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How Porous are the Walls that Separate Us?: Transformative Service-Learning, Women's Incarceration, and the Unsettled Self

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Issue 34 - Social Justice Action, Teaching, and Research

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Social Justice Action, Teaching, and Research

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Coralynn V. Davis and Carol Wayne White

Humboldt Journal of Social Relations

Introduction from the Managing Editors

Jennifer Miles and Michael P. Weiss

The theme of Issue 34 of the Humboldt Journal of Social Relations is Social Justice Action, Teaching, and Research. The first article of this issue, “The Art of Social Activism,” features the works of a slam poet, Vanessa Pike-Vrtiak, an activist artist, Eduardo Valadez, and an overview of the social science literature capturing the role of art in social justice movements. The two artists featured are both active in their communities and worldwide via the internet, raising awareness about inequality, lack of access to resources, and barriers to social justice. Their work adds to the rich heritage of artists who came before them, who use their art to create safe spaces, help define social justice movements, create empathy, and inspire action.

The next two pieces focus on action and pedagogy related to social justice for queer people. Christina Accomando’s article “Social Justice Action and Teaching: the Legacies of Eric Rofes” is about continuing the activism of educator Eric Rofes. The article highlights how activism takes place on many fronts, including academic settings and in non-academic communities. The next article, “Designing ‘Queer’ Across Cultures: Disrupting the Consumption of Diversity” by Kim Berry, shows how a queer films class was difficult to teach without recreating socially constructed dichotomies, and required looking further to challenge colonialism and hegemonic difference.

In their piece “Challenges in Minimizing Teacher Authority While Facilitating a Student-Owned Activism Project,” authors Nicholas Chagnon and Donna King utilize an anarchist framework in constructing an upper-division Sociology of Popular Culture class. Chagnon and King integrated core principles of anarchism, such as non-hierarchical organization and direct action (also being used in Anti Globalization and Occupy Wall Street movements) into their curriculum. Continuing with an exploration of social action is Chris Larson’s “Keeping People in Their Homes: Boston’s Anti-Foreclosure Movement.” His work shows how networks of grassroots organizations, legal service attorneys, neighborhood organizers, and homeowners work together to help fight foreclosure in Boston, Massachusetts after the 2009 housing market collapse. Larson shows how multiple movement tactics (including both direct action and the insider action) can complement each other, and how they form the basis for crucial negotiation tactics that can be used by homeowners facing foreclosure.

The final two articles continue exploring issues related to teaching and social justice action themes. These articles address the challenges educators face crafting pedagogical practices that disrupt hierarchical dichotomies of us/ them and server/ served. In “A Study Abroad Program in Tanzania: the Evolution of Social Justice Action Work,” authors Elizabeth Cannon and Carmen Heider document three study abroad trips in which student experiences were valuable tools in informing and helping construct the program. In the next article, “How Porous are the Walls that Separate Us?: Transformative Service Learning, Incarceration, and the Unsettled Self,” authors Coralynn Davis and Carol White share their experience teaching the class “Women and the Penal System: Knowing Ourselves, Our Communities, and Our Institutions” within a women’s prison. Davis and White built their program through Butin’s political and antifoundational perspectives on service learning to create a classroom climate that would break down perceived barriers between incarcerated women and university students.

Humboldt Journal of Social Relations
The Art of Social Justice
Jennifer Miles and Laura Dawson

Introduction

As this HJSR special issue on social justice unfolded, it became clear to the editorial team that this publication would be incomplete without addressing the well-documented role of art in social justice movements. We asked two of our managing editors, Jennifer Miles and Laura Dawson, to research and write about this area of social action. They interviewed two artists, a spoken word performer and a visual artist, both of whom understand their art as part of larger social justice projects. These artists raise awareness, highlight obstacles and avenues for change, and create space for solidarity and sanctuary. The following montage situates their artistry within their own biographies and a rich history of social change through art. Mary Virnoche and Jennifer Eichstedt, Editors.

Visual and performing arts are woven into the histories of many movements for social change. The Black Arts and Feminist Arts movements of the 1960's and 1970's left us an exciting repository of paintings, poetry, music and more (Collins 2006; Gardner-Hugget 2007). Artists do more than document change. The artist, as well as the art, inform and shape change (Martinez 2007). Art simultaneously draws from culture and produces culture. In this sense art is political "because meanings are constitutive of processes that, implicitly or explicitly, seek to redefine social power" (Alvarez, Dagnino and Escobar 1998:7). Art can redefine social power through creating space that is safe and inclusive, allowing people to connect their personal stories with those of others in the struggle for justice, develop ways to deal with the struggle, and inspire hope.

As a way of situating social justice on a personal level, poetry evokes in the listener/reader a visceral reaction to lived experience. In the literature examining the role of poetry in social justice work, authors acknowledge the power of poetry to personalize struggles for autonomy and agency, and to give a voice to sometimes impersonal discourses of oppression and injustice. As

radical feminist Carol Hanisch (1970) noted, "the personal is political."

While academics study inequality in ways that provide statistical as well as narrative understanding of causes and consequences, poets deepen our understanding of that inequality by giving powerful voice to its effects. By speaking with naked emotions such as rage, helplessness, frustration, and hope, poetry delivers a perspective of inequality many individuals may never have encountered were it not for the poet baring their soul. This interpersonal dialectic inspires empathy, which can spur social action in the poet's audience. Clay (2006) and Reed (2005) write of poetry as a culture-building tool within social movements. McCaughan (2006) and Anzaldúa (2002) write of the depth of knowing (conocimiento) that art and poetry provide, in contrast and in addition to intellectual methods of inquiry and related narrative forms. Audre Lorde makes a strong case for the transformative potential of poetry and the emotions it portrays and evokes in protest to a pervasive culture of "institutional dehumanization" (1978).

Traditionally, the social scientific academic world has studied art and poetry in social justice movements using a variety of

interpretations and lenses. More recently, social scientists themselves have called upon their colleagues to embrace broader forms for both exploring questions and presenting their research. In these actions they further blur disciplinary distinctions and the boundaries between researcher, participant and performer.

In this endeavor, we honor what our colleagues in the arts have long known – the power of the arts to help us discover, understand and change the world around us. Richardson and St. Pierre (2005) suggest a spectrum of “creative analytic processes” that include poetry, readers’ theater, comedy and satire, among many other art forms, as means for communicating social justice work in ways that resonate with larger audiences and academics alike. Likewise, Denzin (2003) explores “performance ethnography” as a method for authoring autoethnographic insights in his recent project on racial justice. These research shifts link to work on critical pedagogy (Friere 1970/2007; hooks 1994; Giroux 2011; Kincheloe 2004). Critical pedagogy centers the identities, experiences, and existing knowledge of communities of learners. It also asks those interested in social change to engage communities in critical discourse and linking their own lives to collective experience and actions for change. In these processes, whether in traditional classrooms or in grassroots organizing spaces, art remains a powerful tool for learning about and expressing actions for change.

In the following section, Vanessa Pike-Vrtiak addresses the “institutional dehumanization” faced by those who work in social justice. She also creates a safe place for expression, a place away from the desk, where she and her audience are free to passionately disagree with people who would deny social justice to others. People who are themselves the recipients of historical social justice work, yet object to social justice efforts for groups “not like them.” From this safe place,

Vanessa and her audience may voice their frustration at the roadblocks they encounter.

Humanizing the 9-5—An Interview with Vanessa Pike-Vrtiak

It’s important that, no matter the style of art, human beings should practice listening to what the artist and the piece are trying to say—Vanessa Pike-Vrtiak

Vanessa Pike-Vrtiak was born in Santa Barbara and raised in Humboldt County, and she has been writing since she learned how to read. Vanessa considers art to be the perfect accompaniment to social justice and action. The struggle to achieve social justice is at times overwhelming. Art, according to Vanessa, delivers social justice themes to an audience in a way that is aesthetically pleasing, yet no less visceral for its beauty.

“The 9-5” was written using the same process Vanessa uses for the rest of her repertoire. Vanessa reads and listens and watches the world. When she is struck by a particular aspect of society, she engages in “free-flow writing,” putting down in words what she is thinking and feeling; not editing, not limiting herself, allowing each piece to emerge as a whole entity, unbounded by literary convention. The finished piece is most often produced in this fashion, seldom edited or retouched.

Vanessa intends her poetry to give a voice to those whose voices are largely silenced in mainstream society. Vanessa also hopes to hold a mirror up to those who may never otherwise understand how their beliefs harm others, as seen in the featured piece “The 9-5.” Vanessa had her first job after graduation with an organization that works with at-risk youth when she met “an old grandmother in a cowboy blouse” who so strongly opposed homosexuality that she was unwilling for her grandson to receive help if it were to come from “one of them.” This experience affected

Vanessa deeply: "I wanted this woman to hear herself, so I created this piece."

Through live performance, Vanessa's poetry takes on aspects of social action in creating a space for social justice to be discussed among a wide range of people. As Vanessa states, "there is immense power in spoken word and standing by what makes us human and different: our ideas. I feel like when I give my piece a voice, ideas come alive. They burn with the same fire in which they were written." Vanessa is the founder of the "A Reason to Listen" poetry collective and produces a local television program of the same name as well as organizing regular live poetry readings and community consciousness-raising events. Vanessa has traveled the United States performing her works, including a performance at the Apollo Theater in New York, and has self-published four anthologies of poetry.

The 9-5

by Vanessa Pike-Vrtiak

Sometimes it's hard to not take work home with you
especially when you sit across from an old grandmother in a cowboy blouse
Wrangler jeans, wrinkles as bleak and drained as the death of an October sky
telling you: her grandson can't be around homosexuals
and the history of a homosexual deserves no voice
only baseball bats to the precious lips of surrogate skulls

and no matter how long I hold my breath
how long I stand in silence
allowing her to eat all that is between us
I cannot change her heart
I cannot pronounce this generation dead
snap it under the cufflinks
And hear its consciousness hit the coffin
Because who am I to dance between right and wrong
to lick the triumphs of tolerance
off her nicotine stained fingertips

I cannot catch too much sunlight in her eyes
Because I don't want to believe that she is overtly loving
I cannot bash her police loudspeakers
that document every personal story near her bedside

I cannot apologize to her grandson
that is half coffee and half crème
tell him that one day he will be able to learn that the other half of his heritage
is out there waiting for him to unbury it
shameless in the noon day sun

instead I'd rather let her fantasize in her ignorance
read her misconceptions their Miranda rights
and bleach her middle
so she can no longer remember what her body identifies with
and instead be content as human

In The “9-5,” Vanessa translates the stifling frustration of words unspoken into a public poetry slam that engages her audience in the struggle for equality. From here, the editorial team moves on to the work of visual artist Eduardo Valadez, who uses words in his artwork to jar his viewers out of their comfort zones. Eduardo’s work defies convention in its many incarnations and its layers of subversive meaning. Through his artwork, Eduardo continues to learn and educate others in an ongoing dialogue of social justice consciousness-raising.

Graffiti to Grassroots: An Interview with Eduardo Valadez

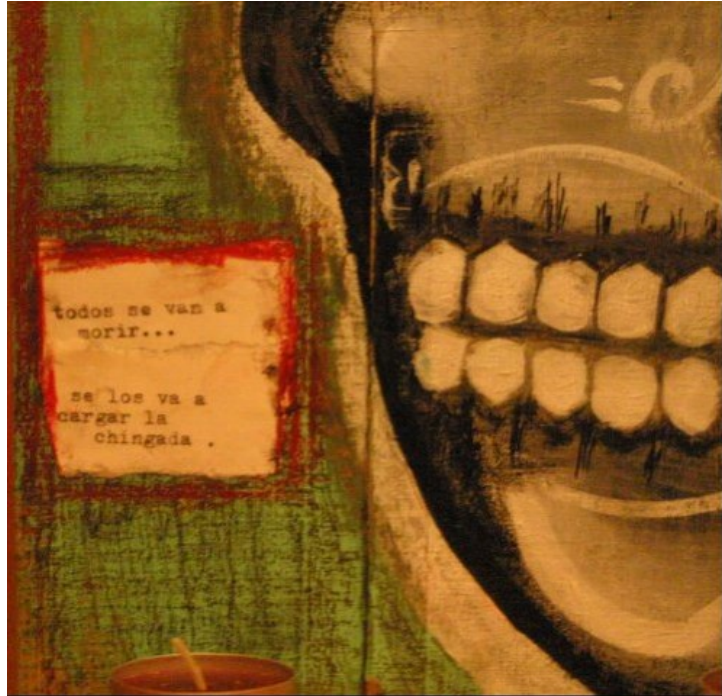
Eduardo Valadez Arenas was born in Mexico City in 1986. He and his mother immigrated to the U.S. in the early 1990s to join his father who had come here to find work. He spent most of his young adulthood in a predominantly Latino neighborhood in Thousand Palms, California. Today he lives in the Bay Area finishing an undergraduate degree in Community Arts at the California College of the Arts.

When he was about 15 years old, Eduardo started exploring art as an outlet for his experiences and feelings. Graffiti gave him the greatest sense of agency:

[Graffiti] allowed me to be out in the world and really say what I wanted to out loud, with no restrictions and no one to answer to. That’s something I seldom get to do nowadays, working within organizations or in the art world in general.

He considers graffiti to be a form of guerilla art, and although he still practices it, he tries to keep it separate from the art he

does in institutions. Eduardo’s art is tightly linked with his activism, graffiti roots and language as action. He uses Spanish ‘slang’ within his creations.



So I think showing work in an institution or gallery setting layered with these words that are in Spanish, words that everybody is familiar with, is really how it starts to build this kind of activist layer. I think Spanish, speaking



Food = Energy

Spanish, and being Mexican still is very much taboo. And if not taboo, it is still a touchy subject, ironically enough. I mean, we think we've gotten to this place where we are very diverse as a country, but there is still a source of power and that source of power is middle aged, white men with money, all three things that I'm not. I am an American now. I've lived in the United States for 20 years. I go to a college that is predominantly white and the professors are predominantly white. Through using the language that is not the norm, I feel it will invoke those feelings of "We're not what he is. How will we interpret this art? How do we interpret these words that we don't know?"

By embedding Spanish slang within institutionally sanctioned artwork, Eduardo potentially engages several dialogues among those who witness his work. For the white, middle and upper class non-Spanish speaking patrons, his work asks them to live in a space – even if fleeting – in which they may not fully comprehend their surroundings. This is a space in which new immigrants with limited English speaking abilities are very familiar. For those who share Eduardo's identity as a Spanish speaker, his artwork insists through its presence in the institution: "we belong."

He notes that life becomes a struggle to "assimilate or function in dual environments." As an immigrant, he feels society pressures him to be culturally 'American,' but Eduardo also feels pressure from home to be culturally 'Mexican.' Many others like Eduardo, who have occupied multiple, often competing, identities, have expressed both the challenges and opportunities of living in these liminal spaces (DuBois 1903; Anzaldua 1987; Collins 2000; Anzaldua & Keating 2002). One of the ways he addressed the struggles of multiple identi-

ties was through an art project with a local high school.

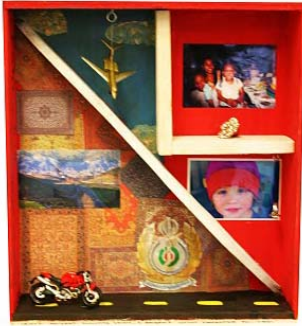
It was the summer of 1992 when I arrived to Southern California, the place that would be my home for the next two decades and a half. De El Distrito Federal a La Frontera Norte Americana llege. This moment has served to be an anchor to my identity as an immigrant, pocho, mojado, wetback, traveler, and artist, as well as a translatable character living in a country of immigrants.

In 2011, I had the opportunity to share this story with the Students of Berkeley High Arts and Humanities Academy as the Visiting Artist on the "From Here to There" interdisciplinary project. The project focused on techniques in performance, visual arts, English, and science to tell stories of immigrants who had come to call Berkeley home. Together we created a series of memory boxes that would serve as capsules to the stories.

The students who participated in this project represented nine different nationalities. The memory boxes represented their lived experiences navigating American culture and the cultures of countries from which they migrated.

Most recently, Eduardo undertook a new project that allowed him to continue his work with kids. He began working with





Phat Beets, an Oakland-based food justice program connecting small farmers to urban communities and facilitating youth leadership (Phat Beets 2012). This project expanded Eduardo's own social justice knowledge as he researched issues of food and inequalities for his art-based project: "I found out the role food played in the conquest of the Americas, and how that plays a role in my own personal ancestral identity." He read *Open Veins of Latin America* (Galeano 1973) and was also mentored by Chicano poet and singer Ricardo Tijerina. He translated this new knowledge about food into an artistic and informational bean bag game he set up outside Children's Hospital in Oakland that helped get kids thinking and asking questions about food origins.

The game was used (centuries ago) by farmers and Native Americans (using) beanbags often filled with seeds. As a metaphor, I thought that that was something that I could work with... I added informational facts about family farms, urban farms and commercial farms. The information tells how far a family farm is from you, how far an urban farm is from you.

The bean bags also included information about the pros and cons of urban and commercial farms, as well as nutrition information. Along with the game, he created an educational poster with more in-depth information about family and urban farms.

Since learning about the food justice movement, Eduardo plans to give more of his attention to food issues in Mexico:



I want to do a series of handmade books, maybe large format books or a scroll-like project, to address a lot of these issues. ...in Mexico there is this really unconscious approach to the consumption of unhealthy food. I want to be a voice for that.

While Eduardo still loves the traditional art forms such as painting and bookmaking, he found power in community art:

I find that this interactive type of art making, which in many people's eyes is not art at all but community organizing, is the best way to advocate and effect change.

Jennifer Miles will receive her BA in Sociology from Humboldt State University in December of 2012. She is a traveler, a writer, and a Jane of All Trades. Jennifer plans to continue her education in graduate school studying global systems and their inbuilt inequalities.

Laura Dawson recently graduated with a BA in Sociology from Humboldt State University. She is an activist, poet and rock climber. In Fall 2012 she will begin her MA in Sociology at HSU focusing on environmental justice.

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Social Justice, Action, and Teaching: The Legacies of Eric Rofes

Christina Accomando

Abstract

This article serves to track the impact and importance of prolific activist, author and mentor Eric Rofes. In particular we explore his contributions and leadership at Humboldt State University prior to his unexpected death in June 2006. His passing left colleagues, students and activists in shock, but also determined to carry on his legacy through their own work.

“We may hate the endless meetings, be sick of licking envelopes, feel frustrated working across different identities and political visions, and be drained by community cannibalism, but we've got to continue doing the work.” —Eric Rofes, 1998

Eric Rofes is known nationally as a prolific author and a seasoned activist for queer liberation and social justice. As a professor of education at Humboldt State University, Eric Rofes fused academia and activism in a rare and dynamic combination that inspired students and colleagues alike. He brought his skills as an organizer, passion for justice and keen intellect to work that spanned the university— from Education to Multicultural Queer Studies, from Women’s Studies and Ethnic Studies to the Environment and Community Program, from Leadership Studies to the university-wide Diversity Plan Action Council.

To the shock of friends and colleagues, Rofes died of a heart attack on June 26, 2006, in Provincetown, Mass., where he was working on his thirteenth book. He was 51 years old. A vibrant and influential leader,

Eric's sudden and untimely death is being mourned around the world. “Eric was an absolute giant of the gay movement -- as an intellectual, an organizer, and an activist,” said feminist anthropologist Gayle Rubin. “He was a massive presence, whose influence was felt across a broad range of constituencies . . . It’s as if a mountain has suddenly vanished.”

“Eric Rofes was a life force,” said Kim Berry, chair of HSU’s Department of Critical Race, Gender and Sexuality Studies. “More than any other person on campus he worked systematically to build institutional change for social justice.” Rofes co-chaired HSU's Diversity Plan Action Council (DPAC), which he believed could be the catalyst for diversifying HSU and transforming the university culture, a process that he knew would require strong leadership and sustained effort.

He worked tirelessly and passionately to lead movements that helped create the places where knowledge from different perspectives could be shared constructively, said DPAC co-chair Jyoti Rawal.

The kind, strong and determined energy he brought is a difficult combination to find in a leader; he will be so missed.

Among Rofes' long-term legacies is the groundbreaking North Coast Education Summit, which he built from scratch ten years ago. With a radical focus on education, democracy and social justice, the conference grew exponentially each year, bringing together hundreds of educators, students and community activists from California and beyond. Since Eric's death, the Education Summit merged with the Multicultural Center's annual Diversity Conference and is now the annual Social Justice Summit. The Summit continues to fulfill Eric's vision of connecting people across disciplines, across regions and across differences of race, class, gender and sexuality. Eric consistently saw fostering relationships across differences as a key to effective organizing.

Eric never took his friendships for granted, nor his positions on the issues he cared deeply about, always looking for greater complexity and possibilities for fostering change

said UC Berkeley lecturer and long-time friend Will Seng. "He changed the way we now think of gay men's sexuality and, by his example, prompted many gay men to take a closer look at feminism, class and racism." Eric brought those complex intersections into his organizing, his personal life, and his academic projects. He was at the forefront of the Multicultural Queer Studies (MQS) minor at HSU, the first of its kind in the nation, designed as a rigorous academic program and to help build intellectual, emotional and political community. Rofes wanted to serve HSU students and offer a model for the nation of a queer studies program that would study sexuality and gender as part of a complex matrix that includes race, ethnicity,

class and culture. This intersectional vision continues in a new academic program at HSU, the Department of Critical Race, Gender and Sexuality Studies (CRGS), which offers an interdisciplinary major with pathways in ethnic studies, women's studies and MQS.

"Eric and his partner Crispin were the first gay people we met in Humboldt when we were looking to move here from Southern California," said community organizer Todd Larsen, speaking of Eric's impact on his life and community.

Their friendship gave us a good feeling about moving to Humboldt. Eric was not only a mentor to my partner Michael Weiss and myself personally, but also an influential part in helping us develop Queer Humboldt. He motivated us to be involved in community-building efforts, including Queerhumboldt.org and events to help bridge gaps between the LGBT and other members of our community.

Todd felt that one of Eric's many talents included helping people "think about things from a different perspective. It was like he had a bigger view of the world—a view that others may not see at first."

Always with an eye toward institutional change, Rofes brought together faculty from across the California State University system to create the first-ever CSU-wide queer studies consortium, which developed a website, a listserv, and an annual conference. This effort involved more than sixty faculty in diverse disciplines at over a dozen campuses and is a testament to both Rofes's leadership and his ability to work in coalition.

Above all else, Rofes was a passionate educator. "Eric was an extraordinarily gifted teacher whose courses were rigorous and often life-changing," said education professor Ann Diver-Stamnes.

His passion for teaching was fueled by his commitment to students and by his belief in education as having the power to transform society and reinvigorate democracy. This belief guided his teaching and led him to develop pioneering courses such as Education for Action and Gay and Lesbian Issues in Schools.

These courses are central to the Multicultural Queer Studies program at HSU, and they also serve as a resource for incorporating LGBTQ issues in teacher training programs throughout California (a project that the California Safe Schools Coalition is actively pursuing).

HSU alum David Bracamontes, now at San Francisco State University, remembered the profound impact Rofes had on his life.

I first met Eric at a weekend seminar he taught, and that weekend changed who I was as a student and a gay man. For the first time I had a role model, someone within my community that I could respect and admire. When I later returned to HSU as professional staff, I was honored and humbled to work side-by-side with this man who had changed my life.

Rofes inspired generations of students, from his early days as an elementary school teacher to his most recent work in the School of Education at HSU. "Eric Rofes was a remarkable scholar and teacher," reflected María Corral-Ribordy, an alum from the School of Education and currently a CRGS lecturer.

He had the capacity to see the brilliance in each of his students and nurture our continued development from that point. His uncompromisingly high expectations demonstrate great respect for all his students' individual potential.

Eric inspired María to pursue a career in education, encouraged her community activism and actively mentored her in both endeavors. She and Eric were among the co-founders of Perfect Union, a grassroots website that facilitated strategic dialogue and broad-based activism in the movement for marriage equality.

In his article "Marriage and Civil Disobedience," Rofes described his 2004 San Francisco City Hall wedding to his lover Crispin Hollings:

I joined thousands of people this weekend and defied the laws of my state in a brazen act of civil disobedience. We didn't chain ourselves to a building, sit down in the middle of a crowded intersection, or occupy a public official's office until our demands were met. We simply got married.

He argued for legal efforts paired with well-strategized direct action, pointing out that civil disobedience can "take abstract and highly charged issues and stamp human faces onto them."

His work was always visionary, but also pragmatic. He lived a life of inspiration as a servant and scholar for the people. Unassuming yet undeniable, he wielded a practical passion for change, beyond the armchair of revolution,

recalls colleague and community member Issac M. Carter.

"I want to be a voice affirming the value and heroism of long-term commitment to democratic processes of community organizing," Rofes said in a 1998 speech.

We may hate the endless meetings, be sick of licking envelopes, feel frustrated working across different identities and

political visions, and be drained by community cannibalism, but we've got to continue doing the work.

Continuing the work, for Eric Rofes, meant everything from grassroots organizing to transforming national organizations to transforming teacher education to publishing books. One of his strengths as an activist and scholar was his willingness to work in diverse modes and tread into unknown waters. Rofes's diverse scholarly, creative and collaborative work has ranged from autobiography to joint authorship with elementary school children to social science research to collaborative performance. In the 1980s he published three books featuring the voices of his students at Fayerweather Street School on the difficult topics of parents, divorce and death. *Socrates, Plato and Guys Like Me: Confessions of a Gay Schoolteacher* (Alyson Publishing, 1985) tells the story of his first teaching job and his eventual firing as an elementary school teacher who refused to stay in the closet. Education professor Jeff Sapp testifies to the transformative power of reading this memoir during his own coming-out process:

The impact of Eric's book on my personal and professional life was stunning. Here was a vision of the authentic person I desperately wanted to be in this world. As a somewhat frightened closeted teacher, it was the very first time in my teaching career that I realized I would be OK, that being honest, truthful and having integrity were indeed cornerstones of being a good teacher.

Two decades later, Rofes continued to publish groundbreaking books on education, including *A Radical Rethinking of Sexuality & Schooling: Status Quo or Status Queer* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2005) and the edited volume *The Emancipatory Promise of Char-*

ter Schools (SUNY Press, 2004).

Rofes's most pioneering work addressed gay men's health, culture and activism, including the important volumes *Reviving the Tribe: Regenerating Gay Men's Sexuality and Culture in the Ongoing Epidemic* (Haworth Press, 1995) and *Dry Bones Breathe: Gay Men Creating Post-AIDS Identities and Cultures* (Haworth Press, 1998). More recently, *Test/Positive/Now: The Infection Monologues* is an experimental, multi-media, multi-voiced performance piece about gay men who test HIV-positive in the contemporary era. San Francisco's Yerba Buena Center for the Arts presented a pilot performance of the piece in 2005, and Rofes was continuing to develop and expand the work with visual artist Daniel Derdula, poet and hip hop activist Tim'm West and other collaborators. And in the year after his death, Eric's longtime associates Will Seng and Sara Miles collaborated to edit Rofes's final book: *Thriving: Gay Men's Health in the 21st Century*.

Eric Rofes often worked through intense collaborations. One of his greatest skills was bringing people together, and he deeply valued -- and did not take for granted -- the ability to work across differences. "Eric understood that bridging differences is first about full awareness and acknowledgment that difference need not be polarizing," reflects Tim'm West.

His role as a mentor and friend, beyond affirming a powerful spirit of cross-cultural collaboration, reinforced the vast similarities between people who find courage to look beneath the surface for the sense justice that binds the most powerful allies. More than this, for someone who clearly knew so much about a lot of things, Eric's humility fueled a powerful curiosity that marked him as one the great voices for social change in our time.

HSU MultiCultural Center Director Marylyn Paik-Nicely noted that Rofes worked for social change simultaneously within institutions and at the grassroots level.

Eric was committed to and intently focused on the project at hand and truly valued the contributions of people around him. He brought people with their expertise and experiences together to collaborate and create: He really knew how to create communities for change.

Like his other colleagues, Paik-Nicely spoke to both the impossibility of replacing Eric and the need to carry on his work, "We must honor his spirit by continuing the challenging work of cultural transformation at HSU and in the world."

Eric Rofes is survived by his lover of 16 years, Crispin Hollings, and by his mother Paula Casey-Rofes and brother Peter Rofes. Hollings has donated Rofes' books, papers and research files to the James C. Hormel Gay & Lesbian Center at the San Francisco Public Library. Updated information about the availability of these materials and about other ongoing projects can be found at www.ericrofes.com.

Christina Accomando is a Professor of English and Critical Race, Gender and Sexuality Studies at HSU. She is the author of "The Regulations of Robbers": Legal Fictions of Slavery and Resistance (Ohio State University Press), and her articles have appeared in Still Seeking an Attitude: Critical Reflections on the Work of June Jordan, the Norton Critical Edition of Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, and journals including MELUS, African American Review, Feminism & Psychology, and The Antioch Review. Along with Eric Rofes, she is one of the founding members of HSU's Multicultural Queer Studies Minor Program.

Afterward: Eric Rofes' Legacy
by Michael P. Weiss

The Eric Rofes Multicultural Queer Resource Center (or ERC), at Humboldt State University, is an organization named in honor of Eric Rofes. The ERC was established after his death to commemorate and continue his community organizing efforts around Queer/Anti-Racist/Feminist activism.

The ERC's mission is to shift public opinion of the queer community on campus and in the local area from tolerance to acceptance. The ERC creates a hub for students to learn about events and organizations on campus. Highlighted events include those focused on social justice and sex positivity that create positive connections within the community. The ERC resource library also provides students with the opportunity to do research and gather information pertaining to queer subject matters.

The ERC also brings queer students, faculty, and staff together to meet and work cooperatively planning events, blending ideas and creating volunteer opportunities. The Center annually coordinates about 25-30 volunteers. Every year the event roster expands. During the 2011 – 2012 academic year events included "National Coming Out Day," the "Queer Community Reception," "HomoComing," "Trans Week of Remembrance," "KINK on Campus," the "National Day of Silence," "Night of Noise" drag show and "DAMN" (Disability Art and Music Night).

The Multicultural Queer Studies Minor, established in 2003, has been incorporated into the newly created Critical Race, Gender and Sexuality Studies Department (CRGS). This department was created out of the merging of the Ethnic Studies and Women Studies majors. CRGS majors take an interdisciplinary common core of courses and then choose a pathway in either Ethnic Studies, Multicultural Queer Studies or Women's

Studies. These interdisciplinary programs use the frameworks of Postmodernism, Feminism, Critical Race Theory, Intersectionality, and Queer Theory to look at the issues of power, privilege and oppression. They use these frameworks to analyze social issues and fuel social justice work on campus and in the community.

Through these various efforts across campus, it is clear that Eric Rofe's legacy is robust and vibrant at HSU.

Michael P. Weiss (not the Michael Weiss mentioned in the Accomando article) is a Sociology major with a minor in Multicultural Queer Studies at Humboldt State University and will be graduating in May of 2013. He has a passion for pop culture and new media and technology, and hopes to complete his PhD in the fields of knowledge and power.

Designing “‘Queer’ Across Cultures:” Disrupting the Consumption of Diversity

Kim Berry

Abstract

This article charts the underlying logic and structure of a course titled “‘Queer’ Across Cultures,” created to provide a transnational focus for the groundbreaking minor in Multicultural Queer Studies, spearheaded by Eric Rofes. Concerned that students would too easily revert to a practice of consuming diversity, I have attempted to weave together readings which complicate a colonial gaze by challenging hegemonic constructions of essential difference. My primary strategy in crafting this course has been to focus on the term “across” in the title. In other words to foreground and theorize the transnational within the production of both similarities and differences in sexual and gender practices, categories, and meanings. Through examining the gendered and sexual dynamics of colonialism, nationalist movements, and contemporary economic and cultural globalization, I seek to engage with the history of relations within and across nations that shape contemporary meanings of sex, sexuality and gender.

Gloria Wekker’s (2006) ethnography, *The Politics of Passion: Women’s Sexual Culture in the Afro-Surinamese Diaspora*, begins with a detailed account of the life story of Miss Juliette, a working class Afro-Surinamese woman, complemented by a rich reflection on the project of ethnography and the meaning of personal narrative. In the midst of this nuanced analysis, Wekker articulates a painful paradox. She writes,

How do I tell Miss Juliette’s life history, and the sexual stories of other Creole working-class women, in light of a dominant Euro-American history of representing black women’s sexuality as excessive, insatiable, the epitome of animal lust, and always already pathological? How do I avoid staging a latter day Sa-

rah Baartman show, with Juliette as the traveling spectacle this time? (2006:5).

Wekker clearly articulated the concerns I felt in the design of the course titled “‘Queer’ Across Cultures.”¹ Many students revert to a familiar pattern of “consuming” diversity when engaging in cross-cultural analysis, collecting examples of essentialized cultural practices and arranging them like colorful jellybeans in a jar. The “consumption of diversity” is the downfall of a form of multiculturalism which emerged in the 1980s, and which Stuart Hall (1991) argues is based on exotification, reproducing in new forms colonial assumptions of fundamental difference between colonizers and colonized. I have worked to create a class which looks at differences across cultures while not reifying and exoti-

cizing these differences; it is a project that must relentlessly complicate a colonial gaze seeking to render the world intelligible through the narrative frame of essential difference.

I developed “‘Queer’ Across Cultures” as part of the groundbreaking Multicultural Queer Studies minor spearheaded by Eric Rofes. Shortly after arriving at Humboldt State University, he initiated conversations with those of us across campus committed to queer studies; reaching out to colleagues in English, Ethnic Studies, Psychology, Sociology, Political Science, Theatre, Film and Dance, and Women’s Studies. True to his spirit as a seasoned organizer, Eric gathered us together for a series of beautifully executed, agenda-packed meetings. Under his leadership we moved through discussions about queer theory and activism, diversity, multiculturalism and intersectionality, to arrive at pragmatic discussions of curriculum. While we were fortunate to have in place a number of courses that fit our emerging mission, it was clear we had two gaping holes: a cross-cultural course on sex, sexuality and gender; and a queer history course.

I don’t know how it happened that I was slated to create a new course in an area outside of my primary research and scholarship. I couldn’t say whether Eric asked me directly (knowing I have a Ph.D. in anthropology), or glanced towards me expectantly. Perhaps his sheer presence and exuberance simply inspired me to volunteer. I do know that I had no business taking on a new project. I was overextended with a precarious balance of teaching, administering, building the Women’s Studies program and parenting. Yet I believe many of us who had the honor of working with Eric found ourselves, at his prodding, doing more than we thought we could. He modeled it for us, willfully ignoring any discouraging barriers and en-

gaging in projects and producing works many see as mutually exclusive.²

As the project unfolded, I sought to integrate postcolonial studies with anthropology and queer studies. I also sought to focus primarily on communities outside the US, for the program’s groundbreaking focus on the intersections of multicultural and queer meant that my colleagues’ had already designed courses such as “Multicultural Queer Narratives,” “Performing Race and Gender,” and “Queer Women’s Lives.” These courses foreground the diverse realities of queer communities of color in the US. Thus, this new course did not have to carry the burden of de-centering a broader curriculum focusing primarily on a prototypical gay, white, class-privileged, and male subject. My charge was to provide a transnational focus, one which would raise critical questions about meanings and practices of sex, gender and sexuality across cultures.

My primary strategy in crafting this course has been to focus on the term “across” in the title – in other words, to foreground and theorize the transnational within the production of both similarities and differences in sexual and gender practices, categories, and meanings. Through examining the gendered and sexual dynamics of colonialism, nationalist movements, and contemporary economic and cultural globalization, I seek to engage with the history of economic, political and cultural relations across nations that shape contemporary meanings of sex, sexuality and gender.

Below I chart out the structure of the class, the key insights and limitations embedded within different sections, and reflect on the overall project of the class.³ I organize the course into three sections: Section I engages with the diversity of categories, relationships and meanings; Section II is focused on the intersections of colonialism, nationalism, race/ethnicity, sexuality and gender in the construction of heteronorma-

tivity; and Section III focuses on situated sexualities and genders in postcolonial contexts. By outlining the rationale for the design of the course, I hope to contribute to the broader conversations on the development of postcolonial queer studies curriculum.

Section I: Diversity of categories, relationships and meanings

This first section of the course introduces a basic framework to critically interrogate the following assumptions underlying hegemonic discourses of sex, gender and sexuality: 1) heterosexuality is the only natural and normal expression of sexuality; 2) there are two and only two sexes, male and female; and 3) there are two and only two genders, masculine and feminine, which naturally correspond with the two sexes. By analyzing the dynamics of naturalizing hegemonic discourses of sex, we examine the ways biology is called forth to support these claims, and we explore alternative conceptualizations of sex, gender and sexuality.

There are multiple frameworks from which to argue against these naturalizing discourses. One of the most obvious is that biological studies on difference between men and women emphasize differences between groups and overlook differences within the categories themselves and similarities across these categories. Joan Scott (1988) aptly argues that poststructuralist theory enables us to see how meanings of categories framed as opposites are mutually constituted. She argues for examining differences in the plural (within and between categories), as well as similarities across groups. The recent work of intersex activists, gender theorists and some biologists (Intersex Society of North America, Butler 1990, Fausto-Sterling 1993, 2000) enables us to understand that our delineation of bodies into two and only two sexes is itself a product of our anxieties, desires, and segmented workings of power including genital surgery in order

to create the illusion of two and only two sex categories. While Fausto-Sterling (1993, 2000) grounds her arguments in a re-reading of biology, Butler (1990) is the most skeptical of our ability to identify the materiality of bodies outside the power-laden discourses of gender. She argues that the language used to describe the materiality of the body (sex) is fully informed by our socially constructed definitions of gender.

In related work, feminist and queer theory has also firmly challenged the claim that heterosexuality is natural. Katz's (1996) work on the invention of heterosexuality lays the groundwork for important aspects of the transnational analysis of the course. His historical analysis of the invention of the concepts of heterosexuality and homosexuality in the late 1800s, and the radical changes in their meanings over the next 40 years, enables students to understand the shifting ground of definitions of normative and non-normative sexual practices and desires, and the recent phenomena of the assertion of sexuality as identity. His work also helps to introduce Foucault's (1980) argument that Western discourses of sexuality, including the elaboration of both normal and deviant desires and practices, are best understood through an analysis of power as productive rather than repressive. This early attention to the workings of power and the production of subjects enables a focus on the concepts of subject-positions, discourse, power, agency, and resistance throughout the course.

A singularly important work on identity and the invention of heterosexuality and homosexuality is Sommerville's (1997) insightful analysis of the methods of early sexology. In this article she argues that the methods of comparative anatomy used in 19th century racist biology (in which the surface of the body was measured and analyzed in the belief that such markings revealed the essence of a person's intelligence, abilities, and desires)⁴ were adopted by early sexolo-

gists. Thus, early studies were obsessed with surface variations in genitalia, leading to claims of oversized clitorises and elongated labia of the female “invert’s” body and African American women’s bodies as well. Held up to a mythical norm, these “inverts” and African American women’s genitalia were declared less differentiated from men’s. Drawing upon Darwinian theories of evolution in which organisms with less sexual differentiation were cast as less evolved, these selective readings of bodies led to a ranking of African American women and “inverts” as lower on the scale of human evolution. Intersexed persons were similarly relegated to the status of less evolved and therefore less human. Thus, rather than race and sex as somehow discrete entities of analysis, Sommerville shows how early discourses of sexology – and the invention of heterosexuality – were dependent upon and produced through the methodologies of early biological discourses of race.

These works introduced within the first several weeks of the course, and which are centered on Euro-American contexts, enable students to engage in a radical questioning of concepts of sex, gender and sexuality. I intersperse the work of these theorists with cross-cultural analyses which elaborate multiple ways of categorizing bodies and desires. These anthropological studies foreground cultures that have (or had) more than two genders or sexes, including numerous Native American communities which identified three, four, or five genders, some of which also define(d) three sex categories (Lang 1999); as well as *Hijra* communities in India, who craft their lives through performing a third gender category (Nanda 2000). Meigs’ (1990) analysis of gender among the Hua people of Papua New Guinea is important for demonstrating the plasticity of human creativity, for Meigs argues that among the Hua, what a dominant discourse would label as sex (particularly the

primary sex characteristic of genitalia) is rather a secondary form of classification of people. Among the Hua in the 1980s, gender was based not on genitalia, but on concepts of juiciness and dryness – thereby creating a system in which it is expected that people change gender categories over time as their bodies become more or less juicy. This relegation of genitalia to a secondary place among the Hua, when read alongside Butler’s (1990) argument that Western culture explains the materiality of the body through power-laden discourses of gender, provides a lived example of the demotion of “sex” to something other than primary or causal, thereby disrupting one of the key narratives of sex in Euro-American culture.

Similarly, anthropological studies of sexuality challenge the supposed natural division of people into heterosexuals and homosexuals. We can see from such studies that while many communities defined both normative and deviant forms of sexual relations, these definitions do not conform to a Euro-American structured hetero/homo divide. In fact, Lang (1999) argues that while some Native American communities did not stigmatize sexual relations among those of the same gender, many did. In the context of three or four gender categories among many Native American communities (in most cases these third and fourth gender categories are for girls/women who became like men and boys/men who became like women), Lang argues that heterogender relationships, defined as involving people of two different gender categories, were considered normal, while homogender relationships were generally taboo. A dominant Western perspective privileging genital conceptions of sex would label many of these heterogender relations as gay or lesbian. These differing forms of classification operate as more than semantics, for at the heart of the difference between heterogender and heterosexual is the identification of who is

in a “normal” category of sexual relationship, with all the resulting rights and privileges that normality accrues.

Furthermore, cross-cultural analysis can reveal how definitions of so-called “normal” and “deviant” sexuality may be focused less on the “sex” of the bodies (i.e., male-male sexual interaction = always homosexual) and more on the sexual act of penetration. In what is broadly referenced as a “Latin American” model of male same-sex sexual practice, the penetrator does not compromise his gender and sexual position as a “normal” man, while the man who is penetrated is feminized and rendered deviant (Kulick 1997).

This exploration of cultural differences in both categories and meanings of sex, gender and sexuality is a useful project for contesting the supposed naturalness of these terms, but it is a project fraught with problems if we refuse to identify and complicate its underlying assumptions. In particular, such reference to cultural difference tends to freeze cultural productions of categories and meanings in time and space, thereby ignoring differences within a culture, similarities across cultures, and the long history of cultural transformations-- the most recent and dramatic of which have been colonialism, nationalist movements, and the current globalization of economies and cultures. Dichotomies of Western/Non-Western, traditional/modern, local/global, are seamlessly reproduced, appearing to be somehow naturally occurring or at least self-evident oppositions. The assertion of a “Latin American” model of gay sexuality is a case in point. Authors such as Quiroga (2000:195-226) argue that this assertion ignores differences in the construction of gay sexuality in Latin America – both within and across countries – and it ignores similarities among Latin American and Euro-American communities.

Section II: Intersections of colonialism, nationalism, race/ethnicity, sexuality and gender in the construction of heteronormativity

Postcolonial scholarship enables an understanding of “queer across cultures” that does not essentialize culture and which refutes a colonial discourse. One of its key insights is a direct challenge of the often unstated assumption that there is a Western world which is discrete, bounded, and separate from the Non-Western world. This assumption is replicated in other dichotomies – North/South, Tradition/Modernity, Developed/Undeveloped, whereby oppositions are posited as if they are somehow based in essential natural or cultural differences.

Scholarship in postcolonial studies reveals that:

1. A central strategy of colonial rule was the production of knowledge about the “East” that postulated essential difference from the “West” (Said 1978).
2. The development of the West, and its resulting “modernity,” was produced through the extraction of resources and labor from the colonies, thereby revealing the complete dependence of a Western construction of self on the exploitation of the colonized (Mies 1998 [1986]). Even defining elements of Western “culture” – such as British tea – emerged through colonial domination, for both the tea and sugar plantations that are central to that quintessentially British “tradition” are dependent upon the labor and the geography of Asia and the Caribbean (Hall 1991).
3. Values heralded as “traditional” in newly independent countries often emerged out of the colonial encounter itself, thereby revealing the mutual production of both tradition and modernity. In ef-

fect, many so-called “traditions” are rather the elite nationalist interpretations of colonially imposed values parading in the guise of national essence (Chatterjee 1993).

4. Modernity is revealed as a discourse that asserts that (a supposedly universal) “we” are always progressing, that “our” lives are improving through technological innovation. This “myth of progress” is revealed as the progress of a few based upon the retrogression of many (Mies 1998 [1986]).

While these key insights are not directly focused on issues of sex, sexuality, and gender, the work of breaking down colonial oppositions is essential to the project of a transnational focus on “Queer” Across Cultures that attempts to disrupt the consumption of diversity. Ann Stoler’s (1997) work brings postcolonial studies closer to queer studies by examining the centrality of the control of sexuality to the project of colonial rule. Contrary to most analyses of colonialism, which relegate analysis of sexuality under colonialism to a realm of effect rather than cause, Stoler argues that anti-miscegenation laws and practices emerged as key strategies of rule in times of political crisis. She argues that it is only through a control of sexuality that “racial” categories can be maintained. The children of interracial heterosexual alliances pose one of the most profound threats to the artifice of colonialism, which is based upon notions of a superior and essentially different self from a distinct and inferior “Other.” Thus the blurring of these categories through the bodies of mixed-race children, and the rifts in the coherence of narratives of essential difference, reveal the dichotomy of self/other as a political construction. Control of sexuality, Stoler argues, is not a secondary effect of

colonial rule, but integral to the project of rule itself.⁵

Postcolonial queer studies furthers Stoler’s important insights by analyzing colonizers’ imposition of European constructions of normative and deviant sexuality upon their colonies. Many colonial laws regulating sexuality were written before the invention of heterosexuality and homosexuality, thus colonial intervention in this realm often occurred through anti-sodomy laws represented as “crimes against nature.” This colonial construction of deviant sexuality could thus be applied against consensual anal sex between a man and a woman as well as between two men. The colonial view of deviant sexuality also covered bestiality, and was broad enough to condemn any non-procreative sexual acts. This colonial construction of “normal” sexuality was thus extremely narrow (Patel 2002, Narrain 2005). Furthermore, colonial laws rendered transgendered persons deviant by instituting administrative categories that assumed a two-sex, two-gender system, thereby marginalizing and stigmatizing trans identities and practices (Nanda 2000, Patel 2002).

Postcolonial queer studies also uses the colonial archive to reconstruct pre-colonial queer histories, a project Eprecht (1998) has argued is plagued by methodological concerns. In the case of societies without written records before colonial rule, the colonial archives serve as an important source for tracing pre-colonial values and categories of gender and sexuality. Yet when the primary discussion of same sex practice and trans identities is found in colonial court records largely focusing on non-consensual criminal behavior, Eprecht asks what in the record counts as evidence of consensual same-sex relations? He explores court cases from colonial Zimbabwe to demonstrate the method of reading against the grain of the colonial script to find narratives of consensual same-sex desire practice. His project is further

complicated by the fact that the British were creating and implementing criminal sexual codes at the same time as their economic policies were transforming the social and political landscape of Zimbabwe. Some historians have argued that men's same sex relations in the gender segregated gold mines established by the British were simply substituting for a supposedly natural heterosexual sexuality. Yet through a careful reading of criminal court cases, Eprecht is able to uncover evidence of same-sex desire and practice that is not rooted in the political geography of male mining communities. His article thus clearly articulates the limitations of the colonial archive, but also offers some strategic reading practices for constructing pre-colonial and colonial queer histories.

Postcolonial queer studies also attends to the painful ironies of nationalist movements, focusing on leaders of newly independent countries who have engaged in an uncritical adoption of colonial values of sex, gender and sexuality. By attending to the contradictory role of elites, many of whom were immersed in colonizers' values through attending colonial educational institutions, we can unpack and analyze some government leaders' virulently homophobic discourses. While Mugabe of Zimbabwe is one of the most infamous for claiming that "homosexuality is a Western disease" or that heterosexuality is "traditional," leaders from the Caribbean, Asia, the Middle East, and beyond have issued similar proclamations. The kernel of truth in these statements is that the construct of homosexuality (that term invented and given meaning in relation to the normative concept of heterosexuality, not to be confused with same-sex sexual desire and practice) is decidedly western, but they are omitting its crucial counterpart – for heterosexuality is a Western import as well.

In nationalist discourse, time and again heterosexuality is unproblematically linked with the cultural body of the nation (Aarmo

1999, beng hui 1999). What is painfully ironic is that as subjects of a neo-imperialist globalized economy, some "queer" people from the global south may at once identify with homophobic nationalist discourses that are parading as anti-imperialism, while simultaneously being terrified of the potential violence directed at their "queer" bodies (see especially Aarmo). Aarmo writes about Evershine's complex relationship to Mugabe's homophobic attacks:

Evershine is one of the black lesbians who condemned Mugabe's outbursts against homosexuals. 'But still I admire the president for his courage to tell the West to go to hell!' Evershine is very conscious of the colonial period and what the 'West' did to Africa. As a black Zimbabwean, she supports Mugabe in his contempt for the 'West,' but as a lesbian, she is scared of the attacks concerning her sexual orientation (Aarmo: 269).

Carefully situated historical analyses enable students to read history critically in order to deconstruct the contemporary deployment of "tradition" for homophobic nationalist projects and to uncover examples of same-sex desire and practice. Yet a turn to history can also have unintended consequences. Shah's (1998) work is extremely important for challenging the impulse to justify contemporary desires and identities through reference to historical evidence of pre-colonial "queer" subjects. Shah engages with debates within the diasporic South Asian queer community about the importance of tracing queer South Asian histories. Raising critical questions about some scholars' far-reaching interpretations of ancient Hindu texts and sculptures, he argues that we must have an understanding of the project of historiography, through which we are "writing history by producing new inter-

pretations of the past” (Shah, 148). He writes, “A ‘recovered past’ cannot secure or fix an identity for eternity. The relationships between identities and histories are fluid and constantly shifting. As Stuart Hall reminds us, ‘Identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past’” (Shah, 148). When we look to the past to validate present identities and desires, he argues, “We are, at best, using ancient text and sculpture to shade today’s meanings of sexual practices” (Shah, 148). He argues for a speculative relationship with a queer history based on ancient texts and sculptures, acknowledging the limitations of our knowledge about the complex debates, intentions and values that gave rise to these cultural productions. He concludes this reflection on queer historiography with a powerful affirmation: “South Asian lesbians and gay men are present now. On that alone we demand acknowledgment and acceptance” (Shah, 149).

Section III: Situated sexualities and genders in postcolonial contexts.

After introducing tools of postcolonial analysis, including critical perspectives on tradition as well as the project of cross-cultural “queer” history, the course proceeds to focus attention on the complex processes through which persons negotiate sexual and gender categories, practices, and meanings within specific locales and in the context of new forms of globalization. Fortunately there are some excellent texts that analyze differences in sexual practices and meanings without essentializing those differences in place or time. Gloria Wekker’s (2006) ethnography, *The Politics of Passion*, is a rich and detailed exploration of these themes, and for this reason I assign the entire book for the class.

Wekker (2006) explores how working class Afro-Surinamese women construct

their sexuality within the context of the history of colonialism, the realities of postcolonial life, and the transnational realities of flows of people, goods, and remittances between the Netherlands and Suriname. This ethnography is particularly useful for deconstructing the dominant Western assertion that sexual desire and practice are internalized as a sexual identity. Wekker focuses on Afro-Surinamese women’s discussions of the *mati* work: their way of describing the sexual relationships they forge with other women (while sometimes simultaneously having relationships with men for the purposes of birthing children, economic security and/or desire). Wekker argues for the importance of taking Afro-Surinamese women’s words seriously: the *mati* work, she argues, is not simply a synonym for lesbian identity. Rather, by paying attention to same sex desire within the construct of work, we can understand that the conflation of sexual desire with identity is an historical product rather than a natural event.

Eschewing simplified (and colonial) discourses of essential meanings and practices, Wekker attends to the multiple and contradictory discourses which shape working class Afro-Surinamese women’s practice of the *mati* work. She explores the dynamic interactions of homophobic discourses of Christianity stigmatizing same-sex desire, discourses of Winti religious practice which support the *mati* work, and Dutch discourses of lesbian identity that conflict with Afro-Surinamese women’s self-descriptions. Through her exploration of working class Afro-Surinamese women’s migration to the Netherlands, she provides rich insight into the practice of the *mati* work that does not freeze this practice in time or place. As the Dutch state regulates the meanings of sexual desire in terms of identity, and frames that analysis within anti-discrimination policy granting same-sex partners the same immigration rights as heterosexuals, migrant Afro

-Surinamese women must position themselves as lesbians, thereby displacing their self-definitions as they encounter the neo-colonial realities of residence in the colonizer's land. By attending to these migrant women's self-representations, Wekker is able to highlight their agency, while also foregrounding issues of power and the production of subjects within a transnational context. Her ethnography carefully integrates analysis of political economy and sexuality, demonstrating what so many theorists claim (but few so carefully demonstrate): that sexuality is historically, socially, politically and economically constructed. Her work is grounded in postcolonial theory which refutes the search for a cultural essence and instead examines the multi-ethnic construction of Suriname within the historical development of global capitalism.

Wekker's richly detailed work then sets the stage for a continued examination of issues of power, agency, and subjectivity within a transnational context, key concepts illuminating the relationship between discourses and the construction of desire, sexual practices, and, in some contexts, sexual and gender identity. By focusing on the concept of agency (within an analysis of the productive workings of power), I direct my students to focus on the multiple and often contradictory ways people negotiate always dynamic traditions within the context of new discourses of sexuality, sex and gender. In this section on situated sexualities and genders, there are several common pitfalls in the literature I seek to problematize. On the one hand there are works which celebrate the emergence of global queer cultures, often with limited interrogation of the reproduction of class, gender, and ethnic hierarchies which occur in these spaces through practices of exclusion (intentional and unintentional). On the other hand are articles which decry the loss of diversity of sexual and gender practices and meanings due to

cultural and economic globalization. These works are in danger of romanticizing static (and colonial) conceptions of tradition, while launching a partial and flawed critique of economic and cultural imperialism (see insightful critiques of Altman [2001] by Arondekar [2005]; see also Wekker [2006], Grewal and Kaplan [2005]). What is most challenging to find – and most useful for this class – are carefully crafted writings which attend to the dynamic complexity of lived traditions within ongoing transnational relations. When these works are at their best, they examine differences (in the plural) within a community. Not all sources I use in this final section of the course live up to this challenge; however, Wekker provides a framework enabling students to search for omissions, to challenge over-generalizations and to ask pressing questions about the global within the local.

Such dynamic interplay of local conceptualizations of sexuality with global cultural flows is explored by Chou in his critical reflection on the emergence of the term *tongzhi* (comrade) within Hong Kong and later China. As a scholar and an activist within Hong Kong, Chou charts the development of *tongzhi* community and political strategies, situating his analysis in an historical exploration of Confucian ideas about sexuality and personhood, British criminalization of sodomy and new social movements. He writes,

Instead of already 'being gay' I would argue that thousands of Hong Kong PEPS [people who are erotically attracted to people of the same sex] 'became gay' in the 1970s, many of them became queer, bisexual, or lesbian in the 1980s, and most of them have become *tongzhi* in the past decade (2000: 59-60).

Chou argues that *tongzhi* activists appropriated the most sacred term of Chinese

communism, thereby indigenizing sexual politics and reclaiming a cultural identity. He charts the construction of new sexual communities who are defining themselves within contemporary Chinese cultural concepts and narratives, reflecting upon Western models of sexual identity formation and Stonewall models of gay liberation and queer resistance. Chou delineates the movement's strategies of "coming home" as opposed to coming out, and "queering the mainstream," thereby elucidating the development of a Chinese model of sexual identity and community formation and patterns of individual and collective resistance to heteronormativity rooted in the locale of Hong Kong and defined through complex transnational histories. Chou's attention to the transnational and hybrid positioning of *tongzhi* enables students to engage with a collective politics of identity based on conceptions of family and community that de-center the individual. Chou is also attentive to the gap between the radical potential of *tongzhi* and its actuality, which reflects hierarchies of class and gender. Yet he remains hopeful that the creativity inherent in the origins of *tongzhi* can be rearticulated through a commitment to engage substantively with the politics of class and gender within this new movement.

Just as Western discourses of sexuality are circulating in global cultural flows, so are Western and medicalized transgendered discourses, leading to conflicts over meanings and identities at the intersections of sex, gender and race. Katrina Roen (2001) foregrounds an analysis of colonialism and racialization in her research with gender liminal persons in Polynesia. She interrogates the western medicalization of transexuality as a form of "corporeal colonialism." After reviewing important insights from transgender theorists in the West who deconstruct this medicalized discourse, she asks, "How might queer and transgender

politics and theories work (or not work) for people whose primary political affiliation is with their racial or cultural identity group?" (2001: 256). Through interviews with three Polynesian gender liminal persons, she examines the ways in which subjects negotiate multiple understandings of the intersections of racial identities and gender liminality through an engagement of Polynesian categories of *fa'afafine*, western medical discourses of transsexuality and state definitions of gendered citizenship. Although she at times lapses into colonial dichotomies of tradition and modernity, as well as problematic divisions of race and gender (as opposed to racialized gender identity), the article raises important questions about contemporary Western transgendered theory.⁶

In order to help students think about the complexity of issues of agency, subjectivity, competing discourses and transnational processes from colonialism to the present, I intersperse several documentaries throughout the class. *Two Spirit People* (Beauchemin et al., 1991) is a short documentary that charts the complexity of forming Native American identities within the context of ongoing relations of colonialism. *Ke Kulana He Mahu* (Anbe et al., 2001) is a longer documentary examining the Hawaiian third gender category of *Mahu* through history to set the context for understanding the diverse ways that persons negotiate this category today: exploring participation in nationalist cultural movements, as well as the performance spaces of drag. *Sunflowers* (Hainsworth, 1997) similarly engages with the theme of contemporary negotiation of identities within neo-colonial contexts. The Sunflowers of the Philippines emerge in this film as subjects who are crafting spaces of creativity within a stigmatized context framed by Catholic heteronormativity. Yet the interviews reveal a more complex understanding of gender and sexuality, articulating a hybrid

formation of colonial Catholic values, pre-colonial categories and meanings of gender and sexuality, and contemporary transnational formations of feminine beauty and fashion.⁷

Once students have a firm grounding in frameworks for analyzing agency, power and subjectivity, I introduce Grewal and Kaplan's (2005) review article to foreground Foucault's concept of governmentality as a critical framework for transnational studies of sexuality. The concept of governmentality is particularly useful for exploring the global AIDS crisis. The practices of codifying, normalizing, stigmatizing and regulating behaviors and identities, through nationalist, medicalizing, and transnational economic discourses in response to the AIDS crisis have created new arenas in which sexual subjects are interpolated by discourse, sexual and gender categories and their meanings are (re)produced, and the role and conception of the state is legitimized. The framework of governmentality reveals everyday state practices as sites for the exercise of power and the production of its legitimacy: the creation of government HIV/AIDS plans, testing and outreach programs, establishment of health centers for targeted populations, training programs, and the creation of models of best practices. Michael Tan's (2000) work on the AIDS epidemic in the Philippines, while not using the concept of governmentality, can be usefully paired with Grewal and Kaplan's article. In particular, his attention to the practices through which AIDS is medicalized and the surveillance and policing of HIV positive persons, helps to bring concepts of governmentality to life.⁸

In this section I also include several articles to critically interrogate mainstream (white, class privileged, and male) US queer politics by utilizing the framework of the course. Yoshikawa (1998) discusses the controversy over Lambda Legal Defense Fund's unrepentant commitment to the use

of the musical *Miss Saigon* as a fundraiser, despite a sustained protest by a coalition of queer/anti-racist organizers who called attention to the racist depictions of Asians in the play, as well as concerns about racist casting in the production. As a result of this painful organizing process, Yoshikawa argues convincingly for the need to engage in an intersectional and anti-colonial analysis where issues of racism are re-centered in US queer politics.

Similarly, Murungi's (2003) article analyzes the painful contradictions of working as an African woman advocating for the rights of all-sexuals⁹ within US-based GLBT human rights work. Interrogating the androcentrism and Eurocentrism of human rights frameworks, and using postcolonial and women of color feminist theory to challenge the underlying assumptions and omissions of this work, she charts her path of engagement in this challenging and important field. She identifies the need to consciously link gay rights work with "anti-racist and anti-imperialist liberation politics" (Murungi 2003, 497), including a critical gaze on institutionalized racist practices in the United States (e.g., police brutality, INS border practices, post 9/11 targeting of immigrant communities). Her account highlights the current wave of anti-democratic politics from African leaders not only in Zimbabwe, but also in Kenya, Uganda, Zambia and Namibia, who have used homophobia as a diversion tactic from pressing political and economic issues.¹⁰ In particular she argues that the frontal attack on women's movements in the witch hunts for lesbian subjects is not a coincidence, but part of a systematic movement to undercut people's movements for justice and the expansion of civil society. One of the greatest strengths of the article is Murungi's pain-filled reflections on how these regional political maneuvers and their global responses have impacted her as an African feminist doing political work in di-

aspora. Through this reflection we can see the ways in which persons are interpolated by multiple and contradictory discourses (African nationalisms; popular media representations of transnational feminism; African women's movements; global human rights; Caribbean lesbian, all-sexual, and gay communities; and diasporic African LGBT communities), and how intimate aspects of self – desires, fears, and longings – are in part produced through this interpellation.¹¹

I conclude the course with the documentary *Dangerous Living: Coming out in the Developing World* (Scagliotti 2003), paired with an article by Hassan El Menyawi (2006) titled, "Activism from the Closet: Gay Rights Strategising in Egypt." The documentary focuses on the Cairo 52, charting the history of the infamous raid on the Queen Boat, a floating nightclub in Cairo, and the subsequent prosecution of men for "habitual debauchery" and "obscene behavior," interspersed with interviews with GLBTQ activists from Asia, Africa and Latin America. The film is simultaneously insightful and problematic, with the compelling moments of the piece provided by interviews with remarkable activists. Yet the richness of these activists' words is eclipsed by a heavy-handed narrative that frames the film along a linear model of gay progress based upon a US Stonewall model of activism.

Drawing upon the analysis of the course, I help students to identify some of the problematic underlying assumptions and omissions in the framing of the narrative. This exercise enables them to weave together much of the prior coursework and apply it to a documentary that is compelling to those lacking a background in postcolonial queer studies. In particular, I encourage students to see that two problematic assumptions are core to the narrative: first, that homosexuality is a stable, essential identity, and second

that the process of gay collective identity formation and collective action is similar across different nations and different historical periods. We then seek to identify key insights from the class that challenge the film's narrative frame, namely:

- The concepts of heterosexuality and homosexuality, homophobia, and the symbol of the heterosexual nuclear family as representative of the nation are all Western in origin;
- Colonizers routinely stigmatized same-sex desire and practice and institutionalized heteronormativity within legal systems of their colonies;
- Nationalist movements did not question this imposed heteronormativity; upon independence colonial laws regulating sexuality were often adopted as law for the independent nation state;
- As national leaders are faced with economic and political crises, as well as the AIDS pandemic, they attempt to hold on to power through critiques of Western economic and military imperialism (here imperialism designates Western domination of global economic institutions as well as US military actions and militarized diplomacy). Because homosexuality is cast as a Western import, political leaders have used homophobic discourse to critique imperialism (through the logic that to oppose anything marked as Western is to oppose imperialism). Thus homophobia gets to ironically parade as anti-imperialist discourse (while that other Western import of heterosexuality is called forth to represent the nation);
- Many GLBTQ people in the US do not have the freedom to live an out gay life; for example, queer youth who end up on

streets due to violent oppression based on their queer identities from family members and in schools; systemic discrimination against transgendered people, rendering passing a strategy of survival for many trans persons; hate crimes against queer people in the US; police brutality against GLBTQ persons, especially GLBTQ people of color (see especially Ritchie [2007] for accounts of police violence against GLBTQ persons of color);

- Those queer activists of color who seek asylum in the West may confront the racist practices of the INS; asylum seekers have been criminalized (see Kassindja and Bashir [1998] for a harrowing account of institutionalized racism in a female circumcision asylum case);
- Once in the US, these activists will have to navigate the anti-immigrant policies of the War on Terror, as well as the new forms of racism that the War on Terror has spawned in communities across the US, including racism within US queer communities;
- The focus on the Cairo 52 has the unintended effect of reinforcing dominant narratives of the “backward” nature of the Middle East, at a time when this narrative is used to justify the latest in imperial wars.

I pair this film with the article by El Menyawi (2006) who identifies the political and economic reasons for raiding the Queen Boat: firstly, it was part of the Egyptian government’s strategy “to divert attention from its failure to address the economic woes of the country” (evident in rising unemployment, recession and insufficient state services for the poor); and secondly it was a

strategy “to attract the support of those who have come to agree with the increasingly popular Muslim Brotherhood” (the popular, yet banned, Islamist political party) (2006, III). El Menyawi writes, “By attacking gays the Egyptian State successfully distracted the public’s attention from its woes, while also shoring up the State’s Islamic credentials” (2006:II). He argues that the model of gay activism in the West is not useful given the contemporary politics of the state that can so easily use homophobia as a tool of anti-imperialist nationalist discourse. Given his harrowing experience of imprisonment and torture due to being an out gay activist, El Menyawi has rethought activist strategies to advocate for a new form of activism, that which he calls “activism from the closet” (2006, IV). The closet in this formation operates not as an individual space of isolation, but rather as a collective space of protection for LGBTQ groups to practice their sexuality and forge changes in society from hidden locations. “The closet,” he argues, “becomes ‘elastic’ – a protean structure moving with flexibility and dynamism. Unlike the traditional narrative of the closet as a location from which a person can only ‘exit’, this closet is expanding and bringing people into it. The hope is that, over time, the closet will expand to include the entirety of society” (2006, IV). By resignifying the closet, El Menyawi articulates a form of activism that is inherently transnational and hybrid (through its dialogue with Stonewall models of US GLBTQ activism), yet rooted in the material realities of post-colonial Egypt.

Conclusion

I have designed “‘Queer’ Across Cultures” such that students who entered the class eager to consume essential difference will depart with analytical frameworks and information that help them to engage critically with dominant US constructions of

sexuality, sex and gender, as well as diverse sexual and gender categories, desires, practices, and meanings. I expect that when the semester is complete, students will have the tools to refuse essentialist claims and to ask questions about the numerous and often conflicting discourses that circulate in any locale; that they will be able to analyze the relationship between these discourses, the multiple and conflicting subject positions that any one person must negotiate, and the complex process of crafting selves in our transnational world. When they are faced with simplistic dichotomies, I expect them to search for the dynamics through which the opposition is produced, uncovering ironies as rich as “British” tea. I also presume that they will no longer be able to think about sexuality, sex, and gender, without also searching for intersections with race, nation, class, ethnicity, religion, age, physical ability, kinship and beyond. Finally, I hope that they will have found a way to meaningfully pair postcolonial and queer, and that they will carry with them knowledge and frames of reference to de-center the prototypical subject of queer studies.

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Endnotes

- 1 I place the word queer within quotation marks in the title of the course to signify the irony of using a Euro-centric term within a course that seeks to examine and de-center Euro-American constructions of sexuality and gender. See section III of the paper and note six for further discussion of this issue.
- 2 See Accomando, this volume, for an overview of the academic, activist and creative projects he spearheaded.
- 3 My caveat for this project is sweeping: every syllabus is but one of many possible ways of approaching a topic and exploring it. A syllabus, as it is a partial approach to engaging with a topic, will necessarily privilege some perspectives and omit or minimize others.
- 4 Omi and Winant (1986) argue that in contemporary US society race continues to operate as “amateur biology” by which the surface markings of the body are believed to communicate deep knowledge about people’s desires and abilities.
- 5 Stoler’s analysis is rooted in forms of colonial encounter specific to Africa and Asia. It is important to note the diversity in colonialisms. Her argument also is of profound interest to disability theorists, for in the attempt to assert the absolute division between colonizer and colonized, she writes about the repatriation to the home country of the elderly, disabled, and poor. Especially during times of political resistance to colonial rule, only the most normative colonizer subjects were allowed to be visible in the colony.
- 6 In this section of the course I also include additional selections from Blackwood and Wieringa’s (1999) edited volume *Female Desires* as well as from Hawley’s (2001) edited volume *Postcolonial Queer: Theoretical Intersections*.
- 7 All of the texts in this section of the course enable us to identify the ironies and contradictions in the use of the term “queer” in the title of the course. As students reflect on the mati work, and identities of mahu, fa’afafine, two-spirit, sunflower, and tongzhi, we identify the workings of power in the project of naming by pointing out the use of the Euro-

centric terms queer, gay, lesbian, transgender as universal terms, while the diversity of other terms remain locally bounded and often subsumed by their supposedly more universal label. Furthermore, the matl work raises the important issue that within Euro-centric frameworks, identity is privileged over practice, a point which links back to Somerville's (1997) important work on the connections between racist biology and early sexology in the formation of conceptions of sexual identity. While the course helps to raise awareness of the dynamics of power in the project of naming (including the insight that one way to trace the power of a group is to identify who has the ability to name oneself and have that name be the one used by others when speaking about them), the terms queer, gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered appear constantly in texts and throughout discussions.

- 8 This section of the syllabus could be greatly expanded to have a number of detailed case studies examining how government AIDS programs have foregrounded particular identity categories and imbued them with meanings through the project of governmental rule, and how citizens positioned in these programs negotiate these categories, meanings, and the exercise of state power.
- 9 Murungi (2003) draws upon the work of Caribbean activists to foreground the term all-sexuals as an alternative to identity-based categories that are prevalent in the West. The term all-sexual emphasizes the concept of all sexual behaviors and thus foregrounds sexual continuums rather than discrete categories and more rigid identities (Murungi 2003, 501).
- 10 This article also helps to raise the point that asylum cases most often rest on the need to represent one's homeland as essentially and violently homophobic. Such arguments paint over the complex histories of colonialism and the political process through which heteronormativity was established and then adopted by nationalist leaders, and they rest on a representation of the US as the protector, the land of safety and freedom of expression. This representation therefore omits not only the racism that immigrants from the global south face in the US (including within the mainstream GLBTQ movement), but also the central role of the US in forcing neo-liberal economic policies on Southern countries (Bello 2000), a key omission in the story of the economic contexts leading to the rise of homophobic nationalisms. For it is often the conditions of economic crisis, caused in large part by such neo-liberal policies, that lead desperate leaders to build national unity through homophobic attacks as a means to fend off political crisis. Such complex stories, however, undermine asylum claims, leading asylum seekers to the choice of betraying one aspect of their identity in order to find a degree of refuge and safety in an unsafe world.
- 11 I draw upon Althusser's (1971) conception of interpellation as a useful, yet limited view of the relationship between, in his terms, subjects and ideology. I prefer the term discourse over ideology as I believe Foucault's (1980) conceptualization of the workings of power through discourse has advantages over a concept of ideology that all too often remains caught in a paradigm that rests on problematic constructions of objectivity and false consciousness.

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Challenges in Minimizing Teacher Authority While Facilitating a Student-Owned Activism Project

Nicholas Chagnon and Donna King

Abstract

Students who take critical sociology courses often report feeling discouraged about their ability to change large-scale social-structural problems. To redress this perceived lack of agency and control, we modified an upper-division sociology of popular culture course to include a student-owned activism project that would entail minimal teacher direction. In this paper we describe our efforts through two iterations of the activism project and reflect on the obstacles and successes of the project.

Students taking critical sociology courses often report feeling discouraged about their ability to change or even challenge the large-scale structural problems they learn about in class. Some research suggests that merely informing students about social problems convinces students such problems are irresolvable. Buechler (2008) notes that sociology's identification of social-structural inequalities and injustices can lead students to see the status quo as immutable. Seider's (2009) study of high school students taking a social justice course reveals that after taking the course students were actually less enthusiastic about attempting to eradicate world hunger. He contends that learning about daunting social problems can lead students to become overwhelmed and convinced that such problems cannot be solved. Seider concludes it is important not only to inform students about social problems, but to also provide them with avenues for ameliorating them. Dallago et al.'s (2010) study of Italian high school students suggests that teachers can provide students opportunities to effect change, especially by facilitating, rather than directing, student efforts.

Efforts to bring social activism into the college classroom via service learning, public sociology projects, applied research, and internships are evident within the sociology curriculum (cf., Mobley 2007; Nyden, Hossfeld, Nyden 2011; Rajaram 2007). However, in our experience, most student activism has been extracurricular and/or teacher-directed. In this paper we describe our attempts to integrate two iterations of a student-owned activism project into an upper-division sociology of popular culture class. We sought a way to increase students' sense of collective agency to challenge, for example, the neoliberal exploitation of sweatshop labor (Klein 2010) and the corporate colonization of youth culture (McChesney 2000) which students often find seriously problematic after taking the course. And we wanted to experiment with minimizing teacher authority and maximizing student control. As we discovered, this entailed challenges, particularly around issues of motivation and grading.

Theoretical Perspectives

Anarchistic ideals were among the perspectives that inspired our desire to facilitate

a student-owned activism project. Anarchy can have many meanings and even prominent anarchists have difficulty defining it (Chomsky 1970). The mainstream media most frequently characterize anarchy as a violent, terroristic philosophy (Fernandez 2008; Owens & Palmer 2003), but anarchy is far more complex than simplistic media framing suggests (Graeber 2004). While mainstream media frame anarchists as violent, ignorant and out of control, scholarly research indicates that anarchism plays an important philosophical role in the anti-globalization (AG) movement, and, more recently the Occupy Wall Street (OWS) movement (Buttel 2003; Caren & Gaby 2011; Epstein 2001; Graeber 2004; Graeber 2011; Juris 2005; Owens & Palmer 2003). Core principles such as anti-authoritarianism, non-hierarchical organization, direct democracy and direct action are shared by pure anarchists in the Anti Globalization (AG) and Occupy Wall Street (OWS) movements, and by those that exhibit what Epstein (2001) calls an “anarchist sensibility.” Epstein claims that many AG activists are not rigidly anarchistic or members of explicitly anarchist groups, but do identify with anarchist ideals and utilize them in their activism.

In our attempt to facilitate a student-owned activism project, we drew loosely on an anarchist sensibility that emphasizes mutual aid and non-hierarchical organization while encouraging students to critique authority, the state, capitalism, and other forms of social domination (Graeber 2004; Kropotkin 1908). Anarchy as a pedagogical practice has received short shrift in sociology, yet we felt that attempting such an approach would be inherently sociological in that sociology, or at least much of it, is concerned with not only identifying various forms of domination but ameliorating them (Buechler 2008). Graeber describes the ideal anarchic order as “com[ing] up with a plan that eve-

rybody can live with and no one feels is a fundamental violation of their principles” (2004:8). This was our modest goal in experimenting with sharing classroom control.

While we were inspired by anarchist ideals for the first iteration of the activism project, for the second we also drew insights from critical pedagogy. In his groundbreaking work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2000), Paulo Freire rejects the idea that a class-based society is inevitable, arguing that education can (and should) be a powerful counter-hegemonic force. Traditional education transmits the ideas and values of the oppressors, says Freire. Power differentials between teachers and students should be dissolved, he argues, granting students ownership over their own education. Ultimately, Freire seeks to make students aware of their own oppression and to spur them to fight this oppression.

Though *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* was originally aimed at poor, illiterate adults in developing nations, many US educators adopted Freire’s ideas (Macedo 2000). Perhaps the most prominent American educator implementing Freire’s ideas is Ira Shor. Shor’s book, *When Students Have Power* (1996), chronicles his efforts to incorporate critical pedagogy at the College of Staten Island in New York City. Shor documents how he and his students negotiated various elements of the classroom, ranging from syllabus to seating arrangements. Shor also discusses how this power-sharing arrangement led students to make demands that he didn’t anticipate. Students not only challenged the need for attendance but also Shor’s authority to determine grading standards. Because of these debates, Shor writes, the class almost transformed beyond his ability to manage it. Using student responses and comments to illustrate his ideas, Shor outlines both the successes and limitations of his experiment in critical pedagogy.

Recent scholarship chronicles efforts to incorporate critical pedagogy into the sociology curriculum. Braa and Callero (2006) describe how they implemented critical pedagogy when supporting a student-run and directed tenants' union. Fobes and Kaufman (2008) discuss obstacles to implementing critical pedagogy and pose solutions to such obstacles. We utilized these sociologists' insights when assessing our own student activism project's successes and limitations.

Campus Setting

The setting for our student activism project was a medium-size, Southeastern United States public Master's university with approximately 13,000 students, of which roughly 12,000 are undergraduates. The student body is predominately white (86 percent), female (60 percent), in-state resident (82 percent), with 35 percent reporting family income in the \$75,000 to 150,000 dollar range. While the university administration encourages, and even mandates in some instances, student volunteerism - and there is a wide range of student organizations on campus across the social and political spectrum - many students describe the political and cultural climate on campus as "neutral" or "somewhat conservative" and there is little evidence of much lively, organized and/or public student activism.

Sociology of Popular Culture

In our popular culture class we examined corporations and the commercialization of culture - and media representations of race, class, gender, and sexuality - from an explicitly critical perspective (King 2010). The first half of the course focused on Naomi Klein's book, *No Logo* (2010). Klein describes the problems of branding, advertising, changing manufacturing and labor practices and other facets of neoliberal globalization, and foregrounds the rise of anti-

corporate activism that has emerged in its wake.

We used Klein's work to encourage students to question the naturalness and/or inevitability of consumerism, corporate capitalism, neoliberalism, and our commercially-dominated and advertising-saturated culture. We encouraged students to recognize that such conditions are not inevitable (Freire 2000; Silvey 2004). Ultimately, we wanted to foster the belief - inherent in the global justice and other social reform movements - that a better world is possible (Scanlan 2009).

The Activism Project

Donna King taught several iterations of Popular Culture as described above, with traditional reading, writing and oral presentation requirements, and anticipated once again the frustration and potential sense of powerlessness, cynicism and/or apathy students might experience as they learned to view their popular culture through a critical lens. When Nick Chagnon became her graduate teaching assistant in the class, he suggested an optional activism project. Nick appreciated the value in developing students' critical awareness, analytical ability and strong writing skills, but he also understood that many students prefer a more direct action approach. With that in mind, just before the semester began Nick suggested experimenting with a new kind of class project, which neither of us had attempted before. He suggested that along with being action-oriented, the project should be student-directed as much as possible. We amended the class syllabus to include a group activism project option in lieu of individual student oral presentations and attempted to make it a collective student decision.

Nick introduced the activism project option during the first day of class. Traditional oral presentations would entail each student independently researching on a topic relat-

ing to class themes and presenting their findings. The group activism project would be collectively conceived and executed by students, taking place in the wider campus community. Nick suggested, for example, that the class could organize some type of campus event or recruit a guest lecturer to come to campus. He also let students know it would be possible to split up the class so that each student could complete the assignment in which they felt most comfortable.

While introducing the project, Nick took special care to impress upon students that the activism project would be student owned. He made it clear that he felt mandating activism was unethical, and that it would be completely voluntary in this class. He also told students that he understood that they lived full lives outside the classroom and they might not be willing or able to do an activism project, for many reasons. Furthermore, he emphasized that, if they chose the option, an activism project must reflect students', not instructors', ideas. Along with this, he made sure that students understood that the possibility of a more rewarding experience through a student-owned project was accompanied by the likelihood of more work and responsibility. After the first class, he repeated these messages periodically while students decided whether they wanted to do the project, and while they selected a topic and techniques for the project.

Most of the initial class discussions involved brainstorming about the activism project so students would have some idea what they'd be getting into. Students floated many ideas, but hadn't settled on any when after four weeks Nick asked for a show of hands to determine which kind of final project they preferred. All but one student chose a group activism project. We validated this student's desire to do an independent project, and encouraged the student to stay flexible and keep an open mind about the

group project. After a few weeks, as the group project began to take shape, this student decided to switch and join in the group project. Thus, the entire class, a total of fifteen students, participated in the activism project.

Over the following six weeks, during class time allotted for the project, students engaged in more discussion and debate. As instructors, we tried to take an approach similar to Dallago et al. (2010), working more as facilitators than directors of the activism project. We approached the project with reflexivity, doing our best to avoid what Hart (1992) calls tokenism or manipulation – that is, using students as figureheads or puppets, or representing youth in projects to reflect the ideas and values of authorities in charge, rather than those of students themselves. We agree with Freire (2000) when he makes a similar point, arguing that education must reflect the ideas of students rather than teachers in order to be liberating.

In short, we wanted to ensure that this project reflected students' ideas and opinions, not our own. In pursuit of this goal, we attempted to maintain a non-authoritative, flexible, and non-directorial approach to helping students design and implement their project. However, we did decide to intervene and moderate the discussion on occasion, to keep it on track and time-sensitive. For example, to help students make sense of each other's ideas, we would ask students to elaborate on their suggestions, remind students of the amount of work likely entailed in each idea, or sometimes, comment on the feasibility of some ideas. We also provided guidance to assure the project didn't put students in any physical or legal danger, such as reminding them that using copyrighted corporate products in unauthorized ways might be illegal. Eventually we aided students in narrowing down their many options by writing them on the board and calling for a vote. Ultimately, students made all the ma-

major decisions for the project including coming up with the thematic focus, the concrete public actions, and the structure for an equitable division of labor.

For the first activism project, students decided to: (1) produce a short newsletter; (2) utilize “culture jamming” techniques, which Klein describes as subverting, spoofing, and/or radically altering corporate advertising to send a non-commercial, socially-responsible, satirical and/or ironic message; (3) organize a campus demonstration to raise awareness and distribute their newsletter; and (4) create a Facebook page to promote the event to a wider public.

Students broke into three groups to develop the project. Each group worked at one of three tasks-- promoting the demonstration, editing the newsletter, and organizing the culture jamming and demonstration. Additionally, students worked in pairs to produce written articles and artwork for the newsletter. Students from each group met independently inside and outside of class to work on their part of the project and then provided status updates and committee reports to the entire class during allotted class time. As facilitators, we were enlisted by the more active students in class to intervene in some of this group process, to ensure that all group members communicated effectively and executed their tasks appropriately. Much of this entailed sharing student concerns via the online discussion board, and (unfortunately for our anarchist ideals) raising the specter of the project grade as a negative reinforcement for group member cooperation and equity. We discuss the problem of grading a student-owned project in the next section of this paper.

The final newsletter was a two-sided sheet with six 250-word, student-written articles and graphics on subjects such as media concentration and ownership, effects of globalization on domestic and foreign labor, environmental impacts of consumerism, and

suggestions for individuals and organized groups to challenge and begin to change corporate practices. The culture jam involved blanketing the main campus pedestrian thoroughfare, ranging one half mile between the student dining hall and the library, with articles of clothing from companies such as Nike or Gap and accompanying posters describing the working conditions where these brand-name items were made. The demonstration occurred during the next-to-last class period. Students set up tables at each end of the culture-jammed campus walkway and for two hours handed out newsletters and engaged passing students in discussions about media conglomeration, corporate consumerism and neoliberal globalization, including a “Guess that Logo” game. Students successfully distributed roughly 200 newsletters on campus that day. The following week they met for the final class period to debrief about the experience and evaluate the activism project as a whole.

The second time we taught the course there were more students in the class (23), and roughly half decided to work collectively on a group activism project. This group focused on media representations of sexuality and reproductive health and worked independently outside of class to organize their project. For their activism event, they set up a large table with a colorful poster strategically-placed on the main campus walkway, and engaged passing students over a six hour period (in 2-hour shifts) by distributing a fact sheet they had created with public health information on STDs and safe-sex practices, playing a trivia game based on popular television shows that exposed the sexual exploitation and misinformation prevalent in the media, and distributing free candy and condoms.

Student Assessments of the Projects

At the end of each project, we felt successful in that students had designed and

carried out an activism project, learned from it, and seemed fulfilled by the experience. To confirm these impressions, we asked students to complete a survey evaluating the project. The first assessment instrument was a 17-item survey containing both open- and close-ended questions. Close-ended items used a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). For the first survey, we included open-ended items to capture data that might be missed by close-ended questions. For the second survey, we eliminated open-ended written questions and conducted focus group interviews instead. We asked students about their sense of empowerment achieved through the project, the freedom and independence granted them throughout the project, the educative value of the project, and finally, whether or not they would participate in such a project again.

Student survey responses were resoundingly positive. The great majority of students from both activism projects reported that the project enhanced their perceptions of agency in relation to social problems. They also felt they were granted freedom and autonomy in planning and implementing each project. When asked about the educative value of the project, students again gave largely positive responses, and almost all said they would participate again. Though survey responses were not unanimous, for nearly all survey items, all but one or two students responded positively.

We were encouraged by these student responses and felt validated in our impressions of the projects' success. As teachers, however, we also learned lessons that we see as important to explore. Facilitating the first project was not easy, nor did it unfold as we anticipated. We spent a surprising amount of time and effort grappling with various issues and reflecting on the actual degree of our success in minimizing classroom authority. While we did experience

challenges, experimenting in this way also taught us a great deal.

Challenges Minimizing Teacher Authority

The paths of these projects were sometimes bumpy roads, though we consider the experience worthwhile for teacher and student alike. As Graeber reports, "creating a culture of democracy in a people who have little experience of such things is necessarily a painful and uneven business, full of all sorts of stumblings and false starts" (2002:8). In our case, there was satisfaction and frustration for both teachers and students. Like Fobes and Kaufman (2008), we encountered (especially in the first activism group) issues such as student unease with our non-directorial approach; difficulties keeping students on-task without invoking authority; free-riding students taking advantage of the project's group-work format; student anxiety about project grades, and the perception of coercion for some students. But we also discovered that many students appreciated both the freedom they were given to construct their own project and the student camaraderie that collaborating promoted.

The Question of Coercion

Despite our best efforts to avoid it, one student in each group reported feeling coerced to participate in the activism project. In an open-ended survey response, a student in the first group wrote, "I felt like there wasn't another option. No one wants to be the [one] person who doesn't want to do the group project. I would have preferred to do what I wanted, how I wanted." We attributed this student's discomfort to the open voting structure in the first group project and the possibility of perceived group conformity pressures, and we changed that format for the second group to anonymous voting. It is not clear to us, therefore, why one student in

the second activism group felt coerced to participate in a group activism project, since anonymous voting was conducted and half of the students in that class chose to do independent oral presentations. Thus, we are aware that when offering a group activism project opportunity to students as a group, some individuals may feel pressured to participate despite our best efforts to prevent that. We will continue to explore ways to minimize this possibility.

The Question of Grading a Student-owned Activism Project

Our first activism project was somewhat spontaneous and thus there was uncertainty for teachers and students alike about how it would be assessed. Because of our open-ended approach, we didn't outline specific grading criteria during the initial phases of the first project. College students are understandably accustomed to structured assignments that clearly outline tasks and evaluation criteria up front. This led to some student concern in the first activism group over how the project would be graded. Braa and Callero (2006) had a similar experience, adding that students' preoccupation over grades can distract them from the learning experience. Eventually, for the first activism group we constructed a grading rubric which we distributed several weeks before the project date, collected peer evaluations from each subgroup at the conclusion of the project, and assigned grades ourselves based on these criteria and sources.

For the second activism project, we handed the evaluation over to students. Both Fobes and Kaufman (2008) and Braa and Callero (2006) suggest that teachers give students a role in constructing rubrics. One of the most integral elements of Shor's (1996) approach to power-sharing in the classroom was his negotiation of assignments and grading with students. Thus, we allowed the second activism group to con-

struct their own rubric and evaluate each other. We thought this was a fitting way to minimize teacher authority and maximize student autonomy. However, in focus group interviews, students raise an issue which we didn't anticipate regarding peer evaluations, the question of rigor. As one student states,

I even wrote on my little grading rubric, we were supposed to write a comment about each person and I ended up just writing [one] paragraph [for the whole group] because, you know like everybody did a good job, and worked really well together and there wasn't really a person who didn't do what they were supposed to do....

Another student seems to question the worth of peer evaluations, implying students might find it difficult to rigorously evaluate each other:

I think it's easier to do the field notes than responding about your own team, because you work together so you're not going to complain. I mean, if there was someone slacking, I'm sure that they would bring that up with the teacher but otherwise everyone's probably going to get the same grade.

It is important to note that this second activism group seems genuinely satisfied with each other's performance, thus explaining why they might be disinclined to criticize each other. Furthermore, students didn't say they *couldn't* evaluate each other; instead it appears they might not have evaluated each other *rigorously*. It makes sense that empathy and solidarity among students may lead to less than rigorous peer evaluation. Still, peer evaluation seems appropriate and desirable in pursuit of a non-authoritarian teaching approach.

The Problem of Student Motivation and Free Riders

The experience of group solidarity and satisfaction was different in the first group activism project, and at times we overestimated these students' independent motivation. While some student apathy is perhaps inevitable, for this first group we sometimes felt compelled to invoke our authority to overcome it. Thus we established deadlines and reminded students that, although this was their project, a lack of effort would cause their course grades to suffer.

This was less of a concern in the second activism group, perhaps because we put evaluation into their own hands, and instead of imposing deadlines, changed tack and requested weekly group progress reports. These students reported later that this approach helped keep them collectively on track yet independently directed. Appreciating the teacher's facilitative role, one student states, "I liked that when we came to class on Monday you would ask for progress and then give input. I think that helped us figure out what direction we needed to take it in."

Fobes and Kaufman (2008) note that in group projects such as these, there are inevitably some "free-riders" or students that allow other group members to do their work while they do little or nothing. In the open-ended portion of our first survey many students criticized the work done by others. Additionally, these student peer evaluations explicitly named some free-riders. Taking this into account, and observing students' in-class planning sessions, we were still able to conclude that most students did actively participate in this project.

On the other hand, the second group of students reported no free-riders. In focus groups, they repeatedly and explicitly stated each person did a fair amount of work. Talk-

ing about his satisfaction with the group process and final product, one student stated,

Yeah, I mean, I think kind of how like we were talking about how we graded people, but like, I don't know, it was kind [of] like no complaints. Like I think everybody did really well.

It is likely that either of these scenarios might occur in a class project; some free-riding students might take unfair advantage of group work, while at other times, students may team up in an effective and equitable way. In the end, we agree with Fobes and Kaufman when they conclude that the value of group projects and critical pedagogy outweighs the occasional reality of some free-riders.

Facilitating versus Directing Students

Advocating for student power in the classroom, Freire (2000) warns that students must own a transformative pedagogy. We strove to be sensitive to this issue throughout both activism projects. Although we did invoke authority to some degree in facilitating the first project, and thus violated strict anarchic principles, we remained mainly facilitators rather than directors. Dallago et al. echo our experience when they state, "we were mostly instruments in the hands of the students" (2010:44).

We respected the plurality of students' views and facilitated a democratic order in designing the projects. Students voted on nearly all matters, and all those who wanted to be heard were able to speak. Ours was similar to an anarchist consensus process; though we occasionally utilized voting, usually a class-wide consensus was reached rather than a majority-mandated decision (Graeber 2002). This probably caused the design process to be less streamlined than it might have been. Braa and Callero (2006) also incorporated a democratic process to

design their project. Unlike us, they question the relative value of such a strategy when it becomes a significant logistical obstacle. In our case, we believe the equity of this approach outweighed some of its inefficiency. It didn't create a major logistical obstacle for us and instead was invaluable both in facilitating high quality, student-created activism projects and in teaching students (and ourselves) about organizing in a loosely structured, non-authoritarian environment. However, our findings indicate that students didn't always find this approach as valuable as we do.

Student Unease with an Unstructured Approach

In the first activism project, some students reported they were often confused about their responsibilities and apprehensive about how the project would turn out. Though we were caught off guard by student anxieties, in retrospect such views are far from surprising. Fobes and Kaufman note that students are often unnerved by critical pedagogy because of its inherent "ambiguity and uncertainty" (2008:27). Shor noted a similar phenomenon when his students were at first resistant and suspicious of his ideas about power-sharing. Furthermore, he acknowledges some students were resentful of the extra student responsibility entailed in a power-sharing classroom (1996:210). Rossi (2009) reported similar findings in his case studies of youth participation, contending that youth do not necessarily prefer informal organizations. While we believe an ultimately open-ended approach to a project such as ours is integral to minimizing teacher authority, the facilitative role of instructors is still necessary. Striking a balance between laissez-faire and directorial teaching is the core challenge of effective facilitation.

Student Autonomy and Collaboration

While much of the first activism project was organized during class time, with some facilitation from Nick in his role as graduate teaching assistant, students in the second group organized themselves for the most part outside of class and collaborated in a non-hierarchical manner. They described their experience as an evolution from confusion to a relatively streamlined process. Students reported they managed to create an equitable division of labor which they felt led to a quality end product. Furthermore, they stated that no one student dominated the project, though key students took initiative in organizing elements of the project. As one student reported,

Yeah, there never really was a need for like one leader because everybody was participating, everyone was working; [one student] was like the organizer, [one] was more like the secretary. Yeah, like no one was like president or anything.

Another student described the division of labor this way,

Sure, I mean for me I'm a very independent person. So I don't always like to depend on others. But this group, they were great. It was easy. Everyone did what they needed to do and did it on time. The three components we had with the game, the flyer, and the poster... was very evenly divided and everyone did their part.

We can't claim that our efforts to cultivate a non-authoritarian classroom environment caused this group of students to develop a non-hierarchical order when organizing their out-of-class efforts. However, we feel encouraged that they were able to effectively organize themselves in this way. Overall,

taking into account survey responses, focus group data, and both activism projects' end products, we feel this project was successful in minimizing teacher authority and cultivating a somewhat non-authoritarian classroom environment. Further, we believe the activism project helped students to begin to think critically and to take direct action in their own community (Freire 2000).

Implications

Ultimately, we feel these projects were successful. Students produced quality and unique end products, organized and publicized campus-wide demonstrations, and successfully distributed materials they researched and wrote themselves. They reported positive experiences relating to the activism projects, and most students said they would participate in a similar project again. However, we recognize there is always room for improvement in future versions of these activism projects.

We can provide students with more varied examples of student activism, such as the Kudong campaign (Featherstone 2004) or Braa and Callero's (2006) student-developed tenant's union, to inspire and inform them. Providing students with more concrete examples may address students' desire for more instruction and structure. As one of our students stated, "I think there should have been more instruction at the beginning, to [help us] understand more of what we were really [being] asked to do." Giving students more concrete examples of activism projects might help resolve such confusion in a suggestive rather than directorial way. Furthermore, our own students' group activism projects will act as concrete examples and possible frameworks for future students should they choose to adopt them. Braa and Callero's (2006) tenant's union project exemplifies this; developed by one cohort of students, it has been carried on by several subsequent cohorts. Our experi-

ence with our students' pioneering projects will allow us to provide vivid examples of local student-owned group activism.

Additionally, we have the benefit of our experience in facilitating such projects. Being more sure-footed in our facilitative duties will hopefully allow us to avoid some of the confusion that students experienced. For example, we might refine our consensus technique by using established methods, such as hand signals similar to those used to organize OWS assemblies. And, though the question of rigor is potentially problematic, we will remember it is important to put evaluation of student-owned projects into students' hands. We feel these lessons will allow us to facilitate future student activism projects in a more streamlined, yet flexible and non-authoritarian, manner.

Student requests for more teacher-directed structure in student-owned activism projects create a paradox. Providing more information, such as concrete examples and student-created evaluation criteria, might resolve these student concerns. On the other hand, they may not. Should we provide more structure in the future? We are concerned that too much input from us would violate student ownership of the project. Additionally, this raises ethical concerns about coercing students into activism. Some might argue that encouraging students to take full responsibility to construct their own activism project might also be considered coercive. But, however bumpy the experience, students did choose whether or not they wanted to participate in an activism project.

We believe classroom flexibility and minimized teacher authority give willing students a unique and valuable educational experience in group organizing that would be lost in a more structured environment. We also see the capacity to tolerate ambiguity and uncertainty as a necessary skill students need to learn on the road to full ma-

turity, and thus consider it our responsibility as teachers to provide successful opportunities for students to master it. Of course, that also requires us as teachers to cultivate a similar tolerance for ambiguity and uncertainty in ceding classroom control. Thus, we remain ever aware of walking a challenging line between laissez-faire and directorial approaches in our continuing effort to minimize teacher authority when facilitating student-owned activism projects.

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Keeping People In Their Homes: Boston's Anti-Foreclosure Movement

Christopher Larson

Abstract

While high foreclosure rates devastate low-income communities throughout New England, a grassroots movement in Massachusetts works to keep tenants and owners of foreclosed properties in their homes. The combined efforts of legal services attorneys, neighborhood organizers and community developers empower local residents to combat post-foreclosure displacement and regain their voice in the political process. This inter-organizational network is dissected and each organization profiled.

We are a nation in crisis. What began as a recession in late 2007, spurred by sharp nationwide declines in housing prices, erupted into a full-blown economic catastrophe in 2008 with the breakdown of the global banking industry. Years later, we are still struggling to recover from the aftereffects of one of the worst collapses since the Great Depression of the 1930's.

The implosion of the subprime mortgage market caused a breakdown in global financial networks, as the value of mortgage-backed securities – a heavily traded financial commodity worldwide – plummeted. These



mortgage-backed securities and collateralized debt obligations, two rather recent innovations of the financial industry, allowed firms around the world to invest in U.S. real estate. The problem was in the packaging of these financial vehicles. Prime mortgages (low-risk) were bundled together with subprime loans (high-risk) and sold with a triple A credit rating stamped on the front, ensuring investors that they were safe investments. While the housing and credit bubbles built up to their peak in 2005-2006, these subprime loans remained dormant, ticking time bombs secured by American homes. When the real estate bubble burst, investor confidence came crashing down. As “too big to fail” financial institutions teetered on the brink of collapse, the federal government prepared a \$700 billion bailout of the banking industry. Over-mortgaged homeowners lost their homes as waves of foreclosures coupled with a decimated housing market created blighted pockets of vacant, boarded-up REO (bank-owned) properties, devastating local communities. Banks were saddled with self-inflicted pipelines of non-

performing, toxic mortgages with nowhere to dump them. In low- and moderate-income communities throughout the country, including New England, foreclosure rates were magnified by an “increased take-up of higher risk loan products and rising foreclosure rates for these products” (Borgos, Chakrabarti & Read 2011). The undesirability of low-income neighborhoods to outside investors and a lack of available capital within the community produced a market without buyers, uprooting entire neighborhoods. In Chelsea, MA, one in 30 households suffered a forced exit due to foreclosure (Fisher, Lambie-Hanson & Willen 2010).

We now face the enormous task of recovery. The foreclosure crisis is far from over and a new market of scarce credit and continuing mortgage defaults hinders the re-stabilization efforts of the federal government. Recovery alone is not enough to right the wrongs of a broken system. The foreclosure crisis presents an opportunity to steer ourselves toward a more equitable and sustainable economic future, while protecting our hardest hit communities from a mass displacement like the one in Chelsea.

A rapidly growing grassroots movement in Boston envisions such a future. This network of community organizers, legal services providers, and nonprofit community developers works tirelessly to keep people in their homes. These organizations provide pro bono legal representation, advocate for stronger consumer protection laws and underwrite new, affordable mortgages for low-income residents. The movement empowers thousands of families throughout Massachusetts and New England to actively participate in achieving a positive economic future.

Organizing For Social Change: City Life Vida Urbana

City Life/Vida Urbana is at the heart of the Boston area anti-foreclosure movement.

This 38-year old community organization is based out of Jamaica Plain, a culturally rich and socioeconomically diverse neighborhood of Boston. City Life’s mission is to fight for racial, social, and economic justice and gender equality by building working class power (more about City Life’s mission can be found at www.clvu.org). Since 2007, this fight has primarily focused on preventing foreclosure-related displacement of local residents, dually concentrating on individual outcomes in housing court and in negotiations with lenders, while attempting to effect systemic change in the larger political and economic systems that allowed the mortgage-lending crisis to occur. In this section, I discuss City Life within a larger framework for conceptualizing community organizing entities and present the strategies, tactics, and partnerships that have contributed to its success.

The People’s Movement – A Contextual Framework for Community Organizing: The Midwest Academy Manual for Activists (Bobo, Kendall & Max 2010) provides a framework for understanding the complex mechanisms and dynamic relationships required to make the anti-foreclosure network successful. This framework situates organizations in relation to existing power structures along a community-organizing spectrum. No one type of organization is ideal for organizing around every issue and social environment. Rather, these groups specialize in a particular method of social change best tailored to their strengths, expertise, and objectives (Bobo, Kendall and Max 2010). Generally, as we move further right along the spectrum, the status quo and existing power dynamics of the politico-economic arena are increasingly challenged and tactics for forging public support become more radically adversarial. In Figure 1, I have placed each major organization according to their respective roles in the movement: Boston Community Capital’s Stabilizing Urban

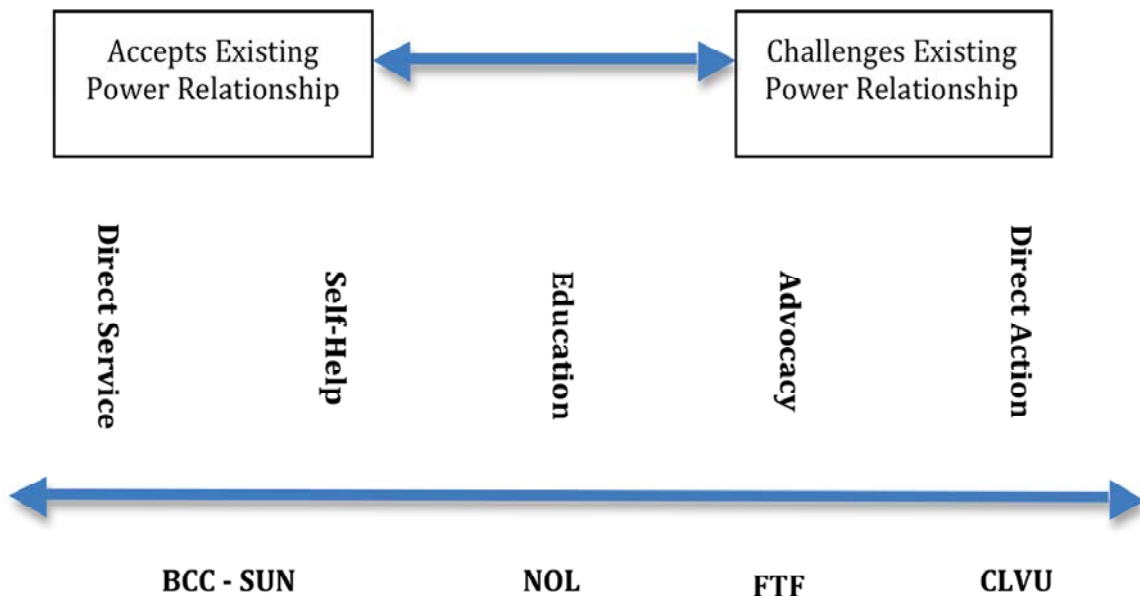
Neighborhoods Initiative (BCC-SUN), Project No One Leaves (NOL), the Foreclosure Task Force (FTF), and City Life Vida Urbana (CLVU). The following sections explore the role of each of these entities in preventing post-foreclosure displacement.

As the direct action organization of the movement, City Life’s primary responsibility is to mobilize, organize, and empower the people most directly affected by the foreclosure crisis – residents of low- and middle-income neighborhoods. Thus, the group itself is almost entirely comprised of residents who have gone through foreclosure, have

foreclosure branch of City Life), where different members lead discussions and present new ideas and strategies. In fact, many of the organizers were at one time new City Life members, receiving training and mentorship from pre-existing organizers who identified them as potential leaders.

To successfully mobilize, organize, and empower its community, City Life must meet the three standards of direct action organizing: to win real, concrete improvements in people’s lives, give people a sense of their own power, and alter the relations of power (Bobo, Kendall, and Max 2010). In the fol-

Figure 1: The Community Organizing Spectrum



been summoned to housing court for post-foreclosure eviction proceedings, or are at-risk of foreclosure. City Life represents “the best interests” of the people by being an organization of the people. Community meetings, rallies, protests, and eviction blockades all present opportunities for the organizers to cultivate local leadership, which in turn becomes increasingly involved in the planning and execution of community activities. This is readily apparent in the weekly meetings of City Life’s Bank Tenants Association (the

following section, the methods of achieving these objectives will be discussed in some detail.

Framing a Public Issue Through Individual Plight

“We shall not be moved” is the battle cry of City Life’s campaign and a poignant message of the ultimate goal of the tenants and former owners at the core of the movement. Each individual City Life member faces imminent displacement as a result of foreclo-

sure. The uncertainty that accompanies such living conditions interferes with the daily tasks of life – the incredibly debilitating nature of the situation is perceptible in the mannerisms of every first-timer at a City Life meeting. Behind on their skyrocketing adjustable rate mortgage payments, harassed by debt collectors and intimidated by bank representatives demanding they move out (without a court order), many of these people feel they have reached the end of the line and resign to a fate of homelessness. City Life’s response is simple: foreclosure is only the beginning of the fight. For many, simply seeing a room packed with neighbors also facing foreclosure is enough to rid them of their depressing outlook. For others, the opportunity to share their stories of anxiety and fear for their family’s livelihood lifts the burden off of their shoulders and begins the process of constructing a collective identity.

Over the course of a matter of weeks, the down-and-out demeanor of old transforms into one of newfound hope and regained spirit. Many long-time City Life members have equated their experiences in the movement to the therapeutic effects of going to church. This is a key characteristic of the City Life model, built upon an adversarial dichotomization of fat cat bankers and the downtrodden masses. Banks and mortgage lenders utilize intimidation tactics and the stigma associated with mortgage default to force the homeowner into a corner. They point the finger squarely at consumers and do everything in their power to keep foreclosure a private household matter. City Life reframes the problem. By sharing each other’s stories, publicly protesting outside mortgage lending conferences, and hosting candlelight vigils in front of foreclosed homes, members make foreclosure a singularly *public* issue. This allows for a broader discussion of City Life’s vision for a more just political and economic future.

While a common struggle is constructed through collective action, individual testimonies at meetings, protests, blockades, and vigils put a face to the movement and serve as powerful mechanisms for mobilizing support. It is far more difficult for a legislator or a bank executive to ignore a person than an organization. City Life’s strategy is to force decision makers to experience foreclosure through the eyes of its members and to portray its Big Bank opposition as cold, callous, and unjust.

Coalition Building and Strategizing for Success: “When We Fight, We Win”

Focusing on the individual struggles of its members allows City Life to pick winnable short-term issues and achieve real improvement in people’s lives. At the heart of the movement, City Life has built alliances with legal services providers, non-profit community developers, and other community-based agencies to provide immediate solutions to the problems at hand. City Life focuses on the struggles after foreclosure and thus refers people at risk of foreclosure, but not currently foreclosed on, to its partner organizations like the Ecumenical Social Action Committee (loan modification counselors). By focusing only on post-foreclosure cases, City Life is better able to dedicate their limited resources to preventing immediate displacement. The partner organizations involved in post-foreclosure activities will be discussed in greater detail later in this paper. For now, they will be examined in the context of City Life’s mission.

Legal services partners collectively referred to as the Foreclosure Task Force provide legal representation for defendants in foreclosure-related eviction cases in housing court. City Life and the anti-foreclosure movement claim a victory every time an eviction case is dropped due to fraudulent foreclosure practices, legal error, mutual settlement, or other reasons.

When the legal process fails to stop eviction, as is common with many former owner cases, City Life turns to grassroots tactics to prevent displacement of residents. Taking the fight to the public arena has proven extremely useful, intensifying political pressure as news media sources feature the “David vs. Goliath” stories that City Life so adeptly brings to light. Foreclosing entities that have refused to work with City Life’s partners encounter a treacherously uphill media battle once a story is published about their unwillingness to find a solution to a problem steadily affecting more and more segments of the population.

As a last stand effort, City Life also engages in eviction blockades, staging rallies outside of the homes of members due to be evicted by the constable. In some cases, these blockades force the bank to call off the eviction and renegotiate, a testament to the power of mass protest and the threat of worsening an already poor public image. In other cases, the eviction does occur, and the occupant is removed from the home. No matter the outcome, City Life ensures that the protest remains non-violent and civil – the bank is *always* the aggressor.

City Life’s partnership with Boston Community Capital (BCC) has also proven tremendously successful in preventing resident displacement. BCC, a nonprofit community development financial institution, purchases foreclosed properties from banks and sells them back to the original owners with a new, affordable mortgage (also discussed in greater detail later in this paper). For those who have enough income and savings to afford one of these mortgages, but have been unable to obtain a loan modification from the bank, the BCC buy-back program presents an opportunity for the occupants to remain in their home through a fair market value, cash transaction that also benefits the foreclosing lender. This program represents the type of innovative, social en-

terprise that takes advantage of the network that City Life holds together. Without the media influence and collaborative partnerships that City Life offers, these creative community options would be hard-pressed to get off the ground.

With each individual victory – a successful eviction blockade or repurchased home – the movement grows stronger and City Life’s influence expands. As awareness builds in the community, so too does the demand to effect change on a broader scale. Community pressure is wielded to advocate for stronger consumer protection bills and foreclosure-specific laws expanding tenant and owner rights. Smaller victories build political clout and allow City Life to demand more from the political process. With their demands strategically outlined and detailed and the conditions for victory clear-cut, City Life actions offer a marked distinction from their Occupy Wall Street allies.

City Life does not just participate in the fight – it wins. A somewhat recent achievement by the collective advocacy efforts of City Life and its partners at the Harvard Legal Aid Bureau (HLAB) came in August 2010, when Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick signed into law “An Act to Stabilize Neighborhoods,” granting unprecedented legal protections to tenants living in foreclosed buildings. Drafted by former HLAB students, the law passed unanimously through the state legislature, due in large part to the advocacy and mobilization efforts of City Life organizers. This was a tremendous victory for the anti-foreclosure movement, as it not only established additional protections against urban blight and prevented tenant displacement, but also gave the community a sense of its own power to alter the status quo. “People power” had triumphed over “big money” interests in the private financial sector. The success of rallies like this sends a clear message to the opposition – they can

no longer brush the people of the movement aside.

Today, City Life remains locked in a struggle to accomplish their most ambitious objective since the movement began: bank-induced principal reduction for at-risk homeowners. Such a proposal has met stiff resistance from the banking industry, even though the highly successful and Federal Reserve approved BCC buy-back model does exactly that. City Life argues that principal reduction is a tool that must be made available to mortgage workout counselors to ensure that low- and moderate-income communities are able to avoid another onslaught of foreclosures. Although progress has been slow, movement organizers and community residents remain committed to this issue.

As a direct action organization, City Life engages in grassroots community mobilization to focus on fixing the problems caused by skyrocketing foreclosure rates and the pockets of abandoned properties and urban decay these foreclosures cause. Its organizers developed a plan that builds upon small, street-level victories to accomplish systemic changes in the politico-economic arena. An organization comprised of “the people,” it works toward a vision of a more equitable and just financial future for low- and middle-income society, to tip the scales in favor of the consumer over big money financial services providers, and make a home affordable for the working-class family.

Socially Responsible Mortgage Lending: The SUN Initiative

The Stabilizing Urban Neighborhoods (SUN) Initiative of BCC works to stabilize the hardest hit neighborhoods of Massachusetts by purchasing foreclosed properties before the occupants are evicted, then reselling the properties back to the original owners with fixed-rate mortgages at the current value of the home. The result is a far more affordable monthly payment and the restora-

tion of economic security and stability in the neighborhood.

For example, a homeowner in Randolph, Massachusetts, repurchased her home with the help of SUN. She originally bought the property with a \$330,000 mortgage, but when her husband suffered a heart attack, the piling medical bills left her incapable of making the house payments. The collapse of the housing market left the home valued at a mere \$180,000. SUN purchased the property from the foreclosing bank at this lower price and sold it back to the original owner with a new mortgage nearly \$100,000 less than the original, significantly reducing the monthly payment to a price she could afford. Such an approach works to bring capital to lower-income communities that have been abandoned by conventional financial institutions. However, BCC is not just dumping capital into these communities. They are bringing capital back as well, forcing existing financial institutions to realize that investing to improve these neighborhoods not only provides a sound social and financial return, but also establishes an environment in which everyone shares equal stakes in an economically sustainable future.

Structuring and Financing the Buy-Back Program

In the fall of 2009, BCC launched the SUN program with \$3.7 million in start-up capital. SUN has since rapidly expanded its operational and financial capacity, lending more than \$14 million to over 125 households over a two-year period.

The buy-back process can be divided into three, overly simplified steps: buying, reselling, and financing. SUN oversees two affiliated subsidiary groups that jointly manage these tasks: NSP Residential LLC and Aura Mortgage Advisors. NSP Residential is a real estate acquisition company that purchases the foreclosed homes in an occupied conveyance transaction (occupied state) at or

below market value from the foreclosing bank. Once NSP takes possession of the property, it sells the home back to the owner at 125 percent of the market value purchase price. The 25 percent markup diverts funds to SUN's loan loss reserves, which secures the capital of the program's investors. SUN justifies this markup by citing the inherently risky nature of lending to prior defaulters. Currently, SUN's leadership is actively working to lower this markup cost to make their loan products even more affordable for future clients.

After the resale is complete, Aura Mortgage Advisors underwrites a new mortgage using very strict underwriting procedures to ensure that only sustainable and truly affordable mortgages are provided – something that conventional mortgage lenders were not doing leading up to the crisis. Aura is an atypical mortgage lending company in that they offer only one type of loan – a 30-year, fixed rate mortgage. This is in stark contrast to the wealth of financial products offered by normal mortgage lenders, which can get complicated very quickly. A standardized, fixed-rate loan provides certainty and stability to the mortgage, which is why Aura does not offer other, sometimes more enticing or profit-maximizing financial products. Simplicity and transparency in underwriting procedures and mortgage conditions allows the client to fully understand the financial choices he or she is making.

The loan officers and intake specialists employed by SUN work with the client much like a financial counselor. They help the client adopt responsible spending strategies to build adequate savings pools to plan for contingencies such as job loss or other emergencies. Additionally, the client is required to create a direct deposit account with SUN, so that the mortgage payments take first priority in household expenditures. Lastly, it is important to note that SUN's clients are exclusively at-risk or post-

foreclosure owners, a target population deemed untouchable by conventional lenders. To build enduring relationships with the banks from which SUN seeks to purchase properties, its directors included an additional condition in the mortgage package. If the property value appreciates and the owner sells the home or refinances, the equity is split between the owner and SUN, with SUN's share recycled back into the lending program.

This equity split clause and the 25 percent markup are controversial and hotly debated within the movement. Some argue that these conditions place unnecessary financial constraints on the client, prohibiting the owner from enjoying one of the premier benefits of home ownership – long-term appreciation on their investment. Others argue that such constraints are necessary to assuage the slippery-slope concerns of the banking industry. After all, without such a constraint, every owner with an undesirable mortgage, even if affordable, would be incentivized to stop payments, be foreclosed on, and buy it back with a cheaper mortgage through SUN. However, SUN actively screens candidates to prevent such activities and it remains difficult to foresee such a problem arising.

Targeting Neighborhoods

Originally, the SUN Initiative limited its efforts to Boston and Revere. Their efforts were focused on the six hardest hit neighborhoods of Dorchester, Roxbury, Mattapan, Roslindale, Hyde Park, and East Boston. Not coincidentally, these urban neighborhoods depend heavily upon the availability of affordable housing, which has considerably decreased over the past 20 years. The stifflingly tight conditions of the affordable housing market coupled with an equally precarious financial environment (accentuated by the residents' reliance on inadequately low-paying jobs) rendered these neighbor-

hoods highly susceptible to aggressive predatory lending practices and the severe downturn in the job market. The decision to focus on these communities was easy: the six neighborhoods together comprise less than one third of all Boston housing, yet contain more than 83 percent of the entire city's foreclosure activity (Cherry & Hanratty 2010).

The Process of Revitalizing Communities

After the initial intake interview in which the entire repurchasing and financing process is explained to the client, the client must undergo strict financial screening procedures during which SUN assesses the client's ability to afford the projected monthly payments. The personalized underwriting standards of SUN challenge industry assumptions about who can afford a stable home, a significant divergence from the conventional lenders' reliance on abstract mathematical models to calculate risk and quantify uncertainty. SUN's approach is a far more pragmatic method of assessing a potential borrower's ability to make payments over the life of the loan – only make loans that the borrower can afford. This means setting non-flexible limits on debt-to-income ratios, realistically evaluating household income and expenses, and building savings and capital reserves to protect the borrower in case of emergencies.

A five-minute walk through these neighborhoods will leave no doubt in one's mind – these are vibrant, yet struggling communities. Foreclosure is merely one of the consequences of the economic crises of the past few years, but it remains one of the most distressing. The uncertainty of the living situation seems to have a crippling effect on the occupant's mind. In my various roles in the movement, I've worked with many tenants and owners going through foreclosure. Their stories are all different and their circumstances as diverse as their ethnicities and the languages they speak. But universally,

they identified the uncertainty of the immediate future as the most emotionally and physically ruinous challenge of the whole ordeal.

That is where SUN can make a difference. If a family knows that the roof over their heads is here to stay, they can focus on piecing their lives back together again, instead of worrying about an uncertain future. It presents a path toward reformed recovery, a socially responsible method of mortgage lending that places a priority on the health of the community, rather than satisfying profit-maximizing investors. SUN still has private investors, and yes, they do make a healthy economic return on their investment. Yet, SUN is also free from the encumbering characteristics of its for-profit counterparts. SUN employs a true-to-its-roots development strategy that recycles capital back into low-income neighborhoods, boosts the city's affordable housing stock, and reverses disinvestment trends that threaten the longevity of the community.

Legitimacy, Relationship-Building, and Negotiating Among Financial Entities

For SUN, forging strong partnerships with state and federal entities such as the Federal Reserve, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and state housing agencies builds political clout and legitimizes the SUN process in the eyes of its mortgage servicing and banking brethren. These political contacts in turn pressure the owners of these pipelines of bad loans to divert these loans to SUN, in a mutually beneficial transaction that minimizes the losses incurred to bank investors while halting the spread of urban blight and preventing widespread displacement.

There is a simple supply-and-demand logic behind these transactions. As clients default on their mortgages, the bank begins foreclosing on these properties. While these foreclosures occur to some degree in every

neighborhood, certain neighborhoods experience rapidly escalating levels of foreclosure rates. Pockets of concentrated foreclosures form in specific segments of the community, resulting in waves of vacant properties and urban decay. Outside investors avoid these undesirable locations where real estate prices have tanked. Saddled with a foreclosed home and a real estate market without buyers, banks are forced to hold onto these toxic assets, as the costs to minimally maintain the property continue to pile up. Additional costs accrue through the legal and administrative proceedings necessary to evict an occupant. What develops is a market excessively supplied with foreclosed homes in dire need of demand. The SUN Initiative injects demand into the REO market. The foreclosing entity and SUN negotiate a fair market price and the bank sells the property to SUN with the occupants still inside. SUN underwrites a new mortgage at current, rather than inflated value, and conveys the house back to the original occupant. The result: the occupant remains in the home, the community is saved from another vacant REO property, and the foreclosing entity minimizes its losses from a poor investment decision.

Although this may seem like an obvious choice for the banks, the negotiation process has proven to be incredibly complex and, at times, frustrating. In some cases, the turnaround is very quick – SUN makes an offer, the bank accepts, and the owner gets the home back all within two weeks. However, this is a best-case scenario and usually is not that simple or easy. Because SUN is a tiny financial institution by industry standards, getting a bank to respond to an offer on a timely basis is difficult. One would imagine this is rather counterintuitive – the bank is holding a toxic asset on their books, has a buyer making a cash offer for it, yet continues to demand more money or hold out for an unlikely offer. The longer these proper-

ties remain in a bank's portfolio, the higher the cost of legal fees, maintenance, broker fees, and other losses the bank sustains. Therefore, one of the best, yet riskiest negotiation tactics in SUN's arsenal is to wait. But this tactic can be a treacherous gamble – while the offer is pending, the bank's attorney is still pursuing the eviction case in housing court. The attorneys of the Foreclosure Task Force assist in stalling this process long enough for SUN to finalize the transaction, but such a move still leaves much to chance. Accordingly, the SUN negotiators must carefully balance time tactics with the need for urgency.

Good rapport with decision-making contacts within the banks allows SUN loan officers to circumvent riskier negotiation tactics. The turnaround on offers is hampered primarily by the enormity of the other side. Banks receive thousands of offers a day and the procedures for processing these offers and separating the viable ones from the unreasonable ones makes the process terribly cumbersome. SUN attempts to cultivate strong relations with a point-person in the mortgage department with decision-making authority. This contact's familiarity with the program allows SUN to speed through the red tape, pushing these deals along the chain-of-command and moving the process closer to optimal efficiency. Establishing solid communication lines with mortgage servicing executives is not always easy, but is facilitated with the help of the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development, and other political connections that have the attention of industry leaders.

Boston as the Ideal Environment and the Challenges of Model Transferability

A long-term goal for SUN is to expand the model beyond the borders of New England. However, this is a far more difficult task than it may seem, as the market condi-

tions and social environment in other parts of the country may prove problematic in adapting the model to the local surroundings.

The SUN lending strategy has thrived in Boston. In just a few years, the organization has made great strides toward legitimizing itself as a successful community development institution in the local mortgage-lending world. City and statewide government initiatives have incorporated the program into their own larger community development plans and area lenders are now more comfortable selling their REO stock to SUN.

Boston also has a very strong professional housing field and a wealth of nonprofits with academic support devoted entirely to affordable housing issues. Most importantly, Boston is an active city in an active state. An army of consultants and community development centers in every neighborhood make housing issues a top priority throughout the state. New England cities, especially Boston, have very strong social ties to community as well, with a history of community organizing around social justice and housing issues. Neighborhood organizations like City Life existed long before SUN and BCC arrived – these nonprofit networks had gone through many years of maturation before the social capital so crucial to SUN's effectiveness was developed and ready for use.

Other parts of the country that are deeply affected by foreclosure may lack the social capital, ties to community, and strong affordable housing networks that provided the groundwork necessary for such a progressive lending strategy. These communities may not have experienced the historical downturns that prepared the foundations for a politically endorsed and richly established housing and finance community critical to the program. The political and consumer protections in Massachusetts state law may admittedly be anti-business and anti-growth, but such an environment gives people time to organize and to fight for the interests of

the community. Lastly, it is important to note that BCC had been around for over 25 years before SUN was established. SUN's business plan works because its locally grounded parent organization is highly attuned to the changing needs and environment of the community. BCC brought a level of sophistication and experience to the project that will not be immediately present in other localities.

Navigating Anti-Foreclosure Movement Partnerships

BCC's SUN Initiative has benefited enormously from its partnership with the anti-foreclosure movement. City Life actively promotes the organization's efforts, while also providing a large client base for SUN. Information sharing and strong communication between SUN and the Foreclosure Task Force permits both organizations to stay informed of each other's progress on individual client cases. Coordinating the legal and financial activities of these two organizations allows the legal services providers to stay updated on purchase negotiations, while providing SUN a legal timeline to gauge the time sensitivity of their purchase offer.

SUN continues to struggle persuading some banks and mortgage servicers to cooperate with the buy-back program. However, extensive local, state, and national media coverage, including a recent interview by Fox News and a feature story by CBS Evening News, have helped increase community awareness of the program and expanded the client pool. Political allies and support, including an endorsement by Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke, have further improved the initiative's standing and garnered additional support for the cause.

As with any inter-organizational partnership, there have been some challenges. Ideological conflicts between the consensus-building approach of SUN and the adversarial strategies of City Life are not uncommon,

especially in light of SUN's recent move to partner with City Life's Public Enemy Number One – Bank of America – in a joint buy-back pilot program. An environment of transparency, close collaboration, and constant communication between the legal services, community organizing, and community development branches of the movement is critical in addressing ideological and operational issues such as these when they do arise. As the movement grows, its unity and effectiveness become ever more dependent upon maintaining open lines of communication between organizations, clearing the air of grievances when necessary.

SUN also plays a role in another movement to transform the way finance is practiced. It is an attempt at reformation from the inside out, toward a more progressive and equitable economic structure. It seeks to fix the problems of modern finance, which has deviated from a system of participatory capitalism. Instead of helping the community these institutions were established to serve, the industry has reinforced an exclusive financial structure by separating firms from the communities their investment decisions impact. Capital has become scarce or non-existent for many working-class communities as a result. SUN is actively challenging many of the mainstream assumptions of the financial industry, arguing that low-income people with imperfect credit not only have a right to an affordable home, but they also possess the means to pay for it. This model of community finance acknowledges that investments connecting these communities to the mainstream economy result in long-term social and economic returns. In this context, SUN is banking done right – putting the community's priorities ahead of myopic private interests.

The Foreclosure Task Force & Project No One Leaves

Completing the anti-foreclosure trifecta are the legal services providers collectively called the Foreclosure Task Force (FTF). For the purposes of this paper, FTF refers to the three primary legal services providers in Boston that founded FTF – the Harvard Legal Aid Bureau (HLAB), the WilmerHale Legal Services Center, and Greater Boston Legal Services. As the movement has expanded, more legal organizations have joined in providing pro bono or reduced-cost services, including representation and advising. These efforts span across the state, including neighborhoods such as Springfield, Chelsea, and Malden, as well as other cities like Providence, Rhode Island. The three Boston organizations remain the most heavily involved groups, overseeing and directing the majority of anti-foreclosure legal activities.

In 2008, Harvard Law students working at the law school's premiere public interest clinic – the Harvard Legal Aid Bureau – founded Project No One Leaves (NOL), a project designed as a community outreach, education, and civic engagement component of the legal services branch of the anti-foreclosure movement. While FTF provides legal representation and advice to both post-foreclosure eviction defendants in housing court and the members of City Life (with much overlap between the two), NOL educates the larger low-income community about the legal process, empowering them to assert their legal rights in court and in bank negotiations.

The students and attorneys of FTF and NOL perform a diverse array of roles as movement advisors, legal counselors, grassroots student-organizers, and legislative advocates. The two groups are almost indistinguishable from each other – most of the law students and lawyers involved in the legal representation side of FTF are also engaged

in the education and advocacy activities of NOL. For this reason, the structure and operations of these groups will be discussed together in the following sections.

Historical Foundations – “No One Leaves... Without A Court Order”

As the housing market began its collapse in 2007, the court system of Boston experienced an explosion in summary process eviction cases. Public interest attorneys in housing court noticed a surge in pro se (non-suited) defendants living in foreclosed properties. These defendants were, not surprisingly, uninformed of their legal rights and were at the mercy of a judge overwhelmed with cases and bank attorneys seeking to evict them as quickly and inexpensively as possible.

In the early days of this surge, the vast majority of these no-fault eviction cases were tenant-defendants. These tenants had paid their rent on time to their landlord and were now facing displacement due to no fault of their own. Many of these tenant-defendants were residing in subsidized, low-income apartments – a commodity in very low supply. Between the high costs of moving and the unavailability of affordable apartments, moving out was not a viable option for many of these defendants. Even today, the “cash for keys” out-of-court settlement offers made by opposing counsel are almost never enough to cover moving expenses, let alone the costs of temporary housing while the former occupants transition to a new residence. Much of the time, tenants were so scared by the flood of legal documents and opposing counsel’s complete monopoly of legal knowledge that they felt forced to take these dismal settlement offers. Some even left the apartment without any assistance, cramming in with distant family members or finding homeless shelters to stay in while they searched for available apartments. The ones brave enough to put their

faith in the legal system were unable to properly defend themselves and were herded through expedited legal proceedings that left them with a 30-day move-out deadline and no cash assistance. Perhaps the worst trend of all was the vast amounts of misinformation and fraudulent misrepresentations that various representatives of the foreclosing party made to these residents. Harassing phone calls, late-night house visits, and threatening letters are just some of the tactics employed by real estate brokers and bank agents to compel residents to leave the property without resorting to formal legal channels. Recognizing these violations of due process, the law students and attorneys at Harvard and Greater Boston Legal Services developed the Foreclosure Task Force and Project No One Leaves.

Legal Services in Action - Contact

These legal services groups provide advocacy and representation for post-foreclosure pro se litigants, while protecting both tenants and former owners from the bullying maneuvers of the opposing side. The first step is intervention. NOL trains undergraduate and law students, as well as volunteers from local neighborhoods, to participate in its community outreach program. The program educates occupants of foreclosed properties about their legal rights and connects them to the movement’s network of resources and partner organizations. NOL divides a Google map into Canvassing Zones, which are then populated with properties drawn from a real estate database that tracks listed foreclosure auctions. By canvassing properties immediately before or after the foreclosure auction, NOL aims to reach these residents before eviction proceedings are commenced.

Each week, teams led by an experienced NOL member canvass these zones, serving as area residents’ first point of contact with the anti-foreclosure movement. These teams

provide the resident with some basic information regarding the legal process, emphasizing that they are not obligated to move out until a court orders them to do so. This is by far the most important piece of information these teams provide, as NOL canvassers are locked in a race against time with their bank agent counterparts. If a bank representative reaches the occupant before the canvassers, NOL risks losing the occupant to a cash for keys deal, something that the entire movement perceives as a bank-favored transaction that harms the community.

More than a dozen university and community organizations manage nearly 25 zones in Boston and the surrounding area. Figure 2 on the last page provides a canvassing breakdown of the city.

Law School In A Day: Legal Education For Pro Se Defendants

An important educational piece of the FTF/NOL process is the pro se eviction defense clinic, held weekly at alternating FTF law offices. Each week, invitation letters are sent to new defendants listed on Boston-area court dockets. City Life members with upcoming hearings are also encouraged to attend one of these clinics.

At the clinic, tenants and owners are taught about the legal process and how to raise proper legal defenses as non-suited defendants. When a bank forecloses on a home, the tenants and former owners enter a legal grey-area, with tenants referred to as “tenants-at-will” and owners as “tenants-at-sufferance.” Once the bank-served Notice to Quit – if necessary – expires, the bank’s attorney initiates formal eviction proceedings by sending a Summons and Complaint to the resident. This document presents an appearance date for court. It is at this stage in the eviction process that defendants attend the pro se defense clinic.

Law students and attorneys running the clinic assist the attendees in filing their An-

swer and Request for Discovery, documents necessary for establishing a legal defense. These documents also prolong the eviction process, as opposing counsel requires time to prepare an adequate response.

The clinic also provides an opportunity for the lawyers to assess the merits of each case, offering full representation when possible, as well as time to review the opposing side’s compliance with due process and foreclosure laws. Especially in the early period of the crisis, many banks and their legal counsel committed serious errors in the foreclosure and eviction process, causing their eviction case to be thrown out by the housing courts once FTF attorneys raised these claims.

The objective of this clinical component is to provide the pro se defendant with enough information so that they can make informed decisions when negotiating with the bank’s attorneys and standing before the judge. Ideally, their case falls in a courthouse covered by FTF attorneys, where they will have access to de facto legal representation described in more detail in the next section. Unfortunately, this is not always the case, and with legal services providers already stretched thin, some litigants are forced to defend themselves without additional legal support. Luckily, the housing court environment is fairly informal and the presiding judges are accustomed to pro se litigants. Although FTF has a strong presence in the central Boston Housing Court, for defendants living outside of this court’s jurisdiction, the eviction defense clinic is potentially their only opportunity to have access to free legal counsel. As FTF has received grants to fund future efforts, additional legal services providers have expanded FTF’s influence beyond the boundaries of Boston. However, funds for public interest lawyers are scarce and it remains a long-standing challenge to meet the legal needs of the low-income community.

Aggressively Progressive Lawyering

The Boston Bar Association provides a service called “Attorney for the Day” at the Boston Housing Court. Pro bono attorneys from both legal services groups such as HLAB as well as private firms administer free legal advice, including “limited” representation for eviction defendants. This limited representation designation is important – it allows these lawyers to enter into an attorney-client relationship for a limited period of time, otherwise referred to as a “one day appearance.” Thus, the client extracts the benefits of legal counsel while the attorneys have no further obligation beyond that day’s hearing. In a time of strained legal resources, this program is imperative to providing much needed support to a population that cannot afford legal counsel.

FTF provides the bulk of its aid to defendants through this program of limited appearance representation. The typical post-foreclosure defendant will be contacted by a project canvasser, assisted by a law student at the pro se clinic, and defended on a limited appearance basis by an FTF attorney. Once a client has entered the FTF system, the cost of seeing an eviction case through skyrockets for the plaintiff. As time and legal costs pile up, the foreclosing entity becomes more inclined to offer better settlement deals or to work with organizations like BCC to reach a mutually beneficial solution that allows the defendant to remain in the home.

These efforts have not gone unnoticed. In the past year, HLAB students representing City Life members have twice argued their cases in front of the Supreme Judicial Court (SJC) of Massachusetts. In *Bank of New York v. KC Bailey*, 460 Mass. 327-2011, a precedent-setting victory for the movement, the SJC ruled that the issue of valid title fell under the jurisdiction of local housing courts. This ruling legitimized a strong legal defense that FTF continues to use today to

enforce bank compliance with strict procedural requirements when foreclosing. However, this victory means far more than an additional legal defense for homeowners. The movement of “the people” trumped the “big money” interests of the banking and finance industry in a supreme court of law, accomplishing a momentous shift in power relations, and confirming the progress made by the entire movement. The second case, *Eaton v. Fannie Mae*, is still awaiting a decision at the time of this writing.

Of all the arenas in which the movement fights its battles, the power imbalances in the legal system are perhaps the most discernible. In districts that lack FTF presence, defendants stand little chance of receiving a positive outcome better than a 30-day move out deadline. Bank attorneys face zero resistance when bringing forth their complaints and many defendants fail to appear for their court hearing, resulting in a default against them and a judgment entered in favor of the plaintiff. Simply put, these defendants are doomed from the start.

Conversely, in Boston Housing Court, where FTF presence is strongest, cases can be extended for many months, during which time BCC negotiates, City Life protests, and FTF defends. At minimum, these clients are given ample time to find affordable housing alternatives. In a best-case scenario, the eviction case is dropped entirely and the defendants repurchase the home through SUN. In other cases, both sides work the legal system until a money-and-time settlement is agreed upon. Regardless of the outcome, in every FTF-involved case, the defendant’s due process rights are asserted – a symbolic victory for the movement’s cause.

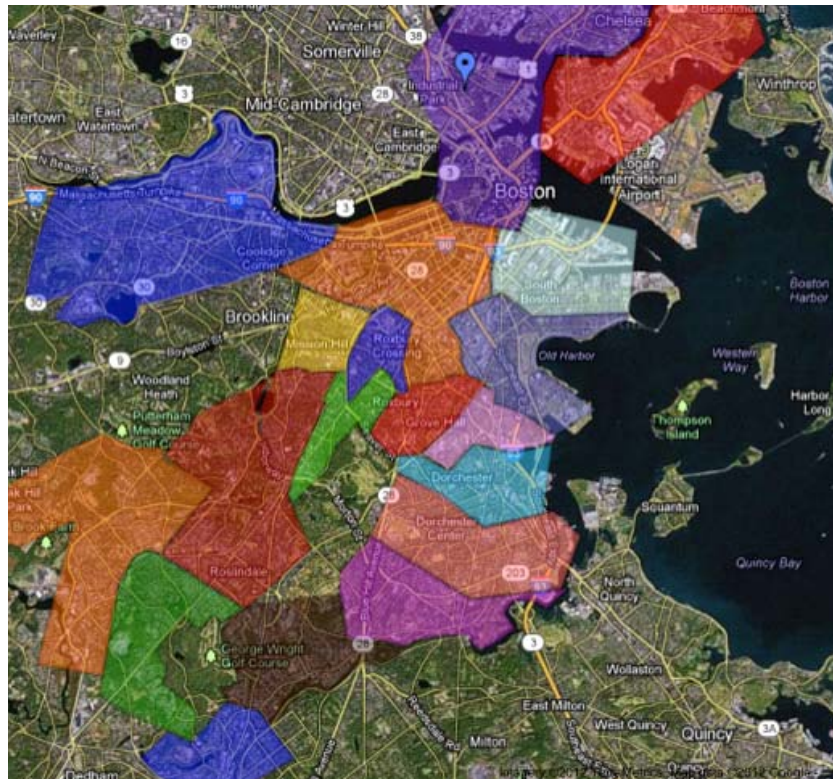
Conclusion

Over the course of my three-year involvement with the movement, I have worn many hats, serving as a student-organizer with No One Leaves, a participant in rallies

with City Life, a legal advocate with the Foreclosure Task Force, and a loan assistant with Boston Community Capital. Each position gave me a unique opportunity to observe the inner workings of all of these organizations and develop a full understanding of the work required to maintain such a strong, unified social network.

Whether working for legal services, SUN, or City Life, I am often asked, “Why help these people?” We can debate the hardships, blame, and the moral hazard of helping those who borrowed what they cannot pay back. Yet my simple answer is this: consider the alternative. Without both public and private sector intervention and cooperation, the result is a neighborhood of abandoned and boarded-up houses, homeless families, and a continuing downward spiral into further instability. That is a future that no one, including the banks, envisions. Additional resources and information about the movement can be found at projectnooneleaves.org.

Figure 2: Boston Canvassing Zones



Christopher Larson was the Program Coordinator for the Foreclosure Task Force at the Harvard Legal Aid Bureau for two years and founded the Tufts University Chapter of No One Leaves in 2009. He served as the only undergraduate board member of Project No One Leaves and previously interned at Boston Community Capital's Stabilizing Urban Neighborhoods Initiative.

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A Study Abroad Program in Tanzania: The Evolution of Social Justice Action Work

Elizabeth M. Cannon and Carmen Heider

Abstract

This article focuses on the evolution of our study abroad program to Tanzania, including the integration of three liberal arts disciplines and the foundational core that links together the three areas: social justice activism. More specifically, we explore the overall challenge of dismantling “us versus them” thinking and the interactive learning moments that allow this process to transpire. We narrate how what we learned on our 2008 and our 2010 trips led to our model of social justice action work, which we enacted on our 2012 trip. Our approach to social justice action work integrates experiential learning with Dan Butin’s concept of “justice learning,” or education that interrupts and complicates binary thinking. Our three-fold model encompasses teaching moments where instructors create the academic framework to facilitate change in our students, where students observe grass-roots organizations performing “traditional” social justice action work, and where on-site activities generate interactive experiential moments in which perceptions can be changed.

It was my first time abroad and my outlook on life changed just by being in Tanzania for 2 1/2 weeks. It's hard to put into words but I would probably say it's been the greatest experience of my life so far. I enjoyed my time so much there and became a better person because of it, I could've stayed much longer—Student Quote

The above testimonial from a university student who participated in our January 2010 Short-Term Study Abroad trip to the Kilimanjaro region of northern Tanzania makes clear why we enthusiastically planned our third trip for January 2012: student perspectives can change when they actively engage with people from a different culture. Engaging students in this process of change has been a driving force be-

hind the trip since we first offered it in 2008. We, the Director of our university’s Social Justice Program and LGBTQ Resource Center, and an Associate Professor, have also jointly led and taught the two subsequent trips in 2010 and 2012. Our academic backgrounds in English, Communication, Women’s Studies, and Social Justice have played an integral role in the evolution of this program, and we have continued to shape and develop it since we began planning the first trip in 2007. This paper focuses on the evolution of our program since its inception, including the integration of three liberal arts disciplines (Communication, Women’s Studies, and Social Justice) and the foundational core that links together the three areas: social justice activism. More specifically, we explore the overall challenge of dismantling

“us versus them” thinking and the interactive learning moments that allow this process to transpire.

Each Tanzania trip has run for two-and-one-half weeks during our January interim and has been preceded by one week of class preparation on campus. All trips have offered students the opportunity to learn about women’s grassroots activist organizations in and near Moshi, one of the larger cities in Tanzania. In addition, the program includes visits to schools, hospitals, and dispensaries in local villages, along with visits to Maasai communities. Overall program goals for the three trips have been: to experience a culture different from one’s own, to interact with local people in area communities, to reflect on different ways of living and viewing the world, to learn about grassroots activism, and to develop and practice intercultural communication skills. The trip has consistently included undergraduate students from the Liberal Arts, Nursing, and Education and Human Services.

When we first envisioned this program in 2007, we were not explicitly thinking about social justice action work. While our home departments differ, one in English and the other in Communication, we both primarily teach core and cross-listed courses in Women’s Studies, Social Justice, and African American Studies. Thus, we knew that for any study abroad program we planned, questions of gender, social justice, privilege, and activism would drive the academic portion of the course and the on-site activities in which our students would participate. But we quickly learned that much more goes into crafting a study abroad trip: working with the international education office on trip logistics and the budget, designing the curriculum, and connecting with an agency to orchestrate the onsite itinerary. When we began planning our first trip for January 2008, we had yet to think through the theoretical underpinning of what we now see as

central to what this experience is all about: a study abroad program that fosters social justice action work on site and through the integration of three areas of study: Communication, Women’s Studies, and Social Justice.

Our approach to social justice action work integrates experiential learning with Dan Butin’s concept of “justice learning.” First, the idea that experiential learning, “education rooted in and transformed by experience” (Lutternam-Aguilar and Gingerich 2002:43), is key in study abroad programs is not new (Wagenknecht 2011, Pagano and Roselle 2009, Savicki 2008, and Kolb 1984). As Thomas Wagenknecht (2011:137) states, “Experiential learning [. . .] is at the center of what leads the study abroad sojourn to become a positive and powerful learning process.” Second, we link experiential learning in a study abroad context to Butin’s concept of “justice learning,” or education that interrupts the “either/or binary thinking that closes off (rather than opens up) a space for discussion, debate, and action” (2007:3). We have found that our students are often inclined to interpret the world through hierarchical binaries; they typically approach the trip through the dualistic framework of developed/undeveloped and privileged/impoverished, which then limits the positive potential of experiential learning. Our primary challenge on this trip, then, has been to facilitate the process of student development beyond simplistic “us versus them” thinking.

This essay explores the transformation of our study abroad trip from a more traditional format that included one distinct service-learning project into an experience that integrates social justice action work throughout (and potentially beyond) the program. Our redesigned 2012 study abroad program reflected a model of social justice activism that emerged through the development of the 2008 and 2010 trips. This evolution also led to the development of our

three-fold approach to social justice action work: first, where students visit grass-roots organizations that perform “traditional” social justice action work; second, where instructors create the academic framework to facilitate change in students; and third, where on-site activities generate interactive experiential moments in which perceptions can be changed. In this essay, we demonstrate how the concept of justice learning has transformed our study abroad program from an experience that, on some levels, reinforced dualistic or binary thinking, to a program that reflects interactive, experiential learning opportunities that focus on social justice. Through directed preparation, trip activities, and guidance, we have tried to create an environment in which social justice action work can transpire. We explore the development of the program by first discussing the 2008 and 2010 trips, including the challenges we faced and the changes we made. We then explain the redesign of our 2012 program, which reflected the three-fold framework that is delineated above.

Tanzania 2008: Poverty and Privilege

In 2008, we brought 22 undergraduate students to Tanzania for our first study abroad trip. We identified poverty as a major social justice issue in Tanzanian life and, by working with a local Tanzanian vendor, sought out women’s organizations that worked to alleviate the conditions of poverty. Our 2008 program title, “Poverty and Privilege in Tanzania,” encapsulates this emphasis, yet it also reflects the major challenge that we faced throughout this first trip: the prevalence of binary “Us/ Them” thinking. We chose the title with some hesitancy, hoping that through the study of poverty-related issues and completion of a service-learning project, students would examine their own positions of privilege and advantage in the United States. In addition, students would then be able to more fully

comprehend the impact of their own choices and actions in a global context. Furthermore, we hoped that trip experiences would invite students to think more critically about the ways in which they were potentially impoverished within our own society in the United States. We were apprehensive about the title because we realized it could potentially reinforce stereotypes and dualistic thinking, but we hoped that the course framework and trip experience would complicate and dislodge those ideas and assumptions. Unfortunately, our expectations were not realized because we did not anticipate the extent to which students’ views were shaped by dominant, dualistic discourses. This section explores the initial design of our 2008 study abroad program and focuses on how the prevalence of binary thinking, encapsulated in the title, is reflected and reinforced through three challenges that emerged prior to and during the trip: the desire to help, ethical questions related to “bricks and mortar” service-learning projects, and student frustrations.

Prior to our departure, we taught four discussion-based class sessions in which we introduced central course concepts, complicated the notion of service-learning, and introduced Tanzanian culture. We chose a number of readings that we hoped would help students question their privileged positions and the ways in which they were guided by dominant perceptions (Appendix A). To this end, we assigned Peggy McIntosh’s “White Privilege,” Terrence Crowley’s “Lie of Entitlement,” and Joel Charon’s “The Nature of Perspective.” We also required two articles that explore poverty in Tanzania: Ruth Evans’ “Poverty, HIV, and Barriers to Education” and Mama Anna Mkapa’s “Opening Address by the First Lady of Tanzania.” To introduce a more critical perspective on service-learning, we assigned Ivan Illich’s 1968 speech, “To Hell With Good Intentions.” Finally, students read

Joseph Mbele's *Africans and Americans* to provide a Tanzanian perspective on cultural differences, which we hoped would prepare them for the study abroad experience and address issues related to culture shock.

The first challenge, the desire to "help" and "do for," emerged during these pre-travel classes and continued throughout the trip. We realized during these sessions that some students perceived the trip as an opportunity to help the poor, primarily through giving to children and women in need. In anticipation of this perspective, we assigned Illich's speech, which concludes with the following recommendation: "Come to look, come to climb our mountains, to enjoy our flowers. Come to study. But do not come to help." Following the advice of others who had been to Tanzania, we suggested that students could bring a few things to give to school children, including soccer balls, paper, and pencils. In addition to soccer balls, some students also brought used toys that they hoped to give to an orphanage.

The desire to help through giving was the first context in which the prevalence of binary thinking in our students' perceptions became clear, as our students hoped to assist Tanzanians through their unsolicited donations. We now recognize that this seemingly admirable desire to "help" and "do for" is shaped by what David Jefferess identifies as the Western discourses of marketing and colonialism. In other words, this worldview "reproduce[s] an 'Us/Them' relationship in which those in the beneficent 'donor countries' aid the desperate people of the 'project countries'" (Jefferess 2002:2). This type of discourse, by focusing on donor gratification, deflects attention away from the causes of poverty, the ways in which those advantaged by Western privilege can perpetuate poverty, and the potential solutions to poverty (Jefferess 2002: 4). To complicate the desire to help would entail dismantling the

stereotypes and binary thinking embedded in dominant perspectives.

The second challenge, ethical questions related to "bricks and mortar" service-learning, emerged in relation to the one-day service project we had planned. We were supposed to help construct a school building in a small village on the slopes of Mount Kilimanjaro, but the project was cancelled because a village elder had died and his funeral was scheduled that day. Some students were very disappointed; because they were so invested in wanting to help, they did not see how constructing a school could reinforce an Us/Them binary. As the day unfolded, however, they started to question the ethics of this kind of project. Students began to understand that constructing a school building could physically and emotionally separate them from those they wanted to help. We were relieved the project fell through because, in the weeks and months prior to the trip, we had also begun to question its validity. One of our colleagues, who had traveled to Tanzania numerous times, advised us to rethink this part of the program, as it might result in a scenario where a group of white people complete a task while local Tanzanians watch them work. Some of these locals might even be put out of work simply to accommodate tourists who want to "help" the "less fortunate" and then go home feeling good about themselves. As Butin (2003:1678) argues,

[S]ervice learning has promoted much good will among those doing the actual service learning, but there is considerably less evidence that service learning has provided much benefit for the recipients.

These ethical concerns led us to question the trip's overall emphasis on service projects and we began to wonder how, if at all, we might ethically maintain the focus on

service without perpetuating what we hoped to challenge.

The cancellation of the service-learning project actually offered an opportunity that then became the basis for the reorganization of the 2010 trip. Because we were not constructing a building, we instead visited with students and teachers, and we learned much about their school, their needs, and their desires. Our host, a village elder, also talked with us about the number of children, many of whom were AIDS orphans, who could not afford to attend school because of poverty-related circumstances. He explained that the Tanzanian government mandated that every village must have a secondary school, but it did not provide funds for tuition and the construction of buildings. Tuition for one year of schooling, we discovered, was approximately \$170 per student. Our students learned a valuable lesson that day and consequently, without our guidance, gathered nearly \$300 out of their souvenir money to donate to this school.

This spontaneous act, unlike the pre-planned service-learning project, was inspired by our time at the local school and interactions with our village host, the students, and the teachers. It comprised one of the most moving moments from the trip because it grew out of an emerging friendship with local Tanzanians and prompted us to think more critically about the importance of “being with” rather than “doing for”. Our interactions allowed us to learn far more about the village school than we would have through the service-learning construction project, including the cost of putting a child through school, the challenges people faced, and what locals identified as their most pressing needs. We learned, after talking with our host, that the most useful act of service is the donation of money, which could then pay for a child’s tuition or cover building construction costs. This type of donation would not necessarily provide us with

the emotional gratification of doing “hands on” work, but our efforts would be put to better use.

The third challenge is best characterized as simmering student frustration throughout the trip in relation to assignments and activities. First, our assignments generated frustration among several students because of their complexity (Appendix B). Additionally, for several students, conflicting notions about the nature and purpose of the trip manifested in frustrations over on-site activities. Frustrations arose not so much because of binary thinking but because preconceived notions about the trip were at odds with its reality. Some students seemed to want a fun graduation vacation and became annoyed by the lack of free time for recreational activities such as sunbathing, socializing, and experiencing the local nightlife. Those who perceived the program as a way to help the less fortunate were very excited about our service-learning project and gravitated toward activities that involved interactions with children; they seemed less excited to visit sites that offered opportunities to learn more about Tanzanian women, poverty-related issues, and the local economy. We soon learned that our pre-trip classes had not adequately prepared these students for homesickness, culture shock, and the types of programs we hoped to highlight, which then hindered them from engaging fully in on-site activities.

Some students also found on-site activities frustrating because their involvement was often passive rather than active, and yet students found it much easier to embrace this binary rather than confront it. Long days packed with activities were often challenging for students, which contributed to the passive nature of the group. Moreover, the practice of Tanzania administrators presenting formal lectures resulted in the unfortunate reinforcement of a different type of division between the students and our Tan-

zania hosts: Us (the passive audience) and Them (the active lecturers). While students always had the opportunity to ask questions after presentations, their already passive disposition precluded them from actively participating. We understood that formality was a part of Tanzanian tradition, but we struggled to balance that format with our desire for more informal, active interaction. Thus, our students were frustrated both by their lack of energy, which inclined them toward passivity, and then by the format of the activities, which reinforced passivity and dualistic thinking.

What became clear from these frustrations is that if students are overwhelmed by what they perceive as an overly complicated journal assignment, by an itinerary that entails long days, and by an inability to comprehend course concepts, their frame of mind impacts their capacity to learn (Hall 2004:268-270). These constraints are especially relevant when the subject matter requires inner reflection about one's values and beliefs and a willingness to move out of one's comfort zone. Thus, reducing these frustrations became a major component of our 2010 trip.

We had organized the 2008 trip with high hopes that the experience would provide a productive and enjoyable learning experience for all who participated. Yet the challenges of leading a study abroad program to a country in East Africa emerged prior to our departure and became more pronounced throughout the trip. Upon our return, students overwhelmingly indicated that they had learned a great deal from the adventure, but as leaders, we felt that we had not adequately prepared them for what we wanted them to gain from the experience. The prevalence of binary thinking, which is reflected in the desire to help, our own decision to include the service-learning project, and general student frustrations, reveals that student expectations and assumptions did

not always align with the nature and purpose of the trip.

Tanzania 2010: Cultural Immersion

In 2010, we brought 19 students to Tanzania. As we planned this trip, we realized that the limited space of two-and-a-half weeks offers interactive moments where perceptions can be changed and justice learning can take place. This trip addressed the challenge of binary thinking by including more of these interactive opportunities, but our 2010 efforts to move students away from dualistic thinking resulted in a framework that still lacked a specific focus. We now realize that most 2010 program changes were reactive rather than proactive: we addressed the major challenges that arose in 2008 and included more interactive activities. We initiated these changes by revising the course title to "Cultural Immersion in Tanzania," which we hoped would avoid the reinforcement of Us/Them binaries. Still central to the course were issues related to perception, unearned privilege, and poverty as a determining factor in Tanzanian life, but we wanted a title that reflected what we were seeing as the key component of the trip—understanding Tanzanian culture from a Tanzanian perspective and placing emphasis on interactive experiences. After re-titling the trip, we continued to re-evaluate much of what we had done in 2008, addressing the challenges that arose: the well-meaning desire to help, our bricks and mortar service-learning project, and student frustrations. In addition to these types of reactive changes, we did make one proactive change: we began to introduce a social justice framework.

One of the first challenges raised in 2008 was how to address students' well-meaning desire to help Tanzanians, and this challenge also arose with our 2010 students. Before we departed, students once again asked whether they could bring gifts. We told

them of our 2008 experience and highlighted how it is best to bring what is asked for by Tanzanians, shifting the emphasis from donor gratification to recipient request in an attempt to break down the Us/Them binary. Prior to this trip, our Tanzanian host told us that the village schools we would visit actually needed soccer balls and pumps. We were able to channel our students' desire to help—they enthusiastically brought six soccer balls and two pumps—but we continued to emphasize through readings and discussions the problematic nature of this desire.

The second challenge raised in 2008 entailed ethical questions related to our bricks and mortar service-learning project. In 2010, we still wanted students to experience a taste of hands-on activism, but now questioned the validity of the traditional service-learning approach. The cancellation of our 2008 construction project and the students' spontaneous donation made us realize that if students are going to do this type of "work," it must be something Tanzanians request and actually need. Because we had learned that the school was most in need of money, we decided to offer a different type of service-learning project: a pre-trip fundraising opportunity for students, who would then give the majority of money to village schools in Tanzania while using the remainder to off-set their trip costs. The students' activist work consisted primarily of letter-writing campaigns and resulted in the donation of \$3,000 to a village school. Even though we were still "giving" money to Tanzanians, they were the ones who inspired the process. Our hope was that this fundraising project would be sustainable and that we could continue to work with village schools in northern Tanzania.

Our visit to Kiwakkuki (Kikundi cha Wanawake Kilimanjaro Kupambana na UKIMW), an HIV/AIDS awareness organization in Moshi, reflects a second example of how students were able to make a differ-

ence because they were asked to do so. In 2008, we noticed that the organization welcomed volunteers from other countries, so we asked whether having our students volunteer for a day would be beneficial. They enthusiastically said yes. When we visited in 2010, the organization had moved to a new location, and they were still in the process of renovating and settling into their new building. Many small tasks needed to be done, but they lacked the people power to complete them. So some students cleaned storage rooms, some entered data in labs, some went on home visits to those living with HIV, and some worked on the roof and mixed cement. At the end of the day, students excitedly talked about how their experiences taught them that activist work often includes the mundane tasks that keep an organization operating.

The third challenge from 2008 focused on student frustrations. We hoped in 2010 to create a more enjoyable and productive learning environment that would be conducive to student development in the area of social justice work. To address the frustration caused by the 2008 students' conflicting perceptions of what this study abroad experience entailed, we tackled the problem on several fronts. We included an interview as part of the application process to make sure students understood the parameters of the trip. In pre-trip classes, we added discussions about culture shock and exercises that facilitated understanding of cultural assumptions. These discussions and exercises reduced frustrations in two ways: one by minimizing culture shock and the other by building group cohesion. Both are especially important to a study abroad program that asks students to do such intense internal work as changing their perceptions. We also used R. Garry Shirts' simulation exercise, BaFa BaFa, which creates two imaginary cultures with very different values and rules of behavior. Members of each culture visit the

other and return to their own to determine how the other culture operates so they can successfully participate. Additionally, we included an exercise where students wrote down all their trip expectations and then tore them up, discussing how expectations can cause them to miss or misread potential interactive moments. These approaches reduced conflicting perceptions of the trip, minimized culture shock, and created group cohesion; although group drama cannot be entirely eliminated, the 2010 students were significantly less frustrated than the 2008 students.

To decrease student frustration over course assignments, we needed to determine how to make the written assignments more meaningful and less complicated. For example, we replaced our long list of journal questions with the following queries on the day's experiences: What did you learn and/or think about? What are you learning about yourself? What are you learning about Tanzanians and Tanzania? What are you learning about the United States (by being in Tanzania)? Why is this significant? We also provided examples of entries that were simply descriptive and those that processed what students experienced in relation to larger cultural assumptions and norms. Moreover, we acted more as mentors by collecting journals mid-trip and giving ungraded feedback, which re-directed those going astray and increased student confidence in writing and learning. We encountered little resistance, and students appreciated our efforts. While both the 2008 and 2010 final paper assignments required students to write a thesis-driven essay in which they were to process and analyze the trip experience through course concepts and readings, the 2008 assignment caused frustration because it lacked focus. In the 2010 paper, we specifically asked students to discuss what they had learned about Tanzanian and United States culture in relation to gender, commu-

nication, and/or a major issue raised in the readings. These papers were more successful, and, again, students expressed less frustration.

We also thought carefully about how to design our on-site class sessions to reflect our commitment to active, student-centered learning, and provide general guidance to our students. We decided to focus these classes on Mbele's *Africans and Americans: Embracing Cultural Differences*, one of our readings from 2008, because this Tanzanian author challenges stereotypes through the presentation of his cultural experiences. Before we left the United States, we divided students into four groups and assigned each a section of this text on which they would lead one of four on-site class sessions. On-site discussions focused on comparisons between Mbele's views of Tanzanian life and students' interactions with the people they met and the places they visited. Frustration was replaced with excited conversations. These classes shifted from tense obligations where learning was stifled to an exciting component of the trip where insights flourished.

In addressing student frustrations during on-site activities, we knew we had to respect the Tanzanian tradition of formal presentations while breaking down the active/passive binary through increased interaction. On one hand, our 2010 students made this endeavor easier because they were not inclined to be passive. More of our 2010 students had backgrounds in the areas of Women's Studies, Social Justice, and African American Studies, which fostered a shared perspective of why they were in Tanzania, so they approached the academic portion of the course with more excitement than frustration. We also changed the format of some activities to promote interaction and dismantle the Us/Them binary. As indicated previously, our 2008 school visits were very formal and offered few opportunities to build

relationships with students. We visited the same concrete classrooms in 2010, but this time, we actively participated in the lessons. Through these interactive experiences, students' assumptions about education in Tanzania and the United States were challenged. For example, they met Tanzanian elementary school students who were learning to speak a third language and who could answer geography questions that stumped our students. In addition, the soccer ball donations leveled the playing field. Students from opposite sides of the world who had been unable to communicate now encouraged each other as they raced around on the grass. These interactive experiences had more of an impact on deconstructing the Us/Them binary than any article they could have read.

As well as addressing the challenges raised in 2008, we also began to rethink our study abroad program in terms of social justice. Up to this point, we had structured our trip as a Women's Studies and Communication course, focusing on gender issues, women's activism, and cross-cultural communication. But in 2010, we decided to cross-list this course with our Social Justice Program and count it as a capstone experience for Social Justice minors. We began to think of how this program already incorporated social justice activities beyond gender and how we could continue to do so more intentionally. We, thus, added three major on-site activities: two days at the United African Alliance Community Center (UAACC) and visits to a fair trade coffee plantation and the Miichi Women's Group, a fair trade artists' organization and shop that provides a source of income to struggling local women. Students came home thinking seriously about where their morning coffee comes from and whether they should seek out fair trade products.

Pete and Charlotte O'Neal's UAACC also added more interactive experiences to

our program and several dimensions to our social justice framework. Both former Black Panthers from the United States, Pete lives in exile in Tanzania, and both have dedicated their lives to giving back to the community in which they live. Students were able to hear Pete's story of fighting for civil rights and see how the O'Neals have created a community center based on social justice principles. The UAACC provides work and educational opportunities for local youth, helps in community projects, and recently added an orphanage on the grounds. Students also participated in a Youth Forum, an interactive experience that especially made them think about current events in terms of social justice. In this forum, "youth" (mostly in their twenties) working at the Center and from the local community joined with our students to talk with and to learn from each other.

While we returned to the United States knowing we were closer to our vision of what we hoped two-and-a-half weeks in Tanzania could mean for students, we immediately started thinking about how to improve the next trip in 2012. In reflecting on the 2010 program, we identified two major challenges. First, we realized that a cultural immersion model is too broadly based; the new title in no way reflects the complex political stance of this course. We, therefore, purposely considered how our emerging focus on social justice shaped what we did while maintaining our commitment to gender and communication. Second, we continued to question the implications of fundraising as service-learning and whether this type of giving did indeed successfully dismantle the Us/Them binary. After reflecting on the reactive changes we made in 2010, we also concluded that we needed to more proactively develop the theoretical framework that guides our trip. As we will demonstrate in the next section, this theoretical framework helped clarify the types of activ-

ism and experiential learning that we now actively try to foster in our Tanzania study abroad program.

Tanzania 2012: Activism, Gender, and Social Justice

In 2012, we brought 12 students to Tanzania. The revisions we implemented for this trip centered on readings, assignments, and on-site interactive experiences that enhanced social justice action moments of insight and addressed our newly created Student Learning Outcomes. Moreover, we found a way to retain our focus on gender and communication while simultaneously integrating best critical practices that merged service-learning and social justice work in a study abroad context.

Our thinking for the 2012 trip stemmed from our concern that the 2010 trip structure was too general: we had made positive changes by including more interactive activities, but overall, the program still lacked focus in relation to what we specifically hoped to accomplish. We, thus, changed the title to “Activism, Gender, and Social Justice in Tanzania,” which more accurately demonstrated what drives this study abroad experience. We chose “activism” to signal the active participation central to this learning experience and to encompass our emerging three-fold model of social justice action work: first, where students visit grass-roots organizations performing “traditional” social justice action work; second, where instructors create the academic framework to facilitate change; and third, where on-site activities generate interactive experiential moments in which our perceptions can be changed. We chose “gender” not only to signal that this concept will always be a major lens through which we view Tanzanian culture but also to stay true to the central form of traditional social action work that remains part of our trip: Tanzanian women organizing to address social justice issues.

Finally, we chose “social justice” to shed light on what has been a major emphasis from the trip’s inception and a major concept that we hope students will more fully understand after the experience. All three topics clarified the focus and purpose of our 2012 trip; in addition, we began to think more systematically and theoretically about our program.

The 2012 trip design reflected the confluence of research and reflection in the areas of service-learning, experiential learning in a study abroad context, and best practices in higher education. First, we refined our thinking about the integration of social justice work and service-learning through Butin’s concept of “justice learning.” As Butin (2007:1) states,

Deep and sustained service-learning [. . .] offers genuine venues within which social justice education can be experienced and experimented. Such service-learning, moreover, fosters a justice-oriented framework [. . .] that makes possible the questioning and disruption of unexamined and all-too oppressive binaries of how we view the struggle toward equity in education. This ‘justice learning,’ for me, is the goal that lies at the intersection of service-learning and social justice education.

Butin (2007:4) goes on to explain that justice learning also “disrupt[s] the unacknowledged binaries that guide much of our day-to-day thinking and acting.” The evolution in our understanding of service-learning reflects and is shaped by Butin’s work. The ethical issues that arose in relation to our traditional bricks and mortar service-learning project prompted us to question whether we should still include this type of emphasis in the trip. Butin helped us clarify how service-learning and social justice work can be productively integrated, as

justice learning “open[s] up the possibility that how we originally viewed the world and ourselves may be too simplistic and stereotypical” (Butin 2007:4). The key, we recognized, is based on creating an environment where students can “meaningfully engag[e] with issues of social justice” (Butin 2007:4). We hoped, in 2012, to continue to create the interactive experiential moments that dismantle dichotomies, thus helping students develop the mindset necessary to enact change. In this way, we tried to foster the concept of justice learning.

Our perspectives were also significantly shaped by the work of Doug Reilly and Stefan Senders (2009: 242), who present a new “critical” lens “for understanding the work of study abroad.” Their work challenges existing frameworks and seeks to position the study abroad experience as “an activist force in the service of global survival” by focusing on “an ethos of global responsibility and citizenship” (Reilly and Senders, 2009: 262, 247). They explore nine approaches to global crisis, some of which we detail in subsequent sections. This emphasis on global responsibility and citizenship entails, as Butin’s work does, the analysis of power structures, one’s own position of privilege, and the dismantling of stereotypes and simplistic thinking.

We also realized that we needed to begin this restructuring process through the delineation of concrete student learning objectives. As Ken Bain (2004:50) emphasizes, “[T]he best teachers plan backward; they begin with the results they hope to foster.”

While Bain suggests that courses should be designed after determining one’s learning outcomes, it has taken us four years of rethinking and two trips to Tanzania to determine what it is we actually want our students to learn through this study abroad experience. Study abroad research (Kachuyevski and Jones, 2011, Ritz, 2011, Long, Akande, Purdy, and Nakano, 2010,

and Donnelly-Smith, 2009) shows that students have much to gain from even a short-term experience. We, thus, created the following student learning outcomes for the 2012 program:

- *To embrace being out of their comfort zone as an opportunity for learning.*

Rather than seeing social discomfort as a warning sign to retreat, we hope that students will realize that cultural or social discomfort can be a sign that their preconceptions of what they think is normal are being challenged.

- *To understand how language and symbols function to shape their perspectives.*

In addition to viewing language and symbols as vehicles to communicate with one another, we want students to understand the ways in which language and symbols provide the foundation for our worldviews and direct our thinking about people, issues, and cultural practices.

- *To demonstrate the ability to think in more complicated ways.*

We hope students will be able to recognize dualisms in public discourse, popular culture, and their own thinking. In addition, we hope they can explain the limitations of such thinking and demonstrate more nuanced understandings of the world.

- *To understand the origin and function of stereotypes.*

Stereotypes of Africa abound in Western media: Africa is dominated by large animals to be hunted, the entire continent suffers from guerilla warfare, the Maasai represent the quintessential African, and all Africans are suffering. We want students to under-

stand how these types of images shape and direct their thinking, the origins of these stereotypes, and the dangerous misperceptions that stereotypes can invite.

- *To understand that their cultural positioning comes with assumptions and biases that can lead to stereotypes about those in a different cultural position.*

It is important for students to understand that in addition to being influenced by stereotypes of “Africa,” their views of “America” have also been shaped by various institutions, including the media, government, and education. Furthermore, we want students to understand that these views can also lead to assumptions and biases that foster stereotypes about those living in other parts of the world.

- *To understand that for social justice activism to be effective, they must dismantle the Us/Them binary.*

We hope to teach students, first, that the desire to help or “do for” reinforces systems of privilege and hierarchy; second, that to create effective change, they must “start[] with the notion that given the proper tools, the people most affected by a problem are not only capable of better understanding their realities, but are also the best equipped to address their struggles” (Koirala-Azad and Fuentes 2009-2010:1).

- *To recognize their potential to enact social change.*

We hope that our program offers opportunities for students to realize that their choices have consequences and that they can make a difference in the world through their daily lives. We also hope that they realize their capacity to create change through a va-

riety of means, such as educating others about their experiences in Tanzania.

We saw our classes as the primary place where we laid the ground-work for our student learning outcomes and began to enact our second vision of social justice action work: creating the framework to facilitate change in our students. We were pleased with the 2010 change in format of our on-site classes. It was to our pre-trip classes that we made substantial changes. We introduced the major course concepts on three separate days: the first two addressing Language, Symbols, Stereotypes, and Perception and the third addressing Gender, Social Justice Activism, and Privilege. Each day included discussions of readings, most of which we used in 2010, followed by an interactive exercise that planted the seeds for change by allowing students to actively experience the central course concepts. For example, prior to our departure, we asked students to create a snapshot “postcard” of Africa that embodied what they thought of when they heard the word. Students designed their postcards using language and images from magazines, books, and websites. We also used the BaFa BaFa exercise, which worked well in 2010, to build group cohesion and explore cultural preconceptions, and we also added Brenda J. Allen’s Privilege Exercise, which asks students to create a paper clip chain that reflects their positions of privilege. To continue our work on dismantling stereotypes, we added two new readings to the course: chapters from Curt Keim’s *Mistaking Africa: Curiosities And Inventions of The American Mind* (2009) and Karen Rothmyer’s “Hiding the Real Africa: Why NGOs Prefer Bad News” (2011). We designed these classes to set the stage for students to be receptive to the third component of our model for social justice action work: the interactive experiential moments in Tanzania in which perceptions can be changed.

While on-site activities for the 2012 program were nearly identical to the 2010 program, we hoped to create a social justice framework that would enhance experiential learning moments. Seeking to generate more of these moments, we included a few more interactive activities. While at the UAACC, we added a new interactive session with Mama Charlotte O'Neal: she discussed her role in the Black Panther Party and her social justice work in Tanzania, and she presented a captivating poetry reading on women, aging, and body hair. We also expanded our day with the Maasai to include gathering firewood, and we added an interactive basket-weaving demonstration with local women in a small village. It is through such shared experiences that we saw the potential for justice learning, and while our Maasai tasks did not turn out as planned (due to our local guide that day), the basket-weaving demonstration went beyond our expectations and students ranked it as one of the top experiences from which they learned the most. The village women did not speak English, but they still taught us how to weave the baskets that they sell in the local community. Through the process of showing us how to complete the task, along with the eventual help of a translator, we shared an afternoon of laughter and productive conversation.

We also redesigned the final paper assignment and added a new post trip event, both of which addressed four of our new student learning outcomes: understanding how language functions to shape our perspectives, demonstrating the ability to think in more complicated ways, understanding the nature and function of stereotypes, and recognizing the potential to enact social change. The final course assignment was shaped by Reilly and Senders' call to analyze often simplistic and stereotypical "representations (and misrepresentations)" in an effort to "build a theoretical framework [. . .] of cultural complexity" and in-

vite students to think critically about their own participation in these representations (2009:254-255). The revised paper assignment followed this framework. Upon their return from Tanzania, students were asked to critically reflect on their experiences, especially those activities focused on gender and social justice grassroots activism, such as visits to KIWAKUKKI and the Miichi Women's Group. They then explored how these experiences "complicated the postcard" that they created prior to the trip. While we've ultimately concluded that writing a final paper in a limited time-frame after such an intense on-site experience is not always going to produce high quality work, we were very pleased to see that our students had learned what we hoped they would about dismantling binaries and stereotypes. In that sense, their final papers were the most successful to date.

The new assignment for 2012 was an ungraded "public event," which we scheduled on campus two months after our return from Tanzania. This event was inspired by Reilly and Senders' (2009: 261) call to facilitate active teaching and learning experiences for students, which, we hoped, would also foster their idea of learning as a "responsibility." We reserved a table in our student union where students could "teach" university students, faculty, and staff about what they learned in Tanzania. Using their final papers as a guide, students brought in souvenirs and created posters that were used as a backdrop for the tables. These materials visually displayed the language, images, and experiences that have "complicated the postcard" for them. In addition, one of the women's organizations that we visited gave us fabric to sell, so we had the added opportunity to fundraise on behalf of Tanzanian women. We hoped that through this event, students would further understand that by sharing their experiences, they can play a role in creating social change, but we were

disappointed that only a few could participate.

Finally, we continued our implementation of the student fundraising project, even though we still struggled with issues related to the donation of money. Does this project continue to reinforce “doing for” rather than “doing with” and/or does the Tanzanian-based impetus for the project shift its emphasis because the need was shown to us and we present the money with no strings attached? We still continue to think about this dilemma, and an email from one of our Maasai hosts has guided our thinking. His school is in need of money for scholarships as they hope to provide education for girls who live under harsh conditions. These scholarships may prevent these girls from being forced to marry at a young age and potentially undergo female genital circumcision, which is still practiced by some Maasai even though it is illegal in Tanzania. We believe that these donations are worthwhile and provide an important contribution to a country that is often without the resources needed to carry out its work. Our 2012 students did not raise as much money to donate to schools as on the previous trip, but their donation still reflected commitment and hard work and was warmly received.

As we reflect on the 2012 trip, we continue to think about two overall challenges. First, the most significant challenge emerged when the trip host and organizer that we worked with in 2008 and 2010 resigned and we began working with his replacement, who lacked the experience and understanding that our former host/organizer brought to the implementation of our program. Working with the new host and trip organizer generated a series of frustrations and illuminated how important it is to find a contact who understands how to shape a trip that reflects the Tanzania experience but also meets the needs of the visiting group. Despite these challenges, we retained the same itinerary,

and from an academic standpoint, our three-fold approach to justice learning proved successful and our student learning outcomes helped us create a better structure for justice learning.

A second challenge focuses on the unplanned interactive learning moments that can become a significant part of the program. At one point in the trip, our Maasai host wanted us to join in their celebration of their young men becoming warriors through circumcision and took us to a home where a young boy had recently undergone the procedure. Our students were horrified and at that time, suggested that we never return to this village. But many of the same students later identified this experience as the one from which they learned the most because it forced them to question their own horror, cultural differences, what their host had intended, and the conclusions they finally drew from this interaction. This type of experience is noteworthy in two ways: first, as trip leaders, it reminded us that we must always be open to unplanned events and interactions, and second, it reminded us sometimes the most uncomfortable circumstances can generate the most productive learning experiences. As we plan our next program in 2014, we hope to once again work with our original trip host and organizer, who has since started his own tourism business, and we will continue to think about the multifaceted interactive moments from which our students have learned so much.

Conclusion

This essay has explored the ongoing development of our Tanzania study abroad program, which reflects the integration of experiential learning and justice learning in an effort to challenge and dismantle binary thinking. Through this process of reflection and revision, a three-fold approach to social justice action work emerged: first, where students visit grass-roots organizations performing “traditional”

social justice action work; second, where instructors create the academic framework to facilitate change in students; and third, where on-site activities generate interactive experiential moments in which perceptions can be changed. In the 2012 program, we also emphasized our own sense of responsibility in planning the trip. To this end, we talked with students about the evolution of the trip, which entails our commitment to working with Tanzanians for social justice, the privilege of studying (and teaching) abroad, our own experiences and struggles in trying to “live lives of consequence,” and the importance of giving back in a way that does not reinforce dichotomies of dominance and submission (Reilly and Senders 2009:257). In this sense, the restructuring process has offered the added benefit of forcing both of us to more carefully re-examine our own assumptions and perceptions and, thus, has deepened our commitment to social justice action work. We will undoubtedly continue to struggle and refine our program, but we hope that we can now offer a framework to others who have confronted similar challenges when trying to facilitate social justice work in a study abroad context.

Endnote

- 1 By “bricks and mortar” service-learning, we refer to hands-on, physical work that occurs on site. We compare this type of service-learning to an alternative perspective on service-learning that occurs through mutual and reciprocal interaction, dialogue, and discussion. See, for example, Lori Pompa’s Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program, which serves as a model for the type of service-learning project aimed at dismantling hierarchies, stereotypes, and dualistic us/them thinking.

Appendix A
Assigned Readings*

January 2008	January 2010	January 2012
Joseph Mbele <i>Africans and Americans: Embracing Cultural Differences</i>	Joseph Mbele <i>Africans and Americans: Embracing Cultural Differences</i>	Joseph Mbele <i>Africans and Americans: Embracing Cultural Differences</i>
Rebecca Haffajee, “The Women of KIWAKKUKI: Leaders in the Fight Against HIV/AIDS in Kilimanjaro, Tanzania”	Iris Strauch and Anne Béatrice Eickhoff, “KIWAKUKKI: Women Fight Against AIDS/HIV”	Iris Strauch and Anne Béatrice Eickhoff, “KIWAKUKKI: Women Fight Against AIDS/HIV”
Peggy McIntosh “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Backpack”	Peggy McIntosh “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Backpack”	Peggy McIntosh “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Backpack”
Joel Charon, “Nature of Perspective”	Joel Charon, “Nature of Perspective”	
Ivan Illich, “To Hell With Good Intentions”	Ivan Illich, “To Hell With Good Intentions”	
“An Introduction to Women and Globalization”	“An Introduction to Women and Globalization”	
Mama Anna Mkapa, “Opening Address by the First Lady of Tanzania”	Mama Anna Mkapa, “Opening Address by the First Lady of Tanzania”	
	Jessi Ristau “Interview with Mama Charlotte for Women of Africa Forum”	Jessi Ristau “Interview with Mama Charlotte for Women of Africa Forum”
	“Culture Shock”	“Culture Shock”
	“MU International Center: Study Abroad - Reverse Culture Shock”	“MU International Center: Study Abroad - Reverse Culture Shock”
Terrence Crowley, “Lie of Entitlement”		
Ruth Evans, “Poverty, HIV, and Barriers to Education: Street Children’s		

Experiences in Tanzania”		
	Rebecca Gearhart “Taking American Race Relations on the Road...to Africa”	
		Curtis Keim <i>Mistaking Africa: Curiosities and Inventions of the American Mind</i>
		Karen Rothmyer “Hiding the Real Africa: Why NGOs prefer bad news”
		“About Us” and “What is Fair Trade”

*See Works Cited for complete citations

Appendix B Assignments

JOURNALS January 2008

You will write a total of 12 journal entries. As a whole, these 12 journal entries must address a variety of questions under the Personal and Civic categories. On certain days, we may direct you to a specific question or a specific course concept; otherwise, you can choose which question(s) and concept(s) you want to address. In addition, you must include one course reading connection in each journal entry. Crucial to writing an effective journal entry is the ability to connect theory and practice. This means that when describing what you are learning from your study abroad experience, you will need to use the readings and course materials. Not doing this will seriously affect your grade. As a starting point, you might identify a particular experience or set of events that took place during the day and reflect upon as well as analyze this experience in relation to a specific course reading or a course concept, such as “lens” or perspective, privilege, poverty, lie of entitlement, or gender.

A. Personal Perspective

1. How is this study abroad experience revealing your own attitudes or biases?
2. How is this study abroad experience challenging your personal identity, i.e. how you define and think of yourself in terms of gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, age, ethnicity/race, and/or nationality?
3. What kinds of stereotypes are being challenged through this study abroad experience?
4. How is this experience shifting your thinking about social inequality? Please explain your response.

5. What important differences and similarities are you finding in relation to yourself and Tanzanians?
6. What changes do you want to make in your life based on this study abroad experience? In the lives of others?

B. Academic Perspective

1. How do the course readings/course concepts illuminate your study abroad experience?
2. Based on this study abroad experience, what have you learned about some of the most immediate or severe problems/issues facing Tanzanians? From whom have you learned about these problems/issues?
3. How is your study abroad experience helping you to learn about structural inequality, poverty, and gender?

C. Civic Perspective

1. In what ways are power differentials emerging in this experience? What are the sources of power in the experiences you are observing or in which you are participating? What systems underlie the power dynamics and who benefits and who is harmed by these systems being in place?
2. What ethical dimensions (rights, duties/obligations/justice/integrity, personal responsibility, equality, freedom) are emerging from this experience? What change is needed for the groups of people with we are interacting? How can this change be accomplished? With individual action or collective action? Within the system or challenging the system?
3. What privilege did you bring to the situation? What privilege did others bring? What systems are the sources of such privilege? How are you or others disempowered by your/their lack of such privilege? How might you empower yourself or others?
4. How does this experience highlight the relationship between individual choices/actions and the operation/constraints of institutions/society as a whole?
5. What are some of the important policies, laws, and political debates related to the primary issues facing the Tanzanians with whom we spoke?
6. Drawing from your study abroad experience, what do you think needs to be done, from a policy perspective, to better serve Tanzanians?
7. Drawing from your study abroad experience, how can we “not forget” the Tanzanians? What can we do, upon our return?

JOURNALS January 2010

You will be keeping a handwritten, legible journal during our trip to Tanzania. You will need 10 entries for this journal. You will write the first entry on the plane trip over to Tanzania and will show it to us at breakfast the first morning we are there. Eight additional entries will be written while you are in Tanzania. The final entry will be written on the plane home.

First Entry Pre-Travel Reflection:

In this entry, write about what you are feeling and thinking at this moment about the trip.

Journal Ideas for Next Eight Entries:

You can briefly summarize our itinerary for each day (if it's easier to remember that way), but a description of what we did each day is not adequate for a journal entry. Instead, *try to process what you experienced each day; in other words, explore your reactions to what we did each day*: What did you learn and/or think about? What are you learning about yourself? What are you learning about Tanzanians and Tanzania? What are you learning about the United States (by being in Tanzania)? Why is this significant? In short, try to weave together your learning experiences with larger cultural assumptions and norms.

Additional ideas to think about:

- Note observations—what do you observe around you (in terms of people, events etc.) and why is this significant to you?
- What do you observe about gender and/or race and why is this significant to you?
- What do you observe about communication and why is this significant to you? Think about your own reactions to the day—for example, if you were annoyed that we didn't stay on schedule, why did this bother you so much? What does it say about *our* conception of time and *our* culture?
- What do you *feel* each day and what makes you feel that way? What do your feelings call into question about yourself, your culture, etc.?
- What do you *feel* each day and what makes you feel that way? What do your feelings call into question about yourself, your culture, etc.?

Final Entry—Post-Travel Reflection:

1. In this entry, write about what you are feeling and thinking at this moment about the trip.
2. How does your initial reflection (first journal entry) compare with your final reflections?

JOURNALS January 2012

Ten journal entries are required; one written on the plane going over, eight while in Tanzania, and one on the trip home. The entries must demonstrate that you are processing your study abroad experience. Entries should be at least 500 words.

Journal Entry 1 should address what you are feeling as we fly to Tanzania.

Journal Entry 10 (your final entry) should 1) identify the two experiences that had the most significant impact on you, and 2) explain why and in what ways these two experiences had the most significant impact on you.

Journal Ideas for the 8 Entries to be Completed While We are in Tanzania

You can briefly summarize our itinerary for each day (if it's easier to remember that way), but a description of what we did each day is not adequate for a journal entry. Instead, *try to process and explore your reactions to what we did each day*: What did you learn? What are you learning about yourself? What are you learning about Tanzanians and Tanzania? What are you

learning about the United States (by being in Tanzania)? Why is this significant? In short, try to weave together your learning experiences with larger cultural assumptions and norms.

Additional ideas to think about:

- Note observations—what do you observe around you (in terms of people, events etc.) and why is this significant to you?
- What do you observe about gender and/or race and why is this significant to you?
- What do you observe about communication and why is this significant to you?
- Think about your own reactions to the day—for example, if you were annoyed that we didn't stay on schedule, why did this bother you so much? What does it say about *our* conception of time and *our* culture?

What do you *feel* each day and what makes you feel that way? What do your feelings call into question about yourself, your culture, etc.?

FINAL PAPER January 2008

This paper asks you to critically analyze your study abroad experience in relation to course readings and key concepts. Address the following:

Do your study abroad learning experiences support and/or challenge the main ideas from the course readings and their interpretation (analysis?) of the key concepts of this course? Advance a thesis and support your thesis in two ways: 1) with examples from your Tanzania study abroad experience and 2) with quotes from the texts. Be sure to explain quotes when necessary to demonstrate your understanding of the readings.

Interdisciplinary 102 students

This assignment is a formal post-trip paper (typed, double-spaced, 4-5 pages). All required readings must be included (except the two upper-level articles by Evans and Haffajee,). Make sure you have an introduction and conclusion.

Communication 400 and Interdisciplinary 366 students

This assignment is a formal, thesis-driven, post-trip paper (typed, double-spaced, 8-10 pages). All required readings must be included. Make sure you have an introduction and conclusion.

FINAL PAPER January 2010

The final paper asks you to write a thesis-driven paper that combines what you learned while in Tanzania with what you learned from our reading assignments, relating your study abroad experiences to the readings.

Analyze what you learned about Tanzania culture and U.S. culture in terms of communication, gender, and/or a major issue raised in the readings. Explain with examples from the trip and the readings. Remember, if this course counts for either your major (Communication or Women's Studies) or minor programs (Communication, Women's Studies, Social Justice, African American Studies), you should choose a category/categories of analysis that fits your program(s).

Checklist:

- Include examples from the trip to support and develop your analysis.
- Include Mbele's *Africans and Americans* and at least 7 of the 10 required articles, and use quotes from the readings to demonstrate your points.
- Make sure you have an introduction, thesis statement, topic sentences for each paragraph, and a conclusion.

Page Length: 6-8 pages (typed, double spaced, stapled)

FINAL PAPER January 2012

The final assignment is a thesis-driven paper that asks you to 1) revisit and complicate the postcard you created in our pre-class session, 2) explore and analyze your experiences on the study abroad trip, and 3) compare and contrast the stereotypes and realities of Tanzanian culture. Your thesis should address the ways in which your experiences challenge the postcard stereotypes and why the stereotypes circulate so freely in the U.S. To this end, you should think carefully about the following:

Part I

1. What is present and absent in your postcard? (1-2 pages)
2. Think critically about and reflect on your experiences in Tanzania, including and especially those activities focused on gender and social justice grassroots activism, such as KIWAKKUKI, Miichi Women's Group, and Nronga Cooperative Dairy.
3. Explore how the experiences in #2 "complicate the postcard" that you created prior to the trip. (#2 and #3 combined 4-6 pages)
4. Make sure you include examples from the trip to develop your analysis and support your thesis.

Part II: Think about and address the following questions:

Which images get back to the United States and which do not? Why might this be the case?
(1 page)

Checklist

- Include examples from the trip to support and develop your analysis.
- Make sure you have an introduction, thesis statement, topic sentences for each paragraph, and a conclusion. Your entire paper should be an argument that supports your thesis.
- Reference three readings from class to develop your argument. The Keim chapters count as one reading.

Page Length

- 6-8 pages (typed, double spaced, stapled)
- 8-10 pages (typed, double spaced, stapled) if this is for your Social Justice capstone.

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How Porous are the Walls that Separate Us?: Transformative Service-Learning, Women's Incarceration, and the Unsettled Self

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Abstract

In this article, we refine a politics of thinking from the margins by exploring a pedagogical model that advances transformative notions of service learning as social justice teaching. Drawing on a recent course we taught involving both incarcerated women and traditional college students, we contend that when communication among differentiated and stratified parties occurs, one possible result is not just a view of the other but also a transformation of the self and other. More specifically, we suggest that an engaged feminist praxis of teaching incarcerated women together with college students helps illuminate the porous nature of fixed markers that purport to reveal our identities (e.g., race and gender), to emplace our bodies (e.g., within institutions, prison gates, and walls), and to specify our locations (e.g., cultural, geographic, social-economic). One crucial theoretical insight our work makes clear is that the model of social justice teaching to which we aspired necessitates re-conceptualizing ourselves as students and professors whose subjectivities are necessarily relational and emergent.

The other is that person occupying the space of the subaltern in the culturally asymmetrical power relation, but also those elements or dimensions of the self that unsettle or decenter the ego's dominant, self-enclosed, territorialized identity.

Ofelia Schutte, *Cultural Alterity*

Introduction

As countless educators have pointed out, service-learning in higher education has constituted an exciting pedagogical intervention with the potential for advancing social justice aims. We agree with this assessment and will not rehearse its arguments here, yet remain troubled by one of the persistent, thorny issues of service-learning that has crucial ethical and political implications, namely, the dichotomy between those who

serve and those who are served (Henry and Breyfogle 2006; Pompa 2002). When left un-interrogated, this dichotomy often reinforces structural and ideological differentials of power and value. Feminism has been a critical resource in addressing this conundrum, as it has called attention to everyday and institutionalized forms of power in our social relations (hooks 1994; Larson 2005; Spelman 1985), and helped us interrogate "service" itself with its histories of gender,

racial, and class politics (Balliet and Hefferman 2000; Nakano 1992). As well, feminist discussions on pedagogy have placed significant emphasis on refining a politics of thinking from the margins (hooks 1984), and on enabling learners to participate actively in forms of knowledge that transform self and other (Kreisberg 1992, Lewis 1993).

In this article, we offer a pedagogical model that draws on the strengths of these feminist analyses and utilizes important insights from innovative service-learning and social justice education models. In the service-learning scholarly community, our considerations find kinship with Enos and Morton's "enriched form of reciprocity" (as cited in Henry & Breyfogle, 2006, p. 29), Schwartzman's (2007) and Pompa's (2002) "transformational" approaches, and Mitchell's (2008) "critical" approach to service-learning. Among social justice educators, we draw our inspiration particularly from Paulo Freire's (1970) notion of "praxis," Schniedewind's (1993) conceptualization of feminist pedagogy, and Ladson-Billing's (1995) theory of "culturally relevant" pedagogy. In entering this discursive space, we reflect on our experience of teaching a class consisting of women incarcerated at a rural prison and traditional college students enrolled in a four-year elite university (Bucknell University) in Central Pennsylvania, where both authors are on the faculty, one in the Women's and Gender Studies and Anthropology Departments and the other in the Philosophy of Religion.

As we taught, we often observed the re-configuration of traditional, established boundaries between teachers and students, between diverse institutions (prisons and universities), and among various types of community dwellers (disenfranchised, transient, local, and permanent). Hence, a major contention of this essay is that an engaged feminist praxis of teaching incarcerated women together with college students helps

illuminate the porous nature of fixed markers that purport to reveal our identities (e.g., race and gender), to emplace our bodies (e.g., within institutions, prison gates, and walls), and to specify our locations (e.g., cultural, geographic, social-economic). Employing the metaphors of pores (openings) and walls (boundaries) to reflect on this pedagogical model, we accentuate our experiences of witnessing the fluidity of fixed (or given) differences even as other (in)visible, established structures remained intact. Recognizing this type of fluidity leads to an important theoretical insight, namely, that the type of transformative pedagogy to which we aspired in teaching this unique course includes re-conceptualizing ourselves as students and professors whose subjectivities are necessarily relational and emergent.

We also raise a vital question in this particular teaching context: Given the material realities involved in bringing together members of a dominant group (college students and professors) with those of a subaltern one (incarcerated women), how does one achieve and promote radical forms of knowledge and transgressive politics? In addressing critical literacy, Colin McFaren and Peter Lankshear have suggested that in order to reclaim their right to live *humanly*, marginalized groups must not only theorize and analyze but also confront, in praxis, those institutions, processes, and ideologies that prevent them from, as Paulo Freire puts it, "naming their world" (1994:146). We take on this challenge, considering ways in which feminist professors can achieve or possibly advance Freire's notion of fearless praxis within the context of teaching incarcerated women. In so doing, we focus on the complex, myriad constraints confronting those who seek to promote liberating knowledge within our penal and educational institutions, which often preserve and perpetuate themselves through targeted and generic consolidations of power. We believe

that our critical approach to service-learning as social justice education can help envision ways to reverse such consolidation (Cone and Harris 1996; Deans 1999; Liu 1995; Schwartzman 2007; Swords and Kiely 2010) by creating “counternarratives” (Adams 2007:25). Tackling these pedagogical concerns, and offering concomitant theoretical insights, we hope, will shed light on the benefits to be gained from teaching incarcerated women together with college students -- a task we believe is an essential one in the process of disseminating knowledge aimed at transformation of self and other -- indeed, in thinking from -- and remaking -- the margins.

I. Envisioning and Teaching a Course on Women and the Penal System

In Spring 2005, the authors co-taught “Women and the Penal System: Knowing Ourselves, Our Communities and Our Institutions.” This course took place at a correctional facility for women in central Pennsylvania, and at Bucknell University, a highly selective liberal arts institution with approximately 3,500 students. The correctional facility is a close-security prison that serves as the diagnostic classification center for the state’s incarcerated women and houses all of its female capital cases. This pedagogically unique and challenging course entailed weekly class sessions held within the correctional institution, where traditional university students and incarcerated students participated as peers in the classroom.

In the course, the professors addressed the topics of women’s incarceration and relational selves with three major objectives in mind: (1) to extend feminist principles and methodologies to our understanding of women in the penal system particularly and of our lives (beyond that of student and educator) more generally; (2) to give students a fuller comprehension of the historical realities of women’s incarceration through experiential learning that recognizes diverse parties as co-learners and co-teachers within encompassing communities; and (3) to enhance academic learning for all students as we engage each other in an atypical educational setting, with the overall aims of gaining insight into ourselves, strengthening a sense of interconnectedness, and strengthening our transformative capacities. In keeping with the pedagogical model we employed, in this article we designate the traditional college participants in the course as “outside” (and occasionally Bucknell) students, while we call the incarcerated participants “inside” (and sometimes incarcerated) students. In doing so, we recognize the irony in referring to the more systematically disenfranchised group of students as “inside” and visa-versa. Our very use of the metaphor of “porosity” reflects our recognition that the answer to the question of who is “inside” and who is “outside” is at once partial and contextual.

The development of empathetic understanding is frequently cited as a goal of service-learning (Boyle-Baise 2006; D’Arlach, Sánchez, and Feuer 2009; Schwartzman 2007) as well as of social justice education (Adams 2007:30). Our course offered the outside students an opportunity to engage in empathetic understanding of the experience of incarceration, enhancing their understanding of the United States’ penal system with the perspectives and reflections of incarcerated women themselves -- not merely relying on the perspectives of prison staff, policy makers, scholars, and the general public. In anticipation of teaching both sets of students, we also wanted to offer them opportunities to reflect on the inextricable ways that communities and institutions shape their lives and affect personal views, experiences, and choices (past and future). Our commitment to the incarcerated students, in particular, was to foster an academic setting that would showcase their intellect, creativity, and

knowledge. Toward this aim, we employed pedagogical methods that enabled learning on multiple levels and in various directions, with all students contributing to the production of knowledge through classroom discussions and exercises. In so doing, our efforts seemed to fit Dan Butin's useful definition of service-learning as "the linkage of academic work with community-based engagement within a framework of respect, reciprocity, relevance, and reflection" (2010: xiv).

In his overview of scholarly and methodological approaches to service-learning, Butin identified four perspectives: technical, cultural, political, and anti-foundational. The political perspective focuses on practitioners' "leveraging of the cultural, social and human capital of higher education" to enact a form of "border crossing" through which participants are led to "question the predominant and hegemonic norms of who controls, defines, and limits access to knowledge and power" (2010:11). The anti-foundational perspective, in Butin's model, focuses "as much on the process of undercutting dualistic ways of thinking as on the product of deliberative and sustainable transformational change" (2010:13). In comparison, Lee Bell defined the goal of social justice education as "enab[ling] people to develop the critical analytical tools necessary to understand oppression and their own socialization within oppressive systems, and to develop a sense of agency and capacity to interrupt and change oppressive patterns and behaviors in themselves and in the institutions and communities of which they are a part" (2007:2). As we show later, the political and anti-foundational service-learning perspectives dovetailed with our aims and methods of social justice education.

Crucial Preparations Before Teaching the Course

Prior to designing the course, neither instructor had expertise in criminal justice, but both were well-versed in feminist theories and practices regarding the intersections of race, ethnicity, class, gender and sexuality. In summer 2004, we began planning a course that would focus on women and the penal system and involve service-learning activity at the nearby correctional facility for women. In meetings coordinated by the Director of the Office of Service Learning at Bucknell, we discussed with prison administrators possible options for service by Bucknell students, such as tutoring incarcerated women, or helping them with résumé creation and other job-seeking skills. Our thinking about the overall structure of the course changed radically, however, after Davis returned from a workshop offered by the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program. As we were to discover, these training workshops are invaluable to college and university professors interested in applying its model and philosophy to their own teaching.

Inside-Out was established in 1997, according to its own mission statement,

to create a dynamic partnership between institutions of higher learning and correctional systems, in order to deepen the conversation about and transform our approaches to issues of crime and justice" (<http://www.temple.edu/inside-out/>, accessed 07-17-11).

Its semester-long courses bring college students (often those studying in the criminal justice field) together with incarcerated men and women to study as peers in seminars behind prison walls. Accordingly, students gain insights enabling them to create a more effective and humane criminal justice system. Inside-Out also

challenges men and women on the inside to place their life experiences in a larger social context, rekindles their intellectual self-confidence and interest in further education, and encourages them to recognize their capacity as agents of change -- in their own lives as well as in the broader community (Ibid).

As a result of our encounters with the Inside-Out program, our notions of what we wanted to engage in shifted from what we saw as traditional service-learning, where serve and served are clearly distinguished, to one in which all parties are involved in novel experiences linked to academic learning, as well as personal and social transformation (Balliet and Heffernan 2000; Enos and Morton 2003; Henry and Breyfogle 2006; Jacoby 1996; Walker 2000).

Key Features of the Course

The demographics of the class are worth noting, as we believe they helped constitute the level of success and particular dynamics we experienced in teaching the course. For the most part, each set of students exemplified, except as noted, the demographic characteristics representative of each institution as a whole. For example, only a small number of the outside students were from working class backgrounds and just one disclosed that he had an incarcerated family member, while very few of the inside students could be identified with class and educational privileges. In Spring 2005, thirteen of the University's students enrolled in the course; twelve were seniors, and two were men. Four of the students were African American (in one case, Afro-Caribbean American). For a typical seminar, this is an overrepresentation of African-American students vis-à-vis the larger student population, which has less than 10% of students of color and international students. The rest of the students were white; all were traditional col-

lege aged. Furthermore, of the two professors, one was African American, the other, white/European American. An equal number of students drawn from the population at the prison facility participated in the course. The racial and ethnic make-up of the inside students was fairly representative of the U.S. female prison population as a whole: approximately half were African American, two were Latina, and the rest were white, ranging from nineteen to sixty years of age.

After much discussion, we decided that fully embracing the Inside-Out model for this first iteration of our course was not a viable option, given various practical concerns. We had already ordered books and outlined the basic reading and topic schedule, based on standard expectations for Bucknell capstone courses, and on the assumption the course was to be held on campus. Further, we felt that the level of reading and writing required of a capstone course at Bucknell would be too adversely challenging for many of the incarcerated students. (Although they represented a mix of educational backgrounds, only one had taken college-level classes.) Ultimately, our course ended up being two courses wrapped into one for the Bucknell students. All participants met once a week at the prison, but the professors and Bucknell students also gathered once a week for about two hours at the university (which goes against Inside-Out's philosophy and practice). Our hybrid model was in our estimation successful, yet we were also aware that this approach maintained problematic distinctions between Bucknell and incarcerated participants as groups of students. (In later incarnations of the course taught by Davis, a pre-requisite of GED was put in place for the inside students, and inside and outside students were assigned the exact same reading and writing assignments.)

The outside students had a standard number of reading assignments, comprised

of texts that focused topically (and historically) on women and the penal system, and such themes as “invention of the prisoner,” “the prison industrial complex,” and “gender and institutional programming.” The inside students were assigned very little reading in preparation for the class sessions at the prison. (This was a result of our assessment, in consultation with prison staff, of the incarcerated participants’ reading and writing skill levels.) Our class sessions at the prison focused on the second half of the title of the course, “Knowing Ourselves, Our Communities, and Our Institutions,” and often involved a series of exercises and discussions that helped students theorize, analyze and interpret their lives and identities (“selves”) as relational beings. Toward this end, all students completed weekly homework assignments and journal entries, which covered such topics as “visibility and invisibility,” “knowledge of self and other,” “creative expression and the integrity of agency,” and “restorative justice and community.” The outside students also wrote a series of short analytical papers addressing the separate readings they were assigned.

Throughout the semester, we used some of the curricular materials from the Inside-Out course program to explore such themes as the ethics of victimization, the creative intersection of justice and care, and community benefits of restorative justice, for which we also engaged in role-playing. We also supplemented these Inside-Out materials with creative pieces, such as the poetry of Sonia Sanchez and June Jordan, and short stories by Minnie Lou Pratt, which were accessible to all students (Jordan 1995; Pratt 1989, 1999; Sanchez 1985, 1999). A final class project involved pairing students (one inside with one outside student) and giving them time and resources to design a performance piece on what they saw as a main theme or learning point from the semester’s course. Our last class meeting, attended by

prison administrators and counselors, included these performances.

Students’ Responses to the Course

Both inside and outside students greatly valued their classroom exchanges with one another. As one outside student put it in her course evaluation, “Going to [the prison] and learning with the [incarcerated] students is the best environment that I’ve ever had for a class.” At our final debriefing exclusively with the inside students, all expressed the desire for a follow-up class, longer class periods, and more time to become acquainted with the outside students. These latter responses are probably indicative of the fact that a) incarcerated women often lack intellectual engagement with texts and ideas as a result of being deprived of crucial connections with the outside world; b) our inside students were placed in a “college” setting that opened crucial space for creative explorations and critical inquiry; and c) they responded to their peers, instructors, and textual and visual tools with the utmost seriousness, flourishing, in the process, as creative, intellectual human beings.

All of the students expressed their amazement at how effectively the course helped to break down stereotypes that each set of classmates had originally brought to the first class meeting. For example, the inside students relinquished the notion that all outside students were snotty, privileged kids insensitive to the wider set of social injustices that affect women who are likely to face incarceration, many of which have been enumerated by feminist scholars (Davis and Shaylor 2001; Girshick 1999; Merlo and Pollock 1995; Miller 1998; Pollock 2002; Sommers 1995). The Bucknell students were equally liberated from viewing the inside students as lazy, immoral and violent women, as popular images often suggest; rather, they encountered and began to reconceptualize their incarcerated peers as cre-

ative, intelligent women for whom imprisonment compounded already shattered lives.

The breaking down of stereotypes began on the very first day of class, when we engaged in an "ice-breaking" exercise in which inside and outside students moved through repeated pairings and were asked to complete sentences designed to reveal personality traits, interests and experiences (e.g., "One of my favorite movies is...", "If I were an animal I would be...", and "I think the most important thing in life is..."). When we debriefed the exercise, inside and outside students alike exclaimed their surprise at the many things they had in common, noting that the exercise served to alleviate some of their fears of objectification by the other set of students. This process of breaking down stereotypes was a successful feature of the course. As a testament to this result, one outside student wrote on her evaluation form,

We have officially broken down a barrier, defied a whole mess of stereotypes and seen each other as the true people we are --nothing less. The perspectives and opinions I have heard were altering.

An inside student articulated the problematic nature of such limited public portrayals:

I always felt that people from the outside would look down on me because I am an inmate. These feelings have now been broken down as invalid. Society can...condition us to perceive things that simply are not. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to prove that.

Another outside student shared this reflection:

It was only one action that put me at Bucknell and the inmates here at [the

prison]. Besides that one wrong turn, we are all very similar.

Each set of students also spoke glowingly about the ability to learn with -- and from -- one another, as they addressed cognitively and emotionally the intersections of gender, race, class and sexuality in the politics of daily living enforced by social institutions and communities. Indeed, the success of the course overall points to the value of combining intellectual, emotional and experiential (even bodily) learning within this unique type of community educational setting.

II. Reflecting on the Course: Important Lessons and Insights

In a recent study of the service-learning language exchange program called *Intercambio*, Lucia D'Arlach and her colleagues concluded that critical consciousness is most likely to develop in service-learning class formats where

community recipients can have expert roles...knowledge is assumed to be co-created and multi-directional, and ample time is devoted to dialogue about current social issues (2009:1).

Our findings from our own course reinforce this conclusion. In the course evaluations, both inside and outside students asserted that the course provided them with a broader sense of community and enhanced their capacity to reflect on ethical forms of engagement across differences. One of the reasons this occurred, we suggest, is that throughout the semester, students worked collaboratively on distinct projects, generating many creative and critical forms of self-expression. The cumulative effects of these exercises became evident in the final class; this session exemplified, in ways we explore below, a complicated answer to one of the

provocative questions we raise in this article: “How porous are the walls that separate us?”

Across identity markers of race, gender, class, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, and institutional placement, the students (in pairs and as a collective) demonstrated through their final performances, and in their planning of and preparation for them, the capacity to bridge -- both intellectually and emotionally -- apparently separate worlds. The performances included song, poetry, theatre, and visual arts and engaged with themes including “hidden similarities” (across apparent difference), body politics, self-knowledge and self-love. As they engaged such course themes as “understanding justice” and “choosing heroines” from a broad array of experiential arcs, the students worked toward deeper individual and collective understandings. Here we experienced service-learning in one of its most critical, transformative forms, i.e., as a

strategy of disturbance...provoking us to more carefully examine, rethink, and reenact the visions, policies, and practices of our classrooms and educational [and other] institutions”(Butin 2010:19).

We also like to think that, in part, the tears shed by participants and attendees at the final event were a response to a remarkable “porousness” that enabled such transformative work, as evinced by the following comment made by an inside student:

To converse, exchange thoughts, and experience the energy flowing through all of us when involved in a project was phenomenal.

As professors, we were pleasantly surprised that a set of very privileged (on the one hand) and problematically stigmatized (on the other) participants could engage in

this process together, thereby altering students’ (and our own) sense of selfhood. We believe, as various studies have suggested, that such transformation is not as readily available in traditional service-learning courses, in which the perceived division between those who serve (students and professors) and those who are served (others outside the academy) are distinct -- indeed often reified. It is a demonstration of the fact, we believe, that human selves are not separate entities with fixed identities; rather, we are porous beings that are relational (even communal) in nature. This important theoretical point we will explore more explicitly in the final section.

Institutional Constraints and Boundaries

While this final event enabled us to experience an illuminating moment of porosity between inside and outside (between individuals, groups, and institutions), it also demonstrated that some walls remain impermeable and solid. In retrospect, we were naïve to imagine that the gates of the prison would open as wide as we envisioned, even though students and professors would experience profound intersubjective openings with one another. Prison walls are constructed to keep some people out as much as to keep others in, of course. As Foucault reminds us, according to its own internal logic, the penal system necessarily operates as a surveillance system (Foucault 1995). Indeed, prisons devote an incredible amount of energy and resources making sure that, despite the aspirations of academics and citizens who try to enter and connect with incarcerated women and men, their gates operate as a firm boundary between those inside and those outside its walls. Our understanding of this insight was acutely felt in our experience of the top administrative personnel’s resistance to our plans for a final celebration. The guest list included a wide array of individuals, including prison and univer-

sity administrators who literally held the keys to the future life of the course. After discussing with our prison programmatic counterparts the possibility of inviting specific dignitaries, we were initially hopeful that the proposed set of plans for the program would be implemented. However, in the process of drafting the invitations, we were informed of an administrative injunction forbidding both potential guests and food to be present for the closing ceremony.

This particular experience is an excellent reminder for professors who teach incarcerated students that we may often have to accept the boundaries set up by prison administration interested in maintaining institutional integrity, even when we may disagree with many of their terms and stipulations, or may not even know the rationale behind certain decisions. Given that the penal system depends on discursive power formations (only partially of their own creation) that deindividuate, isolate, and classify those within -- and such proscription and concomitant penal technologies would be deemed unnecessarily harsh in other settings -- from the perspective of those controlling the prison it seems the fewer of those outsiders present, the better. In other words, while surveillance is a critical strategy of the modern penal system, surveillance of the system itself by outsiders must also be contained or restricted. The last thing corrections administrators want, from a security point of view, is a blurring of subject positions -- it is clear that outsiders must remain outsiders. Thus, while we were successful in transgressing those boundaries with a small group of students once a week for a semester -- and in a manner perceived as productive by prison administrators and program coordinators -- we failed, at least in the expansive public manner we sought, to crack the institutional wall further.

Pedagogical Challenges:

Resistance from Students

When juxtaposed to the very clear institutional constraints, the myriad forms of resistance we encountered from our students appear more subtle and nuanced; yet, they also challenged us as feminist teachers. As we noted earlier, one general aim of our course was to encourage each student to reflect critically and honestly on whether one could ascertain and enact authentic selfhood amid the realities of being shaped and influenced by institutional constraints and prescriptive values. A second goal was to have all students develop fuller comprehension of gender realities that have both shaped and challenged their awareness and sense of themselves. A third was to challenge denigrating stereotypes while also acknowledging and appreciating the differences among us. In attempting to achieve these objectives, we incorporated assignments entailing both experiential and academic modes of grasping the intersections of gender, race, class, and sexuality, which are crucial markers constructed by the myriad social institutions and communities that frame our daily choices and values.

While daunting, these goals proved to be both challenging and illuminating for our pedagogy, as attested by entries in students' academic journals. We designed journal assignments to help students record reflections on the class readings and group exercises, and to grasp cognitively their emotional responses to both. We also wanted students to make crucial connections between theoretical issues related to women's incarceration and what they experienced throughout the semester -- either in their daily lives or while engaging each other at the correctional facility. The journal entries from the Bucknell students ranged in description from experiencing a heightened sense of fragmentation of self through sheer initial discomfort and fear in entering the prison

for the first couple of times, to a fuller critical consciousness of the (often unjust) societal mechanisms (e.g., entrenched poverty, gendered violence, deficient educational systems) that were often operative in the lives of many imprisoned women.

While the majority of Bucknell students embraced these assignments with genuine enthusiasm, a few of them did not, revealing, we suggest, subtle forms of resistance. A small number of students, for instance, consistently submitted journal entries that had very clichéd responses, showing very little progression of thought toward authentic expression or self-exploration. They seemed unable, or perhaps unwilling, to offer anything more than facile responses to all that they were encountering at the prison, in the readings, and with their expanded set of peers. This type of student response has helped us to become acutely aware of the fact that we all set up safe boundaries that can reinforce or establish an intact or integrative sense of self (Griffin and Ouellett 2007). Hence, we think that some of the usual resistance professors encounter in assignments requiring more in-depth self-reflection in regular classroom settings may become fraught with more anxiety within the context of prison settings.

The more illuminating aspect of our experiences with journal assignments is found in the responses of the inside students. They all embraced this writing exercise with eagerness, often offering well-articulated, poignant journal entries that frequently corroborated the data found in scholarly studies of incarcerated women in the United States. For example, both instructors received entries from the inside students that detailed their emotional responses (ranging from shame through fear to ongoing anxiety) regarding separation from their children, their family members, and their cultural communities. Other entries from our incarcerated students contained harrowing descriptions of

gendered abuse (e.g., experiences of incest as a young girl from a male family member or physical abuse from a boyfriend or husband), as well as reflections on harm to others they themselves had caused. We also encountered very nuanced accounts of inside students' critical acknowledgment that within misogynist familial structures and cultural practices in the United States they have often not been treated as the valuable persons they actually are.

These more poignant reflections were often tempered with soulfully amusing critiques of United States' frenetic culture, or enthusiastic bouts of self-affirmation -- marvelous sentiments focusing on self-improvement within the various programs offered at the prison. Ironically, unlike their Bucknell peers, many of the inside students did not enjoy the freedom of movement in their physical environments that often help individuals create or reinforce interior safe spaces or reassuring boundaries. Yet, the incarcerated students wrote, explored, and engaged us with enthusiasm and sincerity. In this context, their journal entries seemed to function as linguistic portals of empowerment, displaying the rhetorical power of incarcerated women's voices that are silenced by a range of institutions, distorted by societal stereotypes, or inadequately represented in scholarly materials (Adams 2007). Another form of student resistance was evinced in those class activities where we tried to address the social variables involved in establishing and reifying prescribed gender constructions. This type of challenge arose in connection with our screening of the documentary film *War Zone*, in which the filmmaker takes on the issue of sexual harassment in city streets (Hadleigh-West 1998). We chose this film specifically to help generate students' reflections on whether, and the extent to which, they tried to resist the pressures of fitting into dominant cultural norms of gender identification, or

how women might resist being objectified by a dominant conception of femininity.

One heated discussion of the film revolved around a scene in which the white producer confronted several African-American men who were making catcalls and whistles at women passing by on the street. Most of the outside students, and a few inside students, were critical of the men's behavior, viewing their comments as objectifications of women in the public arena; however, several of the incarcerated students of color (Latina and African American) refused to accept the premises of such standard feminist observations, staunchly declaring that they appreciated the attention they received from men in their respective neighborhoods and cultural settings. The discussion was very emotionally charged, made even more complicated by the fact that some of the women of color from both institutions interpreted the behaviors of the men as a viable social mechanism in specific cultural settings. In such contexts, different constructions of beauty are affirmed for those who are not traditionally included in the dominant Euro-American model perpetuated in the United States. Despite being able to contain the potentially explosive discussion, we were left with an acute sense of the complexity of teaching gender analysis among diverse cultural landscapes where ethnic, racial, and class variables are intermingled. Moreover, the exchange taught us as instructors about the need for a more nuanced intersectional feminist approach to issues of objectification in order to generate student growth. At the end of the semester, an inside student who had initially resisted viewing the cat calls as problematic, commented,

the class has helped me to understand more about why as a woman I've been conditioned to live and think the way I was taught....I truly appreciate the

knowledge of knowing who I am, my strengths and weaknesses as a woman.

This example elucidates our sense that at crucial challenging moments, the course transported its various participants beyond the server/student – served/other dichotomy, and opened up spaces where all participants are considered students and teachers, enabling new kinds of knowledge.

A third, perhaps more intriguing, form of student resistance we experienced was reflected in students' reluctance to discuss the class readings that focused on the erotic-affective forms of intimate connections among incarcerated women. Several otherwise highly engaged outside students remained silent when we read about the various forms of sexual intimacy and erotic bonding occurring among incarcerated women that were described in class texts (Pollock 2002), or when some inside students of color brought it up during specific group discussions. This issue becomes even more intriguingly complicated when juxtaposed with the fact that one of the white outside students was an "out" lesbian who would talk openly about her relationship with her girlfriend during our Bucknell class sessions. Given the charged emotional atmosphere created by the structure of the course, we did not feel comfortable forcing the outside students to disclose their feelings and thoughts on this issue. The silence was conspicuous, but we allowed it. However, we now think that perhaps the overall reluctance by our outside students to discuss lesbianism and the myriad forms of same-sex erotic and affective bonding within the prison context may have been due to a confluence of factors. Perhaps the outside students were not cognitively or emotionally ready to address the very complex issues endemic to what some refer to as performative lesbianism among incarcerated women vis-à-vis the fact that we were engaging classmates who

named themselves as lesbians. Within the context of prison, lesbian identities are cast as taboo in the popular imagination and are susceptible to punishment by the penal system, so perhaps our outside students did not want to confront their own stereotypes or to put their incarcerated peers at risk.

Another more disturbing thought we bring to our reflection on this issue is that specific racial markers are not so fluid or easily dissolved when students attempt to address sexuality, which is an emotionally charged issue. Whereas our white female student's sexual-affective marker as lesbian might be viewed as relatively harmless, even benignly chic, in popular culture, we suspect that the same-sex erotic, romantic bonds of incarcerated black lesbians may be tied to pejorative ethnosexual myths and stereotypes about African-American women and men reinforced by the popular imagination - chief among these is the enduring cultural myth of blacks' hypersexuality (Freedman 2006). As Sander Gilman has argued, stereotypes help us to see and examine ideologies that structure our universe, as well as to understand the unstated assumptions our worldviews entail (Gilman 1985). In light of these assumptions, the same-sex erotic, romantic bonds of incarcerated black lesbians may have been loosely associated with a racialized homophobia that associates black bodies with violence. Perhaps, on some level, the students were paralyzed by societal myths that reinscribed black incarcerated lesbians as symbolic markers of black (male) violence. Another possibility here is that our outside students (most of whom were whites) were simply less inclined to view the women of color as engaging in same-sex sexuality and did not know what to say.

In reflecting further on this situation, we observed that depending on their positions, students deployed silence and speech as specific forms of resistance: on the one hand, to

the challenges the course provided to their previously integrative selves and, on the other, to dominant and disempowering discourses about "people like them." These various forms of student resistance helped us to see how difficult and yet worthwhile it is to bring students from two different institutions together to reflect on their lives as relational beings whose contextually salient identities (sexual, racial, gendered, and erotic) are constantly being formed and shaped by institutions and communities.

Fortunately, these stubborn forms of resistance did not dominate in class sessions or instantiate themselves to affect the overall positive quality of the class. Rather, they receded into the background that semester as our apparent and obvious differences became increasingly permeable. As students embraced the complex humanity of otherness, so did most of their resistances dissolve, convincing us of the porous nature of our subjectivities -- a startling revelation within the context of teaching behind the walls of prison. With these insights, we evoke Jean-Paul Sartre's innovative notion of intersubjectivity, where one's subjectivity is confronted, in the most immediate way, with another's, both limiting and enabling what one could possibly choose in any given context (Sartre 1985). In the next section, we further explore this theme of decentering subjectivity within the context of postmodern theory.

III. Alterity, Postmodern Subjectivity, and Porous Walls: Theoretical Reflections

Our praxis of teaching this course has impressed upon us that the type of genuine communication across multiple differences to which we aspired, and that we often experienced, may best be comprehended with expanded views of the self, which have been part of compelling feminist critiques of the dominant model of the solitary self, whose

self-consciousness assumes the form of an individual "I" defined in opposition to, and in transcendence of, other isolated subjects (Minh-ha 1989; Moya 2002; Perez 1999; Spelman 1991). Challenges to this modernist view of the self have come to us in many forms, but here we focus on specific post-Enlightenment conceptions of subjectivity itself as fractured, contradictory, and produced within social practices. Alternative models in critical theory range from the psychoanalytic understanding of subjectivity split between the unconscious and the conscious self (or the ego, id, superego) to the Nietzschean critique that the sense of self-unity is a fiction we create to get along in the world. All of these lead to a view of subjectivity as a site of conflicting ways of being and feeling, dissolving essentialist tendencies.

As our essay suggests, we are conscious of resisting essentialist and unitary concepts of the subject (namely, an autonomous, stable, individual capable of full consciousness and constituted by a set of static characteristics) that would not effectively challenge unequal power dynamics among all students and between instructors and students. However, as feminist teachers of incarcerated women who encounter historical forces and realities symbolized by the materiality of walls and cells, our critical sensibilities are wary of those forms of postmodernism that celebrate the purported dissolution of subjectivity where historical agents are "erased" by linguistic forces over which they can have little or no control. One crucial insight we thus have is in approaching poststructuralism as a tool, and not a comprehensive theory (Fraser & Nicholson 1990; Kipnis 1988; Phelan 1990; Scott 1988; White 2002).

Within the context of our course, these postmodern conceptions of subjectivity often took on fascinating material force, as evinced in our account of the outside black

students' classroom behaviors vis-à-vis their fluid identities in distinct class settings: first, in relation to Bucknell white students' perception of them, and, second, in relation to the general perception of them by inside students. During the Bucknell class sessions, the African-American students intentionally segregated themselves from their white peers by sitting together at one end of the seminar table, often chatting and joking with each other in a festive communal manner. Critics who often target such self-imposed isolation as antithetical to the overall mission of university life fail to see, that, among other things, this cultural space created by students of color at majority white institutions effectively helps them to solidify their racial identity against a hegemonic cultural whiteness, which permeates higher education (Tatum 2003).

*Postmodern Selves
and the Situational (In)Salience of Race*

This strategic move by our black students took on a level of added complexity when they entered the prison facility, our other campus. While there, the Bucknell African-American students' perceived separateness from their white outside peers seemed to dissolve on two accounts. First, they were not so cliquish, or segregated in their interactions with the inside students – as noted before, approximately half were African American, two were Latina, and the rest were white, ranging from nineteen to sixty years of age. Rather, the Bucknell African-American students dispersed themselves individually among their incarcerated peers, forging new connections based on mutual values and not primarily on certain arbitrary markers, such as race. Second, the majority of the inside students (women of diverse ages, ethnic/racial, and class backgrounds) did not isolate the black Bucknell students and treat them as others -- as outsiders to higher education. Rather, the inside

students did not appear to distinguish between their white and black Bucknell peers. To them, all of the outside students were smart, educated, and privileged individuals, belonging to an educational system to which they had no access. (Yet, stereotypes associated with such institutional positionality were broken down.) In this unique penal context for education, the form of racial essentialism practiced effectively and out of necessity by the outside students of color was dispelled.

What we are suggesting in sharing this classroom experience is that the de-centered self may lead to genuine cross-difference communication, or, better yet, to reflective understandings or immediate grasps of intersubjectivity. In other words, we emphasize a postmodern relational self that can resist solipsistic tendencies and egoistic impulses. Accordingly, there is no isolated self who stands over against the field of interaction. Put another way, there is no private self or final line between interiority and exteriority -- we always include the other (even if by acting to exclude it). Hence, our basic conviction is that the self is constitutionally relational and inevitably entangled in temporal becoming. Within a service-learning context, this theoretical insight is translatable as the pedagogical aim of possibly blurring boundaries between those who serve/ those served, which is often built on a psychology of differences presupposing superiority/inferiority (Henry 2005; Henry and Breyfogle 2006).

*Alterity, Power/Knowledge,
and Critical Pedagogy*

In suggesting the idea of a fractured, radically relational postmodern subjectivity in this teaching context, we are led us to another major theoretical point, namely, that humans are primarily constituted and enhanced by our efforts to interpret, make sense of, symbolize, and assess our relations with oth-

erness (or alterity). In short, we envision our feminist pedagogy at the prison as grounded in the experience of the other. Our myriad encounters with otherness presuppose our radical historicity, which becomes one precondition for conceiving of and living in community. Furthermore, through an awareness of our material, concrete embodiment and perceived relatedness, we may begin to envision what might lie beyond our self-perceptions and thoughts. As we encounter others and ourselves in a host of ways, we are guided by an interpretive mandate, which compels us to derive meaning, purpose and value amid our efforts to recognize and honor otherness. As some scholars suggest, this becomes an awareness of how to enact intercultural interactions that do not bolster pre-existing stereotypes of those perceived as different (Adams 2007:28-29; Boyle-Baise 2006).

This theoretical insight is, perhaps, most poignantly revealed in our encounter with a certain form of otherness that challenged our unreflective assumptions of privilege as outsiders when we entered the prison facility via the gatehouse. Our experiences of being held at the gate (firmly grounded by the authorial presence of the guards) and subjected to search and surveillance became for us moments of vulnerability where, we became the other, in a very particular, limited sense. We did not shed our special status as volunteer visitors and the privileges of movement, resources, and symbolic capital that came with such status. Nonetheless, within the context of our course, and in other multiple ways, the gatehouse at the prison symbolically functioned as a solid portal that both separated us (students and instructors) from the wider societal assumptions of who and what incarcerated women are (and could be), ushering us into a new space where our evolving (porous) subjectivities were challenged and transformed. Passing through the gate and moving through our classroom ses-

sions, we encountered the myriad subject positions of inside students (e.g., as authors, lovers, and community elders). Their degrees of integrity, views of life, and range of perspectives forced Bucknell students and instructors to reconsider our purported subjectivity as autonomous, free agents who came to engage them inside prison walls. As suggested in some critical models of service-learning, our purported positions as servers dissolved as we found ourselves engaged in mutual reciprocity.

As feminist instructors, we consider this new consciousness of being fluid selves encountering otherness as one foundation for the construction of radical knowledge for both students and professors engaged in service-learning. Our experiences with otherness reconstituted our places in an expanded world, including new forms of relationality with the inside students -- with crucial limitations, of course. If empirical, historicist analysis has taught us anything, it is that thinking, reflective subjects are also material and partisan, situated in cultural formations that are themselves contested sites of power/knowledge struggle between different social groups and classes, which can change in one particular direction or another. We then embrace the insight that Swords and Kiely have offered:

Critical reflection shifts the focus of reflection from self-discovery, student learning, and practical dimensions of service to examine how relations of power, ideology, institutional arrangements, and social structures influence stakeholder participation in service-learning program planning, the original and solution to community problems, and the development of sustainable campus-community partnerships (2010:149).

Wherever there are different interests in play, individuals and social groups will de-

velop strategies to realize or protect those interests with which they identify. In this moment, then, teaching at a prison has significantly shaped our convictions that our systems of thought are contingent, strategic, in constant flux, and marked by undecidability. Teaching in a prison helped us to see that we were embodying a novel type of spatiality in the postmodern landscape where alternative values, social practices, and theorizations necessarily intermingled. We were challenged to identify and promote a set of assumptions, positions, critiques, etc., that are grounded in political and ethical commitments, and are inspired by persuasive models of mutually enhancing relations.

We also think that as long as asymmetrical social and power relations exist, feminist instructors who teach in prisons may need to create alternative cultural values and ethical mandates, including localized counter-hegemonic practices of relationality. In more practical terms, the institutions and procedures that we employ to actualize hierarchies of value -- schools, universities, prisons, local and national government, religious institutions and traditions, political organizations of all kinds -- are always likely to become fixated by the desire to conserve and reproduce those value structures. Yet, as we encountered many formulations of gender, racial, class, and erotic construction within the walls of prison, for example, we quickly learned that forms of valuing must themselves be pluralized; and that instructors need to institute practices that allow for such pluralization. Working within our various institutions, feminist teachers are wise to be strategic, even politically savvy, in our efforts to implement instances of alternative valuing, which may lead to new and expanded forms of community.

Porous Walls, Feminist Pedagogy, and Service-learning = Critical Cultural Work

As instructors of incarcerated women, we view our pedagogy as critical cultural work, as inspired by some of the insights of Edward Said regarding the status of the contextualized critic. Said proposes a view of the critic as one who is inside the culture and who opposes its hegemony with power derived from the experience of having been outside. For Said, "criticism belongs in that potential space inside civil society, acting on behalf of those alternative acts and alternative intentions whose advancement is a fundamental human and intellectual obligation" (1983:29-30). Said posits the conception of the mature critic who is no longer a naïve child, but a social player of a part, a wearer of a mask. Pushed further, this reading alludes to the power of one's positionality. One interesting implication is that feminist teachers engaging incarcerated students often assume the role of seducers, persuading the gatekeepers of our institutions that those who are outsiders in our society (or inside walls) belong as insiders to our educational systems. It is incumbent upon such cultural workers to help create contexts in which marginalized groups, such as those in prison, can both theorize and confront their worlds. Here, we are suggesting that such cultural work expands on the notion that service-learning is a rich form of civic engagement that resists passive/active dichotomies, and opens up participants to richer forms of relationality in community (Rosenberger 2000).

While it is crucial that feminist teachers recognize how everyday cultural discourses (such as institutional, administrative, and educational policies regarding incarceration) produce and sustain hegemonic power, it is equally important to identify counter challenges contained within marginalized discourses. We understand that our critical interpretations as professors and theorists are

often from strength -- we can do what others (the "illegitimate" others or, in this teaching setting, incarcerated women students) cannot do. As critical cultural workers, then, we reject the view of "the inheritor of the voice of the transcendental ego," that wishes to hold onto the Enlightenment privilege of the universal intellectual who serves as the voice and representative of a general consciousness, or the one who escapes (or is outside of) the contingencies and power relations of our time (Hartsock 1987: 201). In contrast, such cultural workers

self-consciously situate themselves at vulnerable conjunctural modes of ongoing disciplinary discourses where each of them posits nothing less than new objects of knowledge, new praxes of humanist (in the broadest sense of the word) activity, new theoretical models that upset or at the least radically alter the prevailing paradigmatic norms (Said 1985:104).

Teaching with the aim of achieving genuine cross-difference communication and knowledge- and capacity-building has prompted us to continue viewing systems of meaning (and value claims) as social products, enmeshed in webs of power. This suggests that feminist scholars and instructors teaching in prison settings, in particular, must continue to do our thinking and our investigating in and through various forms of resistance and struggle. Accordingly, we are led to ask: Which cultural values are esteemed, and under which conditions? Which institutional props or mechanisms aid in reproducing or contesting influential cultural artifacts? To what extent, and how, do our institutionalized values aid in the myriad struggles to acquire, maintain, or resist power in its myriad forms (Brookfield 2010)?

In advancing this type of pedagogy as service-learning cultural work, we can expect (and should hope) to encounter the notions of otherness and difference in the fullness of their material and conceptual forms. And we should not be unaware of the power dimension of our value-laden discourses, for such awareness leads us toward strategic practices that may help to advance some of our interests. These epistemological insights suggest that when communication among differentiated and stratified parties occurs, one possible result is not just a view of the other, but also a transformation of self and other. In order to affect a fluidity of selves and to construct alternative forms of knowledge and justice, one must, of course, overcome resistance on many levels -- a critical pedagogical challenge. Finally, while engaged in such cultural work, we discovered a pedagogical model that constantly challenged us to create a truly collaborative learning context in which all can both serve and be served. As our earlier reflections show, this model also instilled within us many important lessons. Key among these is that social justice teaching compels one to think from the margins (hooks 1984), and to engage boldly in forms of knowledge that continually transform self and other (Kreisberg 1992; Lewis 1993). We believe that in such situations revolutionary teaching and learning occur.

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