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Critical Travel Pedagogy:

Promoting a Critical Consciousness through International Travel Experiences

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in Education

by

Brian Edward Johnstone

2014

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Critical Travel Pedagogy:

Promoting a Critical Consciousness through International Travel Experiences

by

Brian Edward Johnstone

Doctor of Philosophy in Education

University of California, Los Angeles, 2014

Professor Val D. Rust, Committee Chair

In 2005, four high school students and their teacher (the author of this dissertation) began developing a nonprofit organization for the purposes of coordinating and leading educational travel programs for youth. The educational trips were intended to raise awareness about social justice issues, particularly manifestations of inequality, human exploitation, and oppression, in both local and global contexts. This philosophy developed over the years into a theoretical framework termed "critical travel pedagogy," and its first full implementation was on a two-week educational program to Thailand in 2008 with six high school students and one college student. The primary objective of this dissertation is to provide the first insights into the development, experiences, and outcomes of critical travel pedagogy as an emerging theoretical framework. Specifically, this research describes the theoretical conceptualizations and development of critical travel pedagogy and explores its implementation during the trip to

Thailand. Individual interviews conducted two years after the trip with the founders and organizers of the organization and participants of the educational program to Thailand and a follow-up group dialogue with several of the trip participants provide the foundation for a phenomenological approach to the research. Through the voices of the founders, organizers, and trip participants, this dissertation describes the sequential development of critical travel pedagogy, the experiences of the participants during and subsequent to the trip to Thailand involving manifestations of exploitation and oppression, and the ways in which involvement in the development of critical travel pedagogy has impacted their views and lived experiences. The results suggest that there have been tangible consequences for the founders, organizers, and trip participants in their development of a critical consciousness, which have long-term implications regarding their views of the world and their relationships and roles within the world, particularly in terms of their altruistic values and global awareness. Lastly, results provide guidance for further evolution of and research about critical travel pedagogy.

The dissertation of Brian Edward Johnstone is approved.

Elizabeth DeLoughrey

Edith S. Omwami

Val D. Rust, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2014

DEDICATION

In the weeks before my mother passed away in 2009, she told me about the one regret she had in her life – that she didn't learn more. This from a woman who gave birth to eight children, two of whom died in heartbreaking circumstance as children, and who also survived the deaths of three husbands. She lived an incredibly full life, rich in experiences, from the unfathomably painful to the most wondrously beautiful. She was the matriarch of our family, who instilled in her children the values of compassion, authenticity, humility, self-confidence, and unconditional love. Through the admission of her only regret in life, I am constantly reminded of the importance to always live my life through the lens of a learner and to share the experiences of learning through education.

My mom also asked me for one, and only one, favor – to complete this dissertation.

This is for you mom.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

VITA

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2009-2010	Research Assistant: Department of World Arts and Culture University of California, Los Angeles
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2008-2009	Coordinator: After-School Enrichment Program Mesquite Elementary School, Palmdale
2007	George Kneller Prize: Graduate School of Education & Information Studies University of California, Los Angeles
2006-2008	Research Assistant: Center of International and Development Education University of California, Los Angeles
2005	Master of Arts: Education: Social and Multicultural Foundations California State University, Long Beach
2003-2006	Teacher: Science and Journalism King/Drew Magnet High School, Los Angeles
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1998-2000	Peace Corps Volunteer: Ghana
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Chapter One: Introduction

In this age of increasing global interconnectedness, study abroad and student travel programs abound (Berdan et al., 2013; O'Sullivan, 2007). However, such programs seldom incorporate a critical pedagogical approach to learning. Students of privilege participate in these programs but are rarely self-reflexive of their privileged status (Phillion, 2008) or concerned with the abundant manifestations of global exploitation and oppression of which they are both witnesses and beneficiaries (Duffy, 2013; Gogia, 2006; Black, 2001).[1] Opportunities for students to interact and engage in critical dialogue with members of exploited and oppressed populations are distinctively unique possibilities of international travel but are rarely part of student travel programs. What would be the impact on students who participate in the development of and participation in an international travel program that is specifically constructed to raise awareness about exploitation and oppression, in both local and global contexts, by providing opportunities for students to engage in constructive dialogue with members from non-dominant and oppressed communities?

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[1] Student travel programs are a specific category of tourism, and I concur with the statement from Gogia (2006): "Rather than providing avenues for empowerment, tourist infrastructure often relegates local people in the continuing position of having to serve people who benefit from their labour and environment with, in return, often little in the way of economic compensation or opportunities" (p. 371). The documentary film *Life and Debt* (Black, 2001) provides an effective depiction of this inequitable relationship between tourists and local people.

To explore this question, I am proposing the consideration and development of a theoretical framework—critical travel pedagogy—that is founded predominantly through experiential education, anti-oppressive education, and global consciousness, with multicultural education, teaching compassion and critical pedagogy providing additional essential theoretical elements. Employing a phenomenological approach, this purely qualitative research uses interviews as the primary means to examine the perspectives and experiences of the founders and organizers of an educational student travel nonprofit organization that is developing and implementing critical travel pedagogy and the participants of an educational program and trip led by the organization. Individual interviews were conducted of the research subjects, followed by a separate focus group interview of a small group of the participants. The data and analyses acquired from this research support the ongoing development of critical travel pedagogy by providing important insights into the initial theoretical conceptualizations and the relative effectiveness and long term impacts of its implementation.

Objectives and Significance of the Study

> To promote the development of additional anti-oppressive educational programs, we need more public analyses of and discussions about both existing endeavors that draw on and extend the perspectives of the educators and students involved in them and the rich, varied and interdisciplinary theoretical perspectives located within and beyond the field of education (North, 2007, p. 92).

The objectives of this research are to both introduce an emerging theoretical framework—critical travel pedagogy—and investigate the implementation of critical travel pedagogy in the context of a community-based, nonprofit student education and travel organization. This non-traditional pedagogical approach to experiential learning and active engagement in non-dominant community settings may represent what Hytten & Bettez (2008)

are seeking: "new ways to engage students in thinking about questions of difference, class, privilege, community, responsibility, accountability, and more commitment" (p. 178).

This research contributes to three areas in which only limited documented studies and literature exists: (1) the application of anti-oppressive education (North, 2007), (2) high school student travel experiences, and (3) critical approaches to international travel programs (Fobes, 2005). Thus, the qualitative data acquired through this research is significant not only because it contributes to the development of critical travel pedagogy but it also helps to fill gaps in these three areas of research. Additionally, because "antioppressive practices are never fully realized, are always in the making, and can never be panaceas" (Kumashiro, 2002, p. 129), this research contributes to the ongoing dialogue and expansion of the field, providing an alternative, experiential approach to teaching and learning about oppression.

Research Questions

Ultimately, my objective in this research has been to acquire insight into the relative impact of critical travel pedagogy, as it has thus far been constructed and implemented, on student participants in order to further consider and develop the theory. Initial conceptualizations, implementations, and reflections of critical approaches to student travel programs have suggested to me that learning about oppression, engaging in constructive dialogue, and promoting a critical consciousness may have meaningful impacts on student perspectives. Whether or not these changed perspectives are truly consequential, in that they work against oppression (Kumashiro, 2000), and have any degree of sustainability are questions that this research addresses. Additionally, I explore the degree to which any changed

perspectives have contributed and continue to contribute to modifying everyday life and/or significant life decisions of the founders, organizers and program participants.

Considering the primary objectives of this research and a phenomenological approach to the research, my principle research question must be sufficiently broad to allow for unanticipated results and yet be enveloped within the general construct of the theoretical framework. Thus, the principal question this research addresses is:

> *To what degree has the development of critical travel pedagogy – a theoretical framework for using experiential education to learn about local and global manifestations of and struggles against oppression – as implemented by a specific student education and travel program influenced the critical consciousnesses of those who have been involved in its initial formation?*

To answer this principal question, I originally intended to examine the following three sub-questions:

1. How do the founders describe the history and their motivations and interests in creating a nonprofit youth education organization that is developing and implementing critical travel pedagogy; what are their reasons for continuing or discontinuing participation in the organization; what are their expectations and/or hopes for the future of the organization and its approach to education; and to what degree and in what way(s) have they been impacted by their involvement?

2. How do the youth organizers describe their motivations and interests in organizing the educational programs that utilize critical travel pedagogy; what are their reasons for continuing or discontinuing participation in the organization; what are their expectations

and/or hopes for the future of the organization and its approach to education; and to what

degree and in what way(s) have they been impacted by their involvement?

3. What are youth participants' recollections and perceptions of their participation in an

educational program and trip to Thailand, which was led by the organization and based

on critical travel pedagogy, and to what degree have the participants' views, actions taken

since the trip, and possible future life decisions been impacted by their experiences?

During the course of the research it became clear to me that these original sub-questions were not

suitable. Through the phenomenological approach of this research, I found that it was not

constructive to differentiate between founders, organizers, and program participants. Rather, the

dominant themes that emerged were (1) the research subjects' philosophical perspectives about

the educational programs in a sequential context, (2) individual interpretations of experiences

during and subsequent to the trip to Thailand involving manifestations of exploitation and

oppression, and (3) the emotional and material outcomes of participating in the programs,

regardless of the particular gender, race or role of the individual interviewed for this research.

Dissertation Outline

The content of this dissertation is structured to first provide the necessary background

information about the research context and theoretical foundations, which are presented in

Chapters Two and Three, respectively. In Chapter Four, I explain the phenomenological and

interview-driven approach to this research, including a description of the iterative process that

resulted in the emergence of the three discrete themes previously mentioned—philosophical

perspectives, experiences in Thailand, and outcomes. These themes are discussed in detail in

Chapters Five through Seven, respectively, and are presented chronologically in that the

philosophical perspectives contributed to the development of the curriculum for the Thailand educational program and, in turn, the consequential outcomes. In Chapter Eight, I examine a specific outcome—emotional despair— that I felt merited separate consideration because it has significant and unique implications for the evolution and future implementation of critical travel pedagogy. The content in these chapters is heavily guided by the voices of the founders, organizers, and program participants since the primary resources for this research are individual interviews and a focus group discussion. In the conclusion, presented in Chapter Nine, I bring together the themes from Chapters Five through Eight to answer the principal question of the research, suggesting that there have been tangible and meaningful consequences for the founders, organizers, and participants in their development of a critical consciousness and this development has had a substantive influence on their views of the world and their relationships and roles within the world. Lastly, I revise the theoretical framework of critical travel pedagogy, incorporating a new component in response to the outcome of despair, and I present recommendations for future research.

Chapter Two: Personal Journey and Context of Research

The development of critical travel pedagogy has been a crucial path on my journey to both learn and teach about the manifestations and causes of human exploitation, domination and oppression. Historically represented by the extreme acts of enslavement and genocide but more prevalent in the daily lived experiences of disenfranchisement and privilege, oppression is almost entirely ignored by the hegemonic education standards of our contemporary education system and is only rarely introduced to students through the revolutionary actions of progressive educators. With relevant research supplements, this section describes the path which I have traversed in developing and promoting an anti-oppressive and global critical consciousness, including my own experiences participating in student travel programs as a high school student and teacher, early attempts to promote critical consciousness among my students, and the development and implementation of a critical approach to student travel.

Student Travel

My first exposure to student travel occurred as a high school senior on a graduation trip to Mazatlán, Mexico. The trip remains fairly vague in my memory, but what I do recall has nothing to do with learning about Mexican culture, history, or economics or the consequential conditions in which Mexicans were living and working. On the contrary, there was absolutely no

formal or informal educational component to the trip and there were no interactions with

Mexicans other than servers at restaurants and workers at the hotel. As my first trip outside of the

United States, it was dismally insignificant. Of all the experiences and observations on the trip,

which consisted predominantly of watching narcissistic activities related to alcohol consumption

and attempts at sexual conquest by entitled teenaged tourists, there was only one observation that

provided any source of meaningful though brief contemplation for me. During the train ride from

Mazatlán, I observed that quite of few people were riding on the tops and sides of the train

carriages. They were men and women, adults and children, seemingly impoverished, though I

had no source to confirm my speculation other than the ragged and soiled clothing and dirt

covered faces. As we, the predominantly white and middle-class high school tourists, sat

comfortably inside the carriages, a potentially greater number of people were affixed to anything

they could grasp on the outside of the walls and roof of the train. It was my first glaring exposure

to global inequalities, and I, along with the other students on the train, was utterly oblivious.

Many years later, at the end of my service as a Peace Corps volunteer in Ghana, West

Africa, I revisited the potential of student travel. I had joined the Peace Corps in 1998 after

working as a spacecraft system engineer for eight years, at the peak of my career, for a variety of

reasons but primarily because I felt a strong desire to grow as an individual and because I did not

feel that I was contributing to society in a meaningful way. After completing nine weeks of

training, I was assigned to work as a math and science teacher at a secondary technical school in

a small rural town in the Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana. The town had a population of

approximately 2500 people, and the school population ranged from forty to forty-five students

during my two years of teaching there. There was no running water, electrical service, telephone

communications or paved roads within twenty miles of the town. Much of the population worked

as farmers at a subsistence level. However, because of a homogeneity of economic poverty in the community, there was not the daily awareness of inequality that is found in urban settings.

Although English is the official language of Ghana, it is typically acquired as a second or third language, if at all, and in rural communities it is rarely spoken outside of schools. Many of my students had limited English skills, and most had never traveled outside of the region. I worked as a math and science teacher, using a British-based curriculum (Johnstone, 2008), and struggled daily with trying to connect the subject matter to the lived experiences of my students. Through an after school drama club and weekend hiking excursions with my students, I was able to connect with them beyond the rigid classroom environment. During our conversations, it became clear to me that many of my students had limited knowledge and understanding about the history of and cultures within their own country.

As my service was coming to an end, and many volunteers were discussing plans to travel after they left Ghana, I too considered how I might finish my Peace Corps service. Instead of another solo travel experience, I decided to use the approximately five-hundred dollars I had available to me to take eleven of my students on a four day excursion through Ghana. I rented a van and hired a driver for the four days and made arrangements to stay three nights at a hostel in the capital city, Accra. The objective of the short trip was to show my students the history, cultural diversity, and technological developments of their country. We visited six regions, exposing the students to a variety of local languages and cultures, the National Cultural Center in Kumasi, the University of Science and Technology, Cape Coast Castle, Kakum National Park, Akosombo Dam, Volta Lake, and Kotoka International Airport. We learned about the history of slave trade, the technological advances in metropolitan Ghana, opportunities for higher education, environmental challenges, and Ghana's cultural history and diversity. Unlike my own

high school travel experience, our brief travel program in Ghana engaged the students in an educational experience that was specifically constructed to promote a greater historic and cultural awareness. The transformations I witnessed in my students during those four days have made me a lifelong believer in the potential of student travel programs to positively transform individuals and ultimately society.

Unfortunately, study abroad is considered to have a marginal role in US higher education (Gore, 2005), with only about three percent of full-time undergraduate students studying abroad, even though approximately 50 percent of high school seniors and college freshman have expressed interest in participating in study abroad programs (Rust et al., 2007). Because of the numerous reasons why students ultimately choose to not participate in formal study abroad (NAFSA, 2003), short term student travel programs may be worthy alternatives for students (Lewis & Niesenbaum, 2005). Internet directory services (see, for example: IIEPassport.org , 2009; StudyAbroad.com , 2009; GoAbroad.com, 2009) list thousands of student travel programs, many targeted specifically for high school students. Programs range from traditional study abroad courses to language and cultural immersion to adventure travel. Research on study abroad and student travel programs (see, for example: Armstrong, 1984; Cheiffo & Griffiths, 2004; Williams, 2005; and Lewis & Niesenbaum, 2005) have consistently reported positive results in terms of improving intercultural communication and global awareness, among other factors. [2]

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[2] Armstrong (1984) conducted a survey of 180 undergraduate students who had participated in a seven-week intensive language program in Mexico during high school and found "that a successful foreign study experience during high school years continues to play an important role in participants' attitudes and decisions regarding careers, additional language study, and increased cross-cultural activities" (p. 4). Cheiffo & Griffiths (2004) surveyed 1,509 study abroad participants and 827 on-campus students and found that students taking courses abroad acquired significantly greater "global awareness" than student who were enrolled in comparable on-campus courses. Williams' (2005) study revealed "that students who study abroad do in fact show a greater change in intercultural communication skills than students who stay on campus" (p. 369).

Teaching Critical Consciousness

During my first year as a teacher in an inner-city high school in Los Angeles, I taught a variety of science courses with the understanding that I was expected to stick to the prescribed subject matter standards. On occasion, either due to my own interests or those expressed directly or indirectly by my students, I transcended my official role as a science teacher and provided an environment that afforded us—students and teacher—the opportunity to discuss issues unrelated to the standards of the day but relevant to our lived experiences. One of our first opportunities was a group discussion for research I was conducting about student perceptions of multiculturalism (Johnstone, 2004). I invited a small group of students to meet with me during two separate lunchtime sessions to eat together and talk about multiculturalism. Ultimately, our conversations lead to discussions about race relations between black and brown students; white racism; identity challenges for African, Latin American, and Caribbean immigrants; stereotypes; media (mis)representations of inner-city communities; and the limitations of our educational system to openly discuss such vital issues. At the conclusion of the final session, one student passionately exclaimed:

> We're really gonna put it on the table. It's not even all that… it's invisible chains on our race, on the minority people. And it's the truth. It's set up; it's all set up. Don't get me started. Seriously, if you go back, I'm serious; every race that has ever been taken over has never actually risen up again. And I'm being so truthful. Any empire that has been taken down, nothing has ever rose up (high school student quoted in Johnstone, 2004, p. 8).

Her comment and the preceding dialogue were the first substantive indications to me of the degree to which my students took their individual, local experiences of racial oppression and

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Lewis & Niesenbaum (2005) examined short-term study abroad as an alternative to longer term programs and found that, through the incorporation of community-based research and service learning, short-term study abroad can be as beneficial to students as longer term programs.

translated them to an awareness of oppression in a global context, and they reinforced my belief in the transformative potential of critical dialogue.

Necessarily, dialogue with my students about issues of oppression increased from that moment. In the following two years, particularly in my journalism course, which I had sought to teach specifically so that I could address more critical issues, I incorporated readings, documentary films, and opportunities for discussion into my curriculum that addressed issues of inequality and human rights at the local and global levels. These instances were often precipitated by events within the community. For example, student walkouts in support of immigration rights in March 2006 led to Socratic dialogues in all my classes about immigration, living and working conditions in developing countries, and race relations between black and brown students. Monthly "class meetings" were established in my science and journalism courses to give students the space to discuss any issues they desired. During these safe spaces, students shared personal struggles, including experiences of racism, family conflicts, relationships, the gang-related violent murder of a student's sibling, and a coming out moment for a bisexual student.

A student in my journalism class, after a reading and discussion about UNICEF's (2004) report *State of the World's Children 2005*, took the initiative to write a front page article about the report, describing two realities: "sipping champagne at an evening dinner, while trying to decide if you want chicken or steak" and "400 million children who do not have access to safe water." Though the student communicated a clear awareness of global inequalities in her article and during our classroom discussions, she seemed to have difficulty developing a critical consciousness of *her position* within the global system of oppression, and I felt that an

experiential learning component would provide a crucial contribution to the development of critical consciousness.

The Intersection of Student Travel and Teaching Critical Consciousness

In February 2005, I attended an international education conference in Havana, Cuba with students in my master's degree program. During the conference, I unintentionally found myself in a presentation about the Sixteenth World Festival of Youth and Students to be held in Caracas, Venezuela the following August. After considerable consideration, I decided to organize a trip to the festival for any students willing and able to participate. After more than a dozen students expressed interest, six ultimately received permission from their parents and acquired sufficient funds to participate. On August 7, 2005, I left for Caracas with six high school students to participate in the Sixteenth World Festival of Youth and Students. At the festival, there were an estimated 15,000 participants, representing 144 countries. Our housing was provided through the festival organizers, and we initially stayed dormitory-style with other attendees from the United States. We were the only high school group from the US delegation, and we were consequently invited by the organizers to attend a conference at the Simón Bolívar University and spend two days in Acarigua, Portuguesa, visiting various political and cultural sites. After we returned from the tour, we decided to make our own arrangements in Caracas. We participated in the last two days of the festival but also explored the city on our own.

In addition to attending the festival, the students and I agreed to conduct research, publish our experiences in a local newspaper, and create a presentation to be shown to other interested students and teachers. Two articles were published in a community newspaper, one before the trip and one after. In the articles, the students expressed their personal hopes, expectations, and

experiences. Prior to the festival, one student wrote, "I know that there is life outside of the United States, and I want to embrace and learn about it." Upon returning, the student commented on what she gained from her experiences: "I've learned many lessons on the many different views of the world and am fortunate enough to have gained my own view on the world. With that view, I know I or anyone else can make a change for the better in this world." Another student described her impressions on the last day of the trip: "Our goal was to come and connect with people from around the world, but what we are leaving with is bigger than what we imagined." Our evening discussions during the festival, when we shared our experiences and perceptions, and the numerous activities that emerged from the trip,[3] as well as other personal experiences,[4] convinced me that experiential education in non-dominant and oppressed communities may provide the most impacting and meaningful opportunities to promote critical consciousness of global issues of oppression.

In my review of the literature, I found very little research or theoretical discussions about employing a critical approach to student travel programs. Rotabi et al. (2006) and Fobes (2005), however, represent two approaches that provide important points for discussion. In the first, Rotabi et al. provide recommendations "about how to build a study abroad course that is more than a tour group and involves critical thinking, cross-cultural learning and the potential for intercultural competence" (p. 464). They propose nine ethical pillars for short-term study abroad programs in developing countries as foundational for consciousness-raising: social justice and

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[3] Upon returning from the trip, students formed a school club entitled SPIRITT (Students Promoting Interest in Responsible Internationalism Through Travel); created a PowerPoint presentation about Venezuela and presented it to approximately seventy-five students and teachers; and organized a trip in Spring 2006 to Mexico, visiting historical, cultural, and natural sites.

[4] Participating in self-directed critical travel with my sister and niece to Ghana (learning about slave-trade history), Vietnam (learning about the "American war"), Cambodia (learning about the Pol Pot regime and the killing fields), and Thailand (learning about the commercial sex industry) has shown me directly the transformative impact of experiential education on youth. Several years later, my niece spent a year working with Burmese refugees in Thailand, and she attributed her decision primarily to her experiences and changed perspectives from our travels.

human rights, community capacity, dignity and worth of person, self-determination, boundaries, competence, facilitative learning, and integrity. Though these pillars are framed within the context of U.S. social work students, their intent and approaches to promoting critical consciousness are inclusive of other student travel programs. With regard to social justice, and particularly relevant to the promotion of an anti-oppressive perspective, Rotabi et al. ask, "What is fair in terms of redressing inequalities, and how can we question unequal distribution of resources when many of us benefit so mightily from long standing privilege based on colour, gender, age, sexual orientation and chance of birth?" (p. 455). Through incorporating these pillars, along with directed dialogue and reflection, Rotabi et al. found that students began to question and challenge their U.S.-based value systems and increase their intercultural competence. While this approach certainly seems to contribute to the development of critical consciousness, it does not directly address manifestations or causes of oppression nor does it promote individual or social change.

Fobes' (2005) proposal for "a critical pedagogical approach to travel-study abroad" (p. 181) specifically advocates for social change and refers to challenging oppression through action research. Based on her study of an intensive three-week course in Peru, Fobes frames her critical pedagogical approach within Kaufman's (2002) four-point model of critical pedagogy: understanding, reflecting, analyzing, and engaging in social action. Beginning with an understanding of basic social relationships and conditions, students start to recognize and identify differences in social conditions and corresponding causal factors. From this point of understanding, students question their own positions within the social relationships, test those questions through directed action, and engage in a process of self-reflection. In the context of a critical student travel program in non-dominant communities, students begin analyses of their

15

observations and experiences of inequality, exploitation and oppression beyond simple

awareness and basic understanding. In the last point, students engage in social action in order to

cultivate social change. Fobes' highlights this four-point model with anecdotal observations from

the three-week course and formulates six recommendations for a critical approach to travel-study

programs: (1) Students need to be knowledgeable about the location(s) in which they will be

studying, including geography, transportation, health risks and services, weather, food, culture

and living conditions. (2) Programs should utilize local institutions and home-stays. (3) There

should be greater attention to the local language by requiring students to participate in prior

language courses. (4) Students should engage in academic preparation prior to the trip and

participate in more social action activities during the trip. (5) Approaches to assessment need to

be considered and incorporated into the programs. (6) Lastly, students should travel with

minimal material possessions. Though this list has considerable practical advice, I include it here

specifically to highlight the absence of any curriculum or activity to help direct students towards

the development of a critical consciousness. All of the suggestions are typical for traditional

student travel programs, and nothing really new is proposed. In the following section, I will

describe the development of an alternative approach to student travel programs using critical

travel pedagogy.

Implementation of a Critical Approach to Student Travel

Through a continued dialogue with four of my former high school students about the

potential of travel as a transformative learning opportunity for youth, we decided to create a

nonprofit organization. Unlike other travel education approaches, including service learning

programs that may raise awareness about non-dominate cultures but risk condescending

missionary tendencies (Woolf, 2005) and study abroad programs that may not critically consider

the historic, political and economic forces that have shaped current international and local

conditions (Lutterman-Aguilar & Gingerich, 2002), our programs intend to focus explicitly on

raising critical consciousness about issues of oppression, exploitation, and domination. We also

oppose the tendency of travelers to gaze at the poverty of others (Steinbrink, 2012) in

nonconsensual interactions (Whyte et al., 2011), as is often the case in poverty or slum tourism,

but rather seek to engage in direct interaction and dialogue with individuals for the purposes of

sharing perspectives and developing a greater understanding of each other. In addition, while

traditional high school international travel-study programs are typically geared toward tours of

developed countries (e.g., Western European countries) or sheltered tourist destinations within

developing countries (e.g., Mazatlan, Mexico) (Peterson's, 2009), our programs are intended to

take place in a variety of non-sheltered communities in developing countries.[5]

Participants of our programs *will not* attempt to fix anything, provide guidance to anyone,

or engage in any activities that promote the interests of any external entity. Our objectives do not

involve claiming knowledge about the lived experiences of others or speaking on behalf of

others. We seek only to gain a greater understanding of the complex manifestations of

oppression we observe and experience, in both local and global contexts, through shared and

consensual dialogue. We foreground our own positionality throughout the trips in terms of

privilege and oppression (Lozanski, 2011), thus acknowledging our own privilege as tourists and

the inherent inequality of our interactions. We acknowledge there are substantial limitations to

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[5] The promotion of global awareness and critical global consciousness are central theoretical components of critical travel pedagogy, as detailed in Chapters Three, Five, and Seven, and our approach has focused exclusively on experiential learning through international travel. However, there have been discussions among members of the organization about the possibility of conducting trips within the United States to learn about the history and struggles of American Indians (Mihesuah, 2013) and undocumented immigrants (Chavez, 2012). At this point in the development of critical travel pedagogy, I am focusing only on international travel, with an understanding that travel within the United States may also provide opportunities for experiential learning that will promote the development of global awareness and critical global consciousness and should, therefore, be considered for future research.

our programs, including a lack of understanding of the impacts on those with whom we meet and interact. Critiquing our methodology is an important and ongoing part of the development of our educational programs. However, as an evolving critical approach to student travel, we have one primary and enduring objective—to transform the participants through a deepening critical consciousness.

Our first program as an organization was a ten-day student trip during the 2007 winter break. During the previous summer, while I was in Thailand conducting research, the student officers/organizers met to select a destination. They considered several locations, including Thailand and Ghana, but ultimately selected Guatemala due to the lower cost of the trip and because one of the officers had family members living there who would be able to help arrange for housing with trusted families. The officers, who were recent high school graduates, visited several schools and gave presentations about the trip. With the exception of the sister of one of the officers, the only students who expressed interest attended the high school from which the officers graduated and I had taught. Similar to the response to the trip to Venezuela, more than a dozen students initially expressed interested, but parental permission and cost reduced the number of students to six. Ultimately, the total number of participants was six high school students and four undergraduate students/officers.[6]

The program, though not informed by Fobes' (2005) publication, had incorporated many of her recommendations. We met numerous times prior to the trip to learn practical knowledge about Guatemala—living conditions, historic destinations, transportation, food, weather, health, etc. We packed lightly, stayed with Guatemalan families during a majority of our trip, interacted

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[6] The six high school students attended an urban inner-city school in California; five attended the same school and one attended a nearby school. Four of the students were female and two were male; four were Latina/o and two were African American. Three of the undergraduate students were attending four-year public institutions in California, and one student was attending a private Ivy League school outside of California. All of the undergraduate students were Latina/o and had attended the same high school as five of the high school students.

with local communities, wrote journals entries, and most of the participants were already fluent in Spanish. In addition to preparing for the practical aspects of the trip, we conducted research about issues of inequality and human rights in Guatemala prior to departure. During the trip, we engaged in dialogue with community organizers in Guatemala City, visited and critiqued a variety of tourist destinations, and interacted with people from a wide spectrum of social situations within Guatemala. As one of the officers wrote in an online blog:

> Guatemala has magnificent things to offer from history to culture and traditions, but this can only be appreciated by those who visit the country without the intention of exploiting what's left of the country's resources, but rather engage in meaningful conversation with people and take the time to learn about struggles and life conditions.

Informal feedback after the trip indicated that the program had a positive impact on raising critical consciousness among the officers, who were more engaged in critical discourse prior to and during the trip, and less of an impact on the student participants. Additionally, I felt the program was not sufficiently directive in terms of teaching about manifestations of oppression and privilege. Thus, I decided to formalize the education curriculum for our next trip, with an anti-oppression focus and an emphasis on critical dialogue, unintentionally establishing the foundation for critical travel pedagogy.

The officers of the organization and I selected Thailand as the destination for our next educational program because I had numerous contacts in Thailand and there were obvious social issues we could address during the trip. Similar to prior programs, high school students completed an application but were generally self-selected based on parental permission and the ability to obtain funding, either directly from family contributions or through fundraising in churches and the community. Ultimately, this program consisted of six high school students, one

undergraduate student, and an older sister of one of the high school students who served as an additional adult supervisor during most of the trip.

The educational program consisted of a six-meeting pre-departure, anti-oppressive education seminar and a two-week trip to Thailand in the summer of 2008. The objectives of the pre-departure seminars, as specified in the syllabus (see Appendix A), were "to learn about the history and cultures of Thailand and Southeast Asia, but, more importantly… to learn about oppression and to help promote an anti-oppressive perspective." Topics addressed in the curriculum included queer activism (Kumashiro, 2002), sexual exploitation in Thailand, the exotica of tourism in developing countries (Woolf, 2006), religious diversity and the importance of religious discourse (Celermajer, 2008), and political oppression and the plight of Burmese refugees (Diaz et al., 1999) through a variety of interactive activities that required the students to engage in critical thinking and dialogue. During the trip, students met and talked with people from numerous non-dominant and oppressed communities, including Burmese refugees at Mae La refugee camp, undocumented immigrants at Has Thoo Lei Learning Center, dispossessed residents at Suwit Watnoo Homeless Center, sexually exploited workers in one of Thailand's red light districts, and HIV/AIDS victims at the Wat Phra Baht Nam Phu AIDS hospice, as well as a group of economically advantaged students at Bangkok University. This research examines the curriculum, travel activities and outcomes of this program through the perspectives of the participants.

Summary: Impacting a Life

As I look back at the journey of my life so far and think about the experiences that have had an influence on my critical consciousness and caused me to change in terms of my world

view and personal values, I consider experiences while traveling to have been some of the most impactful. This realization was not immediately clear to me, as my first experience with international travel was as a recent high school graduate to Mexico, where I gained no cultural insights or learned anything about empathy but rather only how to exploit my position of privilege among an economically disadvantage population. It would be over a decade later as a Peace Corps volunteer that I would begin to understand the potential positive influences of student travel. Then, as a teacher in an inner-city high school, I began infusing my own journey towards a greater critical consciousness with my students by creating spaces in my classroom for dialogue about manifestations of oppression, particularly in the context of my students' experiences of racism, sexism, and heterosexism. These discussions led to a consideration of how to expand critical consciousness beyond local experiences, and a small group of students and I decided that travel, with a critical approach, might provide that opportunity. Through several trips and an ongoing dialogue, we developed a framework for critical travel pedagogy and implemented that framework on an educational program to Thailand. While my life has been substantially impacted from my experiences traveling, to what degree have the lives of those involved in the development and implementation of critical travel pedagogy also been impacted?

Chapter Three: Theoretical Foundations of Critical Travel Pedagogy

One of the primary objectives of this research is to formulate a theoretical framework that specifically addresses education and the intersection of travel, anti-oppressive education, globalization, critical consciousness and social justice. Thus, I introduce *critical travel pedagogy* as an emerging theoretical framework. Premised on the necessity of direct interaction and engagement in developing a critical and anti-oppressive global consciousness, this initial conceptualization of critical travel pedagogy emphasizes travel experiences constructed through a variety of existing theories, including experiential learning, anti-oppressive education, global consciousness, teaching compassion, multicultural education, and critical pedagogy. While there are necessarily other dimensions to this evolving theoretical framework, I have chosen to limit my initial discussion of theory to these six factors because they specifically informed my perspective in the development of the educational programs. Thus, the foundations of critical travel pedagogy draw from these theories, as illustrated in the figure below, to construct a unique pedagogical approach to developing a critical consciousness through travel learning.
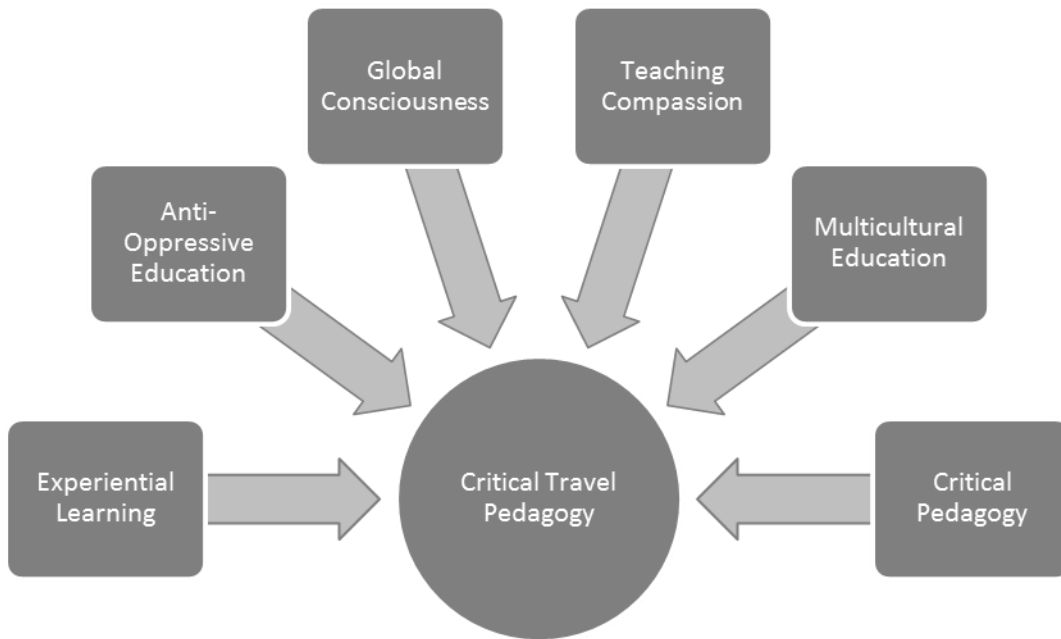
Figure 1: Theoretical Contributions to Critical Travel Pedagogy

Experiential Learning

> To 'learn from experience' is to make a backward and forward connection
> between what we do to things and what we enjoy or suffer from things in
> consequence. Under such conditions, doing becomes a trying; an experiment with
> the world to find out what it is like, the undergoing becomes instruction—
> discovery of the connection of things (Dewey, 1938, p. 140).

Experiential learning has been a recurring theme in the development of educational

theories. In 1762, Rousseau (1979) argued that "lessons ought to be more in actions than in

speeches; for children easily forget what they have said and what has been said to them, but not

what they have done and what has been done to them" (pp. 99-100). One-hundred fifty years

later, Dewey (1944) intersected education with experience cultivated through reflection and

communication. Dewey built upon Rousseau's notion of experiential learning by arguing that

such education also requires a commitment to communication and reflection. Education absent of communication is limited; as Dewey stated, "education consists primarily in transmission through communication" (p. 9), and engaging in "communication is to have an enlarged and changed experience" (p. 5). Further, Dewey stressed the importance of reflecting upon the experiences, suggesting that "reflection upon experience gives rise to a distinction of what we experience (the experienced) and the experiencing—the how" (pp. 166-167). Freire (1970) expanded upon Dewey's argument that conversation is a necessary component of education by stating, "Only dialogue, which requires critical thinking, is also capable of generating critical thinking. Without dialogue there is no communication, and without communication there can be no true education" (p. 81). Through such a dialogic pedagogy, the students and teacher together acquire critical readings of the world and discover those things most problematic to them.

The application of experiential learning to international education programs is illustrated in the studies of preservice teacher training programs incorporating cultural immersion components (Tang & Choi, 2004; Suarez, 2003; Cushner & Mahon, 2002; Willard-Holt, 2001). The studies demonstrate that international experiences can have substantially positive outcomes for the participants. As Willard-Holt (2001) concluded in her study, "Without exception, the preservice teachers reported that the trip had been beneficial to them and that they had experienced significant personal and/or professional changes as a result" (p. 515). Notably, Tang & Choi (2004) highlight the importance of the "meaning" of the experiences, influenced particularly from the dissonance, purpose, and duration of the encounters. Dialogical encounters must be directive (Shor and Freire, 1987), which influences the meaning of the experience to the individuals. Or, as Dewey (1938) argues, "'growth' is not enough; we must also specify the

direction in which growth takes place, the end towards which it tends" (p. 36). It is through this premise that critical travel pedagogy is framed.

Anti-Oppressive Education

> Discovering himself to be an oppressor may cause considerable anguish, but it does not necessarily lead to solidarity with the oppressed. Rationalizing his guilt through paternalistic treatment of the oppressed, all the while holding them fast in a position of dependence, will not do. Solidarity requires that one enter into the situation of those with whom one is solidary; it is a radical posture…. The oppressor is solidary with the oppressed only when he stops regarding the oppressed as an abstract category and sees them as persons who have been unjustly dealt with, deprived of voice, cheated in the sale of their labor—when he stops making pious, sentimental, and individualistic gestures and risks an act of love (Freire, 1970, p. 34).

The explicit direction of growth critical travel pedagogy operates is towards the development of an anti-oppression perspective. In this "age of the corporatization and businessification of education" (McLaren, 2003, p. 43), based on a standards-driven and testing-obsessed educational system, individual competition and opposition become the norm. Through this systemic promotion of non-solidarity, students are unsuspectingly conditioned to believe that "complete human status is conferred only on those groups or individuals who not only perform well in school but who are also both able and willing to dominate others" (Fordham, 1996, p. 64). Because students and teachers "resist learning anything that reveals our complicity with racism, homophobia, and other forms of oppression" (Kumashiro, 2000, p. 43), unveiling our role and position within the complex matrix of our oppressive existence requires an explicitly directed pedagogy. As Lorde (1984) states, "the true focus of revolutionary change is never merely the oppressive situations which we seek to escape, but that piece of the oppressor which is planted deep within each of us" (p. 123).

Kumashiro (2002) describes four approaches to teaching about oppression: (1) education for the Other; (2) education about the Other; (3) education that is critical of privileging and

othering; and (4) education that changes students and society (p. 31). My first teaching experience illustrates an *education for the Other*. As a Peace Corps volunteer teacher for two years in a rural community in Ghana, I actively engaged my students in dialogue intended to assist them in negotiating between their local knowledge frames and the outsider-imposed knowledge system of the national education curricula (Johnstone, 2008). My primary objective was to provide a space for the students that was culturally affirming and verbally, physically, institutionally, and culturally safe (Kumashiro, 2002). Unfortunately, my teaching suffered from three limitations consistent with Kumashiro critique of this approach. First, even though my teaching was intended to benefit the students' ability to navigate between their community realities and the imposed knowledge system and societal inequalities represented in the curricula, it did not critically examine the causes of those inequalities. Additionally, my focus was only on this general group of students and the singular issue of knowledge production; thus, we did not consider multiple forms and manifestations of oppression, including, for example, the expulsion of pregnant girls from our school and the ostracization of mentally challenged individuals in the community. Lastly, even though my experiences in the school and community established me as an external-insider (Banks, 1999), I was never in a position to fully and accurately determine the needs of my students.

The experiential component of student travel programs, particularly those that include direct interaction with members from non-dominant or oppressed communities, may directly or indirectly result in an *education about the Other*. Through this learning, students may develop "empathy for the Other" and "normalize differences and Otherness" (Kumashiro, 2002, p. 42). However, such learning does not necessarily result in an anti-oppressive perspective. Kumashiro argues that acquiring more knowledge is insufficient. "Changing oppression requires *disruptive*

26

knowledge" (p. 42), which may provide the student with a sufficient impetus to both learn more and begin to challenge individual and structural manifestations of oppression. My experience of seeing people clinging to the outside of my train carriage in Mexico as a high school student informed me that some Mexicans were either devastatingly poor or had an adventurous notion of travel; and, though I did feel some empathy because of the dangers they faced riding outside of the protection of the train carriage, I was not moved to further consider their individual circumstances or any societal relationships to their situation. In hindsight, I am confident that the experience, if accompanied with appropriately directed curriculum, dialogue and reflection, could have, at a minimum, caused me to begin a questioning of the causes of such inequalities and my own privilege.

North (2007) examined two anti-oppressive education components of a student leadership program that utilized simulated situations to provide students with experiences of "Othering and being Othered" (p. 75). The activities were found to effectively *promote a critical awareness of privileging and othering*. Though the objectives of the project were to provide disruptive knowledge of social interactions between members of dominant and non-dominant communities and ultimately to promote social transformation, the activities did not sufficiently promote an understanding of the complexities of oppression or a commitment to transform society. By employing simulated and controlled experiences, rather than lived and varied experiences, the students risk falling into a rationalistic perspective of oppression that limits their ability to fully comprehend the variety of ways oppression is manifested and experienced.

Critical travel pedagogy, in my conceptualization, should *inspire participants to change themselves and society*. To address this fourth approach to teaching about oppression, Kumashiro (2002) utilizes three themes: a problem of resistance, a curriculum of partiality, and a pedagogy

of crisis. A problem of resistance, in the context of student travel experiences, challenges students to bear witness to oppressive global conditions and relationships of which they are beneficiaries and engage in dialogue with populations exploited by the dominant local and international powers. Through these personal experiences, participants recognize that "'what is normal' and 'who we are' are really social constructs maintained only through the Othering, marginalization, or silencing of other possible worlds and selves" (p. 57). Questioning the oppressive global conditions and relationships, the historical local and global influences, and the consequential privileges to people from dominant communities and core nations comprise a curriculum of partiality. A pedagogy of crisis arises when students contemplate those questions and begin to develop an awareness of their "own complicity with oppression" (p. 62). During our critical travel program to Guatemala, several participants developed this awareness through our observations of and engagement with Mayan traders at Chichicastenango and our continuous directed dialogues and reflections. The following passage from a participant/officer posted on an online blog illustrates this pedagogy of crisis:

> In search for some inner-peace, I went into a nearby church. Kneeling at a pew, I started to cry. This was a transformative experience for me. As hard as that experience was to live through, for the first time in my life I realized that while in my community there is always a "they" who are marginalizing us, and in one way or another I am also a participant in the marginalization of others.

During our evening critical dialogues, we shared our observations and experiences with each other, analyzing them, reexamining and adjusting our perspectives, and often experiencing additional emotional responses. The experience of crises and opportunities to communicate and work through the crises are critical components of anti-oppressive education (and critical travel pedagogy) in that they foster social change (Kumashiro, 2002).

Global Consciousness

> Teaching about globalization can help students to develop some of the most important tools of critical thinking, namely, the ability to unlearn dominant assumptions and ideologies, to create more critical habits of thinking and of social and political engagement, and to cultivate imagination and a sense of possibility for a more just future…. Teaching about globalization can help us recognize the contradictions between our stated democratic values and the actual practices in which we engage throughout the world. It can help provoke different questions about global realities as well as the desire to want to question more. These are necessary preconditions for creating a more just world (Hytten & Bettez, 2008, p. 179).

In a global context, oppression has significant dimensions that are often not considered in anti-oppression discourse. My approach to teaching about oppression always begins with activities and dialogue about individual experiences and observations of local forms of inequality, privilege, disenfranchisement, discrimination, exploitation, and oppression, as represented through societal structures and individual micro-aggressions. Transitioning this discourse to incorporate a global dimension provides challenges in terms of limited personal experiences and vocabulary. Having been directly and publicly informed by a classmate, during a discussing about global exploitation in a graduate course on critical pedagogy, that "no one is ever going to call me an oppressor," I recognize the difficulty of challenging individuals' views of "themselves as good people in a basically fair and meritocratic world, not people who in many ways benefit from inequitable social relations, even if they are not individually responsible for them" (Hytten & Bettez, 2008, p. 176). Thus, global consciousness provides additional necessary theoretical perspectives and language of discourse that contribute to the development of critical travel pedagogy and the promotion of an anti-oppressive global consciousness.

Mansilla et al. (2007) identify three cognitive-affective capacities of global consciousness that help to expand our perspective about global issues of oppression. The first, global sensitivity, is defined as "our awareness of local experience as a manifestation of broader

29

developments in the planet" (p. 59). This capacity was demonstrated during our travel program to Guatemala. Prior to the trip, students engaged in fundraising activities in local inner-city neighborhoods. When they took their activities to wealthier and predominantly white communities, they were shocked by their experiences of being ignored, belittled, and altogether demoralized. The full growth in social awareness from their experience, however, came through their observations of tourists—domestic, international, and themselves—who treated the Mayan traders in Chichicastenango with the same level of distain, as they exploited their labor through structural economic inequalities.

Global understanding, the second capacity of global consciousness, is defined as "our capacity to think in flexible and informed ways about contemporary worldwide developments" (p. 59). The significance of this capacity is our ability to connect our daily observations and actions to a larger global context. How we conceptualize our daily acts of consumerism, in particular, is considerably altered through an understanding of the global processes of labor, production, distribution, consumption, and disposal. Through the third capacity, global self, we develop "a perception of ourselves as global actors, a sense of planetary belonging and membership in humanity that guides our actions and prompts our civic commitments" (p. 59). Individual and social change occurs when we transform our global understanding into action.

Teaching and learning about globalization and the development of a global consciousness, or "a mindful way of *being* in the world today" (Mansilla et al., 2007, p. 48), are not notably addressed in social justice discourse but should be considered "a central component to education for critical thinking, democracy, and social justice" (Hytten & Bettez, 2008, p. 177). By limiting anti-oppression and social justice discourse to local manifestations of and struggles against inequality and oppression, we are excluding crucial struggles waged by people

30

throughout the world of which we are either causal or complicit. "Privilege is the corollary to oppression" (Hytten & Bettez, 2008, p. 178), and when we, through circumstance or choice, are not mindful of our privileges in a global context, we stifle any progress towards true social justice. Combining anti-oppressive education with global consciousness necessitates that we challenge our preconceived and limited notions of local oppression and continually examine the pervasive, reproductive, mutative, and entrenched nature of oppression within and across local and global contexts. For those who were born in a core capitalist country like the United States and "do not perceive their monopoly on *having more* as a privilege which dehumanizes others and themselves" (Freire, 1970, p. 45), the acquisition of an anti-oppressive global consciousness is an unrecognized imperative.

Teaching Compassion

> A responsible pedagogy in the face of ethical dilemmas that inevitably arise when stories of oppression are told in the classroom might be termed 'a pedagogy of compassion.' Compassion is a response to suffering (Carson & Johnston, 2001, p. 263).

As previously discussed, crisis is a crucial component of critical travel pedagogy but risks transforming into a resistance to knowledge if it is not constructively handled. Compassion is a constructive response to that crisis. It helps to "move us out of a cycle of blame and guilt" (Carson & Johnston, 2001, p. 264), which often results from newly acquired understandings of our roles as oppressors (Freire, 1970).

Additionally, a "compassionate suffering" of students of social justice education who become aware of the "primary suffering" of the oppressed "fosters the necessary disposition to fight suffering" (Mintz, 2007, p. 1). Engagement with members from oppressed and exploited communities is an intrinsic aspect of critical travel pedagogy, and bearing witness to their

31

suffering produces emotional responses and "the cultivation of pity, compassion, sympathy or empathy… [that are] key to social justice projects" Carson & Johnston, 2001, p. 2). Adopting Carson & Johnston's five premises of compassionate suffering in social justice projects (pp. 2-3), critical travel pedagogy promotes the following premises:

1. Critical travel pedagogy aims to eliminate primary suffering.

2. To eliminate primary suffering, students must learn about primary suffering.

3. Primary suffering is intrinsically bad for the purposes of critical travel pedagogy.

4. Individuals who are aware of primary suffering experience compassionate suffering.

5. Critical travel pedagogy causes students to suffer compassionate suffering.

Teaching compassion is, therefore, an important consideration in the development of critical travel pedagogy because compassion is a constructive response to crises and experiencing compassionate suffering is an important objective of critical travel pedagogy.

Multicultural Education

> The most successful education is that which begins with the learner and, when using a multicultural perspective, students themselves become the foundation for the curriculum. However, a liberating education also takes students beyond their own particular and, therefore, limited experiences, no matter what their background (Nieto, 2004, pp. 360-361).

According to Nieto (2004), multicultural education has seven basic characteristics: antiracist education, basic education, important for all students, pervasive, education for social justice, a process, and critical pedagogy. It is my belief that each of the qualities, which collectively represent a philosophical approach to education, is already an integral component of anti-oppressive education and, thus, already foundational in the development of critical travel pedagogy. Multiculturalism, however, is limited with respect to critical travel pedagogy in that it

32

typically only addresses local contexts of cultural diversity with the objective of transforming

educational institutions. Critical travel pedagogy, while necessarily addressing local forms of

diversity and oppression, seeks to examine oppression in unfamiliar contexts and even

oppression in imagined contexts.

McLaren (2003) expands multicultural education to a global context and advocates for a

revolutionary multiculturalism that requires us to "seek relationships of equality with peoples

throughout the world" (p. 289). This perspective is not explicitly conveyed in the preceding

theoretical frameworks but is a central and pedagogically directed component of critical travel

pedagogy. Additionally, McLaren provides a very specific objective of social action that has not

yet been expressed: revolutionary multiculturalism "is dedicated to reconstitute the deep

structures of political economy, culture, and power in contemporary social arrangements" (p.

291). Though critical travel pedagogy does not suggest a process by which this change will

occur, an anti-oppressive global consciousness should reveal that true global equality can only be

achieved by a reconceptualization of local and global social arrangements.

Critical Pedagogy

> Critical pedagogy does not traffic in the realization of endpoints, nor does it
> wallow in a cautious lethargy. On the contrary, it dares to gesture in the direction
> of hope (McLaren, 2003, p. 297).

Critical pedagogy is addressed only briefly at the end of this section because it is already

foundational and thus thoroughly entrenched in anti-oppressive education and global

consciousness. However, a particularly important addition to the development thus far of critical

travel pedagogy is Wink's (2005) realization that critical pedagogy is about each of us finding

our own meanings in it. It is a process and a lens. "It teaches us **to name, to reflect critically,**

and to act" (p. 23, emphasis in original) and "is a new lens that enables me to see more clearly

my past, my present, and my future" (p. 31). Critical pedagogy, which is guided by emancipatory

principles, highlights the necessity of praxis and a commitment to human liberation (Freire,

1970). Critical *travel* pedagogy is based on the same principles, structured through the

experiences of engagement, dialogue, and reflection with the oppressed and in opposition to *all*

manifestations of exploitation, domination and oppression.

Summary: Critical Travel Pedagogy

The development of critical travel pedagogy necessitates the consideration of a broad

range of existing theories. This is not an expansive review and does not include every possible

influence.[7] However, these six theoretical foundations encompass the main characteristics of

critical travel pedagogy. In short, critical travel pedagogy incorporates (1) experiential learning

and dialogue that is guided towards: (2) disruptive knowledge that raises awareness about

manifestations of oppression; (3) a global sensitivity, understanding, and consciousness; (4) the

acquisition of compassionate suffering; (5) a revolutionary multiculturalism; and (6) finding

meaning through critical reflection in our own personal lives.

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[7] For example, I typically begin teaching about oppression through a dialogue that addresses individuals'
experiences of microaggressions (Solórzano et al., 2000) and white privilege (McIntosh, 1998). These initial
dialogues provide a foundation but are not central to critical travel pedagogy.

Chapter Four: Research Methodology

The goals of this research, as best detailed by Maxwell (2005), are to understand the meaning, for the founders, organizers and participants, of their participation in the development of the community-based, nonprofit education and travel organization and experiences related to an education and travel program conducted by the organization.[8] As previously stated, the specific purpose of this research is to answer the following question: *To what degree has the development of critical travel pedagogy – a theoretical framework for using experiential education to learn about local and global manifestations of and struggles against oppression – as implemented by a specific student education and travel program influenced the critical consciousnesses of those who have been involved in its initial formation?* In order to answer this principle question, the research consists of two primary investigative components: (1) individual interviews of the founders, organizers and program participants and (2) a focus group dialogue with three of the program participants who also had varying roles within the organization. Through a phenomenological approach, the data is used to describe the meaning of the experiences for the founders, organizers, and program participants and show the degree to which those meanings correlate with expectations of critical travel pedagogy.

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[8] In order to ensure the confidentiality of the research subjects, names have either been changed or not included. The names that have been used were selected sequentially from the list of most popular female names from the 1990 US census. See http://www.census.gov/genealogy/www/data/1990surnames/dist.female.first.

Research Subjects

  This research focuses on three research subject groups, coincident with the originally intended sub-questions:

1. The founders of a specific community-based, nonprofit student education and travel organization—two Latina females, one Latino male, and one African-American male, all 19-21 years of age in 2008, at the time of the educational program in Thailand.

2. The organizers, who serve as officers of the organization and are not founders of the organization—one African-American male and one Latina female, both 19-21 years of age in 2008, at the time of the educational program in Thailand.

3. The participants of an educational program and trip to Thailand led by the organization—one Latina female, four African-American females, and one Latino male, all 16-18 years of age in 2008, at the time of the educational program in Thailand, and one Latina female who is also an organizer.

  All of the research subjects graduated from the same public magnet high school in either 2005, 2006, or 2009. The high school is located in a large urban city in California and has a population of approximately ninety-nine percent Latino or African-American. All of the twelve research subjects pursued higher education – eleven at a four-year institution and one at a two-year community college.

Interviews and Focus Group Dialogue

  The primary sources of data for this research are interviews and a follow-up focus group dialogue with participants of an educational program and trip led by the organization. As the "dominant strategy for data collection… the interview is used to gather descriptive data in the

subjects' own words so that the researcher can develop insights on how subjects interpret some piece of the world" (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 103). Developed using guidelines from Bogdan & Biklen (2007) and Merriam (2009), the interview protocols are provided in Appendices B-D for the founders, organizers and program participants, respectively. The interview protocols include a wide range of questions, including experience and behavior questions, opinion and value questions, feeling questions, knowledge questions, sensory questions, and background/demographic questions (Merriam, 2009, p. 96). Additionally, probes were utilized during the interviews to help clarify and expand on responses. Bogdan & Biklen (2007) provide examples of effective probes:

What do you mean?

I'm not sure that I am following you.

Would you explain that?

What did you say then?

What were you thinking at the time?

Give me an example.

Tell me about it.

Take me through the experience (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 104).

The interviews were conducted either in-person, via online audio/video conferencing, or by phone, and they were audio recorded. Prior to conducting the interviews, I sought to build comfortable and collaborative relationships with the interviewees through casual conversation (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). After all the interviews were completed, I conducted preliminary

analyses to develop brief descriptions of the students' experiences, from each of their unique perspectives. These descriptions were then used in the follow-up focus group dialogue.

I selected three of the trip participants, who represent a diversity in ethnicity, religion, geographic location, and role within the organization, to participate in the focus group. One of the participants was an organizer/officer of the nonprofit organization prior to the trip, one became an organizer after the trip, and the third has not been involved in any other aspects of the organization other than the trip. In terms of ethnicity and religion, the focus group consisted of Latina, African-American, White (the author of this dissertation), Christian, Buddhist, and agnostic participants. Participants were all located in different parts of the US, from the West Coast to the East Coast; consequently, the two-hour focus group dialogue was conducted through an online, recorded audio conference.

There are three reasons for including the follow-up focus group dialogue. In the first, focus groups "promote talk on a topic that informants might not be able to talk so thoughtfully about in individual interviews" (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 109). With the presence of other participants, some research subjects may feel a greater level of comfort in discussing certain aspects of their involvement. Secondly, "Group participants can stimulate each other to articulate their views or even to realize what their own views are" (p. 109). The dynamics of group discourse often provide individuals with stimuli or recollections that help them to better communicate their experiences and views. Lastly, the focus group dialogue provides the participants with an opportunity to critique my initial analyses of the individual interviews.

Phenomenology

The objective of phenomenology "is to depict the essence or basic structure of experience" (Merriam, 2009, p. 25), which is achieved through the phenomenological interview. Merriam outlines five processes of the phenomenological interview: epoche, phenomenological reduction, horizontalization, and imaginative variation. Through epoche, researchers examine and bracket their biases and assumptions in order to consider an idea an interviewee takes for granted and "act as if they do not know what it means and study it to find out what is actually taken for granted" (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 25). Epoche is a particularly important consideration for this research because I am a co-founder of the nonprofit organization and was the coordinator and education director for the trip to Thailand. In the context of the research, I initially attempted to examine the research data as an outsider. In later iterations, I provide context from my own recollections of experiences and perspectives when appropriate. Phenomenological reduction involves the process of continually revisiting an experience in order to "derive the inner structure or meaning in and of itself" (Merriam, 2009, p. 26). This process required that I review and reorganize the research data numerous times, each time looking for new meanings and significances. Horizontalization requires the researcher to initially consider all data to be of equal value and significance. Thematic and relational organization of the data then leads the researcher to a full description of the experience. My initial organization of the data corresponded to the sequence of the questions and a segregation of the responses by research subject role (founder, officer, trip participant). Lastly, imaginative variation requires the researcher to examine the data from multiple perspectives, "as if one were walking around a modern sculpture, seeing different things from different angles" (p. 26). Through each review and reorganization of the data I attempted to consider a variety of perspectives. The group

dialogue also provided additional perspectives in the final organization of the data and research conclusions.

Data Analysis

In order to determine the long-term perspectives and impacts of critical travel pedagogy, I conducted the individual interviews approximately two years after the trip to Thailand. The follow-up group dialogue occurred two years after the interviews. I analyzed the data in two phases: (1) preliminary analysis of individual interviews and (2) final analysis of interviews and focus group dialogue. At each phase, I coded and categorized the data, as outlined in Merriam (2009). The first phase of the data analysis produced material narratives about the organization and the educational program in Thailand. In the second phase, I conducted an abstract and theoretical analysis of the data, incorporating a phenomenological approach, as previously described, of epoche, phenomenological reduction, horizontalization, and imaginative variation. Through this iterative analysis, I examined the data from a variety of perspectives. Ultimately, three categories of data emerged, partially coinciding with the original interview questions: (1) theoretical perspectives about the purpose or objective of the organization; (2) participants' recollections of the trip to Thailand; and (3) responses to participants' involvement in critical travel pedagogy through the development of the organization and/or participation in the trip to Thailand.

The first category—theoretical perspectives—was initially analyzed in terms of founders' and organizers' original and current philosophical views of the organization. Through incorporating the trip participants' views about the purpose of the educational programs, along

with a variety of coded responses throughout the interviews, a clear chronological evolution of a theoretical framework emerged. This analysis is presented in Chapter Five.

The second category—experiences in Thailand—was initially organized by the discrete chronological experiences described by the participants. This organization was largely maintained in the second analysis phase, but the focus became the particular manifestations of oppression associated with the experiences. For example, participants visited a red light district at the beginning of the trip and a tourist resort at the end of the trip, but they observed instances of sexual exploitation in both settings; thus, the observations are analyzed under the same sub-category of "Sexism: Commercial Sex Industry." This analysis is presented in Chapter Six.

The third category—responses to critical travel pedagogy—was initially analyzed in terms of personal, educational, career, and "other" impacts. Through several iterations of this data, six sub-categories emerged that focused on motivation. For example, one person may describe changing her career path so that she can work abroad, while another person decides to become a community activist—the impact from critical travel pedagogy was not the career but the motivation for choosing the career. This analysis is presented in Chapter Seven. In addition to the six positive sub-categories, I identified a potentially destructive consequence of critical travel pedagogy—despair. This is addressed in Chapter Eight.

Summary: Categories of the Data Analysis

Using individual interviews and a group dialogue as the primary sources of data and a phenomenological approach to the analysis, I have identified three main categories in the data, along with corresponding sub-categories, as shown in the figure below.

Theoretical perspectives	Experiences in Thailand	Responses to Critical Travel Pedagogy
•Experiential Learning and Cultural Diversity •Global Consciousness •Awareness of Oppression •Creating Activists •Critical Consciousness	•Sexism: Commercial Sex Industry •Classism: Homelessness and Academic Disconnect •Ableism: HIV/AIDS •Xenophobia: Burmese Refugees and Migrants •Colonialism: Tourism	•Altruistic Values •Traveling with a Purpose •Global Awareness •Promoting Critical Consciousness •Despair *

Figure 2: Data Analysis Categories

The analyses of these categories, presented in Chapters Five though Eight, are utilized to answer the principal research question, which is addressed in Chapter Nine. This research is not intended to be comprehensive, but it does provides substantial insight into the development and implementation of and propositions advance by critical travel pedagogy as an emerging theoretical framework (Yin, 1994).

Chapter Five: Developing Critical Travel Pedagogy

The development of critical travel pedagogy as a theoretical framework has been significantly driven by my own journey toward understanding oppression and developing a positive identity in the context of oppression; however, it is necessarily inclusive of all the voices who have contributed to the founding and guiding of the nonprofit organization. At the outset, we had no intention of developing theory. Our beginnings were as organic and unpredictable as the birth of a simple flame. The first spark came from a high school junior who convinced a small group of fellow students to travel to Venezuela with me, which led to a school club—the faint light of a future nonprofit organization. Dialogues with my journalism students about inequality and oppression, the transformative potential of experiential learning, and their ability to make positive change in their community were the fuel. Upon graduating from high school, four students joined me in taking this glowing ember and making a small flame, warming and sometimes burning those who traveled with us through experiences and dialogues. This is the story of how we collectively developed the foundations of critical travel pedagogy, which ultimately guided the curriculum for the educational program in Thailand.

Evolution of Theory

My own path of understanding oppression and identity, as previously described, did not originally coincide with that of the objectives of our trips, particularly to Venezuela and Mexico. Each of us involved in this process brought our own personal experiences, perspectives and wants. Yet, through shared experiences and dialogue, we often found ourselves within common standpoints and traversing commons paths, though often at different paces, that ultimately led to a coalescing of thoughts and ideas into a framework. This framework continues to evolve organically, as more voices, experiences, and shared dialogues contribute to its formation. Thus, this section looks at the first stages of this evolutionary process.

Evident in the interviews was a fairly clear chronological development in our collective perspectives about our objectives. Specifically, we initially sought to learn through experience about the diversity of cultures. Increasing awareness and deeper dialogue led to a greater global consciousness and attention to manifestations of exploitation and oppression. These led to a desire to promote social change—to become and create agents of change. Further critique illuminated to us that change necessarily begins with the individual; and, thus, promoting critical consciousness among the participants has become the principal objective of critical travel pedagogy.

Experiential Learning and Cultural Diversity

Our first trips were undertaken without a clear objective. We traveled to Venezuela to attend the Sixteenth World Festival of Youth and Students, understanding that we would likely meet young people from many other countries. We were also aware of controversies portrayed in the media about Venezuela's political system, though we had not specifically researched relevant

political or social issues prior to or during the trip. The experiences of that trip, particularly in terms of our conversations and exposure to situations and perspectives much different than we had collectively ever experienced or anticipated, led to the creation of a school club and a trip to Mexico the following year.

In describing her original motivation in participating in these first two trips, a Latina founder of the organization, Patricia, recalled, "I wanted to learn about other cultures and I wanted to learn about my background and my friends' background." Along with the conventional desire to learn about diverse cultures, she also expressed an individual desire to learn about her own and her friends' cultures, acknowledging her cultural positionality in the context of learning about culture generally. Continuing, she said, "it's about the learning, it's about analyzing things, it's about talking about politics, government, culture within the country." Thus, through personal interests in the trips, she became part of a group that was learning, through observation and dialogue, about various aspects of life within the society. We were demonstrating the necessity of experiential learning, as described in Chapter Three and consistent with Dewey's (1938) argument to "learn from experience."

Patricia further articulated her perspective about intersecting cultural diversity with experiential learning:

> Anyone can teach you about politics and culture in school. We have a politics class and we also take history, but it's not the same thing learning from books, and then seeing it yourself and seeing how things really work and compare what books give you, the information they give you, to what's really happening in the country, and I think that was really important for our club and org because we really want to teach them and let them see by themselves what it really looks like or what really happens in the country.

Like most student travel programs, we had a principal, though not necessarily reasoned, objective to learn about culture through direct experience. It was a very basic de facto or colonial

anthropological objective—to travel to an unfamiliar place and learn about the culture.[9] During

those early stages, we talked about our observations without critically breaking-down those

observations. We were recognizing diversity, and we were acknowledging differences. Such

perspectives continue to play a role in our overall framework, as expressed by Barbara, a student

participant on our trip to Thailand: "I feel like I would have never gone out of the country unless

you and everyone else - the founders - had come up with it and I feel like it's a huge advantage

for kids to learn different cultures and just go see it and just the fact that they've been out of the

country to expose and broaden their horizons."

Learning about cultures and individual people's lived experiences about which we

formerly were unaware is a liberating education (Nieto, 2004) and is fundamental to critical

travel pedagogy. Elizabeth best articulates this perspective, "When I think about [the nonprofit

organization] and what it's given me and what it is or I hope is trying to accomplish as an org is,

you know, just really trying to open up our worldview and trying to build an understanding of

other people and of other cultures and of just other different world views." Only through this

awareness can a more critical engagement and dialogue begin.

Global Consciousness

Susan, a student who had participated in two of our travel programs, described some

perspectives about her trip to Mexico in comparison to the trip the Thailand:

> We went all throughout Thailand, [and] we only went to two parts of Mexico, so I
> can't judge a whole country from the little I did see… We went to Guadalajara,
> [where people] who lived in really, they're rich, they have money, and we went to
> Colima, where we visited [a] family; we did different stuff on the trips, so it gave

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[9] Crick (1985) presents a constructive discussion about the overlaps between tourism and anthropological study. I would further argue that travel programs focusing on raising cultural awareness overcome what Crick suggests is the primary difference between the two, being "the seriousness of our work [anthropology] compared to the frivolity of tourism" (p. 79).

me different views. It showed me the good side of a country and it showed me the not so good side of a different country, so it gave me a broader view. Like we might not have [done] the same things in both countries, but in a way it connects.

Having such different travel experiences provided for her the capacity to critique not only the experiences separate and unique from each other but some interconnecting aspects, further allowing her to see deeper into the overall experiences.

This first shift in our collective philosophical perspective to include promoting a global consciousness not only arose out of the direct experiences of participants, it came from ongoing dialogues. Jennifer, one of the founders of the organizations, who had not participated on a trip prior to founding the organization, addressed this shift, while recalling conversations she had with Patricia:

In my conversations with Patricia, she talked about the big impact that travel to Mexico and traveling from Venezuela [made and how those trips] really made her change the way she saw things in other places in the world and for herself, and I thought, you know, here I am complaining about how people don't see my world, but there's so many other people's worlds that I'm not seeing and I'm not understanding, what role I play in making their lives better or worse. And, so, I think that was really what I thought and, in a lot of ways, what I really still think about what [the nonprofit organization] is - to really try to find a way to understand how other people live, and how you're connected as a result of, you know, bigger issues and things like that.

Through dialogue, a recognition of connections was beginning to form. The cultural observations were no longer isolated experiences but connected to, as Jennifer stated, "bigger issues." Promoting a global consciousness became a central theme to all of our future programs through connecting the research, observations, and experiences associated with each trip to larger, global contexts.

Nearly simultaneously, we acknowledged that these interconnections were also inclusive of our own local contexts. Elizabeth, who became an officer of the nonprofit organization after the trip to Guatemala, described our initial philosophy as one in which we "expose high school

47

students to different issues around the world and [show] how that kind of connects to their community." Our dialogues became more about a collective, global "us," rather than a segregating "them." And many of the challenges observed were translated into personal lessons. As Jennifer recalled, "I think that being in Guatemala showed me that no matter how much you have or how much you don't have, some problems still exist."

Jennifer's perspective about our initial objectives represents well our desire to promote a global consciousness as a critical component of our programs:

> What I really thought that we would achieve, or what I wanted to achieve, was for people to see how other people experience their world, and to see how they were different but, at the same time, to see how they were the same, and see how, like, you're living in your own world, and I'm living in my own world; I'm dealing with these issues that could be very different, but, in a lot of ways, they're the same ways. And, so, because our problems and the things that we're trying to solve are the same, that at the end we really have kinda this common human goal. And that's really what I wanted at the time.

This perspective highlights the belief that understanding the phenomenon of otherizing necessitates an awareness that we, as 'the other' to others, are not entirely separate but have struggles and goals that are common, overlapping, similar, or familiar. It is a recognition of a common humanity, a recognition that grows as we, collectively and individually, engage in direct interaction and dialogue with people, particularly people who we project as being very different from us. Through this recognition, we are all learning, as Jennifer hopes, "how to hear other people's voices, how to validate other people's voices, and how to validate our own experiences as well." From this perspective, we identify ourselves as global actors (Mansilla et al., 2007) and become conscious of our roles on the world stage.

Awareness of Oppression

As we recognize and validate the positionality of our lives within a greater global perspective, the web of interconnections among people became more opaque. And what came into a clear focus, then, was this web of power, privilege, inequity, exploitation, and oppression. When we began to more critically examine our experiences and observations through introspection and dialogue, we found that at the root of global human suffering can most often be found manifestations of oppression—racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism, ableism, xenophobia, etcetera. Thus, in order to better discover and understand global issues and our common human struggles, we made as a primary objective of our programs to focus directly on these manifestations of oppression. In describing the purpose of our educational programs, a current officer and participant in the trip to Thailand, Mary, stated, the "main goal is to expose students to global oppression, and it just helps us become aware of the issues that are going on— issues that are going on around the world and in a country, because these issues, they exist everywhere."

A participant of the trip to Thailand, Linda, reiterated this point but also acknowledged that exposure alone was not sufficient. In her case, guidance provided during the program was essential in her recognizing oppression and processing the observations and experiences.

> I think the purpose of [the nonprofit organization] is to learn about exploitation
> and oppressing people, through experience. It's not something that you can learn
> in a classroom. I mean, we did all that; we watched videos; we had
> conversations... But I think that only the trips, and when you're in the trip, too,
> you can't just be there, you have to sit down and look and analyze and see what
> you're seeing. You can see it, but it's not always going to process. Someone has to
> be there and help the person process what they're seeing. Because sometimes
> they're not going to realize, because I know I didn't. I saw a lot of things, and I
> was, like, 'okay, it looks normal to me,' but you have to help, or, I don't know, at
> least for me, you have to help me see what I was seeing.

Directed dialogue, as advocated by Dewey (1938) and Freire (1970), is an integral component of our trips and provides guidance to both observe manifestations of oppression and process the observations. Chapter Six provides specific examples of how directed dialogue guided the participants towards a greater awareness of oppression as disruptive knowledge (Kumashiro, 2002).

One of the implications of this greater awareness is best articulated by one of the founders, Margaret: "Looking at this complex level of oppression and how it subjugates peoples, keeps people from bettering themselves, dehumanizes them, and keeps us at the same time from being critical; so part of that is through this experience, we're basically just freeing ourselves." This freedom can be best understood in the context of Freire's (1970) and Nieto's (2004) notions of liberating education.

A transformational perspective of oppression must have at its core an understanding of privilege. Jennifer describes the changes in her perspectives about her own privilege:

> I came back with experiences that make, that made me, like, value, value my privilege in a different way, just kind of see it not, like, as a curse or as a burden, like, all of a sudden, all the things, and not to say that it happened right away, clearly it took time and, you know, a lot of other things, but I think they played a big role in changing my perspective in terms of the privilege that I had and how I would want to use it.

A constructive awareness of the corollary relationship between oppression and privilege (Hytten & Bettez, 2008) further supports the development of a global consciousness by not framing the world through the polarizing lens of oppressed versus oppressor. Rather, such an awareness allows for a realization of a far more complex web of oppression and an understanding that the interconnectedness of humanity includes this interconnectedness of oppression and privilege, through global, local, familial, and individual manifestations.

Creating Activists

The third significant shift occurred when we decided to formalize these trips and

articulate a purpose of our educational programs through the creation of a nonprofit organization.

There became a more results-oriented perspective—a desire to make concrete change. This

position was consistent with Freire's (1970) first stage of the pedagogy of the oppressed, to

"unveil the world of oppression and through the praxis commit themselves to its transformation"

(p. 40). A founder, Maria, who had not previously participated in our trips, described her original

perspective about the organization:

> I guess it started from what components I wanted to see and then...and I think we
> started off with the components, and the components being work with inner-city
> high school students, travel in developing countries, somewhat making it into that
> and so the philosophy I guess was to use this organization to empower students to
> be agents of social change, in a nutshell, through travel. That was the original idea
> behind it; that was how I approached the organization.

Among all the founders, there was a strong desire that the organization would help to

develop activists, who would "change the world." Dialogue from this frame of reference led to

the first mission statement for the organization:

> The specific and primary purposes of this organization are to educate youth about
> global issues of oppression, inequality, and human rights; advocate for justice of
> all oppressed peoples; and equip participants with principles of civic, social, and
> global activism. This organization will achieve these education goals through, but
> not limited to, consciousness raising expeditions to developing countries and
> attendance at global educational conferences, while collecting data to establish an
> educational curriculum for promoting intelligent and responsible internationalism.

Our mission statement reflected a jointly held belief that the development of a critical

consciousness of oppression was a necessity for individuals to engage in activism that supports

the advancement of equality and human rights. This perspective and official mission of the

organization generated the greatest critique of critical travel pedagogy and its expected

outcomes. Jennifer communicated the most doubtful position about promoting activists:

I really haven't figured out a way to connect it, 'cause I still think the idea of going somewhere else is important, and I don't think that we need to devalue the idea, you know, of being connected to people in other places of the world; but, from my experiences thus far, it's been kind of the opposite. Like, we took kids far away, and then they haven't really done anything, at least from what I can see.

She further describes this frustration, "I think part of me wants there to be, like, big, immediate results… because it helps to justify kind of our long-term frustrations and helps to fuel our enthusiasm."

A student who participated in the trip to Thailand expressed this view in context of her transformation towards a more activist perspective and her critique of how she perceived other students responses to the experience:

I mean, for me personally it was beneficial because I had already known about these things, so it was probably easier for me to actually incorporate the experience into doing something afterwards, meaningful action afterwards, but I don't know, for some people... I don't know, it might confuse them, they don't really have time to be thinking about global poverty and oppression. I mean, it might have the simple benefit of allowing people to put their lives into some sense of proportion, some scale, some measure to see how good they actually have it, to see, I mean, so in that sense, I think it would have been good for that, but the actual meaning of seeing how horrifying the conditions in other countries can be, the meaning is kind of blurry. It depends on your personality and what you want to do in life.

This recognition that our hopes of seeing immediate and tangible transformations, particularly in terms of creating activists, had not develop into an outcome of our educational programs allowed us to question and reevaluate our objectives and, thus, further evolve our theoretical framework. For all of us who had participated in these programs, the approach definitely promoted a transformation, but it was not immediately clear in what respect.

Critical Consciousness

While describing the ways in which her involvement in founding the nonprofit organization had impacted her – "more critical, analytical, aware, and conscious about my surroundings" – and the importance of these changes, Patricia perfectly articulated our evolved objective: "I personally think that you can change. You can't change the world, but you can change yourself." Maria also described this evolution from creating activists to really focusing on promoting change within the individual:

> Essentially, we're still trying to do the same thing, but I think it's somewhat been modified in the sense to really incorporate a lot of the nuances in that process of becoming an agent of social change, so awareness. Awareness I think has now become, awareness, reflection, seeing ourselves as part of this bigger picture and mainly the organization is, I feel like now has become more about a lot of stuff—self-reflection, self-criticism.

The earlier conceptualizations of our theoretical framework maintained a literal interpretation of critical theories' need to "act" (Wink, 2005). We focused on a desire to see concrete, clear examples of participants becoming agents of social change, without recognizing the most important component of that transformation—changing the self. Through dialogue with students during and after the earlier trips, I was becoming more aware of how we were all being impacted in very individual and complex ways. Intellectual and emotional responses varied significantly, and there was a wide range in how we were all influenced by our experiences. Chapters Seven and Eight highlight examples of the variety of way individuals have responded to the development of the nonprofit organization and to the trip to Thailand.

As previously mentioned, the nonprofit organization departs from other travel programs/ frameworks by focusing on oppression as disruptive knowledge (Kumashiro, 2002). Such an approach to learning is uncomfortable. And Elizabeth argues earnestly that it is specifically this discomfort that promotes a critical consciousness and, consequently, individual change:

I feel like it's extremely necessary for us to really just be put into uncomfortable positions. No matter if it's, I mean, I'm not saying 'let's make everyone depressed.' That's not, like, unfortunately some people do feel like they are, or do get to that point. It's just like we have to feel uncomfortable. All of our lives, you know, people who get the opportunity, like most of us who have the lifestyle that we do here, we're just always comfortable with everything, we're OK with everything; and then finally when we're put into a position where we're uncomfortable, then that's where a lot of, kind of, our consciousness starts to grow and to change; and it's just like, you know, you start to questions things and you start to kind of see maybe things are not all the way they're supposed to be or what is it that things are like that… And maybe it's, and one part is giving students the opportunity to kind of go through that earlier in their lives so they can kind of be exposed to that so when they go on, to let's say college or other different types of experience, they have a different perspective. You know, they have something different that they can contribute and bring to their classes or bring to their friends. And I feel like that's it, you have to feel uncomfortable. When you feel uncomfortable, you start to think about it and why you feel, you think, 'Why do I feel like that? Where is this coming from?' And you start to question things, and it gets to a point where you're confused as fuck, but somehow you just, you learn to kind of go through it and kind of deal with it; and, I don't know, you're just a different person, you know, and you just can't really see things the same way anymore.

By seeing life through a different lens that now illuminates global inequality, privilege, and oppression, we necessarily begin to reflect on our own positionality within a bigger picture of the world. Critical consciousness is this new awareness and the consequential desire and ability to more critically analyze our surrounding and experiences in both local and global contexts. Jennifer thoughtfully and thoroughly articulates how she hopes critical consciousness impacts the participants. Specifically, she advocates for a compassionate response (Carson & Johnston, 2001) to the crisis of attaining a disruptive knowledge of oppression. Her remarks are included in whole and unedited in order to preserve her train of thought.

I think (pause), or at least, like, I would be happy if students were leaving with a better understanding of the role they play, and, so, maybe, you know, like, even if they're not necessarily, you know, creating programs or doing all these types of things, like. I think that even just changing their mindset. So, if we had a student who, you know, went from thinking, you know, things just are, or, you know, who are the, you know, the haves and have nots, like, the have nots, you know, they deserve, they brought it upon themselves, or, the haves have it because, you

know, they pulled themselves by the boot straps. I think that if we, if someone can leave having an experience understanding that, while some of those things do play a role, they don't play, they're not the whole picture. And kind of having a better understanding of, not necessarily the whole picture, cause I don't think anyone can really understand the whole picture, but I think having an understanding that there is a bigger picture and, like, a better, like, an analytical mindset, to where, like, they're approaching other parts of their lives with kind of the analytical tool sets. So, you know, the ability for them to go into other places and have, you know, productive conversations that talk about, you know, issues on the community and on a global level, you know, like, on various levels, the ability to kind of take that to other places, and, you know, and, and have conversation with other people, so they can, they can learn how to take other people's opinions and not necessarily take everything at face value. Um, so, like, when, you know, they go off to college or whatever they experience in their lives to, say, like, hey, wait, you know, I used to be the person who thought things just were this way and now I know that, you know, from my time in Guatemala, from my time in Thailand, from my time in Mexico, whatever, like, I know that there's bigger things going on and I, I can't just take things at face value. I have to, you know, probe and look around and know that I have to do my own research and, and understand, you know, how biases are. (Pause) I think bias is a big thing, like, in terms of (pause) philosophically, that we try to focus on understanding what our own biases are and, like, and our own privilege and understanding, you know, what other people's biases can be. And, I think, that if they walk away understanding what their biases are and even, like, having a way to understand how their biases change. Um, so that they, when they're in other situations, in other communities, or, you know, whatever careers that they decide to go into, they have a way of kind of understanding this. So that whatever career they decide to is more humane. Like, if they, you know, if they decide to go into medicine, if they can, you know, go from a trip to Thailand and understand how people get AIDS and, you know, how, what the bigger kind of social strings are at that (pause), functioning at those bigger levels that result in one person having AIDS, you know. If they go on to being doctors they can understand that, okay, maybe this person has diabetes and not just necessarily blaming that person or, like, you know, they come from a bad culture that results in diabetes or something. But understanding that there's kind of a lot of factors playing into a role or, you know, if they go into teaching, understanding how, you know, the dynamics of a school in a community, you know, the way that dynamics somewhere else affected the way people were living, how dynamics in that. Have the skill set to be able to look at that and see how all the things are kind of affecting, you know, that one student they're working with or that other person. So, I think that (pause), and not only having those skills, but kind of having an understanding that, of the role that they could possibly play, having a way to, to self-examine the role that they play within that picture. And how they could use that understanding to create, like, kind of like if I understand what, what I'm doing and kind of, like, the color that I am in the picture, I could understand how to kind of redirect myself to create an effect, even if it is in one person. So, if they're a doctor, knowing how to make

that other patient feel more comfortable, and saying, you know, like, you have AIDS but I'm really, you know, like, it's my human nature to judge you, but I'm trying not to judge you and I'm trying, you know, even like to talking to the patient and trying what really happened so that that person maybe, you know, can feel more connected and feel, you know, like, have a better experience in that situation. Um, or that student can have a better experience in that situation, and not just say, like, well, this teachers doesn't, you know, see where I'm coming from or, like, you don't understand anything so how, you know, why should I even listen to you , or. You know, or even, like, as parents, so, you know, like, if they grow up and they raise their kids to kind of be conscious of the things that are happening so that, you know, maybe in, like, you know, a billion years, everyone starts raising their kids in way to where they don't just automatically think that people deserve to have less or, or that if they have less it's their fault, type of thing. If they can, if they go and take this one experience and, and it results in the skill set that would help them to raise their kids in a way that, you know, will kind of make them more analytical or more, just more humane, like, just more understanding of other people. Then, I think that would be (pause) a good thing.

The points expressed by Elizabeth and Jennifer—experiencing discomfort through an awareness of oppression and the desired outcomes of critical consciousness—are the differentiating components of critical travel pedagogy and are addressed, respectively, in detail in the next chapters. Jennifer's comments, in particular, mention numerous impacts she hopes are possible through critical travel pedagogy. Specifically, she talks about a greater global awareness, acknowledging bias and privilege, incorporating understanding and compassion into careers, and even raising children to be more understanding. The analysis presented in Chapter Seven highlights the degree to which her hopes are realized.

Summary: Hierarchical Components of Critical Travel Pedagogy

The diagram below illustrates both the evolutionary components of critical travel pedagogy and their relational hierarchy. In order to acquire a critical consciousness, an awareness and understanding of the complexity and diversity of human exploitation and oppression are necessary, which in turn are dependent upon having a global consciousness.

56

However, a global consciousness is only acquired by directly and deliberately experiencing the world. Each of the components must be present for the subsequent level, and critical consciousness requires that all of the components be present. As previously mentioned, the point of departure for critical travel pedagogy from the objectives of other travel programs/frameworks is our focus on manifestations of oppression. Other programs are satisfied with promoting a global consciousness, but it is through experiences and dialogue about oppression that we promote the development of a critical consciousness and individual transformation.
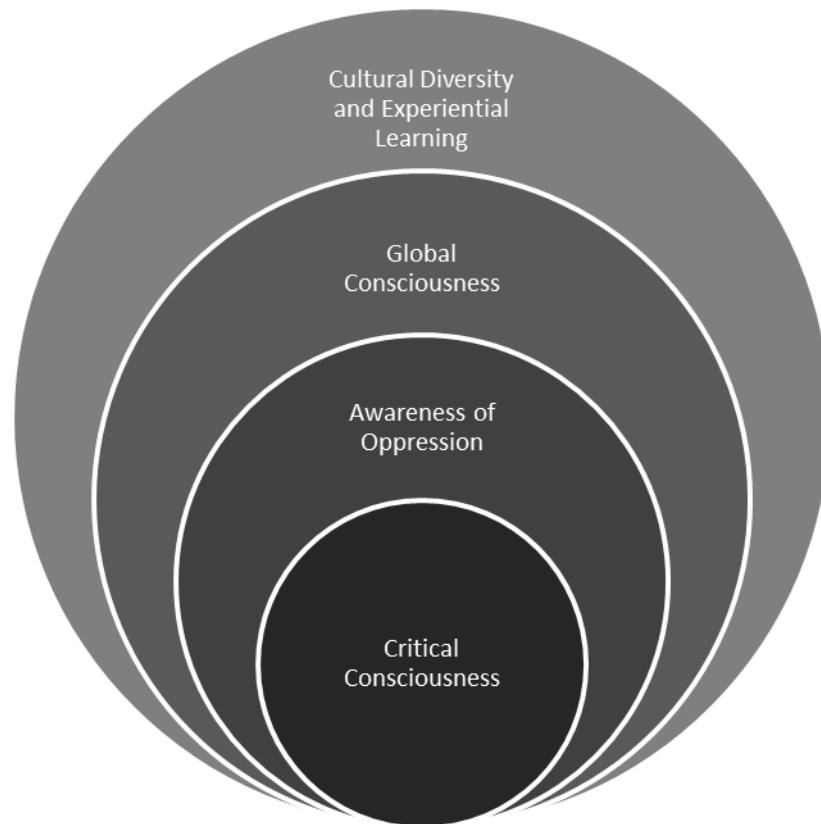
Figure 3: Evolutionary Components of Critical Travel Pedagogy

Chapter Six: Implementing Critical Travel Pedagogy

This chapter will describe what a trip to Thailand looks like in the context of critical

travel pedagogy from the perspectives of the students who participated in the two-week trip.

Much critique has been written about tourism in Thailand, including, for example, community-

based tourism (Boonratana, 2010), eco-tourism (Kontogeorgopoulos, 2005), volunteer tourism

(Raymond & Hall, 2008; Lyons, Hanley, Wearing & Neil, 2012), and sex tourism (Bishop,

1998). However, I have not identified any text that examines travel in Thailand that is conducted

from a purely critical theoretical perspective. Our trip to Thailand is entirely unique in that it was

undertaken specifically to implement a developing framework for critical travel pedagogy and

with a primary objective of learning about manifestations of oppression through direct

observation, engagement and dialogue.

A secondary, though necessary and integral, component of our programs is our

democratic (Shor, 1992) and co-intentional (Freire, 1970) approach to decision-making and

learning. Officers and/or previous participants meet to discuss possible destinations. The primary

criteria for the selection are social justice issues that can be addressed during the trip and the

anticipated costs. We conduct research about locations of interest, share the results of our

research, dialogue about the potential benefits of the locations, and come to a consensus. After a

location is selected, we begin advertising for the trip. Similar to other aspects of our programs,

there is no set formula that we follow. Advertising may involve giving presentations to classes, posting flyers, or just word of mouth. For the trip to Thailand, officers of the organization gave presentations to several classes of high school juniors. Interested students completed an application, which involved general information and a short essay explaining why they were interested in the trip. We held several informational meetings and a parent meeting. Ultimately, six high school students, one officer (undergraduate student), and an older sibling of the one the students self-selected to participate in the trip. The sibling only participated as an observer, was not present during the pre-trip component, did not stay in Thailand for the duration of the program, and is not included in this research.

Prior to the trip, I conducted seven seminars to prepare us for the trip, in terms of logistics and cultural awareness, and to begin a dialogue about a variety of social justice topics (see the syllabus in Appendix One). We began with activities to get acquainted with each other and a map coloring assignment to acquire a basic overview of Thailand's geography. This followed with a variety of research activities, including watching videos and reading texts together as well as conducting individual research, and considerable directed dialogue. Though I consider the democratic process of our pre-trip planning to be critical to our approach, only three students briefly mentioned it during the interviews: "I remember that we got to choose where to go. I remember that. I was really happy with that." "I just remember meeting once a week or once every two weeks and just going over exactly what we wanted to do and just reinforce stuff we wanted to do and planning and just learning more about the culture and the issues." "We had other meetings… about logistics and where we wanted to go and what days and how we were going to get there. And those were good and important and progressive meetings." Responses also referenced videos we watched and/or getting to know the other students in the program. All

responses to questions about the pre-trip component of the program were very brief, and two

students specifically stated, "I don't remember." While the recalled impressions of the pre-trip

component would suggest it is not important, critique during the interviews about the overall

program supports my contention that the pre-trip component is necessary, particularly in terms of

providing the foundations for critical dialogue. Similarly, one of the most significant components

of our programs is our evening dialogues during the trips. The dialogues are never recorded and

no notes are taken. We enter our dialogues agreeing that what we discuss will not be shared

outside of our group. The dialogues last from less than an hour to several hours, sometimes

leading into the wee-hours of the morning. They have become critical components to our overall

approach, and I have seen how the dialogues are transformative instruments in the processing of

our individual experiences, as mentioned in Chapter Five.

Our trip to Thailand had originally been selected, in large part, because of Thailand's

infamous sex tourism industry (Mason, 1999), its consequential HIV/AIDS challenges

(Dhanatya, 2008), and the existence of and access to Karen refugee camps along the border with

Burma.[10] Also, because English is commonly spoken in these settings, there are opportunities to

reduce barriers due to language. In addition to these topics, our group considered other

opportunities in which to learn about social justice and oppression. Based on the research we

conducted and contacts we established, we collectively decided to visit a red-light district, a

private university, a homeless shelter, a refugee camp, an HIV/AIDS hospice, and an island

tourist resort. For the purposes of addressing the discreet observations and reflections of the

participants from each of the these encounters, and with the understanding that oppressive

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[10] Access to Karen refugee camps and migrant communities along the Burma-Thailand border was available to us because of connections I had established with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), ZOA Refugee Care, and other organizations and individuals from previous unpublished research I had conducted in Thailand about education in the refugee camps.

conditions are necessarily overlapping and complex, the visits are initially examined based on

the dominant form of oppression observed. While background information and controversies

about conditions in Thailand are provided in order to contextualize the experiences and

observations of the students, this is certainly not intended to be a comprehensive analysis of

oppression or social issues in Thailand. Visits to the red-light districts and go-go bars were

primarily observed through the lens of sexism, though manifestations of cisgenderism,

heterosexism, ageism, classism, and colonialism were clearly present. The homeless shelter

along with our visit to the private university highlighted classism. The HIV/AIDS hospice

illustrated a palpable manifestation of ableism. The refugee camp and immigrant school

exemplified xenophobia (Kim & Sundstom, 2014), influenced by a complex array of differences

in culture, language, religion, and ethnicity. And our stay in an island tourist resort reinforced

our perspective and positionality with respect to colonialism. The five principal manifestations of

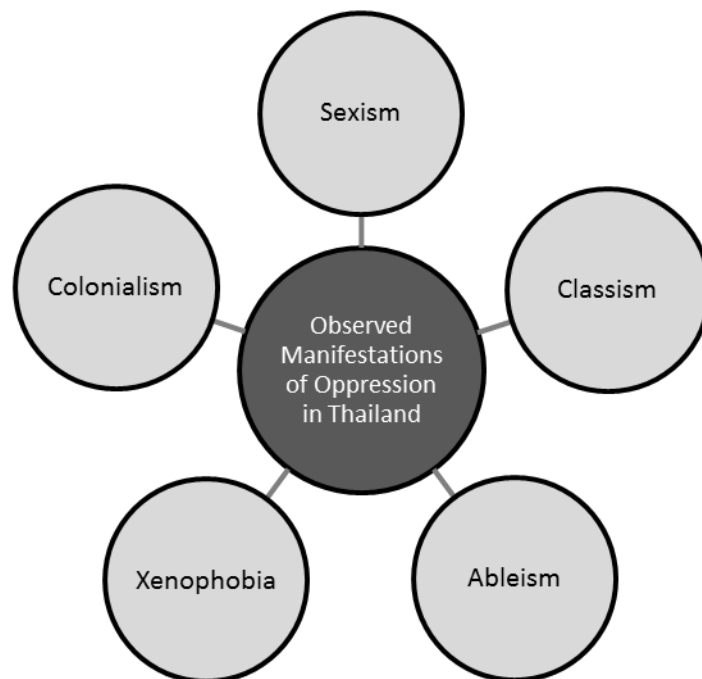oppression we observed during the trip are illustrated in the figure below.

Figure 4: Manifestations of Oppression in Thailand

Additionally, we addressed other forms of oppression, particularly racism and heterosexism, beyond the five highlighted here through research and dialogue before, during, and after the trip. By examining an array of oppressive conditions we are seeking to embrace an inclusive theory of oppression (Bell, 2007).

Thailand: Background

The Kingdom of Siam was founded in 1238 and became a constitutional monarchy in 1932. It officially changed its name in 1939 to the Kingdom of Thailand, and it is the only Southeast Asian country to have never been colonized by the West. Thailand is geographically slightly larger than Spain and has a population of sixty-five million people (slightly more than France). Nearly ninety-five percent of the population is Buddhist, and the country has a 92.6 percent literacy rate and a life expectancy of 72.8 years (CIA, 2008). Tourism is a significant part of Thailand's economy, generating 1.8 million jobs (4.7 percent of total employment) and contributes approximately seven percent to the country's gross domestic product (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2012). Views of tourism in Thailand are best portrayed by the tagline on the Lonely Planet (2012) guidebook: "Friendly and fun-loving, exotic and tropical, cultured and historic, Thailand beams with a lustrous hue from its gaudy temples and golden beaches to the ever-comforting Thai smile." Written between the lines of this mythical description are the lived experiences of Thai people, which are certainly filled with happy smiles but also struggles. For our trip, the objective was to gain some understand about those struggles through direct engagement and dialogue in a variety of circumstances and locations in Thailand. The following figure shows a map of Thailand and the locations we visited during our trip.
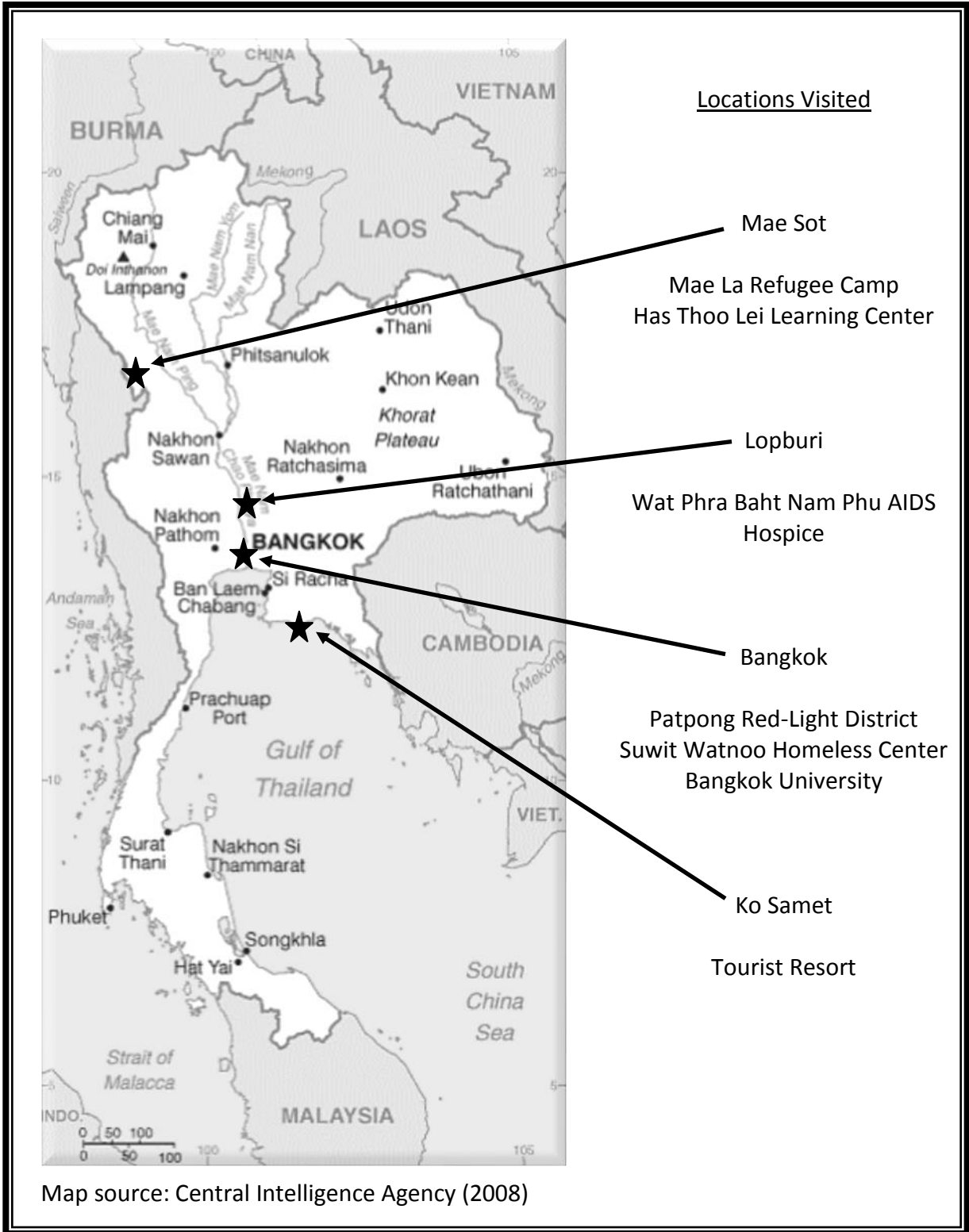
Figure 5: Map of Thailand

Sexism: Commercial Sex Industry

Prostitution plays a significant role in Thailand's tourism economy. Mason (1999) argues that tourism generates the highest foreign income for the country, and "sex tourism in Thailand dominates the country's tourist market" (p. 51). Sex tourism is a fairly recent development in Thailand resulting primarily from military engagements by Japan and the United States during World War Two. Hall and Harrison (1992) outline four stages in the development of sex tourism in Southeast Asia: (1) indigenous prostitution—bonded prostitution of women in traditional patriarchal societies; (2) economic and military colonization—exploitation of women as sexual servants for occupation forces; (3) transition from occupation to tourism—continued exploitation of women for the acquisition of foreign capital; and (4) rapid economic development—the systematic commodification of people.

Prostitution is technically illegal in Thailand, but it is openly conducted and is even promoted by tour companies and hotels (Boonchalaksi & Guest, 1994). Consequently, it is nearly impossible to avoid encountering Thailand's commercial sex industry. It is ever-present. As one student commented, "Throughout the city, you would see these—the restaurant or something— you would see the old white men or Asian men with the young Thai women and you knew why they were together."

Research about prostitution in Thailand prior to the trip was minimal. We read an interview of a Thai sex worker (McGeown, 2007) and dialogued about her experiences. We also engaged in an activity in which we conducted various text searches in YouTube (for example, Thailand, go-go bar, Phuket), noting the frequency and content of videos related to prostitution, and discussed the perceptions and apparent popularity of prostitution in Thailand. Our dialogue was fairly non-critical, and students' views varied, were dispassionate, and were not overtly

opinionated in support of or against prostitution. This potentially volatile topic was addressed

with little controversy.

As we planned our trip and determined our overall travel schedule within Thailand, we

decided to visit a red light district on our first night. We chose to visit the Patpong district, since

it is considered to be one of the first, having been established in 1969, and most popular

destinations for western sex tourists (Boonchalaksi & Guest, 1994). Upon arriving at Patpong

our first night in Thailand, I suggested we walk the entire block without talking, just observing.

The street was closed to vehicular traffic, and vendors were selling handicrafts, tourist items,

clothing, CDs, videos, and a wide range of other items from stands along the length of the street.

Many locals and tourists, including families with children, were shopping at the stands. The

street was packed with vendors and patrons. At each end of the block were fast food restaurants,

including a McDonalds. Along the sides of the street were clubs, as described by one of the

students:

> We went to the red light district our first night there. I remember that. And, I was
> just, like, shocked that there were so many, like, it was like club after club after
> club. It was just pure clubs. And there were, like, just women who were
> numbered. And then, I was just, like, what do the numbers mean?

A student recalled "walking in the sex district that night… and everybody coming to us

and trying to get us to go to the shows." The shows were being advertised as, recalled by another

student, "'Sex show, sex show, razor blade, ping pong." We observed during our walk that clubs

were typically on the first floor and "shows" were on the second floor, above the clubs. After we

finished our walk and arrived at the end of the block, we met and shared our observations. I

suggested that the students decide what they wanted to do next. The students collectively agreed

that we should all go together and sit inside one of the go-go bars. Below are four students'

recollections of that experience:

[Student #1]: I remember the red light district, of course, and I just remember going into one nightclub with female workers. I just remember us looking and seeing how young the girls were and one girl couldn't be more than 12, and it was just really sad that they felt like this was all they could do to earn money and all they really are were, they're like objects. You're pointing, you're asking for a number, and then you're just buying that person. You're buying a person. So that was kind of hard.

[Student #2]: I remember we went to the red light district and that was, it was disturbing. It was very disturbing to see young girls who were—they looked younger than me—out there and they were prostitutes; so they were selling themselves. And the people, the guys that were coming, were like old white and Asian men, and so I was just…

[Student #3]: I guess with the red light district—just seeing how young the girls are—I guess it was just kind of disturbing to me because I'm female and just knowing like, 'Oh, my gosh, what if this was like everywhere?' You know, 'this could be me or anyone else,' and that thought was just kind of disturbing… It was kind of like a shock type thing that everyone's okay with it, like it's nothing, like, "Yeah, twelve year old girls being sold. Yeah, that's fine, we're getting income." You know, like, I don't know, I didn't feel like it was appropriate or correct, but then I guess it could be because I'm American and that's just what I'm used to and I was taught.

[Student #4]: I really remember that first day because, you know, we had gone into Bangkok and that night we had gone to get something to eat and then we went to the red light district and, I don't know, it was just extremely shocking. I don't even know what, like, so many thoughts come into my head. Well, okay, I'll just start with the first day. The first day or the first night we went out. I guess we walked around the red light district and there were all these different signs about like the different shows and it was just extremely shocking because I had never been in a position where, you know, selling sex is just so open and so, it was, okay, it was… it was just very kind of shocking and eye-opening to how sex is just sold like it's nothing, at least not sex, but women are, they're just kind of commodities and women are, you know, it's okay, but then again it's not okay for women to do that because people will talk shit behind their back and call them all these things, but, you know, as if, I was just like, 'God, there's so many damn contradictions and people don't see them or people just care to ignore them,' and I was just like, 'Oh, God,' and it was too much for that first day.

The ambivalence about prostitution that was present during our pre-trip meetings subsided and was replaced with a much more critical consideration of the topic. Direct observation and engagement complexified the students' perspectives. What had previously been

considered with dispassion during our conversations prior to the experience became almost

unanimously "shocking" and "disturbing." These adjectives may seem to represent, in part, the

internal conflicts created by the experience, as student #3 acknowledged that her views might be

biased because she is an American and student #4 recognized the "contradictions" and struggles

with her beliefs, alternating between "it's okay, then again it's not okay." These conflicting

views are consistent with feminist discourse that views sex workers from repressed to resistant

(Scoular, 2004), situated by slavery to consent, and construed into agendas from abolitionism to

regulationism (Lozano, 2011). Weitzer (2010) advocates for a "polymorphous paradigm" that is

"sensitive to complexities and to the structural conditions resulting in the uneven distribution of

agency and subordination" (p. 26). The students' responses suggest that their observations and

experiences in Thailand have resulted in an increased awareness of the complexities associated

with the realities of prostitution.

Students' strong emotional responses may also have been caused, in part, by the

observation, mentioned specifically by the first three students above, of the apparent young ages

of the sex workers we encountered. Lau (2008) indicates there are between 60,000 and 200,000

child sex workers in Thailand, representing a significant human rights crisis. Being similar in age

to the child prostitutes, student #3 connects personally by observing that "this could be me."

Interestingly, all the responses suggest there is a general view among the students that the

women and girls chose to work as prostitutes. There was no mention during the interviews of sex

slavery or forced prostitution. Student #1 sought to understand why young girls would work as

prostitutes by hypothesizing that "they felt like this was all they could do to earn money."

Student #2 further hypothesized,

> It's because they're poor, they don't have any money and so they feel that they
> have to sell themselves. But just the fact that these men are actually feeding into

this, so they don't respect the women either and the women don't respect themselves; but at the same time, they don't feel that there's many other opportunities for them to make a living, so that's why they're doing it. And so they probably know that what they're doing is wrong, but they just feel like, or some of them might not think so, but I know there's some of them that do, but it's because they feel that they don't have any other way of getting money or any other way of making a living.

Students did not acknowledge aspects of the commercial sex industry that accommodate the demands of Thai men. An estimated ten to twenty percent of Thai men were found have had sexual relations with commercial sex workers in a twelve month period (Shah et al., 2011), suggesting that prostitution within Thailand is certainly not limited to sex tourism. Students did, however, observe massage parlors, where "they gave 'massages,' but mostly they didn't; they weren't specialized in massages, they specialized in the sex trade and they were everywhere." Research by Ariyabuddhiphongs & Li (2012) again counters the radical feminist agenda of abolitionism by suggest that Thai masseuses often experience a sense of pride for the sacrifices they make to support their families. This is consistent with the students' conjectures that prostitution was a choice made by the women and girls for economic reasons.

In terms of feminist theory, the students, though highly troubled by their observations of child prostitution, seem more aligned with the notion of consent rather than slavery. And their conflicted views might suggest a possible alignment to a more polymorphous paradigm. However, the students also recognize the oppressive nature of prostitution in terms of the commodification of women's bodies and the economic exploitation inherent in prostitution. While there is evidence of empathy by the students for the prostitutes and an attempt to understand the conditions which may have influenced their decisions to become sex workers, there is no indication of empathy for the male customers who are perceived as viewing the

women merely as commodities. The strongest condemnation and greatest expressed internal

conflict comes from a male student:

> I recall of course the Patpong district and kind of being, I mean, one, being a male and seeing beautiful Thai women, I was kind of like, 'alright,' but then the other part of me was like, 'God damn it!' I recall being very distressed and uncomfortable about being there and generally just being very angry at the quantization of human beings and seeing just large crowds of people going by and not really looking upon it as something to be ashamed of or something to be upset about. Instead, I was just seeing a bunch of people who seemed to just view them not as people, but as products, just something to be bought and something to be dehumanized and something just to be… yeah, that was my impression of Patpong.

He continues, comparing his experiences in Patpong with prior knowledge and views

acquired since returning from the trip:

> I mean, it was clear that the world was a fucked up place; this was something I already knew, but actually going to very prime examples of how the world is a fucked up place, that was something I, those are very strong, just, very direct, very, and it was experienced too. It was just being there and seeing, being there at the, at Patpong, and going to the clubs and sitting there and observing and, um, even I for a bit of time was thinking, "Well, these women are very attractive," and then at the time, and then looking around and having this conflicting view of, "I am being just like these other people who work here. I am just ogling and I'm just not really seeing them as human beings, I'm just viewing them as very attractive people," and just seeing that I was just as guilty as everyone else who was there. I was then switching to condemn mode and then looking at those people thinking, "You bastards." So that was a very conflicted experience and I really never actually, I never had the experience of actually seeing people actively dehumanizing others in such a way as at Patpong; people just walking off with women and the women had numbers and just a very bizarre dehumanizing going on, just a charade, just, and just being very confused and very angry and, yeah, but then looking back on the experience, it was just, having lived a few extra years getting a few more life experiences, and whatnot, seeing that the act of dehumanizing other people is something we do all the time, we do it even just every day, just, just seeing people as the other, as not even people anymore, they just become objects, they just become, okay, that's the stripper, that's the bus driver, that's the this, that's the that, and that's all you are; you're just this commodity for me, useful or not, to be exploited by me for my purposes.

> In these remarks, the student focuses attention and criticism directly on the perpetrators

rather than the prostitutes. He also recognizes his own role as a potential perpetrator. In this brief

experience, he embodies Lorde's (1984) notion of the oppressor within. The dehumanization he observed by the perpetrators, which potentially could have included himself, to the prostitutes becomes a foundation for recognizing manifestations of exploitation and alienation of all types of workers in daily life (Marx, 2007).

Classism: Homelessness and Academic Disconnect

During our meetings prior to the trip, we talked about social justice issues we might want to study while in Thailand. Students viewed poverty as a relevant topic, and so we investigated ways to learn about this issue. After reaching out to several of my friends and contacts in Thailand, we were invited to visit a homeless shelter on the outskirts of Bangkok. We also received a response from another contact inviting us to meet with students at Bangkok University. Through the lens of these two experiences and other observations during the trip, we examined issues of neglect and privilege in the context of classism.

The national poverty rate in Thailand is 8.1 percent, and 5 percent of the population earn below $2 per day (World Bank, 2012). These are relatively low statistical measures in a global context, yet we encountered substantive evidence of this poverty throughout the trip. Our observations of the commercial sex industry led to numerous reflections and discussions about economic inequality, as previously mentioned, but we also encountered it in many other contexts. For example, while staying in a hostel in Bangkok, we frequented a nearby internet café. The students talked often with the woman working there, as one student described:

> [There] was this woman in the computer shop, and she told us, I remember how she, how she, I don't remember how much she was paid, it was less than, way less than 50, probably like 25 [US dollars] or something a month. She worked 12-14 hours a day. I remember I used to go there early in the morning and either go, probably later again, late at night, and it'd be the same person. She slept in her chair. She didn't, she made so little, she couldn't even rent an apartment. All she

70

had enough money for was food, but she was grateful for the job she had just because she could eat, and I think she only had a half a day off a week. She went to go see her boyfriend. Her boyfriend? Or she went to go see someone, I don't remember who, but it was so sad. Like you wouldn't imagine, she didn't seem like she was almost in a way homeless or didn't have anything. At least she carried herself in a way where it didn't, she didn't make herself appear homeless and poor, but there's nothing wrong with being poor, but I couldn't believe how much she went through.

Another student met a woman at a massage place, which the student quickly distinguished "wasn't that type of massage parlor." The woman shared with the student her financial struggles and the sacrifices she and her daughter made so that her daughter could go to school. The woman's story of her struggles "gave [the student] hope because it was like her daughter worked to get out of there." She compared this to her own situation: "It kind of reminded me of me of mom because my mom works really hard for the same purpose, and she just wants me to go to school… and get out of our situation." For the student, it was "a bonding experience," and she returned to see the woman numerous times just to talk with her. This bonding, or solidarity, the student experienced came from identifying herself with the oppressed in the context of poverty and economic oppression. This is comparable to the female student who identified herself with the child prostitute when she observed that "this could be me" and the male student who identified himself with the oppressor when he acknowledged that he was "as guilty as everyone else" patronizing the go-go bar. In these contexts, identifying with the oppressed seems to promote compassion, while identifying with the oppressor promotes conflict.

Our visit to a homeless shelter was a day-long activity. It was located outside of Bangkok, and we had to take multiple modes of transportation to get to it. It was off the beaten track and not very convenient to locate. Because of potential language barriers, we invited a Thai translator to accompany us, and she guided the way. When we arrived at the shelter, we were invited to sit in a circle on the floor of the main room with the residents of the shelter and engage

71

in dialogue. Through the translator, we talked for more than an hour, and then we were given a tour of the shelter. Below are students' recollections and impressions of that experience:

> [Student #1]: I remember going to the homeless shelter and then also within the homeless shelter, they'd be like a family atmosphere and, but again, it was, it made me sad to see that people had to live there and they had to sleep on the floor and, but, I mean, even here in L.A., like people are sleeping on the streets and stuff like that, but I appreciated the family-like environment that was provided at the shelter.

> [Student #2]: We went to this homeless shelter and at the homeless shelter they had a sign at the train station saying, "Free bathrooms over here," and nowhere else did they ever say that, and they didn't care who you were, you could use their stuff. They were homeless. Well, they were in a shelter, but they shared. They didn't have that much, but they shared what they have. That shows you real character, like people that had money didn't do stuff like that who could do it, but they did what they could and that showed me like, "Well, I could do something like that too," and they let people take showers there, they let them use the bathroom and everything, and they shared their stories with us. They had problems within the community, but they talked it out every night or every couple of nights and stuff and that showed me even though you're doing bad, you can try to improve your situation or help other people, you could reach out, and it was really sweet.

> [Student #3]: I just remember being there [the homeless shelter]; and I remember a guy talking about how he was kidnapped. He was sleeping in a field and he got kidnapped and I think they had him working on a boat for a while. And I just remember one woman, she was asking, "Oh, how is it in America?" because she was thinking, I guess, the situation isn't the same here and there's no homeless people or just not as much and we were just trying to tell her, "No, we have homeless people too. We have shelters for them. People volunteer." And it just made me realize more about the American dream type thing; people just think, I don't know, I guess they put America on a pedestal, and they just think if they come here, or just period, it's better over here. But I guess, I don't know, in some aspects it is, but we're going through the same issues that they're going through. Yeah, so that was kind of, I think that was my first in a homeless shelter, so that was like new. It was really nice I remember, really nice.

> [Student #4]: Meeting with the homeless people, and I remember, I remember [Student #1] crying, and it was just the fact that they, like, stuck together and they were just trying to, like, really help each other out, even though they weren't all family. Like, I was used to seeing, like, you know, families, big families, stick together through hard times and stuff, but, like, total strangers? I remember that. And just looking at the, they had this massive collection of pictures on their wall,

and, from all the events they did and the people that, you know, have been through there, and I was, like, wow.

[Student #5]: The homeless shelter. I remember that place because everybody was so happy. Like, I don't know. Like, people welcomed us in a really, like, I don't know, welcome to my home, and they were just so happy, and, like, the kids were running around and just having fun. Like, there's this man telling us his, his story. And his story wasn't very happy, but people were grateful to be there and just happy. And, I don't know, I felt like they didn't have any complaints; they were very grateful for being there.

Interestingly, all the students who mentioned the homeless shelter talked about it fondly, having considered it a generally positive experience. Two of the students did not mention the homeless shelter at all during their interviews. No students expressed a possibility that the conditions of our visit were staged or disingenuous.

In considering the perspectives expressed by the students, I see an underlying theme that was explicitly stated by one of the students when she talked about the woman in the internet café: "there's nothing wrong with being poor." There were no negative judgments expressed about the people's conditions of poverty and no blame directed at the people for being poor. On the contrary, the students generally expressed respect towards the people who were struggling to subsist and to overcome their economic situations. This view was consistent when students talked about the commercial sex workers, the internet café employee, the massage therapist, and the people living in the homeless shelter, in the context of poverty.

Our trip to Bangkok University provided a unique contrast for the students. We were invited by a professor at the university after we informed her that the focus of our trip was to learn about social justice issues in Thailand. We met with five university students and the professor, all of whom spoke English fluently, and they gave a presentation about their student organization and the issues they were addressing in the community. After the presentation, we were introduced to the university president and given a tour of the campus. Our visit was a fairly

formal event. There was a sign welcoming us at the entrance to the university, a professional

photographer followed us for the entire visit, and the university published a website that

highlighted our visit. Below are student reflections on that visit:

> [Student #1]: I remember going to Bangkok University and they were giving us a presentation of, you know, what they had been doing for their community, yeah, for their community, for the city, and it was all very little things, like they were going out and planting trees—when you have like 13 year olds out on the street selling their bodies, you have an AIDS hospice with, like, a low staff and, you know, more patients than staff to care for the patients, and you have people in refugee camps who are lacking clothes, food, shelter, but they're just planting trees; but they were trying to make it seem like they were, you know, they were really trying to, I guess they were trying to impress us or something. But we knew that there is so many bigger issues that they weren't addressing.
>
> [Student #2]: I remember, um, going to the, like, the university, and how, like, it was funny 'cause, like, they, I remember they made everything kind of seem like really cool and perfect about everything. And, we were, like, oh, but, like, down the street there's, like, people, you know, like, selling their bodies.
>
> [Student #3]: I remember going to the university. That was fun. A remember, like, the translator was there, "Oh, that's where all the rich, stuck up kids go," and I remember trying to ask questions, but they were just pointing out the good things about the school and the country and they never wanted to show the bad parts. It wasn't really why we came there, but I can understand why. You know, you don't want foreigners to think badly of your country, so it's understandable.
>
> [Student #4]: Um, the university, I just remember them being really active on environmental work; that's all I, that's all I really got from them. And, and it was more like a presentation, and they were, like, this is the type of work that we do and hello and goodbye. And that's, like, that's all I remember. Um, they, they didn't really seem concerned with (pause) community; like, I don't even know why we were there.

Though our visit to Bangkok University was for only a couple of hours, the students

developed an overall negative impression of the university students' work as being relatively

inconsequential. In all the interviews, there was a sense of dismissiveness of the entire

experience, and student #4 articulated this perspective clearly: "I don't even know why we were

there." Through our group dialogues, we had developed such a high level of criticality and

expectation that anything less seemed disingenuous. There was no judgment of the university

students directly, other than the referenced comment by the translator, but the US students were

clearly unenthusiastic about the focus of the university's work.

Surprisingly, the students found the meeting at the university to be the least impactful

experience of the entire trip. In a setting in which dialogue should have been highly critical and

engaged, the content of the discourse was disconnected from the experiences and observations of

the students. Efforts by the US students to critically engage the university students were met with

censure and diversions. Students suggested that the university students were "trying to impress

us" or did not want us to "think badly" about Thailand. However, I consider this academic

disconnect a consequence of reproductive knowledge, consistent with the notion of "the hidden

curriculum" (Giroux, 1988; Apple, 1990), which raises questions about whose knowledge is

being taught and for whom is the knowledge benefitting? While the students during their short

time in Thailand had identified complex and rampant manifestations of oppression, the

university seemed to encourage less controversial subject-matter to consider.

Ableism: HIV/AIDS

There are over six-hundred thousand people living with HIV/AIDS in Thailand, and it is

the leading cause of death among young adult Thais (Marais 2004). Additionally, views about

HIV/AIDS in Thailand include viewing it as "a dirty, dangerous, fearsome, and shameful

disease" (Kubotani & Engstrom, 2005, p. 5). A survey of elementary children in Northern

Thailand found that over ninety percent were afraid to play with children with HIV (Ishikawa et

al., 2011). While there has been debate about viewing HIV/AIDS as a disability, I concur with

the views of Tataryn (2004) that "disabled people are disabled not by their physical situation but

by societal attitudes, and the manifestation of those attitudes towards them" (p. 3). In this context, people in Thailand living with *evident* HIV/AIDS experience discrimination, marginalization, and ostracization consistent with ableism.

Our decision to visit an HIV/AIDS hospice was influenced by a trip I had made previously to Wat Phra Baht Nam Phu and the experiences I had communicated with the students.[11] A study by Kubotani & Engstrom (2005) conducted at two Buddhist temples that serve as HIV/AIDS hospices, including Wat Phra Baht Nam Phu, found that the patients had been influenced to come there primarily because of the "discriminatory acts and attitudes of their neighbors and communities" (p. 13). They also expressed a desire to be with people who were the "same," allowing them "to live comfortably, free of shame and worry" (p. 15). These experiences of marginalization were magnified by a lack of employment opportunities and counseling and financial resources available to people with HIV/AIDS. The temples were viewed as a sanctuary for the patients.

Our trip to Wat Phra Baht Nam Phu required a train trip from Bangkok and a two night stay in Lopburi.[12] We spent an afternoon at Wat Phra Baht Nam Phu, which included a visit to their single-room museum, an extensive tour of the facility, and a walk to the top of a nearby hill that was part of the Buddhist temple. Our guide during the tour spoke English fluently and many of the patients, who were former commercial sex workers, also spoke English. Student

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[11] In 2006, while conducting research about education in Karen refugee camps, I had learned informally about and then visited Wat Phra Baht Nam Phu. I had been given a tour and told that people typically came to the hospice because their families and society in general had rejected them and were often just left at the front entrance. I shared my experiences with the students, we conducted additional research, and several students ultimately felt strongly about visiting the hospice.

[12] Commonly referred to as Monkey City, Lopburi, as the nickname suggests, is home to numerous troops of monkeys. While our stay there was not a primary objective of our trip, several students briefly mentioned it during the interviews. One student, in particular, found the experience to be uniquely memorable: "That town was scary. There was really too many monkeys there. It was really, really scary because I'm not good, like, I'm afraid of monkeys. I didn't really think I was, but seeing them all around, I'm afraid of monkeys now. I went to the zoo with my four year old Godbrother; I didn't want to go by the monkeys. I'm traumatized by that now."

recollections about the museum were brief if at all, and the following comment most thoroughly

describes the experience.

> [Student #1]: I remember going to the AIDS hospice and the first thing we did
> when we went to the AIDS hospice, we visited the museum and you saw people
> who had AIDS and donated their bodies to the museum and preserve their bodies
> and then they gave a brief description of their life and some of them, they had
> been disowned by their family because in that culture…. There they may not have
> a lot of programs that explain what AIDS is and so people are ignorant; they don't
> know why people get the disease or what can cause it either, and so they're
> abandoned by their family. Or they're like prostitutes and they get like those
> young women out there; they're putting themselves at risk for diseases like AIDS.

The connection between HIV/AIDS and prostitution is further articulated by another

student when she reflects on the most significant part of the trip for her. She also provides a

contextual reference to the significance of ableism for people living with HIV/AIDS, particularly

in Thailand.

> [Student #2]: The most significant part to me was going to the red light district
> and going to the AIDS hospice. That was the most stand out things; that's
> people's lives. It's like their country is selling out their lives for money. You're
> profiting from all these people, and you know they're getting stuff, and then
> they're going to spread it to their families, their husbands, their mothers, their
> children. So you're going to have a sick population and what can you do? People
> go… hundreds of miles to go to a hospice that's full. There's really no help for
> them, even when they get sick; so all they could do is go back to prostitution and
> spread it more because they need money to survive. It's sad. People die at young
> ages. Or, what would you do, how do you break it to your family? Saying, "Oh, I
> have AIDS" or, "Oh, I know you have AIDS; you just don't know it yet." You
> can't do that; that's your life. That's the most significant part ever. You could take
> being poor. Poor is just a state of financial being; it's not who you are. Being sick,
> that affects your whole life.

Razack (1998) states, "The systems of oppression that regulate our lives sustain one

another but we do not always see their interdependency" (p. 22). Several students began to

connect the dots linking the structural oppression of commercial sex workers through the tacit

approval by the powers that be and the societal ostracization that the same people (and

potentially their families) will likely experience through ableism if they acquire HIV/AIDS.[13]

Additionally, the sentiment this student conveys in contrasting poverty as "a state of being" while an illness such as HIV/AIDS "affects your whole life" was not atypical in terms of the degree of emotions other students expressed when describing their recollections and feelings about their experiences at Wat Phra Baht Nam Phu.

After visiting the museum, we were taken on an extensive tour of the hospice, which included meeting with HIV/AIDS patients at varies stages of illness. In some cases, the patients showed little or no sign of the virus; however, we also visited the section of the hospital where patients were in the last stages of the virus, which I was under the impression was not part of a typical tour. Here, a student provides her unique recollection of interacting with HIV/AIDS patients, including one woman who was quite ill and possibly very near death:

> [Student #3]: Well, the AIDS hospice, that was like, you know, you hear about people having HIV or you hear people who live with AIDS, but you don't really know anyone close to you or at least I don't and you just kind of have this understanding like, "Oh, they're still people, they're not different. They're living with a disease that's not curable, but you shouldn't treat them any different." So it's just like I guess being in a place where people go to die – that's unbelievable.... So you know that you're going to be interacting with people who have HIV, who have AIDS, and that was kind of like – I think in the beginning I kind of took that for granted – and I was just like, "That's a big deal," or at least I felt like when I was there and after it.

This student began her discussion about the hospice by acknowledging her lack of familiarity with anyone who had HIV/AIDS and the naiveté of her initial views towards people living with HIV/AIDS. She further highlights how her own biases and ignorance about

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[13]Rates of HIV infection among commercial sex workers vary. According to the United Nations Development Programme, the HIV infection rate for brothel-based sex workers is around 7 to 12 percent (Marais 2004). Nhurod et al. (2010) conducted HIV testing in Bangkok of six-hundred eighty-four women and found that 45.8 percent of street-based sex workers and 4.2 percent of other (ex. brothel) sex workers were HIV positive. Van Griensven et al. (2009) found that 30.8 percent of four-hundred men who have sex with men in Thailand were HIV positive.

HIV/AIDS transmission affected her emotions and, consequentially, her attitudes about

interacting with people who have the virus.

> Not that I could have gotten infected, but I think at some point that just kind of
> was running through my head and I was like, "How safe is this, us being here and
> us interacting with some of the patients?" And when we were talking to that one
> patient, I just felt like I shouldn't get too close because I don't know. I don't know
> what's going to happen, and that was wrong, like me being judgmental and me
> kind of, all that stuff that I learned in school and all those commercials or
> whatever just kind of went out the window and I was just like, "Oh, my God, I
> don't want to get too close, I don't want to interact, I don't want to breath the air
> because what if I do catch it."

Her initial views were not unlike the previously mentioned elementary school students

who were surveyed in Northern Thailand. Interestingly, on the same day as our visit to the

hospice, a group of elementary school students were there on a field trip. Though none of our

students specifically talked with anyone associated with the field trip, it was generally assumed

that they were there to learn about HIV/AIDS and to dispel myths surrounding transmission. One

student, in particular, had a very passionate critique of seeing the elementary school students

there, which influenced her overall view about the hospice.

> [Student #4]: I also remember there was, like, a field trip to the AIDS hospice
> that day that we were there. And there were, like, all little kids, like, from
> elementary, like really young age, and everybody's, like, holding their hands up to
> their noses, like this, and I couldn't understand why because we were in the area
> where all the bodies have, had already been crushed and cremated and they were
> put in little bags and boxes. And they were holding up their noses, because they
> thought they were going to get infected, because they were going to breathe,
> myths, like, dead body that once was infected with HIV, and I couldn't, that's
> what killed me the most, and I was, like, that's absolutely absurd, how could you
> not tell these people, you work here, how could you not tell these kids that that
> doesn't infect them, like, don't you know, you work here, you work with people
> with AIDS, and do you not know, like, I was really upset, and there was a lot
> going on in my mind, and I don't even speak their language, so I couldn't even
> say anything, but I probably even would have, if I could have. And, I was going
> crazy. And that was, like, a really upsetting moment. And, the person who was,
> who worked at the AIDS hospice, and was working with us, like, being a
> translator, kind of, just, like, laughed it off. And that, like, upset me even more.
> But, like, I didn't know, and I just couldn't do anything. I just, all I could have

done was watch and that, that's what happened. Um, I don't know how I feel about that place. I don't know. I don't know about that place.

Her reaction was clearly evident to the other students at the time, as recalled in an interview with another student, "I remember [student #4] being very upset about that because our high school had a health fair and then her topic was AIDS, so she knew a lot about it and she was just so upset; 'You can't catch it like that,' so she found it really, really rude. She was really upset." Interestingly, while student #3 acknowledges her own biases and ignorance and how they were influencing her interaction with the patients at the hospice, student #2 was deeply upset in seeing how the elementary school students were displaying their lack of understanding. Both of the articulations represent a clear recognition of the ways in which people with HIV/AIDS are marginalized and the ease with which they can be ostracized.

Two of the students were sisters, and the experiences at the hospice connected deeply with their own personal experiences of illness in the eighth grade.

> [Student #5]: When we went to the AIDS hospice too, my sister and I walked out, and we were just crying and falling, 'cause, yeah, 'cause it, it just brought us back to, um, you know, the cancer, like, the ward at Kaiser… and all the kids who didn't know what was happening. Some of them had amputations and stuff, so seeing, um, people in there, you know, like, kind of not having anything or anybody. That kind of brought us… Oh my gosh, you got me crying again.

This student communicated to me that she had only cried once during the time her sister had been diagnosed with cancer and was receiving treatment, but the experience at the hospice and even recalling it was extremely emotional. She shed tears through much of this part of her interview.

> And it's so, it, it, it's the, only, only with you Johnstone, 'cause I, like, never cry about that. Yeah, so, that was, like, yeah, and I, and I was happy too that, um, it was such a place for them that they could go to for that, so, yeah. Oh my gosh, yeah. It's all coming back. I know I'm not supposed to cry…. I mean just bringing back memories from it all and just kind of, um, like, those people, like my sister had me, you know. We talked all the time. I remember being sad and not, like,

80

when I'd do anything, she's, like, just do whatever, like, you know, like, stop worrying and just do what you, we usually do, you know, do your homework and everything. And, like, we have a support system, and the people there didn't. They were, like, literally thrown away by their families. And, um, just kind of seeing them, like, in such a state, like, they were, some of them were, like, really bad. And, like, nobody was there for them except the people there. So that was, like, like, I remember having to take a couple breathers, like, a lot of times, like, just having a kind of…. And just walk out and just try to calm myself…. And I remember, like, there were, like, um, I think little kids somewhere…. So, that, like, that was sad too. To see their mom go through that. And it, and it seemed like it was just the mom. Like, I didn't remember seeing a dad or anything… Yeah, so it's, like, you know, these little kids are basically kind of growing up in the AIDS hospice, um, and I don't think, they were so little, so I don't think they really knew what was happening. 'Cause I remember them just running around and just kind of being happy like little kids. Yeah, and I don't think like they knew.

The sister who had previously had cancer also talked about her experiences visiting the

hospice in relation to her own experiences of illness.

I remember just going around and looking at everything and visiting the people, and I remember I just kind of felt myself tearing up, so I had to leave the room and I started crying and I was just like, "I can't let these people see me crying when I'm healthy." Well, right now I was healthy, and they're the one going through with it, and they're not crying; they're dealing with it. And I just felt bad because it was not only like that, seeing them, but it was also me experiencing, remembering what I went through with cancer and me being in the hospital and then knowing other people who went through cancer and then didn't make it…. Just all of that combined and I just kind of broke down, and I just felt kind of bad because I just didn't want them to see me. I kind of dealt with that and I had to, you know, clear my tears and go back in and I did. It took a minute though. …. Yeah, I remember that was a hard one, going there; but I was happy we did it, even though it was a sad day, but I think we needed that.

The visit to the HIV/AIDS hospice aroused the greatest visible emotional response during

the entire trip. One student became vocally upset at what she perceived was inadequate teaching

of the elementary school children about HIV/AIDS transmission based on her own experiences

educating classmates about the topic. Two other students found themselves overwhelmed with

emotions as they connected the struggles of the patients to their own personal experiences with

illness. In recognizing her "own complicity with respect to women with disabilities," Razack

(1998) admits, "I am aware that I do not feel the passion that I do when what I am describing is

my own daily life" (p. 131). However, these students did see their own experiences, and thus

their own daily lives, in the very difficult situations observed at the hospice and, consequently,

described those experiences with great passion. The challenge ultimately is first to recognize our

biased attention towards our own disadvantages without acknowledging our privileges and then

choosing to be passionate against all forms of oppression.

Xenophobia: Burmese Refugees and Immigrants

Thailand has been the recipient of hundreds of thousands of refugees from Burma,

Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam because of its unique geographic and geopolitical situation and its

relatively stable political and economic climate. The Thai government has had a mixed record of

supporting these refugee populations, as noted by Helton (1989), "The Thai authorities have

vacillated in their response to this influx, at times reacting with apparent compassion, and at

other times with callousness" (p. 23). Controversial policies toward these refugees have included

strict screening procedures, humane deterrence and push-backs. However, through significant

international cooperation, including two regional conferences and the adoption of a

comprehensive plan of action in 1989 (UNHCR, 2006), there are no longer any refugees in

Thailand from Cambodia, Laos, or Vietnam (UNHCR, 2005). The protracted, half-century civil

war in Burma, on the other hand, has created a complex and long-term refugee situation for

Thailand that is still ongoing.

In 2002, there were approximately two million Burmese living in Thailand as refugees, regular migrants, irregular migrants, or asylum seekers (Caouette and Pack, 2002).[14] While more than 360,000 regular migrants were registered to work in Thailand (Caouette and Pack, 2002), at least 1,000 Burmese asylum seekers entered Thailand every month (Burma Fund, 2003). At the time of our visit in 2008, there were estimated to be over 120,000 Burmese refugees in Thailand, 100,000 of who were ethnic Karens (UNHCR, 2008). The first Karen refugee camp was established in 1984 with the arrival of 10,000 refugees. Some refugees are now the third generation to be in the camps (ZOA Refugee Care, 2006), and Huguet and Punpuing (2005) estimates that approximately 90,000 Burmese have been living in the refugee camps for nine years or longer. As the influx of refugees continued, the number of camps along the Burma-Thai border increased until the mid-1990s when the Karen National Union lost control of strategic border areas in the Karen State and soldiers from the Democratic Karen Buddhist Association engaged in dozens of attacks on refugee camps within Thailand. The Thai government responded by increasing security, imposing and enforcing restrictive camp policies, and consolidating the camps. Refugees were no longer able leave the camps to work or forage for food; non-governmental organizations' (NGO) positions formerly held by refugees were often given to expatriate and Thai staff because of added restrictions limiting mobility of the refugees; and the fence-enclosed camps were too crowded to support gardens or livestock. This "warehousing" of refugees resulted in an erosion of traditional roles for men, a rise in the instances of domestic violence, and an increase in the use of alcohol and drugs (Martin, 2005). Cultural differences within the confines of the crowded camps were also a possible source of stress among the

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[14]Thailand does not officially use the term "refugee" to describe the Burmese who are fleeing fighting but instead uses the phrases "displaced persons" (Brooks, 2004) or "persons of concern" (Huguet and Punpuing, 2005), which reinforces the government's stance that they are only providing temporary shelter. Additionally, the terms "regular migrant" and "irregular migrant" have been adopted from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) (Huguet and Punpuing, 2005).

refugees (Dudley, 1999). Additionally, much of the policies implemented to improve security and consequently reduce mobility among the refugee population violated several rights contained in the 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (Loescher and Milner, 2005).[15] Bowles (1998) notes, "While the new restrictions may serve to protect the refugees, they have also severely cut into refugee livelihoods and self-sufficiency" (p. 14). Karen refugees experience uniquely complex manifestations of xenophobia. Originally forced to flee their own countries from "forced relocation, forced labor, extortion, arbitrary arrest, torture, rape, and summary executions" (Martin, 2005, p. 82) by the majority lowland, ethnic Burman military regime, they were then attacked by Buddhist factions of their own ethnic community and marginalized by the Thai government and community.

There are three durable solutions for the refugees: repatriation, integration in the community of asylum, and resettlement in third countries. While the ultimate objective of both the Thai government and United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) has consistently been repatriation, and refugees themselves have stated, "We want to go back, to work hard, without war and fighting and running" (Lang, 2001, p. 3), conditions consistent with the 1951 Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees are not likely to be met in the near-future.[16] Burmese General Khin Nyunt's statement in December 2000 is representative of the government's long-standing attitude towards the refugees: "I wish to underscore that the so-called refugees are fugitives, illegal migrants, insurgents and their families are members of unlawful associations opposing the government.… If these insurgents are to be repatriated and

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[15] Thailand has not acceded to the 1951 Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees though it did become a member of the Executive Committee of the Programme of UNHCR in 1979 (UNHCR 2006).
[16] The 1951 Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees states, "No Contracting State shall expel or return ("refouler") a refugee in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion" (UNHCR 2006, p. 32).

reintegrated as refugees, it would be harmful to the peace and stability of the nation" (Than, 2006, p. 21). Additionally, Burma's laws stipulate significant punishment for returning migrants: "Law 367/120 –(b) (1) Burmese citizens who illegally want to go and work in Thailand will be sentenced to a seven-year prison term" (Caouette and Pack, 2002, p. 27). Regardless of the specific durable solutions in the future of the individual refugees, they face substantial and thus far unaddressed problems resulting from the experiences of xenophobia they have faced.

The possibility of visiting Mae La refugee camp in northwest Thailand was one of the primary reasons we selected Thailand for this trip. Mae La is the largest of nine refugee camps in Thailand, with a population in 2008 of 35,680 Karen refugees and an area of less than one square mile (UNHCR, 2008). When we began the trip, it was not assured that we would be given permission to visit the camp. We had arranged housing in Mae Sot, which is about 60 km south of Mae La, and we were scheduled to meet with a Karen contact I knew from a previous research trip to the refugee camp. When we arrived in Mae Sot and met our contact, he scheduled a full day visit to Mae La with a group of high school students in the camp and then an impromptu visit to a Karen migrant school in Mae Sot the following day. Because resettlement in the United States, Europe, or Australia is a desirable durable solution for the refugees, English language acquisition is a critical component of their educational system. Consequently, all of the students with whom we met at the camp spoke English fluently, significantly reducing language barriers and allowing for extensive dialogue during the visit.

> [Student #1] Whenever I think of my trip to Thailand I always think of when we visited the refugee [camp]... I don't know how to describe it. I was really shocked at the condition of the people who were living there and then I was even more shocked to see the spirit of the people who were living there and especially the young high school students who we spent most of our time with, because it was just, you know, they were so open, so warm, so welcoming and they weren't hopeless, because I think of when I'm here at home, I have a house, food, a family. Some of them, they didn't even have their family there with them. They

had to leave their family and they hadn't seen their family for years, and when I'm faced with obstacles, I feel hopeless and I just feel like, "Oh," and so just their spirit and the fact that they were still going and pushing through and studying at school and having fun. They were laughing with us. We played games.... so I think just their spirit is something that, like, their spirit was so, they were so happy and still so hopeful, even though they had, after they had experienced so many obstacles and also just how great it felt after going. It was a little emotional. I mean, it was kind of emotional to be there just because I would think of what got them there. It made me, it really got me just to think of, "Wow, how could you be so, how could, because, how could you be so cruel to human beings?" But their spirit just made me, it made me feel, it inspired me. It was really inspiring to be there. So that was, I think that was the most influential thing for me in Thailand.

[Student #2]: I think really, really, the most impacting thing for me was going to Mae Sot and meeting [the Karen contact]. [The Karen contact] was amazing; he's just like a good person and him really showing us around, taking us into the refugee camp and, I think that was just like one of those experience, and I'm probably never going to get to do that again, you know, to really talk to people who have been displaced from their home, but who are still willing to work and fight and do all they can so maybe future generations can go back to their home. I'm just like, "Man, that's just very similar to what people do here in the U.S. or in other countries," and I'm like, you know, I guess it was just that displacement of like, "How do people go through that and still have hope, still have hope to maybe go back to their home country or," you know, I was just like, "How do people live with that much hope?" I don't understand it. I have such an easy life here, but I'm hopeless, you know, and I consider myself to be extremely negative, and it just kind of seemed that courage and that strength to really keep going, it was just like, it's mind-blowing. I don't understand it, but it was just really inspiring and, I don't know, just really amazing to see how people just want to really work towards that.

[Student #3]: Then we went over to the refugee area, and I don't think it really even sunk in until much later what exactly that experience was like, going to that place in the middle of nowhere, knowing that this was a repressed group of people who would not be able to leave that place and pretty much just abandoned by the international community and no one really cares. Reflect on that, it's something that comes up in my mind every now and then and I'm always just struck by the absurdity of the world; but I sometimes remember that place and how human beings can just be abandoned like that and they're kind of just left in-between either death and persecution or being sent to death and persecution and that's basically their option, kind of in that ridiculous limbo…. Then of course the stories that I heard from the people. I mean, we've all had a rough life I guess, we've all had our ups and downs, but we've got nothing on them. I mean, my biggest complaint I guess is not having cable television until I was thirteen and they were not seeing their family members for, separated from their loved ones, their family, for years. In some cases, a lot of the people they knew were dead….

86

Consistently the stories were… about families being separated, families being killed, arrested, not knowing what happened to family members. And at the time, I hadn't really met anyone with that kind of background. I mean, I, yeah, so I didn't really know how to deal with it or how to take in that information and reflect on it until much later.

[Student #4]: And then of course I remember the refugee camp. I remember their school, they have like two schools and the one we visited was on top of this hill, this major hill. I just remember being tired and I was so glad I brought my water with me because it was a long trip up. I remember the kids were really fun and I was talking to this one girl named Mae. I remember the games we played…. I remember that was more of an eye-opener because I realized not all their family had made it yet from Burma and some, they might not see their family for the rest of their lives, and just like I got teared up personally. It made that much more of an impact because I remember going over it in the pre-trip or whatever, but it's always different when you're hearing someone say it themselves.

[Student #5]: And then the whole refugee camp, I was just kind of mad at the fact that no one was stepping in and doing anything, so I was really mad at the end of the day because I'm just like, "Seriously, this is it?" I know you're helping them, you're saving them or whatever, but then you're not doing anything for them. You're just giving them a plot of land to just sit there…. So I was really mad. I feel like that's why that one stood out, because of the anger probably.

[Student #6]: I remember the refugee camp. And I remember just thinking, when we were walking up to the school, and I remember just thinking that it was so beautiful, 'cause, you know, we are here, and I thought to myself, like, oh, I'm thinking this is so beautiful, but to them it must be like, you know, a constraint, you know, like, this is all they're allowed to go to.

Manifestations of xenophobia were palpable. Participants clearly perceived the hostility, abandonment, and lack of freedom experienced by the refugees. These observations often transformed into feelings of great despair during and after the visit to the refugee camp. The degree of this despair, at least in one case, was potentially destructive, as will be addressed in Chapter Eight. Yet, several students also observed a sense of hopefulness among the refugees and even described the experience in the camp as "inspiring." Likely, or at least in part, due to this sense of hopefulness observed within the confines of extreme oppression, many of the participants considered this to be one of the most meaningful components of the trip.

87

We visited two schools in the refugee camp, as student #4 alluded, though there were actually approximately fourteen primary schools, three middle schools, and three high schools in the camp (Mortimer, 2004). The following day, we visited Has Thoo Lei Learning Center, a migrant school in Mae Sot, and spent over an hour in dialogue with a group of about ten students in an upper-level English class. There is very little published information about the early stages of education in the Karen refugee camps and even less about migrant schools. The Thai government began mandating educational assistance in 1996 (Bowles, 1998), though informal educational programs were likely initiated earlier by refugees organizations (Preston, 1991). Currently, the majority of educational programs are administered by refugee organizations within the camps with some assistance and logistics provided by NGOs (Huguet and Punpuing, 2005). The Karen Refugee Committee (KRC), along with support from the Karen Education Department (KED)[17], defines the education policies and coordinates educational programs within the camps. Various community-based organizations provide education programs, and several NGOs, coordinated by the Coordinating Committee for Services to Displaced Person in Thailand, provide funding and various other support services.

Waters and LeBlanc (2005) caution that each of the actors in the educational system—camp committees and organizations, NGOs, country of asylum, international agencies, parents—have their own agenda. The host country, international agencies, and NGOs advocate primarily for repatriation. Organizations with political and/or religious affiliations tend to advance their particular belief systems. And parents are primarily "concerned with the development of literacy and numeracy needed for effective functioning in whatever society they imagine at the end of their difficult situation" (p. 139).

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[17] The Karen Education Department (KED) oversees the educational system for the Karen State within Burma, the refugee camps, and to some degree the migrant schools. Because KED is not officially recognized by the Thai government, it has limited access and influence in the camps (Oh, 2006).

Unfortunately, there are very limited opportunities for education beyond tenth standard and there is a lack of recognition in Burma or Thailand for refugee camp graduation certificates (Huguet and Punpuing, 2005). A camp leader highlights the underlying challenges facing the refugee camp educational system:

> There are more than 10,000 students in the [Mae La] camp schools. Over the last ten years, about 2,000 people in the camps have completed high school. We have a teacher-training program for high school graduates but that only accepts 40 students, so most graduates have no opportunity to further their education. Students are idle and get disappointed. Some leave the camps and look for a job to get some income, but it is illegal and… they may get arrested (Martin, 2005: 88).

These limitations of the refugee camp educational system are consistent with Preston's (1991) observation that political and economic motivations necessitate the limiting of educational provisions to minority, refugee populations. For example, to avoid economic competition with local businesses, few income-generating educational opportunities are provided for the refugees. From a political perspective, the educational system must provide neutral or apolitical content so as not to be seen as promoting revolutionary or subversive political ideologies. Such limitations to economic participation and political critique ensure continued social marginalization of the refugee population (Preston, 1991).

What then is the ultimate objective of educational systems in the Karen refugee camps and migrant schools? A statement by a UNHCR representative provides some insight into the question by asserting that "strongest reasons for supporting organized activities such as education early in an emergency situation are to lessen the psychosocial impact of trauma and displacement and to protect at-risk groups" (Waters and LeBlanc, 2005: 137).[18] Additionally, Preston (1991) suggests that education "may be intended as a means of filling surplus time" (p.

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[18] As an example, Cardozo et al. (2004) conducted a study in a comparable Karenni refugee camp and found that 79 percent of the respondents had experienced hiding in the jungle, 68 percent had experienced forced relocation, 66 percent had experienced lost property or belongings, 53 percent had experienced lack of food or water, and 51 percent had experienced forced labor.

69). Simply stated, the ultimate objective of education for refugees and migrants seems to primarily be about keeping them busy in a limited way so they do not compete in the local economy or make political waves but in a sufficiently active way so that they do not become troublesome members of society.

The following passages highlight some of the recollections about the visits to the migrant school (students #1 and #2) and the refugee camp schools (students #3, #4 and #5):

[Student #1]: The migrant school was nice. Um, but I don't, I didn't feel any, um, I didn't feel sadness at the, at the, the migrant school, but I did feel like lost hope for some of the kids that were there, 'cause they were, they came from refugee camps, well at least the guy that I spoke to came from a refugee camp and, like, didn't know where his brother was, and his parents were, like, in another place and he hadn't seen them in, like, seven years or something. And, um, I don't know, like, he never knew what was gonna happen or if he was gonna see them or not, like, he seemed fine, and everybody else seemed fine. But, I, I do remember his school not having enough resources for the, for the kids. These students, like, I don't know, like, do these people, like, have a future, like, are they, like, do they have something to look forward to, like, I don't understand, like, after they're done with school, like, I didn't know where they would go or, like, what would happen or, like, if they can try to even get out of there and how they would do it, like, I, I was confused.

[Student #2]: I remember going to the migrant school… because the migrant school [was] where we had like, we broke off into groups and we had one-on-one little conversations with the students, and so we really got to learn about their experience and I talked with two girls. One girl, her name was Felicity and the other girl, I forget, I don't remember her name, but yeah, again, they were so warm, so welcoming. They were holding on to me. The liked my hair. They were just so happy. They were so happy to see us, all of them, and, um, well, yeah, but just to know what they had been through because they shared their experience. One of the girls I was talking with, she hadn't seen her family in like three years and she didn't know when she was going to see her family next and they were, their family, I think both of their families were still in Burma and so, but, again, they had been through so much, but they were still happy and they were still so open to us and welcoming to us, so it was just, it was really, like I said, it was inspiring to experience that and to have that interaction with those students, especially because they were around my age. They were around my age or a little older, but, you know; and I remember there was one girl who lived in the jungle for seven years. I didn't speak with her, but I think it was [Linda] who did. I think, yeah, I think it was [Linda] who did. And she lived in the jungle for seven years, and so just their spirit. I remember, I think I can never forget their experience.

90

They weren't hopeless, they had dreams, they wanted to, they had goals, you know, and they, I mean, they were very positive, they knew that one day they would see their family or, like, one day they wouldn't have to worry about getting killed if they were having to hide out and then if they were found, bring killed or being tortured, so yeah.

[Student #3]: I was very glad to see that they were willing and able to get some form of education despite the hardships of their lives and in spite of the fact that they weren't actually going to be getting any form of certification that they have been educated; but just seeing that they wanted to be educated, they wanted the opportunity to learn and whatnot, that was very nice to see.

[Student #4]: And then I remember them saying how it's hard for them to keep teachers [at the refugee camp school] because they keep leaving. They'll be here for a day or a month or two months and then they'll leave, so they're constantly getting new teachers and that would be hard any time, because our senior year, one of our teachers left and that class kind of suffered for it because they just kept having subs, so it's hard, it's not consistent.

[Student #5]: They're barely getting an education [at the refugee camp school] because people are going in and out and then once they get their education, what are they doing with it? They're not allowed to leave unless, I think they have to be really, really smart or something to be able to come to America, like doctor level and everything, but everyone else, there were just stuck there.

The students' observations about the migrant school reflect the mixed emotional responses of hopelessness and hopefulness. The first student expresses this difficulty precisely: "I was confused." Recognizing the struggles the migrant students had already overcome and their hope for a better future contrasted with an understanding that they will have few opportunities and continued marginalization as irregular migrants in Thailand resulted in conflicting emotional responses for some of the students. This conflict, or confusion, ultimately, I believe, supports a greater understanding of the long-term implications and personal consequences of xenophobia. One student commented about how those visits impacted her views about undocumented immigrants in the United States.

It made me realize what they go through to come here. They have to, first, they have to learn a language that is not their own. They have to do all kinds of things that they shouldn't have to. Like you get paid so little just because you weren't,

91

you were born on the wrong side of the border. They're still human. That made me really look at people different.

The students' observations about education in both the migrant school and refugee camp, based on very short visits, interestingly coincide with the research, particularly in understanding that acquiring an education does not translate into employment opportunities or any alleviation of their oppressed situations. Additionally, there was an understanding of the difficulty for refugees to be resettled in third countries and the consequence to the rest of the refugee population from losing the most education people – refugee "brain drain" (Zeus, 2011).

Through the discussions with the students in the refugee camp and the migrant school, the trip participants gained uniquely insightful perspectives about oppression and privilege based solely on country of birth. The refugee camp raised awareness about extreme consequences of xenophobia—the complete marginalization, confinement, and repression of a people because of national and cultural identify. The ideals of educational opportunity raised the possibility of hope but ultimately reinforce the more compelling implication of xenophobia as a force that maintains some people in a position of dominance and others in a position of subordination.

Colonialism: Tourism

The last days of our trip to Thailand were spent in a tourist resort on the island Ko Samet. We selected this location for three specific reasons: (1) it was located relatively close to Bangkok; (2) we anticipated the need to physically and emotionally unwind; and (3) it provided an opportunity to critique the tourist experience. Because we were at a tourist resort, most people we encountered spoke English fluently. During the interviews, only four of the students commented on this part of the trip, and their comments were brief. In general, the comments

suggest that this served as a suitable conclusion to our trip, regardless of what the students

acquired from it, as the following student typifies:

> [Student #1]: Ko Samet was like, whatever, it kind of, like, gave, like, another, it
> kind of showed, like, another part that, like, you know, that everything's kind of
> shaded over, you know, so that, I mean, that was kind of good. I like that, um, we
> got to experience everything and then go see that. I think that kind of, like,
> wrapped everything up.

Her use of the word "whatever" and her rough description suggest a lack of importance in how

this student perceived her experiences in Ko Samet. However, she did acknowledge that for her

this was an appropriate finale to the trip. Another student clearly viewed the time on the island as

an opportunity to relax after the previous, more challenging components of the trip.

> [Student #2]: And then I remember going to Ko Samet, the island, because that
> was fun, because that was our time to be acting like tourists, you know, not going
> through any emotional roller-coasters like the red light district and AIDS hospice
> or anything; but it was really fun, that was really, really nice.

This first two recollections suggest an uncritical acceptance and even embrace of their

position within the privileged construct of tourism. In so doing, they have accepted the "myth of

the unchanged" (Echtner and Prasad, 2003), as promoted in tourism marketing, that reinforces

colonial stereotypes of orientalism (Said, 1979). Though Thailand has never been colonized by

the West, the military occupation during World War Two and colonial histories with other

Southeast Asian countries provide the basis for a colonial mentality towards Thailand. There

exists a binary relationship between the West and Thailand of changed and unchanged, normal

and exotic, civilized and wild, developed and undeveloped. It is a relationship construct that puts

the West in a position of superiority and thus inevitably benefits the tourists. In this environment,

"The tourist is presented with colonial stereotypes wrapped in a blanket of sun, sea, and sand"

(Palmer, 1994, p. 807).

In contrast, two other students did provide critical accounts of their experiences in Ko

Samet:

> [Student #3]: And I remember thinking about that a lot, when we went to Ko
> Samet, and thinking, I don't know, this might be even a verbatim thought,
> thinking, "I am such a bourgeois bastard for being here," I recall thinking
> something like that, just thinking about, and I had just been to all these places and
> just saw how, just going, I'd just been at a sex district and refugee and the Karen
> and now I'm just chilling at some beach.

> [Student #4]: Oh, and I remember, oh, and then towards the end of the trip, we
> went to the resort and then after seeing all that and seeing where people actually
> need help. And that's where you see all the foreigners, all of the Americans and
> the Europeans. And, you know, when all that is going on throughout the country,
> they're just lounging, relaxing, enjoying the beautiful water and the swimming
> pools and just like in their own little section of the country, you know, relaxing,
> while you have, again, an AIDS hospice with a lack of staff, you have 13 year
> olds selling their bodies, people at refugee camps, and then, but they're just there
> kind of enjoying life, sitting back and relaxing. And then a lot of the people that
> worked there, they were the Thai people, but they weren't really interacting with
> them, they were just, the Thai people were serving, those were their servers, so
> they just, it was very interesting to see that. And then I think that's, you know,
> that's all I remember, yeah.

In these recollections, there is an awareness of the privilege of tourism and the ability of

tourists to ignore any cultural or societal perspectives beyond the myths and stereotypes

embodied in tourism marketing. Additionally, the final observation by student #4 illustrates how

tourism reproduces the interaction and exploitation of colonialism, in which tourists/colonists

take pleasure in being obediently served by mysterious people in exotic settings.

One of the students described a particularly unique encounter with a European tourist in

Ko Samet:

> That was just, I don't know, it was nice I guess, although what I do remember
> from, the thing that stood out the most was my conversation with the Italian man
> that I met on the beach, and I hung out with him, and that guy was telling me
> about all, mainly he's a sex tourist going around Southeast Asia, going to
> Cambodia, Vietnam, and Thailand, and just remarking on how easy women were
> in certain countries, in certain areas, as opposed to others and just being very
> confused because we had been talking, we talked about two hours, and he didn't

mention basically that he was a sex tourist until like the last 20 minutes, and so we were talking. It was a very amazing conversation about our lives and what we were doing, and he was a restaurant owner I believe in Italy. And he was telling me that in Vietnam it's very, it's pretty difficult to have sex with a woman. In Cambodia, they're very cheap he said, and they look like monkeys, and in Thailand they rip you off. Those are his descriptions pretty much. I always remember that conversation.

This tourist's derogatory characterizations provides a textual context to the commercial sex industry from the perspective of the male sex tourists. Embedded within the psyche of the male sex tourists is a sense of superiority based on evident wealth disparity, ideals of male entitlement to sex, and notions of racial hierarchy. The conditions of women in Southeast Asia, and throughout the developing world, "cannot be separated from the colonial experience" (Acosta-Belén & Bose, 1995, p. 15). While economic and political relationships have changed since decolonization, women's experiences of subjugation and patriarchal treatment by Western men continues, particularly in tourist destinations. This is one of the most convincing indicators of the direct link between tourism and colonialism.

Summary: Traveling Through a Lens of Privilege and Oppression

The primary objective of our trip to Thailand was to meet and engage in dialogue with people who were living in a variety of marginalized and oppressed situations. Thus, we structured a majority of our trip around that objective, visiting high school students who had lived a majority of their lives constrained to a refugee camp or hiding in the jungles of Burma, families who lived day-to-day in a homeless shelter, individuals who had been ostracized from their families and society after acquiring HIV/AIDS, and young girls who were being sexually exploited by foreign tourists. In nearly all of the situations, we had the opportunity to engage in dialogue, either in English or through an interpreter as in the case of the homeless shelter, in

95

which the students actively listened and contributed to the conversations. There was a sharing of experiences, stories, and thoughts.

In this chapter, I have explored the recollections of the participants two years after our trip to Thailand. To determine the individual and personal significances of the experiences, I used a phenomenological approach and provided the research subjects with two basic open-ended prompts that specifically did not mention "oppression" or contain wording that might lead the interviewees to provide any particular type of response (see Appendix Six):

- In as much detail as possible, describe the trip, including locations you visited, people with whom you talked, conversations in which you engaged, your feelings about the different locations, people, conversations, experiences, etcetera.

- What aspects of the trip stand-out as being the most significant to you and why?

From these two questions, the students provided extensive critical examinations of their experiences during the trip, not simply memories of a tourist vacation. The content of their responses to these questions was consistently critical, rarely superficial, highly compassionate, and occasionally emotional. Their recollections illustrate a highly developed critical consciousness and an acute awareness of manifestations of oppression, not only from an outsiders' perspective but interconnected to their own lived experiences and positionality. In the context of anti-oppressive education and critical pedagogy, the students clearly demonstrate a critical awareness of privileging and othering. The ways and degree to which that awareness has resulted in the participants changing themselves and society is examined in the next chapter.

Chapter Seven: Responding to Critical Travel Pedagogy

This chapter will examine the ways in which the founders and organizers of the nonprofit organization and the participants of the trip to Thailand expressed how they were impacted by their involvement in the development and implementation of critical travel pedagogy. To support the phenomenological approach of this research, the interviews consisted of three open-ended questions about (1) how their experiences influenced their views, (2) decisions they have made since and as a result of their involvement in the organization, and (3) possible future impacts (see Appendices Four, Five, and Six for the specific interview questions). I initially analyzed the responses from an obvious relational organization of the data, based on the sequence of the questions and separate perspectives of the founders, organizers, and trip participants.

The results of this initial analysis were consistent with a large-scale survey conducted by Dwyer and Peters (2004) of more than 3400 study abroad participants from 1950 to 1999 and a comprehensive literature review by Stone and Petrick (2013) that examined the educational benefits of travel in a variety of contexts. The quantitative analysis by Dwyer and Peters (2004) found that study abroad programs, ranging in length from one semester to one year, influence the participants in a variety of ways, including world view, subsequent educational experiences, understanding one's own cultural values and biases, and, to a lesser degree, career direction. Stone and Petrick (2013) suggest that short-term and long-term travel, in both structured and

unstructured contexts, result in "personal growth, life skills development, general knowledge, and social and cultural awareness" (p. 741). The results from both examinations confirm a general consensus of the educational benefits of traveling and studying abroad, as discussed in Chapter Two. However, these examinations also represent the preponderance of research on student travel and study abroad in that they do not critically analyze the participants' motivations and the specific ways in which their views, educational experiences, and career choices were influenced.

Every interviewee in this study indicated that their participation in critical travel pedagogy influenced perspectives and choices in their lives. However, the recognition of change is not as constructive as understanding the direction of that change. Through subsequent analyses, utilizing imaginative variation, I observed a more meaningful and consistent characterization of the data in terms of the directions in which the participants' views, college experiences, and career choices were impacted. Specifically, I identified four principal themes representing the ways in which the participants expressed how they were impacted: altruistic values, global awareness, traveling with a purpose, and promoting critical consciousness. The analysis suggests that the last two themes are also influenced by the changes in altruistic values and global awareness. Additionally, with the exception of the analysis associated with altruistic values, I discerned no significant differences in the responses from the founders, organizers, and trip participants, nor any differences based on gender or race; thus, except where specifically noted, their responses are not segregated in this examination, and all the research subjects are hereafter referred to as "participants." The following figure illustrates the relationships of the four impacts of critical travel pedagogy that are addressed in this analysis.
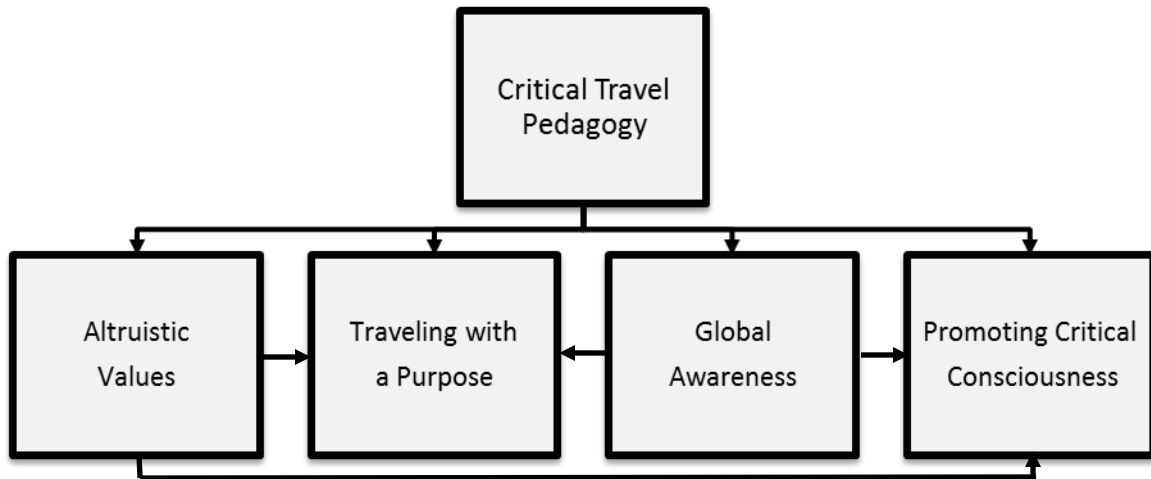
Figure 6: Impacts of Critical Travel Pedagogy

Altruistic Values

Stern et al. (1998) identify four types of personal values: altruistic values, traditional

values, self-enhancement values, and openness to change values. Altruistic values are

characterized by: "a world at peace, free of war and conflict; social justice, correcting injustice,

care of the weak; equality, equal opportunity for all" (p. 995).[19] These values are consistent with

the principles of critical travel pedagogy. Additionally, a study conducted by Fritzsche & Oz

(2007) found that altruistic values correspond to a higher degree of ethical behavior. In the

context of this study, altruistic values are measured in terms of the participants' desires and/or

intentions to benefit or "help" other people.

All of the participants described examples in which their altruistic values have been

influenced as a consequence of their involvement in critical travel pedagogy. The desire and/or

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[19] The other three personal values are as follows: "Traditional (or Conservation) values: Honoring parents and elders, showing respect; family security, safety for loved ones; self-discipline, self-restraint, resistance to temptation. Self-Enhancement (or Egoistic) values: Authority, the right to lead or command; influential, having an impact on people and events; wealth, material possessions, money. Openness to change values: A varied life, filled with challenge, novelty, and change; an exciting life, stimulating experiences; curious, interested in everything, exploring" (Fritzsche & Oz, 2007, p. 337).

intention to "help" is a broad notion but is reflected in this study through three specific types of

responses: (1) explicit expressions of a desire to help other people; (2) direct influences on career

considerations; and (3) community engagement. The following passages from five of the

participants highlight the first type of response.

> [Participant #1]: I feel like you can't come back from it not impacted and not
> wanting to help, so just like, just the helping part, helping other people, helping,
> just being a better person. I feel like it really does make you a better person
> because you've seen these things, and then, so, again, you realize that your life
> isn't as bad, or someone can always have it worse than you. I hope I'm a better
> person now. I feel like my decisions now are way different than they were before.
> Like I think they were more selfish before and now my decisions are, like, yes, I
> want a job that I will be happy with, but I also want something that could benefit
> others as well, so I feel in that aspect, hopefully I've become a better person.

> [Participant #2]: It just made me more aware that there's a lot more to life than me
> and my experiences, that there are people who are actually, like actually suffering
> and actually having problems rather than my bullshit ones. It certainly was the
> Thailand trip... It made me, and I'm working on it, but I'm working, I'm trying to
> be what's called a "better person" I guess. I'm trying to actually be kind to people
> and considerate and show empathy.

> [Participant #3]: Everybody would be a lot better if we just spend a couple of
> hours out of a week, any spare hours you have trying to help someone else. It'll
> really make a difference. For example, you could mentor kids or something. If
> you see someone depressed or going through something, you could just take the
> time out of the day to talk to them. A lot of people won't. They're like, "Oh,
> well." And so it made me realize there's so much we can do, but we don't take the
> opportunity to do it.

> [Participant #4]: I learned how to be aware for others and how, like, I learned,
> like, I learned how to look out for someone else. There are some people that are,
> are just born that way, and they, they want to help everybody, and then there are
> other people who learn it. And, I wasn't born that way, but I definitely did learn
> that; it's a trait that, that I learned and not something [I was born with]. And that's
> definitely something I took away; and it's always a part of me.

> [Participant #5]: I see my life with the purpose of helping to change something,
> instead of just seeing my life to get through it, to get out of it.

For two of the participants, the deepened desire to help meant for them that they were

each becoming "a better person," clearly suggesting that success, in terms of being a better

100

person, means being altruistic. The responses also suggest that becoming altruistic is practical, realistic, and a positive consequent of being involved with critical travel pedagogy. This notion of consequence or, more accurately, motive for altruism is an important consideration. Understanding the specific ways in which critical travel pedagogy has impacted participants' altruistic values, which is clearly identified as a positive outcome, can provide guidance in future theoretical development.

Research conducted by Batson et al. (1988) provide foundation insight into altruistic motivation. Their series of studies support an empathy-altruism hypothesis that "empathetic emotion evokes altruistic motivation" (p. 52). This hypothesis is clearly evident in the response from Participant #2 when she links *being kind* to *showing empathy*. However, Davis (1990) maintains, based on her review of literature, that empathy cannot be taught, but rather just "happens to us" (p. 707). Davis also outlines the work of Stein (1989), suggesting that empathy is acquired after a particular experience and through a three stage overlapping process. In the context of the students' experiences in Thailand, these stages can be illustrated as follows: (1) Students observe situations of oppression and marginalization and engage in dialogue with people in those situations, representing a *cognitive attempt to understand.* (2) Through a voluntary though unintentional shift from *thinking* about the experience to *feeling* the experience, the students begin to form a deep awareness and emotional connection with the people, representing a *crossing over*. (3) Lastly, the students develop a shared, side-by-side sympathy *with* the people about the experience, which represents *getting the self back*. The first two stages of this process were evident throughout the trip, though they did not happen to everyone at every opportunity. Evidence of the third stage, however, was less obvious. Instances in which a side-by-side sympathy appeared to develop were typically associated with situations that involved a

101

personal connection, particularly at the HIV/AIDS hospice by the two sisters who felt connected through their own experiences with cancer and at the refugee and migrant schools by some participants who felt connected because of their common ages and views towards family. Individual students responded uniquely to each situation, and it was never possible to force the students to acquire feelings of empathy. The important implication for critical travel pedagogy is that the process can be facilitated by providing the opportunity to *cross over* and the dialogical spaces afterwards to support *getting the self back*.

The desires to help also translated into examples for nine of the participants of specific actions they have taken or will take in the future in terms of how they view their career options. One participant, studying to become an engineer, talked about the reality that many of the engineering employment opportunities are "unfortunately" in the defense industry. In considering how critical travel pedagogy influences her career choices, she responded, "It'll definitely affect how I think about the companies and places that I work." Three of the participants mentioned changing their college majors to ones in which they felt allowed them to more directly benefit people, as the following passage illustrates:

> My big thing in high school, after I dumped the idea of doing pre-med, I just wanted to be like a poli-sci/history major. I mean, that's chill, but I'd rather do something, and I figured that using a psychology and neuroscience degree, I could actually go and do something to help people and actually work with social organizations and whatnot, so, I mean, that's even, that actually was a factor in my interest in psychology and neuroscience.

In several instances, responses about how critical travel pedagogy impacted considerations of work and careers, including the two other responses about changing majors in college, involved a discussion about income and wealth. There were three perspectives involving income and wealth: (1) seeking personal wealth *and* helping other people, (2) struggling between choosing a path of economic comfort *or* a path of social justice, and (3) specifically choosing a

path of altruism *instead of* pursuing wealth. The following response, from one of the three participants who were also recipients of the Gates Millennium Scholarship, presents the only perspective that directly promotes the acquisition of wealth in addition to and in support of helping people:

> No matter how much you have, no matter how much money, you know, the Gates Foundation can have, do you really feel like you've accomplished something? And it was interesting because I actually met Bill Gates. He came and gave a speech at [the university I was attending], and he wanted a photo op with the graduating class of 2010… And I asked him, "Do you ever feel fulfilled? Do you ever feel like you've done enough?" And he sat there for a while, because I felt like he didn't have a way to really tackle the question, you know. And then he said, "Honestly, no." And that's where I was just like, "It's good, but it's a bad thing," you know, because everyone wants to feel complete, like they've done their part. But it's a good thing because he's still fighting. That's great. That means he's going to continue to fight. You know, he'll go home at night, and he'll say, "Man, I did this, I did this, and I did this, but there's always other things I can do. I'm not done yet." He won't feel complete… Anybody can say, "OK, I'm done… That's it, I'll make my millions, I've done my part to society, I'll kick my feet up because that's it," you know. While others will say, "I can have all that, get the income from that and help other people and keep the process going."

In another instance, which highlights the second perspective, one of the participants talks about the struggle she anticipates facing in deciding whether to follow a path that provides material comfort or a path that is grounded in social justice. In this passage, the participant articulates how critical travel pedagogy has impacted her values but also recognizes the difficulty in choosing to live according to those values. She apparently sees the paths as divergent and mutually exclusive, even suggesting that to live a "comfortable lifestyle" may require she "abandon" her principles.

> [The nonprofit organization] embedding this ethic of social justice, and I think everything I get involved in from now on will have some sort of component. I think that's easier to say though in a more broader concept. I can easily see myself also going different paths, and so at this point I don't know. I don't know because I honestly don't know where it is that I'm going, and part of it is also the reality of being able to keep yourself afloat, also your own preferences and wanting to have a pretty comfortable lifestyle and all that gets complicated by, well, social justice

doesn't pay that much. And so I can easily see myself deviating from the principles I guess, which is what I'm afraid of, of, I guess, abandoning these principles because what else is there afterwards? I mean, it's just like you have these, it's like these are genuine good principles. To abandon them is just like somewhat to go counter or against it. That's somewhat, it's hard to articulate now just because it's starting to hit me now. But I just need to keep surrounding myself with people who are involved, and I think that's the main way I can stay grounded and stay involved. And I think future decisions will probably be, I guess after my fellowship, probably just working just to keep myself going, so for the next couple of years, it's just going to be the more, just trying to get, you know, being able to live independently, that's going to be one of the central, central things. Who knows, I could go do Peace Corps. I've been thinking about it. I think I may need it, but we'll see, we'll see. Everything's up in the air.

These first two perspectives were provided by an officer of the organization and a founder, and neither had participated in the trip to Thailand. Consequently, there arises a question of motivation that may not be associated with empathy. Batson et al. (2002) describe three additional categories of motivation to consider: (1) collectivism, in which the objective of helping others is to benefit a collective of people; (2) principlism, in which the objective is to uphold a particular moral principle; and (3) egoism, in which the objective is to ultimately benefit oneself. It is not possible to identify with certainty any specific motivating factors for the officer and founder, but there are indications from their responses that the first two additional categories may apply. The first response was made in the context of her being a recipient of the Gates Millennium Scholarship and meeting Bill Gates. From this perspective, as an ethnic minority from an inner-city community, she is the beneficiary of Bill Gates' seeming altruism, and she may also have intentions of being financially successful herself. She may potentially even see herself one day joining a similar collective of people who "help other people [in the collective from whence she came] and keep the process going." She sees Bill Gates' assistance not only as helping her but potentially putting herself in a position to help others in *her collective*. The second response is clearly framed around a moral principle. The career path about

which she is conflicted does not seem to be motivated by the empathy-altruism hypothesis but rather a commitment to the *principles* of social justice. In neither of the first two perspectives was there strong evidence of empathy.

The third perspective—choosing a path of altruism instead of wealth—also views the paths as mutually exclusive. For two participants, the choice is acutely clear, and they have already made changes in their career trajectories so they can be in better positions to help people, based on their own individual altruistic values. In both instances, the participants had initially wanted to pursue careers in the medical field but changed majors either before starting college or after already beginning university coursework in their original major. The first passage is from a participant who began college as a biology major and argues that money may provide short-term benefits, but it does not address people's long-term challenges.

> And, I think if it had not been for those things, I might still be a bio major trying to be a doctor for the sake of me making money to help only my people and my family. And so, that's me coming to the conclusion that, hmmm, medicine is not gonna, it's not the way that I wanna help people… And if it had not been for [the nonprofit organization], I don't think I would have been able to acknowledge that I needed to make a change, or even understand that I could change and still be okay, and still help people… Because of those conversations I was able to see those type of things and kind of direct myself in a way where I found, like, like, when I went to anthro, I found a way to, I stayed with it because I found kind of that, like, people's willingness to understand other people and help other people…. So, I think that if it had not been for [the nonprofit organization], I wouldn't have had that mindset that led me in that way... I think especially when I was trying to make that decision to switch over and find something else was, um, if I became rich, then I could, then I could use that money to do all these things that I, like, if I just held off and just kind of stuck to it, then I could eventually use all that money to even, you know, like, I could [contribute]. You know, maybe [the nonprofit organization] would be rich if I had that money, things like that…. I see how, yes, while money can make an impact it doesn't necessarily make the long-term impact that I would want. I think that it makes an impact in that moment, yeah, like, if I had a ton of money to pour into a school right now, it could potentially change the school. You know, they could remodel it, they could get a, hire a couple more teachers, but it wouldn't change the way the people teach, and it wouldn't change the way the administration thinks about the students. And so, I think that I realize that the change that I wanted to make, or

that I would hope to make in other people, is kind of what happened to me, like, realizing that it's really, like, the mindset, like, the way my mindset change is what was more important than the way that the physical things can change. And so, I think those were the things that made me at ease with kind of redirecting my, my career and thinking that, okay, even if I don't make this money and I can't solve all my family's issues, um, I'm still doing something that can help my family… You know, we understand that money helps, but it doesn't, it's not really gonna make any difference. So, I think that when I was deciding whether kind of, like, following a path that would lead me to money, money, money, or, like, money so that I could eventually help versus, like, the path that would kind of start helping now, at least the way I see it, I think it was those, seeing those contrasting views that really helped me feel like I would make a bigger impact following this route instead of that route, like, going to a major that could help me learn the things that I felt would help change people's ideas theoretically and help me understand how to value other people and understand other people versus (pause) just learning the things that would get me money that I thought could help me. Um, I think that was, that was a big, a big factor.

Another participant describes her desire to become a dance therapist, based on how she

best feels she can help people.

It made me want to, whatever I did or whatever I do… it has to be something that's going to help people and that's going to help me to change the issues that I have, that I became aware of because, again, those issues aren't just in Thailand, they're everywhere. And so wherever I can help, that's what I want to do, and I'm thinking dance and psychology. My goals are to use or to go into dance therapy, so use it really like, to use dance, something that we can all do, it's just movement, we can all dance, to help people who are dealing with an illness instead of medication…. And then also I want to work with little kids because they're the future. I want to help them, start them young… So that's what I want to do. So it doesn't matter if I don't make tons of money. I just want to help people, so, yeah, and it's because, and it really is because of my going to Thailand. Because, before Thailand, I was just thinking, "Oh, I want to be a doctor," you know, or I don't know, something that was going to make a lot of, a doctor because that was going, that was what was going to make a lot of money. But then I went to Thailand, and I was like, "No, I want to do something that's going to help change the world." And I didn't figure it out until I went to [my college] and I heard about lectures from dancers who were, like, they were using dance to teach genetics, so then, and I was like, "OK, I want to do that too."

These two passages clearly express a desire and intent to help people as a direct

consequence of the awareness they acquired through critical travel pedagogy. Additionally, the

motivation of this desire is consistent with the empathy-altruism hypothesis. Cialdini et al.

106

(1997) argue that, "Empathic concern signals unity with another" (p. 491). Both of the responses express a unity, a common struggle, in that "those issues aren't just in Thailand, they're everywhere," and an intent "to value other people and understand other people." Additionally, Pavey et al. (2012) suggest that "empathy-evoking experiences might promote the internalization of moral values and therefore, result in more persistent helping" (p. 688). The deep commitment to altruism expressed in these last two passages, which were attributed to the *experiences* of critical travel pedagogy and seemingly motivated by empathy, contrast starkly with the first two perspectives by the officer and founder who did not participate in the trip to Thailand. The narrow commitment solely to a familiar collective in the first passage and the reservations expressed about committing to a principle in the second passage may hint at significant differences in the effectiveness of collectivism, principlism, and altruism as motivating factors to help people, a theoretical consideration that is recognized as need additional research (Batson et al., 2011).

Changes in altruistic values were also reflected in participants' roles within their communities. Four participants indicated that their participation in critical travel pedagogy influenced them to be more engaged in the community. The influences were expressed in terms of how their views of their community have changed and specific examples of community activism. The following passage illustrates fundamental changes in how one of the participants views her community and her role within the community.

> I think that if I, if it wasn't for [the nonprofit organization], for the conversations
> that I have in [the nonprofit organization], for the experiences that I got to learn
> from… if it had not been for things like that, or even just seeing how (pause), I
> don't know, just how, just, how the possibility of change can happen…. In terms
> of my community, I think that (pause), I don't know, like (pause), I like value it in
> such a different way now. Like, things that would make me nervous when I was
> younger or things that, you know, I would wish were different or, like, I don't,
> just like, I didn't see value in a lot of thing before in my community. Like, I didn't

see how, how important it was for people to walk and say good morning when they were taking a walk, or, just little things like that, like, to me, like, I think especially now, like before, before [the nonprofit organization] and before the trip, like, I think that I would, not that there was a difference, like, especially, like, living out here and living back home, like, I noticed there was a difference, but I didn't really understand, like, the importance of the difference or what it meant for me, and what it meant just for, like, the community to, to see value in itself and be able to express that to other people and have other people see those things. 'Cause, I know, like, people say, like, oh, you're from [an inner-city community], like, all they, you know, they mention all, like, the negative aspects. And I didn't really have a way to defend it other than that, that's a stereotype. You know, I didn't have a way to reconcile, like, yeah, some of these things happen, but other things happen too that, you know, you don't see and that are, that are beautiful in their own way. And I didn't have a way to reconcile that; but after, after the trip, I think that I learned to see beauty in the, like, the little things in my community, like, things, things like people saying good morning or good afternoon or seeing familiar faces or things like being on the bus and people being willing to talk to you versus like out here people on the bus just doesn't talk to you, you just sit there, right. Um, I think I see my community in that, in that different way, and I can reconcile those things. And I think also when I meet other people who are from my community, especially because I work with students, and when they have those views, the way I used to have them, and, and almost, like, yeah, people see me this way, and they know that it's not that way, but they can't really say why. And I think, if, even if they know how to say why, they don't see the importance in the why, so they almost, like, I almost can't say, like, yeah, you may think all these things about [my inner-city community], but you don't see that, you know, on Sunday afternoons my street is full of cars because everyone goes to visit their grandparents. Like, I would tell you that, but I wouldn't see the importance of that, if it had not been for those trips.

This first passage discusses what I consider to be the two most crucial initial steps in constructive community engagement and activism: (1) a recognition of the possibility of change (Checkoway, 1997) and (2) a transformation from a deficit framework of community (Valencia & Solorzano, 1997) to valuing a community's cultural capital (Franklin, 2002; Yosso, 2005). Checkoway (1997) argues that, "Basic to the process of creating change is the belief in its possibility. This belief is instrumental to the process, and also is an end in itself" (p. 22). Recognizing the possibility of change and the ability to influence that change can translate into a sense of empowerment for the individual (or organization). The second crucial step is through

recognizing and valuing a community's cultural capital. From this perspective, community

engagement and activism build upon and embrace the cultural wealth of a community –

aspirational capital, familial capital, social capital, navigational capital, resistant capital, and

linguistic capital (Yosso, 2005). Embracing community and feeling empowered to enact change

are foundational influences for community engagement and activism. In the next passages, two

other participants provide specific instances of community activism as a consequence of their

involvement in critical travel pedagogy.

> I was involved with MEChA, which, I guess I should say the whole acronym. So it's a Chicano student activist group, founded in the 1960's, and stands for Movimiento Estudiantil Chican@ de Aztlán and I don't, it had been very, very inactive [at my university] and here in [my community] it's very strong, very radical… I went and thought of it, it's like, "Yeah, so there's nothing going on here. There's an actual need for a critical voice," and so I got involved with that and eventually became president and so a lot of the things, what I did was at the chapter level was educating, leading discussions with my own membership about issues that are going on in the world. So I remember even doing a presentation on [the nonprofit organization] and specifically what we had done in Guatemala just because it was relevant to what we were doing because, again, it's examining the U.S.'s role in fostering these oppressive conditions and that's what kind of MEChA's about, you know, always being critical about the U.S.… I would also organize our big campus events with, I remember the first one that we did was on the deaths along the U.S./Mexico border and we invited someone who was doing their post-doc on that specific issue, but we were able to pack the room with 250 people and a lot of it was because we pitched it to, we pitched it as a human rights issue…. Those ideas started last spring with my involvement with [the nonprofit organization] because I was always thinking, "How do we reach out to others?" And so that same idea, that same ethic was applied when I was involved in other student groups like, "How do we keep going? How do we take whatever it is that we know and communicate it to the broader community?"

> One of the results of the Thailand trip was to make me more committed to actually doing something rather than just speaking about things and going on long tirades, and that's when I started working. When I got back from Thailand, I worked, I started working with Food Not Bombs, feeding the homeless and whatnot. So, in this sense, it really just got me more from, again, the overall theme for me had been getting rid of the abstraction and moving on to actual concrete action and actually doing something, which is something I hadn't done before the trip. I was a founding member and organized the first few outreach efforts for [an anti-death penalty organization]. Really it was a matter of choosing

109

causes which were important to me, things that I could do in my country and things that were in my locality that there was clearly an issue and clearly I could do something about, if I just got off my lazy ass, that I could start doing something. So I think that the major thing for me was the dispelling of abstraction and actually going and doing something and actually, instead of just talking about things and hearing about things and discussing things, actually going out and doing something different.

That there were only two out of the twelve participants who offered descriptions of

community activism is consistent with the concerns expressed by one of the founders, as

discussed in Chapter Five, that, "we took kids far away, and then they haven't really done

anything." From a theoretical perspective, we initially viewed community activism as an

explicitly desirable outcome of critical travel pedagogy. We wanted to see tangible contributions

to social change, as these two participants describe. Watts et al. (2011), however, suggest that

activism, in the form of critical action, is a very broad term that is reflected in a variety of

individualized actions other than just community activism. Identifying some of those other forms

of critical action is specifically the topic of this chapter.

In the following final passage about altruistic values, I return to the question of

motivation, at the intersection of community and the essence of empathy.

Okay, so I feel like before [the nonprofit organization], I've always had just like a strong understanding or strong connection to my community just in general just because I felt like, [because] of my background and of what my interests have always been since high school, I just always felt like I had a strong conscious of who I was and what I wanted and what I believe in and what I valued and it's always been the more leftist liberal whatever. So that's why I felt like with [the nonprofit organization] it was just kind of a good fit because I was like I really, I really believe in a lot of these things that [the nonprofit organization] is trying to do. So it's a great fit and it works and, but I just feel like going through having the meetings, interacting with students, going on the trips, it's really pushed me to really question my beliefs and what I really value in terms of, it just made me question myself and I'm like, "Am I really who I think I am? Do I really stand up for what I really believe in? Am I willing to sacrifice whatever to fight for justice and for what's really right? Am I really that person or am I just really bullshitting? And when I'm faced with it, I'm just kind of scared and I kind of back off. So I feel like, you know, with [the nonprofit organization], it's just

really pushed me to kind of take a stand on where, pushed me to like, I guess it pushes me to just take a stand on things and that just kind of makes me feel uncomfortable because I'm like no one has ever really pushed me like, and for an organization to do that, I'm just like that's just, I never thought that could happen. I just felt you're always challenged by people and I guess, well, [the nonprofit organization] is a combination of interacting with people, learning different things and interacting and seeing different things. So I just, I don't know, I think it's just kind of, it's really pushed me to I guess, I hope this doesn't sound too cheesy, but what is it to really love someone and love your community? What does that really mean? What does it really entail to love another human being, whether it's the stranger down the street or your mom? Can you really love someone that you just don't know, and can you just really respect someone that you just don't know, and is that okay? Is that weird? Why should I love my neighbor, I don't have any connection to him, why does that even matter? And then it's kind of pushed me to really think about things like that, that I just never really thought about and, although I have a strong idea of like identity and community, it's at least a challenge where it's kind of pushed me to expand that…. When you look at people with love and respect, you're able to talk to them, you're able to connect with them, you're able to see them on a different level that you never felt, like, you know, and that's just something I'm like I want to practice, but it's just so hard because you just kind of forget about all that stuff. It's just like because other people are not doing it, it's just like, "Why should I?" It's like, "Fuck, I don't matter to you. What the fuck. Why should you matter to me?" And I just feel like this has kind of opened up, or it's added another meaning to what really love is about, you know. I just feel like I just gotta, it's kind of pushed me to just kind of love the world for what it is and do what I can.

Chabot (2008) identifies four categories of love: self-love, eros, philia, and agape. The first three categories refer to loving oneself, romantic love, and mutual love, respectively. The fourth category, agape, "refers to the love of all human beings and forms of life, without distinguishing between worthy and unworthy people, friends and enemies, neighbors and strangers, likeable and unlikeable creatures" (p. 811). Though this participant did not mention non-human creatures, she did express the idea of an unconditional love towards all people – regardless of relationship or character – and suggests it requires "practice." This notion exemplifies the critical reflection necessary for personal and social transformation (Freire, 1970) and hints at what Chabot (2008) refers to as *revolutionary love*. This term represents the theoretical view that love and revolution are complementary and mutually supporting, as

111

exemplified by the nonviolent revolutions led by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Mahatma Gandhi, who both embodied revolutionary love. I revisit this theme in Chapters Eight and Nine as a constructive response to the feelings of despair and hopelessness expressed by some of the trip participants.

Traveling with a Purpose

The reasons people choose to travel have been researched extensively by tourism theorists for decades (Cohen, 1972; Crompton, 1979; Iso-Ahola, 1982; Shoemaker, 1994; Pearce & Lee, 2005). The motivating factors for travel have been relatively consistent in the research, and, in more recent studies, Pearce & Lee (2005) identify four dimensions that are core motivating factors for travelers regardless of experience and age: "escape/relax, novelty, relationship, and self-development" (p. 235). While I did not explicitly seek to determine the participants' views about travel, the phenomenological approach of this research revealed that the ways in which the participants view travel is an important consequence of critical travel pedagogy. At the end of this section, I will revisit these motivating factors in contrast to the views expressed by the participants.

Eight of the twelve participants described specific examples in which their involvement in critical travel pedagogy influences the way they view travel and the ways in which they find meaning in travel experiences. The responses constitute four general themes: (1) where to stay while traveling, (2) the duration of travel, (3) study abroad, and (4) work abroad. The first two responses provide critiques about where to stay while traveling.

> [Participant #1]: Um, so, so it changes the way I've traveled. And I went to Spain about a month ago or something, in May. And it changed the way I saw the community when I was there too. Like, I just, like, I see the way people live differently than others or than, in that case, than my classmates in school. Um,

112

and, uh, I remember telling my teacher when he was like choosing a hotel to live in, and I was like, "Please don't put me or don't put the hotel that we're staying at in a tourist area, like, I don't want to be there. I don't want to be seen as a tourist. I'm embarrassed to be a tourist." [Laughter]. He was, like, "I understand what you mean." And I actually got us a hostel in a very residential area, and I, I made that clear to him, and I was, like, "Please don't put us there if you can, like, don't, and I'm sure, I'm sure it's more expensive anyway. Don't do it." [Laughter]. Um, I remember making that clear to him.

[Participant #2]: If they have a Hilton Resort out there, it would be pointless to go to Thailand and stay at a Hilton resort. You wouldn't get anything out of it.

Both of these responses suggest an alternative to mass tourism, arguing that it is more meaningful to stay in places other than tourist areas or resorts. The intent, though not explicitly articulated, is to more closely connect with local cultures and people. However, tourism, in general, as previously discussed, is problematic in the context of structural economic inequalities and colonial legacies. While "many socially-conscious people from the 'first world' or global North have come to regard conventional tourism a gratuitous and crass form of exploitation" (Mahrouse, 2011, p. 373), Lozanski (2011) and Jacobsen (2000) suggest that even anti-touristic perspectives are still just idealized versions of tourism. Backpackers and independent travelers, for example, are typically characterized by frugality, independence, traveling off-the-beaten-track, self-reflection, and a desire for intercultural encounters. Lozanski, (2001), however, found in her study that most anti-tourism travelers generally do not have meaningful interactions with the community, but rather exploit the remnant colonial structures that allow for extreme mobility, a consequence of economic, political and cultural privilege. She further argues that, "those who have the means to travel and who choose to act on this advantage reiterate their middle-classness and simultaneously, their entitlement to its associated privileges" (p. 12). In contrast to anti-tourism travel, Lozanski proposes a *decolonizing travel*, in which "the entanglement of the Self – as individual, subcultural, national, supranational – must be

113

foregrounded and connected with global social processes towards an end of more socially just

travel" (p. 480). Future research might examine how participants view their travel experiences in

the context of decolonizing travel.

The second theme regarding changed perspectives about traveling is the duration of

travel, as illustrated in the following two passages.

> [Participant #3]: It made me see that I want to go live in places, but not live there
> forever. Like two/three months a year. I want to live in a different country, like
> rent a house…. So it put everything in a perspective how I want to make all these
> plans. I want to travel, I mean, go to a different country for three months every
> year.

> [Participant #4]: I feel that one of my goals is to go and travel to all Latin
> America, to go to Central America, to go to South America, and just stay in a
> country for at least a couple of months, each county for a couple of months, and
> that wouldn't have happened if [the nonprofit organization] didn't exist.

These two responses highlight a perspective from all eight of participants about wanting

to stay/live abroad for long durations, beyond the typical week-long vacation. In these two

instances, the context is travel in general, while other participants reflect this perspective in terms

of study abroad, in the short-term, and then work abroad, in the long-term. The most radical

impact regarding travel with a purpose is expressed by Participant #4 who, though having a goal

of traveling to many countries in Latin America, has already fulfilled another desire she acquired

through her involvement in critical travel pedagogy.

> [Participant #4]: Personally to me, [the nonprofit organization] was a great
> opportunity to go to other countries and actually learn. And it impacted me
> because I realized I don't want to live in the United States. So when I took the
> decision to come to Mexico, it wasn't that hard for me because I already knew I
> don't want to stay in the United States at all, because I think even though third
> world countries are poor, even though they're developing, even though there's
> crime, the crime rate is high, even though I know all these things, I would prefer
> to live here than the United States where everything is set up for you, where
> everything is money and, I don't know, I think that's what [the nonprofit
> organization] did for me. It opened my eyes to new realities, to new ideas, and it's
> still doing it.

This participant was one of the founders of the nonprofit organization and participated in three of the earlier educational programs but not the trip to Thailand. After her first year at a public four-year university in California, she decided to discontinue her academic pursuits and move to Mexico where she currently lives and has since resumed higher education. Although her experiences and this specific response to critical travel pedagogy are unique, they highlight the substantial range of potential outcomes for the participants.

Participant #3 also expanded upon her view of traveling for extended durations when she considered options for higher education: "Another choice I made, oh, a big choice since that trip – I wanted to go to school to study abroad." This theme was specifically articulated by two additional participants.

> [Participant #5]: Well, I think the biggest decision was my choosing to go to [my college], because I chose to go to [my college], well, when I applied, I really didn't really know much about the school, I didn't know anything about the school. When the acceptance letter came, I just threw it off to the side. I was like, "What? I wanted to go to NYU." But when I went to visit the school, and they were like, something like 83 percent, or somewhere around there, they traveled abroad, and going to Thailand, you know, that was abroad, that was an experience of mine, I was like, "Yeah, I definitely want to do that again." And they have a lot of opportunities, because studying abroad is different from volunteering abroad because, you know, it's the same thing. You're with, it's kind of like the resort, a little. You're in the university, you're with students who are also traveling abroad, but you kind of get to interact with the people, but you didn't have to if you didn't, like, you could choose not to, but they also have a lot of opportunities for you to go abroad and to volunteer. So that was one, and then with it being an all-women's college, I, you know, I see how, especially with the commercial sex industry and just in America like the media and all that stuff and how women are oppressed and so I wanted to be around, you know, powerful women and just, because I knew that would motivate me and just to really learn about, yeah, to really be motivated and learn about my role as a woman, not what, not what society was telling me my role as a woman was, but to see women who are going against that, to be around women who were really challenging that and so, yeah, that influenced, that had an influence on where I went to school and a lot of what I'm learning now is at school. And then, going back to the people that I met at the, yeah, the people that I met at the refugee camps and the migrant school, well, just everybody, just being there, it really motivated me to want to do well in whatever

I do and so that I could really do something, like, become an agent for positive changes throughout the world and in my community. So just going to Thailand made me want to work hard now so that I could really, or even, and not just so that I could do it in the future, but still even like now, just do whatever I can to change what, to change these issues that I have become aware of.

Within this one passage, the participant illustrates the matrix of ways critical travel pedagogy has impacted her life trajectory. She describes how her desire to study abroad and to engage critically with other women were the deciding factors in determining which college she would attend. Further, she demonstrates a deep global awareness, particularly in terms of the experiences of women, and she explicitly states that her motivation is to "become an agent for positive changes throughout the world." Her decision to study abroad is influenced directly by her altruistic values and a greater global awareness.

The following passage is combined from two different responses during the interview and illustrate the overlapping perspectives of traveling with a purpose. Similar to Participant #3, who described her desire to travel for long durations and later mentioned that she also intends to study abroad, this participant first described her desire to study abroad and then later expressed her intention to work abroad.

> [Participant #6]:
> It's because of [the nonprofit organization], because at first I just thought I just want to go to another country just to go, not thinking about learning the culture, just to go tour, you know, but now it's totally different. I'm trying to be like, "Okay, it's not just picking a country just to go, it's picking a country and also looking at the program to see, okay, while I'm there, what can I do to help?" So it's not I guess all about me anymore. It's like more about me and then what I can do while I'm there for whatever period of time I'm there. And then I'm also thinking about different countries since Thailand because at first I was like, "Okay, I just want to go to England because it sounds cool," and now I'm thinking, "Okay, realistically, what country should I go to that I'll never go to period, 'cause England I'll probably go to again to take a tour, and then what country, like, kind of needs more help," you know. So this is my decision process on studying abroad or just going abroad. Now, it's different.

I think, okay, I'm trying to get a job where I am able to go to different countries and help, so, and I feel like I can do that with, especially with the environment. Like, everyone needs help with that. So, I feel like with stuff like that, made me want to go to different countries and help in different countries, so while I'm there I can help with other things too, so I feel like now, at first I was fine with just staying in America or whatever, but now it's like I want to go to more different places and help out whenever I can.

Another participant discussed her intention to work abroad, motivated by the desire to "help" in the context of a very specific global issue, again illustrating the influence of altruistic values and a greater global awareness.

[Participant #7]: It made me, like, in terms of, like, my future, think about that, like, I told you wanted to work with soil, and, um, I want it, like, not to just be like a, a, like, US thing. It made me kind of want to be, go international with it. 'Cause everyone's having problems with soil degradation. That's gonna be, like, a real thing on, um, over-irrigation and stuff. And it made me think that, like, oh, why, like, once I do get to that level, and I have that knowledge, and I can, like, use and implement, like, sustainable techniques that I wanna, um, go to different countries and help out there too. You know? I remember hearing this thing about China and, like, basically the soil has this, like, desertification thing and all the, like, nutrients are gone and stuff. And I feel like I could go to China and, like, help, or I could go, like, back to Thailand and help and, 'cause everybody's, um, like, it's a worldwide thing. Like, and I guess that, like, the AIDS hospice kind of made the connection, like, um, that, you know, everybody goes through the same thing, but some people have it even worse, what we think is worse, and some people even have it worse in the same type of, with the same, given the same hand. You know? So, um, I really just, it made me wanna, um, just not, like, be global. You know?

The perspectives by these participants to travel for long durations, study abroad, work abroad, and live abroad are consistent with the research by Oosterbeek and Webbink (2009), which suggests that students who study abroad may be more likely to live abroad later in life. The motivations and purposes of travel, as previously mentioned, of escape/relax, novelty, relationship, and self-development, suggest an egoistic motivation. This is also consistent with research about reasons students decide to study abroad. A quantitative study by Glencross & Willis (2006) of 600 college freshmen concluded that the primary motivating factors for study

117

abroad are cultural experience, personal enrichment, and language study. Kasravi (2009) conducted a mixed method study of 80 undergraduate students of color and similarly determined that the primary motivating factors are personal growth, cultural experience and knowledge, and practical skills (including language study). The preponderance of travel research suggests that motivations for travel, including study abroad, are driven by desires for personal growth and development. Though I posed no questions about travel during the interviews, the phenomenological approach suggests motivating factors for further travel after involvement in critical travel pedagogy may include intercultural encounters and engagement, altruistic motivations, and the development of a greater critical consciousness. The significant implication for critical travel pedagogy is the introduction of altruism as a motivating factor for travel.

The final passage below is counter to the previous two in that this participant expresses a desire to work abroad as a Peace Corps volunteer but explicitly and critically states that she is not going to "create a difference."

> [Participant #8]: I know I want to travel more. I know that. You know, I thought about doing the Peace Corps. I feel like that's something I would really, really, really love to do, and I like that I've been involved with [the nonprofit organization] because at least I can go, if I did Peace Corps, then I could go into the program not thinking that I'm going to save everyone, that I'm going to create a difference, that I, at least I have that perspective, and I don't have to be so naïve in thinking that I'm a savior or something. But I do definitely want to just, you know, visit different places and meet people and interact with people because it just kind of opens up your whole world and, I don't know, I feel like traveling, it's a perfect thing to really, really learn about yourself and push yourself and learn about the contradictions, and I can't see my life not doing that. You know, it's just going to make me, it just, I don't know, I just feel like it'll just keep opening my perspectives more and more.

This is the second participant who expressed a desire to join the Peace Corps. This interest was likely influenced, at least in part, by the stories and perspectives I shared with the participants about my own experiences as a Peace Corps volunteer. Of particular significance in

118

this passage, as previously mentioned, is the very pronounced statement that it would be naïve to think that she "is a savoir or something." Interestingly, this particular participant clearly expressed altruistic values of helping people in other passages from the interview. My understanding of this statement is associated with the previously mentioned suggestion that critical activism has many manifestations. In this context, the participant views Peace Corps as an opportunity to further develop her critical consciousness, which in and of itself is critical activism. Additionally, she acknowledges and critiques the egoistic nature of volunteer tourism (Coghlan & Fennell, 2009) by rejecting the egocentric "savior" representation. Within the two seemingly opposite positions of wanting to help change the world and dismissing such views as naïve is a larger discussion about how individuals perceive their roles as agents of change in the context of a greater global awareness.

Global Awareness

Traditional attempts to measure global awareness typically involve quantitative analyses (Torney-Purta, 1986; Chieffo & Griffiths, 2004; Kurt et al., 2013). The surveys from such research typically inquire about a wide range of topics, particularly general knowledge and interests related to global issues. For example, Kurt et al. (2013) use a Likert scale (from strongly disagree to strongly agree) on a set of statements in five categories: general awareness (e.g., read an article or thought about an international issue), functional knowledge (e.g., understand exchange rates and how to make international calls), foreign media exposure (e.g., watch, listen to, or read content generated outside of the US), communication and culture (e.g., interest in world geography, art, and culture), and foreign language exposure. Such approaches offer cursory measures about global awareness, but they are highly limited in terms of providing

specific examples of ways in which individuals have been impacted. Through the phenomenological approach to this dissertation, I sought and use specific references to global knowledge or interest as identifiers of global awareness and consider potential theoretical implications.

In addition to the global awareness the students demonstrated in their recollections of the trip to Thailand, ten of the twelve participants provide examples of ways in which they have become more globally aware as a result of their participation in critical travel pedagogy. Through the analysis, I identified four characteristics of global awareness: (1) a desire to acquire more knowledge about global issues; (2) a mindful recognition of and/or concerted effort to reduce biases toward and judgments about other people; (3) a complexified perspective of the world; and (4) an acknowledgement of privilege in a global context. While the first characteristic is consistent with the content of the quantitative surveys that measure global awareness, the last three reflect a more critical perspective beyond general knowledge and interests.

Two of the participants mentioned a desire to acquire more knowledge about global issues, particularly via news media.

> [Participant #1]: From [the nonprofit organization], I learned to pay attention… to the things around me and how people react to certain things. You know, I've read more about global issues thanks to [the nonprofit organization]. You know, I don't skip over the world section of CNN anymore, you know, that kind of thing. In terms of, it has opened my eyes a little bit to a lot of, I guess, the ignorance that communities have of what's going on in the world…. And then I've also started to notice, I notice the people who do notice, you know. I notice people who don't go to Wal-Mart anymore and people who don't do big chains type thing. I also noticed people who, like environmental concepts, people who do companies who exploit other countries and things like that…. I think about it now and I see it and I'm like, I notice bylines now and tags, like clothes, and I actually pay attention that it says, "Made in Taiwan, Made in China," that kind of thing. I pay attention to a lot more than I did. I don't have the knowledge to affect it. I can't say, I don't know if something was made legit just because of the place it was, but you know, you can assume, you can find out those types of things, and so that's what, in terms of my personal self, [the nonprofit organization] has influenced me.

120

[Participant #2]: I've made the effort to… be aware of what's happening out in the world by, um, reading articles online, but then also being aware of, like, which news feeds to trust…. I definitely made an effort. I don't know if it's a good effort or not, but I've made more of an effort than ever before to, like, be aware of what's going on in the world.

While these two responses primarily highlight wanting to learn more about international issues, they also illustrate more critical perspectives that cannot be found within the typical quantitative survey. The first participant expresses insight about the human and environmental exploitation of global commerce and the role of the individual in countering such practices through selective consumerism (Stolle et al., 2005). The second participant recognizes media bias and the need to critique news outlets to determine trustworthy sources (Baron, 2006). This second participant, along with two others participants, also described a recognition of biases about people and communities in the world.

[Participant #2]: I think that the trip influenced me to not go into things or go into people and automatically judge or have, like, and, like, be aware of my pre-judgments that I, that I have and I didn't realize that I had. So, it's, it's going into, like, your subconscious kind of, it, it's weird, like, I, I didn't realize I was so prejudiced against this type of person or whatever.... And, um, yeah, be, be aware of that.

[Participant #3]: I guess it made me kind of be more open to, like, different communities, I think. Like, not just, um, you know, my, like, my grade level, or, like, my, like, American people, or, uh, people who, you know…. like, be more aware that, like, we're connected and that, um, kind of, like, even that, you're going through things that people, other people are going through things too. You know.

[Participant #4]: It just made me realize different is different, it's not bad. At first, I used to say, I used to think the world is good and bad… but the world is not good and bad, it's just a whole bunch of different opinions and experiences and all kinds of things that happen that put people in these different situations.

These responses are consistent with intergroup contact theory (Pettigrew et al., 2011; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008), which has shown that intergroup contact that is mediated to reduce

anxiety and increase empathy results in reducing prejudice. While the theoretical foundations of

critical travel pedagogy were not specifically inclusive of intergroup contact theory, there are

considerable implications for further research and attention. In particular, outcomes of intergroup

contact are influenced by the situation of contact, and outcomes other than reduced prejudice

have been identified. Critical travel pedagogy specifically involves intergroup contact with the

explicit objective of raising critical consciousness and the implicit objectives of reducing anxiety

and increasing empathy. By specifically targeting oppressed and marginalized populations for

intergroup contact, critical travel pedagogy may provide unique situations and outcomes for

examination through the lens of intergroup contact theory.

Participant #4, in her response, demonstrates not only a recognition of bias but an

awareness of a labyrinth of views and perspectives in the world. This recognition of bias

combined with an understanding that there is no single or "good" perspective, especially one that

is solely possessed by the economically dominant countries, translates into a complexified

perspective about international aid, as illustrated in her thoughts about what should be done to

support the people of Burma:

> [Participant #4]: Like Burma, it made me think that, "Oh, the Burmese people do
> need help," but I think the people within the country need to help themselves.
> They will realize eventually, but we can't just go there and help them because we
> might hurt them more than we help. We might not know because we're not from
> there, so we wouldn't know what was destroyed or what was helped. We would
> just say, "Oh, now they're like us." They just try to make someone, we try to
> manufacture people to how we are.

Another participant expressed a similar complexified perspective of international

struggles but through a more personal critique of bias and egoism.

> [Participant #5]: It really contributed to the killing of what I would call a
> messianic complex that I'd always had, that I had the solutions to the world's
> problems, that I knew what the problems were, and I was such a great [person]
> that I would be able to save the world. It made me really look at the problems

122

where I live, where I reside, and actually do something about it because I knew that they're, the problems of Southeast Asia or Guatemala, are just, I mean, they're too complex. And meanwhile, doing something to get the homeless off the street and working on the campaign to abolish capital punishment and to reform criminal justice in this country, they are things that I see as my role for me in my community and my country to actually do something about.

In this response, the participant acknowledges her prior simplified, biased and arrogant perspective of the world and recognizes the complexities of global problems. Yet, she also recognizes that she has the capacity to contribute directly to struggles within her own community. These two participants implicitly counter the egoism of imperialistic and neoliberal international policies of economically dominant countries (Murray & Overton, 2011; Petras, 1997) in the participants' explicit rejection that "we might know" or have "the solutions to the world's problems." Participants #4 even suggests that our "help," constructed from a mentality of superiority, may actually cause more harm.

The following response, however, offers a perspective that does not entirely dismiss international aid but rather suggests that the ideals of international support are important:

[Participant #6]: And then globally, kind of the same thing that I feel kind of toward the U.S. I feel like it should be everyone's problem when things of this magnitude happen. Like the genocide going on, why aren't we helping? I feel like it's the same thing as the Holocaust, why can't we help now? So, I don't know, it's kind of like disappointment kind of, like, I don't know, I kind of thought we were better than that, just to leave them like that. I think I was disappointed.

This participant views struggles from a more collectivist perspective. Without suggesting there are "good" perspectives or responses to problems, she argues that global struggles are universal struggles. In the context of empathy and altruistic motivation, as previously discussed, this response may be informed by Pedwell's (2012) research, which considers the influence of empathy on international development and suggests that empathy may be seen as having positive influences on transnational policies but also has the potential to reinforce hierarchies of

123

inequality. She further maintains that, "Empathetic engagement across social and geopolitical boundaries is not possible without imaginative practices of translation (cultural, political and affective) on the part of both development professionals and the people their work seeks to address" (p. 176). Seeking to connect empathy at an individual level to a greater understanding of the geopolitical structures that have created and maintain hierarchies of inequality is not an explicitly consideration of critical travel pedagogy, but there is evidence that such a connection is occurring among some of the participants, in terms of the participants' evolving critical thinking and recognition of privilege in a global context.

The following responses illustrate how some participants have developed a more complexified view of the world and global struggles through an awareness of their own evolving critical thinking.

> [Participant #7]: I think I'm very analytical and maybe this analyzing process has made me more difficult to talk… well, has made me a person a little bit difficult to talk to. I don't know if I'm explaining myself, but, for example, for other people to talk to me, it's quite difficult because most of the people don't analyze things and they're not interested in me talking about these things… so that I think makes it a little bit hard for people to talk to me because since I'm analyzing things, they take me as a depressed, selfish, and arrogant bitch, pretty much, because I don't have fun like they do. And most people don't really care about learning, you know. I don't know, I think [the nonprofit organization] has made me a bitch. Not really, I'm just kidding. I don't know, Johnstone, I think more people…like I said, people have trouble talking to me and I have a lot of issues when it comes to talking to people who don't care because it's hard for me to understand how they don't care and how they can have fun. I don't know. But I'm also tolerant because I completely understand where they come from because you can't just judge people for not having your same point of view, you have to know where they're coming from and I know where [my friends] come from, I know their background, so that doesn't bother me or it doesn't make me mad or… I understand their point of view, but I also think my point of view is important… I think I'm more critical, analytical, aware, and conscious about my surroundings and about political and cultural differences and I think that's where the arrogance and whatever the other words they said, I think that's where those come from… I just think I'm aware of what's going on. I'm aware of different realities and maybe people, I don't know, it's hard to, I think people go through life without really analyzing things and they do things automatically, as if you were a machine

124

kind of thing, you know. So you realize you have to eat. Well, you're eating, but unless something really impacts you, you don't become aware of that eating process. If you're eating, I don't know, for example, if you become sick and it's really hard for you to eat, you become aware of how hard it is or how important it is to eat. So I think that's what happens with most of the social problems. You don't become interested in them unless it affects you directly.

[Participant #8]: I think the main ways, immediately, is through my world views, just, I think [the nonprofit organization] gave me this face, the excuse basically to delve into all this other research. I think that's been a guiding thing throughout these last four years, which I think have been very critical and where I've matured and where I've developed the way I look at the world, so a lot of it's been engaging with different very, very critical theory and applying that to, so that's because I was involved in the organization and that's how I involved myself in it, went back and a lot of the courses that I started taking, a lot of the concentrations, you know, I went in initially as a government major because I was interested in policy and all that, but I was, after being involved in [the nonprofit organization], it was like, "Yeah, you talk about racism, but in a very, very specific institutional level," and I wanted to go beyond that. I think [the nonprofit organization] made me look beyond institutions and see that in a more nuanced way, looking at the world more complex… So afterwards I started majoring in geography, which started, you know, did exactly what the government department lacked, in my opinion, which was a very critical approach to the world that is interdisciplinary and it just looked at the world in a more nuanced way, and so that translated into my academic interests.

These two responses reflect uniquely insightful perspectives about oppression and privilege, recognizing that (1) people general are not concerned with social justice issues unless they are directly impacted by them and (2) oppression does not necessarily exist in predictable or obvious ways but is more nuanced and global. Through a recognition of these two critical points, participants are able to connect the experiences of empathy in individual encounters to their awareness of the more complex global hierarches of inequality. They are also able to better see their positionality within the complex web of global manifestations of oppression. Specifically, the participants become awareness of their own privilege in a global context.

Privilege is most commonly considered in terms of white privilege (Case, 2012; Dunlap et al., 2007; McIntosh, 1988) and male privilege (Case, 2007). By attempting to look holistically

at the complex web of global oppression, critical travel pedagogy must also address a wide range

of ways in which individuals experience privilege. The intersectionality of privilege (Case et al.,

2012) and coexisting marginal identities (Coston and Kimmel, 2012) have been recently

examined from a limited Western perspective. Additionally, there is limited research that

considers the perceived privilege by local people of African American tourist (Pinho, 2008).

However, I was unable to identify research from a global perspective that examines the

intersectionality of individuals who experience marginal (racial, gender and/or class) identities in

the economically developed countries in which they reside while also recognizing their

experiences of privilege, based on their country of residence and relative economic status, when

they travel to economically underdeveloped countries. McIntosh (2012) provides some insight

into this intersectionality through her depiction of a horizontal line of social justice – above the

line, individuals experience privilege, and below the line, individuals experience oppression. She

argues that everyone has experiences above and below the line of social justice. Experiences of

oppression, however, are much more apparent to individuals than experiences of privilege, and

people also tend to resist acknowledging their experiences of privilege. Recognizing individual

privilege is a critical component of understanding global oppression, though it is highly

challenging because of that tendency to resist such awareness. Demonstrating a deeply

complexified view of the world, four of the participants acknowledge their own privilege and the

consequences for them of that awareness.

> [Participant #8]: Because you know, people suffer and that's the main thing, just
> like, and that's what keeps bringing me back and it is easy because I think it's so
> easy here to just forget about that. It's so easy just to isolate yourself and go of the
> cocktail parties and just be concerned about what's going on in your own circles.
> And so what makes this work important for social justice, because at the end of
> the day, why do I have the privilege to not suffer?... So why not live a happy life?
> I think that's something I'm still, I guess, I've been trying to answer, but I think
> I'll just concede and say, "I don't know." I don't know, but I know what are those

things that are keeping me from accepting that and part of that is just knowing that there's more going on outside of me and again, that's what [the nonprofit organization] is about, taking yourself out of that bubble and becoming aware of this larger thing that's going on.

In this passage, Participant #8 echoes the point stated by Participant #7 that people tend to not be concerned with social justice issues unless they are directly impacted by them; however, her understanding of this point is expressed from a self-identified position of privilege. She expresses how easy it is to "forget" and to "isolate" herself from the suffering of others, acknowledging that she could take a path that could lead her to a "happy life." Implicit in her response is a choice regarding privilege: (1) ignore (resist acknowledgement of) it and live a happy life or (2) maintain an awareness of it and not be happy. She even concedes her own doubt about the choice she will ultimately make in her life.

The following two responses provide an alternative perspective: embrace the acknowledgement of privilege and transform that awareness into a constructive outcome.

[Participant #9]: And so, and, you know, and all those people around me who were, you know, like, almost humiliating themselves to make a living to just have their basic necessities met, and they were still willing enough to be nice, like, it kind of like, it refueled my, not refueled, it solidified that me having hope in things was valid. One. And two, it solidified my ideas that it's okay to want to do things for other people, regardless of what other people think, think about you. So, I came back to [my university] with more of a (pause), kind of, again, like, more of a belief in my own voice, regardless of the people that were around me. I came back with experiences that make, that made me, like, value, value my privilege in a different way, just kind of see it not, like, as a curse or as a burden, like, all of a sudden, all the things, and not to say that it happened right away, clearly it took time and, you know, a lot of other things, but I think they played a big role in changing my perspective in terms of the privilege that I had and how I would want to use it.

[Participant #10]: I guess without [the nonprofit organization], I don't think that I would constantly be thinking about my privileges or I would constantly be thinking about understanding other people or understanding what other people go through or what really, what love is about. You know, because when I think about [the nonprofit organization], the first thing I, I think about love and respect and

127

how it's just, and it just kind of pushes me to really open up what those words really mean to someone or at least to me.

Both of these responses suggest that an awareness of privilege can and should be constructive. Through acknowledging their own privilege, these participants seek to understand the struggles of other people. For the first participant, this means using her privilege to support those struggling. For the second participant, it means transforming her awareness of the experiences of others into a deep contemplation of the meanings of love and respect. This awareness of oppression and privilege, the suffering of others, and the complexities of the world is, as the last participant expressed, "uncomfortable," but I suggest in Chapter Eight, while also addressing the perspectives of a fourth participant who explicitly acknowledged her privilege and the impact of that awareness, that this discomfort is a necessity for the transformative potential of critical travel pedagogy.

Promoting Critical Consciousness

One of the more unanticipated responses to critical travel pedagogy is the expressed desire of eight of the participants to promote a critical awareness of oppression and global struggles even while viewing such awareness as potentially uncomfortable and even painful. This desire was reflected in terms of raising awareness (1) by working with the nonprofit organization, (2) among the general population, (3) through working with high school students, and (4) among family members. Interestingly, I compare the participants' desires to promote critical consciousness to my own philosophical journey as an educator (Johnstone, 2010) and in my involvement in the development of critical travel pedagogy, as described in Chapter Two. An awareness of oppression and the suffering of others from an empathetic standpoint promotes a desire to make change (Pavey et al., 2012). The first and most critical step in creating change is

through promoting awareness. As Freire (1973) states, "Critical understanding leads to critical action" (p. 44).

Many of the students who have participated in our trips over the years have expressed a desire to work with the nonprofit organization. While I have not specifically inquired about the reasons for their interest, the general impression has been that the experiences of participating in the educational programs were positive for them, and they want to share those positive experiences with other students. The following passage provides insight into the reasons at least one of the participants wants to work with the nonprofit organization.

> [Participant #1]: Okay. I, I'll, um, I'll be very specific then, in terms of, you know, in terms, instead of beating around the bush, you know, the, my whole, my whole desire to do [the nonprofit organization] has been, like, how do I influence another person to be more aware and, and the question is even, is that even a good thing, like, does it make a person happier if they're aware or unhappy if they're aware, you know? I've had this conversation with some other people about, you know, maybe know for myself, I'm talking about, you know, there, I have greater moments of depression because I'm aware. Is that a good thing? But at the same time, like, I do think it's a good thing. I don't, like, being happy all the time is necessarily the right state of, of being, you know. I don't think that. I, I think that being able to sort of absorb other people's pain is kind of good. So, um, that's why my, my reason for wanting to be a part of [the nonprofit organization] is to kind of do what I can to make people have that awareness. Um, and so I'm, like, I think I'm getting at is, you know, do you know of other ways to do that? Or, do you know of, do you have any ideas on how to affect that, because (pause) it's really difficult (laugh). You know?

This participant echoes the view that critical awareness can be emotionally challenging, yet she nevertheless concludes that it is not only a good thing but she wants to be a part of raising that awareness among other people. She also indicates that her desire to work with the nonprofit organization stems from her perception that raising awareness is "really difficult," and she does not know of any ways of doing it other than through the nonprofit organization. Her views support the philosophical development of critical travel pedagogy, in that the objective has been to find the most effective approach to promote the development of critical consciousness.

Participants also expressed a desire to raise awareness in a more general context. Again, the overarching goal is to promote action to influence societal change. The following three responses highlight that desire.

> [Participant #2]: It's definitely changed my views over the years. I sit and I think about it all the time, all the time, and I don't want to say, "Oh, if we could get other people to think like me, then everything will be…." No, that's not what I'm saying. I'm saying if people could all just sit down and think to the multitude of whatever level they want to think at, that's all I'm asking. People of course would respond differently to situations. Some would say, "You know, that's really sad," and go right back to eating their T.V. dinners, while other people would say, "That's really bad, let's do something about it."

> [Participant #3]: Well, yeah, I see the world, I see the world as a place that needs a lot of work and also I want to, I want to do something to help people realize that too, so that they can work, because the more people working towards that, or like fixing these issues, the faster they'll get fixed. But yeah, I see the world as a place that needs a lot of work and sometimes I get, sometimes it can make me really sad, and I just frustrated. And at school, I had a little, I had quite a few breakdowns because it was getting too much. Like all the, I was thinking about just becoming, when you become aware of certain things, it gets really emotional, so it's a little frustrating. But I just have to continuously remind myself, "This is why you're here. This is why, this is why, you know, yeah, this is why you're here and you're not the only one, so you have to, you really have to embrace that position and you have to work hard. This is why you have to work hard. You can't," because there are some people who see it and either they choose to ignore it or they let it get to them and they feel hopeless, but I have to make the decision of what I'm going to do. And so my decision is going to be to do something about it and do whatever I can to influence others so that they want to do something about it too.

> [Participant #4]: I don't know, I mean, I guess I can just tell you what's running through my head. You know that our world is not, it's not like, it's not a place where everyone has respect or understanding or love for each other. It's a world where we're willing to hurt each other, to push an agenda, to build something in a town, to, like we're just willing to go through so much dehumanization for shit that in the end doesn't really matter. It's just I feel like I've just gotten to a point where I'm just like people are willing to just hurt each other and for what? But that just doesn't mean that I have to be part of that. I don't have to be part of contributing to that. Maybe I'm part of the system, but maybe I can do something out of it, or maybe I can do something. Like, I don't have to, I don't have to contribute to that anymore. And it's just, like, I know there's more people in the world doing harm than good, but it's just, if I can get maybe another person to be there with me, OK, that's just one less person doing harm.

Each of these responses suggest that raising awareness about oppression and the suffering of others, in a general context, will result in more people who will be more inclined to "do something about it," as the first two participants assert, or at least result in "just one less person doing harm," as the last participant states. The hope is to inspire more people to become agents of change. In a specific context, some participants view students, similar to themselves, as the ideal targets for this raised awareness. Participant #4, in further discussing the challenges of the world and her sense of hopelessness, specifically suggests that through working with high school students she may influence them to make positive change.

> [Participant #4]: I would just hate myself if I took all those experiences for granted, if I didn't use those, that uncomfortable feeling to maybe do something about feeling hopeless because it's just like, you know, there's one thing, I'm just living a comfortable life, but then living a comfortable life and feeling hopeless, you're never going to be happy, you know. At least maybe I can do something about it, maybe I can. Maybe it won't change things, but maybe I can work with people who will and that's working with high school students, you know.

The remedy to hopelessness is to enact change. And if one is not working directly to make that change, then that person can work with those who will. In this scenario, the future agents of change are high school students. Similarly, another participant expressed her desire to become a high school counselor with a specific objective of influencing and inspiring students to become more aware of the world around them. In particular, she envisions that through working as a counselor she will have greater opportunities to have shared dialogues and exchanges of experiences with youth, so that they may acquire greater insights about the world.

> [Participant #5]: Or, um, even, like, my choosing education, I think, like, as a field to go into, I think it's all based on this idea of (pause), I think I chose education, or I'm choosing education (laugh), as a field to go into because I feel like it provides the most feasible route to continue to have these type of conversations, to influence younger people, to inspire people to see the way, the world in different ways, not necessarily in my way, but just inspire them to see the, the possibility of seeing things in a different way. And so, I think that that's

131

definitely been a big choice in, in my decision, even in my decision to decide to do counseling instead of teaching. Um, I think I've seen a lot of the issues that you've been faced with, being in the classroom, and even with some of my internships, like, I had internships in, like, teaching classrooms and things like that, and seeing, like, the type of interaction that I was able to have and just how other factors played into it; so, it's like, even going into education, even deciding what field of, like what portion of education, like, seeing that in comparison to thinking, like, to like the job that I had was very much like a counseling type of job, and working with [my college counselor in high school] and other, other counselors and seeing how, how that job, how that work specifically facilitates that one on one interaction and facilitates the ability to share experiences and help, you know, to learn from their, from student experiences, and to, hopefully, they can learn from your experiences. Like, my decision to go into counseling has very much, very, very, very much specifically been based on that.

This desire to work with youth in a capacity that allows for the sharing of experiences is representative of co-intentional education. As Freire (1970) states, "Teachers and students (leadership and people), co-intent on reality, are both Subjects, not only in the task of unveiling that reality, and thereby coming to know it critically, but in the task of re-creating that knowledge" (p. 56). Through this sharing of perspectives and experiences, a greater mutual awareness is achieved, with an understanding of the potential to enact change. While there is never a guarantee that any individual student will acquire a greater understanding or become an agent of change, hopefulness has led this particular participant along the path of wanting to work with high school students.

The other specific context expressed by the participants for promoting a critical consciousness is among family members. Participant #5 alludes to this in her discussion about choosing a career path guided by altruistic values as opposed to pursuing a course driven by a desire for economic prosperity.

> [Participant #5]: Is it gonna make me a better person? You know, am I helping my family by throwing money at them or am I gonna help them more by, A, becoming a better person myself, B, helping to translate that to them, and, C, like, what are they going to value more at the end? Like, are my parents going to value me having money to throw at them or are they going to value my time with them

or my ability to validate their experiences or things? You know, I was (pause), I don't know, it just kind of made me understand life in a different way, maybe redirect what I see as valuable and what I don't see as valuable.

In this passage, the participant intimates that she can be a positive influence on her family through living her life altruistically, thus being a "better person," and then "helping to translate that to them." Through this indirect approach, the example she demonstrates of her awareness and consequential altruism may help to positively influence her family members. More direct approaches to raising awareness among family members and particularly children are provided in the following three passages.

> [Participant #6]: I definitely want to teach my family that no matter where we live, that that's not the world, you know, because I definitely have known some people who haven't, like, lived. Like, my freshman year roommate, I was the third black person [my roommate's] ever met…. So that was quite interesting, but I definitely don't, you know, if it's something that I could, definitely something like my family, kids, trips, and send them to places or get them involved in organizations like [the nonprofit organization] or something like that where they can learn that where, when they grow up, there's no bubble around them and that's kind of in terms of how I can affect my small little unit of life.

> [Participant #7]: If I have children, I want them exposed to different things. I want them to grow up in a school where there's Muslims and Jewish people and Irish people and all kinds of stuff so they'll like, when they're ready to make their mark on the world that they'll see everything with open eyes.

> [Participant #8]: I definitely, oh, in terms of, like, kids too. I was, like, I definitely want my kids to have, like, that experience too. And not just, um, you know, not just be, like, oblivious to everything else that's out there. 'Cause, like, I was oblivious to the whole Burma, Karen thing, or, like, the Burma and, like, all ethnic groups there, and, um, that was the biggest, like, a lot of things. So, I don't want, I want my kids to be aware.

These three participants express an explicit desire to raise awareness among their family members and children for the implicit purpose of preventing the lack of understanding they themselves experienced prior to their involvement in critical travel pedagogy. The first passage even mentions the nonprofit organization as a desirable program for educating her child(ren). In

the following passage, the participant links many of the themes from this chapter, including a

raised global awareness and altruistic values, to what she considers to be the best way to help her

family.

> Well, again, I think, yeah, if I hadn't gone on the trip, I wouldn't have been aware
> of, I highly doubt that I would have been aware of the things that I'm aware of
> now. Even though I still struggle with these things because it's 18 years of
> conditioning and it's hard to, those are like habits that I developed over 18 years,
> so it's hard to undo those habits, but I'm aware and I can, kind of, I can work
> really hard to check myself whenever I see myself thinking certain things about
> me. And if I hadn't gone on the trip, I know I would have still had the mindset of
> it's all about, because you know, I do want to do something that's going to help
> my family, but like I said, I want to help my family develop the mindset of like
> it's not about materials, it's not about having, you know, it's not about living a
> rich and lavish life. It's about doing what you can to help those around you,
> putting yourself in the position to where, yeah, you're comfortable and you're
> able to take care of yourself because I do think that if you can't, you can't, well, I
> don't think that, but you do have to have food so that you can live, you do have to
> have a house, you do have to have a car so that you can, and if you want to travel,
> you have to have money to buy that plane ticket, but you can have, but those
> things, you should want those things so that you can continue to live your life,
> that you can help other people. But had it not been for the trip, I probably would
> have been thinking, "I want to help my family so that we're not poor anymore. I
> want to help them so that we can be wealthy," and helping other people probably
> wouldn't come into the picture…. I can talk to them and if they have a little
> comment, ask them, "Well, why do you feel that way or why would you say that?
> Do you really know the meaning behind what you're saying?" You know,
> something like that, and then that'll change something in them and maybe they
> can pass it on to the next person

Through her experiences with critical travel pedagogy and the development of a greater

awareness about herself and the world around her, this student has come to value altruism over

material wealth and has recognized the importance of transmitting those values to her family.

Additionally, she envision the possibility that through promoting critical consciousness among

her family and others then "maybe they can pass it on to the next person." This ripple or domino

effect is something that has been discussed frequently among the founders and officers of the

nonprofit organization as an incidental objective of critical travel pedagogy. The first stage of

this domino effect is represented by the participants' expressed desires to promote critical consciousness; the next stages are represented by this possibility that awareness will be passed to another person and so on.

While there is extensive literature about theories and pedagogies of teaching critical consciousness (Freire, 1973; Giroux, 1988, McLaren, 2003), I identified little research that specifically considers what inspires and motivates young people to become advocates for raising critical consciousness and awareness about manifestations of oppression and the suffering of others, particularly in terms of career and parenting considerations. In a study about the impact of international service trips, Cermak et al. (2011) found that the participants desired to create more awareness about social problems but were limited in terms of understanding how to take direct action in response to those problems. The findings from this dissertation suggest, in contrast to the research of service trips by Cermak at al., that raising awareness and promoting critical consciousness is just one of several significant outcomes of critical travel pedagogy.

Summary: Lives Changed

To understand how participants have responded to their involvement in critical travel pedagogy, a phenomenological approach was undertaken for this research, and the data for this chapter was acquired primarily from three open-ended questions:

- Regarding your views of yourself, your community, and the global community, please describe in as much detail as possible how they may or may not have been influenced by your involvement in the organization.

- Regarding decisions you have made in your life – personal, career, education – and any activities you have engaged in since beginning your involvement in the organization, please describe in as much detail as possible how they may or may not have been influenced by your involvement in the organization.

- Regarding plans and hopes for your future, please describe in as much detail as possible how they may or may not be influenced by your involvement in the organization.

The responses from these questions suggest that significant personal transformations have transpired, to varying degrees, in the lives of each and every one of the participants of critical travel pedagogy. The impacts have ranged from directly influencing choices of college majors and career paths to how the participants view and interact in their communities and in the world. The phenomenological approach provides insight not only into the specific actions that participants have taken in their lives but the motivations for and the directions of those actions. In particular, altruistic values developed through the evolved empathy with others, along with a greater global awareness of manifestations of oppression and exploitation, represent significant outcomes of critical travel pedagogy and the primary motivating factors behind the tangible college, career and family changes the participants have made or anticipate making in their lives. These impacts have long-term implications in the lives of the participants, as the following final passage suggests:

> I think, to an extent, probably all my choices will always be influenced by [the nonprofit organization].… I think that I'll probably be eighty and, in some kind of weird way, like, it's gonna affect, you know, even if it's, like, the way I choose to talk to my grandkids, it's gonna be influenced because everything else up until that point would have kind of been, it's the ripple effect, when things, I think, add up to each other. And so, I think, especially because [the nonprofit organization] came early in my life, I think it's always going to be there, not to mention, like, all the other things that could possibly happen. So I feel like there is a long time for more things to happen that are connected to [the nonprofit organization] that'll continue to make the ways I make my choices. So, so, yeah.

Chapter Eight: A Prescription for Despair

During the interviews, two of the Thailand trip participants shared very distressful reflections about their experiences with critical travel pedagogy. Additionally, a third student had communicated to me that she had undergone counseling in part because of her experiences in Thailand. Though compassionate suffering is a desirable outcome of critical travel pedagogy, the degree of despair and hopelessness expressed by the participants was surprising, and something I felt needed further consideration. When I conducted the follow-up focus group dialogue, this theme was raised again by the participants. Thus, this chapter addresses the destructive natures of despair and hopelessness, through the voices of the participants, and the need to reexamine critical travel pedagogy to constructively respond to these outcomes. In the first section, I present the two reflections in the form of narrative poetry (Kumashiro, 2002) that is also verbatim. My intent is to provide the reader with a sense of the speakers' cadences when they shared their reflections. In the second section, I present the passages of the focus group dialogue related to this theme. The third section is a discussion about the theoretical and practical implications of the two reflections and the follow-up dialogue.

Student Reflections: The Pain

The first reflection is from a student who participated in two educational programs with

the nonprofit organization. The trip to Thailand was her second trip, and she was particularly

impacted by her experiences in the refugee camp.

The refugee camp,
just going there, I mean, it was a very just bizarre experience,
just going there seeing how far and remote it was,
seeing how, I mean, Mae Sot was already very removed,
and then going further and going into,
being surrounded by mountains and jungle and checkpoints,
and of course I'd never been through an actual checkpoint, I was like, "what?"
And then actually going there and understanding
that these people actually did have to be there, that they had no other option,
that they, especially the part that didn't really click for me,
I knew I would be going home soon enough,
that I was just traveling through Thailand, just, and so it didn't really click
that, just, the severity of their situation,
that they were completely vulnerable,
that they were terrified,
that they had already been through a lot,
especially people who were even younger than me.
They had been through more than I'll probably ever go through,
and I didn't really, I understood it conceptually,
but the thought didn't really sink in regarding the reality of the situation
until probably a year later.
And I recall getting, no, it wasn't even a year later, it was about six months later,
and thinking about that, the refugee camp specifically,
drew me into some hardcore depression,
got me even suicidal,
it just got me, it turned me into just a total,
"What the fuck is up with the world? Fuck!"
and just being very frustrated, very angry, very enraged,
and thinking about how I, how privileged I was, how easy I had it,
and then being conflicted with,
"These people are being fucked over by the world,
and these people aren't having the opportunities I'm having,
and I'm just shitting away high school,
I'm just shitting away all my opportunities."

The second passage is from a student who also participated in two trips, and the trip to

Thailand was her second trip as well. She ultimately became very involvement in the nonprofit

organization and served as an officer and a member of the board of directors for several years.

I don't know, I think I just want to talk about it, in general.
I think, what I, like when I look back on Thailand,
and when I think about Thailand and what it kind of did for me was just,
after Thailand, I just felt like, "I don't know how things are going to get fixed."
If things are that fucked up in one country,
I don't think anything else is going to get fixed and I felt like,
after Thailand, I just, this feeling of guilt and of hopelessness
kind of just started creeping up and started kind of growing inside of me,
and I just felt like,
although it was an amazing experience and although it kind of changed me,
and it kind of made me really reflect on my ideas
about like people who are living with HIV or AIDS
or, you know, of being a woman and sex and things like that,
I feel like it really kind of pushed me in the wrong direction,
and it really pushed me to feel like shit is always going to be fucked up,
and I just can't do anything about it,
and I just have to be unhappy,
because I can't be happy.
I can't be happy that I have a car or that I have these certain things
because, no, because no one else has it.
Why should I be happy with my life and take advantage of all these things
when other people are suffering and dying and being displaced from their home,
and they're being sold?
I'm just like, "No, I can't be happy and I can't let myself be happy
because, no, it's not right."
And I just felt like it was just really hard for me to kind of get out of that
because I was just like, I didn't know how.
I didn't know, like, was it really okay for me to be happy
and to be okay with having nice clothes and buying all this shit and like, is it okay?
And it didn't feel comfortable, and I felt like a lot of
it made me uncomfortable in so many ways,
and it made me dwell on all those dumb contradictions,
and it made me, it made me feel so bad for having the life that I did,
and I felt like, I mean, just looking back on it I'm like,
"I shouldn't have taken that approach,"
because it wasn't very productive during that time
when I was trying to finish school and it was my last year,
and I was just going through a lot of stuff and I felt like a lot of that kind of,
it really affected me in just how I felt in general about life and having hope
or believing in human nature or humanity and, I don't know, it just [long pause].

I feel like at times it's always going to be that one experience
that I kind of look back and it's just always going to make me feel uncomfortable
because it just made me realize that there's so many contradictions
that I kind of need to work through.
But in the end, you just can't not have hope, you know.
That's not the purpose about these experiences.
You know, you're not supposed to kind of turn it around,
and, so that's, you know, when you asked me about Thailand,
just kind of that uncomfortable feeling.
I'm just like, "Oh, God, I don't want to go back to that."….
And without [the nonprofit organization] I wouldn't necessarily question everything,
I wouldn't like, I don't know,
it's put me in this love-hate relationship with the world,
and how I see it, and how I see myself –
I think is the best way to describe it.
And without it, I don't think I would, you know,
I would feel different, and I wouldn't think about the things that I think about,
or I wouldn't feel like I had a responsibility, you know.
And I think that's the thing of it, kind of like,
"Ah, [the nonprofit organization],
"why did it make me feel like I'm responsible for the world,
"because I'm not.
"I'm not.
"I'm not going to save the world.
"I'm not going to change anything.
"I'm not."
And that's the other thing, I'm just like, "I don't like it."
But at the same time, I'm like,
"If I didn't like it, then I would just give up on it.
"I would detach myself from it,
"and I would go to grad school for other things and I wouldn't,
"or not go to grad school and just keep doing the same shit that I'm doing now
"and not think about shit and just live a nice life."
I don't know, it just makes me uncomfortable,
and I don't know if that's a good or a bad thing.
Or maybe I'm just uncomfortable right now
because I don't know how to really deal with it.
But, I'm like maybe with age, you know, I can handle it better,
and I won't be so hard on myself. I don't know.

Both of these passages express levels of despair that are potentially destructive, involving

a deep sense of hopelessness and even thoughts of suicide. However, these participants also

described abundant positive responses to critical travel pedagogy during their interviews. This contradiction raises the question, is the pain worth the gain?

Conversation: Is the Pain Worth the Gain?

Having learned through the interviews and informal conversations with the participants the degree to which several of them had experienced such painful emotional reactions to critical travel pedagogy, I sought to obtain further insight during the focus group dialogue. However, before I could even raise the topic, one of the participants initiated a conversation about it.

> Linda: You know, because I like can't, I cannot just turn away from the ripple effects of [the nonprofit organization], and it feels like it's something that I must live with now 'cause it's not something you can close the book on. Does anyone else feel like that?

> Elizabeth: Yeah, and I think, and I, I like what you said, like earlier or something, about like how we keep having these conversations over and over, and I'm like, not that I, I don't like having, like I look forward to this conversation, but then it's like, oh it's, it's almost painful to like think about, like you know that time, and then where it's gone and now and I'm like, it just you know, this is, I get this feeling in the pit of my stomach, I'm like, I'm like "ohhh."

> Linda: Yeah, like I'm nauseous right now! [Laughter.] It's like, I'm not lying, like I feel half inspired and then half nauseous.

> Elizabeth: Yes, exactly! [Laughter]

> Mary: That's funny.

> Linda: I'm like oh my god I wanna do this trip with high school students but then I'm like nauseous like in the pit of my stomach and then like I don't want to.

> Elizabeth: Exactly, yeah.

> Brian: Why do you not want to?

> Linda: Because I'm scared

> Brian: Of what?

Linda: I don't want to be the cause of someone else's individual suffering due to their eyes being opened or being mindful or not being ignorant of like the world's problems, and like I don't wanna be responsible for that.

Elizabeth: I, I, I mean I don't feel responsible. I mean people [have] your own experiences you know like we, I think [the nonprofit organization] can only do so much as far as like planning and prepping and creating a space where students can organize but students keep kind of going to these trips and be like okay, "I'm gonna open my eyes, open my heart, open my mind, and just take the experience," and other students could be like "oh, whatever, I'm going on this trip and this is fun, I'm gonna take all these pictures, and yeah I'm gonna ride a horse and" [Laughter]. You know like.

Mary: Yeah… I think that certain type of people, there are certain type of people, and not to say that these are better or whatever, it's just certain type of people are attracted to these type of trips, and those are the type of people who can handle, like there's a reason, like they're seeking it, which is why they choose to go on it, and those are the type of people who can handle that type of expose. So I don't, so I mean it's not, I don't think it's something to be concerned about, like it's, it's, it's really, it's like, it's like, just like, and it's also, you know, like we're, we're trying to be like it, it, it goes back to like the purpose of the organization, which is like instill trust and instill hope that these people, just like everyone else, are going to be okay and like, yeah they're gonna be exposed to like some pretty painful things, but they're gonna be okay cause' they can handle it.

Linda: I feel like, that's not true, because, I feel like I went as a student, who was going to Thailand, going to take all these pictures, and just have a good time, and I came out not that. And I feel also like some people who go on these trips aren't necessarily, umm you know, guided by a purpose to like or you, I don't know what you said [Mary], you said they're, they're attracted to these type of things and the energy and types of trips, but I don't feel like it's always necessarily true, and we can't guarantee that it will always be necessarily true.

Elizabeth: Yeah…

Brian: There's a side of this thought that I, I want to kind of get into and especially with Elizabeth and Linda because you talked about feeling nauseous, nauseated. The question is, is the pain worth the gain? And I think that, that's because you, you talk about being afraid, umm, for the next student or being responsible for the impact on the student and this is after our whole conversation about the positive sides. I think, I think we've been talking mostly about positive things, positive impacts, so the question is, with that lump in your stomach, you know, about the challenges associated with greater awareness, is the pain worth the gain?

Mary: I think the pain is always worth the gain.

Linda: Elizabeth, what do you think?

Elizabeth: Umm it, I, I think it definitely is, and, I mean, I think for me personally it's always those things that cause me the most pain and the most stress because I'm like it, it's just deep down. I'm just scared because I want things to be good for other people or I don't want other people to, I mean, it just like your fears of, you know, you want students to have a, an experience of their own that hopefully makes them feel hopeful and, and it's a scary thing. Like, I think like it, it's definitely, you know, it's, it's, it's scary and it's painful but I, I don't think I would trade it; I don't think I would trade my experiences, or I don't think I would never discourage a student from, you know, traveling abroad or, you know, being uncomfortable in new experiences, umm, that obviously don't bring them harm physically and, you know, emotionally and all that. But, and, and yeah I think it is like, I think, you know, once we get in a position and or in a career or something like that for us and maybe, I don't know if I'm, I'm if, I'm overjumping or I'm overstepping, like we'll proly do work that, at end of the day, we'll be like very stress, might be very stressful, but it's like, who are we helping out in the end and who are we truly serving? And it'll, it'll suck for us sometimes, but it'll be like, I did it, it's worth it, it's worth it because we're providing services, we're doing something for this person, or for this family, or this community, or this group of people, and we are actually seeing changes happen. And they're good changes, and they're positive changes and I think this experience with [the nonprofit organization] really helps….

Linda: You know I don't know if I ever thought I would say this, but Johnstone you said "Is, is the pain worth the gain?" And I, I don't know. It always has been, but I don't know right now. Because I feel like I would be happier if I was just less aware, but I would not know, and I can't go back. And I would not trade my experiences with [the nonprofit organization] at all, for anything. I absolutely love who I have become since then, and love being with you guys. I just don't know if it's worth it.

Mary: Well at least you love, at least you love where you are now.

Linda: Yeah! And I would not trade it….

Elizabeth: And I mean, I think [Linda], I would say the same thing as like I, I didn't expect it, I just, I never expected to feel the way that I would feel, or, or ever feel hopeless, like, or ever feel like I am defeated, and, and I can't do shit about it, and I have to feel this shitty for, and I have to go to therapy to deal with those feelings. Umm, because like I mean reality is, like I had to go through therapy and like be on medication because of my personal issues and then like after coming back from Thailand and not knowing how to deal with all those emotions and of coming from this really amazing trip and then handling all these other issues and of like, fuck, like man, like I didn't, I never expected this, I never

expected my life to be in a position to where I have to talk to someone and tell them that I'm, I feel hopeless and I don't know what to do with it, you know, and not to say that that's where I'm at right now because I don't think that's where I am, I think because of the time that I've had to process and of the different experiences, and I think overall of realizing how good, how much good there is and how like it, it, just kind of opening myself up to just seeing that there's good, that there's people are good and, you know, not everything is bad and not everyone is, is trying to make a buck out of people, you know, and, and seeing that, like man, like okay, I, I don't, I maybe, I can't do shit right now, but maybe I can help someone do something, or maybe I just need to find a path for myself that makes me feel like this is worth it, that it's the pain is worth like the g—like you know the what is it?

Linda: Pain is worth the gain.

Elizabeth: Yeah, there you go. Umm, and then maybe it doesn't work for everyone, but it's like, it's like, fuck, like if it works for the group of people that I'm working with, like it makes, it like, that's all, that's all that matters to me.

Transforming Despair into Hope

From the earliest stages in the development of the nonprofit organization, I had a saying that, "if students don't cry during the trips, we haven't done our jobs." This was based on our understanding that only through emotionally connecting with the struggles of other people could the participants be transformed. This despair, or compassionate suffering, as described in Chapter Three, can be a critical component of social justice education (Carson & Johnston, 2001; Mintz, 2007). Examples of compassionate suffering are illustrated in participants' responses throughout this dissertation, but the passages in the last two sections provide uniquely painful examples of the despair experienced by participants. While this dissertation has also identified ways in which the participants have been positively impacted by critical travel pedagogy, there are unresolved theoretical questions regarding the degree to which compassionate suffering translates into social justice activism (Mintz, 2013). In this section, I argue that more needs to be

144

done to provide opportunities for participants of critical travel pedagogy to engage in discourse and social justice activism as a means to constructively respond to their compassionate suffering.

The title of this chapter comes from a perspective offered by Tatum (1992) related to learning about racism: "Heightening students' awareness of racism without also developing an awareness of the possibility of change is a prescription for despair. I consider it unethical to do one without the other. Exploring strategies to empower students as change agents is thus a necessary part of the process of talking about race and learning about racism" (p. 20). From the beginning conceptualizations of the nonprofit organization, as outlined in Chapter Five, creating agents of change was a central objective. However, no strategies were provided within the framework of critical travel pedagogy to address this objective. There was a growing consensus that raising awareness was a sufficient goal, and from that awareness individuals would respond in their own personal ways. This research has highlighted the constructive ways in which participants have responded, yet the last passages suggest that without some additional support the despair experienced by some participants could be potentially destructive.

Chabot (2008) suggests that a *revolutionary love* "encourages us to confront oppressive circumstances and painful experiences directly, as long as we translate potentially destructive emotions into constructive dispositions and behavior" (p. 816). Recognizing that raising awareness about oppression and exploitation, the suffering of others, and the complexities of the world can result in potentially destructive emotions, it becomes an imperative that critical travel pedagogy also incorporate within its framework a revolutionary love that provides alternatives of hope.

Foundational to revolutionary love is *loving dialogue* (Freire, 1970; Chabot, 2008), which has been a central objective within the current framework of critical travel pedagogy, particularly

145

during the pre-trip components and nightly during the trips. This has provided extremely

beneficial outlets for participants to constructively respond to feelings of despair and

hopelessness during the trips. However, once the educational programs are over, the spaces and

opportunities for dialogue become less frequent. As the participants suggested during the

interviews, however, the feelings of despair continue long after the programs are over, and there

continues to be a strong desire to engage in an ongoing dialogue. Maintaining spaces for loving

dialogue after the trips and potentially for years afterward should be considered for future

implementations of critical travel pedagogy. Some material considerations for future programs,

that would support maintaining an ongoing dialogue, might include developing networks

(Klandermans & Oegema, 1987; McGehee, 2011) for activist opportunities, global youth

exchanges, and program alumni. This is a critical topic for future research, as discussed in the

next chapter.

Chapter Nine: Conclusion

When I first started this journey of traveling with high school students to learn about social justice issues, I had not anticipated that it would develop into a theoretical framework. Creating the educational curriculum for the trip to Thailand changed that perspective, and I began to see the developmental components of critical travel pedagogy. My intention was to just continue planning educational travel programs with this new approach, with the hopes that the programs were having a positive and transformative impact on the participants, as informal feedback suggested. I intentionally avoided this as a topic for my dissertation so that I could pursue other areas of interest in the field of social sciences and comparative education and because I felt this topic might be too personal. Then, one day, out of the blue, I received the following text message from one of the Thailand trip participants:

> We can't stop dehumanization, but I can love those who are dehumanized regardless of who or where they are. Who knew that [the nonprofit organization] would have such a profound affect [*sic*] on me and that the people we've met have opened me up to the possibilities of love. Is it dumb to feel that being someone in life isn't as important as having love, respect, compassion for people?

I understood immediately that behind the words of this text message was considerable contemplation. And I recall thinking, as emotions welled up within me, "Wow, this is huge." Meaning, maybe this is having a greater impact than I imagined. I also recognized that it was necessary for me to better understand specifically what the impacts were on the participants. So,

I took the advice of my colleagues and abandoned my original dissertation topic to begin this retrospective examination of traveling with high school students to learn about manifestations of oppression.

Limitations of Research

Before reviewing the results of this dissertation, I want to acknowledge the limitations of the research and provide assurances of actions I have taken to minimize those limitations, where possible. Specifically, this research is potentially limited in four respects: ethics, validity, reliability, and generalizability. Qualitative research is often perceived as possessing these limitations; however, all of these "can be approached through careful attention to a study's conceptualization and the way in which the data are collected, analyzed, and interpreted, and the way in which the findings are presented" (Merriam, 2009, p. 210).

As previously mentioned, one of the reasons I had originally avoided this topic for my dissertation was because I felt too close to it, raising in my mind a question of ethics. I recognized this limitation from the outset and sought to minimize it by (1) acknowledging that bias exists in all research (Smith & Noble, 2014); (2) attempting to understand my own biases in the context of this research; and (3) ensuring a high level of competence, rigor, and integrity in my research (Merriam, 2009). The phenomenological approach of this research, consisting of epoche, phenomenological reduction, horizontalization, and imaginative variation, as discussed in Chapter Four, provided an ideal structure to assist me in displacing myself (and my biases) from the research subjects and the data throughout the research design, data gathering, and analyses, allowing me to examine the data from a variety of perspectives. Additionally, I sincerely sought to know the answer to my research question without expectations.

Validity, which is a reflection of how well findings correspond to reality, can be improved by a variety of methods (Merriam, 2009). This research incorporated three specific methods: respondent validation, reflexivity, and rich descriptions. Respondent validation of the data was supported by giving participants a forum to critique my preliminary interview analyses during the follow-up focus group dialogue. Reflexivity was addressed through a continued and critical awareness of my role as the researcher and the biases and agendas I inherently carry with me. Lastly, I provided rich descriptions throughout the dissertation in the form of direct and detailed interview responses from the research subjects.

Reliability is commonly defined as a measure of how well findings can be replicated and is particularly problematic for qualitative research because individual perspectives invariably differ. Bogdan & Biklen (2007) assert that qualitative researchers "view reliability as a fit between what they record as data and what actually occurs in the setting under study, rather than the literal consistency across different observations" (p. 40). Thus, again through respondent validation, reflexivity, and rich descriptions, I sought to ensure a reliable representation of the data to the settings under study throughout the analyses.

Generalizability is not an objective of this research because the situations explored in the research are extremely unique and the number of research subjects is insufficient for generalization purposes. However, I have attempted to provide thorough descriptions and analyses throughout the dissertation so that the readers can determine the transferability of this research to their particular situations. Through further implementation and research of critical travel pedagogy, some degree of generalizability may be obtainable in the future.

Review of the Research Question

      This research began with a simple question, which I restate here:

To what degree has the development of critical travel pedagogy – a theoretical

framework for using experiential education to learn about local and global

manifestations of and struggles against oppression – as implemented by a specific student

education and travel program influenced the critical consciousnesses of those who have

been involved in its initial formation?

      As the first endeavor into portraying critical travel pedagogy as a theoretical framework and exploring its impacts, this research was necessarily undertaken using a phenomenological approach. I developed the interview questions to allow the research subjects the greatest possible freedom and flexibility in their responses. From these responses, I identified three principal themes, as outlined in Chapter Four: (1) philosophical perspectives about the objectives and implementation of the educational programs; (2) experiences and responses recalled of the trip to Thailand; and (3) ways in which the participants felt they were impacted from their involvement in critical travel pedagogy.

      Participants' philosophical views provided a sequential and hierarchical structure of the development of critical travel pedagogy. The components of this structure, presented in Chapter Five, are consistent with the theoretical foundations upon which I consider critical travel pedagogy to have originally been developed, as discussed in Chapter Three. The research-derived hierarchical components of critical travel pedagogy consist of experiential learning and cultural awareness, global consciousness, awareness of oppression, and critical consciousness. The theoretical foundations, derived from the initial literature review, consist of experiential learning, anti-oppressive education, global consciousness, teaching compassion, multicultural

education, and critical pedagogy. While the overlap of theory is evident, the hierarchical structure provides a greater representation of the relational and conditional aspects of the theoretical foundations. Specifically, global consciousness, in the context of critical travel pedagogy, cannot be acquired autonomously but is dependent upon experiential learning and cultural awareness. Similarly, awareness of oppression is dependent upon a global consciousness. And critical consciousness is dependent upon an awareness of oppression. This dependency within the theoretical framework provides a guide for implementing critical travel pedagogy, in which participants begin with cultural awareness and experiential education and ultimately lead towards a developing critical consciousness. This reconceptualization of critical travel pedagogy along with additional theoretical considerations are addressed later in this chapter.

When asked to recall experiences from two years earlier during their trip to Thailand, the responses of the student participants focused almost exclusively on experiences associated with the five ways we examined manifestations of oppression during the educational program: sexism, classism, ableism, xenophobia, and colonialism. Through their recollections, they demonstrated the hierarchical components of critical travel pedagogy. Specifically, the direct experiential interactions with people in positions of privilege and oppression along with an awareness of observed cultural diversities set a foundation for deeper understanding. The development of a global consciousness was demonstrated throughout the students' responses in the ways in which they compared and contrasted observations and experiences in Thailand to conditions and situations in the United States and elsewhere in the world. Through these individual and collective explorations, the students developed and expressed critical understanding of oppression and privilege, in both local and global contexts. Each of the students

experienced some degree of discomfort or compassionate suffering from their newfound knowledge—a disruptive knowledge—that caused each of them to reflect on their own positionality within a much bigger global standpoint. This critical consciousness was not only expressed through the students' recollections of their experiences and responses to the trip to Thailand but in the very tangible ways all of the participants stated that they have been, and continue to be, impacted by their involvement in critical travel pedagogy.

In response to the interview prompts about how participants felt they have been impacted, five themes emerged in the analyses: altruistic values, traveling with a purpose, global awareness, promoting critical consciousness, and instances of despair. Impacts expressed by the participants that were determined to be influenced by altruistic values involved explicitly stated desires or intentions to help people in disadvantaged positions, changes of school major and/or career based on a desire to make a positive social impact, particularly in contrast to choosing a career based on achieving economic prosperity, and instances of past, present or intended community engagement. Most of the altruistic responses provided by the participants were shown to be consistent with the empathy-altruism hypothesis, suggesting that empathetic connections developed through direct interaction with people in oppressed situations provide the foundational motivation to engage in altruistic interests and behaviors later.

Participants expressed, throughout the interviews, a significant evolution in their awareness of global issues and their interconnectedness. Of particular interest from this analysis was the degree to which participants developed an awareness of their own privilege in a global context and the potential implications for future research. Increased global awareness and altruistic values has impacted the way the participants now view travel. These changes in the ways participants view the purposes and responsibilities of travel were evident in their

descriptions of travel experiences subsequent to their involvement in critical travel pedagogy and in desires expressed to travel, study, and/or work abroad in the future. There were three primary considerations expressed by the participants for wanting to travel in the future: intercultural encounters and engagement, altruistic motivations, and the further development of a critical consciousness. While the first consideration—intercultural encounters and engagement—is consistently shown in research to be a motivating factor for travel, the latter two considerations have not been documented in mainstream travel research as motivating factors, offering an opportunity for future research.

Participants demonstrated a developing critical consciousness and a desire to further that development through greater global awareness and travel experiences. They also expressed a strong desire to promote critical consciousness among other youth, the general population, and within their own families. This desire even influenced the career paths of several of the participants to study and work in the field of education. While there was a clear consensus of the value of an evolving critical consciousness, several of the participants also described instances of significant despair resulting from this greater awareness and critical consciousness. This last point raises considerable theoretical questions and implications for the development and implementation of critical travel pedagogy, and it highlights the degree to which critical travel pedagogy has influenced the critical consciousnesses of those who have been involved in its initial formation. Participants have expressed deep critical understanding about oppression and exploitation, the suffering of others, and the complexities of the world, even to the point of causing great emotional turmoil and despair, yet they have all argued of the importance of such critical consciousness not only for themselves but for others. In responding to the research question and gaining understanding about the impact of critical travel pedagogy on the critical

153

consciousness of the participants, an additional question arises: How can the potentially destructive despair resulting from an evolved critical consciousness be transformed into constructive action and hope?

Theoretical Considerations and Directions for Future Research

As an initial exploration into the development and implementation of critical travel pedagogy, employing a phenomenological approach, this research provides a broad overview of the theoretical foundations and outcomes while identifying other potential theoretical considerations. The dominant theoretical themes, based on the responses of the participants and discussed in Chapter Five, are experiential learning and cultural awareness, global consciousness, awareness of oppression, and critical consciousness. Within each of these themes are a myriad of other influences, many of which I have attempted to address in the associated sections of the dissertation, including recommendations for future research. In this section, I focus primarily on theoretical considerations related to the need for a constructive response to the potentially destructive outcome of despair.

Adopting Tatum's (1992) argument, in the context of critical travel pedagogy, it is a *prescription for despair* to raise awareness about manifestations of oppression *without also developing an awareness of the possibility of change*. By promoting a critical consciousness through a deep awareness of oppression and exploitation, the suffering of others, and the complexities of the world, as is the objective of critical travel pedagogy, despair is necessarily a potential outcome. In fact, three of the seven Thailand trip participants expressed significant feelings of emotional turmoil and despair as a direct consequence of their experiences in Thailand. Based on their own arguments that the pain was worth the gain and noting the

154

necessity of compassionate suffering, yet recognizing that such despair is potentially destructive, it is critical to understand ways to transform despair into constructive outcomes.

Chabot's (2008) notion of *revolutionary love* advocates for this transformation from despair "into constructive dispositions and behavior" (p. 816), as previously discussed. It is from this theoretical consideration that I will pursue my next research objective, in the context of critical travel pedagogy, to examine how best to incorporate revolutionary love, particularly loving dialogue, into our educational programs. Interestingly, this theoretical consideration is not new to critical travel pedagogy. From the earliest days of the development of the nonprofit organization, there has been a desire among the founders and organizers to create a community of critical thinkers that would be a resource for inspirational support and provide safe spaces for critical dialogue. Primary focus, however, has consistently been on developing the main educational component—the trip. This research has shown that a post-trip component is crucial for ensuring an ongoing, constructive development of critical consciousness, incorporating critical reflection, political efficacy, and critical action (Watts, et al., 2011), through ongoing loving dialogue (Chabot, 2008) within a beloved community (King, 1958). The following figure illustrates this added dimension to critical travel pedagogy.
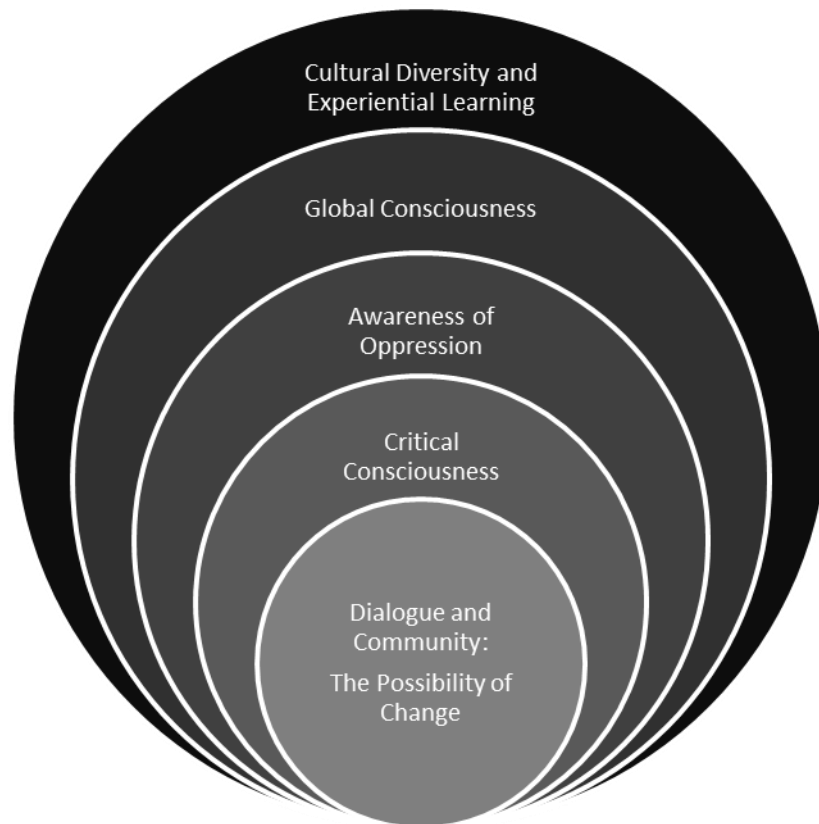
Figure 7: Revised Theoretical Framework

Epilogue: "Let the world change you, and you can change the world"[20]

Critical travel pedagogy has evolved simply from a desire to make some positive impact in the world. It has not been "fun," in the conventional sense, but it has been, for the most part, a rewarding journey. Since the trip to Thailand, I have conducted four more educational programs to Belize, Puerto Rico, Egypt and Peru. At some point before, during, and/or after every one of these trips, I have said to myself, "This is the last time." It is not for a lack of passion for critical travel pedagogy, but rather because it is just very difficult. It is difficult physically, in terms of the administrative aspects of running the organization and planning the trips while also working

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[20] The quote, "Let the world change you, and you can change the world," is attributed to Ernest "Che" Guevara and was featured in the film *The Motorcyle Diaries* by Sales (2004).

full-time as a high school teacher.[21] More significantly, it is difficult emotionally, for with every trip comes more compassionate suffering and occasions of personal despair. What has kept me going are the students' interests in the programs and my own recognition of what the participants have also concluded: The pain is worth the gain.

I entered this dissertation without any expectations as to what the research might find. There were times when I felt our programs were making a positive long-term impact, and there were also times that I feared any apparent impact was fleeting. Since the initial interviews, I have kept in contact with most of the participants, and the views expressed during the interviews do not appeared to have changed. Several participants who mentioned specific career aspirations as a consequence of their experiences with critical travel pedagogy have since fulfilled those goals, include two participants who are now working as high school counselors and one who has a job in an elementary school, combining her passions for dance and working with young children.

I look forward to incorporating the results of this research in future educational programs and continuing to research the theoretical implications. Mostly, I look forward to developing a beloved community with the founders, organizers, and participants of our educational programs, for they too have expressed strong desires to create such a community and it is they who have inspired me to believe in the possibility of change.

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[21] My job as a high school "teacher" involves not only teaching five courses, but running the school's online newspaper, publishing the school's yearbook, supervising weekly video broadcasts, coordinating yearly women's day programs, directing plays, sponsoring no less that two clubs each year, tutoring, mentoring, and so much more.

Appendix One: Syllabus for Critical Travel Program to Thailand

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Critical Travel Pedagogy: [Student Travel] to Thailand, August 2008

"To surmount the situation of oppression, people must first critically recognize its causes, so that through transforming action they can create a new situation, one which makes possible the pursuit of a fuller humanity." ~ *Paulo Freire*

Program Objectives

As we prepare for our trip to Thailand, it's important that we understand our objectives for participating in this program. Of course, we will learn about the history and cultures of Thailand and Southeast Asia, but, more importantly, our goal is to learn about oppression and to help promote an anti-oppressive perspective.

What does it mean to be anti-oppressive? First, anti-oppression begins with a desire to understand and eliminate all forms of oppression, which include racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism, otherization of the different, cultural hegemony, global exploitation, etc. A significant step towards an anti-oppressive perspective is by expanding the ways we see situations (expanding our perspectives). Each of us starts from a unique perspective, based on our experiences, our age, our race, our gender, our sexuality, our socio-economic status, our physical ability, etc. Yet, through conscious effort, we can learn to see situations from a multitude of perspectives. The more perspectives from which we can see a situation, the more we will understand how oppression exists and is experienced and how we can individually develop an anti-oppressive perspective.

As we begin our research of looking at the various "messages" that influence our perspective, it's important that we constantly ask ourselves the following questions: (1) Who is the author of the message? (2) Who is the intended audience of the message? and (3) What is the intent or purpose of the message? Through continuing to ask these questions, we can begin to critically examine the underlying meanings of the messages to which we are constantly exposed.

Seminar Overview

Our meetings will engage in two principle activities: (1) planning for the trip and (2) expanding our perspectives. Ideally, the two components should be linked. What we decide to do during our trip should be based on our objective of expanding our perspectives. In general, the first half of our meetings will focus on a curriculum that promotes "anti-oppressive" perspectives and the second half will focus on planning for the trip.

While we have an established agenda, it's important to note that our topics may change organically with our conversations, and our agenda may ultimately look much different by the time we reach the end of the seminar. However, we all need to ensure that our topics do not deviate from our overall program objectives.

158

Meeting 1: Introductions

> *"Perhaps travel cannot prevent bigotry, but by demonstrating that all peoples cry, laugh, eat, worry, and die, it can introduce the idea that if we try and understand each other, we may even become friends." ~ Maya Angelou*

Perspectives
1. Opening activities – getting to know each other
2. Review syllabus

Trip Planning
1. Status of tickets
2. Fundraising

Assignments
1. Independently research topics of interest from the following sources:
    a. General information about Thailand: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thailand
    b. Tourism in Thailand: http://www.lonelyplanet.com/worldguide/thailand/
    c. Current events: http://www.bangkokpost.com/
2. Create a map of Thailand (see attached): label neighboring countries, major cities, and points of interests from your research

Meeting 2: Oppression and Activism

> *"The moment we choose to love we begin to move against domination, against oppression. The moment we choose to love we begin to move towards freedom, to act in ways that liberate ourselves and others. That action is the testimony of love as the practice of freedom." ~ bell hooks*

Perspectives
1. Opening activities – our similarities and differences
2. Review syllabus
3. Share what we found from our homework (maps and research)
    a. Who were the authors? Who were the audiences? What were some common themes from the research?
    b. Any surprises?
4. Pab's Story
5. What is oppression? A general discussion of racism, sexism, heterosexism, classism, otherizing, hegemony, exploitation, and privilege.

Trip Planning
1. Fundraising and outreach
2. Initial destinations of interest

Assignments
1. Start weekly journal (see attached)
2. Independently research topics of interest from the following sources:
    a. Videos: http://www.youtube.com; http://vids.myspace.com
    b. Pim's story: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/6360603.stm

Meeting 3: Oppression in Thailand

> *"Women are the only exploited group in history to have been idealized into powerlessness."* ~Erica Jong
> *"Sexism is the foundation on which all tyranny is built. Every social form of hierarchy and abuse is modeled on male-over-female domination."* ~Andrea Dworkin

Perspectives
1. Opening activities – four corners
2. Review syllabus
3. Share what we found from our homework (videos and Pim's story)
4. Video: "Delivering the goods: Deadly messengers"

Trip Planning
1. Fundraising and outreach
2. Initial destinations of interest

Assignments
1. Weekly journal
2. Independently research topics of interest from the following sources:
   a. Google search of tourism in Thailand
   b. Thailand: debunking the paradise myth:
      http://onwardoverland.com/articles/kohchang.html

Meeting 4: Tourism

> *"Most people have come to prefer certain of life's experiences and deny and reject others, unaware of the value of the hidden things that may come wrapped in plain and even ugly paper. In avoiding all pain and seeking comfort at all costs, we may be left without intimacy or compassion; in rejecting change and risk we often cheat ourselves of the quest; in denying our suffering we may never know our strength or our greatness."* ~Rachel Naomi Remen

Perspectives
1. Opening activities – favorite vacation
2. Review syllabus
3. Share what we found from our homework (tourism in Thailand)
4. Video: "Life and Debt"

Trip Planning
1. Fundraising and outreach
2. Initial destinations of interest

Assignments
1. Weekly journal
2. Independently research topics of interest from the following sources:
   a. General overview of Buddhism: http://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhism
   b. Religious diversity: http://www.religioustolerance.org/rel_plur.htm;
      http://www.crosscurrents.org/gross.htm

Meeting 5: Buddhism and Religious Diversity

"Man is the religious animal. He is the only religious animal. He is the only animal that has the True Religion –– several of them. He is the only animal that loves his neighbor as himself and cuts his throat, if his theology isn't straight. He has made a graveyard of the globe in trying his honest best to smooth his brother's path to happiness and heaven."
~ Mark Twain

Perspectives
1. Opening activities – spirituality
2. Review syllabus
3. Share what we found from our homework (Buddhist and religious diversity)

Trip Planning
1. Fundraising and outreach
2. Begin detailed planning for trip

Assignments
1. Weekly journal
2. Independently research topics of interest from the following sources:
     a. Burmese refugees: http://www.ncgub.net/BHRY/2006/refugees.html

Meeting 6: Political Oppression

"I arrived in Thailand in March of 2002 with my husband and three children…. My husband and I suffered abuse and forced labor by the Burmese army while living in our small village…. Both men and women were beaten by the soldiers while on forced labor duty…. The reason that we made plans to leave was because of the time they tortured my husband…. I worried that I would be tortured next so we decided to leave the village and come to Thailand." ~29-year-old Karen woman

Perspectives
1. Opening activities – without a home
2. Review syllabus
3. Share what we found from our homework (Burmese refugees)

Trip Planning
1. Fundraising and outreach
2. Detailed planning for trip

Assignments
1. Weekly journal
2. Independently research topics of interest from the following sources:
     a. TBD

Meeting 7: Topics TBD

"The only reason we don't open our hearts and minds to other people is that they trigger confusion in us that we don't feel brave enough or sane enough to deal with. To the degree that we look clearly and compassionately at ourselves, we feel confident and fearless about looking into someone else's eyes." ~Pema Chodron

Topics and format will be determined by participants.

Thailand

Weekly Journal Assignment

Please type your responses to the following questions and email to Brian Johnstone before Monday of each week. It is okay if your responses do not change from the previous week, but you should make every effort possible to be as reflective and honest as possible.

Include your name and date.

1. Describe the themes or topics that we researched or discussed during the previous week that you found particularly interesting or surprising?

2. Have any of your expectations about the trip changed since you first decided to participate? If so, please describe the changes.

3. What are your thoughts about "oppression"?

4. If there is anything else related to the planning of the trip or your perspective that you would like to write about, please include it here.

Appendix Two: Email Invitation to Prospective Participants

Dear [name of prospective participant],

I would like to invite you to participate in a study examining the impacts of involvement in [name of organization]. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. Participation in this study will include a 2-hour individual interview and a 2-hour focus group discussion with other individuals involved in the organization. The times and locations of the interview and focus group discussion will be selected based on your preferences.

Information you share with me will be kept confidential and names and/or other personal identifying information will not be associated with your responses. Again, please be assured that your participation in this study is completely voluntary.

Please review the attached "Consent to Participate in Research" form. If you would like to participate in the study, please sign the form and return it to me within seven days.

If you would like more information about participating in this study, please feel free to contact me at your convenience. Thank you for your time!

Sincerely,

Brian Johnstone
Ph.D. Candidate
UCLA Department of Education
[email address not shown]
[phone number not shown]

University of California, Los Angeles

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

*Critical Travel Pedagogy: Promoting an Anti-Oppressive Global
Consciousness through International Travel Experiences*

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Brian Johnstone, M.A., under the guidance of Val Rust, Ph.D., at the University of California, Los Angeles. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because of your involvement in [name of organization]. Your participation in this research study is voluntary. The principal investigator is a co-founder of [name of organization]. You are not under any obligation to participate in this research project. There will not be any negative repercussions to participants' ability to volunteer [name of organization] or participate in a future educational program conducted by the organization either as a result of participating in the research or as a result of choosing not to participate.

Why is this study being done?

This research will study the development and implementation of critical travel pedagogy—an approach to education that uses experiential education to teach about social justice issues—by a community-based, nonprofit student education and travel organization. Specifically, this research will examine the perspectives of the founders and organizers of the organization and participants of an educational program and trip led by the organization.

What will happen if I take part in this research study?

If you volunteer to participate in this study, the researcher will ask you to do the following:

1. Participate in an individual interview conducted by Brian Johnstone at your home or at a public location of your choosing. The duration of the interview will be approximately two hours. During the interview, you will be asked specific questions about your involvement in and experiences associated with [name of organization].
2. Participate in a focus group discussion with other research subjects. The focus group discussion will be conducted by Brian Johnstone at a home or public location agreed to by all focus group participants and will take approximately two hours. During the focus group discussion, you will be given an opportunity to critique the initial analyses of the individual interviews and share your thoughts with other individuals involved in the organization.

How long will I be in the research study?

Participation in the study will take a total of about five hours over a period of approximately one month**.**

Are there any potential risks or discomforts that I can expect from this study?

There are minimal potential risks or discomforts anticipated in this study. You are free to withdraw your consent at any time.

Are there any potential benefits if I participate?

Your participation in this study may give you an opportunity to reflect upon and address your feelings, concerns, curiosities, and thoughts on your involvement in the nonprofit organization and/or educational program.

The results of the research may help with the preliminary findings of how individuals are impacted by anti-oppressive education, high school student travel experiences, and critical approaches to travel programs.

Will I receive any payment if I participate in this study?

You will receive no payment for your participation.

Will information about me and my participation be kept confidential?

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can identify you will remain confidential. It will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of keeping all data securely in possession of the researcher. It will be destroyed no later than three years after completion of the researcher's PhD program. All participants will be asked to keep what is said during the group session between the participants only. However, complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

What are my rights if I take part in this study?

You can choose whether or not you want to be in this study. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may leave the study at any time without consequences of any kind. You are not waiving any of your legal rights if you choose to be in this research study. You may refuse to answer any questions that you do not want to answer and still remain in the study.

Who can answer questions I might have about this study?

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact:
Principal Researcher: *Faculty Sponsor:*
Brian Johnstone, M.A.   Val Rust, Ph.D.
[phone number not shown]   [phone number not shown]
[email address not shown]   [email address not shown]

If you wish to ask questions about your rights as a research participant or if you wish to voice any problems or concerns you may have about the study to someone other than the researchers, please call the Office of the Human Research Protection Program at (310) 825-7122 or write to

Office of the Human Research Protection Program, UCLA, 11000 Kinross Avenue, Suite 102, Box 951694, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1694.

SIGNATURE OF STUDY PARTICIPANT

I understand the procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

Name of Participant

Signature of Participant	Date

Appendix Four: Interview Protocol for Organization Founders

1. Tell me about yourself: your name, your date of birth, your ethnicity, when you graduated from high school, the schools you have attended since graduating high school, any jobs you have worked, and any other general information about yourself that you would like to share.

2. Describe in as much detail as possible how you became involved in [name of the organization]. Include dates, people, specific events, original reasons and motivations, and anything else you can recall that might be related.

3. Describe in as much detail as possible your role in founding the organization.

4. Describe in as much detail as possible your *original* philosophy about the purpose of the organization when you first got involved.

5. Describe in as much detail as possible your *current* philosophy about the purpose of the organization.

6. What are the reasons you decided to [not] continue being involved in the organization?

7. What are your expectations and/or hopes for the future of the organization and its approach to education?

8. What role, if any, would you like to have in the future of the organization and its approach to education?

9. Do you have any other thoughts you would like to share about the organization – its history, its programs, the people involved, its future, etcetera?

10. Regarding your views of yourself, your community, and the global community, please describe in as much detail as possible how they may or may not have been influenced by your involvement in the organization.

11. Regarding decisions you have made in your life – personal, career, education – and any activities you have engaged in since beginning your involvement in the organization, please describe in as much detail as possible how they may or may not have been influenced by your involvement in the organization.

12. Regarding plans and hopes for your future, please describe in as much detail as possible how they may or may not be influenced by your involvement in the organization.

13. Do you have any other thoughts you would like to share about your views, decisions and actions since becoming involved in the organization, and possible future plans, as they relate to the organization and/or its approach to education?

Appendix Five: Interview Protocol for Organization Officers

1. Tell me about yourself: your name, your date of birth, your ethnicity, when you graduated from high school, the schools you have attended since graduating high school, any jobs you have worked, and any other general information about yourself that you would like to share.

2. Describe in as much detail as possible how you became involved in [name of the organization]. Include dates, people, specific events, original reasons and motivations, and anything else you can recall that might be related.

3. Describe in as much detail as possible your role in developing the organization and supporting its educational programs and trips.

4. Describe in as much detail as possible your *original* philosophy about the purpose of the organization when you first got involved.

5. Describe in as much detail as possible your *current* philosophy about the purpose of the organization.

6. What are the reasons you decided to [not] continue being involved in the organization?

7. What are your expectations and/or hopes for the future of the organization and its approach to education?

8. What role, if any, would you like to have in the future of the organization and its approach to education?

9. Do you have any other thoughts you would like to share about the organization – its history, its programs, the people involved, its future, etcetera?

10. Regarding your views of yourself, your community, and the global community, please decribe in as much detail as possible how they may or may not have been influenced by your involvement in the organization.

11. Regarding decisions you have made in your life – personal, career, education – and any activities you have engaged in since beginning your involvement in the organization, please describe in as much detail as possible how they may or may not have been influenced by your involvement in the organization.

12. Regarding plans and hopes for your future, please describe in as much detail as possible how they may or may not be influenced by your involvement in the organization.

13. Do you have any other thoughts you would like to share about your views, decisions and actions since becoming involved in the organization, and possible future plans, as they relate to the organization and its approach to education?

Appendix Six: Interview Protocol for Participants of the Trip to Thailand

1. Tell me about yourself: your name, your date of birth, your ethnicity, when you graduated from high school, the schools you have attended since graduating high school, any jobs you have worked, and any other general information about yourself that you would like to share.

2. In as much detail as possible, describe the pre-trip educational component of the program, including activities, topics, timeframe, etcetera.

3. In as much detail as possible, describe the trip, including locations you visited, people with whom you talked, conversations in which you engaged, your feelings about the different locations, people, conversations, experiences, etcetera.

4. What aspects of the trip stand-out as being the most significant to you and why?

5. What are your thoughts about [name of the organization]? What do you think is the purpose of the organization? Is it a worthwhile purpose? Does the organization fulfill its purpose?

6. Regarding decisions you have made in your life – personal, career, education – and any activities you have engaged in since participation in the trip to Thailand, please describe in as much detail as possible how they may or may not have been influenced by your participation in the trip.

7. Regarding plans and hopes for your future, please describe in as much detail as possible how they may or may not be influenced by your participation in the trip to Thailand.

8. Regarding your views of yourself, your community, and the global community, please describe in as much detail as possible how they may or may not have been influenced by your participation in the trip to Thailand.

9. Do you have any other thoughts you would like to share about your views, decisions and actions since participating in the trip, and possible future plans, as they relate to your experiences?

10. How could this program have been even better?

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