist (self-in-the-past), and other characters contained in the story. This is not to say that a narrative has to be framed in a Western, linear "beginning, middle, end" fashion. In fact, you seem to have woven the story from different temporal perspectives (i.e., an Eastern sense of the unfolding or cyclical nature of temporal experience) alternating with the Western "day one, day two" linear approach. You might consider highlighting the contrast between these two different temporal approaches as a way to convey further the struggle you currently are experiencing.

2. There may be a conflict between the traditional Western narrative format and the Eastern talk-story format you are employing. While both seem to prize personal experience, the narrative format seems to adhere more closely to a first person accounting of experience, followed by telling (to self and others) the "moral of the story" (i.e., meaning and explanation). I gather that the talk-story format you are employing may be more ambiguous and abstract, ending with unanswerable questions for further reflection. I don't know whether it is necessary or possible to resolve this conflict, but I thought it is important to point out that it may exist.

3. In the manuscript, you dominate the story as both protagonist (and as antagonist) and as narrator. While your complexity comes through very powerfully, other characters seem one dimensional. For example, the various people mentioned in passing appear to be stage props in your drama rather than characters with complexities and struggles of their own. There is a difficult balance here—since it is your story you're telling, not someone else's. Nonetheless, I think readers need to be able to see your experience through multiple eyes—both yours and (at

least in part) the characters in the story. If you make your characters a "caricature" (to make a bad pun!), you run the risk of reducing the complexity of the situation and the drama of the experience that you are trying to convey.

4. Of all the characters in your story, your father seems to speak most clearly to me as a reader. Being also a father, I could understand his point of view and experience the intensity of his love, which made it easy to identify with him in the story. However, I had the impression that other characters—particularly the Eastern grandmother spirit-figure—spoke most clearly to you through prayers, meditations, poetry, etc. Perhaps because I am a Western male, it was harder to hear how this character might also speak to me. At any rate, this touches on one of the most difficult challenges in writing a narrative—how to be true in accounting one's own, unique, individual, private experiences while also crafting a public narrative which touches readers on the larger, more universal, aspects of a shared communal experience. Your readers will look for ways in which they can vicariously learn from your experience and compare it to their own. At times, your story seemed to me very much in the realm of private experience, not quite ready for public sharing and meaning making. (I am going to return to this dilemma when discussing content issues below.)

Content Issues

There are some important content issues in your narrative which might be useful to address as well:

1. Remember that *Reflections* is a journal focused on publishing narratives of *professional helping*. As a reviewer for this journal, one of the things I encounter all too frequently are manuscript submissions in which authors set forth evocative accounts of their own particular personal and professional challenges, yet end without addressing what (to me) is the central point—how did this challenge or experience change their practice and/or teaching and/or their work with others. It is this aspect that makes it a public narrative, because readers of narratives are looking for ways to apply what the author learned to their own practice and/or lives. I think that your manuscript in its present form does not really address how the experience you're currently going through will change your own work with others. One possibility might be to expand greatly on the concept of sojourners which you introduce at the very end of the narrative. While you reflect on the importance of these "expert interpreters of multilevel realities" in your own personal and professional journey, is it possible that this narrative is calling you to become a sojourner for others, drawing on your own experience in a purposeful way to help others experiencing displacement of country and family of origin; culture shock and alienation; and struggles for identity, authenticity, validation, and honor?

2. I hope that the following comments are not a defensive reaction to hearing the criticism of your current educational struggle. Rather, I want to raise issues about professional education from the point of view of potential readers:

(a) It may not be clear to readers why you are writing this narrative. Although you describe great frustration with the aridness of the program's curriculum and its efforts to crush your spirit, an unaddressed question in the narrative is the motivation of you (as protagonist) in seeking this educational experience in the first place. It isn't completely clear the extent to which your current education experience is elitist and oppressive and to what extent that view comes from the ghost of previous educational experiences. (It does not have to be "either/or;" it can be "both/and.") Maybe your current education is a new pathway to learn about how to travel with the burden? What are your hopes and dreams in embarking on this journey? Also, do you want to address the issues and criticisms in your narrative at a narrow level (entering one particular program) or do you want to also broaden it to professional education in general?

(b) The time frame in which you are writing this narrative and its relation to the events being described is not clear. By virtue of being person-

ally acquainted with you, I know that this narrative is about currently occurring issues. However, readers may assume than this is a reflection about some experience from time past. To me, the dilemma about the time frame is as follows: On the one hand, there is an immediacy and urgency in the narrative (will or won't you stay; will or won't the program become more responsive and culturally competent/congruent, etc.) which comes from writing about a current issue. On the other hand, I think a legitimate question is whether you have had enough time to "digest" and reflect upon your experiences so that others can benefit from reading about them.

(c) I was struck by the general absence of humor in the manuscript. A bit of playfulness is seen in the beginning of the story, but in much of the rest of the story, the emotions.are those of anxiety, alienation, and anger. Do humor and laughter have anything to contribute to your story—particularly when they help overcome the obstacles you encountered in your travels?

(d) You named one particular person who strengthened your voice, but I wonder whether this will have meaning to others who are unfamiliar with the faculty of that school? Perhaps a more general description would help readers make a connection to their own memories of people who assisted them and strengthened them in their journey. Are there other people also you want to name or refer to as well? Are there commonalties among these people that would be useful to emphasize?

e) Does the narrative leave the reader with the unanswerable question(s) in the concluding section? What gifts are you leaving the readers? What, if anything, do you hope readers might do as a result of having shared your story?

I hope these comments are helpful and serve to stimulate your own thinking and creativity. I think your manuscript holds the promise of becoming a powerful, challenging, uncomfortable, and kind public narrative.

Best wishes, John Kayser

Conclusion

There are many points of reference one can take as a reviewer of narrative manuscripts. At the time I wrote this letter, I was trying to adopt the perspective of potential future readers. In offering suggestions or critique, I repeatedly considered how readers might understand the author's life story. Because the narrative created such a powerful response, I tried to suggest ways in which the author might make certain aspects of the story more explicit, allowing readers also to respond deeply to the story.

In re-reading the letter again, I was struck by another perspective. There was a parallel process at work! Just as the author's narrative was a personal account of an individual struggle to rework multiple layers of experience and to reconcile diverse aspects of cultural identity, so too was this volunteer pre-reviewer being challenged with a similar process. In order to be open to the author's narrative, I first had to recognize the cultural biases and limitations of my own experiences. This was brought home in a visceral way when reading what it was like for the author—as a person of color—to enter an educational program dominated by Caucasian students and faculty. I realized that I would not see What the author saw—"the sea of White faces." In similar situations, White male privilege (McIntosh, 1988) likely would allow me to overlook color, gender, and other characteristics of individuals so that I would see only those monochromatic "anxious students" culturally congruent with my usual frame of reference.

Whether consciously aware of this process or not, I began to re-read the author's narrative, trying to bracket my own viewpoints. I do not know

if it is possible for a Western male to emulate an Eastern mind, but I became acutely aware of "honor." I felt honored by being asked by an Asian female colleague to review such a powerful narrative and wanted to show honor in return by mak-

ing an authentic, personal response to the author's story.

The above letter and subsequent reflection is an example of the dialogue (external and internal) between narrative author and manuscript reviewer. This dialogue illustrates Riessman's (1993) point about the representation and transformation of personal experiences through the process of attending, telling, listening, writing, analyzing, and reading narratives. At each level, narratives "re-present" personal experiences. Although initially conscious of the reviewer's role in transforming lived experience to written narrative, it was only later that I realized there was more to the story. The author's narrative evoked a parallel process within this reviewer—the recognition of sharing a common journey, even though author and reviewer come from different cultural backgrounds and life experiences. While the reviewer's experience can be only a small approximation of the author's struggle, the fact that both are experiencing it makes for greater mutuality, empathy, and sensitivity to the story. The universal struggle to reconcile multiple, often contradictory layers of experience and identity is one of the reasons why narratives have such power and meaning to readers from diverse cultural backgrounds. □

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THEATER REVIEW - RENT

By
Joan P. Bowker, Ph.D

RENT

RENT

RENT

(From the aisle seat, fifth row of the orchestra: July 23, 1997)

Rent is a current smash hit on Broadway, settled in for a long sold-out run at the Nederlander Theater. It is being hailed as the new American musical—a rock opera that thrills the eye and ear and emotions—that sings of young, impoverished, endangered young people rejecting the alienating (to them) world that we (the establishment) prosaically see as home, safety, and security. (We must be the establishment, paying, as we are, $75 a ticket for the experience from the orchestra and mezzanine rows.)

See *Rent* by all means, or buy the original cast recording (for the price of a ticket in the rear of the balcony). If you are contemplating becoming a helping professional, or if you have been one for years, *Rent* will give you a look at our young people, who don't feel like "ours," either from their viewpoint or "ours"; who don't feel they belong, who don't feel they are recognized as full members of the land of their birth, their homeland. See it for its provocation.

The music from the on-stage band is loud and assertive, the miked lyrics exhilarating, touching, funny, scary (when you can understand them). The choreography is energetic. There are moments when you are genuinely moved. Rent is populated by a vibrant, young and talented interracial and immensely hard-working cast, working to transport us to a world alien to the orchestra seats occupants: a world of poverty, of homeless persons and squatters who owe "last year's rent,"a world populated by aspiring artists, drugs, where normality is friendships transcending multiple sexual identities and young men and women infected with HIV and slowly dying of AIDS. We sit in the comfort of the theater watching a world—New York's East Village— where we, the establishment (read parents, jobs, "success") are the rejected. Lending true pathos to the experience is that its creator, Jonathon Larson, lived the East Village life and died (of an aneurysm) just as his creation was opening Off-Broadway.

Though it is about some of the most difficult personal/public health issues of the day, *Rent* aims to send you out of the theater exhilarated, not thinking. The rock music transports, the gospel-tinged singers uplift, and the romance blurs the issues.

Despite its hip setting, *Rent* is a romance. It is a romance, just as *La Boehme* (its

19th century opera model) was, with Mimi's death of tuberculosis a tearjerker (a sign of a sensitive soul, not a serious public health problem). *Rent*'s Mimi is also dying, of AIDS, but the sadness is kept at bay. This heroine has only a "near death" experience and miraculously comes back to life and love. *Rent* is a 20th century romantic view of dangerous activity and death. It colors with soft pink stage lights personal and public health problems: uncontrolled street drug sales and abuse; HIV and AIDS; true poverty (as well as the voluntary poverty chosen by the well-born artists); homelessness; and gay, lesbian and transvestite life styles on the fringe.

As in real life, there are cross-currents of joy, sadness, fear and contentment in the evening. A young man, in danger of the finality of AIDS, sings "Will I lose my dignity, will anyone care?" An AIDS support group asserts to each other "There is no day but today." And others worn down by the life fantasize "Let's open a restaurant in Santa Fe." (The Santa Fe fantasy is a wonderful piece of dark humor. These self-described outcasts imagine themselves in what has turned into a quintessentially moneyed upper class "insider" enclave.)

All this is seen through the indomitable eyes of youth with death all around them, not perceiving their own deaths. They see themselves as the "insiders," as "family" huddling together to resist the blandishments and punishments of the crass outside money-grubbing world. They know themselves as disenfranchised in their own homeland—— scrabbling for a place to live when there's "No room at the Holiday Inn," harassed by the police when they are just trying to make an "Honest living, Man" like the Squeegieman. They are focused on how they will live (not how they might die). "How can you connect in an age when strangers, landlords, lovers, your own blood cells betray you.?"

That *Rent* connects with its audience is affirmed by the seats filled with young men and women - not the usual big Broadway musical audience. Do they connect with the tale of the dangers of today's version of the plague, or is it just the music? Or do they, like the primary characters in the play, feel protected by their youth and their parents' money and status? Is this the message of what it means to be "inside?"*Rent* gives you ample entertainment.

What is the message of *Rent?* Is it that young people in this country don't have the security to freely experiment with life styles? Maybe. Or is it sending other messages: that income support and decent housing should be available to everyone, that persons' color makes them socially vulnerable to the worst ravages of poverty, joblessness, and illness? Maybe. Maybe it is saying that the older establishment doesn't understand, or perhaps doesn't care enough about what happens to the young. Scariest is the possibility that it is saying for the young the experiences justify the risks.

When one sees this play as a helping professional, or a potential one, it is inevitable that thoughts arise about "implications for practice." What the play brings home is that the individuals we are watching are unique constellations of strengths and weaknesses, resisting easy categorization as "victim" or "pathology," unlikely to be captured or helped by any one single-strategy approach. (Indeed, we suspect that few of the *Rent* denizens would see themselves in need of the helping professions, though we notice the AIDS support group and the mention of drug rehab.) The clearest message that professionals might take away with them is affirmation of social work's historic and professionally unique approach to "persons in environment" that allow equal professional recognition of such opposite approaches as counseling and community organizing. □

BOOK REVIEW

Leon Dash. *Rosa Lee: A Mother and Her Family in Urban America.* New York: Basic Books, 1996, 279 pages. $23.00 hardcover, ISBN 0-465-07092-2.

By
T. Chedgzsey Smith-McKeever

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The material presented in *Rosa Lee: A Mother and Her Family in Urban America* was gathered during a four year period in which *Washington Post* investigative reporter, Leon Dash, followed the lives of Rosa Lee Cunningham and her family. Based on a series of reports which won both the Pulitzer Prize and the Robert F. Kennedy Journalism Award, this book presents a provocative, intimate, and disturbing view of the lives of our most vulnerable citizens, the urban poor. What one comes to see in reading this chronicle is that one need not be a "foreigner" by birth to be displaced; Rosa Lee's life exemplifies how some of us can be strangers in our native land. Whether the reader is a Social Work practitioner, policy maker, instructor, researcher, or simply a person interested in understanding the humanity of those plagued by poverty, one will find this book compelling and a worthwhile investment for their library.

Rosa Lee Cunningham and her family live in the slums of Washington, D.C. Rosa Lee is the matriarch of a clan that includes eight children and many grandchildren. Some of Rosa Lee's children are living with AIDS, as is Rosa Lee. Some of her children are addicted to heroin, as is Rosa Lee. Some of her children have been arrested and spent time in jail for a variety of criminal offenses, as has Rosa Lee. People like Rosa Lee face illiteracy, poverty, teenage pregnancy, prostitution, and drug and child abuse as a part of everyday life. Two of Rosa Lee's children escape the cycle of poverty and lead stable lives. The two that make it out attribute their success to the mentoring and involvement of a social worker and a teacher. Their examples challenge the idea that nothing can be done to alleviate the conditions of the urban "underclass." The problems Rosa Lee's family address in their day-to-day lives are the problems that should compel the modern profession of social work to action. Practitioners and policy makers will find much in this book to help them understand the problems this population face.

This book, however, is not for the practitioner and policy maker alone. Dash's chronicle of his investigation

provides a practical and captivating example of ethnographic research. The book provides an excellent tool for instructors teaching qualitative research methods. Throughout the book Dash uses quantitative research to offer a broader description of the problems Rosa Lee and her family face. His work is that of the ethnographic researcher. Each of the nine chapters is organized around a central theme which Dash found in the four years he spent observing Rosa Lee's life. Chapter One, "One Crisis After Another," describes daily life in Rosa Lee's world; Chapter Four, "A Hell of A Rush," describes the role drugs play in her existence and Chapter Six, "Another way of life," centers on Rosa Lee's two children who escape life in urban poverty. In the tradition of qualitative methods, Dash allows Rosa Lee and her children to speak and live without interference. In so doing he provides us with a haunting picture of life inside the urban poor community.

On the surface one might think Rosa Lee's story is about the "African-American underclass" or perhaps one might conclude that it is about the travesty of chemical dependency and AIDS. While these subjects are a part of Rosa Lee's story, there is a subtext to Rosa Lee's story that I found strong and difficult to dismiss. Rosa Lee, the mother of three small children, moved at the age of 16 to Washington, D.C. from the South where she was born and lived as the child of North Carolina share croppers. In her early life, Rosa Lee learned that her family's survival depended upon hard labor and lots of it. Thus, education came secondary to working in the fields and large families were important as children were a primary source of labor. Whether living with the harsh realities of a sharecropper's life or the equally harsh life of the urban poor, Rosa Lee's life exemplifies the fact that some of our citizens have never had a place in the homeland we call America. Rosa Lee's America was never "the land of the free" for she never had access to the resources, education, opportunity, and money, that freedom provides. Nontheless, she lived her life with courage and proved that those of our citizens who live here as outsiders make America the "home of the brave."

Dash dedicates his book to "unfettered inquiry." It is his "no holds barred" approach to detailing the realities of Rosa Lee's life that make this story so compelling and difficult to dismiss. Rosa Lee Cunningham and her family could be the story of any family living in the exile of urban poverty. Dash's in-depth inquiry goes a long way in presenting the complexities of life for families like Rosa Lee's in a way that calls for thoughtful reflection. *Rosa Lee: A Mother and Her Family in Urban America* is an excellent source of information, ideas, and insights. Rosa Lee's story is our story; though we might like to think of her as a stranger, she is a part of who we are. It is not easy to read this chronicle without realizing that many of us live in exile, though we are citizens of this land. As an African-American woman who grew up in a poor family, I identify with certain aspects of Rosa Lee's story. I too have felt displaced in America and have struggled to make a place for myself in an arena where there are few people like me. Rosa Lee's story serves as a reminder of why I chose the social work profession. Rosa Lee's story makes me feel that my experience as an outsider may well be the very thing that makes a place for me in social work. All who are interested in helping those who are strangers in their own land, America's urban poor, will benefit from reading this book. □

BOOK REVIEW

Harriett D. Romo & Toni Falbo. *Latino High School Graduation: Defying the Odds.* Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996, 324 pages. $17.95 paperback, ISBN 0-292-72495-0.

By
Yolanda C. Padilla,

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Latino High School Graduation: Defying the Odds offers a special perspective on the loss of a homeland by focusing on the experience of Latino youth. It illustrates the personal meaning of cultural and economic marginality for Mexican origin students within the U.S. educational system that extends well beyond the immigrant generation. By listening to the stories of young high school students and their families, the authors reveal how the culture of Mexican youth interacts with a school system that fails to integrate them, emphasizing for them the experience of being strangers, permanent outsiders in U.S. society.

The book fills an important gap in our understanding of the social context of Latino/a educational integration. This ethnographic study of 100 Mexican children, identified as at risk of dropping out of school, and their families uncovers the dynamics that influence the likelihood of high school completion. Based on in-depth interviews roughly across the four-year period of the youth's high school years, the authors observe that certain factors play an important part in school failure: academic tracking, inadequate school retention policies, gang involvement, teen pregnancy, lack of attention to immigration and subsequent generational transitions, the misuse of the GED, and barriers associated with the educational system. The authors dedicate a chapter to each one of these problems and conclude with specific recommendations for administrators, teachers, and social services staff.

This book makes an excellent contribution to the literature in the broader area of Latino/a social and economic incorporation in U.S. society. The authors' focus on high school graduation as the nexus to future attainment and life chances is well-founded. The placement in low-paying occupations and the consequently high poverty rates among Latinos/as are directly related to their low educational levels. According to 1992 demographic data, 28 percent of all Latinos/as fell below the poverty level in comparison to 11 percent of non-Latinos/as. At the same time, only 51 percent of Latinos/as over 25 had completed high school in comparison to 80 percent of non-Latinos/as (Valencia & Chapa, 1993). High drop-out rates are considered a major cause of Latino/a low educational attainment.

What the authors bring that has been lacking is the voice of Latino/a youth and their families concerning their struggle to function within an educational system that does

not adequately respond to their needs. Past studies based on close-ended survey data have found, for example, that social psychological and socialization characteristics, such as personal occupational aspirations and parental expectations, have an effect on how well they do in school (Padilla, 1996). The case studies based on open-ended interviews in this book reveal a richer and more coherent picture of the stories of Latino/a marginalization in American education.

Robert's case study shows that Latino/a students and parents often incorrectly assume that they are on a college track. In this case, Robert's story illustrates that tracking also results in school failure via messages Latino/a students receive from their teachers. According to his father,

The teacher said he couldn't take Algebra because of his grade he made in seventh or sixth grade. He wanted to take Algebra and they told him because of his scores in the seventh grade, he did not have the aptitude for Algebra....So that's the only problem I had, when the teacher said to him [Robert], 'Well, you're not college material.' (p. 21)

Linda depicts the failure of schools to meet the needs of children of immigrants. In response to why she had not consulted with her school counselor about what courses to take to prepare for college, she said,

They were always too busy. I never went and asked them anything, and I don't think they would have told me. I never really went to them. (p. 125)

The authors' concluding analysis of the overall themes that run throughout their data illuminates the complexity of familiar explanations for the school problems of Latino/a students, such as cultural clashes between the home, the school system, and the students; lack of family resources; and limited parental involvement in their children's education.

One significant area that is de-emphasized in this book is the role of economic resources in shaping the educational outcomes of Latino/a youth. Although the effect of the lack of family resources is addressed, the literature strongly suggests that the structural economic conditions of the community and the school are also powerful predictors of school achievement. Latino/a children in poor families tend to lack basic resources and live in overcrowded housing often located within inner-city neighborhoods, areas characterized by concentrated poverty and related social problems. Thus, they are also more likely to attend ethnically segregated schools supported by a low tax base (Valencia & Chapa, 1993). These conditions affect the quality of education available to Latino/a students and result in an environment that makes them even more vulnerable to academic failure. Because the study exclusively follows Mexican students living in an inner-city high-poverty Mexican neighborhood, it is not possible to discern how the patterns differ for Mexican students living in higher income areas and attending better schools or for non-Hispanic students who live in disadvantaged circumstances similar to those in the current sample. Such an analysis would provide a clearer idea of how poverty and ethnicity interact with the other factors disclosed in this book.

All told, this book is strongly recommended for social workers and other human service professionals who work with Latino/a youth and their families, particularly Mexican-Americans within the educational system. The in-depth conversations with Latino/a families also make it a valuable resource for providers in any field of service who wish to expand their knowledge of Latino/a family life and values. At the same time, it provides insights into the problems Latino/a families face in their interactions with social institutions in general. □

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CALL FOR NARRATIVES SPECIAL ISSUE: "FORGIVENESS"

Reflections plans to publish a special issue on readers' experiences with "forgiveness." This topic has always been an important one in the human services because of the role it plays in the ways that we grow as human beings as well as the healing properties of forgiveness after an injury has occurred. Forgiveness is even a more central issue for human societies today for reasons to be discussed below. Its importance rests on several assumptions that we would like to explore:

1. Individuals cause harm to other individuals, sometimes intentionally and sometimes inadvertently. The person causing the harm may suffer (such as feeling guilt) and this suffering can be alleviated when the person who is harmed forgives the perpetrator of the harm.

2. The person who is harmed may carry a burden of anger and resentment that only adds to the burden he or she already feels from the harm itself. Forgiving the person who has inflicted the harm can ease some of the burden, whether or not that person asks to be forgiven.

3. The person who has inflicted the harm may not acknowledge any regret, whether or not this act was intentional. This lack of assuming responsibility can be a force that inhibits growth.

While the above statements relate to individuals, the issue of forgiveness can apply to organizations, communities, and even societies. Today we see the amazing examples of South Africa in which the process of forgiveness is taking place within the legal system and in relationship to acts of brutality that horrified us not long ago. We see the example of nations (such as Switzerland) being asked to take responsibility for wrongs inflicted decades ago. Will acts of such governments lead to forgiveness for the victims or their heirs? Will the terrors of genocide that are occurring now someday be referred to in terms of nations assuming responsibility for their acts and receiving forgiveness? What acts of assuming responsibility and being forgiven must occur for the United States to experience healing from the acts of oppression that have transpired against many groups?

These issues lead to many questions. Can forgiveness be offered even when the perpetrators do not ask for it? What are the experiences of people asking for and/or receiving forgiveness? What are the consequences of acts of forgiveness? What leads people to engage in giving or asking for forgiveness?

Reflections asks authors to submit their own narratives related to forgiveness, that might help to answer some of the above questions or that are relevant to the assumptions we have stated. These acts might relate to individuals or larger systems. The persons involved might be professionals themselves or those whom they serve. Those who are forgiven might not have asked for it. Sometimes, forgiveness might be asked for but not granted.

The editor of this special issue is Charles Garvin, Professor of Social Work, the University of Michigan. Manuscripts are due March 1, 1998. He welcomes inquiries from persons interested in contributing writing something on this topic. His address is:
The School of Social Work, The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1285; phone # (313) 763-5769; and e-mail address chariesg c@u@ch.edu. □

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