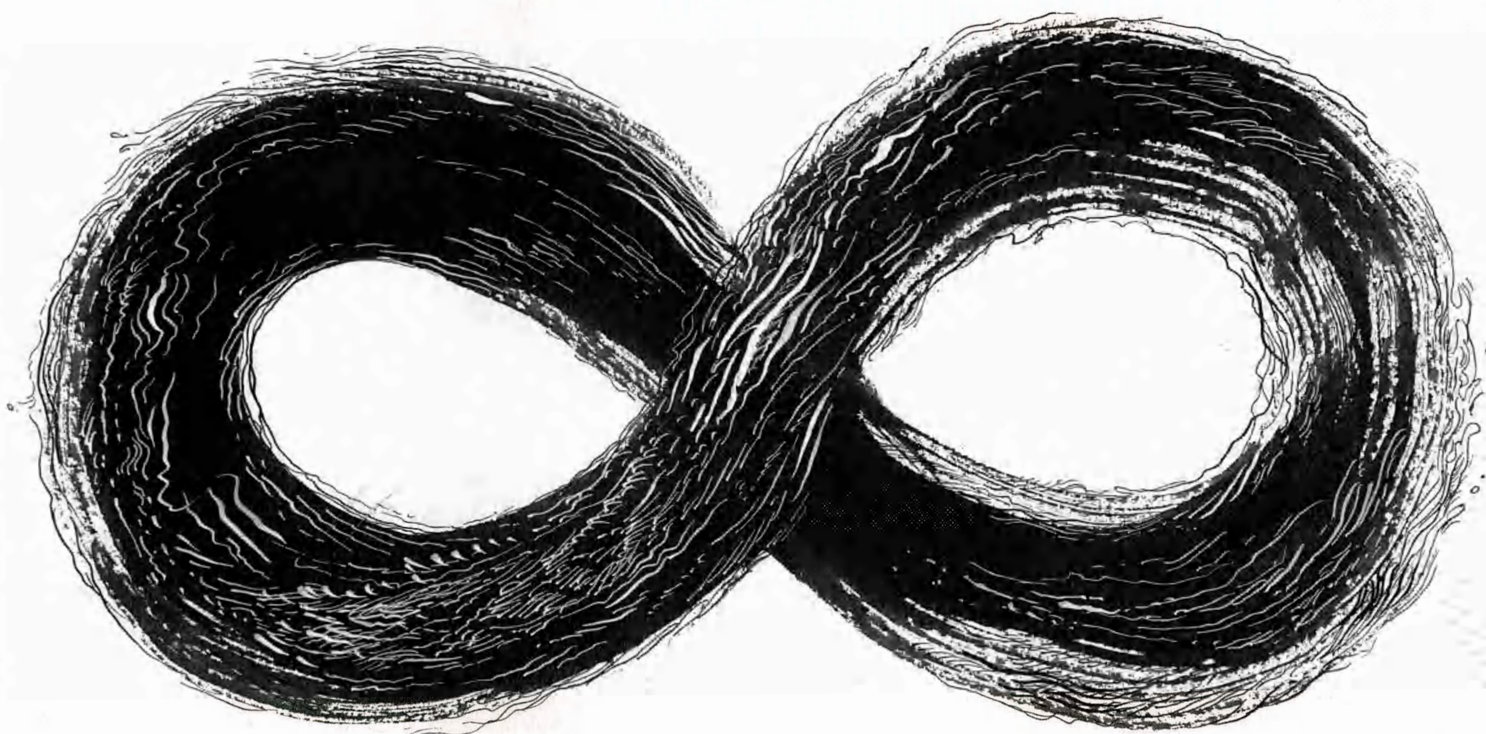
REFLECTIONS

NARRATIVES of PROFESSIONAL HELPING



"It did not start with me, it will not end with me."

Volume 18, Number 1 Winter 2012

REFLECTIONS
NARRATIVES OF PROFESSIONAL HELPING

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NARRATIVES OF PROFESSIONAL HELPING

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FINAL ISSUE PRINTED BY THE CSULB UNIVERSITY PRESS

Letter from the Outgoing Editor and Comments from Colleagues

Eileen Mayers Pasztor, DSW, California State University, Long Beach

Welcome to Volume 18, Issue No. 1, of *Reflections: Narratives of Professional Helping*. On behalf of the students, faculty, staff and our Director, **Dr. Christian Molidor**, we hope that 2012 brings the best for you and those you care about and serve given such challenging times. We have already experienced dramatic economic stresses on national, state, and local levels, and especially for vulnerable children, individuals, and families. In California, the CSU campuses have been hit hard by budget cuts. To accommodate the cuts and minimize impact on students, faculty, and staff, we have sad news related to our *Reflections* journal. We have not been able to increase our subscriptions to cover our costs. Therefore, after publishing 68 issues – four each year for 17 years - our last issue is this Volume 18, Number 1.

We are delighted, however, to announce that we were successful in finding a new home for *Reflections,* with an impressive new Publisher and Editor! Cleveland State University (CSU) School of Social Work, under the direction of **Dr. Murali Nair,** will be the Publisher. **Dr. Michael Dover** of the CSU Social Work faculty has been appointed Editor. Dr. Dover is eager to connect with previous Editorial Board members and authors, and CSULB subscribers, as well as prospective subscribers, authors, and Board members. Please see the "Letter from the New Editor" on page 7. Dr. Dover can be reached at m.a.dover@csuohio.edu.

Those of you who have been with *Reflections* for so many years, as readers, authors, and/or as peer-reviewers, know that it has served a special place for teaching, learning, and sharing. There has been nothing comparable among peer-reviewed journals. The general and special-theme issues have been impressive. The cover art has been dramatic and meaningful; in fact, many of the covers were turned into framed posters that decorate the CSULB School of Social Work hallways.

In addition to publishing nine compelling narratives, this last issue aims to thank and acknowledge everyone who has served *Reflections* over nearly two decades. We begin by giving heartfelt thanks and credit to two remarkable social workers, **Reflections**' founders **Sonia Leib Abels** and **Dr. Paul Abels.** It was Sonia's vision, along with that of her husband, Paul, to create a journal that would inspire a literary tradition of publishing narratives or first person accounts describing the process of helping others and shaping social change. In their own words, Sonia and Paul describe the birth of *Reflections* almost 20 years ago in "Letter from the Founders" on page 6. In tribute to this remarkably visionary couple, we have reproduced the cover of the first *Reflections, Volume 1, Issue 1,* January 1995.

Upon learning that *Reflections* would stop publishing, we received a number of thoughtful comments from distinguished colleagues:

Venessa A. Brown, Ph.D., Associate Provost for Institutional Diversity and Inclusion, and Professor, Social Work; Southern Illinois University Edwardsville: *Reflections* allowed me to bring my years in the trenches with me. My article "From one hand to another" was a testament to the resiliency of our children and families and their graciousness to allow us practitioners to serve them during traumatic times in their lives. *Reflections* is the voice that told the stories of committed social work practitioners in the field who are often not heard. Thanks for all your work with the journal and to all of the people who found value in publishing our stories. Always with hope.

Richard Douglas, MPH, PhD, Professor of Health Administration, Eastern Michigan University, and Visiting Fulbright Professor, Ashesi University, Berekuso, Ghana: There are very few ways to publish narrative in a field that is narrative-driven in practice. I enjoyed my role with the Katrina issue, and the interaction with staff regarding peer-review has always been rewarding. Thanks to the California crew for all your hard work on a project that was worth it!

Alex Gitterman, Ed. D., MSW, Zachs Professor of Social Work, Director of the Doctoral Program, University of Connecticut School of Social Work, West Hartford. I would like to express my appreciation to the former editors and editorial staff and to the founding editors, the Abels, and to Dr. Molidor as well as the prior directors for their gift to the profession.

Martin Kohn, PhD, Director, Program in Medical Humanities, Center for Ethics, Humanities and Spiritual Care, Cleveland Clinic, and Associate Professor of Medicine, Cleveland Clinic Lerner College of Medicine of Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, OH: My connection with *Reflections* goes back to Sonia Abels' visit to Hiram College in the early 1990s, when she was a participant in one of the programs we offered through the Center for Literature and Medicine that I was co-directing at the time. I soon became a member of the editorial board and have been happy to have contributed in any small way I could over the years. It was a good run and congratulations on the accomplishments.

Lloyd Lyter, PhD., Professor of Social Work, and Director, School of Social Work and Administrative Studies, Marywood University, Scranton, PA; I appreciate all of the efforts that everyone at CSULB has put into *Reflections* over the years. It has filled a void that would otherwise have existed in the social work literature. I'm sure you all regret seeing it leave you, but that you are pleased to know it will live on. Best wishes to all.

Brenda McGadney, PhD, MSW, Sessional Professor of Social Work, University of Windsor, Ontario, Founding Faculty, Social Work BS & MA programs in Management at Ghana Institute for Management and Public Administration, Legon, Ghana: It is has been a pleasure to be affiliated with such a fine scholarly journal. I will be eternally grateful for the opportunity that *Reflections* has given to first time authors to publish their work in a peer-reviewed journal. In this manner, *Reflections* provided a forum for sharing rich and authentic experiences of the often voiceless and professional helpers who sought to advocate on their behalf. I want to thank *Reflections* team of Editors and staff for their hard work in making this journal possible. To get *Reflections* published quarterly, the ongoing maintenance of the journal has been a labor of love and commitment to social justice. Stay well!

And when learning that *Reflections* has a new adoptive family, our long-time child welfare advocate colleague, **Dr. William Meezan, Director of Policy and Research at Children's Rights, New York City,** wrote: "This is GREAT news... glad that *Reflections* will live on!

This last issue of the CSULB-published *Reflections* has been assembled as a tribute to the past, but also to celebrate the future. Our cover page, designed by CSULB Professor of Art, **Robin Richesson, MFA,** displays the infinity sign. Underneath are the words, "It did not start with me and it will not end with me." Professor Richesson chose the infinity sign to represent how *Reflections* has come full circle – from Cleveland to Long Beach and back to Cleveland. She added the words you will find in the powerful first article in this issue written by **Dr. Misty L. Wall** at Boise State University. In "A Lesson Brought Home from Seminar," Dr. Wall writes poignantly about lessons learned for her students and her own insights in reframing the challenge of change. The context is her overlapping roles of being an adoptive parent of a child with severe and persistent mental illness and a social work educator in a rural intermountain area. As you

read about her mantra, you may find yourself repeating it.

Two special issues that had been planned for 2012 were on Field Education and on Mentoring, and our new publisher and editor are going to honor that commitment. Dr. Wall's article is a preview of the Field Education special issue, and we have included another preview article on mentoring here. **Dr. Elizabeth Collardey** from the University of Michigan, Flint takes us on voyage in search of those who "inspire, support, and celebrate the diversity, creativity, and success of future educators." The title is "Mentoring the Social Work Academic: Oops – I Broke Alice's Looking Glass."

Staying with the theme of children's literature, "Beyond Green Eggs and Ham – From Refusal to Acceptance to Institutional Change," **Dr. Anne C. Deepak** and her Texas State University BSW student, **Loretta Lambert,** take us on a remarkable journey. It starts with personal questioning, and ends with public action. But know that the road linking the two will be heartfelt and intriguing.

At the University of West Florida, **Dr. Michael Humble** describes the "Use of Self – Merging our History with Teaching Practice Classes." He explores the use of disclosure in the classroom, while teaching social work practice classes. What happens when there are unresolved issues among some students? Read the unique perspectives.

This issue goes international with the next three articles. **Dr. Lloyd Lyter** at Marywood University, writes about "Passing on the Passion: Introducing MSW Students to International Experiences." Coming from a Viet Nam experience, he expands his adventures to Europe and then finds strategies so students can study in England, Northern Ireland, Australia, and Scotland, to start.

Dr. Chikako Nagai at CSULB describes in powerful detail her experiences in "Disaster-Relief Work with the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami." As a Japanese immigrant social worker who responded to this tragedy, she uses narrative documentation of disaster-relief volunteer experiences to help identify roles and detail responsibilities in the continuing recovery process.

What happens when relatively privileged North American graduate students embark on international learning projects in settings different from their life experiences? **Dr. Lynn Parker** and **Dr. Julie Anne Laser** from the University of Denver, describe the dynamics when students participate in courses that share a goal of "Increasing Social Justice Awareness Through International Education: Two Models."

Coming back to the U.S., **Dr. Michael Sanger** from Valdosta State University harkens back to September 11, 2001 with his article titled, "What is the Opposite of Terrorism?" Dr. Sanger defines and explores the power of the opposite of terrorism, illustrated by people and organizations demonstrating the concept.

It seems appropriate to end the articles in this issue with an imaginative look at "The Billiken: Bringer of good luck and cultural competence." Doctoral student **Sachiko Gomi** and **Dr. Edward R. Canda** at the University of Kansas, explore the various cross-cultural meanings of the Billiken, a good luck figurine, which they use in classroom and professional trainings about cultural competence and spiritual sensitivity -- in Japan as well as the U.S.

When learning that *Reflections* would be leaving CSULB, former faculty and editorial board member, **Dr. Benjamin Shepard** from The City University of New York, offered to write a longer tribute to *Reflections*, which is shared on page 83.

This issue closes by wishing each of you and those you serve all the best as one era ends and another begins. As *Reflections* leaves CSU – California State University in Long Beach, thanks to the leadership over the years: our former and current Department and School directors – **Dr. Jim Kelly, Dr. John Oliver,** and **Dr. Christian Molidor,** and our College of Health and Human Services Dean, **Dr. Kenneth Millar** - for their support to the fullest possible extent. Thanks to the executive and editorial board members, named on the inside cover, for their thoughtful peer reviews, especially **Dr. Marilyn Potts,** associate editor, for her wise counsel and comfort. Thanks to our former editor who followed **Sonia Abels** with equal passion:

the late **Dr. Jillian Jimenez.** Thanks to **Dr. Dan Jimenez** who provided the creative cover and inside artwork for many of our long-ago issues. Thanks to **Robin Richesson, MFA**, Professor of Art at CSULB, for her creative expertise, inspiring our journal covers over the past two years. Thanks to **Georgette Bradley** for her administrative support. Thanks to our colleagues in the University Print Shop, especially Graphic Specialist **John Feijoó** for making us look like a journal. As *Reflections* transitions to another CSU – Cleveland State University – well wishes to our new publisher and editor, **Dr. Murali Nair** and **Dr. Michael Dover**. We know they have the integrity and expertise to ensure that the future volumes and issues will include those narratives that are indeed stories worth telling.

Now, please relish the poignant, compelling, and informing articles in this issue. *After, please write and submit your own stories, and contact our new editor, Dr. Michael Dover at M.A. Dover@csuohio.edu.*

Letter from the Founders

Sonia Leib Abels, MSW, with Paul Abels, PhD

We are very pleased to know that the journal *Reflections: Narratives of Professional Helping* will continue its contribution to our profession. Different from other scholarly journals it sought to publish professional narratives of practice. The authors were asked not only to tell the story of how they dealt with the services they offered, but how they were personally impacted as the helping process evolved. The first issue included articles by Professors Richard A. Cloward and Harry Specht, who each wrote thoughtful and revealing autobiographical narratives. And the journal was off to a superlative start, and a groundswell of subscriptions.

As the founding editor of the Journal, I want to thank Dr. Murali Nair, under whose direction the Cleveland State School of Social Work will publish the Journal, Dr. Michael A. Dover who will be the editor, and others at the School for the work they did to make this wonderful event possible. I taught at Cleveland State for many years. My husband Paul, who helped me start *Reflections* taught in MSASS at Case Western Reserve, so we have always loved Cleveland.

We also want to thank those at CSULB and the staff for the work that they did. The Journal reflected the creative, thoughtful thinking of many social workers, and we know it will continue to be an important, stimulating and valuable contribution to concerned practitioners in the years to come. We are always with you. Lots of good wishes.

Letter from the New Editor

Michael A. Dover, PhD, Cleveland State University

On behalf of **Dr. Murali Nair**, Director, Cleveland State University School of Social Work, I am pleased to confirm that *Reflections: Narratives of Professional Helping* will be published as a peer-reviewed online journal. Dr. Nair and I are grateful to our CSULB colleagues - **Dr. Christian Molidor**, Director of the School of Social Work and **Dr. Eileen Mayers Pasztor,** *Reflections* Editor - for their support and collaboration throughout the process of transferring rights and responsibilities for publishing *Reflections* to our University.

Cleveland State's publication of *Reflections* will begin with the "Special Issue on Field Education, Volume 18, Number 2," co-edited by **Denice Goodrich-Liley** of Boise State University and **Martha Kirkendall Wilson** of the University of New England. Prior to that issue, all current subscribers, previous contributors, accredited social work programs and NASW chapters will be contacted about how to access the online journal in order to build circulation and stimulate subscriptions. Later this year, there will be a general issue, as well as a "Special Issue on Mentoring," co-edited by **Mark J. Hager** of Menlo College and **Jennifer Bellamy** of the University of Chicago.

Reflections has important Cleveland roots, as evidenced in the "Letter from the Founders" by **Sonia Leib Abels** with **Paul Abels**. In September 2010, our school hosted a lunch for them to mark the publication of the "Special Issue on Social Justice," which they co-edited.

The *Reflections* Editorial Board also has had strong roots in Cleveland. **Professor Edward McKinney** of CSU School of Social Work was on the original Editorial Board. **Professor John Wilson,** Department of Psychology at CSU, served from the inception of the Journal until approximately Fall 2007. Associate Professor Emerita **Beth Cagan** served on the Board from the 1990s until 2004. The Cleveland Clinic's **Martin Kohn** has served on the Editorial Board for many years. The Executive and Editorial Boards will be reformed, following extensive consultation. Our goals for Editorial Policies and Procedures include transparency, accountability, continuity and change.

Many Cleveland-based authors have contributed to *Reflections*, including Cleveland State University School of Social Work **Professor Lonnie R. Helton**, who has contributed two narratives. **Professor Larry W. Foster** of our School and **Linda McLellan** of the Cleveland Clinic co-authored a narrative. Former CSU faculty members **Janet C. Bussey** and **Gloria Freire** also published narratives. Since arriving at Cleveland State University in 2007, I have published two narratives and edited the "Special Issue on Work and the Workplace."

Case Western University Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences contributors have included the late **Howard Goldstein** and the late **Herman Stein,** as well as current faculty **David Crampton**, and **Kathleen J. Farkas**.

Recently, Cleveland State University School of Social Work Professor Emeritus of Philosophy **Sam Richmond** contributed an article to the "Special Issue on Social Justice," co-edited by Sonia and Paul. In 1996, Sam had published a *Reflections* essay on individual obligation and the necessity to do the right thing. Our School has concluded that providing a new Cleveland-based home to *Reflections: Narratives of Professional Helping* is the right thing to do. It is a privilege that our School can play a role in ensuring that the journal will continue.

As work begins to publish the new era of *Reflections*, we will give full respect to the tradition the journal represents. We especially look forward to being in touch with the readers of *Reflections,* everyone who has contributed over the years, and prospective authors and subscribers for this beloved journal.

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A Lesson Brought Home from Field Seminar: It Did Not Start with Me and It Will Not End with Me

Misty L. Wall, PhD, MSSW, LCSW, Boise State University

As an adoptive parent of a child with severe and persistent mental illness, and as a social work educator in a rural Intermountain area, I have struggled with unavoidable dual relationships as a client, parent, and educator. In the following narrative, I review my experiences navigating and making sense of these overlapping responsibilities and roles.

It's not quite dark, but the sun is setting. Its location in the sky makes me feel like I am in a spotlight. After another discharge from the psychiatric hospital, my daughter is deemed safe for discharge, but it is still unsafe for her to be home with the stress of her siblings and a *family-like* atmosphere. With the sun shining on me, I reluctantly ring the bell on the secured shelter door, where I will leave my thirteen-year-old daughter. Dizzy and numb with exhaustion from the ordeal of discharge planning and discharge, I reel with the shame of having failed as a parent, and the fear of checking my daughter into a shelter with *those* kids., As the shelter door opens, I squint into the sun to see a popular social work senior, who enrolled in several of my practice courses, answer the door. Puzzled, but enthusiastic, she speaks, "Dr. Wall, are you here for a field visit?"

Feeling defeated, I looked down, wishing the sun would set, and that my time in the spotlight was over.

Past Students, Current Students, Future Students, Oh My

The social services in my conservative state are skeletal, at best. There are no residential treatment facilities; no group homes that work with private pay clients; no residential options for any long-term care for children or teens with significant mental illness. Almost all agencies with a social service component depend on the work of students to provide services to their swollen client loads.

There is one small shelter for runaway, abused/neglected, or otherwise unmanageable teens in the state's capital, where I reside. This is where my daughter will remain for the agency's maximum of three nights, while my family determines our next step. The shelter employs two social workers, both graduates of the program where I am an assistant professor, and is supervised by a social worker that oversees several additional social work students each year. As I complete the shelter's admission interview, I sit down with the popular social work student, who greeted me at the door, to complete the required intake paperwork, consisting of a description of my family's history, my relationship status, preferred parenting methods, religious affiliations, income, etc. As I complete the same paperwork for what seems like the hundredth time, I continue wishing for my time in the spotlight to be over.

Between the local inpatient psychiatric hospital, the larger, less acute setting of the state hospital, and juvenile detention; my daughter has been a resident of a facility approximately 80 days this year. Each move has involved encountering a number of my students doing internship hours or being paid for post-graduate (BSW or MSW) work. Some of these students/former students have taken a special interest in her as my daughter; others have kept their distance because she is my daughter. But all have struggled with defining boundaries in this hazy realm of dual relationships. The extent at which students' systems and mine have overlapped is mind-

boggling to me. In absence of other available staff, a former student facilitated several family planning sessions, a current student observed one discharge planning session, in order to have two staff members in the room, and countless students have checked us in or out. One especially difficult night, a current student working as a psychiatric tech while waiting for his social work license was involved in restraining my daughter after a physical altercation following a family session. When she is not in a hospital setting, my daughter receives the services of a therapist and psychiatrist, both of whom are social work students or graduates of my program.

Parenting, Living, Failing in a Fishbowl

When I adopted my children, I had many dreams, some of which I have grieved, as most adoptive parents do. Other dreams have softened into new, less defined dreams that are more in line with the people my children really are, rather than whom I thought I could make them become. While I knew that parenting was taxing, none of my visions included police at 3:00 a.m., secure transports to psychiatric hospitals, or appearances before a juvenile detention judge. Although universal, and natural, the loss and softening of those dreams has been sharpened by the fact that it appears that everywhere I turn there is a student, eager to learn, drawing attention to the complexity of parenting and living in a small community, and dissolving my new dreams of quietly floundering through parenting a child with serve and persistent mental illness.

Looking for Resources and Losing Faith in a Profession

Each time my daughter has been admitted to some form of facility, I have been bewildered by the reports from staff indicating that she is their "best patient," "so kind and funny," "really insightful and helpful," and even "perfectly behaved." Yet, time and again, upon discharge, she would spiral out of control with violent acts in the home, threats and plans to end our lives, running away, destroying property, injuring herself, others, or pets. Each discharge has culminated in another admission to the psychiatric hospital, where she would be the shining star for staff, and make frequent, tearful phone calls pledging to change dangerous behaviors and expressing love and gratitude toward me, her adoptive mother.

Full of hope, I would return to the hospital during visiting hours, only to be greeted with more verbal and physical explosions, or her outright refusal to attend visits or family therapy sessions. The contradictions in responses left me feeling mystified, emotionally exhausted, frightened, self-conscious of my ability as a social worker and mother, and wary of the skills I taught students for intervention with children and families.

The discharge letter prepared by the psychiatrist provided an opening theory to the contradictions in my daughter's behavior when outside of my home. He wrote more than three pages after patiently listening to my exasperation and self-blame. One portion of the letter read, "Amy is unlikely to respond in a positive manner in a single family, foster, or adopted home. The interaction is too overwhelming and anxiety provoking, leading to agitation due to neurobiological insult as well as the unconscious integration of previously experienced negative behaviors. Teresa is more likely best served in a structured group living environment. The insinuation of individuals hoping to have a parental relationship with Amy is fraught with difficulty and inevitably will lead to failure." The day following this letter, my daughter was discharged home when no other long-term placement as described in the psychiatrist's letter was available in our state. During the discharge planning session requested by the social worker to outline expected behaviors and consequences when she returned home, she became angry and attempted to choke me. She was carried back to a locked unit, but the discharge continued as planned, with the social worker saying "She is just a RAD (reactive attachment disorder) kid, acting RAD. That can not be fixed here."

As a parent, I was terrified to bring this wounded child into my home again. As a social worker, I was aghast at the crushing collapse of the system that could anticipate failure (in this case meaning further psychic

injury to my daughter and physical injury to me, her siblings, or anyone). As an educator, I felt lost and angry that a young social worker was so ambivalent to leaving my family's needs so clearly unmet, and uninspired to continue encouraging noble young people to seek a job in this "helping profession" and dialoguing with students about the power of effecting change.

Redefining Success for My Daughter and Me

Realizing that parenting my daughter was not a task I could master with more reading, workshops, reflection, or by finding the "right" resource nearly shattered me. My survival depended on my ability to redefine success for my daughter, me as a mother, and as a social worker. I came to understand (or remember) that Amy is a beautifully bright, talented, and passionate young woman, who is aware of her limits, and above all she is not mine to "fix". She is my daughter and is wounded deeply from the tragedy of child abuse and neglect, abandonment, multiple attachment disruptions, and horrors I cannot begin to comprehend. As a mother, I had to do what I tell students in the field everyday: talk less, listen more, allow her take the lead in her own treatment, focus on strengths, surround myself with helping professionals competent in the field of attachment, and trust in the process. As a social worker, I have to be a relentless advocate for a reorganized system that is responsive to the client's needs, even when those needs are complex and require non-traditional intervention strategies.

Recommitment to Educating Future Social Workers

During this period in my family, I sat on the graduation stage looking out at the students who had completed their degrees, many of whom had inadvertently been brought into my personal world. This year students elected to display a PowerPoint presentation containing "words of wisdom" they had gained from each faculty member as a part of their contribution to the graduation ceremony. When my picture flashed across the screen, "It did not start with me and it will not end with me" scrolled under my picture. This is a mantra I adopted many years ago, while working in child welfare, to remind myself that I did not cause injury to my clients, change is not up to me, nor is it usually done within the short time I am able to work directly with each client. I have shared this mantra with many students in seminar struggling to "see" change in their clients. And, somehow seeing that mantra scroll across the screen at graduation helped me reframe the job of change back to its rightful owner—my daughter. In the end, my students reminded me they are listening, learning, and that I am giving a valuable piece of the puzzle, which they helped me remember that day despite all the pomp and circumstance. Indeed, I am not the origin of the injuries in my daughter's soul. Nor, will I be the cure for them. I am merely one in a line of supportive people planting seeds of difference, and that is how to be a change agent.

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Mentoring the Social Work Academic: Oops, I Broke Alice's Lookin Glass

Elizabeth KimJin Collardey, PhD, LMSW, University of Michigan, Flint

In this essay, I tell my history of what mentoring has meant to me and what mentoring has done to "grow" me into the professional I am. This autobiographical narrative is written in dialogue with the literature on mentoring in an effort to make sense of recurring themes and experiences leading up to my most recent academic assignment. Although mentoring has an established body of knowledge in business, education, and medicine, a cursory review of the literature reveals the discipline of social work as a late adopter in understanding and creatively embracing it as an integral process of educating educators. I conclude my story by highlighting what I want my college, profession, and higher education in general to understand about mentoring practices for female faculty of color in social work education.

Chapter One: Learning how to be Human

When I was young and my parents had the primary responsibility for teaching me the meaning and methods of being human, there was a beautiful, brown-skinned woman named Essie Lee who was to me an angel, a gift especially and just for me. My well-intentioned parents, bereft of understanding the needs of internationally adopted children, were limited in how to grow Korean American children in society's racially-fired kiln, especially in rural Midwest America. Like the velveteen rabbit who asks "what is real," I fled from the existential identity question that demanded an answer but never received one from me—diverse responses to "who am I" always came from others holding up a mirror that reversed, contradicted, or usually ignored my actual reality. I was left feeling a bit like Alice after she went through the looking glass wondering if I was only a figment of other people's imaginations. Who exactly owned the looking glass and with whom would I discover the sociologist Charles Horton Cooley's looking glass self or the ability to see my self as others do (Yeung & Martin 2003)?

Without specific words of instruction or wisdom but rather through unspoken, nonverbal gestures and soft guttural sounds of unconditional acceptance, Essie Lee was my first mentor. In contrast to my parents' role which seemed like the worn out, poorly fitting suit that one is obligated to wear to formal occasions only, Essie Lee joyfully served a role free of judging what was right or wrong, or evaluating performance against an unattainable bar. As I would discover from future formal and informal professional mentors and as is borne out in the literature, the voluntary nature of informal mentors is characterized by the deep learning I gained and internalized. Such profound lessons occurred as a result of the commitments of the informal mentors which were deeper and sustained over longer periods of time than those made by formal ones (Greene et al. 2008). Essie Lee freely taught me how to choose to be a kind human being when my parents' limitations emerged and when the racist environment of the 1960s insisted there was no place that I belonged.

"Why don't the kids let me play in the sandbox? Why can't I hit them when they hit me?" I screamed my rage against the ignorance and the learned meanness of blonde-haired, blue-eyed children. Instead of judging or punishing me for vulnerably baring my soul, Essie Lee injected me with courage and encouragement to experiment and learn for myself while growing up, and slipped me taunting and delicious hints about her own lessons in life. "Will hurting the other kids give you what you want? Why don't you try asking them—one more time? Did I tell you about the time when I ...?" Today, Essie Lee's strength and silence breathe through me and are transformed into patience when I encounter all that is beyond my control.

Through her subtle but very powerful example, Essie Lee mentored me from childhood into adulthood. She was an example of Wasburn's (2007) simple definition of

a mentor who provides guidance, support, knowledge, and opportunities and, as Haring (1999) identified, occurring during a time of transition, change, or crisis. My relationship with Essie Lee bears characteristics of traditional mentoring which involves a one-to-one, unidirectional, asymmetrical relationship in which a junior and less-experienced individual is paired with an experienced person (Blackwell, 1989). But this relationship departs from the traditional model because it was not an intentional mentoring relationship—Essie Lee was our hired housekeeper who came to our home every Thursday to do laundry and clean house. This precious 90-year old woman resides peacefully within my heart. Essie Lee renewed my "S(e)oul Self" so that I could create connections to my humanity and to others.

Lacking Essie Lee's foundation, I could not have embraced social work practice with genuine compassion, empathy, and competence. Later, it was serving soldiers who lived in constant pain and re-connecting them to a shared humanity, albeit off the battlefield, where I experienced the second chapter in this life's voyage on the good ship "Mentorship."

Chapter Two: Learning How to be a Professional Social Worker

HOO-AH! This affirmative shouted with the greatest respect in the United States Army echoed throughout my first day's graduate field placement in social work services. Referring to or meaning anything and everything except 'no', it is believed the origin of this term might be related to the acronym HUA- or "Heard-Understood-Acknowledged." I had selected my graduate field placement with the U.S. Army's mental health and family advocacy programs believing it was a field of social work I would not pursue after graduation. Army social work was a field of practice I needed to understand if I was to make competent, informed future referrals or if I was to serve veterans. I also was curious about the world's largest bureaucracy outside of the Vatican.

At the time, Major P ran his "shop" with an iron fist and an eagle eye, literally. He had only one eye remaining from previous years of combat duty abroad. Seeing Major P dressed in BDU's (battle dress uniforms), holstering a sidearm, and oozing an extreme of self-confidence during my interview for this field placement, I half expected him to break out in a chorus of "Oh, Lord, it's hard to be humble…". Worried that I would be required to live up to U.S. Army standards in ALL ways, I feared that daily pre-dawn 3-mile sprints and weekly sessions on a firing range were in store for me that year.

In my role as graduate intern and under the close supervision of the clinical staff, I was expected to apply what I learned in my clinical assessment and treatment classes to clients who were admitted for hospitalization in the psychiatric unit on the base. Confronted with the range of all possible mental health experiences in their full-blown DSM symptoms, I witnessed that year the glory and gore of what it means to be human and how to request an invitation into the lives of people whose constant companion is pain. As I observed Major P in action with soldiers and their families, I re-discovered how much I did know about being human and how to let my fear of not knowing what to do step aside for compassion. Through informal conversations woven in between official supervision sessions, Major P kept a steady pulse on a newbie's experiences in the trenches. Major P listened patiently to my fears that were typical among my fellow grad students: "Calgon—take me away! I'm a failure. I'm no good at this." Major P's response: "Look, you haven't killed anyone—yet. Try once more. I know you can do this." Major P would never accept desertion of one's post or command, even though every day I toyed with that seductive question. "Well, what if I went AWOL?"

The task of immediate supervision fell upon other clinical social workers in the department, but the mentoring of the social work soul was embraced by Major P. He submerged himself in the rewarding interactions of supporting, educating, and more importantly, affirming the lessons learned by a soon-to-be-practicing master's level social worker. He even confessed that he learned "a thing or two" from the new kid on the block. Major P's rare confessions of the

benefits he received from his role as a mentor reflect research identifying reciprocal benefits for both parties (Stalker, 1994).

Seventeen years after my indoctrination vis-a-vis Major P style into the profession of social work I can, without equivocation, confess that Major P had a greater influence on me than even my adoptive mother, who still reminds me to eat my peas. I hear Major P ordering me to replace anxiety with confidence as I muster up the courage to face clients who make self-destructive choices or confront students texting their 1000 and more "bff's" (i.e, best friends forever) on their cell phones in class. "Let's think about this. If you do 'this', then what could happen? What are your choices? What do you really want in life?" Major P—I salute you, with all fingers unfurled, this time. You and your backbone live within me as I rise to meet the challenge of each new client. Strange, the courage you nurtured in me looks exactly the same as Essie Lee's. The lessons from learning how to be human and learning how to be a professional have all been really the same so far: remembering courage and compassion.

Chapter Three: Learning how to be a Good Colleague

This new chapter in the voyage of the good ship "Mentorship" finds me drifting and bereft of courage and compassion in the third year of my doctoral program. The monsters that have haunted and stalked me since my arrival to the U.S. reappear, raise their ugly heads demanding my attention, and require that I return to a safe haven of humanity. I struggle with vestiges of racist content in the social work curriculum that repeat insidious and ignorant messages. I struggle with finding academic support for a dissertation topic unfamiliar to faculty at my institution. I struggle with securing adequate finances to support my food, shelter, and daily expenses because there is little funding for graduate assistantships. I struggle with creating support among colleagues in a doctoral program that fuels a hidden value that competition breeds excellence. I struggle to remember why I chose this struggle!

The faculty advisor assigned to me has little time to offer counsel, seems uncaring in her communication with me, and directly asks me if I would consider discontinuing. She quotes a statistic that half of all doctoral students drop out after the required coursework and choose not to continue on to successfully complete the dissertation phase. I feel as if the rug has been yanked out from under my feet. I've landed flat on my back and can't move from the shock and trauma of this blow to my self confidence. Paralysis sets in and I start to write.

At critical times in my life, writing becomes the wings I've needed to lift me above and beyond what seem like impossible situations and environments. I write about my experience in order to understand my experience. One day, I seek out a respected social work professor and ask if he would read and comment on my manuscript, trusting that his honesty and wisdom will help produce a document that can be shared and benefit others. Dr. K steps in and immediately engages in a dialogue that quenches my thirst for human affirmation of experience and creative problem solving. Dr. K offers what Eddy and Gaston-Gayles (2008) found as necessary for academic success, whether for doctoral students or new tenure-track faculty. The ability to integrate work-life responsibilities and stressors has been found to be an outcome of effective formal and intentional mentoring programs (Daley et al, 2008; Eddy & Gaston-Gayles, 2008; Thompson, 2008).

Dr. K's example of informal help, generosity of time, and sharing of wisdom reappears with each new collegial relationship I create: instances when I can offer a word of encouragement, report an affirmation of excellence, share in a moment of art and beauty, or think out loud with another about a puzzling situation. If I am viewed as a good colleague in academic circles, it's because I observed, experienced, and learned from a "good colleague" through Dr. K's perhaps unintended mentoring. Dr. K never formally defined or declared this role to me; he simply was; I simply accepted and gratefully received. Just like Essie Lee who never judged or punished me for vulnerably baring my soul,

and just like Major P who lifted me up with courage and encouragement to experiment and learn for myself, Dr. K's subtle but very powerful example mentored me from being a social work practitioner into a social work educator who strengthens her own capacities in the face of adversity and more importantly seeks to build capacity in others. Being a good colleague will be a central theme as I learn in the next chapter of this voyage how to be a peer mentor to my colleagues.

Chapter Four: Learning how to be a Peer Mentor

"At last, my fulltime position has arrived!" Time for taking photos for new faculty ID cards and the department website. The social work program never looked so good: one African American female, one African female, one Asian American female--myself--and one Native American female. We were never Charlie's Angels, but for the few years we taught together as the new cohort of tenure-track faculty, we experienced a rare moment in professional academic circles--genuine collegiality and ongoing co-mentoring of each other. We created these relationships from the basic need of sheer survival in what often felt like hostile territory where predators shed their sheep-like disguises to devour naïve newbies.

The vehicle responsible for cultivating our scholarly potential was a social work department divisively demarcated by traditional patriarchy versus radical feminism; MSW versus PhD; people of color versus members of the dominant white majority; post-MSW practice experience versus no post-MSW practice experience; worker bees versus privileged administrators; male versus female; heterosexual versus homosexual; the list goes on and on. Major P would have thrived in this environment, where battle lines were constantly re-drawn between the haves and have-nots of academic tenure. Were we the sacrificial "young" to be eaten alive for the sustenance of the parent institution?

We took long walks trying to figure out the undertow of political agendas reflected in heated faculty meetings. We ate our lunch together in each other's offices just to check on our own humanity and sanity. We blasted our favorite music through the sterile, institutional halls that housed our offices. We shared different teaching strategies to find out how to reach and engage with a new generation of students whose capacity to focus in the classroom seemed negatively correlated to their focus on technology. We danced to each other's music when the going got tough. And equally significant for psychosocial support, we carved out community niches that built on our previous practice experiences. We began to identify and create opportunities for each other's projects of scholarship and service.

This cohort was an example of what scholars call peer mentoring, which involves participants who are roughly equal in terms of age, experience, rank, and/or position along hierarchical levels within their institution (Kram & Isabella, 1985). The strength of our relationships certainly enhanced our psychosocial well-being in critical ways, but our positions as untenured faculty limited our ability to offer career-enhancing functions to each other. We sadly lacked support from senior faculty who had institutional power to remove or diminish obstacles.

Our peer mentoring relationships diverted from formal peer mentoring models at the point where they emerged naturally and received no formal sanction within the respective institutions. And in New England, the peer mentoring was not limited to matched dyads or triads but took on the characteristics of a peer support group. Sadly, because of the toxicity within the department, our group slowly disappeared as members sought different outside opportunities. As a result, we didn't experience the shortcomings scholars have observed in peer mentoring relationships (Angelique, Kyle, & Taylor, 2002). For example, because we were all hired in the same year and we all witnessed immediately the political dynamics among the senior faculty, we consciously avoided hierarchies and focused on the deep need for cooperation, collegiality, and support. In fact, the division between the tenured and non-tenured faculty contributed to the solidarity and cohesion that emerged naturally within our peer mentoring cohort.

Relying on the skills of reflexive social work practice, I pause to consider my voyage so far. The informal mentoring relationships beginning with Essie Lee have all sustained my growth and development as a human being. Major P specifically fueled my growth and development as a professional social worker. Dr. K created the necessary space for me to learn how to integrate the stressors and strengths between the academic rigor of the doctoral program and life's exigencies. The informal mentoring of the New England cohort gave me the opportunity to experience the power of peer mentoring, which nourished this group worker's soul. All these experiences of informal mentoring were characterized by outcomes identified in Stalker's (1994) review of the literature, including personal development and professional identification. Because of the informal nature of these relationships, there was no career advancement as an immediate outcome. For most formal mentoring programs, career advancement or success in the promotion and tenure process seems to be a common desired goal.

Chapter Five: Learning about the Potential of Peer Mentoring Communities

Driving our big yellow moving truck to our new home in the Midwest, I was struck by the unending flatness of miles upon miles of corn, soybean, and wheat fields. With no geographical landmarks to differentiate my perspective of sameness, I wonder if I have come full circle and am returning to the rabbit hole of my childhood. A small child's irrational fears set in: Will I be the only Asian in town? Will my white peers throw me out of the sandbox? Must I become Alice's looking glass in order to survive? Who will accept me for who I am? These fears taunt me as I engage once more in re-creating for myself a network of support at a small college, my most recent teaching assignment.

Prior to the first week of classes and during new faculty orientation, I meet my assigned mentor. Girding myself, I keep an open mind at the prospect of having a reliable source of support to help me join with my new college. Suddenly, I crash headlong into a brick wall. My mentor ***does not contact me*** after our initial meeting. Later, I discover from others that my mentor truly has too many other responsibilities to sustain a relationship with me. Disappointed but not yet defeated, I'm on the prowl, once more, in search of caring peers who can guide and/or support me through this phase.

As I attend the formal orientation to the organizational structure and shared governance as specified in the faculty handbook, I learn that two white male administrators officially bear the direct responsibility to mentor me. According to the faculty handbook, their primary roles are proscribed to evaluate teaching as well as service to the program, college, and community. Unfortunately, these persons' time and ability to support the professional growth (i.e. mentor) of someone with different professional and educational experiences seem limited.

I face difficulties in preparing too many different classes, and dealing with poorly prepared or unmotivated students in general education classes. I also face challenges in teaching this new "generation x, y, or z," and experience a lack of collegial relations, inadequate feedback, recognition, and affirmation, and a lack of balance between work and personal life. As the outsider to both the small college and the small town, I am given subtle but very clear messages about where my place should be in a well-preserved, rigid, and complex male hierarchy.

There are studies that provide evidence that pretenure women and minority faculty report acute feelings of personal isolation, especially with administrators who provide little mentoring (Boice, 1992). Both Boice and Sorcinelli (1994) suggest that new faculty benefit significantly from a collegial, intellectually supportive environment. My experience during this tenth year of full-time teaching bears evidence to Sorcinelli's finding that over time, new faculty will report lower levels of work satisfaction and higher levels of work-related stress because of inadequate support (1994). Also, my experience echoes the findings from Gibson's research that gender [of mentors] matters to a female protégé (2006) and fits with Olian, Carroll, Giannantonio, and Feren's findings

(1988) that women are more sensitive to, and react more negatively to, a manager who is deficient in interpersonal skills. At a college that seems to be steeped in the traditions of a dominant WASP ideology, I have not met a senior faculty who could address issues that are particularly salient for women, let alone for minority women. And mirroring what Australian scholars are finding (Buchanan, Gordon, & Schuck, 2008), in this small college mentoring appears more like monitoring, and performance-enhancing relationships appear more like performance evaluation when left to the vagaries of senior faculty who have successfully competed and won their tenure through rugged individualism. I am left wondering if the mentoring process at this small college is intended to welcome the protégé to the place or put the protégé in their place? As Zumeta (1998) argued, in such situations, academic freedom is jeopardized by intrusive forms of academic micromanagement typical of patriarchal, paternalistic institutions.

Chapter Six: Remaking the Looking Glass Reflecting Back

I've stepped back through my looking glass and find the same overlapping and intertwined questions that accompanied me from day one in academia: Where does one turn to for guidance in a culture that assumes every faculty is highly competent? When can one ask a question without being viewed as "weak" or "unable"? Who offers encouragement versus gives advice or issues commands? How can new, untenured faculty become real, like the Velveteen Rabbit? How do academia's hierarchies affect definitions of being real? Who is/are Cooley's proverbial looking glass/es by which new faculty come to know their unique selves? How do one's minority status, identity, and experiences interact with the dynamic process of mentoring? Must Alice's looking glass continue to have me always wandering and roaming in search of support? How will I know when I have regained my "muchness"?

The 2010 Disney film version of *Alice in Wonderland* shows the Mad Hatter observing that Alice, as an emerging adult, has lost her "muchness", her fullness of self and thus, well-being. This film's writers depict that Alice regains her muchness only by reconnecting with her childhood. I close my eyes and slowly return to Essie Lee, the initial and foremost mentor in my life. I need to understand so I can forgive, so I can contribute to positive change, so I can regain my muchness and return to find an authentic self reflected back in my looking glass.

How can predominantly white institutions in rural America take affirmative steps to facilitate the success of minority faculty who often get caught in a "revolving door" syndrome (Blackwell, 1988) where they are kept for several years, evaluated negatively for tenure, and then are required to leave (Tillman, 2001, p.321). Tillman and others' research (Dixon-Reeves, 2003; Gibson, 2006; Waitzkin, Yager, & Parker, 2006; Wasburn, 2007) indicate institutions must do more than just recruit minority faculty—they are also responsible for maximizing their chances for success. Researchers point out that turnover is higher for faculty of color than white faculty (Thomas & Asunka, 1995) and those institutions whose faculty are predominantly white should openly have a commitment to sustaining campus climates where faculty of color feel valued and are successful (Piercy, Giddings, Allen, Dixon, Meszaros, & Joest, 2005). I do know I get tired of treading water in the seas of white faces.

Scanning the here and now

We know from the literature on mentoring that the following characteristics of effective mentoring initiatives hold true for all new faculty regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, class, physical ability, or sexual orientation. Mentoring initiatives should include 1) clearly stated purposes and goals with a focus on the professional growth and development of the untenured faculty (Files, Blair, Mayer, & Ko, 2008; Thorndike, Gusic, & Milner, 2008), 2) planned activities that socialize new, untenured faculty (Mullen & Hutinger, 2008), and 3) scheduled meetings to assess the protégé's progress in the areas of teaching, research, and service (Berger, 1990; Valentasis, 2005). I still have no idea what the purpose or goal of my new college's mentoring program is, was, or can be.

We also know that how the mentor-protégé pair is formed is a critical issue (Ewing, Freeman, Barrie et al., 2007; Rose, 2003;). Factors such as personality match, research interests, and personal and cultural interests should be considered (Daley, Palermo, Nivet et al, 2008; Tillman, 2001).

Wilson, Pereira, and Valentine pointed out that whether a mentoring relationship is developed formally or informally will influence the outcome (2002). These authors and others (Kram, 1985; Kirk & Reichert, 1992) identified a potential for exploitation in mentoring relationships that formally assign pairs and where mentors resent the extra responsibility. Given this, institutional compensation of mentors for additional duties associated with formal mentoring should be recognized as a potential influencing factor of the success of any formal mentoring program. This is a situation in which social work's value of empowerment speaks to creating formal mentoring programs. When all faculty have voice and power in defining their work (i.e, academic freedom), then those who are committed to mentoring new faculty seem to be the logical ones to create, develop, and implement formal mentoring in institutions that provide real support for such programs. Compensation and recognition for service in the role of mentor should not be understated or overlooked, especially if the institution claims to value mentoring.

Reflecting forward

If the goal of mentoring is facilitating long-term professional growth and development of new faculty, then a critical issue to address is how formal mentoring relationships are monitored and evaluated. This issue is intricately tied to the issues of matching mentors and protégés, goals of mentoring, who serves as mentors, and the clear definition of the mentor's role. Critics denounce traditional programs that only perpetuate paternalistic ideologies within the institution and prefer that informal mentoring relationships emerge naturally (Gibson, 2006). These critics identify that these formal, traditional models reproduce "an unavoidable homogeneity and sameness within the institution" (Stalker, 1994, p.367) which in turn leads to recycling the dominant ideological power within workplace relationships (Darwin, 2000). These processes "sanction elitist patron systems where the academically marginalized (marked by age, race, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, etc.) are often excluded and/or limited in their access to appropriate mentors" (Angelique, Kyle, & Taylor, 2002, p. 198).

Considering the extensive criticisms of formal mentoring programs and a scarcity of reports on mentoring programs for faculty that work, I am heartened to learn that Australian researchers are demonstrating that positive outcomes are achieved when flexibility, choice (i.e, protégé choice of mentor), responsiveness (critical, reflective approach), and collaboration are built into formal, structured mentoring programs (Ewing, Freeman, Barrie, Bell, O'Connor, Waugh, & Sykes, 2008).

Chapter Seven: Oh, Social Work, Where art Thou?

The absence of mentoring of social work educators is echoed in one out of three articles published by social work faculty during the last decade of this new millennium. Mentoring remains a new phenomenon in academic social work (Maramaldi, Gardner, Berkman, Ireland, S'Ambruoso, & Howe, 2004). Consider that almost a decade after Wilson, Pereira, and Valentine's (2002) research, these authors' implications for future scholarship on mentoring for new social work faculty remain unfulfilled. Social work needs to do much more to inspire, support, and celebrate the diversity, creativity, and success of its future educators so that the power of social workers as agents of change is fulfilled in a vision of social work working itself out of a job. Mentoring is a critical strategy for fulfilling this vision. My voyage resumes.

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Beyond Green Eggs and Ham: From Refusal to Acceptance to Institutional change

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This article is a reflection on our journey to promote social justice education in a BSW program. The core of this narrative is Loretta's personal transformation, from refusing to take an elective Anne teaches called Diversity and Social Justice in Social Work Practice, on the grounds that it was "White-bashing", to becoming an anti-racism activist and spearheading a successful campaign to make the course a core requirement in the BSW curriculum. A secondary part of the narrative is of how we were able to establish a strong working relationship through our vast differences. Our goal is to share our reflections on the individual, interpersonal and institutional processes that led to Loretta's movement from personal questioning to public action so that other institutions, professors and students can learn from our experiences in order to support social justice education efforts that can result in similar transformations.

We are writing this article to reflect on our journey to promote social justice education in a social work program within a large public university in Texas from our perspectives as recent baccalaureate social work graduate, Loretta, and Assistant Professor, Anne. The core of this narrative is Loretta's personal and political transformation, from refusing to take an elective Anne teaches called Diversity and Social Justice in Social Work Practice, on the grounds that it was "white-bashing," to becoming an anti-racism activist and spearheading a successful campaign to make the course a core requirement in the BSW curriculum effective August 2011.

A secondary strand in this narrative is Anne's journey with Loretta as her academic advisor, instructor, student organization faculty advisor, change collaborator and mentor-friend. One of the challenges Anne experienced was making an adjustment to an entirely new student population and geography after living and teaching much of her adult life in New York City. As a social work educator committed to social justice education, Anne was unsure of how she would be accepted by the student body, given her life experience and perspective of the world was so different. Loretta symbolized this difference. Through the evolving relationship, Anne found that the differences and acknowledgement of them enabled a rich and dynamic relationship, a lesson paralleled by Anne's relationship to the institution and the student body.

Our joint goal is to share our reflections on the individual, interpersonal and institutional processes that led to Loretta's movement from personal questioning to public action so that other institutions, professors and students can learn from our experiences in order to support social justice education efforts that can result in similar transformations. For ease of reading, this article will be written in Anne's voice with Loretta's journal reflections interspersed throughout the article. This article is the result of numerous discussions in person and through email in which we mutually tried to understand the many factors that led to Loretta's transformation. The narrative is organized according to the themes we identified in reflecting on our journeys.

Where We Started: Connecting Through Difference

Our journeys began when I was assigned to be Loretta's academic adviser in fall 2007, just after we had joined the university. Loretta had transferred from a community college as a "non-traditional" student, in her 30's, and I had recently moved to Texas from New York City, where I had lived and taught as an adjunct for many years. I moved to Austin with my husband and children because we could no

longer afford to live in New York and my father was happily settled here. In New York I had been teaching as an adjunct lecturer in two different social work programs; after the move I found work as an adjunct lecturer in two social work programs in Austin. A year later I found a position as a full-time lecturer in the BSW and MSW programs at my current university, which was located in a smaller town, and was hired the following year as an assistant professor.

Our institution is deeply committed to the goals of diversity, reflected in innovative student support programs that result in high retention and graduation rates for students of color and support for faculty and students in creating an inclusive campus environment. The Office of Multicultural Student Affairs supports student organizations and campus events that promote learning opportunities aimed at increasing campus awareness of multicultural and social justice issues. I was hired through the Target of Opportunity Program, which supports academic departments in building diverse faculty by funding available through the Provosts' Office.

I was excited to join a university that had such a clear commitment to promoting diversity. The school of social work has twenty three full-time faculty members, six of whom are people of color, three Latino, two African-American and one Asian (me). I volunteered to teach the Diversity and Social Justice elective, content which I have been teaching since 1999. When I started at the university, the course was called "Social Services to Minorities". I initiated changes in the course name and description that were supported by the BSW Committee and implemented soon thereafter. After graduate students expressed interest in the course, the Director changed the course to be "stacked", so that graduate students can take it with the undergrads but with graduate level assignments.

The view of the faculty was that issues of social justice and diversity are infused within the curriculum; hence there was no need for a separate course on this material. I have seen this view echoed in four out of the five programs where I have taught. It was evident that material on social justice and diversity was present throughout the curriculum, through material on white privilege, racial identity, racism and cultural competence, but I felt strongly that a required course would allow students the opportunity to engage with the material in a deeper and more transformative way.

Despite my excitement about joining the university, I found myself on completely new ground. I was suddenly in a new cultural and academic setting, in a small town that was very different than Austin, in size and demographics. Austin is a city and has relatively large South Asian, Vietnamese and Chinese populations in addition to the White, Hispanic and African-American populations. In contrast, the town where my university is located reflects Texas statewide demographics, with a student population composed primarily of White and Hispanic women, and a small population of African-American women, from rural and semi-urban areas. I knew nothing about Southwestern Hispanic culture: coming from New York I had been exposed to Puerto Rican and Dominican Latino culture and I didn't know that the term Hispanic was still embraced.

I coped with this new environment by seeking out faculty and administrators within and outside of my department who shared my worldview and commitment to anti-racism. I was fortunate to find and meet the Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs and Director of Multicultural Student Affairs, just as she was embarking on the development of a university-wide, multi-racial anti-racism peer educator group called Interruptions. We worked together, with a graduate student, in creating the vision and initial training sessions for the student organization.

I found that students had a very strong sense of themselves as Texans and Christians, regardless of their ethnic/racial identities. Many of the students grew up in small towns with a strong sense of community, and with very little or no exposure to people from different racial/ethnic backgrounds, political or religious traditions and perspectives. There is, however, a large amount of diversity in socio-economic and life experiences because

it is a public university with a significant commuter-student population. To me, Loretta represented the general student body and the enormous chasm I perceived between our realities and life experiences. When I met Loretta, I was unsure of how we might bridge the chasm.

> **LL**: *My family, at least the ones I spent the most time with and identify the most with, has been in Texas for six generations. While my father traveled all over the world through the military, he had small-town white Southern values. I grew up firing bb guns and using my own machete to explore land we lived on when I was only six or seven years old. We listened to country music and attended church most Sundays.*

I was around mostly white people for the first 11 years of my life. I never really thought about race, although I had heard racial slurs and had been coached to dislike certain racial groups by my stepmother. The first boy I liked was African-American and when word got back to my parents that their daughter liked a black boy, I was given severe physical punishment and forced to speak to a few relatives about why we did not participate in interracial relationships. On the other hand, I was coached to treat all people equally and that everyone counts. Despite the physical punishment, it did not change my feelings for the boy; it just made me not ever speak to him again. That was the point, I suppose.

By my 18th birthday I had moved 16 times and lived with more than six families. These experiences gave me exposure to people from different racial, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds. I believed I was diverse, because I had African-American and Hispanic friends and I attend a multiracial church. The first time Dr. D. suggested I take the course, I dismissed the idea because I felt I did not need such a course and as far as I was concerned racism was not an issue for me.

In contrast to Loretta, race, ethnicity, and difference have been constant themes in my life. I grew up in a small upper-middle-class white town in Massachusetts. My father traveled internationally for his work--primarily in the Middle East and South America--and before we moved to Massachusetts, we lived in Mexico and Algeria for a few years. I have six siblings, and five of us are adopted; together, we represent most of the traditional U.S. racial categories; White, Black, Hispanic and Asian/ Pacific-Islander. I am biracial, of Asian North Indian and Scots-Irish descent, married to a first-generation South Indian, and I have spent extensive amounts of time in North and South India. As an adult, I met both of my biological parents and my extended families in West Virginia and India, and developed long-term relationships with al of them.

Due to my childhood experiences and adult connections with friends and family in India and New York, I have a globalized view of the world that is influenced by my multiple social locations. I identify myself racially as South Asian, but I am often assumed to be white and thus benefit from white privilege. I benefit from many other privileges as well, including class, ability, heterosexuality, educational access, and First World location. In the US, people have a hard time placing me racially and ethnically and either ask me where I am from or fit me into a category that makes sense to them based on their experiences: Mexican, Puerto Rican, Jewish, Italian, Spanish, Middle Eastern, Indian, American Indian, Pakistani, Nepali, Italian, Brazilian, Brazilian, or Portuguese. In South Asian contexts, I benefit from having light skin color and being of North Indian upper-caste descent. These contradictory experiences and my interpretations of them are embedded in the Diversity and Social Justice syllabus I developed almost 12 years ago, refining it every year based on new insights from my students, life experiences and research.

On campus, I noticed few African-American students and virtually no Asian-American students, staff or faculty. I felt like a foreigner, something I never experienced living and teaching in New York City. I had no reference point for their life experiences, as they did not for mine; we were foreign to each other. The recognition that we were foreign to each other was a central component of how I coped with this new student environment. I found an exciting challenge to find a common

ground of mutual discovery through our differences, not in spite of them. This is part of what I emphasize in the Diversity and Social Justice elective. Inspired by the writing of Audre Lorde (1984). I use one of her quotes in the beginning of the syllabus to frame the purpose of the course:

> *You do not have to be me in order for us to fight alongside each other. I do not have to be you to recognize that our wars are the same. What we must do is commit ourselves to some future that can include each other and to work toward that future with the particular strengths of our individual identities. And in order to do this, we must allow each other our differences at the same time as we recognize our sameness (p. 142).*

As a new faculty member and as a regional and racial outsider, my goal was to find a way to understand and reach the students by acknowledging our differences 'at the same time as we recognize our sameness'. As a social justice educator, my additional goal was to help the students, who may not yet realize it, that 'our wars are the same' and that we must commit ourselves to a future that includes each other.

Teaching Diversity and Social Justice provided me with the unique experience of getting to know students' life histories and understandings of the world in a way that is not possible in most courses, and this enabled me to honor and understand the strengths of the individual students. Embarking on this journey with openness and curiosity was one of the strategies I used to bond with Loretta and the other students. The second strategy I used to join with students was to embrace their world of technology, which was new to me. I used YouTube videos of music, documentaries, stand-up comedy, and poetry, to illustrate concepts such as racism, xenophobia, and resilience and invited students to share their favorite YouTube videos on relevant topics with the entire class when possible.

One of the things I learned from my students is that I benefit from Northeastern urban regional privilege. Since moving to Texas I have become keenly aware of this privilege through hearing the perceptions that some of my Northeasterner family members, friends and former colleagues have about Texans (and Southerners) as universally uneducated, homophobic, conservative and racist. Faculty and new friends born and raised in Texas shared their negative experiences with people from the Northeast based on these stereotypes. I also started to see the ways in which media and popular discourse reinforces these stereotypes and focuses primarily on East and West Coast urban and upper middle-class representations of family and individual experiences.

In the course, students write a paper on their ethnic roots, keep a journal of their reflections on the course and readings, and are provided with multiple opportunities to share aspects of their life experience with their classmates. As a feminist instructor, I share my own stories and experiences with the students with the purpose of modeling sharing and to communicate my own very different life experiences. This type of exchange is rich and rewarding and enables a connection through difference, rather than in spite of it.

Would you like Green Eggs and Ham?

The title of this article captures one of the most powerful themes in the story, without which Loretta and I believe that her transformation process would not have occurred. Would You Like Green Eggs and Ham refers to the iconic children's book by Dr. Seuss (1960) of the same name where the character, Sam-I-Am offers green eggs and ham to another character repeatedly, in many different ways, throughout the story, with the final outcome being that the character tries them and likes them. It was my idea to use this title after our many conversations and reflections together; as a mother of young children I have a recent history with the book.

In this narrative, a core component of Loretta's journey was the power of multiple, repeated opportunities for learning about social justice through on-campus opportunities, the curriculum, and individual advising sessions in which I would frequently ask her to consider taking the Diversity and Social Justice elective. Loretta's sense of social justice was always a

guiding force in her life, but her repeated exposure to new sources of information about racism, sexism, homophobia and other forms of oppression shaped her journey profoundly.

> *LL: After exploring these topics and looking back, I could see racism woven into so many situations of my life, and my view was just simply wrong due to a lack of exploring racism in relation to my own world. I did not believe I was racist. I had African American and Hispanic friends and associates, thus I was not racist. People complaining about racism just didn't want to do what it takes to make it in the good old USA. If it were not for the many opportunities the university provided for evaluating racism, I seriously doubt I would have ever explored racism, sexism, homophobia or other forms of oppression.*

When I initially met Loretta, I saw her as an insider. She seemed to be someone that other students turned to for advice and tips for self-advocacy within the program. I had a feeling that if Loretta took the Diversity and Social Justice elective she would like it and her endorsement would help students identify it as a valuable learning opportunity and see that I was an instructor who, although very different than the student population, had something important to offer. I only remember suggesting to Loretta once that she consider taking the course, as I was anxious not to push the course on her when she really didn't want to take it. Loretta, however, remembers clearly that I repeatedly suggested that she consider taking the course. I do remember feeling cautious about being overly enthusiastic in recommending the course, as I was concerned that this could be a barrier to building a relationship and that I would be risking my reputation with the students—seen as a pushy, arrogant, and privileged New Yorker. Apparently, I was persistent despite this concern.

In addition to my multiple offerings of green eggs and ham, Loretta was being offered the same dish through assignments in social work classes, university events that came with extra credit, and university-wide learning opportunities and student organizations.

> *LL: In my first semester, I attended a seminar for extra credit called "Mirrors of Privilege: Making Whiteness Visible". I decided to attend because I believed that discussions of white privilege were just about bashing white people. I was going to stand up and defend my race and culture. I was colorblind and I took people for who they are and I believed that higher education needed to recognize this. I wanted validation and like the minorities fight for their races, I was fighting for mine. So I attended, ready to challenge anything that sounded like white-bashing or reverse racism. In the seminar, the presenter showed a film based on the famous Peggy McIntosh (1989) article, <u>Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack</u>. After viewing the film I decided to put my environment to the test: was I privileged above my Hispanic and African-American brothers and sisters based on the color of my skin? Within two weeks I realized that the answer to that question was yes.*

I went back for another meeting with Dr. D. about the spring advising. I remember telling her that I supported Barack Obama and asked if she heard his speech about racism. He inspired me and I wanted her to know that I was open to minority leadership at the highest level. I started talking about racism since I realized it really does exist. I remember saying then that blacks and Hispanics can be just as racist as whites and racism goes both ways. I told her that we all have to come together as one people and get along to overcome racism. She did not acknowledge or affirm what I was saying. I remember feeling strongly and passionately about what I was saying and I told her it was not my fault racism existed and what was I supposed to do? She replied that racism is all of our faults. We all participate to some degree. I could at least subscribe to that idea. Again, she encouraged me to take the course, and again I politely declined.

I remember sitting in that meeting, knowing that Loretta wanted to be validated, and knowing that I could not do that. I knew it was a much longer and complicated discussion and process that I very much wanted her to have within the context of the course with the benefit of readings, classroom discussion and reflection that it offers. I felt nervous about jeopardizing the relationship with her, but I could not validate her in the way she wanted.

Credibility Gained Through Local Knowledge

The next theme we discovered was credibility gained through local knowledge. The multiple offerings of social justice education allowed Loretta the opportunity to independently research statistical and narrative data on the consequences of racism and homophobia on targeted groups, thus giving the issues more credibility than simply hearing about it in a lecture or reading it in a book.

Some of the other opportunities for credibility gained through local knowledge were through class exercises within the Diversity and Social Justice Class; one on stereotypes, classroom activities in which there were opportunities to experience other students' life experiences around issues of race and sexuality, and a group project that required research on YouTube to learn about African American GLBTQ experiences. As an advisor and instructor I gained personal credibility with Loretta through my commitment to anti-racism issues through my role as faculty advisor and trainer for Interruptions, the student organization that Loretta joined.

> *LL: An assignment in one of my classes that had a big impact on me was a take home essay test that included the question, "If you were a black male, what would be your future in today's American society, using statistical data? Discuss at least three domains." As I gathered statistical data concerning number of African Americans that attend college and graduate, incarceration rates and levels of unemployment, I found that in every domain huge disparities existed for African American males. This really made me think about racism even more. We are not walking on the same path; we do not even have the same chances in the land of opportunity. It made me question everything about my upbringing, my culture, my previous work experience, everything. I was very mixed up about everything. My knowledge was growing.*

I had another meeting with Dr. D. for the fall 2009 registration. I already thought that she did not like me. During this meeting with Dr. D. she mentioned the elective again for the following spring. I did not want to take a white-bashing class and I told her so. She said it was not a white-bashing class and I did not have to take it, but it would help me understand some of what I had questions about. Again, I declined. I really felt defensive about the subject; looking back I believe I was avoiding confronting the issue for myself. On one hand I could see the examples, on the other hand I did not want to be identified as racist, and I was certainly not going to a white-bashing class. I wanted to learn more, but I was not going to listen to anyone tell me how all white people are when they have not had MY EXPERIENCE, MY JOURNEY, MY INFLUENCES. I would not be categorized like white bread and agree that whites are bad, are the sole cause of racial problems etc.

I was horrified that Loretta had characterized the course as "white-bashing". I was teaching it that semester and I was sure that the rumor about it being a "White-bashing" course had started with the previous instructor. As we were discussing this article, Loretta revealed that it was someone in the class I taught who had identified the course in that way, as she was taking it. I do remember that student, as she did write that in one of her initial journal entries. I welcome that sort of brutally honest reflection because I see it as a sign of true engagement in the material. As that student went through the course, though, she came to embrace the content and in a much later journal entry articulated that she now understood that people were angry about the system of racism and the privileges it bestows, rather than being angry at individual white

people. Despite Loretta's refusal to take the course, she was clearly grappling with the issues.

> *LL: The following fall, we read a book in a policy class called Amazing Grace by Jonathan Kozol (1995). In it, the children were praying for God not to hate them because they were black. This book made me cry and think. In a study group for the class, one female student had asked why they were praying to not be black. I just went off like a rocket about everything, about the white privilege seminar, about the examples I learned about, about the statistical data from my other policy class. It was the first time that I had spoken up to other white people other than my husband, mother-in-law, and best friend. The girl was shocked. The room was quiet.*

Later that semester, one of the students who had been in the room for the study group, asked me to go with her to hear Tim Wise, a white anti-racism activist, speak at a university-wide event sponsored by the Office of Student Multicultural Affairs. Seeing and hearing Tim Wise speak reinforced my own desires to fight racism, to stand up and say, 'this is how it is.' After the event we spoke about racism and our prejudices and she invited me to a meeting for a new multi-racial anti-racism peer-educator student group called Interruptions. I remember being so excited about this group and that there was somewhere to go to actively fight racism.

When I arrived at the meeting I was surprised to see Dr. D. Up until that evening I rejected the idea of her class. In the meeting she talked about the idea behind Interruptions: to learn about the history of racism, read different literature, become educated on how to be an ally and then educate peers on campus about racism. She mentioned that we would go over some of the same things in Interruptions as her class does. That is when I decided that I needed to take this class-- I wanted to learn more.

It was a pleasant surprise to see Loretta at Interruptions and in my class. Her participation in Interruptions and the course had such an impact on the group experience in both settings, because of her honesty and willingness to take risks. I knew that other students were shocked by some of the things she said, but I also knew that she was expressing questions and reactions felt by many other students who were hesitant to volunteer their thoughts and feelings. Her ability to engage with the material in such a deep, honest, and public way enhanced the learning experiences of everyone. The fact that I was engaging in this work outside the classroom made me more credible to Loretta, and this credibility came from local knowledge, through her decision to join Interruptions. Many of the learning opportunities in the Diversity and Social Justice class also provided credibility to the issues through local knowledge via class assignments and exercises.

> *LL: One important activity for me that really began to shift my views, from my heart, was the activity of identifying stereotypes. We broke into groups and went around and wrote one-word descriptions as a group that was associated with a particular group such as homosexuals, African-Americans, Hispanics, and whites. I was stunned as I looked around and read the posters that we ALL in each group had such similar stereotypes. How can all of us, from more than six different races and backgrounds, representing more than four religions, all come up with the same stereotypes for all the groups? Really? This is a senior level course, we have all been taught to critically think and yet, we all shared similar biases. After that activity we sat down in different groups and discussed and shared parts of ourselves of which we were most proud. The two girls I was with were Hispanic and they were most proud of being Hispanic. What? This blew my mind. I was most proud of being a social work student, a good mom, a good wife and loyal friend. It never occurred to me that I should be proud of my skin color. I could not imagine saying that, much less*

> *feeling that. It was as though a coin dropped in the machine of my brain, I realized, immediately, that this is a perfect illustration of my privilege as a White member of society. It was one of those "wow" moments.*

Shortly after this, Dr. D. mentioned a book called *Silent Racism* (2006) in class. The author, Dr. Trepagnier, is a white upper-middle class professor at our university. She wrote this book and I thought I would look into it. After reading it, I was able to really grasp the ideas of race in a way that made sense to me. She posits that racism should not be measured as a 'you are or are not' but rather, on a scale. At one end of the scale is less racist, on the other end of the scale is more racist. This is how I came to identify my own racism. I realized that my ideas about humanity being one and that we are all in it together matter and still apply, but because of our society's dominant cultural heritage I understood that naturally I have some racism inside me. Maybe not toward individuals by any means, but more as a way things are done; as part of an entire societal machine.

One of the opportunities I provide to the class in terms of discovering local knowledge is a group assignment in which students are asked to immerse themselves in an assigned cultural group in order to make a diversity/ social justice presentation to an imaginary agency. In this scenario, a new population is moving into the town of the social service agency and the team has been sent in to educate the agency about this population. They are asked to make a 30-minute presentation in which they must involve the audience in some way and address the following topics; 1) key issues and concerns of the population group, 2) history and current day consequences of oppression for this group, 3) how the group is represented by the dominant culture, 4) conflict and cohesion within the group, 5) resistance and resiliency within the group, and, 6) recommendations to the agency, using a social justice perspective, how service delivery, assessment and interventions should be influenced by the knowledge presented.

I ask students to list the top three groups they have the most interest in and the least knowledge of, and then I group the students with the primary purpose of creating diverse learning and secondary purpose of accommodating their learning interests. I also complicate the identities that students select, in the sense that students often choose racial or ethnic groups without thinking about sexuality or gender. Because many students have been raised in religious communities where they have been taught that the practice of same-sex love is a sin, I often complicate the identities by including GLBTQ to the racial or ethnic groups they have selected. I ask them to immerse themselves in the selected population by finding and sharing traditional and non-traditional sources of knowledge including academic articles, comedy, music, artistic expression, and YouTube.

LL: Another requirement of this course was that we research a minority group. I got African American GLBTQ's. I thought I had been given the worst luck of all. I had zero interest in the topic and I have had little, if any direct experience and knowledge about the topic. However, for my part of this group project I had to find instances of hate crimes against this group. Once I began the research, I was shocked. I started researching personal stories of their lives and their murders. Many died brutally, tortured for their sexual orientation. Some had children, some in monogamous relationships with their partners, some still children 15-17 years of age. I was horrified and emotionally upset about this. What I really found most repugnant was that those in power, charged with delivering justice, often abused and misused their power and stoked hatred against African American GLBTQs. Police beat one woman in the face with handcuffs; one judge sentenced two teens to 15 years for murder because they 'only' killed 2 homosexuals. Since they killed two homosexuals, the sentence should be more lenient? I was quite troubled. This research was in stark contrast to what I believe the positions of judge and policeman should be. What is worse is that the policemen and judges typically are not charged with any crime.

When students are asked to find research on institutionalized homophobia, heterosexism and transphobia through these

group assignments, the information they find challenges their sense of justice. For students who have been taught in their religious communities that same sex relationships are sinful, it creates cognitive dissonance. There are also students who come from these communities and reject the ideas they have been exposed to, and/or are GLBTQ or GLBTQ allies. For students that have more knowledge of GLBTQ issues, the exercise is still beneficial, in that they are asked to delve into the intersections of sexuality, race and gender.

By creating a safe space in the class for all students, I made a conscious commitment to address the beliefs that I suspected some of my students held. In my first semester I had a student who was gifted academically, a sensitive thinker who I could imagine moving on to get her PhD eventually. During the course we entered into a challenging arena. It turned out that she believed in the bible literally and felt that 'homosexuality' when practiced, was a sin. She felt strongly that she could not work with someone grappling with his or her sexuality because she could not present a non-heterosexual choice as positive. In fact, she would feel that she was facilitating the imaginary client in sinning, should she present same-sex love as a positive option. I do not see this as a Texan-Christian position, as I had run into students in New York who held similar positions. Remembering this incident vividly, and aware that I had Christian GLBTQ students in the class, I made a decision to use an empowerment approach to the issue and learn from their local knowledge. That is, I did not want to make an assumption that all Christians or all Texan-Christians subscribed to the same belief but I wanted to create a safe space for everything to be said in a way that would be respectful and result in learning.

I had students read an article on gay affirmative practice that included powerful statistics on homelessness, and attempted and successful suicide rates of GLBTQ youth and adults. I asked them to help me understand the views of the previously mentioned student. I posed the question as a regional and religious outsider, asking how that could be an ethical stance, and what they might tell that same student. Through the discussion, students helped me understand the variety of ways they would use their faith to guide them. Some students felt that their faith and relationship to God taught them to love everyone, and that they would be able to affirm the identities of GLBTQ population easily. Other students said that God would prefer them to support the imaginary client by affirming their sexuality than have the imaginary client commit suicide. Loretta ran with the discussion and said what many students may have been taught through their religious education.

> *LL: One thing I struggled with is [figuring out] issue concerning my Christianity as an individual and what the church as an institution believes. This discussion came up about why Christians believe it is wrong? Having been raised in church and been a member of church for many years I felt I could speak to that. The Bible talks about it being an abomination to God in Leviticus. I was simply stating why Christians believe it is wrong, as it is in the Word. I neither agreed nor disagreed. However, a girl in the class who had been riding with 3 of us that carpool to her car every night burst into tears and said she could not help the way she was, she liked women, she was in a committed relationship and she did not care what it said. I felt so bad for her that what I said affected her. I do not want to make people cry and get upset. I support everyone following their own heart and if that leads them to a same sex relationship it is their business. However, this incident highlighted for me the impact of religion on individuals.*

I have discovered that there are very few non-Christians in rural, small-town and semi-urban Texas. The exposure students have had to different ways of thinking has sometimes been limited, but they seem hungry and enthusiastic for opportunities to learn about the different realities they have not been exposed to. Journals provide a safe space for exploring some of these issues.

Safe Space for Reflection

After Loretta found the local knowledge she was experiencing to be credible, she decided to take the course and to fully engage in the learning opportunities. Within the course, and within the advisor-advisee relationship we had developed over time, the dominant theme was of safe spaces for reflection. These spaces were made safe through rules made by the class for discussion, a personal space through the journal to freely share her journey with me and through my availability as professor and advisor. Loretta also found safe spaces with peers and selected family members through her involvement in Interruptions and through seeking out allies in her family.

> *LL: The class included journaling and I love to write. I really felt I could openly discuss things in the journal and she would make comments and we got to know each other through that and through interactions in class. We had all kinds of hot discussions in this class and the reading was great. Through the class I realized that just because I had socialized with, and been in the lives of many minorities, homosexuals and other 'diverse' groups, I was not as diverse as I thought. Journaling about the articles made me realize how much white supremacist ideas were passed onto me and woven into my personal history. The class also helped me realize how to interrupt racism, sexism and more. Sometimes just saying nothing interrupts it. Many of my white friends and family that I have openly discussed the issues with are defensive--exactly as I was. One of the things that came up in the white privilege seminar, Interruptions and in Dr. D.'s class was the duty of white people who realized how things really are to educate other white people. How would I do this? I was already talking to everyone who would give me the time of day. My mother-in-law and I had a discussion about privilege and racism. She was 84 at the time, and she said that the poor minorities have always had it rough in this country, Whites have always had the privilege and she was the ONLY ONE in my intimate circle that encouraged me to do anything and everything to fight against racism and encouraged me to find a way to take up the issue. I told her about educating other white people and how many just reacted like I was crazy; too liberal or they just did not care. She said if I really care about it to find a way.*

The support that Loretta found from her mother-in-law, peers, and myself, enabled her to move to the next step of action. There were many times that Loretta sought me out during my office hours to talk about specific readings and other course content that she found disturbing or troubling and wanted to process. She also used the journal as a central space to process her reflections on the content and her reactions to it. I collect the journals at four different points in the semester and provide extensive feedback so it can mirror a private conversation. The safe spaces that Loretta found through the course, our relationship, her peers and friends, facilitated her opportunities for deep reflection. This supported deep reflection was a central to Loretta's personal transformation.

From Reflection to Action

Loretta's leadership qualities have always been outstanding, demonstrated institutionally through her election as president of the Organization of Student Social Workers in her senior year. The summer before her election, she had an interaction with a student from her cohort that led her to identify the lack of a required course to be a problem.

> *LL: The summer after I completed Diversity and Social Justice I took a course in which I was among members of my cohort with whom I had gone through many social work classes. I struck up a friendship with a sorority member. Some of the discussion in Interruptions talked about sororities on campus being mostly open to whites only. After a few discussions, I asked her about the sorority's policy*

on diversity. She said they had one black girl and she was their prize. I remember thinking, "their prize?" She represented the sorority's proof of diversity. I told her I could never be a part of a group that did not include all people. She said the sorority didn't have to "do that crap." The conversation continued and I was left disturbed and full of consternation. If she felt that way how many other social work students felt the same way? I had already run into dirty looks from talking about privilege and racism as 'the way it is' in classes, but I had not considered how many people were graduating with degrees in social work. According to our professional association, "The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human wellbeing and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty" (NASW Preamble, 2008). All my social work studies repeatedly showed the majority of those in poverty, that were oppressed, made the least money, had the least education and the highest arrest and incarceration rates were minorities. This girl was going to graduate never understanding her privilege and the oppression of the groups she, as a social worker would serve! This is when I identified this as a problem.

Had the faculty at my institution been aware of what Loretta's fellow student said, they would have been shocked and would have addressed this particular student's racist attitude. The larger problem that Loretta identified, however, was one that I believed existed in every program where I have taught. She identified the problem as the need for social work students to graduate with an understating of their own privilege and the oppression of the groups she, as a social worker would serve. The solution to this problem was making an appropriate course required for all students.

Loretta then came to me to discuss her idea of petitioning the school to make Diversity and Social Justice in Social Work a required course in the BSW program. She worked with me and other faculty members to create a statement for her petition, using skills she had learned in her macro practice course of how to create a successful change project. Many students supported the idea and Loretta organized a petition for students to sign, and brought it to classes. She found wide student support for the proposal. She also identified faculty members from the BSW Committee who would eventually make the final decision, and she and other students lobbied them before presenting their case to the committee. We worked together on strategy and finding ways to use her passion in a way that would be professional and work for her in making the change happen.

The biggest barrier to the passage of the proposal was the issue of finding space in the curriculum due to the large number of required courses in the BSW program; adding another required course would mean replacing one of the other core courses. Faculty supported the idea of adding the diversity course, especially since it was a student initiative, but the initial suggestion of students to replace the professionalism course with diversity was not embraced by the faculty. Being strategic in accomplishing the change meant that Loretta and other students restrain their enthusiasm in suggesting that professionalism be cut to make room for Diversity and Social Justice and instead let the BSW Committee make that decision.

LL: Thanks to Dr. D. helping guide me through understanding the experiences of minorities in her class and in Interruptions, her tireless assistance and counsel with me about the proposal, and her much needed coaching on being professional, strategic and suggesting this change in a way to help ensure a positive outcome, I am pleased to say that Dixie, [a friend and fellow student leader from Interruptions], presented our proposal to the faculty members at the end of the fall 2009 semester.

If Dr. D. had not been my advisor, professor and someone thoroughly educated on these topics, this transformative change in my thinking may not have happened. We were different from day one, but through her reminders of the class, her extra service to this issue through Interruptions and her willingness to see me through an extra task of making the presentation, we may one day in the near future be educating Texas social workers on the experience of non-dominant groups. I say that our differences brought us together and allowed us to work on something we both believe.

Loretta's active commitment to exploring and discussing the issues of white privilege and institutionalized racism, plus her strong internal sense of social justice, led her to take action to change the curriculum in the BSW program. This exploration was supported and facilitated by the multiple opportunities for social justice education offered through university activities such as Tim Wise and the university-sponsored student group, Interruptions, the social work curriculum, and through my persistence in recommending the course. The credibility gained through local knowledge was possible through Loretta's openness to it, and availability through exposure to local knowledge through assignments, class exercises, and discussions. My credibility was achieved through demonstrating my commitment to the issues outside of the classroom. The safe spaces for reflection were crucial in the process. As we discussed our observations of the green eggs and ham effect, we agreed that our social work program itself does a great job in infusing diversity and social justice content, and that this is supported by the university. We also saw that making Diversity and Social Justice a required course was crucial, because of the safe space for reflection it gives students through the journal and through the assignments and class activities.

Our mutual passion for justice was a primary force in our individual and collaborative journeys, and was a key factor in our ability to forge a relationship in which we could recognize and honor our differences. We first met in 2007, and the course has become required starting fall 2011. Loretta has graduated and we have kept in touch to write this article. and we plan to collaborate on other projects in the future.

Lessons Learned as a Social Work Educator

The transformation I have experienced as a teacher through my experiences with Loretta and my ongoing work in the institution is profound. As an educator and faculty member I have learned to identify and embrace contradictions with the belief that everyone, including myself, is a work in progress. This is something that I have explored intellectually and personally, but it was not until this experience that I internalized it and integrated it into my understanding of teaching, culture and community.

As a social justice educator, I know that people coming from socially and politically liberal communities can be racist and homophobic, although the expression of these feelings may be quiet. In New York city, many students fell into this category, but they were often harder to reach because they would edit their opinions in order to fit in to the social norms of politically correct language and attitudes, or they felt it was unnecessary for them to learn about. In this institutional context, where students come from more socially and politically conservative communities, there is less embarrassment about sharing their views and earnestly engaging in a process of self-discovery. I believe that type of honesty facilitates deeper transformations. I cannot imagine a white social work student in New York City saying that they would not take a Diversity and Social Justice course because it was "white-bashing", even if they actually felt that way. At the same time, many students in both programs in New York regarded the diversity elective as irrelevant to their professional development. In one program the elective was eventually cancelled because not enough students registered for it.

I continue to struggle with how to address some of the heterosexual students' beliefs about what it means to be GLBTQ in relation to their religious beliefs. I have tried a variety of approaches, and will continue to do so,

keeping in mind the importance of multiple institutional messages. These multiple institutional messages are sponsored by the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs. Through a program supported by this office, faculty, students, and staff can attend trainings on how to be an ally to GLBTQ individuals, and take advantage of the many guest lectures and learning opportunities offered.

I have also facilitated and witnessed profound movements, as I see in Loretta's journey with race awareness and starting on the path of becoming a GLBTQ ally. I have seen many students reaching out for knowledge and experiences that would challenge what they thought they knew in the past. As I watch this happen with every student who goes through the course, I am convinced that the social work profession needs to explicitly articulate a stance on GLBTQ affirmative practice, and how that can be accomplished with the sometimes competing requirement of religious tolerance. In my current location I feel comfortable in gently pushing the boundaries of knowledge and belief, but I am cognizant of working for the State of Texas, and the larger political environment of the state. When the profession can clearly articulate a position on these issues, myself and I other educators teaching in similar contexts will be empowered to take more risks in addressing these issues.

These are the contradictions that I have learned to see and embrace along with the firm

belief that we are all works in progress. Through the experience with Loretta and my overall experiences teaching in Texas, I am learning that contradictions, when acknowledged and embraced, can provide unique and unexpected opportunities for personal and institutional transformation.

In my personal and intellectual journey, I discovered Gloria Anzaldúa, a biracial, Anglo-Mexican woman who grew up on the Texas-Mexico border. I use readings in the Diversity and Social Justice course from her groundbreaking work, *Borderlands: The New Mestiza =La Frontera* (1987). Her work, and this particular quote, has always been powerful for me intellectually and personally, but as I reflect on the lessons learned as an educator through my experiences with Loretta at this university on this new cultural ground, it resonates powerfully:

> The new mestiza copes by developing a tolerance for contradictions, a tolerance for ambiguity. She learns to be an Indian in Mexican culture, to be Mexican from an Anglo point of view. She learns to juggle cultures. She has a plural personality, she operates in a pluralistic mode–nothing is thrust out, the good the bad and the ugly, nothing rejected, nothing abandoned. Not only does she sustain contradictions, she turns the ambivalence into something else (Anzaldúa,79).

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Use of Self: Merging Our History with Teaching Practice Classes

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This narrative recounts the author's experiences applying a family intervention with new Ethiopian immigrants to Israel at high risk for child maltreatment and domestic violence, and presents narratives of empowering social work practice with two families. Initially, the reader is provided with a brief introduction to the large contribution of immigration to the development of the state of Israel, as well as the nature of Israeli immigrant resettlement. The author presents the historical origins and characteristics of Jews of Ethiopia, as well as an account of their distinct waves of immigration to Israel during the past four decades. The many obstacles faced by the Ethiopian Jewish community within Israeli society, as well as some of their achievements, are noted.

"Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever."
-Gandhi, M.

Introduction

Let me begin with a story about a client I met in 1993. This young gay white male had come out to his parents one year earlier at the age of eighteen and was asked to leave his family's home. His father uttered one single sentence, "just be safe." Now this was the era when an HIV/AIDS diagnosis came with a lifetime expectancy of eight to ten years. The client had a bout of clinically diagnosed depression which led to some unsafe behaviors. When he went for his semi-annual HIV/AIDS test he believed, was convinced, that this test would be positive.

This was also an age of anonymous HIV/AIDS testing so medical insurances could not deny services. The client asked his roommate to go to the public health clinic with his random number to get the results. Later that day, he called his friend who stated, "I tried to go in but was too scared." At that very moment, the client knew the results. Yet he needed more evidence, he felt he had to experience the event himself. Therefore, he shuffled through his roommate's books until he found a diary. That entry for that day simply read, "I went in to get the results and they were positive…how am I going to tell him?" The client remembered feeling nothing, a numb out of body experience which seemed to last forever. That client was me.

Fast forward almost two decades, one year in Americorps National AIDS Fund and three social work degrees later, and I now find myself a social work educator, often wondering if the next generation of practitioners may be equipped to help clients such as myself who may seek them out after hearing life-altering news such as the above, loss of a loved one, or divorce? HIV/AIDS and all other life-threatening illnesses, including cancer and diabetes, come complete with a lifetime of anxiety, depression, and *what-ifs* (Colodro, Godoy-Izquierdo, & Godoy, 2010; Knowlton, Curry, Hua, & Wissow, 2009; Pantalone, Hessler, Danielle & Simone, 2010). As a social work educator and longtime person with HIV/AIDS, I feel I have learned to use my life experiences to enhance the learning that goes on in the classroom so students will be prepared to work with people who are dealing with chronic and/or life-threatening illnesses.

Some research has focused on*The Lazarus Effect*; the process one goes through when given a second chance at life after they thought death was imminent (Hahn, Cella, Bode, & Hanrahan, 2010; Humble, 2006; Tallman, Altmaier, & Garcia, 2007). This concept entails a person being given a *death sentence*, then miraculously, as in the case of HIV/AIDS and advanced cancer treatments in the 21st century, being told they may live longer than expected (Burnham & Wilcox, 2007). Gushue and Brzaitis (2003) explored this phenomenon with a group of people with HIV/AIDS who attended support groups and

were learning to live in an era when death was not imminent. They found that practicioners who worked with this population "must be able to tolerate extreme uncertainty and constant flux" (p. 335). Could use of self be a good wrench in the tool box which would allow social workers that flexibility and empathy for clients experiencing such events as *The Lazarus Effect*?

We currently have multiple medications to treat HIV/AIDS and the illnesses caused by the virus, with more on the horizon (Balfour, et al, 2007; Daughters, Magidson, Schuster & Safren, 2010). Even more exciting are recent developments in the ongoing battle to develop a vaccine which will work for all strains of HIV/AIDS (Sayles, Macphail, Newman, & Cunningham, 2010; Sullivan, 2010). I have been living with HIV/AIDS for 17 years. My complete adult life has been nothing but a revolving door of doctors, lab results, medications, and more sleepless nights than I would like to remember.

Another question I ask myself is did I go into this field thinking it would somehow help me deal with my own life altering event? Perhaps, but I know I am not alone as most social workers have a reason which propels them into this helping profession. A few reasons I have heard from my fellow social workers are rape, sexual incest, being in *the system*, substance misuse, and sexual orientation or gender identity issues. How do we nurture the initial catalyst which made many of us choose the field of social work and more importantly, can we use this event to help our students? I believe we can and should use these experiences to enhance our practice, be it in the classroom or out in the trenches.

Before this can be done, however, we must be cognizant of whether we have fully processed our own life events. For example, have I really processed my HIV diagnosis to the extent I can feel I am using it as a teaching, not coping skill? Well I have processed it so I feel almost as if I allow my body to coexist with the virus. I am reminded twice a day when I take my medication that I have this virus. Not only reminded of the bad part, but the good parts as well. Would I have ever found out about social work if I had not been infected? Would I have been less motivated to pursue higher education if I did not feel that *time bomb* ticking in my body? All of these questions were processed with a therapist before I decided to join the field of social work.

The importance of personal therapy for helping professionals is not a new concept (Macran, Stiles, & Smith, 1999). In my career, I have come across multiple licensed social workers I would be nervous about if they cared for my dog, much less entrusting them with my inner self. I have wondered many times if licensing exams purposefully leave out questions which would self-diagnose those taking them.

Of course I am kidding by this statement, but social workers (a profession rooted in social justice and community organizing), typically have minimal training in psychotherapy or self-awareness compared to students in psychology programs. I question if many social workers have enough insight to be clinically licensed therapists. Although many MSW programs incooperate DSM material into the classroom in various classes, the reality is most CSWE accredited programs usually only offer a single DSM focused class. This one class most times is an elective and not available every semester. Therefore, I feel it is important to explore self-disclosure issues with students in practice classes.

I realize that the internship experience is the foundation on which many social workers begin to merge what is learned in school with the reality of day to day social work practice. This adventure should be paramount in that students begin to acquire their beginning *clinical skills*. Therefore, social work educators must take on the task of modeling to students the advanced ability to properly use self-disclosure.

Use of Self

Use of disclosure has been studied within the therapeutic setting with almost unanimously positive results (Burkard, Know, Groen, Perez, & Hess, 2006; Farber, Berano, & Capobianco, 2004; Knight, 1997; Knox, Hess, Petersen, & Hill, 1997). Students can be taught to embrace their life experiences and

incorporate them into their work with clients. Of course while doing this, they must also be aware of boundaries and the paramount principle: "Is this disclosure helping the client or is it helping me?" After realizing the power of self-disclosure, social workers have the opportunity to create a sphere where social worker and client are aligned and working together. Teaching students how to merge the worlds of client and social worker creates a just, safe, and non-judgmental framework where healing the client is the top priority. It is time to move away from Freud's notion that therapists are merely a *blank screen* for clients and realize our history can and should be an asset.

This can be a difficult task but certainly not insurmountable. I have used my practice classes in BSW and MSW programs as venues in which to start this journey of learning the craft of using disclosure while counseling. By allowing students to piece together vital parts of their lives, we are giving them skills to pass on to future clients. Practice class is the perfect diving board for students to jump off and explore the give and take that occurs in therapy, as well as the tightrope one walks when using self-disclosure.

Practice Class

I am always amazed during the first day of teaching a practice class when I ask students how many of them have been to therapy or counseling. Usually it is less than 30%, sometimes as low as 10%. I am constantly amazed at this low number and wonder how effective someone can be as a licensed therapist performing therapy if they have never been through the process themselves.

This brings me to my personal exposure to therapy. I began to see a psychologist when I was eighteen in order to help me cope with being gay as well as processing what I perceived as the loss of my family. This therapeutic relationship lasted two years and has helped me immensely throughout the rest of my life. I also went back to see the same psychologist for a *tune-up* when I first discovered I was HIV positive. I believe being on the other end of therapy prepared me to be a better licensed clinical social worker because in essence, I learned how to be a client. By contrast, my social work training taught me how to begin to be a therapist.

I called the psychologist I worked with six years later when I was entering my MSW program and feeling a little unsure of my career path. After speaking for a few minutes she uttered that she had been diagnosed with breast cancer. Forever etched in my mind are the words she spoke, "I never really knew what you were going through until this experience." Now this is not so say that we can jumble human experiences into one pot and generalize that each person has processed a similar life event the same way, since there is uniqueness to a human who has lost a child, been sexually violated, or diagnosed with illness. Yet there is something about the old saying, "like speaks to like."

On the first day of teaching practice I often recount this story to my students, replacing HIV/AIDS with a more generic chronic illness. In my practice classes, I have had many students openly divulge experiences around death, violence, poverty, and illness. I have discovered social work students are eager to share what brought them into this profession, and I encourage this type of dialogue. I see these as strengths which can help them empathize with future clients. This is also the point where I can make an assessment as to whether a student still needs to do some more work on personal issues before beginning to work with clients.

For more on the difficult task of dealing with student's self-disclosure, see Haney's (2004) work which brings up some wonderful points around ethical dilemmas regarding students' self-disclosure in psychology papers. Still, I am a social work educator and should be well informed of what do to if a student needs help (in terms of appropriate referrals, etc.). Yet, we live in a world fraught with legalities. Due to this, I believe many times educators seem to steer away from this type of dialogue.

I use my practice class to come out to students due to the fact that I am teaching in the *Bible Belt* where rainbow stickers on cars are few and far between. This allows students the opportunity to ask me questions and humanizes me, therefore displaying the

philosophy that learning is a two-way street. It also prepares them for working with the GLBTQ population. Coolhart (2005) stated, "My ability to be out is related to my privilege as a white, middleclass, professionally respected, not religiously affiliated woman. While it is not always easy for me to be out, I definitely have an easier experience than most other queer people. For example, people of color, those with lower-income, and less academically trained professionals face more layers or oppression, making coming out more difficult" (p. 4). The simple act of coming out to students in a conservative or rural area is a luxury for me, and I do it because this may be the only venue in which to expose students to alternative lifestyles before they begin practicing social work. It also allows me the opportunity to ignite discussions regarding self-disclosure.

Discussion

During my limited years of teaching social work practice classes, I have discovered students respond to discussing use of self as well as students' experience with personal therapy. Most universities, including my own, have counseling programs and offer free sessions at student health centers. This would seem to be a perfect assignment in order for students to have some exposure to the therapy process. Although I understand there may be some legal issues, i.e., a student may be diagnosed with a mental health disorder or present with symptoms which would require more help. But what better place to be treated than in school, instead of sending students out into the field psychologically unprepared to help others because they have not helped themselves.

Although I may be in the minority when it comes to the belief that self-disclosure can be a wonderful and awesome tool, I hope that this piece will begin conversation among educators in social work. We are in a position to train the next generation of practitioners, to guide them using such skills as use of self during practice. Although clinical practice can be much like running a marathon, perhaps we can give students some more balance along the way. Allowing social workers to be themselves will, in turn, permit clients to do the same, creating a symbiotic therapeutic relationship.

I have some praise from my practice students which I attribute to my candor. Just a few of the amazing things students have written about the class include, "Dr. Humble was very helpful and understanding…I liked the open class discussion", "In the short amount of time I have known him he has made a world of difference to me and my outlook on life", "He was very understanding with issues brought up and I enjoyed the open class discussion", "Dr. Humble is a wonderful teacher, he is very laid back…and a very great person", "He is so comfortable answering all questions." As I read these I am both proud and humbled. Those who go into this profession must never forget to toot our own horns every now and then!

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Passing on the Passion: Introducing MSW Students to International Experiences

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My own international travel and study experiences created a passion for more of the same. They have allowed me to not only experience new settings and cultures, but also to see how those experiences can impact my teaching. My travels continue, but my main efforts are now in creating international experiences for my students. I hope they get the passion.

Like many of my marginally pre-boomer generation, international travel was not part of my background. So my own first international experience, beyond a weekend family visit to Niagara Falls in my youth, which included a one-day on-foot crossing to the Canadian side, came as part of my military experience. Although I served in the U.S. Air Force during the Viet Nam War era, the country was not a place I had any interest in 'visiting'. However, at some point I was informed that I would be receiving orders for an international assignment. Given the time left in my military commitment, the possibilities were Viet Nam, Korea, and Greenland. For different reasons than those that made Viet Nam unattractive, I did not welcome the possibility of being sent to Greenland. Ultimately, I received orders to spend thirteen months in the Republic of South Korea.

Living on a military installation in another country doesn't guarantee a true international experience. Many military personnel isolate themselves on the base or, when they do leave, do so in groups in order to maintain a comfort zone that limits the potential for real immersion into the local culture. Some years after my military service in Korea, as a graduate student having been offered the opportunity to study the German language at a branch of the Goethe Institute in Germany, I frequently ran into large groups of U.S. military personnel stationed in Germany on my weekend sojourns. They usually seemed more interested in their own group than in the sights and experiences surrounding them.

My own interests and desire to step outside my comfort zone and experience new things allowed me to travel, almost always alone, around Korea, usually on commercial trains and flights. Not speaking the language necessitated some creative use of body language and trusting those I dealt with. Buying travel tickets usually meant placing a pile of money in front of the ticket agent, saying (phonetically) the name of the city I wanted to get to, trusting the agent would give me back any excess money, then shrugging my shoulders and placing my palms hands up in a "Where do I go?" mode, with a typical response being a number of fingers being raised and a point in some direction to indicate something like "3 tracks that way." Once there I repeated the shoulder shrug while showing some other waiting traveler my ticket. This usually got a nod, with that person then escorting me onto the correct train or plane, then indicating when I should get off. Similar experiences helped me gain access into cultural events, usually musical, since I didn't understand the language. My willingness to trust in the helpfulness of my fellow travelers, both on the specific trip and in my life journey, always worked out well.

My two-month Germany experience afforded the opportunity to take my wife and our toddler daughter along. During the week, we lived in a picture postcard village where I studied the language during the day. Although we had access to a small kitchen in the dorm we lived in, we generally ate most meals in restaurants and hofbrau houses in the village.

The village was so small that, within a few days, word spread around the community of the "American family" that was there, and we were often greeted by that appellation when we would go into a local establishment to shop or eat. Every weekend we rented a car or took the train to some area of interest within Germany, as well as finding our way into Austria, Switzerland, Lichtenstein, France, and East Germany – this was some years before the wall came down.

Our travels necessitated some facility with the language in order to buy train tickets, make hotel reservations, shop, order food, etc. Having always understood and appreciated that many Europeans, among others, speak English, I would occasionally ask, in broken German, whether the person spoke English. On one such occasion, a hotel proprietor replied in German that since I was in Germany and obviously spoke some German I should not expect to be addressed in English. During our stay there he refused to speak to me in English, which forced me to practice what I was learning at the Goethe Institute during the week. That experience boosted my confidence and self-reliance enough that I was less inclined to ask that question in subsequent encounters.

Several years later, as a part-time faculty member, I had the luxury of escorting a group of freshman students on a week-long trip to London. I was appreciative for my own opportunity, but especially pleased that these students, many of whom had never had an international experience before, were able to participate. I had to deal with some youthful behavior, including one eighteen year old who discovered she could legally drink over international waters, and an occasional desire for one or more of them to want to sleep in, causing a delay in our daily schedules, but the experience was overall positive for everyone.

These opportunities helped create a passion for international travel and experience that has persisted. I now take every available opportunity to travel and immerse myself in the culture of the areas I visit. As a teacher, I now work to pass on that passion to my students.

As I started my current academic appointment, I discovered that one of my colleagues shared many of my academic and travel interests. Over time we developed international internship placement opportunities for our MSW students, some as block field internships and others for shorter stays that included volunteering in the area where students traveled; followed by an independent study project that focused on some aspect of their international experiences. These opportunities allow me to introduce some of my students to international experiences, offering an aspect of education most had not considered before entering the MSW program.

To date, students have all been sent to English-speaking countries (England, Northern Ireland, Australia – with an upcoming experience in Scotland) or situations in which English would be spoken (a U.S. military hospital in Germany). At graduation, many students have commented that their international experiences were the most memorable aspects of their education. This was not just because of the travel, but mostly because they got to experience a new culture, see how their social work knowledge and skills applied in those settings, and learn how their own attitudes were affected by international travel and work.

The experiences our students have had include working in an in-patient addictions treatment program in Northern Ireland; a day program for elders and camp programs for youths in London; a counseling program in Australia; and a U.S. military hospital in Germany working with service members experiencing PTSD as result of combat in Iraq and Afghanistan. Their independent study papers have addressed either direct practice or policy implications, sometimes comparative papers addressing both their host country and the U.S., depending upon student interests or practice concentration. In addition to the papers, some students completed other projects, including a photo essay and educational presentations to their colleagues in their field placements or paid employment situation.

The value students see in these experiences has been addressed by comments in their independent study papers such as:

It is imbedded in my heart, mind, and

soul now and forever more that humans are inter-connected and the human component is ever-present.

It was interesting to se that two different countries can face the same issues when attacking drug addiction.

Overall, the author noted more similarities than differences in the types of services offered through both systems (England and U.S.). The differences include the more developed system to support carers that England offers, as well as the comfort of knowing that they do not need to worry about how they are going to pay for their medicine, their doctors' bills or their hospital stays.

The problems of alcohol and other drug abuse are worldwide and much can be learned through an exchange of cultural perspectives. When I left for Northern Ireland I was heavily steeped in the treatment modalities of the United States. My experience in Northern Ireland brought about many questions as to the efficacy of treatment in the United States.

During my studies at Shimna House, I had the opportunity to explore their programming, philosophy of treatment, and made comparisons to the inpatient treatment within the United States.....Their treatment is extremely different than a traditional inpatient facility found in the United States.

Experiencing Northern Ireland has certainly been a chance of a lifetime and I will always be grateful for the opportunity. I have a much broader understanding of the world in general, a deeper respect for cultural issues and the strength of the human spirit.....I was deeply moved by the people I met in Northern Ireland in both a personal and professional way.

My most poignant memory came from the child whose behavior had caused me the most angst. Before boarding the bus back to London he turned to me, and with tears in his big brown eyes, he hugged my neck and said, "I guess you really liked me." He was right.

In the fall of 1997, I had occasion to apply for a trip to North Ireland to study alcoholism. Having had personal experiences with alcoholism at home, the idea of studying alcoholics in another culture fascinated me.

I continue to travel internationally whenever possible. Both my own international experiences and those of my students, whether formally connected to the social work curriculum or not, continuously reinforce for me the value of cross-cultural experiences for the enhancement of different perspectives and the opportunity to reflect upon personal values regarding other cultures and other people. The image of the "Ugly American" is still alive and well (maybe sick?) and one way for every individual to gain insight into their own perspective on the wider world is to experience more of it. I value my own international experiences and offering the opportunity for students, especially those without prior international travel, to gain insight into other cultures and the need to understand various cultural perspectives for their work at home in the U.S.

I hope my students get the passion.

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Disaster Relief Volunteer Work: Grat East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami

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This narrative reflects the disaster-relief experiences of a Japanese immigrant social worker who responded to the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami of 2011. After the overview of the impacts of natural disasters and the summary of disaster-relief volunteer work experienced by the author, the needs of people from the disaster-affected areas in cultural and spiritual contexts as well as the needs of disaster-relief volunteers in relation to what we can do in similar situations in the future are addressed in this article.

Great East Japan Disasters

On March 11, 2011 in the northeastern part of Japan, numerous towns and cities were washed away by up to 133 feet tsunami waves after being shaken by the magnitude 9.0 earthquake (the fourth largest since records began), leaving more than 20,000 people dead or missing and approximately 750,000 houses and buildings destroyed or damaged (Earthquake Report, 2011). A series of aftershocks continued to threaten people in Japan, and even a few months after the disasters, *Los Angeles Times* (Glionna, 2011) featured an article about a medical doctor suffering from earthquake motion sickness, along with many others who developed anxiety and depression resulting from these experiences. As of July 2011, when I volunteered as a disaster-relief worker, I felt at least two aftershocks per day with occasional tsunami warnings that brought a sense of constant tension and triggered images of the traumatic event.

According to the survey results released by the Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare in September, 2011, almost half of the people in the coastal areas suffered from symptoms of sleep disorders and one fifth reported that they consumed more alcohol after the disasters (Sawa & Fukushima, 2011). As of October 2011when I completed this paper, more than 70,000 people were still uprooted from their homes (Mainichi News Paper, 2011) and more than 22 million tons of debris were still left in piles (Reconstruction Headquarters in Response to the Great East Japan Earthquake, 2011). Witnessing these conditions, my mind often jumped from the present to the future, and imagined the continuous impacts on future generations.

Numerous people across the world also experienced collective trauma and exposure to secondary or vicarious trauma through the media that aired a series of catastrophic images and devastating stories. Their reactions to the traumatic events varied and the levels of intensity depended on different factors, such as past related experiences and relationships to Japan. Having families and friends in Japan, I felt helpless due to a lack of detailed information about the victims and survivors immediately after the disasters. After capturing more information, I felt hopeless due to the size of the casualties. Examples of other reactions included: becoming addicted to watching television, only making themselves feel more depressed; avoiding the related news and conversations and detached themselves from negative emotions; indirectly identifying with victims of the disasters; or spending countless hours trying to obtain information on the safety of their families and friends in Japan,

swaying between hope and disappointment. Others might have felt pressured to do something in order to feel or show that they were good religious or community members, felt euphoric or even manic for doing heroic actions, shifted guilt for surviving or living in non-disaster-affected areas to positive actions, such as collecting donations, still others took these existential crises as opportunities to discover a new sense of self, or experienced altruistic motivations to become disaster-relief volunteers. I also felt the internal urge and the external pressure to do something.

In this article I would like to share my experiences as a disaster-relief volunteer and also as an immigrant from Japan, to address what we could do in the recovery process. I would also like to reflect upon the needs of people from the disaster-affected areas in cultural and spiritual contexts, as well as the needs of disaster-relief volunteers in relation to what we can do in similar situations in the future. Before I begin, I would like to note that it is a common practice to identify those who experienced traumatic events as "survivors"; however, some natural disaster "survivors" still identify themselves as "victims" of the continuous disaster impacts and aftershocks, or as "future victims" of predicted disasters. Therefore, a term "*hisaisha*" is used hereafter to address people who were affected by disasters while recognizing the long-term impacts of the massive disasters. The aim is to avoid the pathology of calling them victims or prematurely identifying them as survivors, particularly with respect to Japanese culture.

Disaster-Relief Volunteer Experiences

Japan-Relief Fundraising

Many might have thought of volunteering in Japan; however, not all could prepare in a timely manner or had enough resources to meet the minimum requirement to "do no harm" to *hisiasha* and their communities when staying in the disaster-affected areas. Considering my own responsibilities for the first three months, such as families and jobs, and limitations of the resources I could prepare, the most effective action was to stay where I was and send money to the disaster-affected areas. For example, in collaboration with the U.S.-Japan Council Earthquake Relief Fund (https://www.usjapancouncil.org/fund), I worked with the committee members from the Association for the Advancement of Social Work with Groups, Inc. (AASWG: http://www.aaswg.org/) and the Society for Spirituality and Social Work (SSSW: http://societyforspiritualityandsocialwork.com/) and had raffle events at their annual conferences that were held in Long Beach, California, and Washington, D.C.

In these Japan-relief fundraising efforts, I received many encouraging comments from the donors. There were also some comments that helped me better prepare for similar events in the future. When it entered the third month after the disasters, some donors were surprised that Japan had not recovered yet. I felt the importance of actively sharing the information on current conditions and advocating for the continuous needs of *hisaisha*. Although most of these comments were based on their beliefs in the strength of Japan and expectations for its speedy recovery, a comment such as "Japan is a strong country, and I would rather donate to other countries" made me realize the importance of examining the relief efforts from historical and political perspectives at the global level. The comments lingered in my heart until I came to the conclusion that comparing which country suffers more than others was not productive in the helping process because all of them suffer in various ways. Another comment, "I will donate this time, because Japan helped us before and will help us in the future," made me feel responsible for fulfilling the expected socioeconomic role, realizing that the money was invested rather than being donated. I accepted the money with appreciation, but had to waive the responsibility for *hisaisha*, hoping that they, when receiving the money, would not feel the same way I did.

One couple requested me to remove the displayed pictures of the disaster-affected areas from the donation table since the pictures were depressing. My first reaction was that these were the everyday realities for *hisaisha*, and my primary emphasis at the time was to increase awareness among the potential donors, placing the donors' potential traumatic reactions as

secondary. I later shifted the focus from why we should donate, which might increase the feelings of guilt and pity, to what we donate for, which might create self-efficacy and hope, by displaying more pictures highlighting the positive changes we could bring to the recovery process. Through these efforts, my appreciation to the donors deepened.

As time passed, I realized that the fundraisers tended to target repeat donors, and reaching out to new donors became a challenge. To meet this challenge, I found that recruiting disaster-relief agencies and funding organizations to provide free consultations and workshops on effective and efficient ways to fundraise would be a great future contribution.

Volunteer Experiences in Japan

When I first started to look into volunteer opportunities in March and April, there were few opportunities for individual volunteers at local Disaster Assistant Volunteer Centers (http://www.saigaivc.com/) with warnings that volunteers should not (1) come without notifying the local representatives, (2) build tents in unauthorized areas or sleep in their cars, (3) depend on the centers for foods and places to stay, as well as tools needed for volunteer work, and (4) expect to choose their own tasks since those depended on the needs of *hisaisha*. I sought a non-profit organization that had already established connections with local Japanese social service agencies and recruited social workers. Although "Social Worker" was the last career group on the list to be recruited, I found Project HOPE (http://www.projecthope.org/) and sent an application as a licensed bilingual/cultural clinical social worker in the first week of May. I waited for their response with hope while preparing to leave for Japan; however, when I called the office in the last week of June to follow up with my application process, I was informed that Project HOPE was not sending social workers while physicians were still in need. This process reminded me of the limitations of being a social worker when responding to the disasters.

I also found the immense potential of being a social worker. In June, seemingly during the transition from the acute to the recovery phase, there was news about increasing needs for *kokoro no kea* (care of *kokoro*). *Kokoro* in Japanese means a combination of heart, nerve, mind, thought, emotion, moral, mental health, and psychological structures. By the middle to end of June, three months after the initial disasters, local Disaster Assistant Volunteer Centers started to accept individual volunteers. In July 2011, I arranged to work for the Disaster Assistant Volunteer Centers located in Higashimatsushima (http://msv3151.c-bosai.jp/group.php?gid=10180) and Shichigahama (http://msv3151.c-bosai.jp/group.php?gid=10119) and the Non-Profit Organizations (NPOs), such as Peace Winds Japan (http://www.peace-winds.org/en/) and Tono Magokoro Net (http://tonomagokoro.net/english/).

Preparation: Before entering the disaster-affected areas, I looked into the following information: the impacts of disasters, conditions of transportation systems and availability of lifelines, and materials/supplies to bring to the disaster-affected areas. I obtained an International Driver's License before leaving the U.S. to rent a car since some train and bus lines were still inoperative. The GPS option was a must. In addition to the unfamiliar names and signs, the roads in Japan were narrow and not visibly numbered, and adjusting to driving on the left side of the road with the right side steering wheel took at least a couple of days. When I arrived in Japan, I also rented a cell phone that could be used in the disaster-affected areas and purchased the disaster-insurance that allowed me to do volunteer work in Japan.

In addition to the conventional travel items, Tono Magokoro Net recommended brining the following items to the disaster-affected areas: boots with safely soles to protect against tetanus infections from stepping on glass; masks that block dust and small pollen to protect from infectious diseases; a helmet or thick cap; long-sleeved work clothes; thick pants; waterproof or leather work gloves, and goggles. Depending on the overnight stay conditions, other items, such as a tent and sleeping bag, were required. A sleeping eye mask and ear plugs were helpful for me, since I stayed at a gym with other volunteers.

Higashimatsushima Disaster Assistant Volunteer Center: The City of Higashimatsushima, located in Miyagi Prefecture, lost more than 1,000 residents due to the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami. When I visited the Center in the beginning of July 2011, the Center was still waiting for an approval from the city officials to provide any psychological or mental health services. I heard there was a need for *kokoro no kea* (psychological or mental health care) from the staff and disaster-relief volunteers; however, it would take at least two to four more weeks for the city's approval. During that waiting period, as a team member of nine disaster-relief volunteers, I volunteered to clean the houses of *hisaisha* that were covered with mud. The mud was thick like clay and, above all, foul-smelling. The day was hot (over 90 degrees) and humid, and the assigned team leader reminded us to take breaks every 30 minutes to drink water (at least two liters per day) and eat enough salty candies to compensate for the sodium lost through our sweat, which was constantly running from our bodies. The *hisaisha* we worked for and with were older couples. While cleaning together, the *obasan* (familial term for older female) shared her frustration, asking why the word was followed by *shōganai*, meaning "cannot be helped," or accepting what had happened. She continued to say that she did the same to "clean up the mess and go forward" during and after World War II and previous similar natural disasters that also took everything from her. These conversations occurred when working together for the same purpose. Although she did not need any formal therapy, I believed that this "working-talking" resulted in more therapeutic moments than the time we could have had in an office setting.

Shichigahama Disaster Assistant Volunteer Center: Shichigahama is a town close to Sendai City located in Miyagi Prefecture. Shichigahama lost about 100 townspeople and over 1,000 houses were destroyed. The disaster-relief volunteers were given spaces to build tents and park their cars. There, along with other volunteers, I was assigned to work with residents of temporary houses for *kokoro no kea*. Several residents gathered at the community house, where we had tea sitting together on *tatami* (traditional rush or rice straw mat), making the place feel like a home. During this informal get-together, *idobata* (backstairs gossip), or group talk, ensued (Kugaya, 2011). The group functioned as a support group, focusing on sharing stories, practical resources, and coping strategies.

As with the experience of the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake in 1995 when many older adults faced lonely deaths (Hayashi, Shigekawa, & Tanaka, 2011), we made an effort to invite older persons to come out from their temporary houses. A staff member from the Japanese Association of Public Interest Recreation (http://www.recreation.or.jp/) visited the community house and encouraged the residents to participate in the recreational games and exercises. While doing the activities, the residents expressed many concerns, especially the physical pain that seemed to worsen after the disasters. The relationship between the disaster-related stress and increased physical risks has been supported by numerous studies (Golden, Williams, & Ford, 2004, as cited in Leitch, Vanslyke, & Allen, 2009; Kyodo News, 2011; Solomon, Laor, & McFarlane, 1996; Vieweg, Hasnain, Mezuk, Levy, Lesnefsky, & Pandurangi, 2011; Watanabe et al., 2005). Considering the importance of mind-body integration, it was important to respect how their concerns were expressed and to address trauma-related stress reactions in the health care system (World Health Organization [WHO], 2003).

After the recreational activities, pickled cucumbers were provided by one of the staff members for the purpose of calming and cooling the bodies during a hot day. Two *omawarisan* (affectionate term for a local police officer, literally meaning "Mr. Go Around" who patrols and makes friendly visits in the community) came to deliver the community bulletins. The group invited the *omawarisan* to join the group talk and offered tea and pickled cucumbers. The group recognized them as leaders, and the *omawarisan* served as skilled group facilitators and consultants, developing a

cohesive and supportive group while bringing us the joy of ordinary life by making us laugh with witty responses. Learning counseling techniques in the U.S., I learned greatly from their leadership style that was in accordance with *Tao of Leadership* (Heider, 1985), such as lowering the self (being modest) toward the wisdom of ocean like water and being conscious yet spontaneous by emptying the mind to be mindful. In this culturally relevant safe environment, people started to talk about their experiences and shared their responses to the disasters. The *kokoro no kea* team provided minimum intervention occasionally, in order to shift the conversation from "problem-talk" to "solution-talk."

Tono Magokoro Net: The City of Tōno is located in Iwate Prefecture about 20 miles away from the coastline where the tsunami hit in March 2011. Tōno was not affected by the tsunami, but the city established a volunteer organization, Tono Magokoro Net, to assist *hisaisha* in the coastline areas affected by the tsunami. Disaster-relief volunteers were transported every morning from there to the Sanriku Coast District, including the communities of Kamaishi, Rikuzentakata, Ōfunato, and Ōtsuchi, to do various disaster-relief tasks, and transported back in the evening to sleep in the gym space provided by Tono Magokoro Net. There were strict rules, such as no setting of individual alarms (a public bell was set to ring at 6:00 am), no making noise (e.g., do not touch a plastic bag) after 10:00 pm, and walking tip-toed with no heels touching the floor. These rules were intended to ensure that the volunteers had enough rest to have energy for the following day; however, the occasional aftershocks woke us up in the middle of night, and the heat during the day and at night without fans or air conditioners exhausted our stamina. In addition to setting the rules, I was impressed with the several activities the organization developed for their volunteers: periodical newsletters; public journals for volunteers; an opinion box, a *hatto* (startling experience) memo bulletin board (where volunteers posted dangerous situations they encountered for the purpose of warning others); daily orientations for new volunteers; daily evening volunteer meetings; morning meetings and exercises; and efforts to match the needs of both volunteers and *hisaisha*. Occasional social activities served as our informal debriefing time.

During my time there, I belonged to a team, *Fureaitai*, which provided "Tapping Touch" services developed by Nakagawa (2004). One hour of training prepared new volunteers to provide the services that commenced with holding the recipient's hands, laying down our hands on her/his back, and tapping softly on the back, shoulders, head, and alternately right and left legs for about 15 - 20min. The trained volunteers were assigned to work with the residents at various shelters and temporary housing communities, creating consequent positive bio-psycho-social effects. The experiences were successful, and the method was useful and practical for both the volunteers and *hisaisha*. Considering the heat, one modification I would make for future practice would be to perform the beginning part of holding and laying down hands only during the cold season as an alternative method.

Among those who requested the services at shelters, Tapping Touch services were often provided in public places where other shelter residents also stayed. As a result of this lack of privacy, I would consider the following options: play relaxing background music to block the noise, and/or have bystanders also participate in Tapping Touch exercises in pairs and/or groups, tapping each other's back and shoulders. Tapping Touch services at private temporary houses were different experiences. The service recipients freely shared their stories while ensuring that someone was listening and used the occasional moments of silence as their time to process their feelings. I felt excited about this method as a volunteer, but as a clinical social worker I found myself being bound by the perceived professional role and ethics (e.g., possible exploitations by touching clients, limitations of confidentiality, no guarantee for continuity of care). In this approach I thought I could be more effective taking the role of a volunteer.

Peace Winds Japan: The headquarters of Peace Winds Japan, located in Tokyo,

served as the home base of the disaster-relief team in Ichinoseki, Iwate Prefecture, 30 miles away from the coastline, in order to assist the disaster-affected cities, such as Rikuzentakata and Kesennuma. I joined their disaster-relief team and visited one of the temporary housing communities in Rikuzentakata. The team made shady areas with tents, had residents come out, distributed potted plants and flowers, and informed them about the scheduled activities for both adults and children. These included playing with clay, making fans, squirting water, and playing badminton, volleyball, and dodgeball. According to the staff, these activities were delivered based on the methods developed by Mercy Corps (http://www.mercycorps.org/): Comfort Kids (5 - 11 yo) and Moving Forward (11 – 18 yo) Programs while considering cultural and age group differences (M. Poorman, personal communication, July 26th, 2011).

In order to meet the local needs and provide culturally relevant services, Peace Winds Japan also hired additional staff members from the local communities (M. Ōishi, personal communication, July 6th, 2011), which was also supported by the disaster-relief protocol developed by WHO (2003) for the purpose of keeping the local residents from leaving their communities in search of new jobs (Tan & Tan, 2006). Based on the model developed by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (2007), such helping processes were structured in collaboration with both national and local leaders in an effort to provide consistent and continuous support in the long-term recovery process (Y. Nakamura, M.D., Ph.D., personal communication, July 16th, 2011). From this experience I learned how the NPOs, such as Peace Winds Japan, took positions to fill the gaps between the services offered by local agencies and governmental supports (R. Yamamoto, personal communication, July 16th, 2011). In order for me to be able to help others, I needed help from many people.

Needs of *Hisaisha*

Transition from Shelter to Transitional House

The transition from shelters to temporary houses seemed to be a challenging issue for some *hisaisha*, who had limited resources to move forward. The shift from being allowed to be dependent as victims at shelters, to being pushed to be independent as survivors at temporary houses, was hard to make when the transition was forced on people before they felt ready. There were occasional conflicts that occurred at shelters when the residents of temporary houses came back to request for survival supplies that were donated for the residents of shelters. The resentment and frustration felt by the residents of shelters for not having been selected to have temporary houses exacerbated these conflicts.

Similar conflicts also occurred between the residents and the volunteers/staff. In the process of encouraging independence, the feeling of volunteers/staff that the residents were too dependent--and the feeling of the residents that the volunteers/staff disrespected their needs –occasionally emerged. In order to avoid these feelings, the volunteers/staff needed to differentiate the residents who required continuous hands-on care from those who might benefit from encouragement towards independence. The volunteers/staff also needed to know that everyone had a different pace of moving from the acute phase to the recovery phase, depending on their level of support from extended family members, amount of savings, and skills to get new jobs. It was important to remember that the differences in the pace of recovery increased as time passed, depending on the resources residents could access. One staff shared her evaluation method with me, explaining that as residents of the shelters started to complain about the food and conditions, then they were more likely to be ready to move forward to more independent life styles.

When moving the residents of shelters to the temporary houses, it was important to develop a community-based plan, especially in a collectivistic society. For example, the first attempt taken by one local agency was to prioritize people with special needs, such as

families with small children or persons with disabilities. They were selected and scheduled to move as temporary houses became ready at different times at various locations. In this process, the residents were separated from their community members and eventually lost their communities. They did not know their neighbors in their new temporary housing communities, and as a result they further isolated themselves from each other. Although it took time to relocate the residents, it appeared to be worth the effort for the local agency to keep people from the original community together in the same temporary housing community. This tactic would have helped more communities maintain their social interactions, cultural events, and spiritual rituals; identify natural community leaders; and improve the community supports and resources in the process of recovery.

Donated Supplies

Due to the size and severity of the disasters, the donated emergency supplies did not reach some places for days. *Tsunami: Essays of Eighty Children* (Mori, 2011) introduced the essays written by children who experienced the earthquake and tsunami in March, 2011. Their experiences indicated how one day without food could make them feel that their sufferings would last forever without hope. Meeting their basic needs with emergency supplies was critical during the acute phase. While the *hisaisha* appreciated donations of survival supplies, some donated items were culturally inappropriate or did not match with the phase-related needs and only took up space that *hisaisha* could have used as their living spaces. With the advanced communication technology through the Internet, *hisaisha* requested items that were mailed to the local volunteer centers, but the donors who saw these messages kept sending the items until they become over-stocked. The list of requested items needed to be centralized and updated as the needs of *hisaisha* changed.

There was a debate on the request for computers for children at shelters. Some thought that computers were not basic needs and not necessary, and some believed that in the modern society, computers would help children re-establish daily activities. Re-establishment of routine activities after disasters is recommended by WHO (2003); however, further examination on whether having access to computers reduces children's trauma-based anxiety is needed for future donation activities.

Histories and Cultures of the Disaster-Affected Areas

The stories told by local people were valuable for all disaster-relief volunteers to hear. Stories related to the histories and cultures of the communities should be one of the topics included in the volunteer manuals, in order for volunteers to be effective with *hisaisha* and sensitive to local needs. For example, in one community there were people who lost their houses and people who did not. The loss of the house was not the only difference between them, but there were historical and cultural factors that amplified the gaps. There were historical conflicts between native village residents and newcomers in that community, with many residents still remembering the time when the native village school-age children were banned from attending the school district in the new town. The native village residents had lived on the coastline, taking the best places to have fishing businesses; therefore, the newcomers to the town built their communities on the hillsides away from the coastline. As a result, most of the native village residents lost their houses to the tsunami while most of the newer residents survived. The tsunami further underscored this historical and cultural separation.

Due to the diversified weather regions and physiognomies in Japan, numerous characteristics of each village and town influenced the personalities of residents. For example, people in the Tōhoku area (the Northeastern region of Japan) have been recognized as possessing greater perseverance than people from other regions of Japan (WHO Western Pacific Region, 2011). Their perseverance reflected their morale and was highly commended by the world, which witnessed their calm and orderly response to the devastating disasters. Their

strong spiritual identity also reflected their appreciation for others, nature, and spiritual figures. One disaster-relief team reported how they were impressed when they saw the local spiritual figures being tied to a tree with ropes. The people protected the spiritual figures from the tsunami before they prepared themselves to evacuate. There were also many stories that people took their ancestors' memorial tablets before anything else. Their overall wellness was closely related to their spiritual wellness. The disaster-relief volunteers were recommended to treat these memorial tablets and spiritual figures with respect, consider the use of rituals, and provide ceremonies or memorial events for people who died in collaboration with local spiritual leaders (WHO, 2005).

There are also many dialects spoken in Japan. The heavy dialects, especially those spoken by older people in the Northeastern regions of Japan, were hard to comprehend at times for people who were accustomed to speaking standard Japanese or popular dialects. Local people were attentive to whom they were talking, and kindly switched to the standard Japanese; however, many nuances and cultural meanings attached to the language could be lost in this process. These losses were greater when using interpreters in cross-linguistic dyads. In order to minimize the losses, the use of interpreters who speak the same dialects as *hisaisha* is recommended.

The disaster-relief volunteers needed to respect the local ways of life and their belief systems. In particular, the volunteers who were from individualistic cultures or who subscribed to monotheistic spiritual belief systems were advised to pay extra attention to potentially harmful actions that could be done unintentionally. For instance, volunteers from individualistic cultures might automatically advocate for individual rights and benefits or establish treatment plans that might encourage individual achievements. But in doing so, they could neglect family rights, community benefits, or group achievements that are valued in the collectivistic culture. Another example was that volunteers from monotheistic spiritual belief systems might understand the local spiritual icons and practices as a way to reach their God rather than respecting *hisaisha's* belief systems. Tan and Tan (2006) warned that without carefully examining the local needs, volunteer work could become a mere "outlet for the volunteers' aspirations 'to do something' rather than to meet an assessed need in the field" (p. 98).

Disaster Tourist and Media Exposure

Disaster tourist buses were operating and taking tourists around to visit and take pictures of the disaster-affected areas. The *hisaisha* seemed to have mixed feelings about these efforts. The positive side of these sightseeing businesses was that the tourists would be motivated to become contributors to the disaster-relief efforts, increasing the level of empathy enough to encourage their friends and family members to become donors and stimulating the economy by using facilities and buying local products in the disaster-affected areas. The negative side was that the tourists might use the *hisaisha's* personal belongings as objects for sightseeing. For example, some tourists could trespass on private properties without knowing that those places had special meanings to the owners, and/or tourists would post the pictures of private properties online without getting consent from the owners. Other examples were that some tourist companies might fail to communicate with the local officials and *hisaisha* representatives in advance, and that some tours might be designed to only benefit the tour companies and businesses outside of the disaster-affected areas. In order to avoid the negative impacts of disaster tours, tour companies should (1) obtain permission from the local officials prior to the tours, (2) plan tours to benefit *hisaisha*, (3) train tour conductors to interact appropriately with *hisaisha*, (4) provide educational opportunities for their tourists to discuss how they can have a positive impact through their actions, and (5) discuss ethical issues involved in taking pictures and trespassing on private properties. By being aware of these ethical issues, disaster-relief volunteers could assist the local leaders in advocating for the best interests of *hisaisha*.

The conditions and needs of *hisaisha* portrayed by the media were often used as guides for potential disaster-relief volunteers when determining where to volunteer and what they could do to help disaster-affected areas. In addition, the amount, accuracy, and time sensitivity of the information affected the psychological status of *hisaisha*. The types of featured stories influenced the motivation of potential donors, and the selection of political issues impacted the directions towards the recovery at the community level. Considering the importance and impact of the media, collaborative work with or taking active roles in the media could better prepare potential volunteers, encourage potential donors, and support *hisaisha* in the recovery process. For example, the following topics could be featured more in the media: different ways to participate in the recovery process; how to become effective disaster-relief volunteers; how to prepare for aftershocks and future disasters; available disaster-response services and their service delivery systems; coping strategies for trauma reactions; and immediate, intermediate, and long-term needs of *hisaisha* (Avdeyeva, Burgetova, & Welch, 2006, as cited in Steffen & Fothegill, 2009; Hayashi et al., 2009).

Needs of Volunteers

The idealization of self-sacrifice and/or "spirits of volunteerism" could often result in neglecting the needs of volunteers. Volunteer coordinators needed to keep in mind that volunteers were motivated by self-, other-, and community-oriented benefits, responding to the various levels of needs (Steffen & Fothergill, 2009). Therefore, success often depended on matching those motivations with actual needs. As long as they did not interfere with the goals of *hisaisha* and their communities, providing choices -- such as locations, lengths of stay or hours of work, and types of volunteer tasks based on their expectations and purposes -- could actually volunteer motivation and productivity.

In order to avoid unnecessary burnout among volunteers, their psychological needs were also recommended to be addressed. Some volunteers might feel guilty about seeking support when they voluntarily entered the disaster-affected areas to help others, and held back their emotions until they left the volunteer sites and readjusted to their ordinary lives on their own. This might decrease their productivity, exacerbate the reactions caused by the secondary or vicarious trauma, and/or delay the readjustment process. There was a need of *kokoro no kea* to be actively provided for disaster-relief volunteers. For example, periodical debriefing groups facilitated by trained professionals might prevent unnecessary vicarious trauma or compassion fatigue, and occasional professional consultations and workshops might stimulate motivations and enhance positive changes. It was also recommended to create an environment where volunteers could schedule time for self-care and consider assigning different tasks to take breaks from the primarily assigned tasks while not being forced to do so (Shigemura & Kim, 2011).

Pre-volunteer trainings has been found to help prepare potential volunteers. The volunteers actually became more effective if they were trained prior to disasters (Rodriguez et al., 2006, as cited in Sterren & Fothergill, 2009). However, especially in cases of large natural disasters, many volunteers often ended up responding without having enough training (Villagran, Wittenberg-Lyles, & Garza, 2006). In addition to ensuring the availability and accessibility of volunteer training programs, incentives to completing training programs -- such as certificates or titles that might be recognized when responding to disasters, free trainings and/or continuing education workshops, and/or qualifications for specialized training programs -- might encourage potential volunteers to be pre-trained.

Volunteers' experiences in past disasters can inform the direction of current responses to disasters. For example, the lessons learned from the 1995 Great Hansin-Awaji Earthquake were used to improve the conditions of under-recognized populations in the response to the recent disasters. The needs of women, older persons, children, and persons with disabilities were considered in the following ways: (1) building the changing rooms for

women and not expecting women to clean and cook at shelters (Ōzeki, 2011), (2) developing preventative programs for solitary deaths among older persons who live alone (WHO Western Pacific Region, 2011), (3) establishing guidelines for persons with severe dementia and their family members who stay at shelters (Japanese Council of Senior Citizens Welfare Service, 2011), and (4) having care manuals for children (Japanese Medical Support Network, n.d.; Japanese School Psychology Association, n.d.; Japan Society of Physiological Anthropology Stress Research Group, 1998). Although the experiences with the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami have been unique and some modifications to the previous guidelines are necessary, previous experiences shaped approaches in responding to disasters and addressed the changes in social profiles and life styles. Similarly, the first-hand information gathered and recorded by the current disaster-relief volunteers will contribute greatly to future disaster-response guidelines.

Conclusion

The Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami have affected countless people and will continue to influence many parts of the world over future decades, especially with the radiation threats from the Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant. Narrative documentation of disaster-relief volunteer experiences in the continuing recovery process helps identify our future roles and create new resources. Lastly, I would like to express my great appreciation to the volunteers and organization staff I encountered during my disaster-relief efforts. I would like to end with recognizing the resilience of *hisaisha,* who continue to provide evidence of post-trauma growth that has positively impacted people in Japan, and around the world.

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Increasing Social Justice Awareness Through International Education: Two Models

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What happens when relatively privileged North American graduate students embark on international learning projects in settings very different from their own? What prompts professors to take on these experiences? How does international learning lead to justice seeking that carries over beyond the class experience?

This article unpacks for students and faculty the experience of two graduate-level social work travel-abroad courses. Both courses share the goal of bridging international learning and awareness with furthering social justice and dialogue across borders; however, they approach learning from two different cultural vantage points. The Mexico course is based in Paulo Freire's experiential pedagogy and the China course is taught in a Confucian scholarly style. The article provides an overview of the two courses, highlighting the differing pedagogical and research methods that underlie each course as well as the profound impact the experiences have on students.

Two friends and colleagues work in their offices across the hall from each other in the Graduate School of Social Work at the University of Denver. The Tuesday after Thanksgiving each year, both women lead groups of students to remote areas of the world. They share a commitment to furthering social justice and dialogue across borders, along with a desire to interact more authentically with students in situations that call for honest and soul-searching reflection and dialogue. Lynn takes her group to Cuernavaca, Mexico. Julie takes hers to Beijing, China. This article highlights the professors' motivations that underlie taking on these intensive travel courses, the design and pedagogy of the individual courses, and the lasting effects on all participants.

Motivations for Undertaking International Travel Courses

Julie's Story

I have always loved Asia. Though I am not Asian, Asian culture was significant in my developmental process. When I was 5 years old, my aunt married a *Nisei* (2nd generation Japanese American). From that moment forward the holidays included sushi, red snapper, yakitori, and azuki sweets. One of my prize possessions as a little girl was a doll dressed in a kimono, with hairstyles that could change by using different elaborate wigs. I dreamed about the day I could visit Asia.

My junior year of high school, my wish became a reality. I was an American Field Service exchange student to Japan. Initially, even daily functioning was extremely challenging, because my only formal Japanese language experience was one week of intensive Japanese when we first arrived. Japanese high school students went to school 6 days a week. I took all the required *sun nen sei* (third-year student) classes, though some were completely over my head. Consequently, I was thankful that my credits transferred back to my American high school and not my grades. To get to school, I needed to walk 10 minutes, take a bus to the train station, and then take two trains. One evening, I made the mistake of transferring to the wrong train and found myself on an express train to Tokyo.

At *Chiba Higashi Koko* (Chiba East High School), I played on the *Kendo* (Japanese Fencing) team, and participated in the flower

arranging and tea ceremony clubs. I loved the people, the food, and the depth and subtleties of the culture. The longer that I lived in Japan, the better I understood the culture, but simultaneously understood that there was so much more to comprehend that was not overt and was likely to be out of my grasp as a *guijin* (foreigner). It was an amazing experience and created an indelible imprint on the person I was and would become.

Many years later as a doctoral student, I grappled with my dissertation topic. I knew I wanted to study adolescent resilience, but the exact topic eluded me. Then I was struck by the idea of studying resilience from a Japanese perspective. Japan was the other venue where I had spent my adolescence, and the concept of resilience was non-existent there. Consequently, I needed to create words in Japanese for the terms *resilience*, *risk factor*, and *protective factor*, because they had not yet been conceived. I collaborated with Japanese colleagues who helped me obtain funding through the Yasuda Foundation. I was the first *guijin* (foreigner) to be awarded funding from this prestigious foundation.

My Japanese team and I asked 815 post-secondary students about their life and experiences. I was struck by how many Japanese youth thought the survey was *muzukashi* (difficult), because they had never been asked to take a test that asked them their opinions. Moreover, there were no right or wrong answers. We learned a great deal about what makes Japanese youth so resilient. We found that many of the "Western" risk factors were equally deleterious for Japanese youth; however protective factors were not universally protective. The positive influence of a particular protective factor was more related to the student's gender. Therefore, policies and programs that aimed at supporting Japanese youth needed to consider the gender as much as the developmental stage. Our results were published in both Japanese and English.

Later, when I engaged in my job search, I was impressed that the University of Denver, Graduate School of Social Work (GSSW) had a relationship with China Youth University (CYU). GSSW had been instrumental in helping CYU create social work education for its students. The two schools had participated in faculty exchanges. When I joined the GSSW faculty, it was suggested that I might be able to replicate the Japanese resilience study in China.

Accordingly, the CYU faculty and I began getting to know each other and building trust. My connections to Japan were initially a detriment for my new Chinese colleagues. Most still hold a great deal of hatred regarding the Japanese treatment of the Chinese during the Second World War, especially in northern China where they were invaded by the Japanese military.

The faculty of CYU had never conducted a large-scale research project. We also needed to gain permission from the Chinese government to conduct the research. It took 3 years of visits to move to the data collection stage. During each of these visits, my children accompanied me to China. We all adored the Chinese people, the food, and the culture. We were struck by the Chinese enjoyment of joke telling and laughing uproariously.

During my third visit to China, I suggested that we begin student exchanges. My Chinese colleagues thought it was an excellent idea, and the dialogue continued over the next several years. It was decided that we would bring students to China, and hopefully Chinese students would visit us in Denver. Five years ago, I accompanied the first GSSW students to China.

Lynn's Story

I have always liked Mexico, but unlike Julie, previous to leading the course, Mexico and the issues there were not part of my scholarship. Other than vacation trips to the beaches and beginning Spanish courses, I had only a cursory familiarity with the issues and people of Mexico. Instead, I inherited my course, or rather, a prior version of the course. A colleague who had been leading the course, *Global Relations and Poverty in Mexico*, for a couple of years was no longer able to do it, and encouraged me to take it on, saying she thought I would really love teaching it. Frankly, I was a bit reluctant, because it would take 2 weeks of my summer. However, I trusted this colleague, and so I said yes.

It was not an outlandish prospect for me, because I did and do have a fervent commitment to issues of social justice. My academic writing and research areas concern feminist practice and issues of power and privilege in couples and families. Moreover, my parents were social-justice minded. I grew up knowing I wanted to make an impact on the struggles of the world. Having been a social work practitioner for many years prior to coming into academia, I loved group work. And, though I did not know that these attributes would be a good fit for the course, when I agreed to lead it, the actual experience of the course felt like I had come home to issues, people, and a sense of solidarity with who I am at my best and at my roots. I felt I was doing what I was meant to do. What had been missing for me in academia was the experience of connection and collaboration—of being engaged in something really meaningful, life changing, transformational—all of which I experienced in the 2 weeks of the course. My group of slightly acquainted students slowly coalesced within an intense and powerful learning experience, and together began to scaffold a commitment to work for a better world for everyone.

I will share more about the details of the course in the next section. However, I want, in this beginning, to convey the passion I felt for the work there on that first trip. It provided such a stark contrast from the hierarchical, competitive nature of academia, which remains disheartening for me. When I arrived in Mexico and realized that we were immersed in issues of justic -- in dialogue each day with the people there about shared and respective problems, questions, hopes, and dreams each day—I knew I was engaged in making a difference, doing what mattered, that we as a group were engaged in a transformational process. There was no dissonance between my values and my work. Moreover, the relationship with the students felt more authentic. I was a learner with them in this process as well as group leader/facilitator. I reveled in the opportunity to craft a group process that gently and skillfully deepened the students' relationship with the course, the experiences, the content, and each other. The two weeks were a firsthand experience of praxis: practice in action. I was able to use my skills as a seasoned practitioner to evoke a process of critical consciousness.

Design and Pedagogy of the Courses

So, our starting points as faculty for the courses were different. You will see that the courses are very different. They are taught from two different cultural vantage points. The China course is taught in a Confucian scholarly style. The México course is based in Paulo Freire's experiential pedagogy. Yet, our responses from students tell us that both courses change students' lives. In the next two sections, we describe a bit about each course, and then share some of our students' responses to the courses.

The China Course: *Social Work from a Chinese Perspective*

In preparation for the trip, I teach the GSSW students a class called "Social Work From a Chinese Perspective." The class provides students an opportunity to learn the social, cultural, historical, political, human rights, and economic characteristics of China and how these characteristics shape social work in China today. In a country of 1.3 billion people, even a small percent of the population that is being affected by a social issue is an enormous number of individuals. The sheer number of people is almost unfathomable. For instance, it is estimated that 650,000 are HIV positive in China (UNICEF, 2004). To put this statistic in perspective, there are more people HIV positive in China than the entire city and county population of Denver, which totals 598,707 (U. S. Census, 2008).

Our students become aware that social work in China is a new phenomenon, with only a 20-year history. Many of the ideas regarding social work education were borrowed from the West initially; but over time, Chinese social work has come to reflect the ideas and values of the Chinese people. The juxtaposition of an ancient 5,000-year culture and a 20-year profession is an ongoing tension, because many in China cannot fully understand what the profession of social work actually is. One of the greatest frustrations my Chinese colleagues face is how to legitimize a

profession that is based on taking care of the weak and marginalized, which historically is an activity reserved for the family clan and not a responsibility of the greater society. Many in China see social work as care that should only be given by family members. Subsequently, they distrust care that is initiated from outside of the family system.

U.S. social work was built upon a strong Judeo-Christian ethic of giving to and caring for the less fortunate. Chinese social work has been unable to access that same philanthropic ideal because of the people's strong belief in filial care. This belief system results in there being very little financial support or infrastructure for social work programs. However, these values are beginning to change in Chinese society. The outpouring of emotional and financial support during the 2008 Sichuan earthquake represented a turning point. Ancient clan values are being further eroded by the unintended consequences of the one-child policy. With the creation of the one child policy a quarter century ago, the cultural concept of filial piety, the responsibility of the children to care for their parents in their old age, is being dismantled. The enormous burden placed upon the one child with possibly two parents and four grandparents, who is or at some point will be married to someone who also may have six elderly dependents, has caused the Chinese to begin to consider the creation of other forms of non-familial helping and support. These changes in social policy created profound changes throughout Chinese society and are now helping to propel the need for social work.

Much of what is taught in the classroom in Denver does not fully resonate until the students are actually in China. In Beijing, students are given lectures by faculty at China Youth University. These lectures tend to be given in the classical Confucian, hierarchical method of learned scholar and student. The professors are all experts in their chosen fields and try to best capture the areas where social work has made inroads in China. These areas include community social work, rural social work, school social work, child welfare, and gerontology.

The Confucian style of education is contrary to Paulo Freire's participatory experiential pedagogy. Students are recipients of professors' wisdom. Information moves from the venerable sage to the student. It is the "trickle down" approach to education. The knowledgeable professor imparts her/ his wisdom to the eager student who quietly absorbs the information. Knowledge is a hierarchical experience. It is imparted from those who have it, to those who have shown merit and wish to possess it. At the university, the professors have both been students in such a system and now use these techniques to teach their Chinese students. When American students experience this system, they often have a hard time sitting quietly. They want to enter in dialog and ask questions. This American desire for the exchange of information in more of a collaborative manner is somewhat daunting and surprising for some Chinese professors; others enjoy entering into discourse.

Along with their teaching functions, the Chinese faculty members are responsible for creating, and overseeing needed social programs in the field and advocating for the growth of the profession of social work in China. This is an enormous task. For example, a Chinese colleague recently contacted me, because she was asked to bring medical social work to China. She called to gather information regarding what comprises typical medical social work in the United States. For Chinese social workers, it is both highly exciting and exhausting to be at such crossroads of the profession.

Students also have the opportunity to have ongoing discussions with Chinese social work students. They are often awed by the Chinese students' enthusiasm and trepidation. The Chinese students are aware that they are the front line of creating viable social work in China. Some are excited to bring social work to their countrymen and women, whereas others are fearful that after they receive their degree, they will not be gainfully employed in their area of study. Many Chinese students did not choose social work as their preferred area of study. However, because of their performance on college entry tests or their

desire to be in Beijing, they were put in social work. The lack of opportunity of the Chinese students to make their own choices about what they want to study is very difficult for the American students to comprehend or accept.

While in China, we visit several social work organizations. Many of these organizations have been created by faculty and are staffed by current students. The organizations often survive on extremely limited budgets and strive to make changes within systems that are often resistant to change. The American students sometimes comment that it is the proverbial "using a finger to plug a dam." With such an amazing amount of need—the huge population affected by any social issue, lack of resources allocated for social programs, very little infrastructure, and lack of institutional giving—social work in China is both awe-inspiring and overwhelming.

Following each day's activities, which include a lecture and visits to social work organizations or important cultural landmarks, we have a nightly synthesis of the newly acquired knowledge and experiences. Through these discussions, students come to understand that even though social work in the United States is often less than ideal, its firm establishment offers our students a sense of stability as well as opportunities for advancement in the profession. They worry whether their Chinese colleagues will be afforded the same security. They also consider how they would fare in a similar circumstance where there is so much that needs to be done and so many opportunities to create change. It is both an exciting and an extremely daunting predicament.

The México Course: *Global Relations and Poverty in Mexico*

The México course, in contrast to the China course, is not about social work in Mexico. Rather it focuses on putting students in dialogue with people in México to uncover the pertinent issues that are faced there and the interconnections to policies and practices in the United States and globally.

The course takes place in Cuernavaca, México, a center of emancipatory political, religious, and educational thought and conversation, especially lively in the 1960s, 1970s, and into the 1980s. Ivan Illich's Center for Intercultural Documentation (CIDOC), founded in 1961, was a think tank and meeting place where many American and Latin American intellectuals came together to reflect on education, politics, and culture. Taking place during this time were the famous and vigorously argued debates between Paulo Freire and Ivan Illich on education, schooling, and the awakening of awareness. It was at CIDOC that Illich wrote his groundbreaking critique of the educational system, *Deschooling Society* (1971), arguing that schools made people dumb (Gajardo, 1993).

The course, *Global Relations and Poverty in Mexico*, follows the spirit of those times and is based in the community-learning philosophy of Paulo Freire, which provides a mixture of experiential and academic learning. Rather than going to books and texts, students learn directly from the local people via lively two-way conversations with peasants, spiritual and civic leaders, squatters, refugees, social workers, human rights activists, and indigenous peoples. It is not a service-learning-based project where we more privileged people come to help those who are less fortunate. Nor do we come to Mexico to study from academics or experts. Instead, the U.S.-based students and faculty come to learn from ordinary, local people with whom we dialogue and to whom we afford great respect. We are the students; they are our teachers.

The course privileges experience through dialogue and reflection first. This is the opposite of most academic learning, which mostly leads with knowledge from experts (books, professors) up front. Instead, we participants venture out of our comfort zones to visit remote communities where we gain knowledge regarding Mexican culture; individual, family, and community responses to poverty; historical patterns of oppression; spirituality and liberation theology; global economics and policy; and the role of indigenous movements. Theorizing and action plans occur organically in the process and experience of dialogue between the students and community people.

Included are discussions on the relationship between poverty in Mexico and policies in the United States; the plight of legal and illegal immigrants to the United States and Canada; and international trade policies—do they help or further marginalize those with less. The process is life changing, challenging participants to become agents in creating a world that embraces all who inhabit it.

This quote by Illich (1968), in his work, *To Hell With Good Intentions*, illustrates the position of learner that we strive to occupy:

> *I am here to tell you, if possible to convince you, and hopefully, to stop you, from righteously imposing yourselves on Mexicans. I do have deep faith in the enormous good will of the U.S. volunteer. However, his [her] good faith can usually be explained only by an abysmal lack of intuitive delicacy. By definition, you cannot help being ultimately vacationing salesmen for the middle-class "American way of life," since that is really the only life you know. (p. 2)*
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> *I am here to entreat you to freely, consciously and humbly give up the legal right you have to impose your benevolence on Mexico. I am here to challenge you to recognize your inability, your powerlessness and your incapacity to do the "good" which you intended to do....Come to look, come to climb our mountains, to enjoy our flowers. Come to study. But do not come to help. (p. 5)*

And so, it is our intention in this course to enter humbly with a willingness to learn from the people—to enter their homes; to sit with them; and to learn about their lives, their needs, their wishes, and their hopes. As well, we answer any questions they might have about us. The poor, the oppressed, and marginalized are our teachers. Their voices and stories are privileged. The following is a vision statement that greets students as they arrive at Quest, our home base, which is my facilitator's home expanded to house the students. This statement is written on the walls of the seminar room where we gather and helps to create the philosophy that guides the course. "If you have come here to help me, you are wasting your time, but if you have come here because your liberation is bound up with mine, then, let us walk together (*Lilla Watson.* n.d., p.1)

In accordance with "experience-first" pedagogy, there is not much upfront information given to students before they go to Mexico. Rather, the two or three on-campus sessions focus primarily on building community among the students. Students participate in exercises designed to help them get to know each other and begin to discern how they typically operate in groups. In addition, we examine what makes for good (and bad) group experiences. Acquiring a beginning sense of familiarity with each other helps students enter the intense group-living situation in Mexico and the unfamiliar experiential design of the course.

The course incorporates Freire's pedagogy for developing critical consciousness. The premise is that personal and social liberation occurs when people begin to unravel mechanisms of power, privilege, oppression, and dehumanization (Freire, 1978; Martin-Baro, 1994), understand how power relationships shape our perception and experience, and identify how we can assume a role in social change (Gutierrez & Lewis, 1999; Parker, 2003). The process we use simplifies these tenets into three phases of learning: see, reflect, and act.

See - We immerse ourselves in experience;

Reflect - We reflect and begin to dialogue with community people and with each other about our experience—our reactions to what we saw, felt, heard. Within that process, we begin to hypothesize, theorize, and evaluate;

Act - We develop action plans based on experience, knowledge, and thoughtful dialogue.

Freire contrasts experiential learning with what he calls, "banking education"—where experts (or teachers) make "deposits" of information that students are to receive, remember, and repeat -- a transmission of knowledge from the knowledgeable to those who know less, or subject to object.

> The more students work at storing the deposits entrusted to them, the less they develop the critical consciousness, which would result from their intervention in the world as transformers of that world. The more completely they accept the passive role imposed on them, the more they tend simply to adapt to the world as it is and to the fragmented view of reality deposited in them.
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> The capability of banking education to minimize or annul the students' creative power and to stimulate their credulity serves the interests of the oppressors, who care neither to have the world revealed nor to see it transformed. The oppressors use their "humanitarianism" to preserve a profitable situation (Freire, 1978, p. 73).

Because students have mainly experienced "banking" education, there is often some discomfort and even resistance initially. Students who for the most part have been passive learners often feel reticent at first to take ownership of their learning process. For example, they must learn to take responsibility to raise effective open (versus closed) questions—questions that encourage dialogue and exchange versus shut it down. When we visit the homes of the local people, everyone's comfort level and productive dialogue depends on each student's willingness to be actively, thoughtfully, and compassionately engaged in the group interchange.

I will highlight just a few of the people we visit. Nacho is an indigenous spiritual leader and local veterinarian. We visit him at his family home in Amatlan, a small community that still maintains ancestral customs. He tells the story of the Spanish conquest of Mexico. As well, we hike with him to a sacred spiritual center where he invites participants into an ancient ritual.

Maggie is now a young woman who tells her harrowing story of crossing the border and entering the United States with her mother and sister when she was a child. She weaves a poignant story of the family's experiences with their "coyote"; the attempts, failures, and eventual crossing; then of living and going to school in the United States; and finally of her return to Mexico after a U.S. social worker (wrongfully) threatened to remove the children from the home. The telling of her story is conducted in her grandparents' home, where her extended family now lives. After Maggie tells the story, her grandfather serenades us with music, and her mother and sister lead the group in dance. Students experience the profound love within the family and the dire circumstances that led Maggie's mother to risk a border crossing without documents.

Ofelia, an exuberant woman, now in her 60s, tells of traveling as a young child to México City to become a domestic worker to help provide for her family. Though she hungered to go to school, education was denied her as a girl. As a woman, Ofelia became connected to a liberation theologist, Gerardo Thijssen, in the squatters' settlement where she lived. He helped organize the women to make changes in their community, for example, getting running water into their settlement. Interestingly, the wife of Ivan Illich (a friend of Thijssen) loaned her money to start a small *tienda* (a little store of sorts) where she could sell candy and gum. Ophelia eventually was able to leave her abusive husband and become self-supporting. She now organizes domestic workers in Mexico.

These are just three of the amazing people students met with whom we dialogue. We also visited Gloria, a T-shirt vendor, who told of her escape from the massacre in El Salvador and the destruction of her family and community there; Alfonso, a priest, who serves the gay lesbian, bisexual, and transgender community and established a shelter for AIDS victims in Cuernavaca; Hector, a Zapatista, who told of the struggles of the indigenous peoples in Chiapas; Estella, a spiritual healer, who portrayed the struggles of women in Mexico; and many others.

The course incorporates experiential exercises where, for example, students compare shopping at the farmers market with the local Wal-Mart. After the shopping excursion, students deliberate the impact of Wal-Mart type companies on the local culture and economy. This is followed by dialogue with a professor from a university in México City that allows opportunity for the students to acquire more information about the history of México and the implications of trade

policies (e.g., the North American Free Trade Agreement [NAFTA]). With the accumulating experiences, students begin to comprehend the repercussions of global policies on the 70% of the population who make only 40 pesos ($4) a day. Arturo, another teacher, former diplomat, and community activist, challenged the students to feel and embrace the complexities, contradictions, and relationship of the struggles in Mexico with the relative privilege of the United States and to translate their learning into meaningful social action.

With each encounter, the students become aware of the huge and too often painful complexities of poverty, privilege, dominance, and subservience. How are we connected? What actions of mine—of my people—serve the whole, and which actions and decisions serve to maintain my (our) power and privilege while marginalizing others? Students begin to take to heart some of the major dilemmas as they sink into how intimately related we all are fundamentally. They dissect their reactions, challenges, new learnings, and confusions within a judgment-free context—first in personal reflection time that follows each visit, then in small group dialogue with other students, and finally in the large group.

Students Are Changed, But How Are They Changed?

Students from both courses say that the courses were transformational for them—that their experiences in the courses altered the way that they now view the world, their place, and responsibility in it. Mezirow (1991) defined transformative learning as a profound structural shift in a person's frame of reference that alters the way the world is viewed, engaged, and interpreted. Transformed learners grasp people and situations with a broader, deeper, and more heart-felt perspective. Mezirow identified three essential processes that facilitate transformative change: (a) reflection: the act of reflecting on experience and exploring one's culturally constructed assumptions, attitudes, beliefs, and values as they are uncovered in the face of the new and unfamiliar information and experiences; (b) discourse – or critical dialogue: a sharing of learners' awarenesses and learning with one another as well as the meanings they are making of the experience; and (c) action: the natural emerging of action plans as students engage in the process of observation, reflection, and authentic dialogue.

Freire (2003) believed that *conscientization*, or consciousness raising, is borne of critical reflection. He maintained that transformation occurs as learners participate in an ongoing cycle of reflecting, acting on one's insights from reflection, then critically reflecting again on that action, or praxis (Freire, 2003). For Freire, personal emancipation is not the goal or ultimate aim of education. It serves only as a necessary starting point for social change (Mezirow, 1991).

Both courses use reflection as a primary tool to help students digest their daily experiences. Though the courses are very different in content and format, we instructors are aware of the similarities in the profound effects of cultural immersion and the shifts that occur in students' worldviews.

The feedback obtained from students in the two courses reflects the respective pedagogies. Julie collects mostly quantitative data via a survey, and Lynn prefers to interview students.

Julie's Students

Six months after we return to the United States, the China students are asked to respond anonymously on Survey Monkey to a number of questions about their experience in China. These results, a compilation of data from the last 5 years, indicate there is lasting change in who these graduate students have become, post trip. These changes are striking in both personal and professional identities.

For instance, 80.7% of students who participated in the China course believed they gained better insight into themselves through participation in the China class. Nearly 70% (69.2%) believed that the China class influenced their personal choices. Over half (57.7%) believed that participation in the China class affected their values. Over two-thirds of the students (65.3%) believed that the China class changed their self-perceptions. Nearly 70% (69.2%) believed participation in the China class increased their self-knowledge.

Almost 85% of the students (84.6%) believed that participating in the China class helped them to better understand others. All of the students (100%) believed that the China class increased their international awareness. Most (86.6%) believed that participation in the China class changed their worldview. Over two-thirds (65.4%) believed that participation in the China class changed their level of responsibility as a world citizen.

Regarding students' professional social work skills, 80.8% believed participating in the China class helped them better understand group dynamics. Three-fourths (76.95%) believed their experience in China had an impact on their social work identity, and 73% believed their approach to social work was different because of their participation in the China program. Almost all (92.3%) believed that participating in the China class helped them to become better social workers.

It is striking that being out the country for only two weeks creates such enduring changes on students' worldviews, values, and identity. I believe this data underscores the importance of international experiences, adding credence to the notion that social justice can be deepened and sustained by involvement in international experiences. My students emerged from the experience in China feeling grateful to be from the United States and to be entering the social work field there.

Lynn's Students

Whereas the students come back from their China experience feeling that we in the United States are lucky, students from the México course leave their experience with the sense that we in the United States hold responsibility for many of the world's problems. Our advantage comes at the expense of others. They leave with a conviction that *we* need to change, struggling with their own consumerism and relative privilege. Many vow to buy more consciously in the future, for example, to examine labels to ascertain where the clothing is made so as not to buy brands that farm the work out to *maquiladoras* ("sweat shops") that benefit U.S. factory owners and marginalize young female workers from third world countries.

Jessica: I thought I was a poor college student who didn't have any money, but then I went to Mexico, and I was like, "Man, I don't realize how much stuff I do have, I mean, compared to the people there."

Aliza: As we attempt to make sense of all of this, we have questions. Everyday concepts suddenly have become complicated and confusing. What do we do with our money? What does it mean to be a consumer? How do we define happiness and poverty? What values do we use to make these judgments?

The students have been welcomed into homes with no beds, dirt floors, little food for the day and been told, "*Mi casa es su casa*" (My house is your house). "Come back and visit."

Jake: I like the idea of standing in solidarity with people. It does not presume that one person knows better or more, or that one group needs to educate or help another. Rather, we stand together in our differences, in our struggles, in our hope for a better future.

We have heard their stories. And, out of hearing another's experience comes the possibility of a different relationship. When we become aware of the other's humanity, so much becomes possible (Wheatley & Chodron, 1999). A transformative connection is built that is carried forward into students' lives in the United States.

Stacey: We have witnessed their lives and seen their tears. We have felt their pain. Their stories have reached into the core of our hearts and made us question everything we thought we knew before we got here. As people, we have a history of violence, oppression, and destruction. We have learned that here in Mexico, just like in our own country, the wealth and power are in the hands of a few.

Lisa: I learned how important it is to take accountability for our own actions and how these actions impact the larger picture. Everything you do, from the clothes you wear, the car you drive, what stores you patronize, impacts everyone else in the world. We need to be accountable for that, and make ethical choices. I would say to future students: "Definitely go with a willingness to have an open mind; go expecting the experience to basically rock your world; just be open to the

experience, and let yourself feel those raw emotions, because it's really going to hit you hard. Your whole worldview will be changed fundamentally, and so, just be open to that."

Conclusion

As colleagues, we agree that in the United States are lucky, but we also bear a responsibility. We are lucky to live in a country that has many opportunities that are not so available in countries such as China and Mexico. And we hold responsibility for many of the problems that others experience. Our privilege comes at a cost for others.

The opportunities that come alive in international learning experiences allow participants to be both be grateful for what they have and committed to righting injustice. We are convinced that international education, when well organized, greatly enhances social work education. It takes students out of the classroom and out of their ordinary daily lives to embrace realities very different from their own. As such, international education increases students' self and professional awareness as it catapults their commitment to social justice.

The international experiences are heart opening. That makes all the difference. This last comment by Luke conveys our sentiments well.

Luke: We have talked a lot about the idea of transformation. Transformation means to evolve, to change, and to grow. Transformation means that we have opened our hearts enough to see the world in a different way. When we change our hearts, our world also changes. We leave this experience a little more awake, and because of this, we are a little more free. This is transformation.

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Ten Years Later: What Is The Opposite of Terrorism?

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The psyches of individuals around the world were profoundly changed by the attacks of 9/11/2001 and the events that followed. In the days immediately after 9/11, we felt a sense of unity and caring for others, not only in America but across the globe. But the Bush administration's decision to launch a Global War on Terror (GWOT), and the subsequent invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, changed everything. The GWOT divided the world into warring camps, and it appeared there was little that individuals could do to counter this division. "The Opposite of Terrorism" project began two weeks after 9/11 in an attempt to counter the mindset that leads to both terrorism and the GWOT. This article defines and explores the power of the opposite of terrorism, illustrated by people and organizations exemplifying the concept.

There is great power in simply asking the question, "What is the opposite of terrorism?" Exploring this question can change our relationship to terrorism. Rather than seeing it as monolithic, incomprehensible, and uncontrollable, we can begin to look at its causes and consequences. Asking the question can lead to answers, and those answers to positive actions. The actions may be external (such as donating blood to the Red Cross) or internal (a more open view of the world). In both cases, these new responses can begin to replace the panic and helplessness that often plague people with a sense of empowerment and hope. I would like to begin this exploration by sharing an excerpt Anne Frank (1995) wrote in her diary on July 15, 1944:

> *We're much too young to deal with these problems, but they keep thrusting themselves on us until finally, we're forced to think up a solution, though most of the time our solutions crumble when faced with the facts. It's difficult in times like these: ideals, dreams, and cherished hopes rise within us, only to be crushed by grim reality. It's a wonder I haven't abandoned all my ideals, they seem so absurd and impractical. Yet I cling to them because I still believe, in spite of everything, that people are truly good at heart.*
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> *And yet, when I look up at the sky, I somehow feel that everything will change for the better, that this cruelty too shall end, that peace and tranquility will return once more. In the meantime, I must hold on to my ideals. Perhaps the day will come when I'll be able to realize them!*

My own journey of exploring the opposite of terrorism began two weeks after the terrorist attacks of 9/11, as my friend Marti and I sat at a window table of the Vietnam Georgetown Restaurant in Washington, DC. Through the window we watched people walking down M Street, which turns into Pennsylvania Avenue. The people on the sidewalk would be passing the White House in ten or fifteen minutes, if they walked quickly and if the soldiers manning the barricades across Pennsylvania Avenue let them through. Thinking back to those days, it is somewhat amazing that Marti and I had gotten together to see a movie, have dinner, and talk. That's because two weeks after 9/11 we were still expecting follow-up attacks, and if they were going to come anywhere they were likely coming to DC. The smart thing to do was to buy cases of bottled water and rolls of duct tape, and stay at home cowering in front of the cable news stations. So perhaps going to see a French film that begins with a man pretending to be gay in

order to keep his job and ends with the man and his co-workers discovering their common humanity was not the smartest thing to do. But perhaps that movie was the seed of "The Opposite of Terrorism."

As we ate, our conversation revolved around our families and friends. Neither of us had lost anybody, but we both had people in New York and DC we worried about. Marti and I knew each other through the Shambhala Meditation Center, and our group had been holding regular evening meditation/prayer sessions since the attacks. I had donated blood to the Red Cross and we both had given money to various relief efforts.

Toward the end of dinner, Marti said she wasn't satisfied. She felt we needed to be doing more. President George Bush was preparing to launch his "crusade" against the evil-doers, and to some of us he sounded more like an angry teenager than the leader of the most powerful nation in the world. So we were worried not only by actions Al-Qaeda might take. We also were worried by the actions our government might take, and by the language they were using to frame the situation. That included defining the situations in terms of us versus them, with them "hating us for our freedoms." It also included presenting reality in a dualistic fashion, with us being the innocent victims of attacks by the evil-doers, and them being the not-quite-fully-human "evil-doers." And since those evil-doers were out to get us, the government was out to destroy them by whatever means necessary. Those views are the epitome of terrorism. We were becoming the people we were afraid of.

There was a real fear of a major war breaking out, a fear we felt physically and could see in the faces of those we saw at work, at prayer, and at home. And there was a fear that even if we were not attacked again, the Bush administration's military response would mean more death and destruction for innocent civilians all over the world.

"What can we do" Marti asked.

I didn't really understand her question.

"What can we do to change the atmosphere? To make a difference?"

I was Marti's meditation instructor, which means I've been practicing Buddhism longer. That implies that when she has questions, I should have at least some answers. Sometimes I have answers. Sometimes I don't.

I didn't have an answer to her question. What could we do that would make any difference anywhere? What could we do to deal with the fear, hatred, and divisiveness that lay thick in the atmosphere around us? What could we do to help those attacked by terrorists, and those whose suffering was at least part of the motivation for the terrorist acts? What could we do to slow down the escalating spiral of belligerent rhetoric that was coming from the administration and the cable news stations? What could we do to help the small nonprofits whose funding was drying up because all the money was flowing to the Red Cross?

I didn't have an answer, so I did what my meditation instructor had told me to do in situations like this. I waited.

Soon a thought came to me. It really did feel as though the thought "came to me," much more than it felt like I "had the thought." In any case, this was the thought that came:

"We could do the opposite of terrorism."

"What?" Marti asked.

I didn't know what, it wasn't my idea. It just came to me. But I was her meditation instructor, and I was supposed to have answers for her questions. So I said, "What if we were to think about what lies at the heart of terrorism, and do something that is the opposite of that?" It sounded good, but I still didn't know what it meant.

"Like what?"

"Well, terrorists try to scare people, and try to hurt people, and seem to be looking out for their own. They don't care who they hurt. So what if we did something that made people happy and ….."

Another thought came.

"What if we had a party to raise money for one of the nonprofits that need money? And we did it for something that wasn't part of the Shambhala community?"

"A fund-raising party?" She seemed to think it was a good idea, which surprised me. So I nodded.

"Great," she said. "I could have it at my

house, and I could make Iranian rice and some side dishes. And it could be for Miriam's Kitchen."

Miriam's Kitchen is a place in the basement of a Presbyterian church that serves breakfast to homeless men. Jonathon, one of our mutual friends, was a social worker there.

"Are you serious?" I asked.

"Of course," Marti replied.

For me, it had just been an idea. But Marti was going to make it real. "We should give it a name," I suggested. "We can have these once a month, and maybe the idea will grow. We can call them 'First Friday' parties. We'll have them on the first Friday of each month."

And if it hadn't been that there were already a couple of other events called "First Friday," and that nobody had a First Friday open to host or come to a party, that would have been it. So we decided to find another name.

That happened rather by accident, when I was emailing Jonathon, to see if it was okay with the leaders at Miriam's Kitchen for us to have a party. I got tired of writing "the opposite of terrorism party," and said we'll have a T.O.O.T. party (T.O.O.T. being The Opposite Of Terrorism). Jonathon liked the name and it stuck. One of the neat things about calling them T.O.O.T. parties is that it was kind of funny, and if there was one thing we needed in those days, it was a sense of humor.

We scheduled the party at Marti's house, and about 30 folks showed up. We raised enough money to buy food for two days of breakfast for 150 homeless men. Then we had a party in the garden apartment where I lived. Almost everybody in my apartment building pitched in as if it were a block party. The next month a friend hosted a party at her house for City at Peace—a multiracial, multicultural group of teenagers using drama to tell stories about, and improve the skills for dealing with, conflict in their lives. My mother and father (a career Army officer) hosted a party at their house. Each party spawned another, and the last one was held in an upscale bar-restaurant and raised almost $40,000 for suicide prevention.

My strongest memory from these parties is sitting on a couch with Marti at my folk's house, as the guests started arriving. We looked at each other, smiled, and said "This is really good." The basic feeling that marked each of these parties was that something good was going on. It was the combination of the good intentions of the host; the good intentions of the nonprofit that was going to receive the donations; the good intentions of the guests who were donating money; and the general sense of celebration. The events almost had the feeling of a graduation party, or a wedding reception or bar mitzvah.

These parties were the most obvious result of asking the question "What is the opposite of terrorism?" But there were other, more subtle results. Asking the question had two other effects. First, it reduced "terrorism" from some monolithic entity that only the government could deal with, and against which the individual was left powerless. Asking the question helped break terrorism down into its component parts, each of which can be dealt with on its own. This is not to say that terrorism was removed as a national threat, but at least we realized that reaction to terrorism could be changed from a personal obsession into a personal concern. And that can make a huge difference in how we can live as individuals in the world.

Second, it led us to discover actions that we could take that countered the effects of the terrorist attacks. The parties provided a sense of community, security, meaning, and helpfulness at a time many of us were feeling isolated, frightened, confused, powerless, and helpless.

As the parties flourished people began to ask, "What is the opposite of terrorism, beyond just having the parties?" The more we broached the question, the more we discovered many people who had responded to the trauma of 9/11 in creative, proactive, positive ways. Rather than being beaten down by the terrorist attacks, they were responding in ways that let them hold their heads higher. For example, a man began a website to support others who, like him, were grieving loved ones killed when the plane crashed into the Pentagon. In Iowa City, a class of second graders decided that each student would raise one dollar a week for three weeks. This was a

lot of money for eight-year-old kids, and they certainly felt proud, empowered, and part of a greater community as a result of their gifts.

These people often didn't make the news -- it wasn't as exciting to have a lead story about a second-grade class in Iowa donating their dessert money to the Firefighter's Fund than to interview an expert on bioterrorism. So while these uplifting stories were often lost in the war hysteria, the impacts of their actions were profound—for themselves and for others. We also realized that many people had been doing similar things for years. Some of their stories will be shared in the following pages, as examples of how to provide hope, help, and the possibility of personal transformation to others show us how to fulfill our desire to be angels and heroes ourselves.

But that still left the question, "What is the opposite of terrorism?" We found it challenging to go beyond citing examples and to discover something that was more like a definition. We knew what the opposite of terrorism wasn't. It wasn't feeling frightened, powerless or hateful. It wasn't trying to protect ourselves by killing those we feared. It wasn't waging a Global War on Terrorism or launching a crusade to destroy the evil-doers. But what was it?

It is clear that not all questions have a single answer. For example, while "What is the capital of North Dakota?" has a single answer, the question "What numbers add up to 20?" has many: 1 and 19, 2 and 18, 1 and 2 and 17, 1 and 2 and 3 and 14, –20 and 40. In a similar way, there are many good and useful answers to the question "What are the opposites of terrorism?" After pondering the similarities between the many people and organizations that doing what we saw as opposites of terrorism, we answered the question for ourselves by settling on three central themes:

- Waging peace,
- Seeing what it is, and
- Practicing true kindness
- The following pages will explore each theme, and you might notice that many of the following examples combine several themes.

Waging Peace

From our point of view, terrorism is a tactic of warfare based on creating fear in the terrorists' enemies with no concern for the loss of "innocent" lives. It is a way of solving the problems that concern them through the unbridled use of force. By contrast, "waging peace" can be thought of as recognizing a problem, and finding creative, life-affirming ways to solve it. As an example of the contrasting approaches, Gandhi believed that using violence to fight oppression was not only wrong, but a mistake. This is because violent responses to oppression fueled the prejudices and fears that lead to oppression. "The means may be likened to a seed, the end to a tree," he wrote in 1909, "and there is just the same inviolable connection between the means and the end as there is between the seed and the tree. . . We reap exactly as we sow." (Gandhi, 1962, p. 51)

Using this approach, if you want a kind world, you have to use means that are kind. If you want a world of understanding, you move toward it by using understanding, not shouting. This is why Gandhi, and, later Martin Luther King, stressed nonviolent resistance in their struggles against oppression. It may be why in both Vietnam and Iraq, the American military attempted, with limited success, to win "the hearts and minds" of the civilians in those countries. As President Johnson (1965) said in a speech, "...the ultimate victory will depend upon the hearts and the minds of the people who actually live out there. By helping to bring them hope and electricity you are also striking a very important blow for the cause of freedom throughout the world."

You and I may not be interested in winning the hearts of minds of a nation, but we could be interested in waging peace—finding creative and life-affirming solutions to difficult problems. In doing so, it might be well to recall Gandhi's observation that "The means are the ends in the making."

There are many examples of waging peace in the realm of conflicts, and here are a few. One of my favorite instances was my sister telling her children, each of whom was pointing fingers and blaming the other for whatever they had done wrong, "Go to your

room and come down when you have a story you can both agree." This was a creative solution to a problem, where the means created the end she sought—the children coming together. Waging peace can also be seen in one of groups for which we held a T.O.O.T. party, City at Peace—a group of teenagers using drama to tell the stories of and improve their skills for dealing with conflict in their lives. At a more macro level, a striking example of waging peace can be seen by noting the huge difference between standard nonviolent protests such as labor strikes and political demonstrations, versus the practice of nonviolence as exemplified by Gandhi and Martin Luther King. Their intention was to win the hearts of those they were opposing rather than just win a political victory. In so doing, they sought to create a greater community that transcended and included opposing ideals and parties.

The oldest, and to me one of the most useful, examples of waging peace is the concept of "taking whole," which comes from the eighth-century classic by Sun Tzu, The Art of War (2005). In his third chapter he presents an idea that can be applied to daily life as well as to warfare between countries:

> *In the practice of the art of war, it is best to take the enemy's country whole and intact. To shatter and destroy his country is inferior to this way.*
>
> *So, too, it is better to capture an army intact than to destroy it, better to capture a regiment, a detachment or a company intact than to destroy them.*
>
> *Hence to fight and win in all your battles is not the foremost excellence; to break the enemy's resistance without fighting is the foremost excellence.*

Commentaries on this text suggest that in order to "take the enemy's country whole and intact," one has to understand the enemy from the inside out. You have to know the enemy as well as you know yourself. I think of this in conjunction with the hero of *Ender's Game* (Card, 1994), a child commander who defeats a vastly superior force by fully understanding that force. In the book, Ender does not realize that he is fighting an actual enemy; he thinks he is playing an advanced computer simulation. This is because his superiors knew that once he understood his "enemy" well enough to defeat them, he would not have the heart to do so.

In my own life I apply a version of "taking whole" with my friends and colleagues. When we disagree about something, rather than trying to "shatter and destroy" their arguments we try to understand not only their words but the thoughts behind those arguments. In the process, I often change my own view of the situation, and sometimes we find a creative solution that works for both of us.

Beyond knowing how to deal with conflict, waging peace also means reducing or avoiding conflict by removing what feeds it. In our view, terrorists are actually trying to accomplish something through their actions: they are trying to solve some problem. Thus another aspect of "waging peace" is finding creative ways to address those factors that often lead to conflict—factors such as hunger, hopelessness, and intolerance. For example, OXFAM helps villages in developing countries create the infrastructure they need to grow and prosper, like building a safe drinking water system for a town in India. Doctors Without Borders provides doctor and nurse volunteers to provide urgent medical care to victims of war and disaster regardless of race, religion, or politics. Amnesty International is a global movement of more than three million supporters, independent of any government, political ideology, economic interest, or religion, which campaigns to end grave abuses of human rights. Finally, the Southern Poverty Law Center's *Teaching Tolerance* Program provides resources for parents and educators to assist them in teaching about and living lives that respect differences and celebrate diversity.

In these examples of waging peace, we focused on actions, but not the world-view or motivations that lay behind those actions. The next two themes, "seeing what is" and "practicing true kindness," are opposites of the world view and motivations of terrorists. The first of these is an overly simplistic world

view that assumes how the terrorists see the world is how the world actually is. The second is devaluing those who are not in the terrorist's camp. We will explore the opposites to both of these in the next sections, and you may notice some of the examples look much like waging peace.

Seeing What Is

Terrorists believe that their view of things is the single correct view, and thus they have no need to consider other, divergent viewpoints. The opposite is recognizing there are many valid ways to view the world, rather than believing that there is one and only one truth, and that you possess it.

Evidence suggests that terrorists hold a dogmatic view of reality (Rosenthal & Muller, 2007); they are sure they possess the one and only truth. Their view of the world is correct, and all other views are wrong. The opposite of this is the second central theme -- seeing the world as it is, rather than just seeing our version of the world.

It might seem strange to claim "seeing what is" as the opposite of holding dogmatic views. One could claim that holding a variety of views, or being open-minded, is the opposite of being dogmatic. And it would be hard to argue against that, especially since we've already noted that both 19 + 1 and 10 + 10 are both equal to 20. But I believe that "seeing what is" is a stronger opposite than being open-minded.

Part of "seeing what is" consists of recognizing. I emphasize this when teaching introductory social work courses, using the idea of "social construction of reality" to help students realize that how we think things are is just how we think things are. It is not how they really are.

One aspect of "seeing things as they are" is that those things can be internal or external -- they can be a thought or an airplane. A second aspect is that by seeing things as they are, we gain the ability to see them without judging them. "Without judging them" means that we become aware of how we judge things, ideas, or people, and then let the judging mind go.

There seems to be a transformative power that exists in the world, a power that is called into play whenever we simply observe things as they are. Somehow, and I have no idea what the mechanism is, when we look at things and really see them, when we bring things into awareness and let them rest without trying to change them, something good happens.

When we see things as they are, we realize that no one individual or group has cornered the market on truth. No single "truth" is unequivocal or indivisible; not everything can be viewed through the lenses of that truth. Further, we might also realize that "we" are not always the good guys, and "they" are not always the "Great Satan." Once we see that both "we" and "they" have aspects of good and bad, we see further the unity underneath all the differences. Other benefits that arise from "seeing things as they are" include

- Seeing that we are all interconnected, or in the words of the song—we are family.
- Breaking us out of our mental prison of helplessness and meaninglessness.
- In relation to traumatic events, such as those of 9/11, seeing things as they are, not as we are afraid they are. This helps us shift from an obsession with the dangers of the world to a more realistic appraisal of what there is to fear and what there is not to fear.
- Appreciating people for their actual qualities, and not viewing them only as members of some "group" or how they impact or reflect on us.
- Learning to recognize our own prejudices and how to overcome them.
- Continuing to see after we "blink." We don't look away, and we don't immediately cover over "what is" with our thoughts about it. We must be willing to make contact with the world as it is, which can be beautiful but also painful. If we can't bear to see the suffering in the world, then we might be able to look at why we can't bear it. If we notice we don't want to pay attention to our spouse or lover or friend, we can pay attention to the fact that we don't want to pay attention.
- We begin to see the world as a rainbow.

That last one probably needs a translation, and the best I can do is tell you a story.

Joanne was one of the people who first

started helping to host the T.O.O.T. parties, and she and I were working on a book called *Meditations on The Opposite of Terrorism.* The book contained some of the ideas shared in this article, but also included a discussion about opposites. In particular, we had written that terrorists saw the world in terms of opposites: good and evil, us and them, black and white. The problem was that while we argued this was a bad thing to do, we were writing a whole book based on looking at opposites. So we got into the question of "What is the opposite of opposites?" This really had us stumped for a while. Once we realized there was a problem, even if it was only a conceptual problem, we were stymied.

Then one evening, after dinner, the answer came to me.

"What's the opposite of black?" I asked her.

"White," she replied -- a little hesitation in voice since she could tell by my grin I was on to something.

"Then what is the opposite of black and white?"

She frowned, not at all happy about being on the receiving end of one my strange riddles. "What?" she asked.

"Come on," says I. "What's the opposite of black and white?"

"Grey?"

That surprised me. I hadn't thought of that. "Could be, but grey is sort of in between black and white. What's the opposite of 'black and white'?"

She struggled with it for a little while, but I had this feeling she was getting ready to throw a pillow at my head, so I told her.

"The opposite of 'black and white' is a rainbow."

She smiled. I guess she liked it.

The point of this story is that if we look at the world in terms of black and white, we are limiting ourselves. It may not be the first step on the road to becoming terrorists, but it certainly limits how we can see things. If we realize that we can actually look at the world and not only see the blacks and whites and greys, but also all the colors of the universe—we are opening ourselves to a much wider, richer world. And in this world it is far easier to find, appreciate, and manifest the opposites of terrorism.

Kindness

Seeing what is was presented as the opposite of holding an overly simple, dogmatic view of the world that disregards opposing opinions. But having a simple, dogmatic view—in and of itself—is not sufficient to create a terrorist. There must also be a strong sense of "us versus them" with "us" being all good and "them" being the essence of evil. The terrorist knows that God is on his side, and that those on the other side are pawns of the Great Satan. The opposite of this view is what we call "practicing true kindness." Kindness in this sense goes beyond just "being nice." Kindness has the same Old English root as "kin," and thus "true kindness" includes a sense of kinship with others. Rather than seeing the world divided into "us versus them," we can see the world as an extended family. We might have an uncle we don't like, or a sister that drives us crazy, but they are still family.

In this sense being kind can be viewed as being the opposite of being "self"-centered, where self can be my group, my race, my nation, or me. Being kind breaks down the barrier between "us" and "them"—the barrier that is one of the hallmarks of terrorism. This barrier can divide me from the rest of the world, or my group from other groups (e.g., whites vs. blacks), or my nation against another nation (USA vs. Iraq), or my religious group against another religious group (Lutherans vs. Baptists). Kindness is based on taking care of others, and so it means reaching across some divide, to the other side.

Martin Buber (1970) reflected this opposite with his idea of "I-thou" and "I-it" relationships. In an I-it relation, the other is seen as an object that we only relate to in how it impacts us. In an I-thou relationship the other is honored for who or what it is. When we take an I-thou stance we are relating to others as if they were family, and possibly more. In order to really honor something for what it is, we have to actually see it as it is, not see it filtered through our self-interests or preconceptions.

An idea related to practicing true kindness is that of expanding circles of concern. Your circle of concern contains those about whom you are really concerned, about, whom you really care. A sociopath's circle of concern consists only of himself. For most of us, our circles contain our friends, families, and possibly some of our neighbors. Our circle of concern might also include those who share our basic beliefs, who share our religion, ethnicity, race, or sexual orientation. Mother Teresa's circle of concern expanded to the poor of Calcutta. Gandhi and the Tibetan monks and nuns imprisoned in China hold in their circle of concern those who would oppress them.

- A central aspect of circles of concern is that there are those inside the circle, for whom we care, and those outside the circle. Thus one of the opposites of terrorism is to expand your circle of concern to include some of those people you might tend to exclude. The following is a list of some people who are practicing true kindness. Many of these are also examples of waging peace, and some illustrate seeing things as they are.
- Acts of kindness might take great bravery, such as historical acts of simple generosity that were later viewed as great heroism. The secretary of Otto Frank, for example, spontaneously said "yes" to his request to help hide him and his family in July of 1942. For the next two years, eight Jews were spared from what would have been certain death. Though we tend to think of Anne Frank as the hero of this story, we should remember those who protected her and others like her as long as they could. A more recent example is the firemen rushing into the burning towers on 9/11.
- A related example is the story of the father who stood up to people who were making racist remarks in a restaurant where he was eating with his daughter. Because they laughed at him, the father felt he'd failed—until he overheard the daughter telling a friend how proud she was of him for standing up to that bully.
- In contrast, other acts of kindness seem almost commonplace, such as offering something as simple as directions to someone in our hometown who is looking at a map and seems lost. The Random Acts of Kindness Foundation is a group devoted to spreading the idea of doing simple acts of kindness that often cost us little or nothing. Other acts are simple, but take more effort, like Olga's project. Olga is the wife of a career Army officer, and a retired musician and music teacher who loved to knit, but had made all the sweaters her girls and their kids could ever use. So she started buying used sweaters at local thrift stores, cleaning and fixing them "like new," and then shipping them at her own expense to a Native American reservation in upstate New York. She is extending her kindness from her immediate family to those she doesn't personally know, but who can certainly use the gifts she offers.
- In addition to providing for the physical needs of others, some practice true kindness by addressing their psycho-social needs. In the political realm, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt gave us the platinum standard of providing psychological comfort when he said in his first inaugural address, "We have nothing to fear, but fear itself."
- Mrs. R. practiced true kindness. She was a foster mother to at least 20 children. She saw a problem and did her best to address it, not by attacking some external evil "other" who caused the problem, but by taking care of at-risk children who needed her care.
- Not everyone is going to play by the rules, so we need the armed services, and the unarmed services such as child protective services, Amnesty International, and even school crossing guards. We might not think of them as practicing true kindness, but if you look at the circle of concern for a social worker, a police officer, or a member of the National Guard, it makes sense.

Ten Year Later, and Now What?

So here we are, ten years after the attacks that made terrorism and the threat of terrorism real to many Americans. One might question,

"What is the practical use of these opposites so long after 9/11?"

The fact is, fallout from terrorism is still with us. We still live in a world that is dominated, perhaps not by terrorism, but by the roots of terrorism: using violence to solve problems, seeing the world in a dogmatic simplistic way, and devaluing those you see as "other." These can be seen in our current national and international politics. There are still people who need protection, nurturing, and simple kindness. There are still problems facing us, as individuals and as a society. Hunger, global warming, natural disasters, and poverty are still with us. Fear and the devaluing of those who are not "like us" still exist on the international, national, and personal level.

As Anne Frank's writing suggests, it is easy to despair. But we can use the opposites not only to deal with the threat of terrorism, but with all these other challenges.

This is what I believe is important: that we realize that we can change the way we think about the world. Going a step further, by thinking about our relationship to the world as the possibility of creating the opposites of terrorism and then acting on those thoughts, we can create a world that is better for ourselves and those we care about. Still, it is easy to become overwhelmed with the immensity of the suffering in the world. To counter this tendency to get overwhelmed by the size of the problems we face today, we might recall a little history

In 1966, when apartheid was a fact of life in South Africa—a fact as solid as rock -- Robert Kennedy (1966) visited the country. He said "Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring, those ripples build a current which can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance." And look at what happened: apartheid was eventually abolished, the result of lots of "small" actions joining together into a tidal wave.

Until the Soviet Union collapsed, we thought it was here to stay. Until Rosa Parks sat down in the front of the bus, Jim Crow was "just the way it was." As a feisty grandmother in the Midwest was fond of saying, "*Can't* never did anything."

Coda

Part of asking the question, "What is The Opposite of Terrorism?" was realizing we had to go beyond the idea of opposites. As you came to the end of this article, you might have expected to find "the answer," just like one expects to find the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. But a rainbow doesn't end: seen from the earth, it certainly appears to have two distinct ends, each touching the horizon. But seen from an airplane, it is a circle, and how it looks depends on the interplay of atmospheric moisture, light from the sun, and who is viewing it and from what position. Just as no two people see the same rainbow, what's important is not "the answers" we come to, but the questions that arise in our minds.

In writing this article, I presented problems and solutions. There are still many unanswered questions:

- How can we contribute to the world while we continue to work at our jobs and raise our families?
- How do we deal with those who hate us—what does it mean to turn the other cheek in a time of hate and fear?
- How can we transcend our differences with those who don't seem to want to transcend theirs?

In the final analysis, each of us must answer the questions for ourselves. And all must determine what choice to make with the answers they find.

This article began with a quote from Anne Frank and I would like to close this article with the following short story, versions of which are found in many folk traditions.

> *Once there was a very wise old woman, who could solve any problem any one brought to her. And she could also answer any question she was asked. While most people respected and honored her, some were always trying to stump her.*

One day a clever young boy caught a small sparrow, and gathered his friends around him.

"We will go to the old lady, and I will hold the bird in my hands behind my back. We will ask her if the bird is dead or alive. If she says it is dead, I will let it go. If she says it is alive, I will crush it."

His friends all thought this was terribly clever, and they all rushed to the old lady's house.

She came to the door, and the clever young boy said: "I have a bird in my hands behind my back. It is dead or alive?"

The old lady thought a bit, and then she smiled.

"It's in your hands," she replied.

It's in your hands.

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THE DKNNKMGP<" DTKPIGT" QH" IOOD" NWEM" CPF" EWNVWTCN" EQORGVGPEG"

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In this narrative, the authors describe their exploration ofthe various cross-cultural meanings ofthe Billiken, a good luck figurine, which they use in classroom andprofessional trainings about cultural competence and spiritual sensitivity, both in Japan and the United States. The stories are based on their two different cultural vantagepoints and ongoing cross-cultural interactions regarding the Billiken, which originatedandgained muchpopularity in the UnitedStates and then made its way around the world, including Japan. The stories revolve around how they encountered and reacted to the Billiken in two different cultural contexts, discovered their very different understandings, andpursued the meanings ofthe Billiken for enhanced mutual understanding. The authors explain lessons learnedfrom their experiences for effective cross-cultural learning andforpromoting cultural competence and spiritual sensitivity among social work students.

The Billiken is a creature attributed by various cultures to bring good luck. In this article, we tell stories about how we each separately encountered the Billiken in Japan and the United States, the divergent meanings we gave to it, and the ways our cross-cultural interactions and dialogue led to a transformation of understanding. In order to set a context, we first explain the historical background and various cultural meanings of the Billiken which neither of us knew at the times of our initial encounters with it and with each other. Our stories illustrate lessons for social workers who wish to develop cultural competence and spiritual sensitivity. In the conclusion, we discuss how the lessons we learned connect with social work education for cultural competence and spiritual sensitivity (CSWE, 2010; NASW, 2001).

As scholars, including Anderson and Wiggins (2003), Canda and Furman (2010), Devore and Schlesinger (1995), Green (1999), Haley (1999), Lum (2003), and Pedersen (1988) have pointed out, cultural competence and spiritual sensitivity are not merely concrete end points to achieve; rather, they involve a life-long process of learning attitudes, values, knowledge, and skills for effective relationships, collaborations, and helping practices. Direct life experience across cultural and religious differences can be more powerful than classroom-limited learning in order to promote this life process. Also, stories from people who have gone through significant cross-cultural encounters can be enlightening to students. Therefore, this article illustrates the power of such interactions and provides a narrative for use in social work educational settings.

History of the Billiken

In our personal stories to come, we will explain our encounters and explorations with the Billiken and each other across many cultural and religious contexts. When we write in the first person style (i.e., "I"), we will add the name of the writer in parentheses. Throughout, we shared our initial and emerging impressions with each other and continued to re-shape our understandings of the Billiken as well as each other, along with the various cultures in which Billiken has appeared. We hope that this history will be read not only as a statement of information but also as a recounting of the many surprising revelations that came to us over a period of seven years, sometimes through serendipitous encounters with the Billiken and sometimes through research. We also use this historical background when conveying our story about explaining the Billiken. As a result, this background information can be used

by social work educators to explain the multicultural meanings of the Billiken and also to illustrate the process of discovery and cultural awareness raising.

Origin and History in the United States

We discovered that although the origin of the Billiken as a trademarked image is well documented, details of its development into various and unexpected forms in the United States and across cultures are very difficult to ascertain. There has been little scholarly research about the Billiken while there are many speculations, unfounded claims, and popular cultural beliefs. The most detailed accounts of the Billiken's history were written by Dorothy Jean Ray (1960/2002; 1974/2008), an anthropologist who is well-known for her Alaskan research. A wide variety of Billiken images and forms across several languages and cultures can be seen at the flickr website (http://www.flickr.com/groups/52857 1@N2 5/pool/page6/).

We were both surprised to learn that the image of Billiken was originally created by Florence Pretz, an art teacher and illustrator of Kansas City, Missouri (Ray, 1974/2008), which is nearby our university. In 1908, Pretz patented her design of the later-named "Billiken." Although Pretz did not leave a record of her exact inspiration, there are several claims about it (Church of Good Luck, n.d.; Ray, 1974/2008). One claim is that the Billiken image appeared to her in a dream. Another possibility is that she was inspired by mythical 'little men,' which appeared in the poem "Mr. Moon: A Song of the Little People," by Canadian poets Bliss Carman and Richard Hovey (Carman & Hovey, 1986). Others claim that she was inspired by a Chinese image of a Buddha or a Daoist deity or by pixy-like Brownies as invented by Palmer Cox in 1887 (Ray, 1974/2008). In addition, there are no definite explanations of the origin and meaning of the name, Billiken. Possibly, it came from the principal manufacturing companies of the original Billiken objects, all of which had the patent number of Pretz (Ray, 1974/2008). The ambiguous nature of the Billiken's origin influenced our reactions to it, as will be described in our stories of encounters with it.

The Billiken gained much popularity in a very short period. It was created into many different commercial objects, including marshmallow candies, dolls, metal banks, pins, statues, and ornaments. Catchphrases were attached to many of the original Billikens for advertising it as a good luck charm, such as "The God of Things as They Ought to Be," "Grin and Win," and "Good Luck." Printed verses were also attached with some Billiken objects; they emphasized the miraculous luck and fortune that can be brought by the Billiken (Ray, 1974/2008). As another evidence of its popularity, Billiken-featured songs were developed: "The Billiken Man and The Billiken Rag" (Rogers Historical Museum, n.d.).

Billiken figures were included in the 1909 Seattle World's Fair, which highlighted several kinds of culturally stereotyped exhibitions (Berger, 2009). I (Sachi) realized that this could have been the point of connection for the Billiken's transition to Japan. According to Ray (1974/2008), a famous Alaska territory Inupiaq (so-called Eskimo [sic]) carver named Angokwazhuk (nick-named Happy Jack), who lived in Nome, used a Billiken figure from the United States as a model to begin carving Billikens in 1909. Since then, particularly in Nome, Alaska, thousands of ivory Billikens have been produced by ivory carvers. The Billiken has continued to be a popular Alaskan souvenir. Many Alaskans came to believe that the Billiken originated from Indigenous cultures. Indeed, the cryptozoologist Drinnon (2011) claims that Alaskan artists converged the commercial Billiken image with longer standing shamanistic Indigenous images. Alaskan popular beliefs surrounding the Billiken include: 1) possession of the Billiken keeps bad spirits away, 2) rub the Billiken's stomach while making a wish, and 3) a gifted Billiken brings more luck than a purchased one (Ray, 1974/2008). Coincidentally, while we were writing this article, my (Ed's) friends went to Alaska and purchased Billiken souvenirs as gifts for us. One of many verses that accompanied the ivory Billiken is as follows (cited in Rays, 1974/2008): *Rub his tummy or tickle his toes, You will have good luck so the story goes.*

Despite the fast fame the Billiken acquired, the Billiken fads in the United States had a fairly short life outside Alaska. By 1912, the Billiken faded away in its popularity (Ray, 1974/2008).

However, during and even after its peak of popularity, the idea and name of Billiken were attached to some events, organizations, and publications. For example, around 1910-1911, the Billiken became associated with the football team of St. Louis University (SLU). Based on several versions of its origin, it appears that the image of the Billiken became associated with John Bender, the football coach, and then the sports players became referred to as Billikens (Senay, 1983). To this day, the Billiken remains as a good luck charm for the university athletic teams and is the official mascot of the university (Billiken Media Relations, 2011). The Billiken name is associated with many SLU students' events, including ones that promote cross-cultural understanding. As I (Ed) will explain, discovery of this positive educational use of the Billiken at SLU was especially significant to me (Ed) since it related to my initial concerns when first encountering the Billiken.

The Billiken name also became associated with African American culture in Chicago. The *Chicago Defender,* an African American newspaper founded by Robert Abbott in 1905, created the "Bud Billiken" figure in 1923. A 10-year-old boy, Willard Motley, who published a story in the newspaper, drew a character, "a Billiken, apparently named after a Chinese 'guardian angel and patron of children'" (Rutkoff & Scott, 2004, p. 318). Motley took the Bud Billiken pen name and became the first Bud Billiken for seven years. He continued to make contributions to African American literature in later years. Abbott used Bud Billiken as a mascot for the newspaper and organized the Billiken Club for African American children in Chicago (Rutkoff & Scott, 2004). The Billiken Club raised a sense of "race pride" among African American children and expanded its branch clubs and membership over the years. Several individuals took the position of Bud Billiken over time. Bud Billiken "became the symbol of guardianship and protection for children" (Higuchi, 2005, p. 156). A picnic event for children held in August 1930 developed later into the large scale *Bud Billiken Parade* and Picnic, celebrating African American culture and youth education, which is annually held in Chicago yet today (Higuchi, 2005). We were pleasantly surprised to learn that the name Billiken became associated with this celebration of African American culture.

The Billiken around the World with Focus on Japan

Although the Billiken's mass popularity faded away in the United States in a relatively short period of time, the Billiken fad brought the Billiken outside of the United States. The Pelliken (Russian for Billiken) became absorbed into the culture and imagery of the Chuckchee people of Siberia, most likely due to the influence of the Alaskan Billiken (Drinnon, 2011; Ray, 1974/2008). There is a variety of Billiken objects manufactured in various countries (Fujii, 2000; Ray, 1974/2008). The Billiken even inspired a popular weekly magazine promoting education for children in Argentina. The Billiken was interpreted as a smiling Hindu divinity and used for the name of the magazine. The first edition of the *Billiken* magazine came out in 1919 and continues to be published (Speedylook, n.d.; Tangocity, n.d.). The image of another publication on the Billiken in Argentina can be seen at the flickr website (http://www. flickr. com/photos/20148734@N06/1968146107/). We were impressed by the uses of the Billiken in various countries.

The Billiken appeared in Japan in 1909 and continues to be very popular. The best-known representation of the Billiken today is the one enshrined in the Tsutenkaku Tower in the Shinsekai area of Osaka. This is how I (Sachi) came to know the Billiken. In 1911, the Tamurakoma Company, a textile company in Osaka, acquired a registered trademark of the Billiken and began using the Billiken as the company's symbol and lucky charm. In 1912, the Billiken was enshrined in Luna Park, an amusement park, where the first-generation Tsutenkaku Tower was located in the Shinsekai area. However, in 1923, when Luna Park closed, the enshrined Billiken

disappeared. In 1979, the Billiken was re-enshrined in the second-generation Tsutenkaku Tower as a symbol of the Shinsekai area. At the time of re-enshrinement, a Billiken statue created by the Tamurakoma Company was loaned to the Tower and a celebration event was conducted, which attracted many people. Based on the loaned Billiken statue, a new wood carved Billiken was created, which is the one still sitting in the Tsutenkaku Tower today (Fujii, 2000; Tsutenkaku, 2009).

Throughout Japan, the Billiken is considered a kind of *kami* [god], that is, *koun no kami* [lucky god]. The Billiken beliefs in Japan relate to *minzoku shukyo* [folk religion], which does not take a form of organized religion. It is a popular belief in Japan that Billiken will grant people's wishes if they tickle the soles of its feet. A variety of manufactured Billiken objects is on the market, including dolls, cell phone straps, and Billiken-shaped sweet buns as lucky goods. The Billiken statue can be seen mostly in Osaka but also outside Osaka in Japan. The popularity of Billiken in Japan is also apparent from the fact that the Billiken was featured in a comedy movie, *Billiken,* which was staged in Osaka and directed by Sakamoto Junji in 1996.

The preceding discussion shows vividly that the Billiken has a history full of twists and turns that have taken it from its Kansas City origin, possibly inspired by Chinese religious or European and American folk cultural images, into various forms and meanings around the United States and the world. This history set up situations for us to encounter the Billiken in two very different cultural contexts of Japan and the United States. Next, we recount our stories of these encounters, how we met each other, and how our cross-cultural interactions led to deeper understandings.

Personal Encounters with the Billiken

Encountering the Billiken Starting in Japan

The Billiken in my Japanese perspective. I (Sachi) grew up in Osaka City and came to be familiar with Billiken during my youth. "Billiken-san"-Japanese call this lucky god with affection and respect. Osaka City is where the original Billiken resides in the Tsutenkaku Tower. Therefore, when the Billiken comes to my mind, it is the one enshrined in the observatory of the Tsutenkaku Tower. The little creature with pointed-head, pixie-ears, fat belly, and a beaming smile sits with his feet stretched out, welcoming visitors to the Tower.

I visited the Billiken as a child with my parents. Later I began taking visitors there because the Tsutenkaku Tower is one of the emblematic buildings of Osaka. Whenever I visited the Billiken, there was usually a line of people waiting to meet the Billiken, which reminded me of its popularity. I often heard visitors say "how cute!" when looking at the Billiken and often saw them buy Billiken goods in the souvenir shops in the Tower. The routine for me to greet the Billiken was roughly as follows: 1) proceed to stand in front of the Billiken, 2) bow to it, 3) put some change in the donation box, 4) tickle the soles of its feet, and 5) make some wishes. Although I did not know scientific proof of the Billiken's ability to grant my wishes, I felt at ease just by looking at a big grin on the Billiken's face. The mysterious appearance of the creature made me believe that it would bring me good luck. The soles of the Billiken's feet are well-worn and have noticeable finger traces. Evidently, they have been rubbed by many people over time. People have rubbed its feet to make their wishes come true. The Billiken has been adored by many people in Japan over 100 years.

The Billiken in my cross-cultural encounters. I first met Ed in 2004, when he was a visiting lecturer from the United States at Ritsumeikan University in Kyoto, Japan. I was introduced to him and asked to give him a casual sight-seeing tour in Kyoto by a Japanese professor I knew. We visited some places and then stopped by a small restaurant. Outside of the restaurant, there was a Billiken statue, and Billiken objects were sold inside the restaurant. I did not think much about it as I had seen Billiken statues elsewhere, although it was less usual for me to see the Billiken outside of Osaka. What surprised me most was that Ed knew about the Billiken! I wondered why he knew about this "Japanese" lucky

god. Although I can now see information about the origin of Billiken available on the internet in Japanese, at that time I did not know anything about its United States context until this visiting scholar explained it to me.

Throughout my life I just accepted the Billiken as a lucky god, which is strongly associated with the Tsutenkaku Tower. The thought of searching for the origin and history of the Billiken had never occurred to me. Moreover, I had never imagined that the Billiken came from the United States. Accordingly, I was quite astonished to learn about its American context. It was simply beyond my imagination that the Billiken originally came from the United States and is still there (i.e., as a mascot of SLU). To me, the Billiken has always been a lucky god who resides in Osaka, Japan. Interestingly, Ed shared with me his original reactions to the Billiken when he first saw the Billiken statue at SLU. He did not know anything about the Billiken at that time. To my surprise, he had ambivalent reactions to the Billiken statue, as he will explain in the next section. In contrast, Billiken-san has always appeared to me as a positive figure, as I always associated it with an image of a lucky god.

I now think differently about the Billiken because I found out about the Billiken outside of the Japanese context. Long before I knew about the Billiken as a lucky god at the Tsutenkaku Tower, the Billiken had its own history outside of Japan, which was unknown to me. Similar to the remarks made by people in Alaska responding to Ray about the Billiken--"Oh, it's just something the Eskimos [sic] always made" (Ray, 1960/2002, p. 111), the Billiken to me was "something that has always been sitting in the Tsutenkaku Tower." Now I think about its meaning in the Japanese context and also in the cross-cultural context. Now, I am more mystified by the fact that the Billiken has been appreciated as a good-luck piece or inspiration for other meanings in different cultures.

I also feel more connected to the Billiken. The interactions and conversations I had with Ed regarding the Billiken ever since our first meeting in Kyoto helped me to re-think about the Billiken. The Billiken represents my cross-cultural learning. Ed and I discussed our experiences and understandings in our own cultural contexts in a mutually respectful manner. Through the dialogue, I learned not only about the Billiken, but also about myself by becoming aware of my own faulty assumptions. Moreover, I related with Ed more comfortably, and most of all I enjoyed sharing our own experiences.

Coincidentally, I currently live near the city where the Billiken originated. If Ed and I had not stopped by the small restaurant in Kyoto, we would have never talked about the Billiken and expanded our cross-cultural understandings. Nor would this paper have been written by us. After all, I feel like the Billiken did bring me good luck.

Encountering the Billiken- Starting in the United States

My first encounter with the Billiken. I (Ed) first encountered the Billiken at the fourth annual conference of the Society for Spirituality and Social Work in 1998. The conference was hosted by the School of Social Work at St. Louis University in Missouri. This conference brought together social work practitioners, educators, and researchers who promote respectful, knowledgeable, and skillful ways of addressing the spiritual perspectives of our clients and their communities. There was an enriching blend of intellectual, practical, and experiential presentations along with a sense of camaraderie and mutual support among participants.

One day as my wife, Hwi-Ja, and I walked across campus, we noticed a puzzling statue. We were intrigued by its unusual appearance, but at first sight, we could not figure out what it represented. When I looked closely, I was startled, because it seemed to me to be a silly caricature of an East Asian man or a distorted version of a Buddha figure. (An image of the SLU Billiken can be found at: http://kccollegegameday.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/434px Slu:_billiken.jpg). We learned that this is a mascot for SLU. A sign below the statue said that there is a legend that tickling the belly can bring good luck. I could recognize that this figure had a positive meaning for SLU, but I felt ambivalent about it.

I was sensitive about the issue of racist mascots among American sports teams and universities because of my familiarity with the all too frequent caricatures of Indigenous people. I grew up in Cleveland, where the Cleveland Indians baseball team uses a cartoonish so-called Chief Wahoo face as one of its emblems. I was never comfortable with this as I grew up, but rarely heard it questioned in my social circles. My awareness and ire were raised in subsequent years, as I came to know First Nations friends, colleagues, and students, some of whom were opponents of the misuse of so-called Indian mascots and First Nations images as colonialist playthings (e.g., Yellow Bird, 2004). Indeed, some of my First Nations students had protested the Kansas City Chiefs' use of that football team name, their so-called tomahawk chop cheer, and related emblems. I was especially incensed when I heard one of my students describe how he had been insulted and even spat at by some white sports fans during a protest gathering near the Kansas City Arrowhead stadium. I have been an advocate for cross-cultural and interreligious respect in my professional work and personal life. And unfortunately, as a Czech American/Korean American couple, my wife and I have experienced occasions of racist attitudes and actions in both the United States and South Korea (Canda, 2007). So all this predisposed me to be attuned to signs of racism in educational settings.

My wife and I talked about this Billiken issue. She was not sure how to regard the Billiken. I was a bit perturbed and considered sending a letter of concern to SLU. On the other hand, my wife was curious though not offended. I realized that I did not know enough about the Billiken, its origin, and meaning to make a judgment. After some time passed, we both forgot about the issue. I filed the Billiken in the back of my mind with a mixture of curiosity and indignation.

The Billiken in my cross-cultural encounters. Flash forward to 2004: I was a guest lecturer on spiritual diversity in social work at Ritsumeikan University in Kyoto, Japan. I had wonderful conversations with students, my translators, and my faculty colleagues about the complexities of understanding and applying spiritually sensitive social work practice across cultures, especially given the significant cultural differences between the United States (the cultural context of the approach I used) and Japan. This experience increased my desire to learn more about Japanese religions and customs.

One day, one of my faculty hosts introduced me to her co-worker (Sachi) and asked her to accompany me for sightseeing. After visiting various places, Sachi brought me to a small restaurant for a break. Entering the restaurant, I noticed a strangely familiar figure in the window. Once inside, I looked around the restaurant, enjoying the ambience. I was very surprised to realize that the statue on display at the front window and smaller statues set around the restaurant were Billikens. I blinked my eyes, wondering if I were really seeing what I was seeing. I thought to myself, "What in the world are those Billikens doing here?!" I was dumbfounded.

I asked Sachi what those figurines were. She explained that the Billiken is a good luck god popular in Osaka, which is not far from Kyoto. Sachi pointed out the soles of the feet. She said that if you tickle the feet just right, the Billiken will send you good fortune. She said that there is a shrine for the Billiken in Osaka. I told her about my surprise to find Billiken in Japan and my previous experience and ambivalence regarding the Billiken in St. Louis. She was as surprised to hear that the Billiken was in America as I was to see it in Japan. I realized that there must be a lot more to the Billiken than what my first impressions and concerns suggested. And one thing was clear-the meaning of the Billiken in Japan had nothing to do with my personal impressions of the SLU Billiken.

I asked her to inquire with the restaurant owner for more information about why she has the Billiken featured there. She confirmed Sachi's explanation and then directed us to a poster that explained more in Japanese. To the surprise of both myself and Sachi, the poster indicated that the Billiken originated from an artist in the United States in the early 1900s and that it somehow made its way into

Japanese custom as a god of good fortune.

This was a wonderful revelation for me. I was struck with the contradiction between my first ambivalent impressions of the SLU Billiken and the unambiguously positive meaning of the Billiken in Japan. All at one instant my mind jumped with surprise, curiosity, and clarity about the limitations of my own earlier assumptions about the Billiken. When Sachi shared her understanding of the Billiken based on her experience growing up in Osaka, I was amazed.

We got to know each other more during my later visits to Kyoto, during which Sachi worked with me as translator and cultural mediator. In 2007, Sachi came to my university for further study. As we explored the Billiken further over the years in Japan and the United States, the mystery and complexity of the Billiken grew. My evaluation of the Billiken became higher and higher. The fact that this figure took on different meanings and inspired people in so many varied contexts reinforced the importance of keeping an open mind. It is as if the good luck Billiken figurine truly graced me with a deepening insight.

Although there is some speculation that the original Billiken image might have been inspired by Americans' superficial views of East Asian cultures and religions, it became clear to me that the significances given to Billiken across time and several cultures included many positive values, including good luck and joy (United States and Japan), synergy with Indigenous imagery (Inupiaq and Chuckchee), pride in university (SLU), African American cultural pride, and positive youth education in Argentina. Although I feel that my original concerns about the misuse of cultural and religious imagery remain important, I gave up attributing any positive or negative meaning to Billiken outside of a particular context and people's interpretations.

Implications and Conclusions

We came to share our Billiken stories with social work students, hoping that they would provide insights with regard to cultural competence and spiritual sensitivity for social workers. Indeed, we both realized that the Billiken reminded us of things we have told ourselves, social work students, and social workers many times regarding cultural competence and spiritual sensitivity. More importantly, the Billiken also reminded us that everyone, including those who teach about cultural competence and spiritual sensitivity, has limitations and that cultural competence is a lifelong process of growth. When we tell our stories to students, we always emphasize this point, so that we model the ideals of self-awareness of limitations and commitment to continual growth in cross-cultural awareness through a respectful and enjoyable relationship.

When we tell our stories, we give time for each of us to share separately in order to draw students into each perspective and the feelings and changing reactions that we experienced. We also show pictures of Billiken images from different contexts to reinforce our points about the dynamic and contextual nature of the meanings of a cultural or religious object. We also take time to interact spontaneously with each other, interjecting mutual reflections and humor.

We enjoy the reactions of students and we explore wherever they might lead. For example, some students giggle when Sachi describes the Japanese custom of tickling the toes of Billiken for good luck. This can be an occasion to discuss the ways that religious practices and cultural customs taken for granted and enjoyed by one group can seem silly or bizarre to another group. Discussing this in a non-threatening way can lead students to become more careful in showing their immediate reactions to clients' religious practices. As another example, Ed's discussion of his initial ambivalence about the SLU Billiken and his ongoing concern about culturally inappropriate mascots sometimes raises agreement from First Nations students and sometimes raises puzzlement from Euro American students. This can be a great opportunity to explore the controversial issues of cross-cultural and interreligious use and misuse of spiritually and culturally significant images and practices in social work and in the general society (Canda & Furman, 2010). Further discussion of the complex

and contextual understandings of the Billiken adds even more questions about these issues, while taking the concerns about cross-cultural misappropriation very seriously.

In the next section, we suggest implications for culturally competent and spiritually sensitive social work, which we drew from our Billiken stories. When we teach about cultural competence and spiritual sensitivity, we sum up these insights from our stories and students' discussions.

Not Assuming

We should be cautious about making any assumptions, especially in cross-cultural contexts. As we have seen how the Billiken has been presented in various contexts over time, the same thing can be interpreted differently by various individuals and groups in different cultural and historical contexts or can be interpreted similarly in very different cultural contexts and across long periods of time. As each individual is a cultural entity, gut reactions to a mere object could differ significantly among people. Gut reactions can be especially strong when they relate to objects with religious significance. Even within our own cultural context, we need to be careful of making baseless assumptions about things that seem familiar.

Not Reacting Hastily

Naturally, we react to something that has an emotional or cognitive impact upon us, as Ed first reacted to the SLU Billiken. Instead of reacting hastily, it is important to be aware of the reaction and to reflect on what it is in us that evokes our reaction in terms of our own values, beliefs, life experiences, and biases. This would also help us not to jump to conclusions or to act rashly.

Self-Reflecting

Self-reflection and self-awareness cannot be over-emphasized in pursuing cultural competence (Devore & Schlesinger, 1999; Pedersen, 1988). Haley (1999) regards self-awareness as the first step toward cultural competence. Similarly, Lum (2003) states that "the road to cultural competence begins with an understanding of your own personal and professional cultural awareness" (p. 75). Green (1999) emphasizes the importance of awareness of self-limitations. Importantly, the Billiken in our cross-cultural encounters reminded us of this fundamental element of cultural competence. We must always be in a process of self-reflection and growth in striving for cultural competence.

Building Accurate Knowledge

Accurate knowledge requires continuous learning and critical thinking. Acquiring knowledge is often considered as a component of cultural competence (Lum, 2003; Sue 2006: Weaver, 2004). Utilizing various learning sources, including direct experiences, would enhance the process and outcome of knowledge acquisition. Indeed, in our search for further information about the Billiken, we critically reviewed literature and online sources and asked our colleagues about the uses of the Billiken in their own cultures. We also talked with people who were familiar with the Billiken in various contexts. After all, we realized what we originally believed about the Billiken was a very limited aspect of the Billiken.

Fostering Cross-Cultural Dialogue

Mutually respectful dialogue in cross-cultural interaction can bring an opportunity to realize our own cultural assumptions and to expand our understandings of distinctiveness and commonality across different cultures (Green, 1999; Lum, 2003). Although differences are often focused upon in cross-cultural encounters, commonalities that connect different cultural groups need to be more highlighted. Discovering both the commonalities and differences of understanding can lead to insight and deeper connecting between people across cultures and religions (Canda & Furman, 2010). We believe that respectfully sharing our own understandings and experiences of Billiken during our first meeting with each other laid the foundation of our mutual respect and further connection. We also found that the Billiken has been used for similar purposes in different cultures (e.g., as good luck figure) but with different connotations and specific forms. As we continued our explorations and discussions over several years, we deepened

understanding of the many nuances of the Billiken and enhanced our understanding and appreciation of each other.

Being Curious

Curiosity and cross-cultural experience interact and enhance each other. By being open and curious about people's experiences and stories, we might discover something that we have never expected. Any assumptions and beliefs that we have held for a long time might even turn out to be inaccurate or faulty (Lum, 2003). Curiosity can motivate us to delve more deeply into the meaning and significance of a cultural or religious item. As our Billiken stories illustrate, exploration of just one thing could take many years to open up its many facets. Genuine and respectful curiosity can carry us through as long as it takes, sometimes many years, to develop authentic cross-cultural or interreligious understanding.

As we reflect on this several years long process of exploring the Billiken, we are grateful to the Billiken figure for the good fortune of our enhanced learning and teaching about cultural competence and spiritual sensitivity. So during our final discussion to complete the writing of this article, we enjoyed looking at the grin of a newly acquired 1910 Billiken bank figurine.

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- For a picture of the Billikin, please go to: http://ja.wikipedia.org/wiki/%E3%83% 95%E3%82%A1%E3%82%A4%E3% 83%AB:Billiken_200712.JPG#filelinks

Reflections on *Reflections*: Narrative Turn in Social Work

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When I think about *Reflections: Narratives of Professional Helping*, I am reminded of the love, care and passion for social justice which the best of social work is about. I am also reminded of the complicated relationships social work has to people's lives and stories. Rather than deny the messiness of this experience, many of these stories found a venue in *Reflections*. The last article I wrote for the journal was born with Dr. John Oliver, the former director of the School of Social Work at California State University, Long Beach. We were talking about Jillian Jimenez, the journal's long time editor, who had passed. John reminded me there was a special issue coming up and suggested I write something, which I did. I recall the editorial process with Paul Abels, one of the journal's founders, as he put together a commemorative issue for her. *Reflections* was a labor of love for so many.

It was also a place to consider the ways social work policy and practice are actually conducted in all their not so simple dimensions. This is what the practitioner narratives published in the journal highlight. Jimenez was a historian of social policy, so many of the issues she edited included interviews with policymakers and scholars of social welfare policy, including luminaries of the field such as David Gil, Mimi Abramovitz, and Richard Cloward. Each interview helped explain where the field had come from and was going. My first article for *Reflections* was an oral history of Housing Works, a New York housing program which helped create the harm reduction model of care for homeless people with HIV/AIDS and later advocated for the policies which created funding lines to support such programs. Few other journals are open to long interviews which bridge the divide between policy and practice. The last conversation I had with Jimenez was over margaritas. We talked about the journal and ways to keep the policy interviews going. I mentioned that I had loved the Cloward interview reviewing his life work and that perhaps we could conduct an interview with Frances Fox Piven. She said go for it. That summer I reached out to Piven and, within a year, the life story interview with Piven was published in *Reflections,* with a portrait of the controversial author by my wife, Caroline. I'm grateful to the executive board and editors of *Reflections* for keeping the journal going so long.

Reflections is one of a kind social work journal. While other journals in the field embraced positivism and evidence-based practices of care, *Reflections* moved further into a post-modern direction. It embraced the creation of social reality through social discourses more consistent with a new philosophy of living and social work practice. This is a form of practice which reflects a multicultural world, with few monopolies on truth. Much of this was on my mind when I presented on the significance of personal narratives with Jillian Jimenez to the research committee at Cal State University, Long Beach in December of 2006. The point of the talk was to highlight that social science researchers increasingly have come to recognize that stories matter. This development is often described as, 'the narrative turn' in social research. It helps us consider life stories as narratives to be studied in terms of the ways they are created, heard, and understood. These stories reflect how different individuals, groups, families and people find and create meaning. As *Reflections* transitions, it is worth noting why it is important that the journal was framed in terms of narratives.

In the last decade, there has been a vast conversation in the social sciences about the efficacy of life stories. Practitioners now use narratives for clinical assessments. Anthropologists use them as a tool for research into social conditions, and pastoral

counselors often ask patients to review their lives at the end of life. Philosophers suggest narratives offer insights into world making. And community organizers seek to build community through storytelling. Philosopher Richard Rorty (1979) demonstrated that, in the second half of the 20th century, questions of knowing have shifted from notions of truth to notions of significance and meaning. Neither science nor theology are outside the influence of cultural bias or interpretation. No one has a monopoly on the truth. Instead, we have stories to help us interpret and create meaning in a rapidly changing world.

"Throughout history, story has been used to teach, to entertain, to express, to advocate, and to organize," note Natasha Friedus and Ceasar McDowell. "It is through the sharing of stories that communities build their identities, pass on traditions, and construct meaning." Here, narrative is an approach to assessing the ways groups of people make sense of their lives and cultures. Community plays a key role in story-telling. As Ken Plummer (1995) pointed out, stories bring people together, attracting audiences while building a common language and perception. Mair (1988) concurred, suggesting, "We inhabit the great stories of our culture. We live through stories. We are lived by the stories of our race and our place." John McNight's (1987) point follows, "In communities, people know by stories." In these ways, stories and oral histories can be used to assess changing conditions of communities. They also help us define and identify with our communities.

The proliferation of new stories has helped support the creation of a participatory democratic political culture. After all, narrative perspectives are increasingly finding a place in studies of social movements. Here, movements are considered as bundles of intersecting, overlapping, diverging and converging stories signifying different aspects of meaning within both culture and political economy (Fine, 1995).

In a diverse society, stories help us make sense of an increasingly complex social fabric. A recognition of the narrative turn also influences social work practice. When people come to you for assessments, do they tell everything the first time they see you? No. Why not? Because we are all born into power relationships. Stories thrive or are suppressed in relationship to power in which honestly has consequences on who is deemed worthy and unworthy for services. For this reason, Plummer (1995) highlighted the relational field in which stories are produced, heard, and understood. Shifting understandings and interpretations of stories of power have everything to do with definitions of illness, health, and human feeling. Here, story creation has everything to do with community organizing, especially when current cultural narratives fail to account for diverse perspectives on reality, community building, and cultural life. Philosopher Richard Rorty (1982) posited that some of the most important philosophy taking place today occurs within these transformative narratives and practices of self, these texts of peoples' lives and struggles.

The story is defined as the presently recorded lessons of the past that make sense of experience. The point for social workers to consider is how our clients reconcile their experiences within the storied form. When someone tells their life story, this is when the past, present, and future are recorded. Resiliency is like a river, if it flows to a dead end tributary, it will flow back and find meaning elsewhere (Cohler, 1982). The social worker who is conscious of narrative listens for plot lines, themes, including tragedy, and comedy. Have they made peace with their lives, stories, or illness, or have events taken meaning from their lives? Building on the principles of Victor Frankyl's logo therapy, it may be valuable to listen for the ways meaning is created, or seems to be lacking within the clinical narrative. Some may ask if there is there room for different spaces, meanings, and directions for their life stories?

Thank you, *Reflections,* for making space for these questions and stories.

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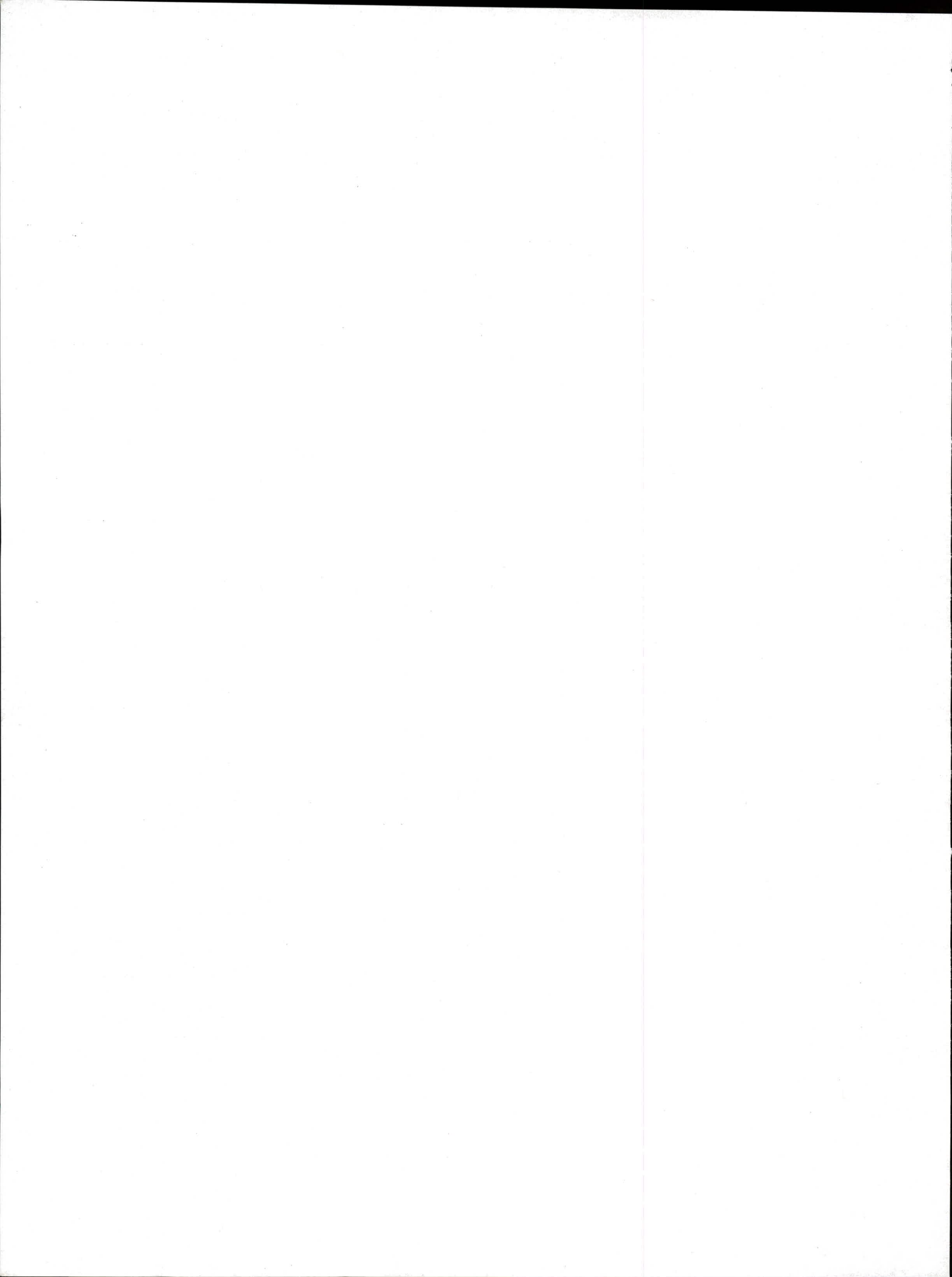

REFLECTIONS

NARRATIVES OF PROFESSIONAL HELPING

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Reflections: Narratives of Professional Helping was first published in 1995 as a unique journal that allows powerful and intimate narratives to be shared. This journal communicates intense shared experiences that are embedded in the diverse settings and systems that make up the profession of social work and other helping professions. It is a forum for uncovering, evaluating, and forwarding the diverse joys and pains of our work and sharing the knowledge we derive from our experiences. *Reflections* utilizes narrative inquiry as its core focus. These narratives explore our communities, our students, our theories, our politics, our biases, our ethics, and our growth. It is a journal that uncovers connections that unite all of us and disconnections that divide us. This journal showcases educators, community and clinical practitioners, and students. Clients of social service systems are especially invited to share their perspectives.

Since January 1995, *Reflections* has been published by California State University, Long Beach, School of Social Work. Effective May 2012, *Reflections* will have a new home, publisher, and editor:

- **Cleveland State University (CSU) School of Social Work, under the direction of Dr. Murali Nair, will be the Publisher.**
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