REFLECTIONS:
NARRATIVES of PROFESSIONAL HELPING

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EDITORIAL	Mary Ann Jimenez	2
NARRATIVES		
Outsiders on the Inside: Reflections on Social Work Teaching in Vietnam	Mary Ann Forgey Carol S. Cohen Sheila Berger Robert Chazin	5
Like Oil in Water: Exploring the Narratives of an Undocumented Worker	Rachel Pitt Flavio Francisco Marsiglia	18
A Journey to a Small Planet	Thomas H. Walz	24
Providing Mental Health Services in a Culture Other than One's Own	Samuel Julio Rosenberg	32
Non-Euclidean Feminism: Where Parallel Lives Meet	Scott L. Horton	42
The Role of Mutual Self Disclosure in Helping and Healing between Gay Clients and Therapists	Fred Schloemer	50
The Never-Ending Story: Robert's Lament	Josephine Mendez-Negrete	58
An Introduction to Leon Ginsberg	Sonia Leib Abels	67
Reflections on a Social Work Career	Leon Ginsberg	68
Every Good-Bye Ain't Gone: Reflections on Memory and Leave-Taking	John A. Kayser	79
ORIGINAL ART WORK AND COVER	Daniel Jimenez	

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1949 1999 ANNIVERSARY CSULB

Editorial

by Mary Ann Jimenez, Ph.D

The year 2000 may not be the actual beginning of the next millennium or even the end of the 20th century (we know we have to wait for 2001 for these milestones), but the meaning attached to this arbitrary date change by at least some of the world's population (judging by news coverage) suggests that a chapter has been closed in many people's minds and lives. Remarkable moments in the passage of time often have to do with a sense of narratives completed or begun. According to historians, the end of the 19th century was accompanied by seismic revolutions in cultural styles and revisions of formerly accepted truths. The import given to a socially constructed, as well as mathematically inaccurate, concept of the "new millennium" is largely due to the perception that the year 2000 signifies a milestone in human history. The concept of millennium compels us as individuals to write a coda to our own history—those who marvel at reaching this marker in history as well as those who impatiently wait for the new wonders implicitly promised by the 21st century. Observers of ancient civilizations, Egyptian, Chinese, and Judaic, to mention a few, are likely to recognize the relatively narrow Christian origins of the millennium—marking only a small slice of human history in a Eurocentric and Whiggish manner that valorizes scientific and technological advances made primarily in the West. Nonetheless, regardless of the constructed, even culturally chauvinistic, origins of the idea of the millennium, it does speak to the human need to give our stories beginnings and ends. All narratives, like the concept of the millennium, are created by humans as arbitrary markers of beginnings and ending points in the undifferentiated flow of time. In this spirit, it may be worthwhile to contemplate some of the narratives braided through the 20th century that offer us perspectives on our current place in human history.

Without question,one of the greatest achievements of this century was the end of apartheid in South Africa, achieved, as were the civil rights victories in this country in the 20th century, by newly empowered oppressed groups. The optimism of this thought is counterbalanced by the examples of human horror and treachery during this century— such as the Holocaust and the countless butcheries in Cambodia under the Pol Pot regime. Wars fought and resolutions undone in little more than the blink of an eye—World War I and Vietnam come to mind—are matched by transcendent struggles for equality and human dignity led by Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, and Martin Luther King, Jr. The United States succeeded in establishing military as well as economic and cultural hegemony over the rest of the world after the Soviet Union opted out of the cold war in order to redefine itself along historic and cultural boundaries.

The ascendance of the United States as a great world power is one of the strongest narrative lines of the past 100 years. Yet with more than 6 billion people in the world as of 1998, the United States was still behind China and India in the most populous places race. Consuming far more than its share of resources, attention, and cultural ascendance, the United States has sought to set the standard for progress, success and happiness for the rest of humanity. Insofar as it has succeeded, it has engendered a sense of unearned privilege and entitlement in many of its citizens, assumptions that did not exist one hundred years ago, when this country was shadowed by the great European powers. This change in our national consciousness took place in spite of, or perhaps because of, the fact that most human struggles and triumphs took place in other countries during this century. Yet the power of the United States to be a world leader in social justice has been largely untapped until now. To turn our cultural and economic advantages to this new mission would signal a deep change, worthy of a new millennium.

What can we as professionals, seeking to transform personal and social realities, learn from the excitement of the millennium and

from our place in human history in the year 2000? The most important insight may be the power of new beginnings—the ability of people to recreate themselves and their social realities. To forge new life stories after experiencing horrors, as did those who survived the tragedies of the Holocaust and other catastrophes born of human evil or natural disasters, is a sign of the raw courage embedded in human nature. Narrative therapy is based on the power of the stories we tell ourselves about our lives to redeem us from our suffering. The ability to begin anew, demonstrated by the shared conceit that the year 2000 is the beginning of a new era, rather than an ending of the old, is a universal and triumphant human capacity. As professional helpers, we can transmit this optimism and courage to our colleagues, our clients, and our students. All efforts to co-create personal and social change depend on the power of transforming narratives, which allow for new beginnings. May the freshness of this calendar year infuse *Reflections'* readers with the energy to begin again the process of becoming.

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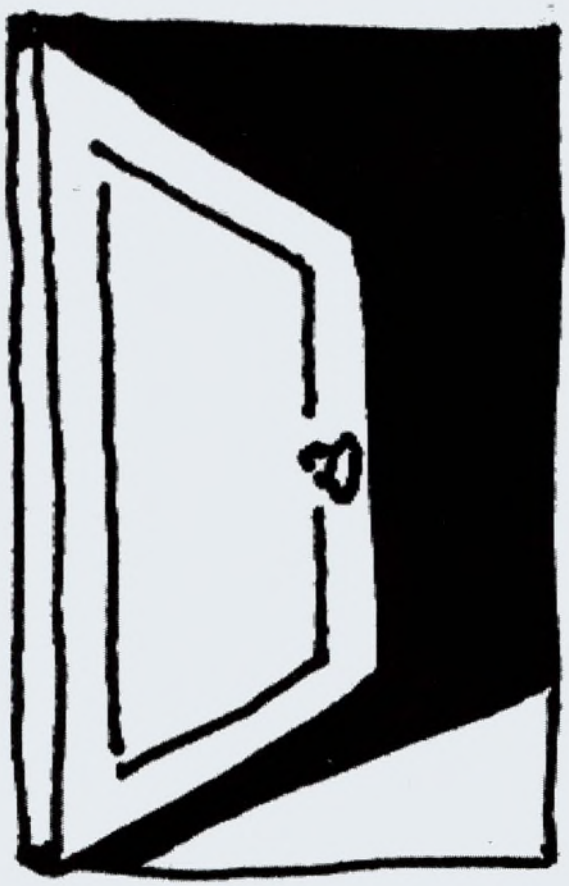
Reflections welcomes letters to the Editor. Letters should be sent with the writer's name, address, and daytime phone number to Editor, Reflections, Department of Social Work, CSULB, 1250 Bellflower Blvd., Long Beach, CA 90840. They can also be faxed ([562]-985-5514) or sent via E-mail to mjimenez@csulb.edu. Letters may be edited for length and clarity and may be published in the journal.



SPECIAL ISSUE
CALL FOR NARRATIVES

GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN:

FAMILIES FACING CHALLENGE

The reality of today's grandparent role is far from yesterday's "pleasure without responsiblity." These days more and more grandparents are assuming major caregiving roles for their grandchildren, either in support of adult children who share a household, or as a sole caregivers for their grandchildren. Almost 4 million children were raised in grandparent-households in 1997 (5.5% of children under 18) compared to social and economic pressures and are the forefunner of powerful and challenging roles for grandparents to come.

As a topic for stories, grandparents raising grandchildren invlolves the drama of cirsis and resoulution of renewal or resignation; and perspectives from grandparents, parents, and grandchildren. The topic spans urban and rural issues, and reaches across the generations, encompassing the fields of child welfare and greontology. Join us in telling the stories of grandparents and of professional struggles to advocate for their needs. We are looking for:

- Episodes of loss, triumph, tragedy, and renewal as told by grandparents raising grandchildren.
- Narratives of initiatives to change law and adapt new welfare legislation in the intrests of grandparents.
- Stories of organizations and institutions serving or failing to serve grandparents: the courts, child welfare, public assistance, schools, health and mental health services, and the prisons.
- Narratives telling of efforts to establish innovative programs and to reform old ones.
- Tales told by professionals who help grandparents.

Manuscripts due by October 31, 2000

Mail manuscripts to:

Catherine Goodman, DSW,
Department of Social Work
California State University, Long Beach
1250 Bellflower Boulevard
Long Beach, CA 90840

Outsiders on the Inside: Reflections on Social Work Teaching in Vietnam

Four educators tell stories about their teaching in Vietnam, using a theme of "insiders" and "outsiders." Their recounting of the experience follows a developmental framework, starting with the preparation phase, and continues with planning and beginnings. Next, the process of the training is explored, including discussion of collaboration with participants, bridging the insider-outsider barrier, reciprocal process of learning, and participants' evaluation of the experience. The final re-entry and reflection section suggests five key processes that facilitated the teaching effort, including tuning-in, reframing, working from the experiences of the participants, openness, and egalitarian approach to co-trainer and trainees.

by

Mary Ann Forgey, Carol S. Cohen, Sheila Berger, Robert Chazin

Mary Ann Forgey, PhD, LSW, Assistant Professor, Fordham University Graduate School of Social Service.

Carol S. Cohen, DSW, CSW, Assistant Professor and Program Director, BA Program in Social Work, Fordham University Graduate School of Social Service.

Sheila Berger, MSW, CSW, BCD, CASAC, Director of Family Treatment, Greenwich House Counseling Center, New York.

Robert Chazin, DSW, CSW, Professor, Fordham University Graduate School of Social Service.

Introduction

Formal social work practice and education in Viet nam was discontinued in 1975 with the "fall" of Saigon and the end of the Vietnam War. Recently, Vietnam has moved to re-establish the social work profession. We, the four authors of this paper, participated in this process during the summer of 1997, providing consultation and training to the faculty, field instructors, and students of Open University in Ho Chi Minh City.

Our partnership began with Open University's interest in expanding its fledgling social work program (a two-year program within the Women's Studies Division) to a four-year program modeled on the baccalaureate degree in social work. The Vietnamese faculty were interested in advancements in social work since 1975, particularly in the ongoing conceptualization of generalist social work practice as the foundation of professional activity. Fordham University Graduate School of Social Service began working with Open University in 1995. Funding for the project came from USAID, with World Vision serving as the operational NGO. Fordham sent a four-person planning team to Ho Chi Min City during the summer of 1996 to present lectures on the content and structure of our curriculum. Based on these presentations, two components of the foundation area—Human Behavior and the Social Environment (HBSE) and Generalist Social Work Practice with Individuals, Families, and Groups—were identified as training priorities for 1997. Two of us, Robert and Sheila (husband and wife), were chosen for the HBSE component held in early July 1997 for ten days, and the other two, Mary Ann and Carol, were chosen for the ten-day mid-August 1997 component on Generalist Practice. Mary Ann and Carol were accompanied by Mary Ann's husband and Carol's husband and 12-year-old son.

Soon after we returned from our teaching journey to Vietnam and began to tell stories about the experience, the Fall issue of *Reflections* arrived, focusing on the loss of homeland and the insight of "strangers." Clearly, we were not homeless or disen-

franchised during our visit, but we had experienced common consequences of being "outsiders," albeit temporarily (Abels, 1997). As we have had a chance to talk about and make meaning of our work in Vietnam, we believe that this "outsider" status was central to our actual work and has informed our understanding of its impact here in the United States.

As the following pages indicate, we were able to sign on to the project, make sense of our charge, and actually do the work because we acknowledged our status. As "outsiders," we could bring our own knowledge and experience and were, in fact, obligated to do so. This article traces our work through each stage, from initial preparation to reentry, with special emphasis on the impact of the "outsider" theme. We have attempted to highlight our voices through the use of individualized fonts and attribution throughout the text.

Making the Decision to Go

Each of us had thought about the possibility of going to Vietnam when we first asked to be considered for the trip. However, it is one thing to consider a possibility and another thing to actually commit oneself and one's family to the journey once we were selected in February 1997. As soon as we began preparatory meetings in the spring of 1997, it became clear that we had a variety of motivating factors for our participation, ranging from the desire to make restitution to the Vietnamese people, to curiosity and the quest for adventure.

Robert and Sheila: Both of us had been against the Vietnam War and had protested in various ways. Neither of us felt our actions had any significant impact. The opportunity to teach and in some way help the Vietnamese with their social problems could be reparative—to heal our own misgivings and regrets as well as to make amends in some small way for the damage our nation had inflicted there. We viewed ourselves as good will ambassadors bringing knowledge and assistance. Of course, there also was the excitement of being exposed to a very different culture and of learning from our Vietnamese hosts.

Mary Ann: When I first saw the request from the Associate Dean for interested faculty to submit their resumes to do training at Ho Chi Min Open University, I experienced an overwhelming sense of curiosity about the Vietnamese people and the land itself. These feelings are what propelled me to initially submit my resume to the Associate Dean. In thinking now about this initial reaction, I think the curiosity stemmed from a strong desire to learn about Vietnam first hand. My knowledge of the country and its people mainly came from the texts I had read in college, war-related newspaper articles, and Hollywood films. I also had been a social worker employed by the U.S. Army in the 1980's and had listened to the rage and unresolved grief of many soldiers who had lost friends in Vietnam and who felt so misunderstood and betrayed by the American public.

My initial curious reaction to the invitation, however, soon turned to feelings of anxiety and dread as I began to focus on how much of an outsider I really was and how little I really knew about where I was going. Would I be safe there physically? Was I putting my health in jeopardy by traveling voluntarily to a land that was fighting diseases we rarely think about? What did I really have to offer since I knew so little about them and their needs? Luckily, these negative feelings continued to be interspersed with enough of the initial feelings of curiosity and adventure that I stayed the course and boarded the plane in July of 1996 with other members of the initial planning team. Little did I know that I would be returning the following summer to conduct the actual training at the University.

Carol: At first, hearing that I had the chance to go to Vietnam, I was stunned, and then quickly thought, "What have I gotten myself and my family into?" The answer soon came: "A grand adventure!" I was unprepared for the questions of friends when we told them our summer plans, who either quickly assumed that my husband was a Vietnam vet on a trip of reconciliation, or that we were going to the next "hot" eco-tourist destination. I must admit to a feeling of pride when we explained the purpose of the trip.

Preparation

Following our initial excitement came feelings of fear, wonder, and openness to the work. While we had different styles (based on our traditional ways of getting ready for a new situation), our common conceptualization of our roles as "outsiders" placed special emphasis on our preparation for our trip. It drove us to

rigorously prepare, while knowing that we would have to be ready to drastically reconfigure the training as needed. We cannot remember a time when we were more prepared, yet consciously open to new discoveries and surprises. We needed to acknowledge that there were areas in which we would simply be unprepared.

Robert and Sheila: Although as outsiders we could not know what our encounter would be like, we approached the experience with some preconceived ideas about our Vietnamese students as well as notions as to how we would be perceived by them. Because of the long, painful, and conflicted history between the U.S. and Vietnam, we approached the Vietnamese with trepidation, concerned with how they would view us. Despite their agreement to have us teach some basic social work content, we wondered if they would harbor some anger and resentment due to the history of our two countries. If we were preparing for work in another country with whom we had a more neutral rather than a conflicted history, we would most likely not have been as apprehensive.

Mary Ann: The emotions I experienced in preparation for the second trip were considerably less intense than the first time since I was no longer entering the complete unknown. I had met some of the insiders. While preparing for the first trip, I remember imagining myself sweating uncontrollably 24 hours a day due to the heat. As a result of this fantasy, I found myself obsessing about what to wear. I pounded the pavement looking for 100% cotton, which I was told was the best defense against soaring temperatures. In my clothing search and selection process, I was also concerned about "fitting in"... not wanting to be too "American" in style and dress. Luckily my selection of loose fitting, 100% cotton clothes worked out just fine in dealing with the heat, which was quite tolerable due to the proliferation of air conditioning. To my surprise I also found many of the Vietnamese women wearing very stylish polyester. In fact many of them looked much more "American" in dress than I did. So for the second trip, I did take the same stash of 100% cotton clothes, but threw in a few polyester skirts as well.

Getting the vaccination shots for the second time was a quick reminder of my outsider status and provoked some of the same feelings of vulnerability as the first time. Just hearing the words of the diseases one could potentially contract—typhoid, polio, rabies, malaria—made me realize all over again how very far away we were going and that this part of the world did not have the medical benefits and environmental securities we take for granted in the United States.

Prior to my first trip to Vietnam, I was very concerned about the reaction of the Vietnamese to the war and how that would affect our relationship building. As a result of my employment as a social worker for the U.S. Army in the 1980's, I wondered how they would perceive me. I was fearful of being misjudged and not accepted as a person separate from the American military who brought so much destruction to their country. I wanted them to know I believed the war was wrong and was sincerely sorry for all the destruction it had caused. My first visit educated me that the war with the Americans is very much behind the Vietnamese people. I concluded that they do not have the luxury of dwelling on the past, analyzing it as we do and staying stuck in certain emotional reactions. They appeared to have reached a stage of resolution about the war, evidenced in their strong desire to form new, more productive relationships.

As a result of witnessing this during my first trip, it was not a major part of my emotional baggage in preparation for my second trip. However, the range of reactions from some relatives, friends, and acquaintances to my second trip reflected feelings of guilt (i.e., some saw the trip as an opportunity to pay back) or anger (i.e., some wondered why I would want to be friends with "the enemy") which reminded me again of how little we as a country know Vietnam other than our associations with a war fought 30 years ago.

Carol: As the reality of our task sank in, my next question became almost overwhelming: "Who were WE to presume to do this work?" After a great deal of discussion and thinking, I began to reframe the charge—WE couldn't possibly teach the Vietnamese how THEY should teach social work. On the other hand, we were(are) experts in how, what, and why we teach social work the way we do here at Fordham. In addition, as social workers, we like

to think of ourselves as experts in helping others tell their story, look at options, and form new understandings. If we could find a way to share our work and learn how they work, then we might be able to collectively think about how social work should be taught in Vietnam. I was then released from the panic—was, able to "sign on" as a partner and to begin the work of planning the actual contents.

Planning the Training Experience

Once we all made the decision to go and oriented ourselves to the task, the work of designing the curriculum and its delivery began. Here, too, we each approached the task somewhat differently, but all were mindful of balancing a very high level of preparedness with heightened sensitivity to building on the participants' knowledge. The planning phase of approximately two months was complicated by incomplete and somewhat contradictory information about the projected trainees, their experience, and their scope of knowledge. Sheila and Robert were to go first in July for the Human Behavior and the Social Environment portions, and Mary Ann and Carol were to go in August for Generalist Social Work Practice.

Robert and Sheila: As part of our preparation, we engaged in concentrated reading about Vietnamese history, society, culture, and religion. We were impressed by much of what we read, particularly by the strength, determination, and perseverance of the Vietnamese people in maintaining their culture and beliefs while simultaneously combating various invading and occupying nations over the centuries. On the one hand, our preparatory reading was reassuring by enhancing our understanding of this foreign land. Thus, for example, we were attuned to the importance of visitors bringing gifts. On the other hand, our reading stirred up additional concerns. Without direct contact with our Vietnamese "students" we were unclear as to which aspects of human behavior course content would be relevant and applicable to their culture. We knew they had a special interest in material related to the problem of homeless street children, but that served as a very limited guideline in preparing our course. The more we read of their culture, the more striking the differences from our own, and the greater our concern about the relevance of our content to their situation. Their strong family and ancestral ties, their commitment to community, their spirituality, and their determination in overthrowing occupying oppressors over centuries created a picture very different from our own society. We were uncertain about our ability to find a common ground where our understanding of human behavior and social environment would apply to their society.

These concerns, deriving from our outsider status, shaped our teaching in three ways. First, we prepared much more material than could possibly be covered in our short stay. Second, we met with program administrators in Vietnam just prior to teaching to discuss our outline to determine which areas to revise and emphasize. Finally, we scheduled consistent time in addition to our lecture for participants' intensive involvement. In short, we depended on the insiders to help us cross the barrier we felt between us. We divided each day into a morning of lecture and discussion and an afternoon of varied exercises which involved them in applying the morning's lecture to the problems they confronted as social workers. Whenever possible, we adapted our material to their culture. We used notions from their cultural belief system as instruments in organizing and illustrating our material. For example, the concepts of Yin and Yang were used as a theme throughout the course in explaining basic systems theory and its application.

Similarly, recognizing the importance they placed on community, we consistently encouraged a comprehensive perspective by systematically considering macro, mezzo, and micro elements in any problem they raised. Further, our reading alerted us to enduring sensitive issues which influenced our presentations. For example, having read about their sensitivity to talk about relations between North and South Vietnam, we discussed our own Civil War between north and south as a way of providing safety in discussing social conflict and its consequences. While our reading about Vietnam sharpened our sense of entering a foreign country, so too did our medical preparation. The numerous immunization shots that were required served as a painful reminder that we were entering a foreign and, in some regards, dangerous new world.

Mary Ann and Carol: In preparing for the training itself we experienced some inner tensions regarding the level of preparedness. While we knew the content of the courses extremely well, we were concerned about how much would be relevant to the Vietnamese context and culture. Since making these decisions ourselves would be utter guesswork, we decided to focus on how to teach the material in a way that would leave the Vietnamese in the position to decide the relevancy question. One critical decision in the preparation process for our focus on generalist social work practice with individuals, families, and groups that reflected this teaching method was to ask the Vietnamese trainees to develop case studies on the first day that they would work with throughout the training. We would then teach the content of the course using these cases. We believed that this teaching strategy would provide the secondary benefit of educating us about the kinds of problems the Vietnamese people are facing and the ecological contexts within which these problems develop and are addressed. While this strategy made sense to us on many levels, it was also very anxiety producing because we were left with so many unknowns prior to the training and so much case material to digest on the first day of training.

We think we approached our preparation somewhat differently than Robert and Sheila, although we were ultimately happy to review the articles they passed on to us. We found ourselves somewhat resistant to reading extensively about Vietnamese culture. While we knew this type of reading is helpful in creating a sensitivity to cultural differences that may not be readily apparent, we agreed that it also can be limiting if one enters the culture with already established frames of reference. We tried to cultivate the openness needed to rely on the more inductive method of participant observation when coming in contact with another culture. Perhaps this preference is also a result of having lived and visited other countries and becoming quite familiar with people who were quite well read about American culture. Too often in their company, we felt like an experiment in which we were going to prove or disprove some theory about American culture.

Perhaps this preference in preparation also comes from our realization that there will be differences that cannot be anticipated ahead of time. We took some comfort in Mary Ann's survival of the "red flag incident": During one of her lectures on the first trip she was talking about warning signs of domestic violence, and instinctively used the term "red flags" in describing these signs. The translator asked her to repeat what she said since she thought she had misinterpreted it. As she repeated "red flag" (while one of her colleagues shook his head back and forth to signal disapproval), she realized the reason for the confusion and her poor choice of terminology.

The differences in methods to develop cultural sensitivity that we struggled with are reflective of the on-going debate in social work education regarding the best ways to prepare students to work with diversity, as in the following questions: (a) Should the emphasis be on content about different cultures to increase sensitivity to difference? or (b) Should the emphasis be more on teaching a method to recognize and explore the implications of cultural differences on a case by case basis? Eventually we found a balance to best suit us and our task.

First Encounter with Vietnam

Entry experiences can have great power, and ours certainly had that dimension as we were immediately immersed in a very different culture. Our individual narratives of arrival reflect our expectations, our preparation, and pure chance. We each tried to make sense of our beginning encounters in order to face the inauguration of the training. While different in content and meaning, each of our entries cried "Welcome to Vietnam!"

Robert and Sheila: We were fortunate in having a three-day stopover in Hong Kong. This provided some rest and time to recover from jet lag. It also afforded us exposure to culture with some similarity to the one we were entering. However, it did not prepare us for the dark, dismal, largely empty Ho Chi Minh airport which was our midnight entry point to Vietnam. Nor did it prepare us for coping with the immigration guards' confiscation of our teaching video tapes. After a heated argument with three armed guards, our tapes were screened and returned. While we had struggled with the sense of outsider in preparing for this teaching, in retrospect we realize we considered ourselves as spe-

cial outsiders. In arguing with the airport guards, our sense of specialness emerged as we identified ourselves as connected with a Vietnamese university and the

Ministry of Education. Our host, having witnessed our confrontation, later informed us that we could have been deported or jailed. Our naivete served us well.

Mary Ann: On my first trip to Vietnam, it was strongly recommended that we build in several days to adjust to Vietnam and to Ho Chi Minh City in particular. This adjustment period was deemed necessary due to the time difference (23 hours!!); the temperature change; and the social, cultural, and environmental differences of Ho Chi Minh City. It was good advice and I took it. On the second trip, it felt less necessary since I knew what to expect in Ho Chi Minh City. In addition, I planned to be in China for a week prior to arriving in Vietnam, so I would have already adjusted to the time difference. Therefore, my itinerary had me arriving in Vietnam on Sunday afternoon at 4:00 p.m. This plan would allow for dinner with Carol and possibly some of the Vietnamese faculty that evening with the training scheduled to start at 8:00 a.m. Monday morning. Unfortunately, this itinerary left no room for the typhoon that hit Hong Kong on Saturday resulting in all flights being either very delayed or canceled. Somehow I managed to make it to Vietnam very late Sunday evening but none of my luggage did. So I arrived in Vietnam with my purse and fortunately my training materials but without my 100% cotton wardrobe and other little transitional objects that ease the adjustment to a strange land. Fortunately my colleague Carol, who, needless to say, was anxiously awaiting my arrival, loaned me some clothes for our training debut (despite our 4" height difference) which was to occur in less than seven hours. Having no luck getting to sleep, I spent the night lying awake in a strange bed in a strange hotel room in a strange land wishing I had taken more seriously the need for an adjustment period the second time around.

Carol: My family and I arrived in Ho Chi Minh Airport after a glorious week in the rain forest of Malaysia. We had climbed and caved and also survived jet lag and initial stomach troubles—we thought we were "ready" for Vietnam. It was with sadness and dread that we encountered the airport. In the dreariest of buildings, with the most dour customs inspectors, subdued travelers, and more policemen than would seem necessary, we waited with our papers and luggage. We were shocked to be waved right through customs since we had been warned for battle by Robert and Sheila.

As we left the customs lines we entered a larger room, no less somber but alive with family reunions, loud voices, laughter, and great confusion. With the crowd, we exited and saw a man holding a sign with my name. They knew us here! Through limited English, we greeted each other and put our enormous amount of luggage in his small car. We were brought to the Palace Hotel on the French built Grand Boulevard (down the block from the famous Rex Hotel, home to western journalists during the war). Ho Chi Minh City on a Sunday evening seemed like a festival, with bright colors and activity everywhere, even balloon sellers in the square.

Our hotel room was fine, and the tiny swimming pool on the roof looked inviting. I settled in for Mary Ann's arrival and a welcoming call from our hosts. After a few anxious hours came the call that we would be picked up at 7:55 the next morning. Mary Ann had not yet arrived, so we walked outside, with my 12 year-old son, robust and blond, encountering the intense stares and touching from strangers that would become a daily trial. The square was lit by white light bulbs everywhere, adding to the festive atmosphere. The constant traffic of motorbikes, bicycles, "cyclos" (like a backward rickshaw, powered by a tricycle and rider), and the occasional taxi cab was intense; the absence of street lights or any other traffic control added a touch of danger to crossing the street. We were excited and entranced—but definitely out of our element.

The waiting for Mary Ann

continued and I was getting a bit worried. Finally she arrived, with quite a tale of adventure herself. Once we sorted out what clothes of mine she could wear until her luggage arrived, we said goodnight. My son fell asleep to

the familiar signals of MTV, Asian edition.

The Process of the Training

Our "outsider" status had a profound effect on the actual training experience and our relationships with the participants. We were formally introduced to our role as outsiders by the existence of a language barrier between us and our students. They denied any ability to speak English and acknowledged only limited understanding. Thus, we taught our classes in English while two or three interpreters took turns translating our lectures.

Surprisingly, the translation process was not as challenging as we had feared. For us, the requirements for effective translation, including speaking slowly and clearly, observing delayed reactions, listening to both speakers and translators, and carefully pacing material, became second nature rather quickly, helped by the translator's expertise and knowledge of the content areas. We were fortunate in having multiple translators and found that having more than one present most of the time enhanced the validity of the translation. During the rare instances when one of the translators noted a discrepancy or was searching for equivalent language, we took a "time out" to negotiate the meaning of a comment or concept. We moved into a comfortable rhythm rather quickly, and the translators were encouraged to stop us when they needed clarification.

While respectful of local conventions, as "outsiders" we felt we could be creative in our approach; the novelty of training by American professors gave us some room to introduce exercises, small group discussion, and other learning strategies. The openness and directness of the Vietnamese was unexpected, but welcome. It appeared that while they were unfamiliar with many of the activities we used in training, they were (for the most part) willing to experiment. We hypothesized that since they were engaging with "outsiders," our Vietnamese colleagues were open to taking risks that they had not ever been asked to take before. The "outsider" role, coupled with their openness, fostered our experimentation with each other.

The following section headings--launching the collaboration; bridging the insider-outsider barrier; reciprocal process of learning; and participants' evaluation of experience—are used to organize narratives about how we experienced the process of collaboration and training.

Launching the collaboration.

Mary Ann: On the first morning of the training, Carol and I were met at 7:55 a.m. sharp at the hotel by one of the Vietnamese faculty members who gave us a card with an address on it and swiftly put us in a cab, while he followed behind on his motorbike. When we arrived at the training site, we were enthusiastically greeted by approximately 20 trainees who appeared very eager to begin. Having not slept at all and feeling quite sensitive to the heat and noises of the city, I found myself secretly wishing that I could just disappear. Since that wasn't going to happen, I plodded on, going through the motions of the activities prepared but not feeling emotionally connected to the experience at all. We introduced ourselves and heard from each of the trainees about their background. I remember how this activity made me wonder how I could possibly teach these experienced teachers who had seen much more human misery than I ever would. I tried desperately to ignore these insecure feelings knowing that their intensity was most likely linked to my physical exhaustion.

During the first morning, we also did a contracting exercise in which the trainees anonymously wrote their expectations for learning on a piece of paper. They were quickly translated and we wrote all the expectations on the board and explored with the group which expectations we were prepared to meet and which ones we were not. This felt like an easier activity to do given its straightforward nature. I did not fully appreciate until the end of the training the impact that this

contracting exercise had on the group and how different this type of open negotiation was for them.

In the last activity before we broke for lunch, we asked the trainees to break into small groups and develop their cases. Following this we asked them to briefly describe each of the cases before the entire group. The descriptions were overwhelming in terms of the multitude of problems and the lack of any formal resources to deal with them.

At lunch, Carol and I discussed how disturbed we were by the case material and admitted how hopeless we were feeling that our training would be helpful and relevant. To make matters worse, I was still feeling quite weary and questioned if I could really make it through the rest of the day. We discussed how to best handle this. After some thoughtful discussion, it was decided that the events of the night before, the typhoon, the late arrival, the absence of clothing, the lack of sleep, should be revealed to the trainees and my resultant feelings of exhaustion shared. When the training resumed we shared my travel story. I immediately felt their support and understanding and the weight of having to pretend was lifted. To my surprise and relief, the emotional honesty resulted in a surge of energy that allowed me to finish the day in pretty good shape.

The afternoon activities may also partially explain the lift in mood as well. We began the afternoon with a presentation on the strengths perspective. Following the presentation, we asked them to identify the individual, family, and environmental strengths of the cases presented earlier. As the strengths were recognized, the hopelessness that seemed to pervade the morning presentations seemed to disappear. There was a lightness to the strengths presentations shown in the participants' spontaneous sharing and much laughter.

Bridging the insider-outsider barrier.

Robert and Sheila: Our status as outsiders was not totally problematic. In our teaching, it actually had a liberating effect. After all, as outsiders our ignorance about their culture and special circumstances was understandable. This freed us to involve them in guiding and teaching us. We easily put aside a more traditional "gas and go" approach to teaching—i.e., where students are treated as cars in a garage in need of a filling up with knowledge. Instead, these students became our collaborators, as we worked together in forging solutions to the problems confronting them using the knowledge and skills we presented.

Our husband and wife status was particularly potent in breaking down the outside-insider barrier we had apprehensively anticipated. Our marital relationship and interactions in the classroom stimulated numerous observations and personal questions about our lives. Our openness in responding fostered an increasing openness from them regarding not only their professional lives but their personal lives as well. A reciprocal process of sharing ensued in which they joined us in sharing personal as well as professional circumstances and dilemmas. Revealing information about our relationships with our children or aging parents evoked their sharing information about their struggles with these same relationships. The erosion of barriers between outsider and insider, teacher and student, led to the continued building of a climate of trust. Within this climate, they were able to openly share in discussions and to participate in the various exercises and role play used in the teaching. One sure sign that the barriers had eroded was that many students gradually spoke to us in English, revealing that they were initially too shy and embarrassed to risk making mistakes.

In addition to our position as outsiders, our status as co-teachers and as husband and wife afforded special teaching opportunities. In preparation, we carefully balanced responsibility for the teaching material, each taking areas of expertise. We further balanced by dividing the teaching time equally. Our marital and co-teacher relationship allowed us to demonstrate an egalitarian approach to teaching, where we worked together as equals at times openly disagreeing and publicly resolving differences. This style was in contrast to the hierarchical one they were familiar with, where faculty are ranked by status and lecture to the students. Perhaps, this was particularly important as students observed the synergy which flowed from gender equality. In addition, co-teaching facilitated our fuller engagement with them. While one of us focused on the content of the moment, the other was free to attend to the process, i.e., the students' response to what was

being discussed.

Mary Ann and Carol: One of the initial challenges in the training was dealing with the topic of social work values and ethics. Our training format consisted of a review of the major ethical standards of NASW followed by a discussion around these standards and how they fit with current social work practice in Vietnam. The first standard addressed was confidentiality. In the discussion that followed, we were surprised by the lack of application of this standard to social work practice in Vietnam. Instead, there seemed to be more of a value placed on talking to as many people as possible about a family's difficulties in order to better understand their situation. Asking the family's permission to make these inquiries did not seem important to them. When asked how they thought the family would respond if they found out about these inquiries, some did acknowledge that trust could be affected but others felt that the inquiries could also be construed by the family as a caring gesture.

In reflecting after the training upon this difference, we theorized that in a more community-oriented, collective society in which individual rights are not as honored, more is expected to be known about each other and more collaboration is expected. What we might see as intrusion and violation in our more individually oriented society is seen as caring in Vietnam. However, the traditional value of community concern for its members is currently challenged by Vietnam's rapid social dislocation. Thus, the kindly enlistment of others to serve a family in need in a close community could alternately be interpreted as a violation of privacy in a community of strangers. We returned to issues of confidentiality and protection with a far more complex understanding of traditional Vietnamese values and their challenges with migration and industrialization.

The other area that presented particular challenges was dealing with issues of power and authority. In our teaching of social work practice, we emphasize the need to acknowledge our position of power and authority with the client as a way of dealing with the unspoken feelings of intimidation and threat. Contracting with the client is a strategy used to deal with the imbalance of power that we believe always exists between a person who has something that another person needs. Acknowledging that a power differential exists between a client and a worker was difficult for many of the trainees. Some insisted that they do not have power over their clients and that the relationship is based on equality. Their emotional reaction to the word power tuned us in to thinking that something deeper was going on with this issue for our Vietnamese colleagues. Again, we theorized that perhaps in a socialist structure where values are based on the good of the community vs. the individual, individual power is not a concept thought relevant for consideration.

Power over another is something that did not seem acceptable or compatible with their feelings of altruism. There were, however, a few Vietnamese who quietly acknowledged that they had power over their clients because they were in control of resources that the client needed. We did not pursue this difference of opinion among our colleagues at that moment because we sensed a high level of discomfort in the room, including our own. In the end we were left with the recognition that there will be differences in the way we interpret certain concepts, stemming in part from our very different political traditions and contexts. These issues did, however, emerge as we discussed interventions and concepts of doing "for," doing "to," and doing "with" clients, bringing us back to the nature of power in the worker-client relationship. We found that we could talk about these issues in greater depth when we did not use the word "power," but talked openly about its dynamics, influence, and consequences.

Reciprocal process of learning.

Mary Ann: A wonderful surprise in the training was their embrace of the various family assessment tools used in social work practice. As they worked diligently on their eco-maps for the case study families, we experienced a renewed sense of appreciation, the power of these visual tools in helping to organize historical and environmental information. The eco-maps drawn by the trainees were inordinately rich compared to the first eco-maps drawn by our typical American students. Initially, we have found that our American students have a tendency to somewhat dismiss the eco-map or have some difficulty naming the particular envi-

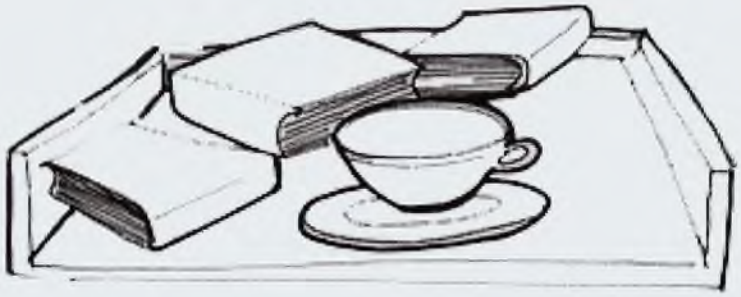
ronmental influences in the clients' lives. This did not seem to be a problem for the Vietnamese who went into great detail in their maps in describing the clients' interaction with their environment. Again we wondered if this difference could be explained by our different orientation to the individual vs. community. We also hypothesized that the different reactions could be related to the Vietnamese lack of exposure to a medical disease model in which the focus becomes the pathology of the individual. Could this lack of exposure lead to their valuing environmental influences as much as or more than individual characteristics of their clients?

Carol: Once the training was underway, we had many informal conversations with the participants. These were particularly helpful in understanding our encounters with Vietnamese people. I was grateful for the chance to talk about the problem my son was having with people touching him wherever he went. After a few days of training, I related the problem to a senior member of the University faculty. She reassured me that people meant no harm and were, in fact, showing welcoming affection to an obviously "foreign" child. As we were talking, I suddenly realized that she was stroking my arm as she spoke. It was one of those memorable moments in which facts and understanding come together—I turned even closer to her and said, 'Like you are touching me now?" We laughed, and she said, "Yes!" We continued our conversation (and the stroking) and moved into a discussion of how the Vietnamese are grappling with how to help children distinguish between "good touching" and "bad touching," in terms of child sexual abuse and exploitation. The personal entry point of helping my family cope with a problem became a window to a whole new dimension of our professional discourse.

Participants' evaluation of the experience.

Robert and Sheila: In ending, we asked each of the students to share with the class what of value they had taken from the experience. Interestingly, one of the most frequent comments we heard was that they had gained a new understanding of teaching as a collaborative, egalitarian endeavor, with teacher and student working together. This instead of a more traditional teacher as superordinate, student as subordinate arrangement. In a sense, they were talking of replicating their experience with us. Rather than functioning as outsider (teacher) and insider (student), they planned to teach as insider with insider. Another frequent comment was that their initial self doubt had changed because of our validation of them as professionals struggling with a myriad of complex social problems.

Perhaps the diminishing of outside-insider barrier was most evident in the final closing.



We thanked the students for their warmth and for their active participation. We then distributed the gifts we had brought them. We were surprised and touched that they reciprocated with gifts to us. Another strikingly clear sign of the shrinking of the barrier then occurred when all of us joined together in a meditative closing ritual. While the class sat quietly with eyes closed and one of us conducted the exercise, we were startled back to alertness by a bright light. One student had abruptly stood and, using a camera with flashbulb, snapped a picture of the class. One of us rushed to him and, after some struggle, confiscated the camera in order to prevent a reoccurrence. The class responded with good natured laughter. Our act and the group's response indicated a bond beyond cultural differences. We then repeated the meditation creating an imaginary silk fabric whose threads con-

sisted of all of the good moments we shared. In ending, each of us removed one of the threads, free to use its positive energy in our own way.

Mary Ann and Carol: On the last day of training, the participants had an opportunity to share their reactions to the training. Hearing from them what had the most impact caused us to take a much closer look at our orientation to teaching and practice that sometimes get taken for granted. For example, they spoke of our initial contracting process in the training and the mutuality it conveyed. They felt like real partners in the training process. They emphasized that this was a very different experience for them. They also commented on our co-teaching. Several of the participants had attended the earlier training with Sheila and Robert and said that initially they were disappointed that we were not "a couple" given their positive experience earlier with Robert and Sheila. However, as the training went on, they said they really began to appreciate how we worked as a team and that they gained so much from observing our checking in with each other, the clear split of responsibility coupled with a certain amount of flexibility in response to participant or trainer need. We felt that the extensive time spent planning for our teamwork, including evaluating our individual strengths and weaknesses, had paid off.

The participants also expressed a real joy and excitement in learning about the various visual tools, such as the genogram, eco-map, and family map (Hartman & Laird, 1983), for creating a mutual understanding of the client's situation ecologically and for developing a multi-level intervention plan. The use of roleplay in learning about individual and group process was also a new way of learning for them that they embraced with much enthusiasm. They felt strongly that they had their own experience validated, and many made comments such as: "In the past I just did it—I never knew it was real social work practice!" These themes were particularly strong in the areas of assessment, engagement, and practice with groups.

At the end of the training we felt very empowered as teachers as a result of their hunger for knowledge and skills and their expressed appreciation for the learning that occurred. We also were left with a sense of awe at what can be accomplished when both student and teacher have the amount of openness, curiosity, and discipline that our Vietnamese trainees demonstrated during our ten days together.

Re-Entry and Reflection

Once we left Vietnam, our "outsider" status gave us a unique vantage point from which to re-enter and reflect on our "insider" experiences here in the United States.

Mary Ann and Carol: The training experience in Vietnam had the overall effect of allowing us to see and understand social work practice through a much wider lens. The effects of one' s sociopolitical context on practice became much clearer. We began to understand more about the struggles our American students have with some of the social work practice concepts in light of this context. For example, the difficulty our students often have in fully integrating the strengths of clients must be understood in relation to our historical ties to the medical model, which presents many obstacles to this integration. Our Vietnamese students do not share this history and, as a result, seemed to have a more natural inclination to look for and work with their clients' strengths. The tendency of our American students to assess and intervene on the individual system level rather than on the family and environmental level may also reflect our more individualistic-oriented, socio-political context. On the other hand, our Vietnamese students demonstrated an ability to much more readily identify environmental strengths and intervention processes. Our willingness to acknowledge the power/authority differential that exists in the helping relationship clearly had a different meaning for our Vietnamese students who live within a socio-political context that is not organized around individuality and does not recognize the exercise of power by one community member over another. We had to look critically at the value that we as American social workers place on confidentiality and self-determination, given our individual rights orientation, and to understand that these concepts had different meanings in the more community-oriented Vietnamese society.

In looking at this experience from a narrative perspective, the Vietnam training resulted in a "restorying" of the meaning of

social work (White & Epston, 1990). The Vietnam training helped to "perform meaning" on those parts of social work practice that tend to get unstoried in a world of private practice, DSM IV diagnoses, and empirically based practice. The critical importance of creating a mutual partnership with clients; the fundamental importance to social practice of an ecological assessment that balances the strengths and limitations of the client's individual, family, and environmental systems; the power of multilevel intervention focused on strengths; the constant need to work on one's self awareness in order to effectively use one's self in practice and to respect client self-determination are concepts that all claimed a more meaningful and legitimate place in our story of social work practice. This restorying process has impacted profoundly on our teaching. As we teach, we feel more in touch with the powerful meaning of these concepts for social work and have thoroughly enjoyed telling this "new story" to our students.

Robert and Sheila: Our experience in Vietnam gave new meaning to and respect for the concept of outsider. The importance of erasing the barrier between outsider/educator and insider/student has been sharpened by this experience in a foreign land. Whatever the content taught, one focus in social work education must be on the process between student and teacher. This entails sensitivity both to the student's special circumstances and to a unique way of using new knowledge. Validating the student's efforts is one significant way of erasing the classroom barrier and collaborating in the exciting process of learning.

Self revelation (i.e., openness about one's own life) is another powerful tool in dissolving barriers. Sharing stories of our own personal family experience was acknowledged by several participants as particularly helpful. They could easily relate our experiences to their own, which in itself reduced barriers. They also noted our sharing often facilitated their discovering solutions to their painful family and work problems. For example, one participant thanked us after a class in which we shared our own personal experience with an aging parent. She spoke of the death of her mother a year earlier and the difficulty of living with her depressed father. After listening to us, she realized he needed some purpose to live. She then created a new role in the family for him which evoked significant improvement. Clearly our sharing our story helped us reach each other across the insider-outsider barrier.

Summation

It is difficult to bring this article to a close—the thoughts and feelings connected with this journey keep coming into consciousness. However, when we step back from the experience and its details, we see that we were able to successfully join the insiders, without losing our outsider status. Five key processes facilitated this effort. First was the importance of tuning in (Schwartz, 1971). Through this process we were able to access our own concerns and worries and then were able to find means to ease and, in some cases, build on them in our relationships with the Vietnamese. Second, we used reframing extensively, especially during our preparation stage. Rather than seeing ourselves as ignorant, we viewed ourselves as learners, thus reducing our burden of responsibility and encouraging us to seek ways to involve the participants in guiding the training process. Third, we immediately set a standard of working from the experiences of the Vietnamese participants. We rarely used case material from the United States, and when we did so, it was only to highlight differences that would lead to greater understanding. Fourth, we practiced openness, modeling the appropriate sharing of personal matters that reflected universal themes such as parenting, marriage, and collegial support. Fifth, we demonstrated an egalitarian approach in regard to our co-trainer and trainees. Our view of participants as collaborators enriched all of our experiences and made it possible for us to learn a great deal from the Vietnamese, thereby enriching our work back at home.

Thus, the frame of "insider" and "outsider" served us throughout the project. Of course, we were very privileged "outsiders." However, we learned that these terms are not as cut and dried as one might think. For example, with the faculty of Open University, we were members of the same social work education community. On the other hand, are we not "outsiders" as we enter the realm of students in the classroom here in the United States? Rather than seeing it as

a problem, we embraced the "outsider" label and acknowledged how much it brought us, including the right to be curious, to make mistakes, and to learn more than we had ever thought possible. We discovered that the insider-outsider relationship does not have to be frozen but can empower students and teachers to learn from each other and to benefit from a fluid enlarging of each other's worlds and perspectives.

□

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Like Oil in Water: Exploring the Narratives of an Undocumented Worker

Every year millions of immigrants come to the United States with a dream of making their lives better. Many of them face ever changing immigration laws and institutional discrimination. Like oil in water, the undocumented worker lives within the confines of society but is not mixed into the community. This narrative examines the life of one such individual, highlighting challenges many undocumented workers encounter. She is a young woman with hopes of improving herself and her quality of life, while finding herself categorized and restricted within the status of undocumented worker, without opportunity, freedom, or membership in the community. Her narrative informs and challenges practitioners, policymakers, and researchers.

by
Rachel Pitt
and
Flavio Francisco Marsiglia

Rachel Pitt and Flavio Francisco Marsiglia, Ph.D., are with the School of Social Work - College of Public Programs, Arizona State University

The general public's attitudes towards immigration are treated as the Greek Chorus speaking to the undocumented workers as their real life tragedy unfolds. Changing immigration laws (Padilla, 1997) have increased the challenges faced by documented and undocumented immigrants. This article explores the immigration experience as narrated by a young, undocumented immigrant woman. Within the interview, different layers of an undocumented worker's life unfold, exposing the oppression and limitations that are part of her daily existence.

The Journey

Bienvenido a los Estados Unidos de America [Welcome to the United States of America] is the title of the (1996) pamphlet given to non-citizens entering the U.S. The inviting words give the impression of open arms, a warm smile, and a friendly atmosphere. "We welcome you to the United States and we wish that your entrance into the country is easy and without inconveniences." These welcoming words printed by the Immigration and Naturalization Service, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the U.S. Customs Office often contradict reality seen within individual lives.

Despite the economic opportunities the U.S. provides, many immigrants struggle to succeed or adequately survive. Discrimination, racism, economic factors, and other obstacles taint the opportunities given to immigrants. While these difficulties exist, many individuals continue immigrating, surviving, and at times prospering. Hopes and dreams for a better future remain as part of immigrants' stories despite the hostile environment many of them face in this country.

Listening to one story

This article presents personal meanings behind the current depersonalized immigration experience. This journey into the life of an undocumented immigrant worker elicits information, insights, and meaning from a usually silenced voice.

As a student and the instructor of a graduate social work diversity course, the authors arrived at the conclusion that the narratives of undocumented workers were missing from the course readings. Class was held very close to the Mexico-U.S. border, but the voices of immigrants were distant. Those who make daily attempts to cross the border, succeeding or failing, were not represented in the class material. The informant was chosen since she was a casual acquaintance with one of the authors; thus a comfort level was previously established. She was enthusiastic and inclined to share her insider's perspective of the immigration ordeal. When asked, her response was of surprise in that her story was recognizable and important enough to be documented and substantiated. Her willingness and interest inspired the dialogue to occur.

Specifically, the goal of the interview was to uncover personal meanings behind the expert informant's immigration experience. The informant was a 30-year-old South American female. She emigrated from her country of origin to Mexico in 1987. Her journey into the U.S. began in 1992. She has lived in a large city in Texas in the home of her employer since her immigration. She has not been able to obtain documentation to authorize residency in the U.S. Despite these obstacles, she remains optimistic to the outside eye. Inside, frustration colors her reality. For purposes of this article she will be referred to as María Lopez, a pseudonym she chose.

María's Narrative

It was a Saturday evening. Driving to meet María, one could see magnificent mansion-like homes, majestic yards, and beautiful cars parked in colossal driveways. The home in which María worked and lived was no exception. Shimmering windows from castle-like homes lighted the dark night and led the interviewer to María. Her employers were out for the evening, leaving the large home available for intimate discussions and private dialogues. The only other individuals present in the home were sleeping children in their upstairs bedrooms. The interview took place while the participants drank tea in the spacious kitchen. The enormous house was filled with the chilly air of a winter night. María was wearing a casual outfit of jeans and a sweater. She was an attractive, petite woman with modest jewelry adorning her ears, hands, and neck. Her demeanor was calm and welcoming that evening as she spoke softly, yet purposefully. The house remained quiet while we discussed sensitive details of María's life.

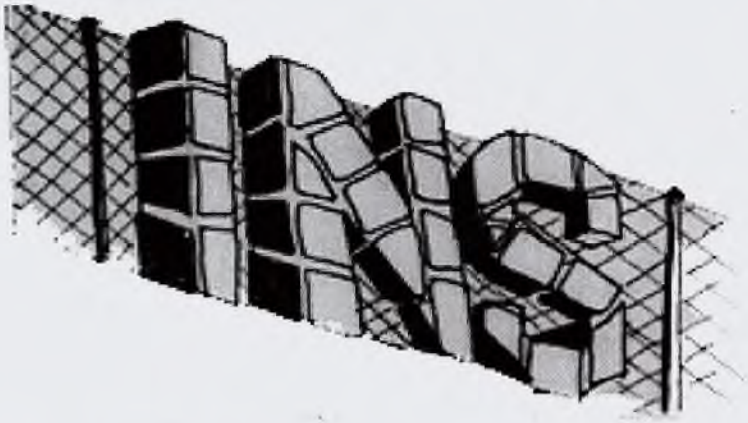
Why did María, like millions of other immigrants, resettle in the U.S.? María shared her perspective: *"I think it is the same reason everybody comes [to the U.S.]: To make money and go back to your country. But I don't think that ever happens because you are here and start making money and get used to making money and living that kind of life."*

María was less than two years from finishing dentistry school in Mexico, a profession practiced by both her father and brother in her country of origin. Her parents were helping support her while she attended a university in Mexico until financial troubles struck the family. Her parents were no longer able to offer monetary support. *"I thought that since I am close to America, I said that I will go and make some money, then go back to Mexico to finish my school. That never happened!"* María recounts her reason for coming to the U.S. with humor, but disappointment tinges her voice.

María entered the country with a tourist visa. It entitled her to reside in the U.S. for a limited time until, she thought, it would be possible to obtain a work visa. *"I thought I would stay here maybe a year."* Five years later, María sits at the kitchen table of her employer's house reporting that *"[the visa] expired and I became illegal."*

Hers is just one of many scenarios that describe how people immigrate into the U.S., only to be caught in the legal battle for citizenship rights. After

the time limits of her restrictive visa expired, the immigration laws were in effect. People establish lives in the U.S. but without documentation permitting them to remain in the country, leaving them with the option of remaining part of the undocumented "illegal" community. They face overwhelming barriers and frustrating limitations. People become trapped, unable to free themselves of monumental obstacles encountered in the U.S.



La Pared **[The Walls]**

The INS presents bureaucratic walls difficult to climb. Barriers such as language skills, lack of work experience, lack of proper documentation, lack of resources, and absent family support systems also create problems. They help structure glass walls that keep immigrants from prospering.

Lack of employment is a pressing issue for many immigrants. As noted earlier, many individuals enter the country with visas that do not permit legal employment or extended residency. Thus, one might question how immigrants obtain employment without proper documentation. María reports: *"There are many ways. You can buy fake papers on the street, you can pick a social security number, or some people [employers] don't care because they don't have to report you on income taxes so they would rather hire someone cheap."*

Agencies, like the employment agency María used, apparently are less concerned with legal status of an employee and more focused on earning commissions. Finding placements for workers may grant agencies approximately $600 to $800 for each person employed through them. María needed employment. *"I did not have experience with any type of job. So, the easy job to look for was as a nanny."* Not speaking English, without work experience, and without proper documentation for employment, María's options were limited. *"...Being single and being by myself, it is more easy to have this kind of job because I don't have to pay rent. You can save some money!"* This scenario describes many in this country.

How do immigrant individuals obtain "status" for employment and residency in the United States? Employment choices are limited. People do what is necessary for survival. María tells how she might gain legal status in this country: *"Getting married to an American citizen. You pay money. You marry someone who will allow a fake marriage with you and live with you if necessary. You pay $3,000 or $4,000 dollars."* This option is a reality for many undocumented immigrants wanting authorized documentation. *"That is the only way now. There is no other way."*

Feelings of powerlessness tainted her thoughts. Her words hinted at an optimistic viewpoint, but her reality was painted with pessimism and despair, replacing her once optimistic dream. While María floats along the rim of society, she is left without a strong sense of community or belonging. Her words expressed a dichotomous perception of herself: as a woman and as an undocumented immigrant. The adjective "undocumented" obscures the hopes and the dreams of the woman.

Soy una persona tambien **[I'm a person too]**

Experiences have shaped María's view of the U.S. She has experienced an ambivalent acceptance within U.S. culture. The precarious status of the undocumented worker leaves her and many other immigrants with the bitter taste of racism. Glances, cruel labels, questions, and comments create a community filled with pain for many immigrant individuals.

In the U.S. it is not uncommon to hear the term "illegal

alien." This label is used to describe an individual who does not possess the required documentation to reside in this country. "Illegal alien" is a reference that reaches beyond legal terminology, implying that immigrants are foreigners in a profound sense. María explained her perspective of the term. "I feel like I am from another planet!" Her eyebrows are raised. A look of amazement crosses her face. María fully understands the implications behind the label "illegal alien." "Undocumented" is the term María uses to describe herself and others in similar situations, as it is a term that refers to legal status and not to issues of worth.

Discrimination places limitations on fulfilling one's potential. Barriers are created which limit success. María illustrates this relationship based on her own experience at school:

"I remember the first time I went to school, I felt sad because the first thing they asked me was if I was legal. I said that I don't have my papers but I would love to go to school. I am going to pay! They did not want me in the school. They said the only option was to get continuing education, which doesn't count if you want to have a career. That was a kind of discrimination because of being undocumented and not having the social security card."

María knows discrimination. *"White people don't trust us [Latinos]. If you are Latin it is hard for them to trust you. I can see that, I know."* María describes the ignorance seen in the attitudes of many people: *"they believe Latinos [in the U.S.] are uneducated, ignorant, and all [Latinos] do is work their whole lives."* María tells of a movie, *A Walk In The Clouds*, the epic story of a Latino family. She explains her own thoughts by reenacting her favorite part: *"...'Because I speak with an accent does not mean I think with an accent, too.' I feel that way. Because I don't speak your language, doesn't mean that I am stupid. I love that line!"* Hurt rests in her eyes.

She proved her academic achievement in Mexico, but no one recognizes her past achievements or grants her the opportunity to create her future. In the eyes of the host society, María's most important attribute is her label as an "illegal alien." Her individuality is ignored. María pays taxes, money she will never see since her social security card is a counterfeit. María is unfairly isolated from true membership into the community.

***Me siento sola* [I feel alone]**

María accompanies these painful obstacles with fear. Fear leads many undocumented immigrant workers into isolation. These individuals may find themselves floating along the edge of society, not fully able to participate in the community. María recounts her first months in this country when she began English classes. She recalls: *"I was afraid that Immigration would come to the school while I was in class. I was scared that they would put me in a van and take me to jail."* She is more aware of the laws now that she has mastered English, something María reports many immigrants have trouble accomplishing.

María's fears are persistent. She tells of her uneasiness in public places, particularly the airport. When asked what she might do if an INS official approached her, María shrugs her shoulders and says: *"I think they know if you are nervous. Sometimes the way you act or look has a lot to do with it. The way you dress, I don't know."* The image of oil floating in water comes to mind. María makes her life in a community where she is not permitted to mix.

She does not feel at home in the U.S.; she feels alone outside her native country, people, language, and culture. "I *feel like I am in a jail, a nice jail, but it is a jail!...because I cannot do some things, go anywhere out of the country, I can't! You have to live with limitations. I try to be realistic and I know I don't have many choices. I cannot go back to my country and start a life over there.*

She offers a voice that relays sentiments not usually heard. *"Sometimes I am very, very lonely, especially during Christmas and*

all those festivities." One might question why she simply does not return to her native country. María speaks of this issue: *"My expectations are different now that I am living in another country. The problem is that I think different from them [those of her native country]. I don't fit in there and I don't fit in here. I don't know where I am going to fit!"*

Uneasy laughter hides her pain. Her isolation is apparent. She is without her family, her country, her language, and her culture. She drifts throughout the community without experiencing the comforts and opportunities of others.

***Mi sueño* [My dream]**

The American dream (*el sueño Americano*) has a special place in American and universal mythology. Life is thought to be better in the U.S. This country has been idealized as the pinnacle of places in which to live and work, as it is supposed to be the land of opportunity. Yet, prosperity is capped for many undocumented immigrants.

María reports that her scenario is not uncommon. She tells of immigrants coming to this country from their homelands with hope. It begins with an optimistic dream, but at times the dream remains in their native country as a relic of hope. This reality leaves individuals with an isolated existence in the host country. María elaborates on this point: *"I think when young people come to this country, they come because they want to make their life different with a dream and sometimes that is possible...but, you have to deal with [the fact] that you're illegal. And that is not the worst part. The worst part is that you don't speak the language and of course some people learn that language and want to keep going and get better jobs. Some of them have education, others don't. You want to be different. You want to help this country. You want to be part of this country, but it is almost impossible now. The dream is gone."*

The oppressive reality is dried-up dreams about education, work, and opportunities. For many undocumented workers, the dream they brought into the U.S. has faded or has been washed away. New immigration laws have made entrance into the U.S. highly selective. Establishment of residency is a nearly impossible task. Like many people without legal documentation, María waits to see what will happen with changing immigration laws. María, like many, must remain stagnant until changes in her immigration status occur. Hopes and aspirations survive in the imagination.

What is María's future? *"I am going to stay here and many people are going to take the same position. I don't think they're going back to their countries. What are they going to do in their countries? They have a life here."*

***Mensaje de María* [María's message]**

María was asked to explain what is important to her and what she would like the public to understand. Her image is that of a spokesperson, a dignified and insightful commentator. María pauses. Silence fills with her thoughts. María's message speaks to all who might listen.

"I will ask them to give us the opportunity to demonstrate that we can make this country better. We can contribute to make it better. Because, like me, there are a lot of people who want to get an education. And if I get an education I am going to work and I am going to work in this country. There are a lot of people who didn't come to this country looking for someone to support them or someone to resolve their problems. Just give us the opportunity. There are a lot of people who want to do the right things here. Sometimes I think it was a mistake [to come here] but I can't go back and start all over again. I have faith that something is going to happen to change my situation and everyone's situation. And I hope it is soon."

This is María's story. She recounts her situation, her life, her "alien" label, and her future. *"It is real. It is how my life is."* María ends the conversation with words spoken in her native language:

"Yo creo que a pesar de todas las cosas tan dificiles que he tenido que pasar en éste país, hay cosas que me han hecho conocer, cosas tan diferentes. !Y que bueno que estoy aquí, a pesar de las circunstancias! [I think in spite of all the very difficult things that have happened to me in this country, there are things that I have been able to learn, different things. And how great that I am here, in spite of all of the circumstances!]"

Strength and optimism fill her voice and empower her words. María exudes an inner depth from which insight, hope,

and motivation flow. Her words are those that the larger society does not want to hear. The individual person is often forgotten in the text of laws, words of the media, and attitudes of the general public.

As we conclude this article, María's situation remains unchanged. She has not been able to enroll in college or pursue any of her other dreams. She remains a nanny in a glass castle. Her days are spent in a beautiful home that keeps her safe from the outside world while keeping her from fulfilling her dreams.

Conclusion

Immigration into the U.S. is an international issue that needs to be revisited. Unauthorized immigration is a daily phenomenon with mass numbers of individuals searching to improve their lives. The stereotype of immigrants looking to abuse resources in this country in hopes of solving their problems is a far cry from María's experience. Such prejudiced attitudes have helped create discriminatory laws. As a result, masses of undocumented workers float like oil in water without a chance of participating fully in society.

Many individuals are in dire straits, trapped in the "land of opportunity," powerless, with their hands tied behind their back. Understanding the current laws and regulations concerning immigration is of utmost importance for social workers serving the immigrant community. María's situation raised ethical dilemmas in the minds of the authors. What is our role? Should we be active advocates or silent witnesses? María's case helped us to remember the unique individual hidden underneath the alien label. Keeping voices like María's silenced only contributes to an already macro-level problem.

This narrative offers an insider's perspective of the experiences of an undocumented worker. Employment is limited due to lack of proper documentation. Immigrants experience discrimination, frustration, fear, and isolation. Such challenges and limitations often leave the American Dream unfulfilled. Governmental restrictions, institutional discrimination, and substantial challenges dampen the once promising fulfillment of a dream. As seen in María, many immigrants have capabilities to make great contributions to this country, if only the opportunities were in reach.

Like the great majority of the inhabitants of this nation, we the authors, are the product of the immigration experience of our ancestors or of our own immigration experience. Maria's story made us question our personal and professional stand toward immigration. Personally, we agreed on the artificiality of national borders. The saying "we have not been crossing the border, the border has been crossing us for the last two centuries" often used by members of Chicano families in the Southwest, captures the complexity of the immigration experience in the borderlands. Professionally, Maria's story made us rethink about our ethical responsibilities toward the client in front of us. The person without labels or adjectives that may justify rejection or passivity in our minds. At the same time we know that we need to work within the frameworks that the law of the land presents. Contradictions may emerge between our professional ethical duty and certain radical anti-immigration laws. As with many other dilemmas we face in our daily professional practice, we have no simple recipes to resolve the problem at hand, just the ability to examine and assess case by case and decide on the right course of action. María and many other immigrants like María may depend on that resolution to enhance their quality of life.

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A Journey to a Small Planet

In this essay, the author recounts how international experiences helped to shape his view of the world and his professional career. Beginning with military service in Europe, his awareness that this is a small planet expanded out of Peace Corps service in Central America and, later, opportunities to develop scholarship in Gandhian thought in India. For thirty-five years, the author annually directed travel study seminars for social work students in different parts of the world.

by
Thomas H. Walz

Thomas H. Walz, Professor Emeritus of Social Work, University of Iowa, School of Social Work, Iowa City, Iowa.

A Journey to a Small Planet

When I was a child growing up in an abandoned mining village in Northern Minnesota, the world seemed immense and mysterious. Never in my wildest imagination did I anticipate becoming a world traveler or even a local adventurer. Oh yes, Dr. Doolittle stories could trigger fantasies about Africa, as could Tarzan movies. Likewise, Father Damien and his leper colony on Molokai appealed to my hidden missionary impulse as a Catholic school-age boy. But the reality was that I remained pretty much confined to one spot throughout my growing up years. By graduation from college, the farthest I had traveled from home was just one hundred miles. Florida spring breaks and vacations were part of neither my social class nor my family culture.

How then was it possible that experiences in faraway places would become the genesis of my philosophy of life and the primary influence on my career as a social worker? As a social work educator, why for thirty-five straight years would I proceed to take students overseas? Perhaps some of the experiences I am about to relate will provide an answer.

After graduation from a small Benedictine College near my home, I took a job at the local Montgomery Ward's store. This was during the last year of the Korean War, a war which was somewhat of an obscurity to most people my age. Yet, when I was drafted into the army I welcomed the escape.

By fall of the year of my graduation, I was on a bus to Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, the site of our boot camp. The twelve weeks spent at boot camp (the second half in Camp Chafee, Arkansas) found me a reluctant student of military discipline and skills. It wasn't until after I left our debarkation post, Fort Ord, on a troop ship to Germany that overseas events would begin to influence my life.

On arrival at the port of Bremerhaven, we transferred to a troop train. I had been assigned to the 775th Field Artillery Battalion stationed in Swabish Hall. Our Battalion was located in a former Luftwaffe base. Bavaria, an 800-year-old city, was nestled

in a pastoral setting in the north. Soft rolling hills and verdant valleys interwoven with small farming villages surrounded our city. Coincidently, less than 35 miles away in another Bavarian town, Swabish Gmund, my great grandparents had been peasant farmers.

My initial response to this first trip overseas was somewhat subdued. Yet I enjoyed the experience because I was challenged by the personalities with whom I was forced to live and others with whom I had chosen to share time. Lisa, my soon-to-be wife, was one of them. She was a special services worker for the US Army whom I met shortly after she had been transferred to Swabish Hall from Munich. Her compassionate nature and love of travel convinced me that she would be a perfect companion. Her constant

support and sense of adventure had much to do with my future international endeavors.

Lisa and I returned to St. Louis, Missouri, after our respective tours of duty, I to attend graduate school in social work on the GI Bill, she to take a social work job with the Red Cross. Within a year we were married and within two we were parents. The babies kept coming, four in the next five years. The youngest would spend most of her first two years in Honduras, Central America.

We moved back to Minneapolis in 1961, where I directed an aftercare program for newly discharged mental hospital patients. After several years of getting this program established, I was admitted to the doctoral program in social work at the University of Minnesota. Shortly after completing my doctoral course work, I received an invitation to apply for the position of Peace Corps director in Honduras.

I eventually got the Peace Corps job in Honduras, but how and why remains a bit of mystery. Part of the explanation was probably that I had completed my M.S.W. at St. Louis University. As it turned out, St. Louis University was under contract by the Peace Corps to train and administer the first Peace Corps group for Honduras. As a Jesuit university, St. Louis University belonged to a Jesuit Province that supplied priests to the missions in northern Honduras and Belize.

The fact that the initial Honduras Peace Corps group was to consist of thirty public health nurses and community social workers also was a factor in my favor. My having an M.S.W. and having completed doctoral work in social work with a public health minor apparently fit the credentials the University was looking for in a director.

Apart from these academic credentials, there were few reasons why I should have been selected for the Peace Corps position. I couldn't speak Spanish with any fluency, I had never been south of the border, and I didn't know Honduras from Tartarstan or Reugania. Being just 29 years old, I was younger than half of my first Peace Corps group. Yet, for whatever reasons, Sargent Shriver, Director of the Peace Corps and the brother-in-law to President John Kennedy, gave me the final thumbs up on the job. I was elated. My wife was a little less excited about the idea, with three small babies and another about to be born.

Awakening in Honduras

By late summer of 1962, I had settled into my new offices in Honduras. Much to my surprise, my office was located next to the Honduran president's wife's office in the Casa Presidential (the Honduran White House). It is common in Latin nations that the wives of the heads of state often lead their government's social welfare program. Dona Alejandrina, wife of Dr. Ramon Villeda Morales, administered the Bienestar Social, a government social welfare organization to which at least half of our volunteers would be assigned.

It would be an understatement to say that my Peace Corps experience contributed only to my philosophy of life and subsequent career in social work. This international experience would chart the course for the remainder of my career. It assured that I would "think globally" as a social worker - something that would be reinforced by my scholarship on Gandhian thought.

Honduras, at the time of my arrival, was a typical underde-

veloped nation. This Central American state was locked in a tight race with Bolivia as the poorest nation in the southern hemisphere. Honduras had borne the brunt of over 100 revolutions in its last 125 years. Another revolution would occur a year after my arrival. Since the 17th century, Honduras had been a colonial holding that bounced between English and Spanish "ownership."

Honduras, in 1962, was still a walk through the Middle Ages. Modernization had yet to show its face. There were but a hundred miles of paved road in the country, only one working stop light, and no lights on any of its airstrips. Its national airlines,

SAHSA, stood for "stay at home stay alive" according to members of my Peace Corps group. Eighty-five percent of Hondura's population at the time was illiterate.

Despite its poverty and level of development, I fell in love with Honduras. It lacked the manicured, strip mall, commodity-driven ambience I had left and which I detested. In front of me were rugged mountains, untamed jungle, and what seemed like thousands of rivers without bridges. I wore out a new four-wheel-drive jeep in less than a year. With every bounce on those washed-out mountain roads I was filled with a sense of being alive. The sights and smells of the wildness were overwhelming. There was no falling asleep on a Honduran road, since often the loosely laid wooden bridges across Honduras's many rivers were missing. They were stolen for firewood.

When my Peace Corps contract ended, I was disinclined to leave. It was only in the interests of the greater good of my family that I reluctantly returned to Minnesota, my home state. I had a dissertation to complete, so I accepted a position with the University of Minnesota School of Social Work to make this task easier.

What exactly had I learned from my Peace Corps experience? My position as director had been to organize thirty volunteers scattered around the country. The group would grow to 150 by the time of my departure. My job was to support them in their assignment to build a network of public health clinics throughout the rural areas and barrio social work centers in the urban slums around the capital city of Tegucigalpa and the major cities on the North Coast. Later, when the community development volunteers arrived, we would penetrate even the more rural communities.

Traveling throughout Honduras aligned with the volunteers, I was introduced to the world of 20th century colonialism and given a lesson in its history and effect. Colonialism in Honduras was evident by the eco-

nomic interests and behaviors of the New Orleans-based and American-owned United and Standard Fruit Companies. Honduras had been made into a leading supplier of banana and coconut oil throughout the world. Prior to this exploitation, other predatory groups from the United States and elsewhere had stripped Honduras of gold, silver, and precious woods. More recently, the Japanese commercially exploited the fishing waters off the North Coast, while American agribusiness interests bought thousands of acres for cotton plantations in the south.

The dynamics of the situation appeared to me to be no different from 19th century colonialism. Governments were bought off and a middle class was helped into existence to serve the colonial culture, while the bulk of the population was left to witness the outflow of the limited wealth of their poor country.

The lesson I learned about capitalism at the international level was that it lacked any com-

mitment to justice and equity. It was violent and exploitive. Politically, I found myself pushed left. The popularized Marxist alternative, Stalin style, however, struck me as an equally brutish political economic system, exploitive in its own way. In fairness, I listened to the rationalizations of the global economic "developers," who argued that they were doing no more than helping to modernize the back wards of the world. Many in the international business community saw themselves as commercial missionaries, uplifting indigenous peoples and democratizing their societies.

Having been through a bloody coup in Honduras, I understood confrontations and acts of violence in the America to which I returned. This understanding would permit me to play an influential role within the University of Minnesota, as institutions of higher education tried to cope with militant change. By its own choice the School of Social Work where I was employed was more or less outside the loop of this social action. The philosophy of the School's Administration at the time was that activism was unprofessional.

Despite the challenges of the Sixties at home, I missed Honduras. I began looking for a way to give to others in America the perspective I had gained in Honduras. When I reflected on how meaningful the Peace Corps experience had been for the volunteers, I decided that getting students overseas, especially into the third world, would be one of my missions as a Social Work educator. For the next thirty-five years, I annually conducted travel-study seminars to Honduras/ Guatemala, shifting the seminar to Mexico in recent years. On each of these trips something new was learned. My eyes were always kept fresh from the insights of the students. On my very first travel study seminar to Honduras there was an eighteen-year-old sophomore by the name of Tom Gjelten, now a noted foreign correspondent for National Public Radio.

As some of the heaviest social action of the Sixties subsided, so did the opportunities for community social work. The macro side of social work seemed to be collapsing as society turned conservative. I feared that social work education would follow suit. In many ways it did. The profession swung back to clinical social work, often in private practice settings. In 1973, I was presented with the opportunity to apply for the directorship of the University of Iowa School of Social Work. I believed I could best challenge the conservative drift as an educator, especially if I were the director of a School. By August of that year I was on the job.

As Director of a School, I was now in a position to work with other internationalists in Social Work Education to promote internationalism and social development within the curriculum. Under the leadership of Jack Jones, a former student but now head of a School himself, a group formed and founded the Inter-University Consortium on International Social Development. I was fortunate to be a founding member of this group. The following year we started a new journal at Iowa with an international and third world slant, the *Social Development Issues* journal. My goal was to help make our School and its curriculum become globally focused.

The Gandhian Connection

Networking with other internationalists produced many new friendships and led to some special opportunities. One chance happening that would impact my future came in 1978, my final year as Director of the School. It came through a call from Terry Hokenstad, then Dean of Social Work at Case Western Reserve. Terry wanted to know if I could host one of his visiting faculty members from India. I agreed. The man who showed up at the airport was an Indian social work educator by the name of Sugata Dasgupta. Dasgupta, prior to his exile by Indira Gandhi, was founder/director of the Jayaprakesh Institute of Social Change in Calcutta. The Institute was essentially a training program for social workers.

Dasgupta, a man in his late fifties, was stoutly built and frumpily dressed. Most noticeable, however, was his gentleness of spirit and broad smile. One sensed immediately that this was a man of peace. I brought him to my house where he stayed for a week, joining me at work and speaking to different groups on his special topic: the "No Poverty Society" theory. The more I listened to his ideas and got to know him, the more I was drawn to his theory. His basic thesis was that contemporary economic development was essentially a form of neo-colonialism, in which the West got richer and the poor of India (and other third world nations) got poorer.

By the end of Dasgupta's visit we had agreed to co-host an international seminar for social work faculty on the topic of the No Poverty Society. We intended to hold it the following summer at our school's new Social Development Institute in Patzcuaro, Mexico. Throughout the remainder of the year we kept in correspondence. Dasgupta had gone from Case Western Reserve to Australia, where he was popular among the social work community. Still in exile, he was unable to return to India.

Late in the year of 1978, I received a call from Dasgupta's son. He informed me that his father had had a massive heart attack in Australia and died. I was shocked at the news. My shock was even greater when his son informed me I had been named in his father's last will and testament. Dasgupta had left me his writings with a request that "I help to dispose of them." At the moment I had no idea what this meant. Nonetheless, I accepted his gift and arranged to go to Calcutta to receive his writings.

Having resigned as the school's director in fall of 1978, I had some open time before I was to begin a new assignment in the College of Medicine. In the company of a graduate student volunteer, I traveled to Calcutta with the intent of staying several months. In Calcutta I met with Dasgupta's widow and his daughter. They had organized the materials that Dasgupta had left for me. Mrs. Dasgupta explained that it was her husband's wish that I circulate his idea of the No Poverty Society in the United States. She also informed me that I could remain in India for as long as I liked to work on her husband's writings. Arrangements had been made for me to stay at the Gujurat Vidyapith, a small university founded by Gandhi in the city of Ahmenabad.

My student and I went to Ahmenabad where we stayed for nearly three months. I would daily read and edit Dasgupta's writings and she would do library research in the marvelous Gandhi archive located at the University. In between we would join the students and faculty for their daily prayer and meditation session and participate in various faculty and college activities. It was then that I discovered Dasgupta's background as a Gandhian. For sixteen years he had headed the Gandhian Institute of Social Sciences in Banares. Meanwhile, my student was sharing her research on Gandhi. Most evenings we spent discussing Gandhian ideas and carving out an article we wanted to jointly write. We would eventually publish an article on a non-violent approach to management that would be published in *Gandhi Marg*, the official journal of the Gandhi Foundation. I would also go on to write a series of articles in various North American journals under Dasgupta's name.

This scholarship activity would leave its mark. I discovered Dasgupta to be an insightful critic of post-industrial colonialism, while I found Gandhi to be the source of this insight. Dasgupta served as my doorway to Gandhi, and Gandhi my doorway to reconstructing my views about life and visions about the future.

Gandhi was a definite radical in his criticism of western economic development. He decried its material emphasis and the violence that accompanied it. To Gandhi, economics was ethics and should be a means to a spiritual life, not its substitute. Gandhi felt that one of the most important roles of the economy was to provide the opportunity for meaningful work. Such work he felt contributed to the development of self. I was especially impressed by Gandhi's theory of material simplicity and his arguments about how it promoted non-violence. Gandhi's stance on spiritual self development through service to others and the promotion of social justice was reminiscent to me of the language of social work. This unplanned connection to Gandhian thought would form the basis for much of my scholarship over the coming years.

The deeper my scholarship on Gandhian thought grew, the richer I felt his concepts to be. A subsequent trip to India three years later contributed to this enrichment in unexpected ways. This second trip I made to India came at the invitation of a group that sponsored an annual memorial lecture in Dasgupta's name. I was the invited speaker for the third annual event. Traveling with me was a faculty colleague and three students. Earlier, I had been at meetings in Finland with a research team of North Americans, Japanese, and Scandanavians. Our purpose was to explore the relationship of culture and ethics within our respective welfare systems.

From Gandhi to Mother Theresa

The day following my lec-

ture in Calcutta, my colleague, Professor Eleanor Anstey, suggested that we visit the Mother House of Mother Theresa. That morning we took leave of our musty lodgings in the Hotel Bliss (quite misnamed) and by trolley went into the downtown area. After several inquiries we managed to head in the direction of Mother Theresa's quarters. En route we had a strange experience. Before us on a busy street in a somewhat rundown area of the central city lay a naked woman. She lay on her back, frothing slightly at the mouth, while the sun beat brutally down on her body. The woman appeared to be alive, but in some sort of stupor. The locals were walking around her as if oblivious to her presence. My colleague and I hesitated and wondered what we should do. After a quick skirmish with our consciences, we decided to follow the guidance of the locals. We walked on by, as the song goes.

Not more than three blocks further, we spotted our destination. There stood a three- story, wood-framed, neatly trimmed building. Painted in blue and white, the same color as the habits of the Sisters of Mercy, the Mother House rested in marked contrast to the industrial buildings that surrounded it. After ringing the doorbell, a young English speaking novice invited us to come in. We explained the purpose of our visit. The young woman replied that she was uncertain whether Mother Theresa was in, but that we were welcome, in any case, to acquaint ourselves with the building. She suggested we might like to join the novitiates in morning prayer in the chapel.

Eleanor and I explored a bit, then joined the young women in the chapel. As we knelt, my colleague nudged me and excitedly stammered, "There is Mother Theresa!" As I turned my head and spotted her, she noticed us. Although involved in a conversation with a young man, she managed to signal to us to wait for her. A few minutes later we were paying rapt attention to Mother Theresa's discussion of the work of her order and the unmet needs of the mission.

I was shocked to find Mother Theresa to be such a small woman. She could not have been much more than 5 foot and a few inches tall. Despite the short frame, she had the sturdiness of build of a peasant woman accustomed to hard work. I could more easily picture her harvesting grain in a field than serving as the CEO of a large social and health services network around the world. Her eyes were penetrating and determined. Her countenance soft. In my world travels, I would discover again and again that same gentle look among the Sisters of Mercy.

As our conversation with Mother Theresa drew to a close, we presented her with our moral dilemma. What should we have done with the woman lying in the street. Without drawing a breath, she said emphatically, "You would take her into your arms and bring her here." Then she asked us where we had seen the woman, and, as soon as we replied, she ordered two of the novices to go pick her up. We spoke to her of our reasoning, our uncertainty about local customs. She smiled, and without apology stated, " I follow the culture of Christ and the principle of love thy neighbor." She then added with some humil-

ity, "We are such simple women, we need a simple guide-post for our lives--the love of God and those in need. We use our heart, not our head, in making these decisions."

This would not be the only occasion when I would be given lessons on life by the Sisters of Mercy. Seven years ago I had organized a very special travel seminar to Honduras. I called this my "thirty year retrospective" trip and invited several persons who had been on that very first study seminar to return with me and review the changes we had noted. Included in this group were several social work educators and the travel editor of the *Minneapolis Star and Tribune*.

It was on this visit that I became aware of a serious outbreak of AIDS on the North Coast of Honduras. One of the more devastated communities was the Garifuna village of San Juan de Tela, a village that we always had visited on these seminars. The members of the original group could not believe the changes that had occurred in the village, the AIDS outbreak notwithstanding. On our first acquaintance, San Juan appeared to be an ideal community. The men were subsistence fishermen, the women gardeners and caretakers of the children. They lived in traditional thatched roofed huts near the beaches of the Caribbean. They played soccer, had their own dance band, danced meringue, and ate lightly. They were tall and handsome, both the men and the women. Overall they seemed considerably healthier than the mestizo Honduran.

In talking with friends and family in the village (my wife and I had helped raise for a few years one of the children from the village), we were told their story of colonial exploitation. The men had been forced to abandon fishing because they couldn't compete in their dugout canoes with the commercial Japanese trawlers. In pursuit of survival, they worked on the nearby banana plantations cutting bananas. When machine technology replaced the hand cutting, they accepted positions as sailors on the banana boats. In taking to the sea, they left their families for nearly a year at a time. The community behind them adjusted to living with their fathers absent. Sexual patterns for both men and women changed as well.

Within a few years, the banana boats became obsolete and were replaced by quicker and cheaper air transport. The Garifuna sailors were cut loose once again. But now the village was no longer home to them. It offered no alternative livelihood. So they took their cosmopolitanism (knowledge of the world, language competencies) and pursued their futures in the United States and Europe. Most left their families behind. They fulfilled their responsibilities by sending checks to partially abandoned wives, children, and elderly relatives. In thirty years, the village had transformed from a subsistence fishing village to a ghostly remittance-economy village. The checks were used to buy drugs as well as food. Sexual relations involved multiple partners, given the scarcity of men. Once the AIDS virus entered the village, it spread rapidly because of the altered sexual patterns.

In the nearby city of San Pedro we discovered that the newest social welfare services were three hospices, all directed towards serving dying AIDS patients. One of these was run by the Sisters of Mercy. The Mother Superior, a young Costa Rican, showed us her facility. By Honduran standards it was a showplace. Once again I was impressed with the compassionate attitudes of these women of Mercy. What incredible social workers they were.

Recently I returned to Honduras to assist a student in a research project on AIDS. Together we revisited both the Garifuna village and the hospice. In the village, I found yet another chapter had been added to the tragic decline of the village. A five-hundred-bed resort hotel was being built by Japanese investors on their pristine beach. Drug trade and prostitution were already pandering to the vacationers. The AIDS epidemic in the village continued, unabated. A once spirited community was literally dying a not-so-slow death.

On our return to the Sisters of Mercy hospice for AIDS patients in San Pedro Sula, we were greeted by a new Mother Superior. The new Sister in charge was a spirited young woman from Italy, Sister Anna. Her eyes, face, and gentle smile combined to exude that look of spiritual health and unity, which seemed to characterize most of the Mother Theresa nuns. Sister Anna invited us to spend the day with her. She had us meet each of the twelve patients in her facility, sharing with us their stories. The ambience of the hospice defied the

notion that this was a house of dying people. It was clean, simple, and rich with living things--both plant and animals--and overflowing with a love of life. My student ended up volunteering to work a couple of days a week for the remainder of the summer. This experience would add an important dimension to her thesis research.

In conversation, the hospice nuns explained that the first case of AIDS in Honduras was not diagnosed until 1990, five years after its diagnosis in the United States. This fact made one question whether AIDS, too, was but another negative effect of colonialism, not unlike the syphilis and influenza spread among Native Americans by the invading European immigrant.

Revitalization of the Small Planet

The space of this essay does not permit a full review of my international experiences. I have chosen to share only those that seemed to have left the deepest imprint on my own thoughts. The Peace Corps, the writings of Gandhi, the relationship to Sugata Dasgupta, the contacts with Mother Theresa and her Sisters of Mercy, along with the sharing of these ventures with my students, are all contributors to my current philosophy of life. I have arrived at a view of the future based on neo-Gandhian perspectives, which I have attempted to apply to Social Work. Much of this thinking I have integrated into an unpublished paper titled: "Gandhian Thought, an Ethical Paradigm for Social Work."

I am especially indebted to Gandhi and Dasgupta for demonstrating to me that colonialism is an inherent feature of capitalism, and as I have discovered, that the contemporary spread of global capitalism ("globalization") is no exception. Bernard Barber's book (1996) *Jihad vs Mc World* offers a penetrating analysis of this dynamic. Gandhi's ideas on non-violence and respect for planetary integrity could not be more timely for a world that will enter a new millennium battered and bruised from assaults to both human and physical environments.

Both Gandhi and Mother Theresa have shown me the importance of moving beyond a culture of consumption to an appreciation of the simple and efficient lifestyle, which is based on the foundations of compassion and trust. I believe the issues of the 21st century will not center on expanding production but will deal with a more just distribution. The issues will not focus on the pursuit of greater and more complex technology, but in finding more appropriate technology. It will challenge the assumption that one's quality of life rests in access to commodities. We then will be able to explore a more non-violent and humanistic way of life.

During the course of my international journey, my idea of the world has changed. What I once perceived as an immense world, I would now describe as a "small planet." I experience it as small only because resolved distances are amazingly "immediate." I can both feel the planet's fragility and empathize with its complexity. To draw an allusion, this small planet is somewhat of a familiar face to me, and I'd like to keep it alive for future generations to meet. Travel and international experiences have been central components of my professional education. For as long as I am able, I plan to continue to take my students on their own journey of a small planet.

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Providing Mental Health Services in a Culture Other Than One's Own

The author's own experience of vulnerability and alienation as a youth attempting to adjust to a culture that was not his own paved a path to his professional involvement in mental health services for ethnic minorities. In this paper, memories of his adolescence and of his professional life inform a discussion of cultural competence both in theory and in the practice of a community mental health agency serving a Latino community in Brooklyn, New York.

by
Samuel Julio Rosenberg

Samuel Julio Rosenberg, Ph.D., LCWS, CSW, Assistant Professor, Ramapo College, Mahwah, New Jersey.

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I received an interesting response to the announcement of the seminar on which this paper is based—a response that reminded me of what it means to find oneself in a culture other than one's own. One of my colleagues sent me a friendly note saying that she would be very glad to come to the presentation; she pointed out, though, that the announcement said, "a culture other than one's own," and that grammatically this should be, "a culture different from one's own." I found this a very interesting comment. It may or may not be correct, but on the other hand, it took me back to my feelings as a recent immigrant to the United States. My colleague's response reminded me of how I felt when people corrected me on my use of English, and how these corrections, no matter how well intended, exacerbated my feelings of being an outsider.

I came to the United States from Argentina with my family when I was sixteen years old. Within a few days of arriving in the U.S., we went to Los Angeles and, because it was September, I started attending high school there. All of a sudden, I found myself having to deal with a situation that I was totally unprepared to handle—culturally, socially, emotionally, and psychologically.

At that time, Argentina was a very formal society in which high schools were segregated by gender. I went to an all-boys school, and, throughout my life, I had always attended school wearing a suit and tie. So, in L.A., after being in the country only seven days, I went to Hollywood High School on the first day of class wearing a very dark, pin-striped suit, a beautiful white shirt, and a very nice tie. Not knowing exactly what to expect, I thought I should dress as I had in Argentina—although in Argentina I would smell of cigarette smoke because before going to school I would hang out with my friends, drinking coffee and smoking cigarettes. Here I didn't have any friends, but I did have cigarettes!

So, I went to school and thought I had just arrived in a very strange place. All the students, both boys and girls, were wearing sneakers—in those days, they wore those blue surfer sneakers—with T-shirts and jeans. I felt I was on a completely different planet, one on which I did not belong, not only because I was dressed differently from the others, but because I felt that everybody was looking at me as though I were from a different planet myself.

The experience was one of a reciprocal disposition— reciprocal, I believed—toward mistrust and, to some extent, dislike.

I felt the other students didn't like me because I spoke strangely and often didn't understand those who spoke to me. I didn't know how to maneuver in the culture—how to get around and get things done—and I was

convinced that people thought me odd. Only many years later did I realise that what I had interpreted as manifestations of hostility were more likely expressions of fear; my fellow students were probably as scared of me as I was of them.

On that first day at high school I stayed through the day but I was very uncomfortable and cried a great deal in corners I'd found where I could be by myself. I went home after school and told my mother, "I don't want to be in this place. Send me back." My mother said, "Sure, I could send you back—you could go back and live with your grandparents." I didn't want that, so instead, we went out and bought jeans, T-shirts, and sneakers. But despite my new clothes, I still felt very uncomfortable at school because I spoke hardly any English.

I had taken ten years of classes at the English Institute in Argentina, but these lessons left me ill prepared for day-to-day, conversational use of the language. We studied grammar and vocabulary but had no practice in conversation, and now, in an English-speaking country, I felt mute, unable to speak and unable to make use of what English I had learned. When I did make attempts to communicate, my language was formal and old-fashioned, and I had trouble understanding idiomatic expressions. When I asked the way to the bathroom, for instance, I was surprised to be directed to a restroom—a rest was not what I needed.

To make matters worse, my family spoke no English at all. My parents had invested heavily in my education and were now counting on me to act as the family's interpreter. Their high expectations and my new role as my parents' caretaker in this alien culture only added to my state of anxiety.

As time went by, I found myself in a situation similar to the problem with the clothes on my first day. Now I was wearing the clothes that everybody else was wearing, but I still didn't seem to belong. One of the differences I noticed was that I always seemed to be very overloaded with books. Although I was dressed like everybody else, the other students looked very svelte; they all walked around with one or two books, while I was loaded down with books under each arm.

Finally, I said to someone one day in my broken English, "Why is it that I'm loaded down with books?" He replied; "Don't you have a locker?" "Locker? What is 'locker'?" He pointed to a wall, and said, "Those are lockers! Go into that office and give them your name, tell them you are a student here, and they will give you a locker. After every class you go to your locker, take the books you need, and leave the rest."

Of course, the language barrier was not my only problem as a new immigrant. I felt I was unable to penetrate the culture I was surrounded by. Everything was completely different from what I was used to—the food, the customs, the people, their habits and haircuts—even the very air itself seemed different from the air I had breathed for the first sixteen years of my life.

There were a few Spanish speakers at high school, but they were mainly Chicanos, people of Mexican extraction who had been born in the U.S. and who spoke a mixture of Spanish and English quite unlike the Spanish I knew. These second-generation Mexican-Americans were themselves an oppressed group within the broader population of the high school, and among them I was able to find some empathy and companionship despite our differences.

I found the transit system particularly hard to deal with. My bus trips to school were disrupted by confusion over tokens and exact change, but I was rescued by the sister of a Chicano student,

who offered to pick me up at the corner and drive me to school.

I gradually acclimatized myself to my new home and, indeed, found some aspects of the culture quite fascinating. I was entranced, for instance, by the big, boat-like cars with their flashy fins and chrome fittings. On the whole, though, my high school experiences were of alienation and marginality. I was depressed and in pain from my sense of estrangement; I felt that people treated me coldly, and I resented this treatment—I had done nothing wrong; my only crime was being different.

I became bitter and angry, and my grades dropped. I had been a distinguished student in Argentina, but in L.A. I started skipping school to congregate with groups of youths who were as marginal as I felt myself to be. I met some Argentineans who spent their time fixing up those flashy cars and cruising along Hollywood Boulevard and the Sunset Strip, and I began hanging out with them. My days increasingly revolved around this street scene and car culture—a culture that I felt I could be a part of. Eventually I dropped out altogether and took a job in a gas station.

There I might have stayed, nursing my hurt and alienation, were it not for three aspects of U.S. culture in the mid-1960s: jazz music, the Civil Rights Movement, and the Vietnam War.

I developed a passion for jazz through listening to a local Black radio station, and through jazz I began to find a sense of community. On the day the great saxophonist John Coltrane died, the station urged its listeners to keep their headlights on while driving, and I did so, demonstrating my membership in a fraternity of Coltrane mourners on the roads of L.A. that day.

The radio station also introduced me to the Civil Rights Movement, and in 1965, riots in the Watts section of L.A. brought

questions of racial injustice and oppression close to home. At the same time, demonstrations against the Vietnam War were spreading across the country, and in this atmosphere of unrest and rebellion I began reading, meeting people involved in the civil rights and antiwar movements, and thinking about issues of racial justice and peace. I felt I had found my niche.

I returned to school, first to a local community college, and then to the University of California at Berkeley. In the politicized environment of 1960s campus life I felt embraced; cultural differences were transcended, and I no longer felt that those around me saw me as different. I became integrated within the college culture through the political vehicle and forged a common commitment with people of the U.S. who were opposed to the war.

My anger, hostility, and outsider feelings were channeled against the war, and because I was subject to the draft, the personal and the political came together for me. In particular, I identified personally with the political issues of justice for marginalized populations.

I went on to study sociology and eventually entered the field of social work, where I was struck by the plight of clients suffering from schizophrenia. It seemed to me that their feelings of alienation, of being outsiders in a hostile culture, were similar in some ways to my experiences as a recent immigrant. The concept of a culture other than one's own has been part of my being for a long time, and the experience of a culture other than one's own, or different from one's own, is something that has interested me for personal reasons.

Imagine, now, that my personal experience can be applied to someone who doesn't speak English, has been in the

United States for a short period of time, and for unknown reasons all of a sudden finds herself hearing voices. In high school my perception was that I was on another planet, that people were very hostile to me, that people didn't want to help me. Now imagine that on top of these natural feelings of alienation, this person feels that something is telling her she is no good—she is a very bad person. If she tries to seek help in a big city such as New York, Los Angeles, Washington, or Chicago, she is going to have a pretty hard time; before she gets any help, she could deteriorate further and might even be hospitalized.

To prevent these kinds of outcomes, we've worked very hard in the past twenty years or so in training programs for social work, psychology and sociology to develop cultural sensitivity (Green, 1998; Leigh, 1998; Vega & Murphy, 1990) so that incidents like my high school experience and that of the hypothetical woman who was hearing voices can be dealt with without putting the person at risk and in a manner that is culturally congruent and helpful to that person.

About 1.1 percent, roughly speaking, of the adult American population has been diagnosed as schizophrenic. In the course of a year, 44.7 million people were estimated to have issues to do with major depression, schizophrenia, manic depression disorder, acute anxiety attacks, or addiction—some sort of mental disorder that has required some kind of involvement with the mental health system (Regier, et al., 1993). For those who are experiencing these issues within a culture that is not their own, this involvement can be problematic.

However, after about twenty or twenty-five years of promoting the idea of cultural sensitivity, one could probably ask anybody, "Are you culturally sensitive?" There's a good chance that he or she will say: "Of course I'm culturally sensitive! What do you think, I'm not?" Who's going to admit that he or she is not culturally sensitive? As the theory of cultural sensitivity has been developed and applied by social workers, psychologists, sociologists, and others, a gap has developed between the theoretical concept of cultural sensitivity and implementation of its practice (see Green, 1998; Leigh, 1998; Vega & Murphy, 1990). So I want to dispose, in a way, of the term "cultural sensitivity" and discuss instead something that perhaps approximates: cultural competence.

We have to begin to develop an approach that at least attempts to be culturally competent. Unfortunately, the concept of cultural competence is another recent idea that has suffered from the same gap between theoretical conception of competence and the execution of competence as practiced by social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists, and sociologists (Vega & Murphy, 1990; Leigh, 1998). We need to reframe the idea of competence into something that borrows concepts from anthropology, adopting some of the methodologies and the approaches of the discipline and searching with both a clinical lens and an ethnographic lens to begin to imagine what it must be like to be in the position of a person of another racial/ethnic category or cultural group.

Valle (1986) has described the elements necessary for the development of what he terms "cross-cultural competence." These include:

1. A working knowledge of the symbolic and linguistic "communicational" patterns of the target ethnic minority group(s);
2. Knowledge and skill in relating to the naturalistic/interactional processes of the target population; and
3. A grasp of the underlying attitudes, values and belief systems of the target population.

Questions of diversity, multiculturalism, and cultural competence are issues that have acquired very strong political content. They are the object of current dispute in California in terms of the politics of multiculturalism in affirmative action and also, on a curriculum level, throughout the country. This is not the place to discuss the politics of these issues; nevertheless, I take diversity for granted in the age of globalization, and if we want to be part of the global universe we're entering, we should not have to apologize for diversity or multiculturalism. We have to assert that multiculturalism is an integral part of globalization, of being a part of this universe.

Therefore, I take it for granted that multiculturalism is

something that we should work with, is desirable, and is part of our reality. It is not a debatable issue whether it is desirable to have a diverse population or not. The question, rather is,: What do we do in this community to provide the services? How do we serve this population that is our population?

In order to provide services to a particular population, there has to be a programmatic philosophy on the part of management and administration, as well as the staff, that defines what we ought to be doing. There has to be the intellectual preparation to be able to do this competently, and a political-philosophical disposition to allow policy to be carried out directly with as little conflict as possible.

The concept of an inclusive Latino population has a somewhat contradictory meaning. On the one hand, there are all those issues that unite people who identify themselves as being Hispanic or Latino; on the other hand, there's a great deal of disparity and difference between Latinos from different nations, and indeed, from different backgrounds, classes, gender, sexual orientation, and so on.

There is a common language and a similar history among Latinos, and I can talk to another Spanish speaker very easily (although there are differences in the various forms of Spanish spoken in the western hemisphere), but there is a whole range of personal experiences that I have, coming from Argentina, that are completely different from those of someone coming from, say, Mexico. Our experiences don't speak to each other spontaneously without any kind of prior understanding. So it's difficult to talk about providing services and support for the Latino population without contextualizing commonality and differences.

Once I'd completed my training, I wanted to work where I could use many of my skills, including my language skills, and I was recruited as an intern at a mental health center in downtown Brooklyn, New York, an area with a large Spanish-speaking population. After my graduation, I was offered a position as Director of Outpatient Services for this diverse client group and spent fifteen years working as the Director of Outpatient Services in a downtown Brooklyn mental health center. The largest group that I worked with as team leader in the mental health center was Puerto Rican. However, the following is an example not of a Puerto Rican person because this particular story speaks to other aspects of the Latino experiences in the U.S.

The New York State Office of Mental Health now has units that are exclusively Spanish speaking. I visited a state facility where a wonderful program called La Casita had been developed; La Casita was a little house on the grounds of the facility that catered to long-term Latino patients. Latino meals were prepared, primarily from Caribbean cuisine, with lots of rice and beans and chicken. Both staff and clients were Spanish speaking.

I became very interested in the case of a young Latino woman of about thirty-four or thirty-five who sat in a corner and was always very quiet. I asked someone on the staff about her. "Oh, it's a wonderful story," the staff member said. "Let me tell you the story." This woman had been there for about three years. She had been brought in by the police, who had found her in the street, homeless, very poorly groomed, very depressed. She was catatonic; she didn't talk, she didn't establish eye contact, her affect was extremely flat. She first came to the hospital prior to the establishment of this Latino unit and was interviewed by a male

psychiatrist who didn't speak Spanish. The woman just sat with her head down, didn't make eye contact, and didn't answer any questions, probably because she didn't understand. But even if the interview had been in Spanish, she might not have answered.

The diagnosis that emerged from the psychiatric interview done by the male, non-Spanish-speaking psychiatrist was that she was schizophrenic because her affect was very flat. Affect describes the mood and the disposition in terms of emotion of an individual, and schizophrenics usually present with a flat affect. If you are in a healthy mental state, your affect and your mood ought to be congruent. If you say something sad, you should show some sad emotion; if you say something happy, you should show a smile. This woman showed no change in emotion. The psychiatrist noted that she didn't establish eye contact and therefore had poor interpersonal relations, probably as a part of the schizophrenic process and caused by some internal stimuli which took her away from interpersonal contact.

Within treatment one is limited by categories established by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM). If one is working in an agency, one has to follow these categories in order to claim Medicaid and Medicare funds for reimbursement on clients. And yet those categories are very limiting and don't allow for an approach based on clinical cultural competence; they narrow down the available choices to the point where this psychiatrist felt perfectly comfortable with a diagnosis of schizophrenia.

Because the symptoms of schizophrenia include withdrawal, isolation, and flat affect, the woman was given antipsychotic medication, which is supposed to bring schizophrenics out of this state and make them more sociable. In the case of this woman, the medication sedated her more. She became more isolated, more depressed, and for two years she sat, doing absolutely nothing.

During the process when the unit was being converted to the Latino unit, a Puerto Rican nurse took an interest in the woman and started to talk to her, without expecting any answers: "Hello Juanita," "Juanita, how are you today?" "Nice to see you," "Nice day." The nurse took as many opportunities during the day as she could to talk to her, to establish a personal relationship of concern and nurture. After six or eight months this woman began to give brief replies, and after a year or so she started talking to the nurse—very little, but she was talking. And within two years, around the time when I saw her, she was talking to people around her.

So what had happened to this woman? The people who were working with her were not working as clinical ethnographers. They made a terrible mistake—they didn't pay attention to where she came from. They put in her chart, "Place of origin: El Salvador" without exploring the implications of this. When the nurse started looking at the chart, she noticed that the woman was in El Salvador in the 1980s. It turned out that this woman had seen her whole family—her husband and children—killed by the Salvadoran military in front of her. She was the only survivor. Somehow she was smuggled out of the country, brought to New York, was with somebody for just three months, and then got lost. She was experiencing extreme depression and post traumatic stress disorder, among other things, yet she was diagnosed as schizophrenic.

If the staff treating this patient had known that El Salvador was torn by civil war in the eighties and that she was from El Salvador and had been smuggled out of the country, they might have made a much better connection with her and she might not have been warehoused for years in the back of an inpatient unit somewhere on Long Island. As a visitor to the unit, I had little to do with her treatment, but I was struck by how a lack of cultural competence among the professionals she first came into contact with had impeded her progress to such a degree.

If we are going to work particularly with a population that comes from Latin American countries, we have to begin to see the commonality, the common aspects, of the culture as well as the differences in terms of origin, class, ethnicity, race. This sociological approach to clinical work, "clinical ethnography," requires being very careful as to place of origin, and within place of origin I include race, ethnicity, gender, and rural or urban background.

However, in order to develop these programs there has to be the philosophical disposition on the part of administration and staff to be able to do it and, once

that's there, one has to study the community. Is it primarily Puerto Rican? Or is it a mixture of Puerto Ricans, Ecuadorians, Colombians, Salvadorians, Mexicans? Are they legal or illegal immigrants? Are they rural? Are they urban? Are there local leaders in the community who may have emerged over a period of years? And one has to make a needs assessment of that community: Are they being served by anybody? Who's providing services?

In downtown Brooklyn, we provided services to about 400 or 500, sometimes 600, people a week. The 1980 census said that about twenty percent of people were of Latino origin in the area we were supposed to be serving, and yet only about four to five percent of our clients were Latino. We were falling short of our mandate. Our client base did not match the demographics of the area, and we had failed in all our efforts to encourage Spanish-speaking clients to take advantage of the services we offered.

Disposition is not something that emerges naturally. In our case, the disposition changed when someone made a complaint to the New York State Department of Health in Albany, saying, "I live in this particular area of Brooklyn and I feel that this particular state agency is not providing services for the Latino community." And the hospital administration's disposition changed right away. The office of the commissioner of mental health demanded changes, and the administration in turn gave the orders to us—we have to provide services to this at-risk population.

Once we had the disposition, we had to learn about this community. I started to go out in a van with a nurse driving around the neighborhood to all the places where we could meet the people; we went to the churches, and I spoke with a local priest who turned out to be the one who had leveled the complaint to Albany because he was treating people for mental illness. The people didn't know where to go for help, but they trusted him, so he was the one they approached in their distress. He, however, felt he didn't have the training or the ability to help them, and felt overwhelmed by this role. Consequently, he welcomed our outreach.

In addition to going to the priest, people were using the emergency room as their treatment facility, and the priest's complaint had alerted the state government to this situation. The state wanted us to remove the burden from the emergency room because it was very costly; people who felt they were about to have a psychotic episode or were going to try to commit suicide were encouraged to come to our clinic so we could prevent an expensive emergency room visit. The disposition changed because there were very powerful political forces telling the administration and management to move in this direction.

So we started going around the community in the van, doing ethnography and participant observation. It was summer, people were in the street, and the men would bring out a table and put it down in the street to play dominoes. We would stop and say, "My name is so-and-so; I work for a psychiatric service and we're interested in doing psychoeducation." "Psycho! No, we don't need psycho! We don't need any of that—no one's crazy in my family!"

Back in the van we asked ourselves, "What did we do wrong? No one's crazy there!" We went back two or three weeks later: "How are you? If anyone has problems—fighting with their husband, anything like that—we'll leave you these pamphlets—you know, if anything's wrong with the kids—it happens in families, right?" "Oh yeah, it happens—nothing psycho, no one crazy, but problems—it can happen." I spoke in Spanish, of course, and many people didn't know what to make of this Spanish speaking Sam Rosenberg; I felt some of the same dislocation I had experienced back in high school.

Other changes were made in our services: we expanded our staff, we received a grant and developed a psychoeducational program, and we took on more Spanish speakers. We were able to assemble an excellent team and within three or four years we had a full-fledged service with twenty to twenty-five percent of our clients being Spanish-speaking.

So there has to be training, disposition, and the right approach; outreach has to be where the clients are. We have to overcome resistances, which are cultural to some extent and expressed in religious terms, medical terms, and so forth. We have to take our cultural differences and convert them into pluses.

A great deal of work was already being done by providers in the community such as the

priest and the *curandero* or *santero* (traditional healers). These people become natural providers because they share the common cultural and ethnic background of these populations; they also live in the community. It's necessary to bring these people in as resources but also to expand and make connections. When clients came to our community mental health agency, they came not just with problems of mental health but with questions: "How do I get my SSI?" or "How do I go for an interview to get my permanent residence?" or "How do I become a citizen?" And so a whole network of community contacts evolved that allowed us to be perceived by the Latino community as a reservoir of help. Shortly after we started going around with the van getting the initial process going, it snowballed. We really didn't have to do much more. There were entire buildings where the word of mouth was, "Go to Flatbush." People would come by and ask, "Is Rosenberg here?" (Never Sam Rosenberg—alwaysjust "Rosenberg"!)

We realized that local *curanderos* or *santeros* within the Puerto Rican community practice their own brand of healing arts. They believe that spirits can penetrate the phenomenal world and inhabit human beings; disembodied spirits can communicate with spirits inhabiting bodies through mediums, who have spiritual faculties (Colon, 1996, p. 85). So what do you do when your client comes in and tells you, "I went to see my *santero*, and he told me that it's okay to be here but that I should be careful." How do you work with that client? After many years we decided not to fight it. In most cases it wasn't damaging and might even have been helpful.

We started inviting *santeros* to come to our clinic and join us in helping our patients. "We have the same end in mind," we said. "You want to help this person; we want to help this person; how can we do this together?" At first the santeros were willing to talk but reluctant to come to the clinic; but a Puerto Rican member of the staff offered to coordinate between the clinic and the *santeros*, and soon they were our allies in the community. They were able to reassure our clients that treatment at the clinic would not violate any spiritual duty or obligation and could persuade patients to continue taking their medications while also taking part in traditional treatments.

The participation of the *santeros* was symbolically important as an acknowledgment of their cultural place within the community, and our contact with them allowed us to discourage the more extreme practices, such as animal sacrifices, that could have exacerbated the condition of mentally fragile clients. Our approach transcended the cultural schism by offering community-based services which utilized culturally based realities of the population.

The points relevant to developing adequate services for working with the Latino population and developing a competence based on this community are the following: 1) study the demographic profile of the community to be served; 2) work in the community as a participant observer to gather as much information as possible; 3) get intimately acquainted with the neighborhoods; 4) participate in social and educational activities as a member of that community as much as they will let you; and 5) build working relationships for referral and work (Lum, 1997; Valle, 1986).

One more issue which has to do with the question of matching resources with client needs goes back to the common cultural base of Latinos and an interesting interplay that one obtains more in exile than in one's own culture. About thirty years ago I interviewed for a job at a university in Ohio and asked them, "Are there any Spanish-speaking students here—any Latinos?" And they looked at me and said: "Chico! Let's get Chico!" Yet Chico and I may have had nothing in common—from his name, he was presumably Mexican or Mexican-American and from a very different background to my Argentinean origins. Similarly, and within the Latino community, we found that just putting together a group of people who are Latinos who speak Spanish wouldn't necessarily mean that they would be able to work well with each other.

An example of this is the story of a twenty-nine-year-old Ecuadorian, an extraordinary dancer who was doing very badly in the United States because his type of dance was avant-garde native ballet. He was therefore working as a construction worker. He had been exposed to some political injuries in his country of origin and came to our clinic com-

plaining of feeling persecuted. He was also expressing concern that he had some gender issues of a kind psychiatrists call "homosexual panic." He felt attracted to men but was afraid this was a symptom of mental disorder. His life experiences had made him very distrustful. He was an undocumented immigrant, he had been exposed to some political troubles in his own country, and now that he was in this country he was experiencing persecutory delusions, perhaps with some legitimacy since he was here without papers.

The cultural sensitivity, as opposed to cultural competence, model told us to give him a Spanish-speaking therapist or social worker. This is what we did, and it failed miserably. We matched him up with a Puerto Rican woman in her forties who had been here all her life, had worked as a social worker for about 25 years, and felt that at this point in her life she was very much middle-class, professional, heterosexual, and in the mainstream of American society. These people were both Latinos, but they talked two different languages—their cultural experiences were at variance, and they found no common ground for communication. There was no match. This man didn't want to work with her, and she didn't want to work with him, even though she didn't want to admit it.

We eventually found the solution in this case by placing the Ecuadorian with a gay man, an Anglo, but nevertheless someone who was able to help him work through his fears of homosexuality. So again, competence and sensitivity in this case needed to be reinterpreted to mean something that took into account the complexity and multidimensionality brought into the treatment situation.

Conclusion

Valle (1986) has noted that mental health practitioners have advocated in the past what Rohman et al. (quoted in Vega & Murphy, 1990) have called "spontaneous" change: it is presumed that practitioners can put forward "some knowledge relevant to the target population and then hope that cross-cultural competencies will emerge as serendipitous outcomes of the effort" (p.44). This approach has been demonstrated historically to be a dismal failure in generating either a reliable information base or a training model for a transcultural mental health intervention (Vega & Murphy, 1990). The arguments discussed in this paper are based on the aforementioned historical reality and on my personal experiences of alienation in a culture other than my own; they point to the need for a move toward a reformulation of multicultural community mental health services. The suggested approach transcends the cultural schism by suggesting community services, which utilize the culturally based practices of the target population. For that perspective to succeed, and to promote political alternatives and advance culturally competent knowledge, a flexible theoretical framework must be utilized which incorporates the personal and cultural nuances of different populations and understands cultural communities as the beginning and end of practice.

Upon reflection, writing this story makes me feel rather uneasy. On the one hand, I have re-experienced the sadness and alienation of my early years in the United States. I discovered the intensity of those lonely years and realized that wounds that appeared to have been healed remain dormant. Time and the bumps and grinds of growing up have tempered those memories, but I realize that the uncertainty and vulnerability of marginality have permanently colored the tint of the lenses I use to look at life. On the other hand, a great deal of my uneasiness has to do with the fact that to those reading the story it may look like a success story. After all, I overcame the injuries of otherness and went on to become a culturally competent professional. However, once one commits oneself to public discourse, one relinquishes control over the myriad interpretations readers may have concerning the narrative. In other words, the story belongs to everybody for whatever purpose they may want. It is here where the problem looms large. I am uncertain, and probably will remain so for the rest of my life, about the meaning of adversity. I know that the not totally known forces of history and biography have shaped my trajectory. I also know that those whose daily existence is characterized by vulnerability and marginality are condemned to a life of oppression and exploitation, an existence of exclusion due to no fault of their own. In that light, I believe that respect and culturally competent approaches towards those falling

outside of the mainstream may be a much more desirable experience than exclusion and adversity. □

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Non-Euclidean Feminism: Where Parallel Lives Meet

Through narrative depictions of two personally influential black women (Annie Robinson, who raised the author as a small boy, and Audre Lorde, an ardent black feminist), the author attempts to make sense of their very different responses to institutionalized racism during the late 1940's and beyond. He, as well, seeks to reconcile the doubtless privilege afforded him as a white boy growing up in the south at that time with his current commitment to diversity and cultural awareness. This exploration is conducted by drawing on Robert Kegan's (1982) meaning-making paradigm and Patricia Hill Collins's (1991) model of black feminist thought, both of which are inclusionary rather than exlusionary.

by
Scott L. Horton

Scott L. Horton, ABD, CAS.EdM, Lecturer II, University of Southern Maine, Department of Human Resource Development, and Doctoral Candidate at Boston University School of Education, Developmental Studies.

Introduction

Recently in reading Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot's (1994) portrayal of six middle-class Blacks, *I've Known Rivers: Lives of Loss and Liberation*, I was provoked by her portrait of Katie Cannon, feminist, minister, and professor. Cannon in her classes decries, among other things, what she perceives as a limited view that many white students have of her—either mammy or villain. Her assertion has prompted me to look again at two black women who have had an influence on me. Annie Robinson, who raised me from birth to about five in the post-World War II South, was my grandparents' housekeeper, or maid as she would have been called then. Audre Lorde was a noted black lesbian feminist whose writing stimulated my thinking some 40 or more years later about living life passionately and demanding equity among all peoples.

These two very different women have established a grasp on me despite, or perhaps even because of, their diametric responses to a vast cultural imbalance. This imbalance is one that has no doubt benefited me, although unwittingly—I have never accepted the residing premise that sponsors racial inequity, segregation, or bigotry, namely any people's declared superiority over others. And the time passed some time ago for feeling guilty about the circumstances of my first years of life, since to some extent we are all captive of our cultural and historical surround. How, then, may the conflict be resolved between the benefits that I experienced on the one hand in being raised by Annie, and the support that I feel for Audre Lorde on the other in her burning outrage on behalf of all the Annies too long silent?

The depictions that follow of Annie as she was nearing the end of her life, and of a pivotal event for Audre Lorde as she was just beginning hers, are set within a few years of each other. On the surface the two women's substantially dissimilar responses to the racial culture of the era would appear to have little or no

confluence, save in the fleeting and intense passage from old ideas to new. However, Collins's (1991) inclusionary model of black feminist thought and Kegan's (1982) meaning-making paradigm (which posits increasing complexity and acceptance of internal paradox as developmental markers) together offer a harmonic view of these disparate lives and reconciliation of the impact each has had on mine.

As early as I can remember, I have felt a strong, inherently open and affectionate response to black women in the age range of, say, 45-65. One such woman in particular is memorable for me because she is the very first person I am conscious of knowing in my life or caring anything about. The thought of her is highly evocative yet: her smell, her presence, phrases she would say, the feel of her skin, all part of both literalembrace and of the spirit that holds some cloudy influence on me still. Somehow, even this far away, she seems the key to things difficult to articulate, things that remain unfinished but beckoning. I wish I had been able to talk with her as an adult, to thank her, to honor her, but she died before I was barely a teen, and I am over 50 now. I knew her only as Annie; I did not know that she had a last name. No matter, for this child new to the world, one name, Annie, was all I needed.

Hers was such a strong, positive presence that she remains at the center of my original memories, supplanting even my parents. She worked for my grandparents in Atlanta in their big house where we first lived following the end of World War II and had worked there since my father himself was a child. He used to tell me about going on dates, coming back late, and looking up from the driveway out back at the light coming from the high window of Annie's room, knowing that she would go to bed only after being certain that everyone was home safely.

When I recently asked my father about Annie, he told me he had never gone inside that room where she stayed, just looked in once or twice. It was the attic,

hardly proper accommodations, especially in the humid Atlanta summers, for someone who was widely and paradoxically touted as being "part of the family." Her room was small, with one dormer window lined with suitcases that everyone but she would have occasion to use. As a young boy I could not see how cluttered and dim the roughly finished space was. All I knew was that I wanted to be there when Annie was and felt welcomed there. In fact, we all felt a strong sense of nurturing and loving care associated with being with her. The uneasy awareness came only years later that she was far more truly welcoming of us in a family sense than we were of her.

Annie, of course, was restricted in her movements in a way that I could neither see nor understand. The only main floor domain that could be called hers was the kitchen. Yet, even with the stress of cooking for and looking after an entire household, she remained good-natured, calm, and patient, even when I rode my trike in the kitchen. To my knowledge, she never raised her voice or spoke in anger. If things got to be too much for her she would simply and quietly say, "Go, go, come no more," and I would leave. But just minutes later the exile would be over, to her credit, and I would be allowed in again. These were warm sunny days, at least for me.

When I was four or five my parents and I moved into our own house, and after that I saw Annie only occasionally. Although I still looked forward to her company and felt well-received, we were never as close again. In a way, it was fortunate that my richest memories of her do not include being much older, because the era and culture would demand that she be increasingly deferential and less familial to me. Had she lived long enough, she would have had to put "Mr." before my first name, a convention that even then was jarring to my young ears. For a while, however, it worked otherwise. This momentary and isolated span, when the greater external expectations of separation and privilege could be suspended, was the only time when we would be able to relate to each other more or less freely and

more or less equally. Abundant affection seemed to flow both ways, and it didn't matter to anyone that I was White and she was Black.

I cannot help but think of Annie as I consider Audre Lorde's account of her first trip to Washington, D.C., taken from Janet Zandy's (1993) *Calling Home: Working Class Women's Writings*. It was a combination high school graduation trip for her sister, Phyllis, and eighth grade graduation present for herself. Her sister's class, all seniors, had arranged a trip from New York to Washington at the end of the year. As the only black girl in her class, Phyllis was unable to go because there would be no place for her to stay with the rest of the class at that time, segregation being in full, insistent bloom in Washington. The trip deposit was returned to Phyllis, and her father, determined not to allow his daughter to be rebuffed and let down, decided instead to take the whole family as a special treat.

Lorde recalls the excitement surrounding the events of the trip, from packing loads of food for the long train ride out of New York City, to seeing various famous Washington sights, including the Lincoln Memorial where Marian Anderson had sung after being refused the use of the DAR's auditorium because of her race. Lorde effectively evokes the almost blinding and sweltering July whiteness of the city and its monuments that was compounded by her parents' disapproval of sunglasses.

At one point Lorde writes about how they entered a Breyer's soda shop for cool refreshment, flush equally with excitement from the trip and its uniqueness, and the heat. Sitting at the counter, they were instead refused service because they were black and departed the ice cream parlor, disgraced. This humiliating event marked the end of Lorde's childhood, and, we are led to believe, also ultimately forged irreversible changes in Lorde, who never again looked at the nation with the same eyes or without being keenly aware of its manifest racism. Judging by her account and its title "The Summer I Left Childhood Was White", these, like mine, were warm sunny days, but for her, on remembrance they evoke little comfort or longing.

In 1947, the time of Lorde's awakening, I was not quite two, and although I could not possibly know it, by then I was well part of the other side of the very discrepant world that had been so painfully and publicly pointed out to her. The memories I have recounted of Annie are of a period only just later, yet contrast the difference between Annie's placid demeanor and Lorde's justifiable rage and active response to institutional oppression. Annie continued to display her characteristic and singular sweetness and seeming lack of bitterness the whole time I knew her, which was the only way my father and others had ever known her to be as well, to hear their stories about her. Yet she was housed in the attic and never once sat down to eat at the same table with other so-called members of the family. Even taking into consideration prevailing attitudes such as mandating that Blacks step off the sidewalk into the street to let Whites pass, it disturbs me to think that our family's limited response was likely to be the best treatment Annie received at the hands of Whites.

On the other hand, Lorde, indignant and unprompted, immediately wrote a letter to the President of the United States protesting the wrong that she had endured and witnessed. History shows us that she spent the rest of her life advocating for social

justice and fighting oppression in whatever form or guise she encountered it, including bias and discrimination within the feminist movement itself. She approached this task by harnessing what she called the erotic (Lorde, 1984), which translates into a fierce passion that infuses the very soul of women and serves as their "most profoundly creative source" (p. 59).

In different ways, both Audre Lorde and Annie represent the idea of "outsider-within" that Patricia Hill Collins (1991) discusses in her development of a black feminist intellectual ideology. One of the cornerstones of Collins's thinking is the notion that Blacks in general are "outsiders-within," that is, that they are outsiders within a white power structure and that black feminists

in particular exist as "outsiders-within" within multiple realms beyond that. They remain outsiders within mainstream intellectual circles by being non-White and non-male, within African-American organizations by being non-male, and within the feminist movement by being non-White.

Audre Lorde adds another factor by being a lesbian in a heterosexual culture. I imagine her standing in a room between two parallel mirrors in which she sees herself reproduced more or less infinitely. Each reflection is progressively less distinct, smaller, and more removed from the flesh and blood person that constitutes reality. Each one represents some outsider-within facet of her life, and each is farther away, thus requiring more voice to be heard. This is something Audre Lorde clearly knew early on.

Which reflection of her is the black woman, which is the Lesbian or the intellectual? This image of great additive distance attracts and fascinates me, even as I have an equal sense that it is one of isolation, of sequestration, of capture almost, and that having such multiple roles must create in those marginalized by society as a whole to begin with, a distinct sense of fun-house disorientation, minus the fun.

Annie's outsider-within position was obvious, well-defined, and not unique, at least not unique in the South. At 211 15th Street in Atlanta, she was outsider-within in the household that claimed her as "part of the family." She knew all about us; we knew and asked little about her. One time Annie and I were sitting on the front porch and she said, "Wave to her." When I asked who, she said, "To that colored woman there," indicating someone who was walking by. I looked at the woman and turning suddenly back to Annie with a start of recognition said, "So that's what you are!" It was only a few years ago that I found out what her last name was. I also learned then that she had been married the whole time, although not well apparently, without children, and in such a way that allowed her to spend only one night every two weeks or so at her own house, wherever that was. About this my parents only said, "We didn't want to pry." Perhaps most telling about how little we knew about Annie was that after she died, my father, in attendance at her funeral over fifty miles away in her home town, was surprised to find the church fully packed with all black people paying final respects. He, like the rest of us who thought of her only as part of our (white) family, had no sense of her having kin, friends, or a life of her own apart from 211.

Still another possible area in which Annie might be considered outsider-within is within herself. By this I mean that unless she was at peace with her individual responses to the unavoidable oppression she encountered, she could potentially sit in harsh, internal judgment of her actions or lack thereof, never fully accepting herself for and as herself. Although there was an air of peace and conviction around her, one that might be construed as internal commitment and connection, I am uncertain. Perhaps it was just resignation. I hope she never acceded to the then dominant notion of racial inferiority. There was not enough time for me to find out what she truly thought, even if she would have been willing to let me know. Ours was an artificial relationship, one locked in time and place and cultural values, in which sitting at the same table could happen only for a brief period.

One last arena in which Annie might be viewed as an outsider-within, were she alive today and had she gained a voice of defiance, is within the black feminist intellectual movement. Collins (1991) argues strongly for the need to reexamine the everyday experiences and knowledge of black women who would not necessarily be considered intellectuals or feminists, to draw them into the greater discussion, a discussion that too often bogs down in definitions of who is or is not a feminist. Collins recognizes that the existing approach intrinsically divides people instead of getting at whatever feminism is and how it can be supported, expanded, and strengthened.

Collins calls for finally bringing Annie and Lorde together and provides the reference to non-Euclidean geometry. In Euclidean geometry, parallel lines never intersect, but in non-Euclidean systems they may. Metaphorically, Collins offers a non-Euclidean system where lives that otherwise might not meet finally do. What connects Annie and Audre Lorde is Collins's insistence that a wider, more encompassing range of experiences be presented.

She argues in general for an inclusionary model based on self-definition, rather than one of

determination by race, gender, or other limiting markers that in and of themselves do not signify a black, feminist, or intellectual ideology, separately or in the aggregate. Collins reports bell hooks (who signs her name using lower case letters) as taking this adaptable position, an opening that avoids altogether the thorny problems of definition and exclusion, which are, after all, the constituents of the outsider-within position to begin with. Instead of saying, "I am a feminist," she recommends saying something like, "I advocate feminism." Such a phrase contains the fruits of reconciliation between seemingly disparate styles and responses, voiced or not voiced, angry or calm, as represented respectively by Lorde on one hand and Annie on the other.

The call in Collins's feminism for broadened inclusion echoes the subject-object relations perspective of constructive developmentalist Robert Kegan (1982). He has proposed that, as we develop, our thinking becomes ever more complex and inclusive, that throughout life, thinking and responses are shaped and shaded by things outside our conscious awareness or control. These may be cultural, familial, or even personal values blindly adhered to. In the process of developing, we gain perspective on them, holding them more at arm's length and becoming less subject to their hidden influence. For Kegan, we move toward the realization that we are the container of multiple roles, values, and experiences, that we are not so much defined by them as by the containing of them. This means all of them, whether they are discordant or not. In other words, we ourselves are not our jobs; we have jobs.

When someone says, "I advocate feminism," it shows that the speaker is less subject of being defined by the role of feminist and more agent of choice as holder of multiple desires, competencies, or perspectives. Along with this comes a greater acceptance of diverse elements within, a sign itself of developmental growth. In this regard, it could be argued by extension that Collins's black feminist position embodies a significant developmental shift away from and beyond that embodied in the first phrase, "I am a feminist."

However, such a statement also implies that the speaker has a voice to begin with. In Annie's case, I can only imagine how often and how stingingly she must have borne in silence the burden of living in the heart of a racist and unequal society. Applying to black feminism at large the idea of having a voice is consonant with Gilligan (1982), who has written extensively about the damage that can result when people are effectively silenced within relationships or within cultures. The position that Collins takes indicates this awareness, as an effort is made to include all speakers along the continuum of voice (and the confidence to use it), without which Annie and Lorde would stand considerably apart. Such a position shows that black feminism as a whole has found its voice or is determined to.

As I have thought further about Annie and read both Audre Lorde and Collins and sought to understand each better, I have been struck by a term that Collins uses to explain roles of African-American women within their communities. In a culture where often the parents are absent, perhaps working long hours, multiple jobs, or in places far away to provide or survive, someone else must care for the children. This person is called the othermother. In Annie's case the term has meaning across racial lines, and would include the several children for whom she was othermother,

specifically my father, his sister, and me, although she was not formally charged with child care. Nonetheless, her care-taking was manifest and consistent.

What must it have been like over time for Annie to care for children of all ages; to be widely regarded as being so open, loving, and embracing of affection; to have children eager to be in her company; and yet to have no children of her own? On top of everything else, at some deep level it must have been terribly painful, being an outsider-within throughout her whole life, even as a woman among women, and then to be an othermother, too. These roles represent her parallel mirrors. However, the resultant voicing of these roles produced a decidedly different sound from that of Lorde's, one not of audible sadness or anger but of calm stability and equanimity, at the base of which must have been considerable resolve. Often such a voice is too soft to be heard or is ignored in the greater clamor, something that Collins has sought to redress through active inclusion of those such as Annie not used to being considered important.

In working to bridge and connect, Collins has also notably recognized that oppression exists everywhere. It does not lie exclusively within the province of particular groups or persons alone, regardless of enduring or extreme restriction. Collins (1991) reaches back to quote Anna Julia Cooper who, in a speech of 1893, states that the cause will be won when and only when the inalienable right to happiness is conceded to "every man and ... every woman who has writhed silently under a mighty wrong" (p. 37). Implicit in this is an invitation to all peoples to participate. Indeed we all have something legitimate to complain about and address, and denying it serves no one.

Outsider-within status is neither alien to me nor relegated to one segment of the population. For me there have certainly been instances, such as during military service in the Vietnam era, when I felt I was an outsider-within, both as an enlisted person with college experience and as someone within the broader culture that had begun to raise its voice against the war and its participants. But it is not the same. The fundamental point of difference is that by being white and male, I have been permitted one thing that neither women in general nor especially women of color are allowed in this culture, namely, to be invisible. By invisible, I mean that to the segment of the population in control, my presence in certain corridors is expected, at least historically, rendering me and others like me functionally invisible to bias, discrimination, and routine exclusion. Although these things have nonetheless happened in my life, they have not been institutionally lifelong and, outside of the military, definitely not body threatening.

When I first began speaking about Annie, I mentioned having a sense of comfort and trust around black women. Of course my response to Annie was from the perspective of a child, one who barely recognized that she and I were of different races. In a sense we were both outsiders within, each being decidedly on the fringe of power within the household and without. However, it was never intended to be permanent for me.

It is such a realization that gives me pause, because on the one hand it is important to recognize the ways that our culture is repressive systematically, and that even we who superficially fit the job description of privileged, white Anglo-Saxon males have felt the sting of stereotyping, of silencing, of being outsider-within. Witness increasing numbers of men, ostensibly the insiders, getting together to seek a new way of being because the traditional models of masculinity have not proven to work for them, for their partners and family members, or within a changing world view. They, too, perhaps feel isolated from a culture of competitive masculinity that serves really only a few (the winners) and with questionable results.

Yet, on the other hand, it would be presumptuous to claim profound affinity for and identification with the black feminist intellectual movement, despite the appeal of inclusiveness, simply because their oppression is so visible, so incessant, and so undeniably systemic, and that unlike me they can never be invisible in this land, where even in repressive environments a white male has the advantage.

Fortunately, this advantage has not insulated me from a growing awareness of large-scale injustice and inequity all around, nor spared me the necessity of looking at my life and actions in that light. But understanding

alone is not enough. What is also necessary is that something be done with it, whether it be in meetings with other men where such awareness might be best explored, spread, and engaged as an agent of developmental and social change; or through university scholarship, teaching, and publication; or through involvement in political activity.

I have learned from both Annie and Audre Lorde, yet their internalized value has been difficult at times to understand and accept. How have these different lessons—Annie's resolve, equanimity, and patience and Lorde's passionate outrage and commitment to right wrongs—come to reside together and find a common resting place? The answer lies in arriving at a common structure for making meaning of their lives and its impact on mine, whether comfortable or not, which Kegan offers in his recognition of multiple elements within oneself and the dialectical thinking that such awareness presupposes. The capacity to let coexist these elements that otherwise might cause internal conflict signals further movement in the direction of self-definition as *holder* of roles, views, and experiences, however contradictory or paradoxical they may be, and not the *embodiment* of them.

Substantially constituting Collins's ideology of the black feminist intellectual movement is considerable belief in inclusion, activism, and rededication to reclaiming the silenced voices of everyday African-American women. In this movement can coexist Collins, Audre Lorde, Annie, and diverse other outsiders-within long excluded, long denied voice, long restricted to the margins of power and page. The provocative, rigorous, and open examination of thought and action exemplified by Collins challenges and urges similar response among men, notably white men. I suspect, however, that it will be necessary for more men to experience being outsiders-within before they can fully appreciate the magnanimity and grace of inclusion that Collins presents.

Kegan and Collins independently offer models and reinforcement for the desirability of accepting multiple and even conflicting aspects within. Demanding neither homogeneity nor rigid consistency, they instead recognize the value of differing views as enriching thought and colloquy, whether of individuals or movements. Together they provide the resolution and understanding I had previously unsuccessfully sought regarding two women who have been important to me; one whom I knew virtually from birth (in however limited a fashion), and the other whom I never met at all, save in print.

Returning to Katie Cannon's opening statement (mammy vs villain) that spurred this reexamination, I have realized that in the pre-integration South of my first years, it was only through knowing Annie in the role of "mammy" that the essential humanity and goodness of her and others like her could have been made apparent to me. This loving relationship forever prevented the exclusionary and discriminatory tendrils of racism from taking root. Far from embodying a limiting, degrading stereotype, Annie instead modeled grace, composure, and dignity in the face of intense cultural pressure. Early on, then, it was apparent that numerous attributes displayed by Annie every day were not restricted to one "better" race. I knew this first hand from the ongoing interactions that all children unerringly recognize as either welcoming and loving or not. Later on it was not difficult to see that ethnicity, religion, gender, or sexual orientation were similar, which thus prevented my viewing people who struggled to be treated with dignity as villains.

My interactions with Annie, a one-time relationship built on an entrenched cultural foundation of inequality, had an unintended effect. Although at the time I was unaware of institutional racism and what it meant, knowing Annie as a person gave me the first glimpse of the inhumanity of discrimination and of the terrible loss that we suffer when groups are sytematically pushed to the periphery or excluded. Later, through her passionate writing, Lorde provided the voice that Annie had never dared raise, one both challenging and deeply resonant. At the same time, Lorde also belatedly voiced the support for Annie that I, as a child, felt but was powerless to raise. Doubtless they will each continue to influence me over the years and fuel my hope for a time when divisiveness will not hold sway.

□

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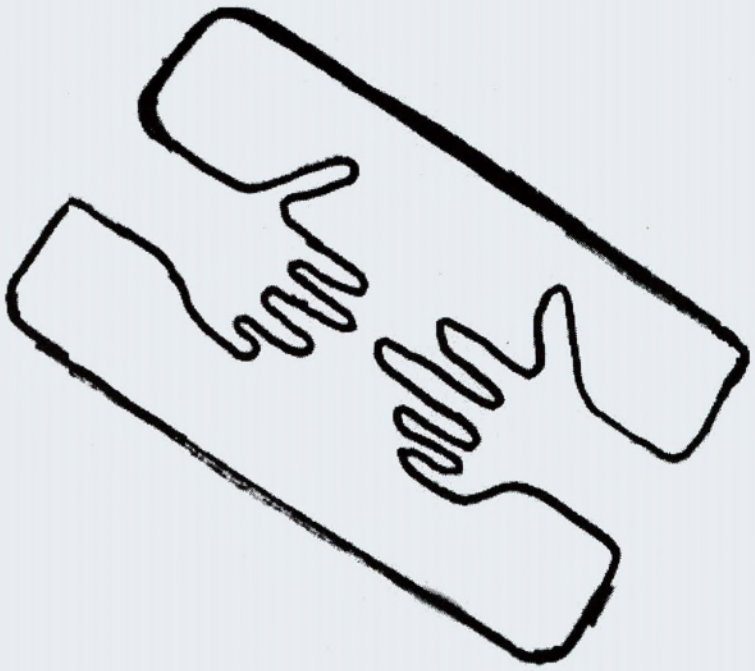

The Role of Mutual Self Disclosure in Helping and Healing between Gay Clients and Therapists

Therapists are often taught to avoid personal self-disclosure with clients. Early in their training, counselors learn to use personal sharing rarely and with caution. Guidelines exist in professional literature suggesting when and how therapists may volunteer such material to clients, usually only within strict therapeutic constraints. Many gay clients, however, come to therapy specifically seeking gay or gay-friendly therapists. Gay clients may want and need more personal information from therapists, especially information that the therapist is truly gay-friendly and knowledgeable. For these clients, therapists may need to learn to share more of themselves with both honesty and ethical integrity. This narrative offers experiences and insights of gay and lesbian therapists in negotiating today's new and often challenging self-disclosure norms and values.

by
Fred Schloemer

Fred Schloemer, Ed.D., LCSW, CMFT, Spalding University, Louisville, Kentucky.

Introduction

A new client once confronted me with an unsettling challenge. "But I thought you were gay!" I had encountered similar confusion before with other gay clients who had just learned I am a bisexual man, formerly married ... to a woman. Now, seeing the concern on Christopher's face, I realized I probably owed him an explanation.

Chris had been coming to therapy weekly for a month. He was making good progress on the grief and loss issues which first brought him in after his male lover left him suddenly. He had gotten my name from the local gay and lesbian hotline where I had given permission for staff to disclose my sexual orientation to callers.

Like many gay or bisexual people, my coming out to self and others has been a gradual progression. While married, I self-identified as bisexual, although since my divorce, I have described myself as gay with bisexual tendencies. Apparently, hotline staff had placed me in their directory of gay therapists. At any rate, Chris now informed me that he had first come to me believing that I was exclusively gay. Without discussing that fact, we had established a good rapport in our first meeting and he had resolved to do a series of solution-focused sessions to rebuild his self-confidence in the aftermath of a devastating breakup.

Normally Chris sat beside my desk and failed to notice the family photos which cluttered its surface. Today he had chosen a seat across the room and spied the snapshots of my ex-wife and children. When he asked who the family was and I told him, his jaw dropped briefly before he confronted me with his consternation. As in the past, when presented with this situation, I reflected on the options for a moment.

Chris had never asked me details about my sexual orientation. He had assumed I was gay by virtue of the way he obtained my name from the hotline. Then, like many people, gay or heterosexual, based on his assumptions he had formulated an uncon-

scious mental picture about who I was and how I functioned in society. But as numerous authors have pointed out recently, gender identity and sexual orientation are complex social and political constructs, as well as biological ones (Wood, 1996; Knudson-Martin, 1997). Sexual orientation and gender identity encompass multidimensional, subtle, and spiritual sides of self. Watching Chris struggle with how to view me now, I wondered how to treat these subtleties.

I could explore several questions with him. What difference did my sexuality make? How would my orientation impact our

working successfully together? What prejudices did he harbor about gays or bisexuals involved in heterosexual marriages and how might these obstruct his relationships in a diverse society?

It has been my experience that many gay people question the legitimacy of bisexuality, claiming that all bisexuals are denying their true gay identity. Was Christopher operating under the belief that a bisexual married man couldn't relate to the gay experience? If so, perhaps I could reassure him with the story of how I fell in love with a woman before coming to terms with my predominantly homosexual identity. I could try a therapeutic use of humor and note that while waiting for my prince to come, a princess arrived first.

Or, I could set a boundary and declare the topic of my personal issues inappropriate and unethical for me to discuss with a client, citing pertinent codes of ethics and licensing standards which affirmed this stance. God knows there are plenty of them, I thought. I found myself running through the various theoretical frameworks which might guide me in responding to the very legitimate questions Chris posed for me at the moment. As sometimes happens in therapy, a client now felt a need to know more about me before committing to invest continued trust and do further work with me.

The Issues and Debate

Therapists are often trained to use self-disclosure of any personal information judiciously, if at all. Professional literature has long debated the relative value and risk of workers disclosing personal information to clients. Historically, the issue has been a loaded one. The prevailing wisdom has been that worker self-disclosure can be an effective and powerful tool to promote positive client change, especially at strategic points in the therapy process, but that it must be used with extreme consciousness and caution.

Numerous generalist texts outline specific applications of worker self-disclosure, including empathy building, rolemodeling, or infusion of hope and encouragement at pivotal times in the helping relationship (Middleman & Goldberg 1974; Hepworth, Rooney, & Larsen, 1997; Ivey, 1994). Middleman and Goldberg offer ways in which workers may use self-disclosure to enhance insight, clarify feelings, and forge stronger partnerships with clients. Hepworth, Rooney, and Larsen assert that the practice of authenticity, which they define as workers' sharing of self in open, genuine ways, is essential to effective casework or therapy. They further outline various levels of self-disclosure which can prove helpful to workers in empowering clients and give highly specific guidelines for authentic responding with clients, from giving feedback to assertive limit-setting. An evolving tradition of narrative therapy places great value on the skill of transparency with clients, or letting clients see us in our full humanness so that we may share a journey of change and growth together (Freedman & Combs, 1996).

The chief concern most authors express about worker self-disclosure is that clear boundaries must be observed, including seeking professional consultation and supervision when needed, to ensure the appropriateness of worker self-disclosure strictly as a means of benefiting the client (Meyer & Mattaini, 1995). Various sources clearly agree that worker self-disclosure for personal satisfaction or advice-giving reasons is a violation of client rights and codes of ethics. However, even the most recent revision of the (NASW, 1996) Code of Ethics offers no specific language ad-

dressing the matter of worker self-disclosure. Rather, the ways in which such disclosure poses ethical violations must be drawn from inference and by reading other sections of the code, including those dealing with conflicts of interest and dual relationships, wherein workers are cautioned against doing anything that might exploit, confuse, or otherwise place the client at risk.

Much of what helping professionals believe, say, and do in the matter of worker self-disclosure changes dramatically when we shift focus to worker disclosure of personal sexual information. Professional literature has seldom, if ever, supported the practice of workers sharing sexual thoughts, feelings, or experiences with clients. Traditionally, the very essence of effective psychotherapeutic relationships has been seen to hinge upon workers maintaining clinical objectivity and emotional detachment with clients. Strong prohibitions have always existed against the abuse of transference and counter transference events with clients, especially those involving an exchange of libidinal energies.

A recent report on an nationwide survey of practitioners suggests that workers may be at risk for malpractice litigation if they even thought sexual thoughts about or felt attracted to a client (AAMFT, 1998). It sometimes seems as if the integrity of the helping relationship is so fragile, and the potency of human sexual impulses so great, that no options exist at all for merging our sexuality and our professional practice with safety

and honor. However, this rather conservative stance can both limit creative casework possibilities and devalue the pivotal importance of workers exercising their own humanity and judgment as an essential part of the helping process.

Fickey and Grimm (1998) advocate for the more honest sharing of self by gay therapists working with gay clients. Few benefits are achieved, they assert, by workers hiding their gay identity from clients. They further state that few risks emerge through such self-disclosure which cannot be countered through the worker's careful exercise of healthy, professional boundaries and the use of close supervision and consultation by skilled clinicians sensitive to gay and lesbian issues.

Minuchin has spoken and written in numerous forums about "the heart and the art of therapy." He and other authors, including the narrative therapy school, agree that the essence of the therapeutic relationship is the genuine human connections forged between client and worker, rather than solely the clinical knowledge and skill of the therapist (Freedman & Combs, 1996). The following casework scenarios of actual therapy events affirm Minuchin's assertions and add to our growing body of knowledge about the importance of therapists' authentic sharing of self with gay and lesbian clients.

Case Scenarios

Troubled by my last session with Chris, I sought consultation with other gay and lesbian therapists, asking how they handled self-disclosure of their sexuality with clients. The cases below are drawn from dialogues with colleagues, all practicing in a large metropolitan area with a strong gay and lesbian community. In the following scenarios, client and worker names and other identifying information have been changed to protect confidentiality.

Scenario One: Mona and Jill– Disclosure as Reassurance and Socio-Emotional Support

Mona is a licensed clinical social worker working as a therapist in a large outpatient psychiatric clinic specializing in brief solution-focused work with families and children. Although out to her family and friends, she normally prefers to keep her lesbian sexual orientation private at work.

Jill had begun therapy with Mona when she first came to the clinic for a severe, adolescent depression. Mona followed Jill through several in-patient stays for suicidal ideation, some difficult college experiences, and nu-

merous break-ups with boyfriends. Now a young adult, Jill seemed to be reconstructing her life at last.

"I have a terrible secret," Jill confided one day. "I want to share it, but I'm afraid you'll abandon me." Mona reassured Jill that she was committed to their work together and that she respected and valued Jill no matter what secrets she might harbor. Expecting a confession of parental physical or sexual abuse, Mona was relieved when Jill finally blurted, "I'm gay!"

Aware of the need to treat Jill's experience with tenderness, Mona thanked and affirmed Jill for her honesty. "It always takes great courage to come out," Mona said. "You may be relieved to know there's a large, cohesive gay community in this area and most of its members are happy, healthy people."

"So you know some gay people?" Jill asked.

At this point, Mona surmised that Jill might need strong role modeling and a clear face and name on which to place her evolving image of lesbian identity. Due also to the long-term nature of their therapeutic alliance, Mona decided that Jill deserved the truth. "More than that," Mona told Jill. "I'm a lesbian myself."

Jill expressed great relief at this news and the two spent the rest of the session redefining their therapeutic relationship through the lens of this pivotal shared experience. In subsequent months, Mona's role would shift to mentor and coach as Jill came out to her parents and co-workers. Not surprisingly, Jill's chronic battle with depression alleviated as she came to positive terms with her lesbian identity. She would eventually quit anti-depressant medications and terminate regular therapy sessions, attributing much of her success to the self-acceptance she had developed through Mona's mentoring.

Hearing Mona describe her experience with Jill, I reflected on my session with Chris. Central to Mona's response was the skill of using personal disclosure to reassure the client that she was not alone in her sexual orientation and would not be rejected by her therapist because of it. Perhaps this basic need for reassurance was what Chris had needed most from me.

Mona's scenario reminded me how important it is for gay therapists to reveal and explore the core sense of social and emotional isolation which often exists for gay clients in order to ultimately heal it. The therapist's self-disclosure of a personal gay identity may be especially helpful to the client at these times. However, the therapist's sharing of personal information which is unclear or ambiguous may simply confuse and frustrate the client. What the client may need to hear most from the therapist is a clear, concise affirmation: "It's good to be gay. I'm gay myself." Having thus established this shared reality, the therapist can then proceed to explore the meaning of being gay in the client's life and work on ways to strengthen the client's self-acceptance.

Scenario Two: Jay and Ron—Disclosure as a Means of Strengthening Client-Worker Partnerships

Ron was a young, unemployed gay male who initially stated that he wanted counseling due to anxiety about his relationship with his lover. "My partner can't come in for therapy because his work keeps him too busy," Ron told the therapist, Jay, in the first session.

Ron had found Jay by word-of-mouth referral from friends who had seen Jay for couples counseling. The friends had characterized Jay as a presumably straight man known in the community for being gay friendly. Several sessions into therapy, Ron confessed that he was HIV positive. Jay responded supportively. "I work with a lot of HIV-positive clients," he told Ron. "Let's explore your HIV history, your present health status, and your ongoing wellness regimen."

Jay believed that the rest of that session went well. However, the following week when Ron returned for therapy, he confronted Jay. "You changed when I told you I had HIV," he said. "You broke eye contact, took more notes, and seemed somehow detached."

Jay didn't try to correct Ron's hyper-vigilant perceptions but, rather, tried to address the heart of Ron's concern. "It's normal to feel alone and abandoned with HIV," he told Ron. "But I believe we're more alike than not on this topic. You see, I'm gay myself and have had HIV-positive sexual partners. I'm well-acquainted with the stresses HIV can place on relationships."

Jay's disclosure not only helped Ron feel greater accep-

tance but also increased trust, leading to a deeper level of work. Ron went on to share that his partner now feared having sex with him and that they had not been intimate for months. "How did you decide to be sexual with HIV-positive guys?" he asked Jay. "And can you talk to my partner about it?"

The new freedom to discuss shared relational dilemmas, which Ron developed in this in-

stance, served to deepen and enrich Ron's therapeutic alliance with Jay immeasurably. This degree of freedom would probably never have occurred, however, without Jay's disclosure of his own gay identity and personal steps in coming to terms with the risk of HIV in his own life.

Jay's scenario brought new light to my work with Chris. Jay's experience as a sexually active gay man, dealing personally with HIV-transmission issues, had clearly enabled him to forge a therapeutic link with the client. However, Chris, on learning I had a bisexual orientation and heterosexual marriage in my history, rightly assumed that I may not have had some of the same experiences that he had had as an openly gay man. His recognition of our clear differences had immediately distanced him and caused him to doubt my ability to empathize with him.

In this new light, I was able to envision other ways I could have responded to Chris. Remembering the narrative therapy school's emphasis on transparency with clients, I could have owned up to our differences, then explored Chris' experiences and fears around not being accepted by people who were different from him. Through embracing rather than minimizing our divergent perspectives, I might have established a level of genuineness and trust with him such that he could come to value my input, specifically because it was from a different reference point.

Scenario Three: Kate and Celeste—Disclosure for Healing Internalized Homophobia

Celeste was a young university coed working part time as a hospital aide. She reported never having had a committed lesbian relationship due to being "too independent." She sought counseling for job-related stress and a desire to manage her study time better. However, her therapist, Kate, soon surmised that Celeste might have more to work on in therapy than job-stress and time-management issues.

Kate sensed that Celeste's emotional independence masked a fear of intimacy in her same-sex relationships. The more Celeste "slept around and partied," as she characterized her life, the more Kate suspected that Celeste might be manifesting a suppressed fear of her own emerging lesbian identity.

Taking a calculated risk after establishing sufficient trust with Celeste to try something creative, Kate shared her own experiences early in her coming out process. Now a recovering alcoholic and chemical dependency counselor, Kate had once abused substances in order to get up the courage to go to bars and meet women.

"I hated my lesbian self," Kate confided to Celeste. "Somehow I hated myself less when I was drunk ... at least while I was drunk!"

Celeste teared up. "I know what you mean," she said. "Only my anesthetic isn't alcohol. My anesthetic is 'the chase.' The more women I sleep with, the less I feel."

Once Celeste's central self-loathing and self-medicating behaviors were identified, she was able to begin taking steps to counter them. Kate's disclosure helped Celeste initially identify for herself the counter-effective, even destructive, ways in which she expressed her sexuality. If Kate had named these behaviors, Celeste's ability to admit to them and her incentive to change them would probably have been less.

Kate's experience with Celeste reminded me that it is sometimes the therapist's past personal struggles, rather than special training and skills, which empower the worker to be most helpful to clients. Relating this idea to my work with Chris, it occurred to me that it might have

been very powerful for me to acknowledge openly that a mistake had been made in the way in which he came to me for counseling. I could have conceded that my own journey to self-acceptance had been a confused and confusing one, but that overcoming this confusion had been an important learning experience for me. Finally, I could have shared the belief with him that surviving my own confused journey might ultimately empower me to be particularly helpful to him in sorting out his special issues.

Scenario Four: Tim and Jon—Disclosure as a Call to Social Action

Tim was a middle-aged gay man just beginning to deal with coming-out issues after leaving a heterosexual marriage of 20 years. He still remained largely closeted but in therapy sessions was beginning to speak longingly of a time when he could live openly as a gay man in his community. Recently, he had begun dating another man who was also not out yet. Tim felt that he might one day love this man deeply but was growing tired of seeing him solely at one of their tiny apartments for quiet dinners or rented movies. However, the thought of being seen when he was out with another man struck terror in Tim's heart.

Tim's therapist, Jon, was an HIV counselor and AIDS activist whose office sported colorful flyers and posters concerning support groups, rallies, and calls to legislative action. One day when Jon came out to the waiting area to welcome Tim, he found his client leafing through the pamphlets with a sad face.

"Doesn't all this gay AIDS information scare all your 'normal' clients off?" Tim asked. Jon reassured Tim that, in fact, no one had ever commented in negative terms on the literature. "I can't even imagine going to one of these rallies," Tim said sadly. Jon shared that he too had once harbored doubts about advocating for HIV issues. "I used to fear people would think I was HIV positive and hesitate to refer child and family clients to me as a result," he admitted. "But I went for it anyway and to the best of my knowledge I've never lost any business over the fact that I'm an 'out for AIDS' activist."

Tim received this information with skepticism. However, Jon let the discussion go at that and the two went on to deal with other matters.

Not long afterward, the community held its annual fundraising AIDS Walk. Jon's office served as a team sponsor and he was there with his colleagues in force. When someone called out his name, he looked up to see Tim across the crowd, waving a placard in one hand and giving him a thumbs-up signal with the other. Later during a therapy session, Tim thanked Ron. "I could never have gotten the courage to go to any public gay function without that comment you made about being 'out for AIDS' a while ago. Somehow coming out feels different when you do it to show support for a sick friend." While Jon hadn't considered the waiting room dialogue with Tim a significant therapeutic intervention, its impact on the client may have been greater than anything they had accomplished together during the confines of the formal therapy process.

Jon's experience reminded me that sometimes helping professionals have to challenge clients therapeutically. Therapeutic challenges can occur either directly, through the therapist using overt, positive confrontation techniques, or indirectly, through the worker subtly pointing out a contradictory truth or modeling a different way of doing things. Applying these ideas to my work with Chris, I realized I could have challenged him to a dialectic on the function of his assumptions in his life. I could have explored with him how these assumptions helped or hindered him in relating to me and others like me. There are many diverse ways of being a sexual person in our society: heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, and others. Did Chris plan to cloister himself in an exclusively gay world and only seek the counsel of other strictly gay individuals? How might he benefit from widening his sphere of influence to include more diverse advisors and viewpoints? When was it important for him to seek input from a clearly gay mentor, and when would he benefit from another perspective? Through exploring these questions with Chris, we might have reached a richer, deeper level of helping and healing.

Summary and Conclusions--Some Success Stories and Some Not

The above case scenarios all deal with success stories experienced by therapists who came out to gay and lesbian clients.

But for every success, there are failures as well.

I ruminated on this pessimistic thought as I watched Chris sift through his conflicting emotions upon learning about my ex-wife and family. Finally I resolved to be fully genuine with him.

First, it seemed important to seek his permission for sharing more of my own story during his therapy time. I asked if it would be helpful for him to know more about my own journey and he gave me an emphatic yes. I shared with Chris a *Reader's Digest* version of my life as a bisexual/gay man once married to a woman. He listened closely and asked some important clarifying questions, wanting to know how my wife first dealt with the knowledge that I was attracted to men, how my children accepted my coming out to them as they grew older, and how family friends who knew the truth accepted me. I answered each question honestly, striving to be as forthright as possible even as I remembered the painful scenes with my angry, bewildered adolescent son and thought of the family friends who had fallen away through the years. Shortly, the story and questions were done and Chris thanked me for the truth. We ended the session on what seemed a positive note soon afterward. However, Chris never came back to me for therapy. I ran into him some time later at a mall, where he greeted me cordially enough, apologizing for never returning my messages after our last session and explaining that he had just been too busy. But I have always wondered whether the decision I made to self-disclose to him that day was the right one.

Epilogue: The Importance of Clinical Supervision and Consultation

My experience with Chris provided ample fodder for several discussions with clinical colleagues. The consensus from my sessions with a clinical supervisor and several peers was that I did the right thing with Chris but with an unfortunate, realistic consequence. Such is often the case with this inexact endeavor we practice called therapy, half science, half magic; we do the best we can with the knowledge, values, and skills at our calling. The rest is up to the client, good fortune, or whatever spirits guide the therapy world.

In the ongoing quest to achieve greater genuineness and integrity in working with clients, it also seems the right thing for therapists to question themselves and face some feelings of self-doubt at times. Here the role of doing our own work in our own therapy, as well as clinical consultation with supervisors and colleagues, cannot be overemphasized (Fickey & Grimm, 1998). Through seeking the support and constructive criticism of clinicians whose honor and skills we trust, we empower ourselves to be not only more clinically competent with clients, but more fully human as well.

Reflecting on my experiences with Chris after consultation with peers, I now recognize many additional options for responding to him that day. In retrospect, I believe I might have served him better by volunteering less of my personal story and listening more to his specific questions and concerns about me, then addressing each of these in reassuring and problem-solving ways. Clearly, Chris invited my sharing more, but only after I asked him. The NASW Code of Ethics (1996) reminds us that, as helping professionals, we are always in a position of power in our clients' eyes and that we need to take special steps to equalize the balance of power with clients. Asking the client's permission, while important, cannot ensure an honest response from the client who may feel a need to please us. In such situations, it may be more empowering to the client for the therapist to suggest a therapeutic strategy and take responsibility for the outcome: "I'd like to share a brief personal story in order to facilitate your process here, and would welcome your feedback afterward."

Since seeing Chris, I have become more acutely aware that the therapy hour belongs ultimately to the client. We professional helpers may justifiably feel that we have been charged with certain ethical responsibilities for promoting positive gains during that hour. However, in therapy, it is the client's experiences we are there to discuss, not our own. Particularly when working with gay and lesbian people, whose stories have often been negated by a heterosexist world, therapists have a special duty to focus most on the client's perspective. Personal self-disclosure of the therapist's own gay identity may be especially helpful to gay clients at strategic points in the therapy process, but the level of sharing

by the therapist should be extremely focused and targeted solely on empowering the client.

Now when a client asks me about my family and marital history, I generally respond briefly: "I once identified as bisexual. Now I'm divorced and identify as gay." We then go on to discuss the client's questions and feelings around this information. However, since Chris, I've never had clients take issue with my bisexual history. More often than not, they are pleased to hear that I have biological children when so many gay men do not.

It may well be that in the matter of therapist's self-disclosure with clients, two old truisms best capture the ideal practice. These are, "honesty is the best policy," and "less is more."

□

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The Never-Ending Story: Robert's Lament

This narrative provides a snapshot of what it is like to deal with a loved one stricken by mental illness. Stories and poems have served the author well, as she learned to express and process the pain and hurt of living with her son's condition. It has been a difficult road to travel, and the author expresses the difficulty of imagining the meaning of her son's life as a schizophrenic. This narrative, therefore, is written as a reflection of her struggle in hopes it may light the way for those who must travel the same road.

by
Josephine Mendez-Negrete

Josephine Mendez-Negrete, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Division of Bicultural-Bilingual Studies, College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, UTSA Downtown Campus, San Antonio, TX.

Robert—Genius Boy

As I look back, Robert was a brilliant little boy who was raised by me, a single mother, until his stepfather, Jorge, came into the family when he was five years old. He did not have a history of abuse—physical or psychological—although he recently recalled memories of child sexual abuse perpetrated by the daughter of his family day care provider.

Robert was fun, creative, and an extremely intelligent child. He could read when he was four, and at five he could read a book upside down. I remember him using this as a ploy to impress other adults around him when we would attend community meetings or other public events.

"Look! Look! I can read this book upside down," he would say to those who would listen to him. With deep-set wide eyes and a modified Beatle haircut, looking as cute as a button, Robert seldom lacked the attention he sought.

When he began kindergarten, however, there were some changes in my son. He became afraid of everyday things. For example, his first year of school, after he learned to walk to and from school, I would often be called at work to pick him up because he was afraid of the dogs in his walking path.

"Mom, come and pick me up. The black dog scared me. I don't want to walk by myself. Please, please, come and pick me up." It took him more than a year to walk home from school, but the extreme fear remained. I would experience multiple disruptions at work to pick him up and take him to his family day care home.

My son never had an easy time making friends. I don't recall a single friend from his elementary school years and only one friend from middle school. Family served as the core of his ability to socialize. When he entered high school in the ninth grade, he attempted to penetrate the narrow and parochial peer groups there in a desperate attempt to fit in. He tried all the groups available to him, but the "druggies" were the only ones willing to include him. They, like my son, understood what it was

like to be high school outcasts.

Despite his difficulties making friends, his overactive imagination, and his extreme fear as a young child, it was not until Robert was nearly sixteen that I began to notice clinical symptoms. It was then that he began to experience olfactory hallucinations and to become compulsive about self-grooming, taking two to three showers a day. Our family was baffled by this behavior, but we assigned it to the difficulties of adolescence.

My Firstborn Son

Late spring of 1990, when he was 16 , I sent Robert to México. He was experiencing a very difficult adolescence and doing terribly in school. My husband and I were at a loss about his borderline anti-social behavior. Robert

was truant from school, did not want to study, broke curfew, and refused to find a job. So, we sent him to stay with Tía Juanita and Tío Gabriel.

My tíos both were wonderful, nurturing, and caring persons who had raised eleven successful children. Along with that, they lived in the town where my mother was born and raised, which would give my son an opportunity to meet and get to know both sides of my family.

His stay lasted less than six months. When Robert came back, he seemed to be increasingly angry. He attempted to pick up the pieces by returning to school, finding a job, and reintegrating himself into our family. In his ambivalence whether to become an adult or to remain a child, Robert fought us all the way; he refused to be held accountable for his behavior, for example, smuggling a girl into his bedroom. After that situation, Robert moved out to a seedy side of town with his two friends, a pregnant 16-year old girl about to give birth and her boyfriend, Bruce.

Soon after Robert had been "on his own," Bruce came to tell me that Robert lacked the maturity for independence. (Robert survived on the food we bought him and kept clean by washing his clothes at our house.) Bruce also expressed concern over my son's suspected drug use. "Rob is a little kid. He needs your help, but does not know how to ask you. Go pick him up."

I took Bruce's advice. The next day, I got up early, went to the house my son shared with his friends, and knocked on the door. No one responded to the first two or three knocks. I persisted. Finally someone heard the knock and Bruce answered the door. I asked if Robert was home. "Rob is in his room," Bruce said, as he ushered me in. The house was filthy: cat droppings all over the place; a kitchen sink filled with dishes; and clothes strewn on the floor. With my insides at my throat and my stomach churning, I knocked on Robert's tiny loft.

"Robert. Get up! I have come to take you home. You have no choice but to come with me. I am taking you out of here."

He groaned and babbled, and still half-asleep Robert said, "I'll be right there."

Agreeable and docile he came down with all his belongings. His appearance did not signal any warning signs. Apart from his disheveled and uncombed hair, he was clean. His weight had not fluctuated greatly; he was the same size. When he saw me, he sighed as if to express relief and gratitude.

In the car, Robert and I did not speak to each other for what seemed an eternity. The silence gave me time to think through a plan of action. My husband and I had agreed that he could return home, with the expectation that he would have to follow the rules of the house. My mother and my brother also had made themselves available to Robert if he wanted to change his environment and return to school. Since he did not like living with us or the rules we had for him, Robert chose to go live with my mother. He was to have stayed there until he graduated from high school.

At a family meeting, we laid out the expectations: he was to attend high school and graduate; if he dropped out of school, he was to go to work; he was expected to contribute and help with the household needs. He agreed to all conditions. The way we saw it, these expectations were estab-

lished to help Robert transition into adulthood.

In the fall 1990, Robert went to live with my mother, my brother, and my brother's girlfriend. I'm sure respect for those persons who wanted to help him influenced Robert's decision.

Pre-Onset Behaviors

In late 1990, Robert broke his agreement with my mother and brother—he did not graduate from high school or hold consistent employment and moved into his girlfriend's home, into shady dealings, and into the illegal drug trade. His girlfriend's family, which actively participated in the gang and drug life of our town, became his haven. He severed relationships with all of us and became immersed in the lives of his girlfriend and her family. Opting for a lifestyle that was not of our liking, Robert became estranged from us as he became an integral part of his fictive family. However, there were times when he would call and tell us he needed money or food for the children he babysat for. We were suspicious of his requests.

"Mom. I need money for groceries. The children haven't eaten. We have nothing to eat in the house."

"Grandma. Lend me some money. I'll pay you back."

"Tía Felisa. Do you have some money you could lend me? I need to help and I'm out of work. Can you help me?"

More often than not, my brothers and sisters and my mother or I would help him. But, there came a time when we grew tired of his calls.

I recall the countless times, refusing his request, I said, "Roberto. She gets welfare for those kids. What does she do with her money? That's it! They're not my responsibility. Don't ask me for money anymore," as I refused his request. Soon, he stopped calling, and he stopped asking for money.

Robert remained distant for months at a time. However, sometime in July of 1991, I got a call from María, his girlfriend's mother.

"Robert is tweaking." She said, without even identifying who she was.

I had no idea what Maria was talking about. Even though I had worked in and around youth and families who used drugs, her statement made no sense to me.

"What do you mean?" was all I could say.

She quickly responded: "He took an overdose of crank. The only thing I know that will bring him down is a shot of heroin. I'm going to give him a shot."

"No! Don't you dare!" I shouted.

Drawing from my experience as a professional who worked with drug users, I said, "Give him plenty of fluids: Orange juice, cranberry juice, waters, and make sure he eats." I feared she would make a *tecato*, a heroin addict, out of my son. I didn't know what else to say or do.

"That's the only thing that works." Maria repeated.

Without telling her I would be at her home, I hung up and flew the 37 miles over the Santa Cruz Mountains to see about my son.

I was there in record time. Robert was incoherent and completely out of it. I wasn't sure he even recognized me.

"I tried to kill myself," I heard him say to me with a conviction that frightened me.

Fearing repercussions, Maria asked me to take Robert home. *"Llévatelo. Yo no quiero problemas!"*

I took him home. Once there, Robert seemed a bit more relaxed. However, the paranoia and fear intensified. My son did not want to be left alone or out of my sight. It became an unbearable situation, a week of pure hell!

Traveling Through Madness

After his break, I could see why my son had been attracted to a drug-friendly environment. Use of drugs, the literature states, is not an uncommon response for pre-onset individuals. Mentally ill people use drugs as a means of normalizing the irrational fears, dealing with the "not fitting-in" experiences, and coping with the unexplainable behaviors.

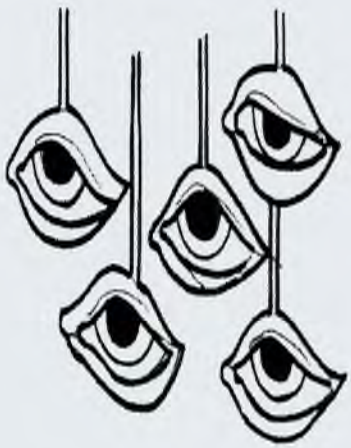
Still, as his mother, I was willing to see his mental problems as drug induced because there was a possibility of recovery. In that light, my quest to get help for Robert began.

I initially approached two drug-rehabilitation clinics. When I took him to the first one, he was extremely agitated. He refused to get out of the car and would not go into the facility because he took the workers for devil worshipers and accused them of engaging in bizarre behaviors. In his reality, every car that passed and every person he saw was somehow connected to "those people who want to hurt me."

Time and time again, drug facilities refused to help Robert

because they perceived his problem as something beyond their control. Employees at these facilities expressed regret but also shared their concern that his need was beyond what they could treat.

Next, I tried to get my son help with Community Companions, a community-based program for mentally ill. This, too, proved useless. Although Robert was begging for help, this agency refused him assistance because it did not serve dual diagnoses clients. With every viable option closed to him, we returned home. I made sure he ate and gave him plenty of liquids, intending to flush out whatever drug residue



remained in his system.

These were difficult times for our family, and me in particular, as a professional and his mother. To me, it was obvious that Robert was medicating himself to normalize the confusion he was experiencing. I found myself voiceless and powerless, despite having the knowledge necessary to help my son. I could not get for him what I had many times before provided for others as I helped them gain access into mental health and drug facilities. I had opened doors for others that would have remained closed were it not for my advocacy efforts. Yet, in our personal situation, when seeking support for my son's condition, my professional entrée and knowledge dissipated. As the mother of a mentally ill son, I found my professional status to be irrelevant.

All the while, I struggled with the tension between professionalism and motherhood. It is one thing to read about mental illness in books and another to diagnose mental illness, especially when it is your own child living the symptoms. It was a grueling and difficult experience.

Robert talked about eating human flesh in the pizza. He was suspicious of everything he put in his mouth because, he said, it tasted like blood. I could not go anywhere. I could not leave the house because I was the only person he trusted and with whom he felt safe. He didn't even trust his younger brother.

"Don't mess with me, Mom. I know Corky is seeing Vicky, my girlfriend. He is in it with them and wants to kill me."

After three more days at my house, it became obvious that I could not help Robert. Again, acting on the premise that this was a drug problem, I sought help from Victory Outreach, a church-based drug program that agreed to accept him in their East Palo Alto facility. He agreed to go. The church affiliation seemed appealing to him somehow. When I got home, I had a message that Robert was found on Highway 101, walking against the traffic toward San José. On a courtesy drop, the CHP took him to my brother's house. By this time it had been close to two weeks since Robert had taken the overdose. I drove to my brother's to see what I could do.

I felt stretched between professional obligation and my feelings as a mother as I encouraged my son to voluntarily sign himself into a mental ward. While I did not want to see him in a mental ward, I knew the best place for Robert was a psychiatric hospital—I feared for his safety and the safety of others.

I struggled with the hospital to hold him longer than the initial 24 hours. I wanted my son to be helped. Finally, after much persuasion and additional data, his 72-hour hold was expanded to 14 days, but his girlfriend came and took him out under the pretense of wanting to help him. She convinced him that all would be well once he was drug free and no longer "tweaking" from the overdose.

In a delusional stupor, Robert went to Lake Tahoe and married his girlfriend. He felt he would be safer around her family. Marrying her gave Robert the false sense of safety he needed to be around them.

Robert stopped taking the medication the hospital gave him, on the advice of his mother-in-law and his new wife, who told him to "ride it out." The psychosis returned without the medication. When the paranoia intensified, my son was on the telephone asking me to come get him.

"I don't feel safe in my in-law's house," he claimed. "Mom, I'm sure they are going to kill me."

I brought him home again. In

trying to get him help, I was referred to various drug programs. I did not fight the referrals, preferring to believe that my son had a drug problem instead of a serious mental health problem. I could see a possible solution to his problem if I looked at it from this point of view.

Angels at My Table—*Guardianes y Amigas*

Feeling completely hopeless, I called Lorelei, a clinical social worker friend of mine. I asked her

to help me with Robert. Knowing the urgency of my academic deadlines, she agreed to take him in until we could all figure something out or until I took my oral exams to advance to candidacy. This was mid to late August of 1992.

With some trepidation, but knowing that Lorelei had expertise with mental illness and drug abuse, Jorge and I drove Robert to Philo, California. Lorelie lived on a ranch that had previously served to treat extremely emotionally disturbed children. Lorelei, who had known my son for about six years, said. "Joze, what happened? This is not like Robert."

Robert seemed to feel comfortable there, yet he asked to sleep with the lights on and also locked his room from the inside. The next morning, Robert managed to put forth a facade that convinced us that he was feeling better. We went home; Robert stayed in Philo.

The day after he got there, I got several calls both from my friend and from Robert. She was seriously concerned that Robert's problem was more than the results of a drug overdose and felt that all Robert's symptoms pointed to mental illness.

As Lorelei told me, "Robert was hearing things, seeing things, and still extremely agitated. While he fronts some rational sense of his surrounding, he cannot cover his delusional thoughts."

My son wanted to sleep in the same room where she slept, and his explanation was that he was afraid of the creatures that lived in the town and wanted to hurt him. By the third day of his stay, Robert expressed a desire to protect himself with a weapon. In fear for their safety, Lorelei hid the cutlery and any other sharp object in her house. She became concerned over the potential harm that could come to her and Robert.

When she had done all she could, she called and told me that he needed more help than she could give him. "Joze, I told Robert he could no longer stay with me. I asked him where he wants to go. He said he wanted to go to Modesto with his aunt." Lorelei bought him a greyhound ticket to Modesto.

Seeking a "Home"

The constant spatial movement experienced by my son is not uncommon for individuals who are mentally ill. Movement was the one constant my son experienced in the initial phase of his illness. Only twenty-one years old, he had moved in and out of four counties in the period of four months. Running away from and to became metaphors for the confusion and displacement Robert felt.

On his bus ride to Modesto, where he expected to find respite from the paranoia and delusions, Robert fell asleep and ended up in Sacramento. He got off the bus and took a ride from a drunk driver. They were in an accident.

He called me from Lodi Hospital. "Mom. I've been in an accident. Please come pick me up." I refused. He was 250 miles away, and I was determined to abide by the limits I had set for him.

He finally ended up at my sister Margaret's in Modesto but my sister, afraid of Robert, had her husband, Joe, drive him to our brother Juan's.

As soon as they arrived, I got

a call from my brother. "Josie, Robert has been dropped off at my door step. He needs you to come and get him."

I talked to Robert. Knowing that Mendocino, the county he had just returned from, had been receptive to helping him, I convinced Robert to return there. Promising to find him emergency housing in a homeless shelter, Lorelei had offered to connect him with a mental health and homeless advocate and to help him begin the process of applying for General Assistance (GA) and medical insurance. Juan bought him a Greyhound ticket for his return to Ukiah where Lorelei worked.

Santa Clara County, Robert's county of residence, had refused to treat him. Lorelei and I thought that since Robert was in the system at Mendocino County, he would be better able to receive services. Robert returned with the intent of establishing residency. However, he was unable to complete hisapplication and requested help with the forms. When he was finally able to complete the forms, he found out there was a 30-day residency requirement for processing his application. He became frantic because his housing would run out two weeks before he met his eligibility requirements.

I got a call from him, pleading, "Mom, please! I only feel safe at your house. Please! Let me come live with you."

As heartbreaking as it was I had to tell Robert no. I was very clear from the beginning—with him and myself—that his living with me would not be good for either of us. As a professional, I knew I could not help him. As his mother, I lacked the degree of patience and compassion necessary to be his caregiver.

Every time Robert called, I repeated that he could not live with me. "We need to get you some help and the process there has been the most humane and receptive to your needs," I said to him. County personnel there had been the only ones receptive to his needs. Also, he had begun to make connections with homeless and mental health advocates and other support systems.

The last call I got from Mendocino County sounded extremely desperate. Rightfully, he was frightened about the prospect of ending up in the streets.

His Return

I told Robert he could come back, but only if I could find a homeless shelter or mental health service that would take him. I reiterated that under no circumstances would he be able to come and live with me. He agreed to these conditions.

Tim, Lorelei's husband, drove Robert to Santa Clara County's Valley Medical Center where I picked him up. As much as it broke my heart, and as much as he obsessed about coming home because it was the safest place for him, I refused. Dealing with a son who was in active psychosis was something I could not take on nor was willing to assume. I wanted Robert to get professional help. As his mother, I was clear I could advocate for him and support him, but I knew I could not take charge of his affairs or be a primary caregiver. I lacked the time and the patience to assume this role.

I took Robert to Julian Street Inn in San Jose where he lived for about three weeks. In early November of 1992, he entered an experimental dual diagnoses program called Virginia Street Project. He was placed in a board and care facility.

Since then, Robert, my husband, my younger son, and I have established a relationship that makes sense for our schedules. My extended family has been apprised of his condition. With some reservations on some family members' part, they are beginning to understand that he is schizophrenic. He is included at family gatherings. He attends birthday parties. He is invited to dinner and occasionally is taken to the movies or sporting events.

While my family of origin does not fully understand Robert's condition, they are there to support him as he attempts to deal with his illness. I hope they and we can handle the arduous road to come, particularly as we confront impending relapses.

In the Fringes of Madness—*En el Margen de la Locura*

In 1994, after I completed my fieldwork, Jorge and I moved to San Antonio, Texas, where we were offered academic positions in the same community. I made the move with the expectation that I would have to continue advocating for my son's treatment as he navigated the cycle of mental illness.

"A woman called you. She said Robert tried to hurt himself again." Cautiously and laboriously attempting to protect me from the pain embedded in the mes-

sage, Jorge repeated the messages for the day, "Robert tried to kill himself. You better call her."

I decided to wait and eat my meal, having just arrived from teaching a class. I sensed Jorge glancing at me through his peripheral vision. My response baffled him; he was confused by my new strategy for coping with the ever-present crises in Robert's life. Was I learning to handle the situation? Could be!

"Please tell her to call by nine" the note said. I waited until almost nine to return her call. I needed the time to gather my wits.

"I'm returning your call," I heard myself say to Ms. Salud.

Without an attempt on her part to soften the blow (I'm sure this was not the first such call she has made about a resident in her board and care facility), she told me: "Robert has cut his wrists."

"Are the wounds superficial?" I said, attempting to assess the seriousness of the situation.

She responded. "I think it's just a cry for attention from your son. He is very lonely."

I spoke to Robert. He talked of feeling empty, tired of being perceived as incompetent and incapable of handling his life. "Mom. I wish I could live on my own. I would be all right." This has been part of the magical-thinking aspects of his illness.

He explained that he feels trapped by the paranoia and delusions. He curses the schizophrenic condition that controls his life.

Robert is not the only one affected by his illness. The paranoia and delusions have enveloped all family members. It's no wonder he feels lonely. His illness is cumbersome, although we cope with it the best way we can. I, two thousand miles away in San Antonio, feel insulated by the distance. However, the protection afforded by the miles also binds me in constant engagement with my son's condition.

His physical absence did not blot him or erase him from my mind. He was embedded in my daily interactions. He was with me, despite the distance. Just as he contended with the voices and exaggerated fears, I lived with the impending crises of his illness.

Is it a Dream? *¿Dónde Estoy?*

It's summer 1996. I live with the potentiality of an impending crisis. I live with the expectation of a call. From week to week I fear the past repeating itself. I dread a replay of the calls and of days gone by.

"Robert is homeless."

"Robert killed himself."

"Es tu hijo, ¡cuídalo!"

"You are his mother. He's your responsibility. Take care of him."

When does mothering end? When are my caregiving responsibilities accomplished? Do I have to be fused to my son? Or, do I attempt to create the recommended distance that supports his empowerment and self-sufficiency? Therein lies the answer, in the tension of the unknown, the unpredictable, and the uncontrollable. The answers are tenuous, as is his condition. The answers change along with his prognosis.

When talking to strangers about my son's illness, I often hear myself say, "My son is mentally ill. His condition can be managed with medication. He has a mind of his own. He has a case manager and services at his disposal. He needs autonomy and independence. He needs the clarity necessary to learn the coping skills that will help him and us live with his illness." With this speech act, I am trying to humanize and normalize my son's illness. However, when interacting with family members, my speech changes into a more active and invested self as I say, "You don't have to help him if you don't want to. He has a support network. Send him there." These words play out in my conscious mind and in my dreams like a broken record, as I engage Robert's illness even in its dormancy. Like his delusions or his voices, my concern for him plays a complementary self-talk that never ends.

There are times when I relive or dream about conversations or calls I have received. For example, the times my brother Juan José called about one of the many psychotic episodes that my son was experiencing, I was choked by the emotions welling up in my throat, unable to respond.

I can still hear Juan, his voice crisp with frustration, resenting having to confront Robert's illness one more time, say, "Josefina, Rob is here."

"He really believes someone is going to kill him. I don't feel safe with him here." Fearing for his family, Juan adds: "María [his wife] and Max [his son] are at risk."

Hasn't he learned that the harm is imaginary? I think to myself.

I want to say, "At risk of assassination by imaginary demons," but I remain silent. I swallow the words and his attacks on my mothering, exhausted by my

already frayed emotions. My sad heart and empty soul weep.

"He is your son. He's your responsibility. You don't give a shit about your son. He needs to be with you. He needs your care."

"¿Por qué no me dices lo que sientes? Why don't you really tell me what you feel?"

He doesn't mouth it, but I hear him loud and clear: "I'm tired of dealing with your son. I don't know how to tell him to stop coming to me every time something is wrong. I don't know how to turn him away. Get him out of our lives. I want to continue living in the safety of our isolation, away from all the hurt he brings us."

I mean to be empathetic and say, "I hear you Juan." Instead, a dam of tears caught in my throat bursts. I'm voiceless. I can't and won't engage his judgments and criticisms. I allow myself to break down, as I am engulfed by the misery of it all.

Finally, I break through the tears. Clearly and precisely, I tell Juan that Robert is having another episode. "Did Robert take his meds? How long has it been since he took them? Has he gone to see his case manager? When was the last time he saw his case manager?" Juan hears only my questions. He fails to sense the emotions that tug at my heart as he imagines me in the safety of the distance between us. After all, I am two thousand miles away and Robert is there. My brother wants me to make it all go away. I can't.

I finally gather my wits about me and tell Juan to send Robert to Downtown Mental Health. "Have him go ask for help." We hang up.

These recollections keep me connected to how I have felt and still feel about my son's illness. I feel put down and less of a mother to my son when interacting with loved ones about my son's illness. I know Robert's schizophrenia imposes additional burdens on the family and particularly on those he trusts and relies on for support. I ache for them, as Robert's incursions into their life disrupt the "normalcy" of their daily life. As his mother, I live with impending needs of my son.

These dreams and conversations with myself remind me that I live with the knowledge that someone—any one of my family members, a mental health worker, or Robert—can call me at any time to inform me that something has gone wrong. When that happens, I will have to resume the never-ending cycle of his condition.

Reflection

I have been living an emotional roller coaster since Robert's diagnosis. The feelings that I had learned to reawaken in myself as I healed from past hurts and mistreatments are sometimes buried and hidden within me because I have been resorting to internalizing and hiding the pain I feel as a result of his illness. It is a form of protection. Perhaps I am using a misplaced strategy for coping with the unknowns of dealing with Robert's mental illness. But, if I am to survive and continue to learn from the experience, I must resort to what works while I learn the personal skills for survival.

Still, all is not lost. My creativity has resurfaced. I am writing poetry, keeping journals, and documenting my son's experiences. This creativity serves me well and helps me to focus on the learning that comes from living with a loved one who is haunted by the specter of schizophrenia. All those around my son, my family, and I grow with every interaction we have with Robert. As a mother, I have become more patient, compassionate, accepting, and insightful. I am also learning to trust myself. The professional books did not prepare me to live with my son's mental illness.

As a professional who is intimately familiar with the mental health system, I have learned that I cannot diagnose or treat a person in the family for mental illness. However, as I interact in my son's life, I find myself having to use my knowledge and skills to document, analyze, and name the sets of behaviors I observe in his illness and to advocate for his treatment. I am using what I know. I aim to learn more about the disease as I try to better use the intuitive, emotive, and educational aspects of my professional life to support my son. I want to help him achieve as much self-dignity as is possible in this culture that is so driven by normalcy.

In the past, I could not sit idly and accept the conclusion that Robert was ineligible for social security benefits because some bureaucrat perceived him to be able to perform unskilled work. Now and in the future, I will continue to hold accountable those individuals and institutions that provide services to my son as I advocate for a humane approach to treating mental illness. I feel entitled. I have been inside the

madness and the pain as my son and our family deal with the spiritual, psychological, and emotional pain of his illness. His words say it best: "Mom. Because I'm schizophrenic does not mean I don't feel. The only difference between you and me is that I have at least eight televisions going in my head at all times, which make my attention and concentration difficult to achieve. Maybe now you can see how I get lost inside the goings on of my head." □

An Introduction to Leon Ginsberg

by
Sonia Abels

Sonia Leib Abels is the Founding Editor of *Reflections*.

While I was editor of *Reflections*, I invited Leon to write an autobiography. He agreed, and about three months later we had his story. Mary Ann Jimenez, the present editor, asked that I write the introduction. I invited Leon for several reasons: We are friends, albeit annual ones--we see each other every year at APM, CSWE; I know his work and have always encouraged colleagues to write about their careers; I think it's important that we publish personal career autobiographies of the people in our profession as social work's history embodies persons as well as institutions.

In his narrative, "A Personal Experience in 1990's Community Organization: Back to the Future," (*Reflections* 1996 Vol. 2#1), Leon wrote about community organization, with a modest portrayal of himself. Of course, the editorial comments focused on showing more of himself. In the narrative's abstract, he wrote: "For most of nearly 40 years of social work, I taught about, rather than practiced community organization . . . It was good to discover in 1995, during a local dispute over environmental contamination, that much of what I had taught still worked." I know Leon likes to write. During our editing process, he said that everyone enjoys telling about themselves. When he was commissioner of welfare, NASW NEWS published a series of back and forth letters in disagreement around a policy; I always found that clashing perspectives offers a better understanding of the issues. Although his demeanor is traditionally southern in its presentation, he has appeared unafraid to take on substantive conflicts. He has been a social worker and an academic and continues a varied and complex career.

Philosophically, *Reflections* commits itself to publishing personal career biographies to enrich Social Work's narrative, and to give social workers the opportunity to gain insight into the personal meaning persons ascribe to the events and experiences in their life careers. As you will see, Leon has been a devoted advocate to our profession's purpose.

Social workers and social work academicians rarely are quoted in the news or sought out for their opinions on significant events. Yet, many in this profession know a great deal about how to improve social relations in families, communities, and institutions. Narratives can describe, and explain practice and make public the meaning it has for us and for those served. It is not to promote the profession, but rather directed toward social work's purpose—to repair the world. That's why *Reflections* tells stories, and why we invited Leon and others to contribute their autobiographies. □

Reflections on a Social Work Career

Leon Ginsberg, Carolina Distinguished Professor at the University of South Carolina's College of Social Work, finished his MSW in 1959. He has been a social work educator since 1963 and has published over one dozen social work books. For ten years, he was a state government official. This is a brief autobiography of a diverse professional social work career.

by
Leon Ginsberg

Leon Ginsberg, Carolina Distinguished Professor, College of Social Work, University of South Carolina, Columbia, South Carolina.

Being asked to write a professional biography is flattering and humbling. It is flattering to think anyone might read a story of a life that is, compared to younger people who head universities, states, and nations, not especially remarkable. And I am a long way from being through with a career in which there is always something new.

Much of my writing is autobiographical, although not usually intentionally. *Careers in Social Work* (1998) covers some of what I've learned in the 40 years since finishing the MSW. The rural social work articles and books (Ginsberg, 1999, for example) are at least partly about my family in small-town Texas—although I was born and grew up in San Antonio. And the books and articles on politics, social welfare policy, aging, and public welfare practice are largely about my employment.

But I'm grateful to have my turn at reflecting and analyzing what I have done as a social worker and how I have done it.

Wartime and Postwar Education

I was born in January 1936 when Europe was rumbling and about to erupt with World War II. My dad, who was born in Kansas City, Missouri, owned a series of clothing stores, first in rural Texas but later in the predominantly Mexican-American commercial neighborhood of San Antonio. Although his formal education ended in the eighth grade, he learned to speak Spanish as an adult and was something of a reader. He identified closely with his customers, fellow shopkeepers, and employees, most of whom were Mexican-American, and had a strong sense of social justice and equal opportunity. He was familiar with discrimination because it was also the lot of many Jews of his generation. His ambition was for his children to finish college. Both his sons finished Ph.D's and are professors. He died just as he reached his 61st birthday from heart disease and the effects of diabetes. His mother died when he was a teenager and several of his siblings died young. His father, who lived with us when I was young, never really learned to speak English before he died in his 70's.

Even when my father's business was going well, something always seemed to interfere— floods, lost leases, thefts, chain store competition—and, after decades in small business, he was bankrupt. Sadness about business and family always seemed part of the family environment, although there were always some good times, too. I

think economic problems and the incidences of unpreventable tragedies contributed to what I eventually learned is my natural affinity with social work. Working with people who experience disadvantage is a natural extension of much that I encountered growing up.

My mother was born and raised in Weimar, Texas, a small, agricultural town between Houston and San Antonio. She finished high school there and completed a year at the University of Texas in Austin before marrying my father in her late teens. In her infancy, she lost her own mother. Her father remarried and she grew up with him, her stepmother, and three half-brothers, who became distinguished business people and community leaders in their part of Texas. She died at 68 from the complications of surgery to remove a brain tumor.

My mother's father emigrated from the Ukraine and his second wife came from what is now Moldavia but then was Romania. Both spoke accented English only. They were active in the Weimar community, which was largely settled by Christian Eastern European immigrants and their descendants. That grandfather died in his 50's but my stepgrandmother lived until her 90's.

I think there was a streak of radicalism or at least concern about social justice in my antecedents. My maternal grandfather read magazines such as *The Nation*, where I later published an article. One of my father's sisters and her husband were reputed to be Communists. When she visited us, we often talked about politics and she sent me books—books I never saw in libraries or bookstores. Our discussions about the big political issues of the 1950's were a pleasant contrast to the reminiscences and retail business discussions that occupied the rest of the family.

Looking back, I think the combination of some family tragedies and concerns for social issues were natural routes to social work—although I never heard of the profession until I was well into college.

School Days

In my preschool and early school years, I was something of an outsider. We were Jews who lived on the opposite side of San Antonio from most others. My neighborhood had few children my age. I must have also been a bit fragile after two operations before age five. I was never able to compete well in athletics, partly because of clumsiness but, I later learned, also because my left leg is an inch shorter than my right. And later yet I learned I had only four senses. I could not smell anything—and still can't. Being an outsider also contributed, I think, to my interest in social work and its activities. It often seems that many of us are outsiders or at least unlikely to be in the social and economic center of life. We identify with other outsiders whose lives are typically at the margins—the disadvantaged, people with mental and physical disabilities, members of ethnic minorities, offenders, children, and older people. I readily understand minority and international students who are frustrated by being instantly evaluated, often in demeaning ways, because of their skin color or accents.

Although I was not an immediate success in primary school, I was frequently announced as first on IQ tests at a time when confidentiality was not an issue. In the fourth grade, three classmates and I were "skipped" because our grades and standardized test scores were high. I think I determined at an early age that I would never be happy as a permanent outsider or below the top of whatever I did. I probably became competitive and desirous of power and leadership roles and pursued them regularly. Fortunately, I had some abilities that could help me pursue my ambitions.

I was early an outsider in my beliefs and values. For as long as I can remember, I told fellow students that I opposed capital punishment and the color segregation that was practiced at the movies, in schools, on buses, in employment, and everywhere else in Texas. Both were unpopular positions with many of the people I encountered. Even some teachers felt comfortable speaking out against African-Americans. Legal segregation of black and white people was the law, but there were some areas where Latinos were also subject to discrimination. I remember our Boy Scout summer camp going to a movie theatre in a town that required Mexican-Americans to sit in the balcony. We all sat in the balcony.

Junior high, Thomas Nelson Page, and high school, Thomas Jefferson, in San Antonio were different from elementary school. The student bodies were, for one thing, more "diverse," as we would say now.

There were more of San Antonio's Mexican-American majority in both. We had a Mexican-American student body president at Thomas Jefferson High School, the first, I think, in a school that was not predominantly Latino. However, African-American students were still limited to segregated schools. I graduated from high school in 1953, a year before the Brown v. Board of Education decision, which declared school segregation illegal.

The South's changes in relations between ethnic groups in my lifetime are phenomenal and could not have been predicted during the first half of the century.

Youth Organizations

One of my major influences was youth organization membership—the neighborhood Boys Club, the Boy Scouts, and especially the B'nai B'rith Youth Organization (BBYO.) I was active (that's an understatement) in the boys' division, called AZA, which stands for the Hebrew words for benevolence, brotherly love, and harmony. The local unit, the regions, the districts, and the international body, all of which had frequent meetings, conclaves, and conventions, were ripe for someone who liked government and politics, travel, and new people. Before aging out, I was president of everything, including the international organization. There was much to learn and much of it is the basis for what I do now—making speeches, writing articles, chairing meetings, running conferences, and dealing with people from other nations. So my youth organization work was also a route into social work.

Journalism was always an interest, too, providing training in writing, which I continue to use. Public television news anchor, Jim Lehrer, and I were on the same high school newspaper staff. Hal Wingo, who became editor of *People*, and I wrote together. For a time, I wrote about sports for the *San Antonio Express* and later wrote news scripts and edited news film (before video tape was developed) for the local ABC television affiliate.

Higher Education and the Army

After high school, unlike many of my classmates, I stayed in San Antonio and went to San Antonio College (a community college) and Trinity University, which was not particularly well-known in the 1950's but which is now a highly rated regional liberal arts school. It was o.k. then, though, and I studied with many whose teachings stayed with me permanently.

By graduation with a political science bachelor's, I knew I wanted to be a college teacher and tried for admission and financial aid in political science at the University of Wisconsin, where my favorite political science professor was a student while working on his doctorate. But Madison didn't come through and B'nai B'rith offered me a work-study plan that would send me to Tulane's MSW program in New Orleans in return for working part time for them while I studied and to continue working after I graduated. By then I was married to a former international B'nai B'rith Girls president with a child on the way. The Tulane alternative sounded fine—although social work was not my original choice. I wanted an academic career but I didn't know social work was compatible with that goal. Studying social work was an economic compromise. I could be a graduate student, have a job, and support a family, which were not possible had I tried to pursue graduate studies in political science.

But before graduate school, I had to serve in the Army to fulfill my ROTC obligation. I applied to be an Army social worker, quartermaster, or transportation officer, anything other than a combatant. My short leg, I thought, would keep me out of battle assignments. When my assignment came back, I was a second lieutenant in the artillery—which the ROTC staff had apparently added to my choices—and had orders to go to El Paso and the Air Defense Artillery School.

The Army did me a favor. The best instruction I've had on teaching methods was at the School. The Army used overhead projectors, for example, years before most educators knew about them. And I learned mathematics, a subject I had avoided at Trinity. Then I served as a training company executive officer and learned a great deal about people, some of whom were absent without leave, drunk on the job, or broke from gambling on payday. It was useful preparation for graduate school, social work practice and teaching, and the many different people with whom I would work in the future.

Tulane, BBYO, and Oklahoma

Tulane University was a

good experience, although moving from the Army, with its then all-male units and emphasis on weapons, to a school of social work, with primarily women students and professors and an emphasis on nurturing and understanding, was complicated. For a couple of weeks, I wanted to drop out and return to my old TV news job. But the subject matter and the people eventually piqued my interest; there was little indoctrination and a good bit of freedom of thought, and some of the professors were original thinkers and scholars. A field placement at Kingsley House introduced me to settlement house work. Other practica with children who had disabilities and with a group of mothers of deaf children broadened my knowledge of human problems and social services. Helping people resolve problems was fascinating and rewarding. I not only learned to like it, I also realized that social work was just as interesting to me as political science and that we were well-suited for one another.

When I finished at Tulane, I worked as assistant director for BBYO's Southern District. Then the director moved away and I at age 24 became responsible for the organization in seven Southern states. I was also pursued to consider other jobs—at the Houston Jewish Community Center and with the Tulsa Jewish Community Council.

After my New Orleans commitment expired, I moved to Tulsa for a salary of $9,500, which was fantastic for a young social worker at the time. I organized a Sunday youth recreation program, helped build a senior citizen program, and ran a summer day camp, all with the support of a devoted board, many of whose members were in the oil business. Learning to construct programs from the ground up was enriching and I continued a pattern of holding part-time jobs along with the full-time. I was a group worker at a children's psychiatric facility, a trainer for a mental hospital, and a member of the Army Reserves. My first published article was about my work in Tulsa.

While in Tulsa, I wrote to the director of the University of Oklahoma School of Social Work and told him about my background and my interest in teaching. Within a few months he called me for an interview. They offered me a position—for a salary of $8,750 for the academic year—and in the summer of 1963 I began as an assistant professor in Norman, Oklahoma, with responsibility for teaching undergraduate courses and graduate group work and community organization courses.

In five years at OU, I completed a doctorate in political science, taught three or four courses each semester, and trained Peace Corps volunteers, Head Start and Job Corps staff, VISTAs, and many other government and business employees as part of the Oklahoma Center for Continuing Education. I worked closely with an American Indian education program and traveled all over the state conducting seminars. When Oklahomans for Indian Opportunity was founded, I became a consultant. I also organized what we called Project Peace Pipe, a program to recruit and train American Indians for the Peace Corps.

The political science doctorate was a good choice. When I began at the Oklahoma School of Social Work, only the director had a doctorate. Most social work educators, everywhere, had only MSW's and, occasionally, the "third year" study programs that were offered at the time. There were many fewer schools of social work, and social work doctoral programs were rare. Pursuing a social work doctorate would have meant relocating and giving up my job, which would have been hard to do with three young children to support. Oklahoma allowed me to work towards a doctorate there if I would revert to the lower rank of instructor while I did so. I explored programs in education and social psychology in addition to political science, which I liked best.

I made it clear to the political science faculty that I did not plan to pursue a teaching or practice career in their field—that I wanted to use political science knowledge in social work education. I wrote a dissertation on mental health issues and took all the courses I could find that dealt with political behavior, social policy, and social research. The two fields were quite compatible and, for most of my professional life, I have taught, written about, and practiced a sort of political social work.

In addition to my regular duties at the Oklahoma School, I traveled by air or auto to teach extension courses all over the state, created correspondence courses, and taught in the Bachelor of Liberal Studies, which was an off-campus degree program. I discovered that I usually say yes

when asked to speak or consult or prepare grant proposals. There is always something to learn. If I carefully weighed invitations and judiciously protected my free time, I would miss a great deal—especially the many and diverse experiences that have punctuated my social work career. Although I have held only a few full-time jobs since 1959, I always do a number of additional pieces of work. They expand my horizons, dilute the full-time job's stresses, and, I think, make me more effective in general.

In the 1960's, Oklahoma was in the midst of Council on Social Work Education accreditation. When the site visit came, the chair was Dean Richard Lodge of Virginia Commonwealth University, who became a dear friend. I told him my ambition to be dean or director of a school and that my letters to those who were searching for school CEO's were not well received. I was 31, had a new doctorate, and was affiliated with one of the less well-known schools. Of course, the ambition wasn't totally irrational. In the 1960's, as mentioned earlier, there were few social work educators with doctorates of any kind and those few were often deans or directors.

West Virginia

When Dick Lodge was employed to help West Virginia University find a new director for its Division of Social Work, he remembered my interest and recommended me, among others, to the College's Dean, Stanley O. Ikenberry. Ikenberry, who is now head of the American Council on Education and former president of the University of Illinois, was even younger than I was. And the new president of West Virginia, James Harlow, was the former dean of education at Oklahoma and a close friend of some of my friends. I was interviewed, offered the job, and took it—in early 1968. I also considered two other faculty positions, one at the University of Utah and another, interestingly, at the University of South Carolina which was opening a new MSW program. But I wanted to be a director and West Virginia was the choice for that.

I began to understand that career development is only partly affected by one's qualifications and experiences. Much depends on personal contacts, luck, and coincidences. Career opportunities often require staying alert to the profession's larger environment and making as many friends and friendly contacts as possible. They are often pivotal. I also determined that one often has many choices and most can be desirable. Worry over making the wrong choice or passing up the right opportunity is seldom worth the trouble because any one of the choices is likely to have both advantages and disadvantages.

WVU was recovering from a denial of its accreditation reaffirmation. With the experiences from Oklahoma and extensive consultation with anyone I could find, we prepared a self-study and were positively evaluated by our site visit team and the Commission on Accreditation.

We also began a focus on rural social work because West Virginia is a largely rural state. Through Dick Lodge's help, once again, I was invited to present papers on rural social work at CSWE Annual Program Meetings and at meetings of the now out-of existence National Conference on Social Welfare. My colleagues and I found hundreds of others who were interested in the subject but who had not been organized in the past. All that led to the development of a grant-supported project on rural social work for CSWE which included some training projects and the first edition of *Social Work in Rural Communities*, a collection of articles on the subject. It is now in its third edition (Ginsberg,1999) and is one of the Council's all-time best sellers. Rural social work continues to be a small but viable part of the profession.

I was young and brash enough to initiate activities that were innovations in social work education. We used some of our block field placements for experiences in Africa, Colombia, and Wales. We had one of the first undergraduate grant projects from the federal government as well as grants from the National Institutes of Mental Health, the Veterans Administration, and the Department of Labor. West Virginia University developed a reputation for preparing effective proposals and for doing what we promised to do. Eventually, I offered proposal-writing seminars for others as a way of showing people how to succeed in the pursuit of external projects and dollars. Our School also offered some of the first courses on sexuality and conducted some of the first frank discussions and workshops on gay and lesbian as well as women's issues.

Child Development and the Governor

One of the more interesting WVU projects was the development of a comprehensive child development training plan for the state, which I was asked to develop for the Appalachian Regional Commission. The staff specialist, Irving Lazar, who later founded the College of Human Ecology at Cornell, told me Governor Arch A. Moore, Jr., was interested in the effort. I went to the state capitol in Charleston and was astonished when we were ushered into the governor's office and began working directly with Moore on what became a large and effective project for early childhood education and many other services. Moore, an ex-U.S. Congressman, was flamboyant and charismatic. He was frequently charged in the press with illegal activities but was found not guilty in a federal trial during his second term. He was an object of fascination and sometimes admiration for many of us.

Personally, it was a time of difficult decisions for me. I was approached about deanships at several other social work schools and was offered several of them, all at salaries larger than West Virginia's. Ultimately, however, I never chose to relocate. Building a school's program, raising new funds, and preparing for reaccreditations was wonderful once, but I didn't want to do it again. So I stayed with West Virginia until 1977. In 1971, however, my title was changed from Director to Dean and the Division was changed to the School of Social Work.

During my tenure as Dean, I served on the board and as treasurer of the Council on Social Work Education, began participating in and eventually chairing CSWE accreditation site visit teams, and worked with the graduate deans' association.

I was awarded a sabbatical to teach and write in Medellin, Colombia, where I improved my Spanish, finished the first rural book (1974) and *Lifespan Developmental Psychology,* (Datan & Ginsberg,1975) which I wrote and edited with Nancy Datan, and began developing material for a book on management, parts of which eventually became the co-edited and written *New Management in Human Services* (Ginsberg & Keys 1987, 1995). I also learned the rudiments of guitar-playing, which remains a hobby.

Among the many ways my life changed while I was Dean was a commitment to physical exercise such as handball, racquetball, and distance running. I initially used running to prepare psychologically for faculty meetings and other stressful times, but after reading Kenneth Cooper's (1969) *Aerobics,* I also recognized the physical benefits of regular, sustained activity. So, for the past 30 years, running or some other aerobic exercise is part of almost every day.

Commissioner and Government

In 1976, John D. (Jay) Rockefeller, IV, was elected West Virginia Governor. He had been a legislator, Secretary of State, and president of West Virginia Wesleyan College between the 1972 and 1976 elections after losing to Moore in 1972. Friends recommended me for Commissioner of Welfare, a position I had followed for years since many of our students came from and returned to that Department and for which we provided extensive consultation and training.

After Rockefeller appointed me and the Senate confirmed me in 1977, I learned to apply my academic preparation in political science. Actually, everything I had ever studied and done came into play in that position. Much of the work was press relations, for which my newspaper and television experience was relevant. Social work, social policy, and social research were all central to the Department's functions. Working with the legislature, keeping the Governor and his staff informed, dealing with the medical community, negotiating policies and laws, and managing a multi-million-dollar budget were all parts of the job. Interest groups of all kinds, hospital directors, nursing home owners, and dozens of lawyers were the daily complement of visitors. I had an able staff to help with any task we undertook, to advise on policies and directions, and to implement the agency programs.

While serving as Commissioner, I also served on the state's Women's Commission, chaired the Commission on Aging, and was involved with more task forces, committees, and councils than I can remember. It was an enormous job—larger and more complex than I initially imagined.

We had many successes and some crises. Because of shortfalls in the declining West Virginia economy and over-bud-

geting by my predecessors, we had to reduce the staff size substantially and could not give salary increases for some years. At one point, staff around the state staged a "sickout," and did not come to work for a few days. But, on the positive side, we had one of the first "workfare" or community work experience programs in the nation, which gave us international publicity. We overcame some negative evaluations by federal agencies and became experts on dealing with "quality control," which plagued many states at the time. I was elected president of the American Public Welfare Association (now the American Public Human Services Association) and became a member of the board of the Child Welfare League of America as well as the chair of its Public Policy Committee. I was heavily involved with the Southern Regional Education Board and often represented Governor Rockefeller with that group. I testified before Congress, did an hour show on C-Span, and was interviewed by national news people such as Robert Hager, Lisa Myers, and many others. So many groups around the country invited me to speak or conduct seminars that I was called before a legislative committee that wanted to know what I did with the honoraria and how I had time to do my job and work as a consultant, too.

A few years earlier, I was impressed with simply being in a governor's office. Now I met all sorts of celebrities—President Jimmy Carter, vice-president Walter Mondale, senators of both parties, many governors, cabinet members—and a few famous artists—like poet Allen Ginsberg, playwright Edward Albee, Ted Turner, and Bob Hope—through my board role with a local school, the University of Charleston. It was difficult to feel an outsider in such company.

It was an exciting job, probably the most exciting I ever had. Perhaps most important, a department head can make decisions that count. Before becoming Commissioner, my budget at WVU began to approach a million dollars. In the state government job a million dollars was considered a small amount. We were able to establish an "affirmative action" plan for social workers and minorities. In retrospect, we probably started some early managed care by establishing a "prescription formulary" and helped find other means to hold medical cost increases in check. We investigated and punished corruption through state and federal courts. We improved and extended social services in many ways and helped pass legislation that changed the archaic Welfare name to Department of Human Services.

But, fortunately, because such appointments are almost always short term, I didn't want to be Commissioner forever. I had divorced and remarried. My new wife had two daughters and I wanted more time with the three of them. The addictive political life didn't suit me for a lifelong involvement although it's fine for many people, a subject I wrote about in a *Social Work* article (Ginsberg, 1988). I wanted to be back in higher education, my primary career. Even while serving in government, I completed a book on aging with Anita Harbert, director of the School of Social Work at San Diego State University and another on public welfare, as well as articles and book chapters. I also lectured often at colleges and universities.

The perfect new job opened up—President of Marshall University in Huntington, West Virginia. A college presidency was now my goal and Marshall was attractive to me. Many Huntington community leaders and Marshall faculty supported my candidacy. But it was not to be. The search committee chose a list of candidates without my name.

Within a few months, the Chancellor of the Board of Regents, which governed public higher education in West Virginia, resigned. I was invited to apply for the position and was chosen enthusiastically by the Board in June 1984. At the time, I was also recruited to serve as dean at a top quality school of social work and to be executive director of NASW, when the very able Chauncey Alexander retired from that job. But my ambition was a college presidency and a higher education chancellor post seemed a fine alternative. The Board of Regents was frequently criticized by the legislature, the press, and, among those who knew it existed, the general public. But, I thought, after a lifetime of professional success, I could turn the Board around. For several months, I think I performed well—although not always popularly. I reassigned presidents of colleges whose performances were poor. The Board chose the system's first women presidents, on my recommendation. We pressed for employment of minorities on faculties and we

insisted on fair treatment of staff and students. I was, at the outset, personally popular with the Board for being devoted to action, with my friend and colleague, Governor Rockefeller, with the state's delegation to Congress, and with much of the legislative leadership.

But I was not popular with all of the Board staff, some of whom wanted my job when I was chosen, and some of whom, especially at more senior levels, seemed overpaid and unnecessary—a conclusion I expressed too openly. Some presidents would have been pleased to see me go away. But all of that was irrelevant until Arch Moore became governor once again in 1985 when Rockefeller's term ended and he went to the United States Senate. Moore and I had conflicts, although there were times when I thought we could get along, as we had during his earlier terms. I suppose he felt pressured to get rid of a high-profile Rockefeller man. And his priorities were quite different from mine. They had a great deal to do with constructing new buildings for higher education. He also withheld money from higher education that the legislature appropriated. I confronted that action directly, with the support of the Board, based on state higher education law. When the state Supreme Court examined the case, we prevailed against the Governor. I was also faced with requests from Moore allies to pursue actions similar to those that finally, in other areas of government, led to Moore's guilty plea, conviction, and imprisonment for federal felonies.

In his State of the State message in January 1986, Moore proposed abolishing the Board of Regents. During the legislative session, my priority was maintaining the Board, a position that prevailed although some presidents worked to abolish the Board. They accused me of trying to stifle their freedom to speak out. By then the Governor had appointed enough new members to the Board to control it, so one day in February 1986, I was forced to resign from a professional job for the first time. In retrospect, my handling of the job looks professionally suicidal. All at one time, I managed to disagree with the Governor, the senior staff of the Board, a major foundation, and some of the college and university presidents. On the other hand, the Board was in danger of being dissolved—which, after I left, it was—and I thought one of my primary roles was to defend its existence.

Being off the job wasn't all bad. I agreed with the interim Chancellor and the Board to continue on the payroll through July. My assignment was to write a report on the Board and changes I might propose. I probably needed write no report. But I did, 161 pages long, and I discovered that it was suppressed by the Board for another year. By then I was living in South Carolina and didn't realize there was any interest in the report. A newspaper Freedom of Information suit—perhaps designed to see if I had actually done something for my salary—broke it loose and suddenly there were telephone calls and letters from all over about what I wrote. *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (Jaschik, 1987) published a two-page story, picturing me relaxing near our swimming pool. The reporter told me I said many things about higher education they all knew but that no one had written before. The *Charleston Gazette* published an eleven part serialized version of the report.

While I was on the Regents' payroll but not working daily, I explored other jobs and communicated with many of my contacts in social welfare and higher education. By 1986, I was less interested in administration than in a faculty position. Ideally, I would teach social research and social policy, which had been my interests as a state official. A fine school of social work wanted me to consider its deanship; a couple of states interviewed me for higher education system jobs and presidencies; and several schools of social work approached me about faculty positions. Ultimately, my favorite offer was from the University of South Carolina, where I had consulted with the administration several years earlier. I highly respected the then-Provost, Frank Borkowski (now president of Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina), and Dean, Frank B. Raymond, III, and liked the position I was offered—a tenured, full professorship with a title, primarily teaching research and social welfare policy and services.

And that is where I have been since 1986—teaching, writing, and developing new programs. I organize and lead social worker and student overseas trips (to England, France, Greece, Israel, Mexico, Russia, Scotland,

and Sweden) almost every year; chair and serve on College of Social Work and University committees; teach students from all three educational levels—bachelor's through doctorate, in the classroom and by distance education; teach correspondence courses; obtain and administer occasional grants; direct conferences on subjects such as diversity, social policy, and technology; help with the offering of the College's MSW in Korea; consult, conduct accreditation visits, give workshops, and write.

Over the years, I served as an editor of the *Encyclopedia of Social Work*, was NASW National Secretary, chaired the National Policy and Practice Center, co-chaired the NASW Development Committee, served as a member and interim staff member for the Council on Social Work Education Commission on Accreditation, edited and wrote several books and articles, and generally do what a social work professor is supposed to do. I've won awards, been appointed to a gubernatorial commission, and maintained my titled professorship, Carolina Distinguished Professor.

On occasion, I've been approached about other positions in other universities and in South Carolina state government, all of which looked attractive but when I had to choose between leaving and staying, I stayed. There is nothing quite so emotionally rewarding, for me at least, as a professorship under a capable administrator. Why change?

Some Lessons

For some time, fellow social workers and others who know me have asked how I do a number of things, many simultaneously. Some of the suggestions that follow help explain myself. Some of my tools are, perhaps, not adult learnable. For example, I write and type fast, which are skills I began developing in junior high school. I was blessed with demanding English teachers and my mother was something of a grammarian. Therefore, I use language confidently. I also read—constantly. At one point, I took books to college basketball games to read during time-outs. Reading enhances writing, I think. Many of my ideas for articles and books come from my reading as well as professional and personal experiences.

I also like doing several things at once: dictating while driving; reading and watching TV while on exercise machines; composing lectures or articles in my mind while running and listening to radio.

Generally, I do everything right away. Many people wait until deadlines to complete proposals, grade examinations, or prepare reports. I am usually finished well ahead of any deadline. If I have the necessary information, I go on with the task. Those on the receiving end usually appreciate the speed. I think the social work term for that quality is "compulsive" but colleagues in Colombia called it "*cumplido*," or complete, which is much more complimentary.

I try to be efficient in what I do. Many years ago, I mastered some elements of "speed reading," which was a preoccupation of many people in the 1960's. When I read, I attempt to capture the major elements of the file or document and sometimes pass over some of the details. Usually, that makes it possible for me to prepare a faculty evaluation or manuscript review in less time than I might otherwise spend. If I read every line and all the attachments, I would not be able to do as much.

I also find that "just showing up" is helpful. I try to respond positively to invitations: to attend a meeting; to attend someone's session at a conference; to evaluate a candidate for promotion; to read and comment on a manuscript draft. As all social workers know, people respond positively to those who show an interest in them. When one is too busy for others, they often find they are too busy for us, as well.

Despite a less than ideal family health history, I have been blessed with generally good health. During my social work career, I probably have missed less than five or six days of work because of illness. That also makes me a reliable participant in the profession.

A now legendary and late social work educator, Paul Deutschberger, who taught at the University of Tennessee and the University of Georgia, told me, when I was a teenager, that I had some special skill in dealing with people—that I was able to establish comfortable relationships with others. Although it requires effort, I attempt to meet and talk with new people at national and regional conferences. The numbers of people who spend their time at such events with the same people they see every day sur-

prises me. Personal contacts are often the sources for invitations to workshops and other activities. All of us like to be recognized and remembered, and we think well of those who acknowledge us. It's something of a political skill. Every successful politician knows that shaking hands, making small talk, and calling on people in their own homes are often more significant to voters than the issues of policy and power. I occasionally encounter people whose reaction to such relationship building is negative. But they are a minority and are unlikely to become my allies or collaborators anyway.

What else have I learned that is worth passing along? That depends on one's goals, strengths, and shortcomings. I have operated, during these 40 years, under a set of principles and lessons that work satisfactorily for me but may not for everyone:

1. Always do more than one thing. Just practicing social work in one agency or teaching only in a specific area are insufficiently challenging—at least for me. And there are so many possible disappointments and frustrations, especially in higher education, that devoting all one's energy to only one thing can be disastrous. Besides, higher education rewards diverse activity.

2. Write. There is nothing quite so important in higher education and even in practice than putting one's ideas on paper and publishing them. So few people write, even when they have important ideas, that those who do inevitably have professional advantages. Writing spreads to many places and people—and it lasts. Strangers who have seen and read one's work often feel an instant rapport and develop relationships quickly with the author. I attribute many of my social work opportunities to my publications. Although social work book royalties are not lucrative, writing pays off in other ways, both economically and non-economically. Contracts to consult and to conduct workshops, as well as salary increases, often result from publishing.

3. Don't assume social work or education careers are easy. All work is difficult and social work is no different. Academic work is especially trying. There are few compliments, and rejections (of articles, book proposals, conference presentations) are a regular part of the experience. Being prepared for frustrations as well as successes is realistic.

4. Use help. Office assistants and support staff are often willing to help with manuscripts, classes, letters, and many other tasks they can handle as well as the social worker. Effective and talented people can extend one's own capabilities and available time.

5. Don't worry about money, so long as the basic salary is all right. I do all sorts of things for no compensation and all sorts of other things for generous fees. I always ask what others are being paid for the same work and seek to match it. But I don't turn down interesting assignments for monetary reasons alone. Besides, the most prestigious social work is often voluntary.

6. Stick to the job. Unless another position is much more attractive or one's current work is unattractive, it is best, after the first few years in a social work career, to stay on the job. Years are required to learn most jobs well and the payoffs are often many years away. The costs of relocating and learning new employment are great—often greater than the rewards.

7. Be involved—in NASW, local government, agency governance—as much as possible. Volunteer involvement often leads to greater professional rewards than anything else one might do with spare time.

But each life and each career are different and each of us needs to develop our own lessons. I am not sure that I am an appropriate model for everyone—or even for large numbers of contemporary social workers. We have to find our own way in complicated environments. And that is perhaps the greatest part of the adventure. □

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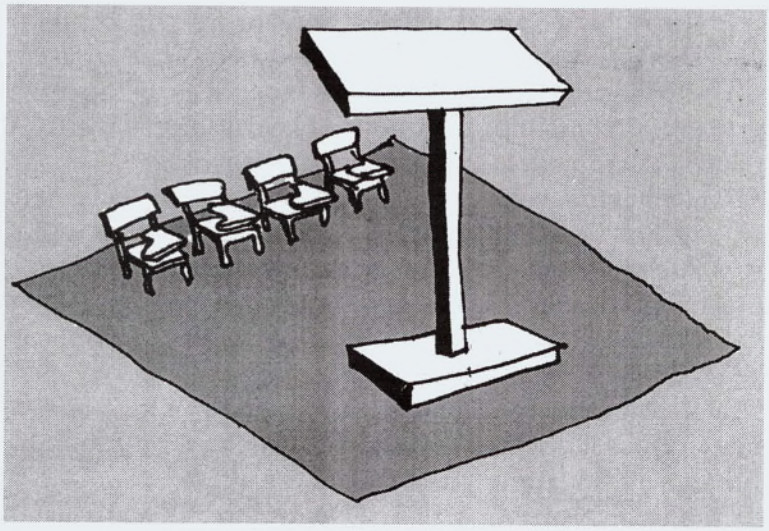

Every Good-bye Ain't Gone: Reflections on Memory and Leave-Taking

This is reflection on a number of leave-takings occurring in the author's personal and professional life. The process of departure facilitates remembering and making meaning of the events.

by
John A. Kayser

John A. Kayser, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Contributing Editor, University of Denver, Graduate School of Social Work, Denver, CO

It is the season of leave-takings and endings, both personal and professional. At the professional level, several mentors and colleagues are retiring at approximately the same time, so much so that it almost feels like a generational passing of the torch. At the personal level, I am immersed in the "sandwich generation" developmental transition with my young adult son, now on his own, and my very elderly parents, increasingly challenged to maintain their independent lifestyle.

In the midst of all of these comings and goings, I have spent some time experiencing, observing, and reflecting upon the process of leave-taking. The impetus to write this particular narrative is to remember (and celebrate) these people who have had formative personal and professional influences in my life and/or my profession. I have chosen to frame this experience as "leave-taking" rather than using professional jargon such as "termination" because I hope to capture in a more immediate way the process of departure, both for those who are leaving and for those who are left behind. Examining the leave-taking process seems to be one way to examine how we humans weave and unweave the fabric and fibers of our life, how we write—and then perhaps erase and rewrite—the unfinished chapters of our life journey into a coherent, meaningful life story.

"What type of good-bye is this?"

When I think back to my own experiences of leave-taking (from previous jobs, relationships, or clinical work with clients), I know well what a difficult process it is. Although I gradually became more skilled in raising the topic of closure with my clients, it was only after a few near-disastrous, trial-and-error experiences. The worst such example was the time I left my job as a child care worker in a residential treatment center to enter graduate school in social work. I avoided telling the kids I had been working with—some for several years—that I was leaving until my very last shift. I rationalized that this was appropriate because the children would not have too much time to become upset. The real truth was, however, that leave-taking then was too painful an experience for me to face and embrace directly.

Eventually, however, I learned the errors of my earlier ways and became more comfortable and confident about the ending process. With later child and adult clients, I would introduce the topic by inquiring about the "different kinds of good-byes" they previously had experienced. Typically, we could list several

kinds of leave-taking: the "see-you-tomorrow" kind of good-bye, said at the end of the day, when you expect the relationship or contact will resume shortly; the "see-you-next-later" good-bye, said at the start of a sustained interruption in the relationship or contact, but one which you expect to resume eventually; and finally, the "we-are-ending-our time-together" good-bye, said when you anticipate ending the relationship or not having further contact.

Framing good-byes in this way helped to normalize and legitimize leave-taking and diffused what for many clients was a highly charged process that they would rather avoid, in part because their previous experiences with endings often had been painful, chaotic, abrupt, and unresolved. Asking clients "What type of good-bye should we plan together?" allowed a clear focus on our ending, making it a mutual processand allowing the opportunity to talk about ways they could continue their growth and progress in the absence of the ongoing therapeutic relationship. It also offered a closure process for me, a way of attending to my own feelings about the ending process. Sometimes happy, or sad, or worried about their future, and occasionally guilty at the outright relief experienced, knowing that the burden of the work was over.

The following reflections about the present set of personal and professional leave-takings draw from this previous experience and address the question, "What kind of good-bye is this?" (Note: To preserve some measure of anonymity for the people being focused on, I have chosen to use first names or initials, or in some cases, to give no identifying information.)

Good-bye to Memory

"Honey, tired don't mean lazy and every good-bye ain't gone."
—Maya Angelou (1997) *Even the Stars Look Lonesome*

I wonder why some memories are preserved and others not. My mother—six months shy of 90—is doing a slow cognitive fade, her short-term memory becoming increasingly variable and Swiss-cheese like. The last time I was home, she repeated many times stories about our old (mostly dachshund) dog, "Herman the German"—the time he kept brushing his white coat up against the black pants leg of a visiting priest—the time she learned from a neighbor that he was chasing cars in a department store parking lot, five miles from the house—the time in winter when he was poisoned and died and my sister came home and cried. But what happened yesterday or earlier in the morning, or what was said two minutes ago, often is not available. Yet, I marvel at her valiant effort to compensate, her mind actively searching for and substituting alternative descriptors or memories when the correct words or associations just aren't there or won't come when she needs them.

My father, at age 88, has become the placeholder for her short-term memory, organizing her calendar when the next doctor's visit or hair appointment is scheduled. He also has learned to cook, taking on the running of the household and intuitively keeping their regular daily routine going, albeit at a slower pace and truncated (though still independent) lifestyle. While both of them are distressed at times about the literal deconstruction of her memory, there also is an amazing quietude, born of faith, that helps them face this challenge. They do not appear to anguish much over what has been lost; rather, they get up each day to pray, to love each other, to care for their friends and neighbors, and to continue.

I do not have the comfort of their faith to help ease my sorrow. Too much contact with the human side of institutional religion and dogma has left me bruised and cynical. Yet, I still can appreciate the healing powers that others find in it. My mother is fond of quoting the old adage "It's a great life, if you don't weaken." However, she has added her own witty rejoinder: "So who wants to be strong!" In their slow surrender to infirmity, I recognize their transparent openness to the Spirit, which allows me to see anew their strengths and to treasure their weaknesses. If ever the time comes when I reach their advanced age, I hope I can remember their lessons—that it is possible to continue to live meaningfully and to love, even as memory fades and abilities diminish.

Good-bye to Adolescence

"Goodnight stars. Goodnight air. Goodnight noises everywhere"
—Margaret Wise Brown (1947) *Good Night Moon*—

The nicest compliment ever said about my wife and myself—and certainly the most unexpected and meaningful—came

last December as our son graduated a semester early from high school. As class valedictorian from a small alternative high school, he used his speech to thank his teachers and family. About us he said, "I would like to thank my parents for all their unconditional love and for always pointing me in the right direction, but never giving me a road map."

It is not often that I cry, but this certainly was one of those times. The tears were not only those of happiness at his accomplishments, but of amazement

that he—and we—had survived his adolescence. Certainly, there were many times during his earlier teen years when I did not feel that my love was unconditional or that he was going in the right direction. I cried a few nights during those years, wondering if all those hours working for tenure was worth it if it came at the expense of being a father who could not help his own son.

A few weeks later after graduation, I gave him his Christmas present—a photo album of his life, from birth to present. I hoped this gift not only would symbolize his life journey thus far, but also would be something he would take with him on his departure into adulthood. Unexpectedly, our son was moved to tears at the album.

Now living on his own, gainfully employed, and self-supporting, he currently is researching actively his college options and future aspirations—which may take him still farther from home. The midnight anguish about the adequacy of our parenting or the wisdom of supporting his capacity to make meaningful choices about his life has given way to the sunshine of parental pride at his maturity and self-directedness. As always, his development creates the need and opportunity to further our own growth as parents. If we're not quite as prepared for the status of "quasi empty nesters," which has come more quickly than we expected, for the time being we're content as this transitional period still allows frequent contact and trips back home for refueling.

I do not necessarily recommend traveling life's journeys without a road map, for as some sage has said, "If you don't know where you're going, any road will take you there." Nonetheless, I wouldn't change it, because our son was right. Allowing him the freedom to make choices—and to learn the positive and negative outcomes stemming from those choices—has helped him get headed in the right direction.

Good-bye to "The Perfect Year"

"'Tis some visitor," I muttered,
"tapping at my chamber door;
Only this, and nothing more."
—Edgar Allan Poe (1936) "The Raven"

I have come full circle with Eleanor. One of my initial field instructors during graduate school, she was the first to teach me direct practice skills. In midyear, I began to pick up cases at the inner city elementary school where she was the school social worker. At the time, I was placed with a unit of students in another agency and we were all quite disgruntled with the lack of cases and poor supervision provided by the primary field instructor. Eleanor's laughter, genuineness, and patient teaching helped turn the year around for me.

After graduation, there was a long hiatus in which we were out of contact with each other. For the past ten years, however, we have worked closely together: she, as educational coordinator of training for the 15 to 20 students placed each year in an urban school district and the direct field instructor for two to four of those students; and I, as faculty field liaison for most of those same students. Through the ups and downs of working with both excellent and difficult students, I have come to know her passion for school social work and her love of teaching, as well as her poetry and playfulness. Who else but she and Connie (described below) would be able to say that upon their retirement they were going to start the "Retired Social Workers' Terrorist Society, dedicated to fighting social injustice—but only in the afternoon!"

The year before retirement, Eleanor began counting down how many months and days were left. I contributed to this

demarking process by grandiosely promising that her final year would be a "perfect year." It only seemed right to have a problem-free ending after years of dealing with challenging or "high maintenance" students. This became our running joke throughout the year. Although we did encounter occasional difficulties (e.g., student-supervisor conflicts, programmatic meltdowns in individual schools), on the whole the year went much better than usual. Problems somehow seemed less intense or intractable and were more amenable to resolution. In addition, at the dean's request, we jointly developed a field training component that attempted to integrate policy, practice, and research into student group field practice experience. We learned some important lessons about what works and what doesn't in the training process, such as "Don't expect students to testify in front of the school board about school social work when they are fearful of and unskilled in policy advocacy." (A painful personal lesson was learned as well. I know now what it is like to be the faculty member on the receiving end of negative feedback and mass resistance from a group of students disgruntled with a part of their field experience!) Finally, with the help of an extremely capable doctoral student, we carried out a well-designed satisfaction survey research study on the quality of school social work student training, as seen by a variety of school personnel. Lo and behold, the data discovered from the survey nicely supported the importance of school social work services and the value of student interns to the schools. Our final act of the year was testifying in front of the school board, along with two brave students and two highly skilled field instructors. So it was a perfect year after all.

Eleanor truly is (and received a national honor for being) the heart of social work. So, with apologies to Edgar Allan Poe, when tempted to forget, I shall remember to tell the raven about this excellent social worker, poet, and masked crusader for justice. Quoth the Kayser: "Not nevermore. But Eleanor! Forevermore."

Good-bye to the State of Grace

"Amazing grace, how sweet the sound."

—religious hymn—

Our field director, Connie, also is retiring. At their separate retirement parties, both Connie and Eleanor were presented with long flowing purple capes and purple masks so that they could go forth as "Super Social Workers" to continue their fight for truth and justice.

The quality about Connie that many people describe first is her amazing grace. No matter what the situation, she always has been welcoming, understanding, patient, and unflappable with students, field instructors, agency heads, faculty members, university administration, lawyers, and academic deans, even in the midst of heated conflict. Knowing nearly everyone in the practice community by name, she has been the best ambassador of social work and the most effective representative of our program for many years. Her gracious manner has made everyone involved feel an important part of the field team.

While sad that Connie is leaving us, equally sad is that many of us are leaving field education. About two-thirds of our faculty have opted out of doing field liaison work, desiring to increase their time devoted to scholarship and research. At first, this was abhorrent, as I felt strongly that having ongoing contact with the field was a core part of what social work faculty should be doing. This feeling gradually

gave way to puzzlement: how did the profession get to such a state that research and practice must be treated by faculty as mutually exclusive options, requiring some type of trade-off? Most recently, I have been confronted by the need to make the same trade-off choice myself.

As I head towards a sabbatical, I ponder the long-term goal of making full professor and the need to re-prioritize my time to do more research. Easy to be critical when the shoe is on someone else's foot. Not so easy when it is on your own. The prospect that I might need to leave field work also seems too much like a fall from grace, a loss of innocence from a less complicated, demanding, or rigorous professional life. In traveling this uncertain future, I will remember Connie's grace, fairness, inclusiveness, and, above all, her deep commitment to the field.

Good-bye to the Champion of Collegiality

"Many lives they have lived as various Beings.
They could have been a bear, a lion, an eagle or even
a rock, a river or a tree."
-Nancy Wood, *Many Winters*-(1974)

Dr. H. is an inconvenient speed-bump on the superhighway of sloppy thinking, an immovable rock on the pathway of shallow ambitions, a surging river blocking the unfettered passage of back-door-dealing travelers. Which is why some students, faculty, and more than one dean have found it uncomfortable to deal with her. One never has to wonder what she is thinking, because she tells you directly. While known informally as the resident historian or "institutional memory carrier" of our program, I prefer to remember and celebrate her accomplishments in a different fashion. A fierce champion of collegiality, she insists that faculty exercise their individual roles and collective responsibilities in the governance of the school. Should faculty try to avoid doing so, be like the lion, she courageously is willing to remind us.

In her doctoral theory class, Dr. H. also (literally) has been the tree. Using the metaphor of a great tree, she has taught about the conceptual seeds, roots, major trunks, and off-shooting branches of social work theory development. She has planted the seeds of scholarship in numerous students, and with her famous red marking pen, pruned the unproductive branches so that the tree itself could continue to grow and flourish.

I will remember the lessons and crucial contributions Dr. H. has made to my professional development. She has taught me the importance of courage, the meaning of tenure, and the need to take a forceful stand when faculty governance is imperiled. I thank her for making the critical contribution to my earliest narrative research efforts by linking me with Sonia Abels, who was just starting *Reflections*, thereby opening unimagined opportunities. Finally, she has taught me to see past the surface level of academia and learn how to discern and trust the depth of things.

I worry about the next generation of scholars who will come after people like Dr. H. Will we be concerned only with our own branch of expertise, or will we be able to tend to the needs of the whole tree? I hope that we will be willing to be the tree, the rock, the river, the lion, the eagle, or whatever is necessary when the need arises. That we will know when to become fierce champions of collegiality, and when to dig among the roots in order that the tree might continue to flourish.

Good-bye to the Story-Teller

"I realized that my sense of place is not a physical entity; it has more to do with my being and doing in context, not where I physically belong. I think we try to fill that empty space, as the patterns that make up reality are missing. *Reflections* and the people connected with it, filled that space for me, with opportunities for learning, creativity, and connections."
—Sonia Leib Abels, [Her Farewell] Letter from the Editor, *Reflections*: Narratives of Professional Helping, 5(2), p 3.—

Sonia too is many things: the keymaker who unlocked the helping professions' storehouse of reminiscence; the weaver who designed the journal tapestry of written narratives, connecting practitioners, scholars, and readers; the village story-teller or scribe who gathers and retells experiences and events to inform the community and preserve its traditions.

It is not easy making connections to someone when we work at different schools, in different time zones, with different deadlines and responsibilities. Yet I made such a connection with

Sonia through letters, phone calls, E-mails, and occasional visits, as well as through the exchange of manuscripts, peer reviews, and proposals for narrative and oral history research. The commitment to the narrative form (along with laughter and intuitive sensing) forged connections that broke through times of isolation and discouragement each of us occasionally experienced. Although she is no longer editor, I am pleased that the personal bond remains unbroken.

I will remember and cherish the mentoring and nurturance Sonia and Paul Abels have given to me and other generations of faculty colleagues. Their narrative and connective work has helped to create more humane and humanistic helping in the various human service professions. In knocking down the walls between humanities and social sciences, they have helped us all to embrace narratives as both art and science.

Conclusion

All of these developmental transitions and retirement departures create empty spaces in the fabric of one's personal and professional life. Empty spaces create opportunities for narratives and poems about the leave-taking experience.

The empty space, filled,
creates
connections, meanings, and reflections

The empty space, emptied,
creates
room for the Spirit to enter

The empty space, traveled,
creates
developmental opportunities and alternative pathways

The empty space, re-told,
creates
narratives of experience: life history and life story

The empty space, full of grace,
creates
a departure and returning place

□

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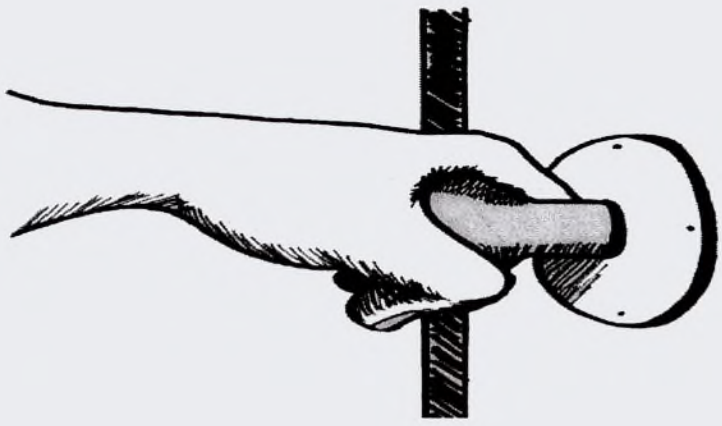

REFLECTIONS:

NARRATIVES OF PROFESSIONAL HELPING

Reflections: Narratives of Professional Helping (ISSN 1080-0220) is published quarterly by the University Press at California State University, Long Beach under the auspices of the Department of Social Work. Annual Subscription Rate: individuals, $30.00; libraries and institutions, $45.00; outside USA, add $15.00. Single copies: $12.00. Payment: check, money order, or credit card (Visa or MasterCard, please include number and expiration date). Please send to **REFLECTIONS: CSULB; Long Beach, CA 90804-0902**. We remind subscribers to please immediately notify Reflections of address changes, providing both new and old addresses. Please allow six weeks for address changes to take effect.

The purpose of ***Reflections*** 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 is given to articles that provide a 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 healthcare providers; educators, researchers, and administrators in the helping professions.

The central theme of ***Reflections*** 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 make 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 textural description of the experience, taking into account time, place, action, persons, behavior, and interaction. Narratives explain and describe event; 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, and explores the meaning of the experiences. Some narratives end with a coda, that is, a perspective on what occured.

Writing Instructions and Submission: Manuscripts are peer reviewd. Articles appropriate to the journal'spurpose 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 a seperate page, a brief abstract written in the same style as the narrative.
4. Place identifying information such as name, affiliation(s), title(s), address, and phone/fax numbers only on cover page.
5. Send three (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 Rich Text Format (RTF) for IBM based or Mac PCs and one (1) additional hard copy will be requested. Submission of narrative poetry and photography or artwork is strongly encouraged.

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

REFLECTIONS: Narratives of Professional Helping
California State University Long Beach
Department of Social Work
1250 Bellflower Boulevard
Long Beach, CA 90804-0902
(562) 985-4626 www.csulb.edu/depts/socialwk/reflections

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CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, LONG BEACH
Department of Social Work - 111194
1250 Bellflower Boulevard
Long Beach, California 90840-0902

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