

The process of belonging: A critical autoethnographic exploration of national identity in
transnational space

by

STEPHANIE MCCUTCHEON

B.S., University of La Verne, 2008
M.A., Claremont Graduate University, 2010

AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Curriculum and Instruction
College of Education

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

2017

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to better understand constructs of national identity in transnational space by illuminating the processes and relations of national identity disruption and development. This study is pertinent as cultural and social identities are traditionally framed by nation-centric processes in education. However, the effects of globalization continue to transform education through learning abroad initiatives and changing migration behaviors, which necessitates perspectives de-centering the nation as an assumed boundary. The theoretical framework for this study was transnationalism. A transnational perspective has brought new focus to educational research and national identity development by questioning the multiculturalist assumption of nationality as stable national identity and exploring the concepts of national identity and nationalism in transnational spaces created by globalization. The methodological approach was critical autoethnography as informed by narrative inquiry, in which I critically examined my own disruptive experience as a teacher in the Marshall Islands by engaging in retellings of experiences with one of my former Marshallese students as an informant. The method of interactive interviewing with an informant was necessary to develop a critical lens and to connect individual reflexivity with writing ethnographically to relate to broader human experience. Qualitative coding methods were applied to our retellings as thematic analysis to categorize accounts in the narrative. Finally, writing as a method of inquiry and analysis was used to explore emotions, positionality, and perspective. Through iterations of performing narrative with the informant and applying narrative analysis I found that the theme of belonging was apparent as a personal feeling in our narrative. Recognizing this as the theme posed another question; how does this address the original guiding question: what is a sense of belonging in terms of relations and processes? To answer this I considered space-sensitive

understandings of belonging as a transnational perspective. This conclusion reconceptualized and grounded national identity development in the materiality of belonging as a feeling to reflect (1) the material consequences of physical characteristics, (2) the allocation of resources, and (3) language as power. In curriculum and instruction, this understanding of belonging as process could reinforce the ideological inclusivity of multiculturalism while liberating constructs of identity from the constraints of the nation. This perspective could have implications on the development of students' national and transnational identities, allowing for the recognition of diversity without diminishing issues of difference such as racism, sexism, classism, and xenophobia in society creating students capable of celebrating difference while recognizing inequity and promoting social critique.

The process of belonging: A critical autoethnographic exploration of national identity in
transnational space

by

STEPHANIE MCCUTCHEON

B.S., University of La Verne, 2008
M.A., Claremont Graduate University, 2010

A DISSERTATION

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Curriculum and Instruction
College of Education

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

2017

Approved by:

Co-Major Professor
Dr. Kakali Bhattacharya

Approved by:

Co-Major Professor
Dr. Thomas Vontz

Copyright

STEPHANIE MCCUTCHEON

2017

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to better understand constructs of national identity in transnational space by illuminating the processes and relations of national identity disruption and development. This study is pertinent as cultural and social identities are traditionally framed by nation-centric processes in education. However, the effects of globalization continue to transform education through learning abroad initiatives and changing migration behaviors, which necessitates perspectives de-centering the nation as an assumed boundary. The theoretical framework for this study was transnationalism. A transnational perspective has brought new focus to educational research and national identity development by questioning the multiculturalist assumption of nationality as stable national identity and exploring the concepts of national identity and nationalism in transnational spaces created by globalization. The methodological approach was critical autoethnography as informed by narrative inquiry, in which I critically examined my own disruptive experience as a teacher in the Marshall Islands by engaging in retellings of experiences with one of my former Marshallese students as an informant. The method of interactive interviewing with an informant was necessary to develop a critical lens and to connect individual reflexivity with writing ethnographically to relate to broader human experience. Qualitative coding methods were applied to our retellings as thematic analysis to categorize accounts in the narrative. Finally, writing as a method of inquiry and analysis was used to explore emotions, positionality, and perspective. Through iterations of performing narrative with the informant and applying narrative analysis I found that the theme of belonging was apparent as a personal feeling in our narrative. Recognizing this as the theme posed another question; how does this address the original guiding question: what is a sense of belonging in terms of relations and processes? To answer this I considered space-sensitive

understandings of belonging as a transnational perspective. This conclusion reconceptualized and grounded national identity development in the materiality of belonging as a feeling to reflect (1) the material consequences of physical characteristics, (2) the allocation of resources, and (3) language as power. In curriculum and instruction, this understanding of belonging as process could reinforce the ideological inclusivity of multiculturalism while liberating constructs of identity from the constraints of the nation. This perspective could have implications on the development of students' national and transnational identities, allowing for the recognition of diversity without diminishing issues of difference such as racism, sexism, classism, and xenophobia in society creating students capable of celebrating difference while recognizing inequity and promoting social critique.

Table of Contents

List of Figures.....	xi
Acknowledgements.....	xii
Dedication.....	xiii
Chapter 1: Disturbance of An Assumed Stable Identity: A Critical Autoethnography.....	1
Pirate in Paradise	1
Paradise Lost.....	14
Navigating.....	28
Chapter 2: Academic Situation of Critical Autoethnography.....	47
Introduction.....	47
Background.....	48
Rationale for this Study	55
Purpose and Research Question.....	56
Significance of the Study.....	58
Subjectivity Statement.....	60
Literature Review: Understanding Transnationalism as a Framework for National Identity.....	63
Multiculturalism, Anti-multiculturalism, Cultural Relativism and Globalization.....	66
Transnationalism.....	74
Research Design.....	86
Appropriateness of Qualitative Research Design.....	88
Nontraditional Dissertation.....	89
Setting: A Brief History of the Marshall Islands	95
Narrative Inquiry as a Methodological Framework.....	102
Critical Autoethnographic Methodology.....	105
Creative Nonfiction as Nontraditional Representation.....	123
Trustworthiness, Quality, and Ethical Considerations.....	128
Trustworthiness.....	128
Criteria for Quality.....	129
Conceptualization.....	129
Substantiation.....	130

Social significance.....	130
Resonance.....	131
Coherence.....	131
Generativity.....	131
Ethical Considerations.....	132
Procedural Ethics.....	132
Relational Ethics.....	132
Personalized Conclusion.....	133
Conceptualizations of National Identity and Nationalism.....	134
Transnational Perspective of National Identity Through Belonging as Process.....	138
Implications of a Transnational Perspective of Belonging in Curriculum and Instruction....	144
Further Research.....	149
References.....	150
Appendix A - Operationalization of Constructs.....	173
Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI).....	173
Globalization.....	173
Autoethnography.....	173
Critical autoethnography.....	174
International Education (as a practice).....	174
International Education (as a field of study).....	174
Multiculturalism.....	175
Multiculturalism.....	175
Nationality.....	175
Nationalism.....	175
National Identity.....	175
Transnationalism.....	176
Cultural Competencies.....	176
Narratology.....	177
Narrative Inquiry.....	177
Creative Nonfiction.....	177
Nontraditional Dissertation.....	177

Appendix B - Email Solicitation and Informed Consent Forms.....	178
Direct Informant Email Solicitation	178
Informed Consent	180

List of Figures

Figure 1: Holistic Coding Example	115
Figure 2: Example In Vivo codes and corresponding categories.	119
Figure 3: Iterative Process of Critical Autoethnography	123

Acknowledgements

I'd like to acknowledge my friends and family from the Marshall Islands for their continued support and willingness to work with me throughout the creation of this autoethnography, especially Tai. I appreciate your friendship, words of wisdom, and our time spent together.

I'd like to acknowledge my co-major professor and methodologist, Dr. Kakali Bhattacharya for her guidance and encouragement. Thank you for pushing me to expand my research capabilities and explore ways to produce research with possibilities that expand beyond the academy.

I'd like to acknowledge Dr. Elizabeth Dodd for her willingness to indulge my creative writing exploration. I've learned much from your expertise and patience.

Finally, I'd like to acknowledge my friends and family that have shown me unconditional support in many ways. My partner, Josh, my parents, Lisa and Dennis, my grandparents Don and Verona, my confidants Jess D., Jess K., Claudia, and Erica, my editor, Ashley, my brothers, Brandon, Kevin, and Connor and the many in-laws I've added along the way, and everyone else who has been there during a moment of panic, sorrow, doubt, excitement, and progress, thank you for the support, assistance, and love.

Dedication

I dedicate this work to my late grandfather, Don McCutcheon, who recognized the importance of continued curiosity and impressed upon me a passion for learning.

Chapter 1: Disturbance of An Assumed Stable Identity: A Critical Autoethnography

Pirate in Paradise

I was lost in thought when my static, deadened eyes began to refocus. Out of the small plane window, the deep blue ocean which had been the sole backdrop since we had left Hawaii five hours ago, began to creep closer. I scanned the entirety of my limited view for the strip of earth we would be landing on, but I could only see the limitless ocean. As we descended there was no sign of anything solid, but the hue of the water became lighter, a slight indication that land was near, but not enough to pacify the thought I was entertaining in the back of my mind. I imagined we were crashing, and the Captain was not notifying us because there was no point, we would all die in the middle of nowhere, and he was granting us the gift of a peaceful last moment. As the water transformed to lighter blue and multiple shades of turquoise there was still no dry land that I could see. It wasn't until we were what seems like only several feet from the water that the land instantaneously appeared, magically as if we were in a Harry Potter novel and the pilot willed it to appear as our tires touched the tips of the whitecaps.

As I disembarked, I struggled to keep my eyes open; the sun seemed brighter than it ever had. I found myself pondering how this fragile strip of dead coral remained year after year, and how people survived on it no less. The mighty blue ocean looked to be crashing directly onto the runway. I looked over my shoulder, past the rusted steps and saw that a small, but strong old man had kindly wheeled up to the side of the plane to unload the luggage.

Directly ahead, 40 feet in front of me, was more ocean. From its lighter colors, I inferred that this was the *lagoon side*. It was less ominous than the *ocean side*, which I had been warned about before leaving LAX. The ocean side had big, scary sharks and strong currents that could carry you out to sea in seconds. If that were to happen, there was no hope of washing up on any

shore, seeing as the closest was Hawaii at 2,000 nautical miles. The lagoon side was less threatening with its more playful coloration, and usually smaller sharks. On this side, there was less chance that you could be sucked out to sea through one of the passes, but as the currents around the passes were strong whenever the tide receded playing in the lagoon demanded that you keep your wits about you.

The simple fact: I was surrounded by water, which felt uneasy and unnatural. I felt that a modest rainstorm would simply wash away my new world. I had an immediate appreciation for the frailty of life in my precarious circumstance and it seemed to augment the beauty of the otherwise terrifying speck of land I was going to call home for the next year. In front of me, and slightly to my right, I saw a one-room building that was the airport terminal. My walk across the tarmac to the open door, where people were waiting to get on the plane that I just gotten off, was no more than two hundred feet. I grabbed my one, tiny piece of luggage, which had been magically wheeled up next to me in the time that I spent in painful wonder without much needed sunglasses and started my journey.

It took days for me to see the swollen diapers swashing in the high tides, the red, white, and blue plastic particles that littered the shores, Styrofoam trash in the water, along the shore, lining the road—everywhere. For days, I only saw the exceptional colors of ocean so unlike the California coast I grew up near. It was clear and bright, not a homogenous dark bluish, brownish as far as the eye can see, but multiple vibrant tones of blues and greens. Colors I'd never seen in nature collided with each other, but somehow remained within distinct boundaries.

There was much to be done in the few weeks I had in Majuro, the capital city of the Republic of the Marshall Islands. I was there with around thirty other volunteers and two directors that would explain to us newbies everything we needed to know before we were

individually shipped off to the outer islands. I had just turned 24 after graduating early from my Master's program and instead of walking across the stage to celebrate that moment, I decided to fly to the middle of nowhere to help teach children.

Most of the other volunteers were only slightly younger, considering all volunteers had to have a baccalaureate degree, but in my early twenties the difference felt considerable. I assumed that I was wiser and more well-adjusted. I judged them for the reasons I imagined they had for being there, none were as serious or responsible as mine. They were all just looking for island excitement. Revering the Captain-Jack-Sparrow-type of adventure and isolation on the sea with white sand beaches sprinkled far from each other simulating the truest form of physical solitude one can find on our shared earth. They longed for a quiet, pristine beach on which to sit with a bottle of rum, and their feet in the tide. This was undoubtedly false, with a sense of certainty I can now postulate that their reasons paralleled my own - we were the fortunate, ready to assuage the meager existence of these *poor* people, many of whom were living without electricity or running water, or Hershey's bars, or, however difficult it is to imagine, without beer and football.

Regardless of the reasons that brought us there, we were all in a similar situation and Aljeltaki became our interim home. Aljeltaki was a province or neighborhood on Majuro Atoll. It was about seven miles from *downtown* Majuro, a drive that we usually made by hitchhiking and leaping into the back of one of the few rusted out Nissan or Toyota trucks. In Aljeltaki there was a school. It was a small, simple, concrete building that had been jazzed up with a two-toned purple paint job, and was guarded by a white puppy with brown spots. This empty two-room school building became our shared residence for the first three weeks of our time in the Marshall Islands.

I don't remember many details about the building because we didn't spend much time there. We were engrossed in education crash courses, as well as Marshallese culture and language classes. A two and half inch, tri-fold mat was distributed to each of us. All our other possessions had come with us in the suitcase that we brought on the plane, most of which became immediately useless despite having been given a packing list by the organization. It would have been more practical to tell us to bring an empty suitcase that would be filled in Majuro before sailing to our assigned islands.

Except for the few boys, we all bought guams, traditional daily clothing, and muumuus, traditional fancy clothing. A guam resembled a potato sack with arm holes, but made of yoga pant-like material of bright colors and patterns. A muumuu bears semblance to a dress stolen from a baby doll and sent backwards through the Wonkavision machine until it is large enough to fit a human being, an odd length somewhere between the knees and ankles with frilly edges and puffy arm sleeves. When I say traditional, I mean relatively recent traditional clothing; we can thank early missionaries for these atrocities. I would have preferred walking around topless as natives once did prior to wearing guams and muumuus, but we were learning how to fit in on our islands and the first step was to shed our inappropriate shorts and tank-tops and don the guam. Three weeks later we were systematically shipped to our placements.

My placement was on Kwajalein Atoll, which was another four to five-hour plane flight. Most volunteers endured long boat rides on over-crowded ferries, or flights on the local airline, Air Marshall Islands, a.k.a. Air Maybe due to the constant cancelation of flights, possibly related to a duct tape shortage. I was lucky, the flight to Kwajalein was through Continental Airlines. The pilot's voice came over the loud speaker, "We are arriving to Kwajalein Army Base. Only pre-

approved persons with the correct paperwork will be permitted to disembark. All others need to stay in their seats upon landing. At this time, please pull your window cover down. No photographs for any reason.”

I didn't feel lucky anymore. My chest started to hurt, I didn't know if I had the necessary paperwork, and I didn't have it with me. *What if I was stuck on the plane, unable to get off and required to fly to Guam or Peru or wherever the hell this plane is headed after this stop?* I decided to act like I belonged, grabbed my luggage and hoped for the best. No one stopped me. I had my bags and as I walked toward the terminal in the open air, the plane's engine was still running behind me. I simultaneously laughed at the lack of security on a secure Army base and feared that they were going to put me back on the plane any second. It was intimidating. The military protocol made it unsettling. As I walked into the terminal someone demanded over a screeching loudspeaker, “Place your bags on the red line in front of you. Do not attempt to remove anything. Stand behind the black line.” I did as I was told as an official looking person with a dog walked up and down the line of bags. Apparently, none of us were drug smugglers on that day and the same voice told us to gather our things, have our paperwork in hand and line up at the window. I panicked. I had no paperwork with me because a person was supposed to meet me there with it. I'd been scouring for anyone trying to make eye contact with a young blonde with brown eyes, as I'm sure they described me. Most people in the room were men, and most were making eye contact, but none asked me with wide eyes and lifted brows, “Are you the person I'm looking for?”

I lingered toward the back of the line, hoping the plane would take off and I would be permitted through for lack of another option. When it was my turn at the window I explained that someone was to meet me with the paperwork, but that I hadn't seen him. They let me through;

again, although still in a state of apprehension, I considered how lousy the security was. Right outside, leaning against the golf cart he had rented to pick up me and my luggage, Richard, a pasty American man almost the size of the golf cart itself, was astonished that it took me so long to get through.

“Hey there, I was beginning to think you didn’t make the flight. I’m Richard, get in.” He grabbed my luggage and threw it on the back to take me to the hotel. We sat in silence until he dropped me in front of the hotel, a quick jaunt down the road. “Here is your key.” I took a single key attached to an oversized oval keychain with a room number on it. It looked like something that belonged at the Bates Motel.

The two-story motel, white and brown just like every building on base matched the key that belonged to it, and I felt like I was walking into a horror movie. We stepped off the golf cart, Richard’s ass imprint clearly perceptible as the golf cart seemed to emit a sigh of relief. He walked to the back to manhandle my luggage once again. I tried not to care, I had nothing of value in it, but the harsh way he threw it around rubbed me the wrong way. He was insistent about carrying my luggage to my room despite my assurances that I could manage just fine. After climbing the stairs to the second floor and an awkward *this entryway is too small for the both of us* type of sidestepping dance into the room, he left me. “I’ll be back in a few hours, after you’ve had time to have a proper shower and relax a bit to show you around.” I checked my new watch bought specifically for this trip and made note of the time. I thanked him for his help and then let the heavy door slam shut.

I was tired. I sat on the edge of the twin bed; finally, alone. My lopsided luggage slowly fell over and landed with a thud. I left it. A single phrase was playing over and over in my head. They were his words, “a proper shower,” over and over and over. They felt demeaning. He

wasn't necessarily wrong; I'd been showering in the open air, inside a carefully crafted wall of tarps looking up into the blue sky with a gallon bucket at my feet for almost a month now. At first it was amusing, something foreign that we all joked about in Aljetaki, then it became tiring, and we wished for the ease of a shower with running water, but *improper*? I still felt clean when I was finished. On nice days, it was a simple joy that I vowed to make a habit that I brought back with me to the states, and on not so nice days it was chilly and much less enjoyable, but never *improper*.

I showered, put away the guam I'd been living in for weeks in favor of army-green North Face light-weight Capri's, plain black V-neck, and flip-flops, and headed down to the front of the hotel to await Richard. You could hear him before you could see him, he was unabashedly loud. He overconfidently yelled a jovial, "Hey there!" with an accompanying head-nod and three-finger wave (a lazy peace sign, keeping his thumb extended and his pinky and index fingers only loosely curled). You could also smell him before you could see him. Maybe not literally, but it's also not much of an overstatement. He was a 350-380 pound, out of shape man who ripened easily in the equatorial sun. Sweat was a constant accessory, and he didn't wear it well.

I told myself to be more sensitive toward him, but that wasn't even the worst part. If the sun was to blame for his natural odor, I could at least blame him for the cigarette stench that didn't help his cause. It was extraordinary how much the perpetual cigarette, sometimes burning sometimes unlit, seemed to be another appendage protruding from his mouth. It seemed a permanent gap in his jagged, yellowed teeth had been created for the sole purpose of accommodating his ever-present cancer stick in his top row of teeth, just slight of center. The gap was so perfectly molded to his cigarette that he could open his enormous mouth and carry on a full-blown conversation without it falling out.

The island we were on was Kwajalein, Kwaj for short. It was the larger of the two American Army bases on the Atoll, also called Kwajalein. By the time my Continental flight had landed, there wasn't time to catch a flight to Roi, or so Richard said, which is where I would then take the ferry to Enniburr. It seemed he would make any excuse to stay on Kwaj a little longer as he touted about the Subway sandwiches and the better cigarette selection at the Kwaj shoppette. And so, we drove around in the golf cart from one end of the island to the other. I was only half paying attention when Richard told me about each building, I kept thinking that it didn't matter because we were only staying one night. I was uncomfortable, my pants felt restrictive and I longed for a guam. I just wanted to be on Enniburr, able to unpack, and settle in, I'd been living out of a suitcase for a month.

In the morning, Richard and I headed to the airport to catch the small puddle-jumper jet plane up to Roi. Richard was strategically placed to counter balance another heavy man already on the plane. I was thankful that I had been assigned a seat near the front, almost as far from him as possible. Once on Roi, our routine was essentially the same. He took me and my luggage to the hotel, and when I asked why he wasn't taking me to Enniburr he replied, "You don't want to miss the party." I had no idea what he was talking about, but he was my liaison, orchestrated by the organization, and so I trusted he knew when I needed to be where.

It wasn't really a hotel just a one-story building with a handful of rooms. He left me and shouted over his shoulder, "The party doesn't start for a few more hours. I'll be back." There was TV in my room; I turned it on. I flipped through the channels. Nothing interesting was on, but I didn't turn it off, it was comforting compared to the silence. It provided background noise for my *proper shower*. I hadn't done much, or traveled very far, and I was acclimated to the warm

equatorial weather, but I felt grimy; contaminated from breathing the same recycled air as Richard.

Roi was like Kwaj, garnished in white and brown. The Outrigger provided those living and working on base with traditional American comfort foods. There was a shoppette, which served mainly as a liquor store and smoke shop although you could get condoms, Cheetos and ballpoint pens there as well, you know, the necessities. The golf course was well kept, although not as green as most golf courses, the saltwater outdoor pool was full and crystal clear, and the outdoor theater was the only other form of evening entertainment apart from the bar. Uno, an ancient Japanese man, tended the bar. I swear he didn't speak any English, but he understood even the most obscure of drink orders. At the bar, with Uno, was the place to be from sundown to sunup practically any night of the week. But, before sundown, between the hours of 3:00 and 6:00 p.m., there was a special spot where people met before migrating to the bar. This was where Richard and I were headed for the party.

The Parrot Head, as it was called, was a modest shack, if it even qualifies as such. It was no more than a deck along the water of the lagoon with a beautiful view of a perfectly crescent beach. Tucked away between palm trees, protected from rain by a simple roof, it was a perfect place to unwind after a figurative *hard day* of work on the island. Someone's responsibilities for the workday always included leaving work 30 minutes early to prepare the extra-large cooler of ice and beer, bring it to the Parrot Head, and put out the metal collection box, which gathered donations to put towards tomorrow's supply. It was a simple place where simple conversations passed most of the time between dice games where wrinkly dollar bills were piled like pirate treasure beside the victors. It was the place all my peers were searching for! It was surreal.

It was paradise in every sense of the word. I sat at the shack, which was made with one intended purpose, to be a picturesque, beach-front gathering place for the tequila-sunrise-in-one-hand, rum-and-coke-in-the-other-hand, no worries, with a cushy government job, busy enjoying island-life people who inhabited that place. Looking out, beyond the edge of my margarita, over the railing of the porch, was what seemed an exact copy of the generic *beach image* on a desktop. Crystal clear, vibrant blue water gently washing over the white-sand beach where nothing polluted the whiteness of the sand except the shadows of the palm trees. The trees added a splash of green to complement blue hues of the ocean and extended over the sand toward the waves as if yearning for the taste of saltwater, not dissimilar to the arch of my tongue reaching for the salt rim of my margarita.

For two weeks, I stayed in that hotel room alone and partook in the dice game shenanigans at the Parrot Head. I was Captain Jack Sparrow, occasionally venturing out to meet people, but perfectly happy to take a solitary run along the golf course or a swim in the unoccupied pool. I drank tequila sunrises and rum and cokes and ate taco salads and hamburgers. I watched movies on the outdoor projector screen, laid in a hammock on the beach, and sailed on a boat. I guessed that Richard wasn't taking me to Enniburr because school hadn't started on the island. *Why wasn't I there getting to know my host family and the children of the community that would soon be my students?* I never vocalized these thoughts for fear that if I did my tropical American paradise vacation would end.

“I’ll pick you up in the morning and we’ll head over to Third Island on the second boat, the first boat leaves too early,” said Richard as he pulled beside me in his golf cart while I was walking to the hotel after dinner. Third Island, as it was referred to in English, because it was the

third island south of Roi on the reef, was titled Santo by the Japanese, who pronounce three as *sahn*. Its Marshallese name was Enniburr, which was rarely used on Roi.

The first boat left Roi before sunrise to pick up the Marshallese that worked on base everyday but left the island on the last boat every night. After it docked on Roi, over a hundred Marshallese unloaded and walked down the pier, presented their badges, signed in, and were permitted through the chain-link fence to complete their daily duties. Richard and I pulled up in the golf cart and caught the tail end of this parade. We walked through without showing any identification or paperwork or even being asked a single question. Then we sat on the empty barge waiting for it to pull away from the pier again. Thirty minutes or so had passed in uncomfortable silence before we pulled up to the Enniburr pier. A few workers who had missed the first boat were waiting for the second to take them to work, but other than those few, the pier was empty. As we disembarked, Richard made a quip about how the second boat was a waste of money and only encouraged *their laziness*; missing the irony of his own refusal to take the first boat himself.

As I stepped off the barge a swarm of Marshallese children seemed to materialize from thin air. Where previously there was no one, a mob of gawking, excited kids were laughing and pointing. The younger ones were yelling things in Marshallese and pulling at the muumuu I'd worn hoping to be presentable when meeting my host family for the first time. The older ones tried to impress me with their English saying things like, "Hello, miss," "Nice to meet you," "My favorite color is blue," "What is your name," and my favorite, "I love you."

Richard had been there before; he took a handful of individually wrapped candies from his oversized pants pocket and placed them in eager open palms before shooing the children away. Some of the children ran back into the shacks from which they came once they got what

they came for, but most were too excited to meet the new teacher to be so easily distracted.

“Well that didn’t work as well as it usually does. They must like you already.” Richard seemed surprised.

We crossed the span of the entire island, which took about ten minutes. Our entourage of children surrounded us and the group, like an amoeba, changed shape as new children joined us while we traveled through the village of homes and narrow alleyways along a path of dead, crushed coral. We ventured onto the land of the Iroj. The chief. The king. My host father. Richard and I continued to walk, but only a fraction of the children who were initially with us were now by our side. Thanks to my crash course in culture during my three weeks in Majuro, I gathered that the remaining children must be his descendants as it was disrespectful to walk on land your family did not own, and worse still to walk on the king’s land uninvited. This rule either did not apply to Americans or Richard had previously communicated that we were coming.

The children summoned Gerti, my host mother and queen of the island, from the back of the house without Richard having said a word. She appeared slightly disheveled, wrapping her waist-long black hair into a bun on the top of her head. It was apparent that Richard did not ascribe to or was not even aware of the “No Trespassing” lesson from culture class. Gerti was obviously embarrassed to be found in such a state, unprepared with a messy house and no gifts to offer. Richard seemed completely oblivious. I was angry and embarrassed to have arrived with him. I felt that my host family’s first impression of me must be tainted by what I saw as his lack of respect for them, their home and their culture. I racked my brain to remember if hugging was okay. I decided to keep it brief and polite with Gerti and focused my attention on the children to ease the tension for us both.

A boisterous girl about ten or eleven years old had taken charge of the situation. She asked questions of me and translated my answers for Gerti while she gave me a tour of my new home. A tour which I felt Gerti did not necessarily appreciate as she stood sheepishly against the wall with a smile that portrayed more shame than happiness. The front room was dark because the plywood shutters were covering the windows, but I could make out a table in the corner, a chair against the back wall, and what looked like a propane tank in the middle of the floor surrounded by dirty dishes. *Is that what they cooked on?* In the adjacent room pillows were strewn out over woven mats, a sleepy toddler stirred in the corner where he laid naked. The third room was to be my room. Per the organization's requirements I had to have my own room with a door that locked. Piles of clothes were collected in several spots and the bed was unmade.

“Thought they'd be ready for you.” Richard quietly commented. “We'll take the next boat back.” At the end of the tour, Gerti explained to our guide, Amelia, that she would have the house, namely my room, clean and in order in a few days. Amelia relayed this message to me, although I already knew what Gerti was saying without understanding the words. I thanked Gerti for her kindness and tried to apologize for our intrusion. Amelia responded, translating Gerti's words, “I am sorry,” to which I replied, “No, I'm sorry.” My assumption that Richard knew what he was doing was wrong. He had clearly had no contact with my host family.

We took our leave and found our entourage waiting on the edge of the property, they were happy to help carry my luggage back to the pier. I was shaken by the uncomfortable exchange with Gerti and was no longer in a mood to be laughed at for my awful pronunciation, something that hadn't fazed me a few moments ago. I refused to speak the few Marshallese words I knew, which had been the main source of entertainment for the children on our first walk. My communication was reduced to high-fives. I felt intrusive and out of place. I wanted to

leave.

The dirty, loud, distasteful man became my savior, delivering me from Enniburr and returning me back to paradise. I dreaded having to return to live full-time on Enniburr, but I was dutifully bound by my contract to help teach the children and was determined to return to the land of no electricity, no running water, no privacy, dirty hands tugging at my clothes, uncomfortable conversations constructed of one-word sentences, and dead coral walkways because I knew that I could make a difference.

As I entered my cleaned hotel room I wished that I had gone straight from Majuro to Enniburr. I wasn't a complete fool; I knew that I was volunteering in an *underdeveloped* nation and had been advised of the typical living conditions of natives and the *realistic* expectations one should have as a volunteer. The month in Majuro, learning to speak basic Marshallese, practicing my teaching skills on students that were bribed to attend school on the weekend solely to serve as my guinea pigs, and adjusting to my new life of bucket showering, guams, and sleeping on cement floors, had served as a novel escape. I had started to adjust to my minimalistic unique lifestyle, and then Roi ruined me. I had found paradise, Roi-Namur: paradise/American Army Base. No more sleeping on the floor, bucket showering, white rice, sanitizing water to make it drinkable, applying insect repellent like sunscreen, waking up in a bed of sweat, or going to sleep when the sun went down.

Paradise Lost

I hoped that Lloyd, the principal of Enniburr Elementary, would continue to be delayed in Majuro. My extra time on Roi was due to his absence and his return signaled the beginning of school. I hoped that he would continue to be postponed because I wasn't ready to leave Roi. I

wasn't sure if I could live like I did in Majuro for an entire year. Nevertheless, Lloyd was no longer delayed, my room was assumed to be ready as it had been another week, and school was to begin, so I was forced to accept my fate.

Knowing that Roi was only a few miles down the reef made it difficult to unpack. I was so close, yet impossibly far as the chain of small islands were separated by passes with powerful currents and razor sharp coral. During high tide the current could sweep you away, and during low tide the coral would rip apart your flip-flops as if they were made of cardboard. As I emptied my suitcase a girl, about 11 or 12, sat in the doorway to my room. She sat crossed legged in a brown guam with pink and orange flowers that stretched over her knees just staring, no words, no gestures, just wide eyes tracking my every move and examining every item I had brought with me. Her presence was awkward for me, but she didn't seem fazed at all. Her stoic gaze felt intrusive and somewhat disconcerting. I'd made sure not to unpack my valuables, iPod, laptop, Nutella and peanut butter in front of her. I looked at her and smiled hoping to prompt a question from her or at the very least get a smile in return. My cautious smile worked, her demeanor transformed, she became giddy, smiling, laughing, and waving all at once, and then she ran off.

Within minutes there was a swarm of children crowding my doorway and both open-air windows. I'd assumed the little girl had left to spread the news. They packed themselves tight outside the windows and the open door to get a peek at the new *Ripālle* teacher without entering the room. *Ripālle* is a word for American people derived from the Marshallese word *balle* meaning covering; clothing; or costume due to what the Marshallese considered a laughable amount of clothes that the early missionaries wore in the equatorial sun (Abo, Bender, Capelle, & DeBrum, 1976). A few of the younger children kept inching past the threshold making room for new faces to appear behind them. Despite all this action, still no words were spoken. When I

smiled, they laughed; when I waved, they laughed; when I said, “*Yokwe*,” hello in Marshallese, they screamed in laughter rolling on the ground. Just when I started to wonder what I should do next, the little girl with the piercing gaze returned shooing away the children. She then sat in the doorway continuing to shoo any curious passersby; my self-declared guard.

For the first few days she blended into my surroundings, always near, but quiet. She walked me to school in silence, smiling and playing the ukulele. She would point out answers to my questions: “Where is this, where is that?” When I started to clean the classroom, a dark room with a cement floor and cinderblock walls she, unspeaking, walked to a neighboring room, returned with a broom, and began to sweep. I learned that her name was Tai. She was in the sixth grade and had taken a liking to me. I would find out later that she was fascinated with all things American, which included me, because her father, whom she had never met, was an American sailor. She walked me home, wrote me notes, drew me pictures and remained the guardian of my privacy.

It had been almost a week and Gerti and I had yet to share a conversation. It had only been short greetings in passing, with limited eye-contact, both of us unsure about how the other perceived us. Her embarrassment was lasting as she usually sent one of the children to fetch me for dinner and when we ate together in the front room I spoke mostly to Ruben, my host father, because he had a greater command of English from working on Roi. Both of us were unsure how to break the ice, but she made the first move and came to my room to learn more about me.

She knocked on the doorjamb with a sheepish smile and Huey, her toddler son, tucked behind her legs. I set my journal on the bed next to me, motioned for her to come in, and pulled out the desk chair for her to sit in.

“*Yokwe*, hi” she whispered.

I smiled and replied, “Yokwe.”

“You good?” Her voice was still quiet; she was embarrassed not to know much English.

“Good.” I said in English having searched my brain for the Marshallese equivalent and come up empty.

Tai was sitting on the ground near the foot of my bed reading a book I had been given by the organization: *Marshall Islands Legends and Stories*, which I had yet to crack. She sensed our discomfort and fear and stepped in, “Emman” she nodded toward me.

I smiled and nodded to thank her. “Elukkuun emman,” *very good*, I said to Gerti.

Tai continued to give us key words and help us communicate and because we could use her as our safety net, we quickly became bolder in trying to speak each other’s language. I learned that Ruben and Gerti had two other children who were young adults, in addition to the three that lived with us: Emilia (11), Bellary (5), Huey (3), and that Gerti was three months pregnant with her sixth child. It also came up that she loved chocolate, especially when she was pregnant. I stood up held my hand out to say stop and said, “Kattar?” while looking at Tai for affirmation.

She smiled and said in English, “wait.”

I smiled, proud of myself, and dashed to the front room to grab a spoon. I came back and quickly rummaged through my belongings for the jars of Nutella and peanut butter, which I had placed underneath my clothes. When I pulled it out Gerti squealed and clapped, we each took a spoonful on our finger and continued to talk while licking the chocolaty treat from our fingers.

Something about watching two grown women struggle over ordinary words and the simplest of sentences, being forced to laugh at ourselves, relying on body language to illustrate our points, and constantly reassuring the other that they were doing a good job, changed

something in Tai. From that moment on she never stopped talking. At first, Tai's vocal presence was overwhelming. She asked me for extra homework to improve her speaking and writing in English. She stayed after school to help me clean and organize, all the while talking about her friends and family. She read from the books on my shelf and asked me questions about what she was reading. Hundreds of questions ranging from, "How tall is the tallest mountain?" to "Why aren't you married yet?"

I would hint to her that it was time for her to go, "I'm tired, I think I'm going to take a nap" to which she would reply, "Why are you always so tired?" Eventually, I would break down and tell her directly that she needed to go home. She would raise her eyebrows, a common sign of confirmation, and leave with no hard feelings only to show up at my door before class the next day to walk me to school and ask me more questions. It didn't take long for us to grow close. Her presence ultimately became comforting and we were each other's main source of information; she was a lifeline. Often our conversations were often just a series of questions:

"Aren't you too old to be single?"

"Not in America, people in America tend to wait until their late 20s to get married and start families. How old are women when they get married here?"

"Married, I dunno, that's hard, some get married, some don't, but they have babies young, very young, like 16 is normal. That's what my mom did, she was 17. I don't want a baby till later, like after college, like 25 or something, I dunno... Do you want babies?"

"Yeah, one day, not anytime soon. Do you think this will be Gerti's last baby?"

"Oh, no. Not yet. Are you going to take the baby?"

"What do you mean?"

"Will you take the baby back to America?"

“No... I couldn't do that... I don't think Gerti would want me to do that... would she?” I looked at her with a wrinkled forehead in both shock and confusion.

“Yeah, she would. It would be better.” She said candidly not perceiving my perplexity.

“Better for the baby?”

“Maybe better for everyone. You would have a baby. Gerti would be your mom forever. The baby would be in America.”

“You think America would be better for the baby? What about her family, she has a good family and a good home, Ruben is Iroj.”

“I dunno... She has good family, but school is better... it's different. And, she will learn the best English. And then, you come to visit because you will be more Rimajel. And, she will be American first and Rimajel second, like you, which is good.”

“What makes me Rimajel?”

“I dunno... You speak Marshallese.”

“Not really.”

“Well, you try.” She shrugged her shoulders. “Most people don't. Some Americans have been here since I was born and they don't know any—it's mean. Well... not mean... I dunno... They just don't come here, except for the Christmas party, but they don't know any Marshallese.” She slowly shook her head back and forth.

“But does trying to speak Marshallese sometimes make me Rimajel? Everyone just laughs at me, especially you.”

A smile crossed her lips. “We laugh all the time. You are Rimajel, if you aren't, we don't laugh.”

Tai taught me about Marshallese society and culture from her perspective -- the two different worlds that adults and children occupied, and how the older children, not the parents, were responsible for the younger children. She shared customs that I wasn't aware of and often helped to explain the actions of those around me. For instance, a woman shouldn't be alone in the room with a married man. I finally understood why whenever I entered the kitchen Ruben seemed to walk out in the morning. He seemed comfortable sipping his coffee in the faded maroon lounge chair, and yet he always tipped his head toward me to say good morning, got up from his chair, and took his coffee outside while Gerti slept. She tried to describe the complicated family structures that made it difficult to explain to outsiders how you were related to someone, how many brothers and sisters you had, or even who your mom was. She explained that it was because 'mom' was a term used for biological mothers as well as her sisters, and sometimes friends, all who shared childrearing responsibilities, or traded children for periods of time for relief. In some circumstances, like if an older sibling hadn't had children yet, or if among two sisters one only had boys and the other only girls, or to create a blood bond between friends, children were traded or gifted indefinitely. This is what she was talking about when she asked if I would take the baby. Gerti would gladly give me her baby knowing that he/she would be raised in America, and knowing that it would make me the equivalent of a blood relative. Our fates would be forever tied together, we would become each other's responsibilities, it would establish an invaluable connection to an American, to the US, to opportunity for her and her family. An opportunity so great it would be worth the sacrifice of their newborn baby.

Tai also taught me about the history of the Marshall Islands. How her ancestors didn't believe in God although she couldn't recall details of the old religion, she told me that to scare children I could point at a tree and yell, "Demon, demon!" She explained how the United States

saved the Marshallese from the “very mean” Japanese long before both of our times, and how the uninhabited islands of Kwaj were owned by families, but that they weren’t allowed to live on them because of the missile tests. I became obsessed with Marshallese heritage. I finally read the two books I’d brought with me as part of my packing list from the organization. I asked Gerti and Ruben, and anyone else who would listen to my questions about WWII, the bombings at Bikini, the different dialects and ancestries of the two chains of atolls, the royal families and the new democracy, and the recent emphasis on modeling education after the U.S.

Conversations tended to be brief and less informative than I’d hoped. I once had a conversation with a drunk Marshallese man in my search for more information. Technically, alcohol was prohibited on the Enniburr, but Roi made it accessible and drinking was a common pastime. I sat in a room with several Marshallese, the few on the island who were about my age but did not yet have families, which was rare. We drank Cabernet from the plastic bladder of a box of wine. It was the first time that I’d been invited to a house other than my host family’s or Lloyd and Leah’s, the principal and his wife. The room was dark, lit by a candle at one end and I sat on a pillow on the plywood floor at the other end. The man closest to me sat on an overturned 5-gallon bucket, and three others shared a small futon couch. Other than us, and the small shelf where the candle sat, the room was empty.

“Where you from?” I asked the man sitting on the bucket. The other three were talking in Marshallese amongst themselves. He looked at me with his head cocked to one side and peered through eyelids almost completely closed. He did not understand my question, but he began to re-explain.

“I’m from Ebeye,” He paused for a silent duh, as he had just finished explaining that he was born on Ebeye, was the best fisherman there, had never left, and had no intention of leaving. I stopped him before he started the entire story again.

“No, I mean where are you from?” Signing the wax-on, wax-off motions with both hands simultaneously, drawing a large circle in the air to indicate I meant everyone in the room with us, everyone on the island, all Marshallese people. “Like, where did your ancestors, your family that’s dead, the ones that died a long time ago, when did they come here, where did they come from?” He enthusiastically raised both of his eyebrows, an affirmative sign indicating that he understood.

After a moment of what seemed to be serious reflection he blurted out, “The moon!” Bent over his knees and laughed so hard that he almost toppled over.

“Goddammit, never mind,” I smiled and shook my head, chuckling at his comment, but frustrated that he kept referencing the moon. Earlier that night he had successfully convinced another, slightly intoxicated, man that he had been to the moon. Everyone had laughed long and hard over the whole situation, and he wasn’t ready to relinquish the spot light.

Even when my conversations were sober there existed a general sense of *the past is the past* and perhaps because it was me asking, an American, everything was presented through a rose-colored lens, “Yes, Ebeye is overfished and overcrowded, but because of Kwaj we have jobs and can buy our food.” While I could have argued that white rice and Spam was not better than freshly caught ono, who was I to argue with the perspective they presented? I resorted to scouring the small library on Roi for anything I could find on the history of the Marshall Islands, which is where I came across *Bravo for the Marshallese: Regaining control in a post-nuclear, post-colonial world*. There was no stamp on the library card on the inside cover indicating it had

never been checked out before, but as far as I knew there wasn't a way to check out the books. The small room was attached to the back of the bar and almost always locked, I don't think most people knew about it. Richard had given me a key because it had a computer that I could use to send email. I took the book to Enniburr with me to read after school.

For an hour each day after school, students could come check out books in my room at the schoolhouse. I created a small library from books that had been donated by someone's Eagle Scout project years ago and had since been boxed in the attic of the community hall. Many students came to look at the books and pick out one to take home, but most came to play games that had been donated by a church group on Kwaj. I didn't mind either way, but there was one rule, *No bothering Ms. Stephanie!* So, I sat in my room for an hour after school, five days a week, with my nose stuck in the book and students strewn over the cement floor playing Chutes and Ladders, Candy Land, and whatever other worn and outdated board games people had contributed.

Barker (2004), the author, focused on modern history, which is easier to trace. Little evidence of early life on the islands exists because of the delicate nature of local resources. Durable elements that can stand the test of time, such as stone, clay, or metal are nonexistent. Instead, coral, palm fronds, and sea shells, items much more vulnerable to damage and decomposition, were used to fashion the tools of life. Not much was made to last and much of what might have weathered the wind, rain and sun was probably lost to the sea, a permanent disappearing act leaving behind no trace of clues or history for the future archeologists.

The Republic of the Marshall Islands is a recently sovereign nation that was once a U.S. trust territory. Previously occupied by Japan, before them the Germans, and before them the Spanish. Its namesake, British captain John Marshall, *discovered* the islands in 1788, a mere two

hundred and fifty-nine years after the Spanish had begun using the islands to support long voyages and thousands of years after the Marshallese had traveled within and lived upon the low-lying atolls in the South Pacific.

The Spanish rule of the Marshall Islands began officially with the Treaty of Tordesillas in 1594. First recorded contact between Westerners and the Marshallese people was in 1529, but the contact was minimal and usually consisted of seafarers stopping to trade for supplies on long journeys. During Spanish rule, the Marshall Islands appeared on no Western maps of the world, and were almost certainly unknown to the rest of global inhabitants.

Centuries later, after the voyage of John Marshall, the islands began appearing on Western maps. The location of the atoll made it a convenient stop for transpacific ships, and shortly thereafter American Protestant missionaries arrived and forever shifted society. Christianity was to bring an uncivilized people into the light of the Western world. Marshallese were convinced that their traditional clothing was immodest. Analogous to original sin being introduced to the Garden of Eden, concepts of shame, modesty, and indecency were transformed. Not all Marshallese took kindly to the imposition of missionaries, many island tribes fought off and killed many missionaries, but in the end, Christianity murdered almost all trace of the polytheistic religion of the heathens.

While Christian missionaries destroyed the religious aspect of Marshallese culture, the Germans exploited the islands for economic gain. German rule was indirect as their main interest was control of trade operations. However, the introduction of a Western economy through trade was in direct contradiction to the heart of Marshallese government and economy, socialism. Within and across islands, the Marshallese worked together to use and preserve their limited natural resources and to sustain life. The introduction of money and economic power with

outsiders destroyed their traditional way of life and thrust them into a global economy for which they were unprepared and readily abused.

German oversight of the islands carried on for decades until the Japanese took control during World War I. Although Germany can be blamed for the downturn of “communal self-sufficiency and family [and the shift] to individual income generation” (Barker, 2004, p. 17), Japan can be blamed for effacing much of the history, culture, and independence of the Marshallese people. Japan came to the islands with clear imperialist objectives: “economic development and exploitation, colonization for Japanese emigration, integration with Japan, and militarization” (U.S. Department of Interior, 1987, p. 336). During the onset of military occupation before World War II, the new Japanese regime effectively isolated the islands from the outside world. Japan declared the islands a closed military area, controlled all travel into and out of the restricted zone, and built schools to educate Marshallese in Japanese culture and language. The traditional government structure of the Marshall Islands, a complicated construct of multiple royal bloodlines and varying levels of royalty, all while maintaining a socialist perspective representing something closer to communism than capitalism, was rendered nonexistent, as all Marshallese became second-class citizens to their Japanese rulers.

Yet, even still, the worst of what happened to the Marshallese transpired at the inception of U.S. involvement. The Japanese island territory was recognized as a strategic position during World War II. When the U.S. entered the war, one of their main objectives was to gain control of the tactical Pacific position. In an effort to achieve control of the islands, the U.S. cut off all food and supply ships to the Marshall Islands. Unfortunately, this meant not only starving the Japanese, but also the Marshallese. Food and supplies became extremely limited as the U.S. Navy prevented any shipments to the desolate coral atolls on which not much food could grow.

Japanese began hoarding all resources for themselves and beat, hung and beheaded Marshallese for attempting to pick coconuts from their own trees. These tiny specks of land in the middle of the Pacific became the site of a barbarous, blood-soaked, and merciless conflict between the Japanese and American governments. Marshallese people were simply caught in the middle. Both Japanese and American hands were red with Marshallese blood.

After starving many Japanese soldiers and natives alike, the U.S. bombed entire islands with the acute precision of a two-year old finger painter, disregarding Marshallese villages and lives. This infernal bombardment strategy defeated Japan and won the U.S. an advantageous wartime location in the Pacific in 1944. Shortly after, the battle in the Pacific ended as did the war, and despite information having been received by the U.S. government, that Japan was to surrender (declassified documents cited in Alperovitz et al., 1996), the U.S. carried out their plans to drop two atomic weapons. Hiroshima and Nagasaki are considered by many to be the first unethical and unnecessary use of nuclear weapons. This legacy of *testing* would continue in the Marshall Islands.

I flipped over the book and rested it face down on the desk so as not to lose my page. I looked at the bullets sitting on my desk. One was a 50 caliber, or so I was told, it was live, not just a shell, but black ooze had started to bubble out of the casing. I had collected several gallon bags of bullets and bullet shells. When I first arrived on Enniburr I would walk the perimeter of the island picking up bullet shells, almost more common than seashells. Word spread quickly due to the entourage of children constantly at my side that Miss Stephanie liked bullets. Bullets became like the iconic apple; I would receive one almost daily from students. These remnants of the battle between the Japanese and Americans that littered the shore where children swam a half-century later fascinated me; that they handed them to me as they walked through the

classroom door with beaming smiles blew my mind. I took the oozing bullet outside, dug a small hole with my hand and buried it before returning to the book.

The U.S. played upon the fact that the Marshall Islands were now 99% Christian thanks to the early American missionaries. While the islands were under the control of the U.S. Navy, Marshallese leaders were asked if the U.S. could perform nuclear tests. It was framed as a matter of life and death, and it was insisted that America needed their nation to conduct nuclear testing to “learn how to use it for the good of all mankind and to end all wars” (Weisgall, 1994, p. 107, as cited in Barker, 2004, p. 19). Navy Commodore Ben H. Wyatt proceeded to ask, “Would Juda and his people be willing to sacrifice their island for the welfare of all men” (Weisgall, 1994, p. 107, as cited in Barker, 2004, p. 19). Juda, the Marshallese Iroij, or chief of Bikini Atoll, chose to lend his island to the allies who had just liberated them from Japanese rule and promised to bring world peace.

Never mind the lack of accurate interpretation and legal representation or the intended manipulation of the Iroij and his people by the Navy, the U.S. had God on its side and would use weapons of mass destruction to ring in an era of world peace, right after an era of cancer, deformities, sickness and death from radiation exposure.

In 1946, Operation Crossroads detonated two bombs on Bikini after evacuating Bikinians from their home island (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2015). In 1947, the UN placed the Marshall Islands in a trusteeship with the United States. The Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands was designated a strategic territory and the U.S. used this title to justify closed military operations and the detonation of 67 atomic and thermonuclear bombs despite begin charged with the responsibility “to promote the health and well-being of the citizens” (Barker, 2004, p. 20) and

“to protect the inhabitants against the loss of their land and resources” (UN Trusteeship Council, 1954).

The U.S. detonated 108,496 kilotons, during twelve years, a total yield over 7,200 times more powerful than the atomic weapons dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki (Embassy of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, 2015e). The BRAVO Test alone was a 15-megaton hydrogen bomb, which was 1,000 times larger than the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima and was dropped on Bikini on March 1st 1954 (Embassy of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, 2015e).

The knowledge of the long, dark and painful past between two nations that would begin with Tai’s simple history lessons, would transform my initial impressions of Roi as a paradise into something of a hypocritical, selfish, and terrible snub by the United States government and by extension, its people, to the Marshallese. After ruining the water, land, homes, and lives of generations of an entire society, drastically altering the state and future of an entire culture, the U.S. had the audacity to create a little slice of island paradise smack dab in the middle of the fallout. A bubble under the invisible, but very real protection of the United States Army amidst the literal wreckage and the physical and psychological damage of an entire people.

Navigating

The more information I consumed the more I realized how many blunders I had already made and how many assumptions I held. I felt so embarrassed for pushing Ruben out of his own house, I never attempted to say that I was sorry for being inappropriate. I had committed one cultural faux pas after another and I felt ignorant. I felt like my very presence was obtrusive and no one was correcting me because I was American. I felt like I was Richard on that first day and all the other Marshallese were looking at me in disgust, like I had of him for his blatant

unawareness. I was just as unaware and presumptuous as he was; we were more similar than different. We were the oppressors.

I sat on the woven palm frond mat outside my bedroom door. The white curtains were billowing through the open windows in the gentle breeze. Tai was facing me sitting on the small ledge of the open doorway with her legs outstretched and crossed at the ankles. I decided to ask her what she thought about Richard.

“What do you think of Richard?”

“Elekkuun enana.” She smirked and raised her eyebrows because she knew those were a few of the Marshallese words I understood. *Very bad.*

“Why?”

“I dunno.” Tai’s lips pursed and she shrugged her shoulders. She sometimes got frustrated with me when I asked her to explain things, but I also sensed that she was holding back for another reason, like she wasn’t supposed to talk about him. She stared at her feet, rocking them back and forth, one bare and one with a knee-high black sock with neon pink and green stars, both donning blue flip flops. I hated the feeling of socks with flip flops, but it was a hot trend on Enniburr. All my socks had been loaned out and not a day passed where students didn’t ask me to buy socks for them on the internet. Without looking up she quietly listed what sounded like a practiced list, as if she’d been coached by her parents. “He’s bad. He only cares about himself. He’s dirty. Only bad girls go with him.”

“Is Anabella a bad girl?”

“No... Maybe... Not much... He makes her bad.”

“Why does she go with him?”

“I dunno.” I didn’t press, or give her a look as if to say *continue* because I didn’t know

how much she knew or understood, but she offered an explanation after another short silence.

“She wants clothes and music and wine. Maybe she wants to marry him and go to America. I dunno. She won’t go to America, he just likes them for some time, then brings them back and likes someone new. He is too old and...” she held out her arms in a large circle in front of her and puffed up her cheeks. Exhaling in laughter. “I don’t like him.”

“Me either...” We stopped talking for a moment. Tai was pulling out individual strands of grass and placing them on her leg to create a design. I was enjoying the sun with my eyes closed and head tilted toward the sky. I was trying to imagine myself having grown up on the island; deciding what about me would be the most different from this alternate version.

“What do you think of other Americans?”

“They are good.”

“Not like Richard?”

“I am some Ripalle. I am not bad. You are not bad. We all have good and bad.” I smiled and nodded my head, she was right. As a sixth grader, she had the ability to recognize over-generalizations, while all I could see were the parallels between Richard taking advantage of young Marshallese women and Americans taking advantage of the Bikinians. Richard, in my mind, had come to represent the evil empire.

Days became increasingly more difficult. The honeymoon phase was wearing off. I was no longer the intriguing new American woman, laughing at my pronunciation had become banal for the students, and I felt that my presence represented an aspect of the latest imperialistic intrusion of the small nation leaving me disillusioned and withdrawn. I did not want to belong on Roi with the likes of Richard, and I was something worse than him on Enniburr, just another imperialistic

tool. I felt betrayed by own nationality, yet despite Tai's assurances that I was Rimajel I felt like a phony if I even attempted to speak Marshallese. Besides, no one knew my secret. If they had they wouldn't have been so inclusive.

I hadn't come to be the philanthropic hero, although the naiveté of that justification stung now also. I had come to escape heartbreak. I first met Cooper when I was 22 and became immediately infatuated. After six months of dating, when I thought things were going well and was starting to daydream about what our wedding would be like, he bailed. I thought I had played it cool, but he must have sensed the list of pros and cons I was making that would help us determine where to spend the holidays. In any case, I was devastated and did not understand our friendship post-breakup. In an act of desperation, I chose to haul off to a remote location. My romantic mind half expected my grand resolution to push my friend/noncommittal ex-boyfriend into a Hollywoodesque move of overwhelming love. Even as I stood on the escalator I imagined him breaking from his controlled wave and leaping onto the moving staircase, bounding past the tired travelers standing on their designated stair because he could not wait to embrace me. Then, pulling me in so tight that my feet left the floor. My luggage falling over beside us, tears streaming down our cheeks as they pressed tightly together, forming a single stream of suppressed emotion finally reaching its crest after gradually having built up over time and violently, swiftly breaking. He had called my bluff. He never broke from his formation, and I was left to acquiesce my lost love as I reached the top of the escalator, a moment of no return. My pride and outright refusal to admit that my decision to move to the farthest, most isolated speck of land I could find had anything to do with my broken heart kept me moving forward. I turned my back to him, my mom, and my fantasies, wondering what I had gotten myself into and I walked slowly toward my gate. But, no one could know that.

I was left wondering how I was going to endure an entire year. I resigned to spend most of it my room with Emilia, Bellary, and Huey sharing what was left of my peanut butter and Nutella. No speaking, just sitting, licking the treat off our fingers. I'd given up trying to hide my treat, they knew all my hiding places, my own room with a locking door was only an illusion of privacy. My iPod was gone, most of my books, chap stick never lasted long, a pair of my flip flops were missing; I once had to chase down students who I caught cutting grass with the newly donated scissors for class while on my walk home. There was no point trying to maintain my things; I had accepted that I would be leaving with an empty suitcase, maybe not even the suitcase, which was fine because at that point I just wanted to leave.

Tai wasn't walking me to school anymore, and she hardly ever came to my room. The only visitors I had were my host siblings. Huey was only three and unable to detect my despondency, Bellary was six and just loved to cuddle, and Emilia was eleven, practically mute from a disability, but loved to color in my room; they were the only three. Even Gerti wasn't coming by to sit in the desk chair and chat. She simply knocked on the door quietly when dinner was ready. I didn't walk around the island like I once had collecting bullet shells and children as I went. I left my room only when I had to.

February 9th was one such day. Liberation Day. A day commemorating the turning point in the Battle of the Pacific and the day that the U.S. liberated Kwajalein from the Japanese. I helped make Marshallese-style fried donuts with Gerti to bring to the event. Matching green shirts had been made and were passed out days ahead of time. Games and events had been planned and there were prizes won for basket weaving, coconut peeling, and relay races for children and adults alike. A speaker system was run off a generator; music was played all afternoon, a choir sang, and Ruben, as Iroj, gave a speech. It was a production to say the least,

all ending in a ceremonious flag raising.

Lloyd approached me after the flag raising ceremony as I sat on the stoop outside my classroom door with one of the woven baskets on my head for shade. Huey was seated next to me drinking a Coke. He pulled over a white, plastic chair and sat on the other side of Huey.

“Nice hat.”

“Thanks,” I said with a smile. A few of the children were also wearing them on their heads.

“Good day” he said looking out at the continued festivities; children running around waving the dollar bills they won as prizes, adults gathered eating left-over rice and donuts.

“It’s been fun.”

“Can I ask you a question?” he asked still looking off in the distance.

“Yeah...” I was unsure where he was going, but he seemed solemn.

“What did you think about the flags?”

“You mean that they raised the American flag higher than the Kwaj and Marshallese flags?” His head snapped to face me. I don’t think he expected me to understand.

“It is weird?” Given everything I had learned and was recently considering, it had stood out to me. I didn’t know how to explain all of that to Lloyd. He continued, “I know America is important, they gave us Liberation Day, but why does that flag have to be highest?” He gestured toward the three flags with his open hand. I felt that he had more to say, but also didn’t want to offend me. “What do you think?” I paused, looked at him then shifted my gaze toward the flags.

“Well... I know that in America, no flag is higher than the American flag.” He gave a resigned sigh.

Less than three weeks later I recalled our conversation as I played team Battleship with

three third graders after school. The game had become a great way for students to practice pronouncing the letters B and D, which were indistinguishable to their ears, although this often caused much debate when someone declared a win. I checked my watch, which also stated the date: Mar . 1 2011 . Remembrance Day. I'd read about the significance in the Barker book. A significance I was surprised I didn't see enacted by the Marshallese on Enniburr. It had been a regular school day; no ceremony or recognition, which was hard to believe given the frequency of community celebrations for which we canceled school.

Remembrance Day honored the victims and survivors of nuclear testing done in the atolls by the United States from 1946 to 1958. That year marked 57 years since Castle Bravo was dropped on Bikini. I asked the older students near my desk who were drawing hopscotch on the cement floor if they knew anything of Remembrance Day. Blank faces looked back at me. "Nuclear Survivor's Day?" Still nothing.

I found a replacement for my teammate and walked over to my desk to retrieve the book. Maybe I was misremembering, maybe it wasn't March 1st. I flipped through the pages trying to find the date for Remembrance Day. A story caught my eye as I scanned for the date:

I was not on Rongelap for the Bravo test, but I returned with everyone in 1957...

It was around this time that I had my first pregnancy. My baby had a very high fever when he was delivered, and the attending health assistant conveyed his doubts as to whether my son would survive the night. He was so dehydrated from the fever that his skin actually peeled as I clasped him to me to nurse. The only thing we knew to do was to wrap him in wet towels. And so it was that I held him to my body throughout the night, changing the towels and willing him to fight for his life. He lost the fight just as dawn broke.

My second son, born in 1960, was delivered live but missing the whole back of his

skull—as if it had been sawed off. So the back part of the brain and the spinal cord were fully exposed. After a week, the spinal cord became detached and he, too, developed a high fever and died the following day. Aside from the cranial deformity, my son was also missing both testicles and penis. He passed water through a stump-like apparatus measuring less than an inch. The doctors who examined him told me that he would not survive. And sure enough, he was dead within a week. . . . You know, it was heartbreaking to have to nurse my son, all the while taking care his brain didn't fall into my lap. For in spite of his severe handicaps, he was healthy in every respect. It was good he died because I do not think he would have wanted to live life as something less than human. . . . If it were not for the bomb testing, I would not have had to watch helplessly as two of my children were taken from me (Catherine Jibas, August 23, 1994, as cited in Barker, pp. 51-52).

I was momentarily unable to move on. The imagery painted a picture so unbelievable that I reread the passages. Finally, I continued and found the reference for which I was searching. It was on page 96, March 1st, Nuclear Victims' Remembrance Day. Fifty-seven years of poisoned food, radiated water, high cancer rates, high rates of miscarriages, abnormal birth defects, abnormally large tumors and growths in adults, radiation burns causing skin to fall off, being guinea pigs for U.S. government established radiation-related illness experiments, and fighting the most powerful government in the world for compensation and apology. Was I the only one who saw the juxtaposition of these two days as preposterous? Perhaps not since no one was recognizing the holiday.

The more time that passed the more frustrated and exhausted I became. I sank deeper into a depression each day. I didn't want to go to school. I woke up dreading every morning. I

stopped arriving early to ring the bell promptly at 8:00, instead I slept in until about 8:00 and then waited in bed for another teacher to ring the large, old, rusted welding tank with a hammer. That usually gave me about an extra hour of alone time at home.

One morning about mid-way through April, my eighth month with Gerti and Ruben, I woke with a pit in my stomach. I slinked out of bed, twisted my hair in a bun and held it in place with a decorative comb that Gerti had gifted me. I didn't change because I wore a guam to sleep and to work, I figured there was no point in getting another dirty. I emerged from my room to make myself a cup of instant coffee and sat in the maroon chair facing the open front door. Dark storm clouds headed our way. Often on stormy days the cinderblock classroom with no electricity was too dark to work, and we couldn't go outside because of the rain, so classes were canceled. I sat wishing that school would be canceled, surveilling the door for a messenger student to come to tell me there was no school so that I could crawl back in bed.

No one came. The bell rang, so I made one more cup of instant coffee with the last of the boiled water and walked to school. Class started out normally, but soon after the students' attention was drawn toward the open door. The door was always left open for air and it often caused disruptions as chickens, dogs, and toddlers were frequent visitors. Most of the time they wandered in and left, sometimes a toddler would find a sibling and sit on their lap, but today was different. Students were fixated on the door and whispering. Desks started sliding and the chatter became louder.

“What's going on?” No one acknowledged me.

“Kwōj ta?” No one even glanced in my direction. They stayed focused on the door and the walkway outside. I walked to the door and leaned out directing my attention toward the room just north, the Kindergarten.

Leah, the kindergarten teacher, was scolding a student, not a kindergartner, he was a second grader, Rentin. He was screaming, his notebook lay upside down and open on the concrete next to him, his pencil still in his hand. With tears streaming down both cheeks, which were red from yelling, he caught my eye. His eyes widened and he ripped his arm out of Leah's grasp. The next thing I knew, I had a pencil stuck in my leg. Sharpened pencils were a point of pride for the students and Rentin was no different. His pencil, sharpened like a spear, stuck into the meat right above my kneecap. He had crumbled at my feet and was holding so tightly to my legs that it took three teachers to pull him off. As two held him under the shoulders, one held his wrist and pried each finger away from my guam. With a puncture in my leg, and the teachers and students visibly upset, classes were canceled.

I wasn't home long when Gerti appeared in my doorway.

"Amelia said Lloyd want to speak to you."

"With me? Is he at his house?"

"Yes, she said go to house." The pit in my stomach intensified. I was being summoned by the principal.

"Yokwe, Stephanie, ej et am mour?" he shouted as he saw me approaching when I neared his home: how are you?

"Fine, emman...Just a Band-Aid" I said, gesturing to my knee after walking a few steps closer.

"Ejjeļok jorrān," I said: no problem. I felt obligated to use Marshallese; an attempt to compensate for my unsociable actions.

"Elukkuun emman," he replied with a smile on his face: very good. The knot in my stomach loosened, I felt that I wasn't there to be reprimanded like I had anticipated. Perhaps he

just wanted to check on me and the sense that I was in trouble was manifested from my own guilt due to shrugging off my teaching duties.

Lloyd wasted no time, he was a straight-to-the-point kind of person, yet he also had an informality about him. The first day I met him he was wearing a bright blue t-shirt with a marijuana leaf on the back, his hat was black with rainbow colored stripes emanating from the very top of his head, his flip flops looked as if they were about to wear through, but he also sported blue jeans, albeit torn, in the heat because it was after all the first day of school. By the time I had reached him, the small talk was over and he jumped right in to the reason he had requested me.

“I was thinking maybe once or twice a week, you meet with the other teachers and have lessons. You are our expert. I want you to teach them what you know about teaching. Every week, maybe once or twice, for only one hour.” I couldn’t believe what I was hearing. On the very same day that I skirted bell ringing duty, wished for rain so that class would be canceled, and was stabbed by a student, presumably because he hated me, Lloyd referred to me as the expert! The thought was insane! Here I had been wrestling with and tormented by my country’s hegemonic role in history and what that meant for me as an American teacher in the place where my own government was still controlling the land, ocean, and lives of the Marshallese and Lloyd was spouting colonial nonsense. I was no expert teacher; after all, I had come to escape heartache. The knowledge and pedagogy I had learned in my master’s program was brand new. I’d only ever been a student teacher at home, I’d never taught on my own, let alone in another country, with a different language and culture. I was in over my head. I wanted out. I wasn’t suited for this responsibility.

“You will do it? I will give you hours on Friday, you leave early to plan lessons. I will

cover classes and you can go to work on Roi with the computers,” he met my silence with a sweeter deal assuming it was the work load that I was hesitant about.

I thought back on my teaching so far: I had students make name tags so that I could learn their names and opened each class with a different student teaching me a new word in Marshallese. I had made spelling charts organized by word difficulty that students could complete individually at their own pace to demonstrate vocabulary mastery and then record their success with stickers. Even so, classes were loud and unruly, difficult to organize, and strenuous to teach. I felt like the only words I used all day were, *jaab* and *jijet*, *no* and *sit down*, and students would only respond in giggles.

I thought of Leah, who I had heard bustling around in the house when I arrived. She was Lloyd’s wife and had years of experience as the kindergarten teacher, was working towards her master’s degree in education by taking summer courses at the College of the Marshall Islands in Majuro, adept in both English and Marshallese, and a product of the island culture. She was the expert, not me. But Lloyd persisted and eventually I agreed to spearhead meetings once a week where all faculty could meet to discuss current issues and areas in which they were interested in improving. Explaining as clearly as I could that my duties extended only so far as holding the meetings and encouraging people to come.

Our first meeting was canceled due to a funeral. A seventh-grade student named Jary had lost her father due to a diabetic seizure because the island had run out of insulin. We helped carry his body from the dispensary shack back to his home. It might have been inappropriate, but I couldn’t help thinking that if they were eating *ono*, not Spam, the entire ordeal might have been avoided. The next week, we had a funeral for an infant. Tai tried to explain why funerals were three days long, something about believing that the soul of the newly deceased roamed after

having died and to guide the soul or send the soul off with reverence and esteem the body could not be alone and usually stayed in the house for three days, or that's what I gathered, I'm not sure she really knew. The week after that an infant celebrated their first birthday, which was a multiple day community event and rightfully so given the high infant mortality rate, a tangible reality. Eventually, all talk of teacher meetings fell of the radar, and everything continued as normal.

An elderly teacher, Happy, took over morning bell ringing operations. After school, I would watch the students play games for an hour and then come home to snack with my host siblings on the floor of my room. On Fridays, after school, I would pack a small bag for the weekend, gather the baby's clothes to take with me to put in the washing machine to reduce Gerti's hand washing load, and leave on the last boat to Roi. Every week I anticipated a weekend on Roi to be an escape from my discomfort on Enniburr where my privilege was palpable and with increased understanding and experience came increased guilt and uncertainty. And every Sunday, I couldn't wait to get back on the barge to Enniburr as I wasn't comfortable on Roi where Richard was a constant reminder of my country's encroaching, self-serving agenda. His image reflected an ugly truth within myself that I wasn't entirely ready to confront. I was stuck between two worlds.

Tai stuck her head through my open bedroom window.

"Yokwe." I turned my head to see her holding back the curtain. I felt a spark of joy, *she was back!* followed immediately by the dread of having to talk. Talking seemed laborious and I wasn't overly interested. I was content with my mute company. Bellary and Huey were pretending to read on my bed while I laid on the floor. Huey was holding a scuba diving book

open and upside down.

“Yowke,” I replied, as I sat up and nodded my head silently to ask if she wanted to join. She raised her eyebrows and left the window to enter through the door. She chuckled at Huey, grabbed the book and turned it right-side-up and then sat on the floor with her back against the bed and looked right into my eyes.

“Rentin is sorry... He wants to come back to school.”

“Okay,” I was confused, it took me a moment to realize that he’d been missing, I guess I hadn’t noticed that Rentin had never come back.

“You want him to come back?”

“Yes!” Now she looked confused. “Tai, I didn’t realize he wasn’t in school, I never said he couldn’t come back, he should be in school.”

“You aren’t mad?”

“I mean, I was... I was frustrated... but I never wanted him gone... I still don’t even really know what happened. Do you know what happened? Why Leah was yelling at him, and why he was so mad at me?”

“Well, it was because you got him kicked out. That’s why he was mad at you.”

“How did I get him kicked out?”

“You told him and Axel to stop fighting over the pencils. Remember when they were fighting and he tried to hurt Axel with the pencil?”

“Yeah, kinda.” With eight periods and 270 students ranging from the ages of 5 to 15 in my classroom every day there had been many fights among students that I broke up, especially among the younger children.

“Well, they told him to go home for the rest of that week because he didn’t respect you...”

What do you call that?"

"Disrespect?"

"No, being sent home from school."

"Oh, uh, Suspended?"

"Yeah, he was suspended because Leah talked to his mom."

It seemed that there was a different standard for students in my classroom and the creators and enforcers were the Marshallese teachers and parents. Temporarily gracing the school with my presence as a volunteer required that the students maintain a different set of expectations for the American teacher.

"So, Leah was trying to send him home."

"Yeah, he showed up the next day anyway, so Leah was going to drag him home." I tried to remember details of those days, but they were months ago. I knew that that wasn't the first pencil fight I'd broken up, pencils were prized possessions and every student collected them, but maybe I had said something to Leah? I couldn't remember.

"After he hurt you they said he couldn't come back."

"But if I say I want him back, then they will let him?" I finally figured out why she had come to tell me all of this.

"So, you let him come back?"

"Yes."

"Okay, itok." She stood up and motioned for me to come.

"Where are we going?"

"Itok," she said: Come.

"Okay, okay." I got up thinking we were headed to Lloyd's so that I could insist Rentin

be let back into school. But, as we exited she took me left instead of right.

“Where are we going?” She reached back to grab my hand but didn’t speak. We weaved through a narrow walkway between dwellings, this was a crowded part of the island I didn’t walk through much, I didn’t know who lived where and I felt as if I was walking right through people’s homes. The walkway widened and opened into a space with a massive breadfruit tree. We had to duck underneath the low-hanging branches weighed down with fruit. Near the trunk was a platform, a plywood bench with no back painted dark brown. Sitting on the bench was Rentin.

He jumped up from his seat, ran to me and hugged my waist. I put my arm around his shoulders. I already had tears in my eyes.

“Go,” she prodded him.

He broke down in tears and the only word he could manage was, “School?” as he looked up to my face, his chin still pressed against my body unwilling to relax his squeeze.

“Yes,” I whispered with tears on my cheeks, the word seemed to unlock his grip and I kneeled to give him hug.

The tender moment with Rentin was short-lived as I realized the boy had missed months of school and I hadn’t noticed. What’s more, it was because of me that he was sent home. *What had he been doing all day? Why hadn’t I seen him around? How could I have forgotten about him?* I wanted to run away from the little boy who wished to go to school so badly that when faced with having to go home he had raged and was consequently banished. I felt transparent, like everyone could see right through me, and knew me for the fraud I was. I wanted to shrink away. I had never wanted to leave the island more.

Despite wanting to run away, I resolved to stay for the weekend. I had to admit how

indolent and removed I had become. I forced myself to stay busy in the classroom until I had missed the last barge on Friday and had no other choice. All I wanted to do was sit in my bed and cry, but I felt so much guilt that I decided to talk with Leah. It was easier to talk with her we had worked together, and because her English was better than most others on the island. Lloyd and Leah's house was a place where I didn't have to rely on my Charades skills or embarrassingly repeat myself until I eventually smiled and nodded pretending to understand. Tai was there. She often was to help clean. She talked to me over her shoulder while sweeping the cement floor as Leah fried Spam for dinner.

“Don't feel so bad.”

Leah added, “You are wonderful, Stephanie.” I didn't feel wonderful. But to prove to me that I was wonderful they both began listing off all the ways other volunteers had been terrible.

“Nick hit us. He even threw desks at us, like he lifted them off the ground and threw them.”

“I remember that, he was bad. He was so mean. He was the first one we had,” Leah chimed in.

“And Courtney and Jennifer were nice, but spent all the time at Roi.” I gave Leah a quick glance to see what her reaction was to Tai's comment. I felt transparent again and did not understand how that differed from me. I left every weekend, I had to make a concerted effort not to leave that day. Leah saw right through me.

“Not like you. When you go, you take clothes to wash for Gerti, you bring back food, you make copies for teachers. They were here at the same time, both of them, they would cancel class and leave all Friday, and sometimes they wouldn't come back on Monday. It was a mess at school. Lloyd would get furious. They just did what they wanted and left us to take care of

everything. No one, I think, blames you for going on the weekends.” She wasn’t completely reassuring, so Tai tried her hand at comforting me. She turned to face me, but continued to sweep.

“Once Courtney said there was no school because she was sick and then she left to go to Roi, but I went there with my mom and saw her with her boyfriend. She lied and I was like, ‘Is her boyfriend more important than us?’ They were nice, but Ripälle. You, you are Rimajel not Ripälle.” It was a nice gesture, but *what made me Rimajel, what made me anymore Marshallese than Nick, Courtney or Jennifer, or Richard for that matter?* Leah caught my glance of frustration and confusion.

“You care. You speak Marshallese. You share your things. You ask about our history.” It was meant to be inclusive; a compliment signifying high regard. I felt honored to receive such a title and I valued being Rimajel. However, I felt that nothing about me was Rimajel. Everything about me was Ripälle, from my nation’s history of savior and oppressor right down to my reliance on peanut butter and Nutella. I stood out like a sore thumb with my pale skin and blonde hair, standing about a head taller than most. I came because it was an opportunity to turn my heartache into something bigger than myself, and justified it with a patronizing care, pity. And, I clearly cared more about my own identity crisis than I did my students who could disappear without me noticing. My grasp of the language was minimal at best, mostly greetings, requests, colloquialisms, and repeated phrases that I heard often like Emeloklok niñniñ nuknuk, which Gerti had said to me once after returning on a Sunday having forgot to take the dirty laundry with me: You forgot the baby’s clothes. I had asked her to repeat it so many times because of how funny it sounded that she came to use it instead of goodbye whenever I left the house. As for “sharing” my things, well I didn’t really have a say in that, and I can’t say that I

understood or appreciated the different perspective on ownership. And the questions I asked were followed by answers that made me angry, confused, and despondent; I had been depressed and distant for so long that the point seemed moot. *No, I was Ripālle. I knew that. However, I was still forming an understanding of what that meant.*

Chapter 2: Academic Situation of Critical Autoethnography

Introduction

This study is an exploration of conceptualization and formation of national identity in transnational space. The phenomenon of learning abroad will not diminish in an increasingly globalized economy. Increased movement of people across national borders for the purposes of education has generated interest in better understanding the interconnectedness of relationships, benefits, and potential detriments of transnational experiences. Through the retelling of my experience in the Republic of the Marshall Islands I explore and analyze the disruption of my assumed stable national identity as American in a transnational space to better understand my conceptualization and understanding of national identity and to highlight the processes and relations behind discourses of assimilation and acculturation. The intent of this study being to effectively illuminate aspects of the transnational experience related to processes and relations of identity that cannot be traditionally quantified. This study proposes to do so by exploring national identity development in transnational space through *autoethnographic* (Cann & DeMeulenaere, 2012; Kempster, Stewart, & Parry, 2008) means in order to better understand the *rhizomatic* (Sermijn, Devlieger, & Loots, 2008) relationships of myself, as an American teacher in the Republic of the Marshall Islands, with Marshallese host family members, students and colleagues, as well as American counterparts on an atoll in the South Pacific. The Marshall Islands have a unique history with the U.S., the relationship we maintain with the small sovereign nation creates a distinct transnational space. By better understanding national identity formation in such a space this study can enhance conversations in education regarding the relations and processes of national identity construction, how they can be applied in compulsory curricula to address issues of nationalism and transnationalism in the classroom, and add to the

broader discussion regarding the shifting role of education from one of creating national citizens to expanding beyond nationally bound multiculturalism in an era of increasingly globalized education.

Background

A paradigm shift may be occurring in the study of international education. In the past, international education was most prominent in economically developed countries, and was seen as an avenue for students from less economically developed countries to receive a better education outside their country of origin (Marginson, 2014; Pike, 2015). International students were studied from an adjustment lens, which requires the student to adjust to the ‘norms’ of the host country (Marginson, 2014). In this model, the student is seen as deficient until he or she completes a period of acculturation, which inherently denotes cultural superiority (Marginson, 2014). Tange and Kastberg (2013) refer to this framework as the, “exclusive interpretation (i.e., the conventional understanding of international students as the net receivers of Euro-American wisdom)” (p.1). Tange and Kastberg (2013), Franken (2012) and Marginson (2014) are calling for a shift from the “adjustment,” or “cultural fit,” perspective to a transition perspective, where the personal experience, background, culture, and knowledge of an international student is considered and integrated to enhance the learning experience. Rather than assimilation as a means to success, academic achievement is fostered through culturally and linguistically relevant pedagogy (Banks, 1994; Cushner, McClelland, & Safford, 1996; Delpit, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Osborne, 1996; Phinney, 1990; Sleeter, 1994) wherein the student’s continued academic achievement is built upon their preexisting knowledge. Thus, student identity development becomes a personal navigation of two, or multiple, cultures, languages, and spaces rather than a linear progression of movement from original to target culture/society. Each of the

aforementioned authors has a different name for this new framework: “inclusive approach” (Tange & Kastberg, 2013, p.1), “re-situation” (Franken, 2012, p. 845), and “self-formation process” (Marginson, 2014), but the message is the same. International students are not deficient; they bring valuable information and experience to the learning environment (Franken, 2012). Learning is not a one-way street by which the international students must absorb the norms of the host country, with nothing to reciprocate to an academic setting (Duffy, Farmer, Ravert, & Huittinene, 2003). Instead, international students can help create a setting of intercultural learning and awareness (Tange & Kastberg, 2013). International students are in a complex situation that requires consideration and integration of old and new identities (Marginson, 2014; Phinney, 1990).

To this day, the general trend of student mobility between nations is from economically developing to economically developed countries (Kondakci, 2011; Pike, 2015). However, the reason to promote international education has shifted in the last decade from practicality on an individual basis to practicality as we enter a global era. Transnational experience is different from that of migrants before globalization (Russ, 2013). The UN’s Global Commission on Internal Migration identified a new norm in migration in 2005, re-conceptualizing the former paradigm of permanent migrant settlement (assuming assimilation) to a new transnational, multi-national pattern (Ley, 2009) where migrants relied less on the spatial connections of their new home and showed greater inclination to remain connected to their homeland, living betwixt and between multiple locales, developing a hybrid culture or in-between-ness, whereby their experiences and identities are conceptualized in multiple national contexts (Archer, 2011; Levitt, 1983; Schiller, Basch, & Blanc-Szanton, 1992). Transnationalism provides a new lens with which to better understand the development of identities as multi-national and no longer focused

on assimilation as a means to succeed due to disassociation from the country of origin or a nationally bound understanding of multiculturalism wherein issues of culture, language, power, and therefore identity are socially constructed within the American context (Banks, 1994; Giroux, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Neito, 2009; Nieto, 2010; Sleeter, 1994). As early as 2000 former U.S. President Clinton recognized that:

Today we live in a global community, where all countries must work as partners to promote peace and prosperity and to resolve international problems. One of the surest ways to develop and strengthen such partnerships is through international education programs (p. 2868).

The research focus of international education has moved away from quantitative, comparative education, which evaluates nation-states as an entity with respect to each other and has developed a phenomenological framework, which requires a deeper understanding of the assumptions made about students by host countries and institutions, as well as what international students bring to the learning context (Franken, 2012; Khagram, 2012). The focus becomes the incorporation of international students to create multicultural experiences to benefit members of a global community (Dolby & Rahman, 2008). Due to this shift in perspective in recent decades there has been an increased interest in global, international, and transnational education. These terms mean slightly different things to many different groups interested in studying, learning, or profiting from the phenomenon of globalized education.

To understand the rise of this interest, we must first consider the role of globalization. Theodore Levitt (1983) is the economist who is credited with coining the term *globalization* to describe systems of production, consumption and investment in a global market in the mid 1980s (Stromquist, 2002). The term was quickly applied to areas that were common across the world

including political and cultural changes and effects within and across nation states (Spring, 2008). One such common global phenomenon to which the term was applied was *schooling* (Spring, 2008). As international economics became increasingly competitive, the connections between economics and education led to an increased focus on globalized education (Pike, 2015; Spring, 2008). However, this growing interest in globalization since the 1980s is more correctly termed a reinvigoration as Dolby and Rahman (2008) explain, international and comparative thought has existed for over a century.

In the context of international education there are many approaches to research as historical circumstances shift. Dolby and Rahman (2008) outlined a) comparative and international, b) internationalization of higher education, c) international schools, d) international research on teaching and teacher education, e) internationalization of K-12 education, and f) globalization of education (p. 676). Within each of these loosely categorized, often chronologically overlapping, research approaches there are distinct traditions (Dolby & Rahman, 2008). However, since the 1980s, most of the contemporary research in comparative and international education can be categorized into four general research categories (Dolby & Rahman, 2008).

The first follows the traditional comparative paradigm of statistically measuring differences in educational systems across nations. A second trajectory follows the traditional international paradigm where research is focused on educational policy and practice within the context of a nation. A third approach focuses on the development of educational institutions in developing countries. The fourth trajectory concerns issues and questions of definitions, practices, and theories; both within comparative and international education and the role this discipline has within the larger context of educational research. According to Dolby and Rahman

(2008), within this fourth trajectory, recent work has begun to question the core premise of comparative and international education, that a nation state is a viable entity by which to compare, and examples of such works reevaluating this primary assumption include: Crossley, 1999; Crossley & Watson, 2003; Cummings, 1999; Marginson & Mollis, 2001; Arnove & Torres, 2007; Crossley and Tikly, 2004; Epstein & Carroll, 2005; Hoffman, 1999; Vulliamy, 2004; Welch, 2001. It is from this reconsideration of the importance of a nation-state in an increasingly economically globalized world that new theoretical and methodological paradigms have sprung, transnationalism being at the forefront.

Transnationalism is a broad term used by different scholars in different ways, but the underlying assumption that exists regardless of research trajectory or ontological approach is that processes, structures, and people can be seemingly bounded, but are becoming increasingly constructed by trans-societal, trans-national, trans-organizational, dynamic, intricate, and various overlapping relationships since the onset of globalization (Khagram, 2012). It describes an understanding of human relations and experiences as being transformed from “nation-centric spatial connections,” (Archer, 2011, p. 198) to interrelated, international, “networks” (Pence & Zimmerman, 2012, p. 495).

The concept of transnational allows a space for the consideration of multi-national, implying integration and reciprocity. In contrast, assimilation is the outcome of the adjustment lens of deficit models implying cultural superiority. Assimilation is a process by which a person or a group's language and/or culture come to resemble those of another group. It is primarily a one-sided exchange of information from giver to receiver reinforcing concepts of learner as deficit, wherein the outsider must conform to the norms of their new culture or society to succeed. Transnationalism, however, fosters processes of acculturation wherein there is a two-

way process of change as a person experiences second-culture learning; navigation of meaning within the second culture from their own sociocultural, linguistic, and academic perspective and negotiation of a multi-national identity with the power of self-determination. It will inevitably enhance the understanding of the increasingly common transnational experience by removing the strict categories and boundaries generated by traditional comparative and international education frameworks. It is a way of looking at experiences, especially the educational experience, as a “non-national but indisputably important process” (Briggs, McCormick, Way, & Way, 2008, p. 627).

As the concept of international networking within globalization continues to grow international competence becomes an increasingly desirable trait in students, employees, and citizens. Because of “the advent of the information society, scientific and technical civilization, and the globalization of the economy” (Spring, 2008, p. 331) more attention and money are being directed to international programs and opportunities (Pike, 2015; Spring, 2008).

Governments, intergovernmental organizations, global nongovernmental organizations, multinational corporations, and public, as well as, private universities are becoming increasingly invested in global educational processes (Pike, 2015; Spring, 2008). These constituents are interested in influencing the conversations regarding programming, curriculum and instruction, technology, publishing, development, multiculturalism, marketing, for-profit schooling, human capital, migration, job skills, and economic development as related to international education (Spring, 2008).

Preparation of culturally competent individuals capable of working in and capitalizing on the progressively globalized nature of our world has become an important task of educational systems (Pike, 2015). Multicultural education has aided in this effort, however, multiculturalism

challenges stereotypical reductionism, issues of identity development, and accommodation of diversity within a national context (Wright, Singh, & Race, 2012). Globalization progressively challenges such national borders and demands cooperation, collaboration and productivity across nations and because of this some argue that multiculturalism is no longer sufficient. Instead, many argue for transnational perspectives, as does Willinsky (2012) who calls for “recognition of the increasingly reduced cultural force of those national borders” (p. 32). Essentially, the ideal of a more inclusive state within a nation as a right and necessity of democratic participation that multiculturalism urges is now being applied in a global sense (Willinsky, 2012); recognizing global constructs, not only societal issues, and moving from a nation-centric perspective to a global perspective, effectively liberating constructs of identity and culture from the constraints of the nation. This new space of a “transnational public sphere” (Willinsky, 2012, p. 33) is the foundation of transnationalism.

However, this transnational public sphere is often not considered in international education research. Despite increased enrollment in international programs every year (Chow & Bhandari, 2012; Vande Berg, Paige, & Lou, 2012) research continues to focus on determining, understanding, and quantifying, the outcomes for participating individuals as related to developing and increasing intercultural competence, and impact on learning and professional development, which centers what the participant is gaining from the international experience. For examples of such research see: (Altshuler, Sussman, & Kachur, 2003; Cohen, Paige, Shively, Emert, & Hoff, 2005; DeJaeghere & Cao, 2009; Doctor & Montgomery, 2010; Hansel & Chen, 2008; Koskinen & Tossavainen, 2004; La Brack, 1993; Marx & Moss, 2011; Paige, Cohen, & Shively, 2004; Pederson, 2013). This is largely because learning abroad has been driven by a multiculturalist perspective of preparing culturally competent individuals capable of working in

and capitalizing on the progressively globalized nature of our world. Although there is consideration for and research on the effects and impacts of international programming on host countries, faculty, students, and communities as well as on international student experiences, expectations, and benefits of coming to the U.S. to study, much research has maintained a multicultural perspective of the study abroad phenomena, wherein a stable national identity is assumed.

Rationale for this Study

It is the very pressures of multiculturalism in the U.S. that continually prompt researchers to consider larger implications of international programming, particularly ethical considerations of cross-cultural exchanges (Altshuler et al., 2003; Cohen et al., 2005; DeJaeghere & Cao, 2009; Doctor & Montgomery, 2010; Hansel & Chen, 2008; Koskinen & Tossavainen, 2004; La Brack, 1993; Malewski & Phillion, 2009; Marx & Moss, 2011; Paige et al., 2004; Pederson, 2013; Rahatzad et al., 2013; Sahin, 2008; Sharma, Phillion, & Malewski, 2011), however the problem that this study intends to explore is that of assumed national identity in international education, which multiculturalism perpetuates (Beck, 2006; Butera, 2001; Willinsky, 2012; Wright, 2012). National borders have for so long been unchallenged in comparative and international education that students' national identity is considered stable and coinciding with their nationality and is independent of student identity development (Cowen, 2015; Crossley, 1999; Crossley & Tikly, 2004; Crossley & Watson, 2003; Cummings, 1999; Epstein & Carroll, 2005; Hoffman, 1999; Schweisfurth & Phillips, 2014; Vulliamy, 2004; Wilson, 1994). However, the globalization of education and shifts in migration patterns require a new lens with which to consider national identity development and the role learning abroad has in this development (Archer, 2011; Clavin, 2005; Dolby & Rahman, 2008; Klages, 2012; Ley, 2009; Marginson, 2014; Matus & McCarthy,

2003; Pence & Zimmerman, 2012; Russ, 2013; Schiller et al., 1992; Song, 2011; Spring, 2008).

The assumption of national identity as stable and the issue of traditional containers for national identity in transnational spaces are the problems this study intends to illuminate and explore.

A transnational perspective brings new focuses in research and programming related to learning abroad, especially as it relates to national identity development. Within a transnational perspective, not only can multinational identities exist, but the very concept of nationalism can be challenged and what it means to be have a national or multinational identity can be explored (Briggs et al., 2008; Crowder, 2008; Kaplan, C., Alarcon, N., & Moallem, 1999; MacCormick, 1996; Skinner & Kubacki, 2007; Vertovec, 1999; Wimmer & Glick-Schiller, 2006). This will be attempted in this study through consideration of my own assumed stable identity while learning and teaching abroad and the relations and processes of national identity development in a transnational space.

Purpose and Research Question

The purpose of this research is to learn about the relations and processes regarding national identity disruption and development, question the multiculturalist assumption of stable national identities, and explore the conceptualization of national identity and nationalism from a transnational perspective. By critically examining my experience as a teacher abroad in the Marshall Islands and engaging in the retelling of experiences with one of my Marshallese students, Tai, the study questions the multiculturalist assumption of stable national identities and explore the conceptualization of national identity and nationalism from a transnational perspective. It frames the disruption and critical examination of my assumed stable identity within the hybridized experiences within a transnational space suggesting the necessity of a non-essentialist perspective of identity in contemporary discussions of global education. The cross-

cultural encounters that frame the transnational experience have the potential to disrupt identities; they “can also succeed in seriously destabilizing the subject by considering what emergent and valuable ideas may come from this disruption” (Friedman & Schultermandl, 2011). This study produces an autoethnographic account of such disruption.

It is not the intent of this study to research solutions to the issues of multiculturalism or international education, but to problematize multiculturalism as a framework for international experiences and reconsider issues of national identity development, stable notions of national identity, and the complexity of educational experiences within a transnational perspective. Thus, this qualitative study does not seek answers. By design, it considers relations and processes to better understand national identity disruption and formation and the changing role of education from a transnational perspective in a globalized era of education.

It is intended to engage an international audience in a complex conversation regarding the future of education in our increasingly globalized world, with careful consideration of cultural reference frames regarding the purposes and processes of education, cultural, linguistic, and societal differences, and a history of Western imperial education and colonialism. The study aims to be a work that appeals to a large social audience beyond academic educational experts in hopes of informing and engaging the public in areas related to transnationalism, globalization, multiculturalism, and other important aspects of education that are relevant in U.S. classrooms as well as in greater educational spheres that extend beyond U.S. national borders. To do this, the study was designed as a critical autoethnography, wherein, as a researcher, I extend personal experience into the larger realm of society to shed light on processes and relations of national identity development, and engage the public in personal meaning-making and conversation through narrative (Boylorn & Orbe, 2014; Denzin, 1997; Ellis, 2004). As such, the format of this

study is considered nontraditional, in that I utilize creative nonfiction in conjunction with rigorous qualitative research to appeal to non-education experts, as well as academics.

As a critical autoethnography it is important to consider myself in the development of the research questions (Agee, 2009). My research interests stem from my personal experiences and it is therefore important to consider the why and how of human interactions with my perspective in mind. Agee (2009) also addresses the importance of “dynamic and multi-directional” research questions in qualitative research that are capable of “focus[ing] on a topic of significance and at the same time functioning as lenses that are directed outward by the researcher to capture the nuances of the lives, experiences, and perspectives of others” (Agee, 2009, p. 446). Therefore, the broad question relating concepts of national identity to relations and processes allows for comprehensive and divergent exploration of my role, perspective, and position in relation to my informant. In other words, creating a broad research question that could reflect the journey of interactive inquiry, increased understanding, and the unpredictable and complex nature of human relationships at all stages of the research process was necessary.

This study was guided by the following research question:

How do I conceptualize national identity in transitional space and what relations and processes am I considering in constructing my identity?

Significance of the Study

Learning abroad arose as a phenomenon wherein migration was most often from underdeveloped to more developed countries. As understandings and the promotion of multiculturalism increase due to a global economy and increased international opportunities, as well as increased diversity within the U.S., the importance of cultural competencies and the ability to work in diverse environments is stressed, and in turn, this trend is reversing. It is

becoming common for students from developed, Western countries to travel to less developed countries to experience diversity and gain cultural competence and other desirable traits for the global economy. Along with this new trend in educational migration comes a new trend in research of international education, which focuses on the Western counterparts of these interactions and lessons that they are learning. The research on international students in the U.S. is similarly focused on what they are gaining from their experience in the country, and the rhetoric of reciprocity within multiculturalism seems nothing more than empty jargon; a buzzword. Most commonly, learning abroad focuses tend to have a nationalistic perspective wherein the assumption is that Americans are situated in study abroad programs to gain perspective and knowledge to be applied in a U.S. context (Malewski & Phillion, 2009; Rahatzad et al., 2013; Sahin, 2008; Sharma et al., 2011), or international students are gaining a U.S. perspective to increase their potential in a Western context (Altshuler et al., 2003; Cohen et al., 2005; DeJaeghere & Cao, 2009; Doctor & Montgomery, 2010; Hansel & Chen, 2008; Koskinen & Tossavainen, 2004; La Brack, 1993; Marx & Moss, 2011; Paige et al., 2004; Pederson, 2013). Learning abroad has become a phenomenon in the U.S. that is largely an experience for Caucasian students, who made up approximately 76 percent of the U.S. students abroad in 2012-2013 (NAFSA, n.d.). There are voices missing in the global discussion of study abroad programs. The *reciprocal relationship* (Greene, 1993) that is a tenet of multicultural education is not being adequately considered in the research regarding international education and thus the issue of national identity in education is all but nonexistent.

Often, when research is constructed around the story of “the other” within multiculturalistic understandings of identity, cultural and linguistic negotiations, and integration are limited by the binary assumptions of multiculturalism. Multiculturalism as a theoretical

framework assumes national boundaries and is concerned with multiculturalism, or social policy within the boundaries of the nation. This delineation of nation and nationality within a framework of tolerance and acceptance is inherently limiting and is ineffectual at dissolving the either/or and in/out dichotomies in discourse related to tolerance and diversity.

The opportunity to explore the *rhizomatic* (Sermijn et al., 2008) relationships and experiences in the Marshall Islands, across two deeply connected nations and very different cultures, is a chance to examine teaching, learning and identity development across borders. The use of transnationalism as a theoretical framework allows this study to question the assumptions of multiculturalism and national identity development in an increasingly globalized world.

Subjectivity Statement

Qualitative research is directed toward developing understanding and challenges the positivist perspectives of objective truth and knowledge. Research and analysis are inherently subjective as understanding is created within cultural context under the precept that the processes of socialization design the very lens we develop with which to understand the world. Therefore, the subjectivity of the researcher plays an important and overt role in qualitative inquiry, especially when using creative nonfiction as a tool. As Caulley (2008) comments, “Each writer filters his or her writing through his or her own values, which depend on his or her gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and cultural background. Creative nonfiction writers try to capture truth about reality as they find it” (p. 444).

In line with countering the positivist perspective, subjectivity is viewed as an asset when conducting research in the humanities wherein understanding is not considered objective or universal. It is from the incorporation of ourselves in the research that the work becomes more honest (Richardson, 1994). This is not to say that qualitative research is thus ungeneralizable as

it incorporates the personal, rather the experiences and understandings illustrated by the personal through creative nonfiction are interpretable and meaning derived is dependent on the readers' subjectivities and socialization. Therefore, as a writer/researcher I do not claim that this research is generalizable in the positivist sense. It is temporal and situational, however as the issue of identity is a human construct it is generally relatable. As a "situated speaker" my experience, subjectivities and conclusions may differ from others, but my knowing/telling can have widespread, albeit divergent, significance (Richardson, 1994).

I operate under constructionism in so far as I believe truth is relative regarding individual existence and identity formation and expression. Identity is unique, multiple and dynamic under the logic of *social constructionism* (Ackermann, 2001; Crotty, 1998a); we are socially constructed beings; distinct, as we experience life differently with diverse knowledge. However, as this is *autoethnographic* (Boylorn & Orbe, 2014) it is an attempt to relate the personal to larger constructs and issues in culture and society; to "grasp history and biography and the relations between the two within society" enabled by the *sociological imagination* (Mills, 1959, p. 2). Therefore, I do not assume, as extreme postmodernism can, that nothing can be known, that the individual is more important than the social, rather I respect that what is to be known is dependent on the author's and readers' interpretations and perspectives. I understand that a *rhizomatic* (Sermijn et al., 2008) perspective of relationship is never completed and never fully known, however I believe that much can be better understood and applied to larger social issues in efforts to improve research lenses, questions, considerations, and understandings of identity and education. I believe in the power of counter narratives to impact public discourse and social norms. Finally, as a critical analyst, I am concerned with the construction, role, and place of the individual within larger social constructs and power dynamics. Here, I examine the constructs of

national identity from a transnational lens that fosters multinational identities through processes of acculturation. There will not be a single solution regarding issues of national identity construction and this research is not resolved to solve the issues, but to illuminate a counter narrative for the purposes of engaging the public in discourse and adding to the collective of counter narratives that are necessary for acknowledgement of perspectives and improvement of curriculum and instruction in education.

Peshkin (1988) acknowledges that there are many ways to address subjectivities in research and declaring them upfront in the form of a subjectivity statement, as I do here, is one. There are several subjectivities that I am inclined to recognize as they fuel my interest in this inquiry and govern how I relate national identity as the topic of this study and transnationalism as a framework to curriculum and instruction, education, and society. As I have indicated in discussing social constructionism I believe that identity is subjective as it is something we construct in our minds. However, it is influenced by others' perceptions and interpretations of our identities, as well as affirmation or rejection of our presented selves. It is with this understanding that I see blind nationalism as obstructing international and global progress by creating, reinforcing, and advocating for in-group/out-group, or Us versus Them perspectives of othering that hinder a humanist perspective and the presentation of and progress on human issues of power such as war, poverty, hunger, access to clean water, discrimination, wealth inequality, and education. I find this particularly timely and relevant as the current administration ran on a nationalist platform to "Make American Great Again." I believe that such a nationalist perspective focusing attention inward with implications undermining the progress the nation has had regarding diversity, equality, and equity is drastic, irresponsible and harmful. I believe that nationalism is a sentiment valuing Americans over other humans and in its extreme form is

responsible for the racism enabling colonial and imperial acts throughout history including the testing of nuclear weapons in the Marshall Islands.

However, Peshkin (1988) emphasizes the importance of recognizing subjectivities through all stages of the research process by means of attentive “monitoring of the self” (p. 20). This is something I attempt to embody through *writing as inquiry* (Richardson, 1994) (see pages 117-119 for detailed explanation), and negotiating dialogue and queries with Tai. In these practices I continually use reflexivity (Bhattacharya, 2013; Guillemin & Gillam, 2004; Mosselson, 2010; Pillow, 2003; Quicke, 2010; Richardson, 1994; Sermijn et al., 2008) to understand personal background as positionality (Agee, 2009; Frank, 2000; Mosselson, 2010; Pillow, 2003; Straubhaar, 2015), and work to “be enabled to write unshackled from orientations that...[I] did not realize were intervening in...[my] research process” (Peshkin, 1988, p. 17). As a result of being aware of my subjectivity through careful attention to positionality and reflexivity I can know myself and be honest about myself in relation to my informant and research.

The following sections offer historical context for the rise of multiculturalism and transnationalism, delineates the two theories, expands on how transnationalism is used in this study as a theoretical framework, addresses the distinction that must be made concerning nationality, national identity, and nationalism, and introduces the symbolic interactionist conception of identity that supports an unstable notion of identity; allowing this research to contemplate identity construction as continual and social.

Literature Review: Understanding Transnationalism as a Framework for National Identity

I approached this study from an epistemological lens of constructionism, wherein it is assumed that we are socially constructed beings; distinct, as we experience life differently with

diverse understandings. Knowledge and reality are thus viewed as constructs formed through social and linguistic interactions (Crotty, 1998a; Mallon, 2013). The structures of truth, knowledge and reality are questioned as the foundations of self-evident propositions and deductions are examined. Therefore, identity is also unique, multiple and dynamic under the logic of *social constructionism* (Ackermann, 2001; Crotty, 1998a).

Interpretivism, the theoretical perspective derived from the epistemological notion of constructivism, integrates cultural and historical interpretations of the social world into human science inquiries (Bhattacharya, 2007). In such inquiries, the focus is on developing understanding rather than deducing causal explanations or generalized laws as in inquiries from a positivist perspective (Bhattacharya, 2007). As this study is concerned with identity, specifically conceptions of national identity, it follows the Symbolic Interactionism (Blumer, 1969; Cooley, 1902; Crotty, 1998a, 1998b; Ezzy, 1998; Mead, 1934; L. T. Reynolds & Herman-Kinney, 2003) vein of Interpretivism (Crotty, 1998a, 1998b; Howe, 2009).

Concepts of identity are as divergent as they are vast, with terms and meanings across popular and scientific discourse (Ashmore & Jussim, 1997). A rise of the social constructivist perspective in the social sciences in the latter half of the 20th century generated theoretical, methodological and conceptual tools allowing us to reconsider constructs of identity (Ashmore & Jussim, 1997). Gleason (1983) argues that Erikson, and the psychologists who followed him, viewed identity as “internal to the person and persisting through time” (p. 9); internal and relatively stable, but constructionism influenced thinking of identity and led to Gleason’s (1983) sociological term of symbolic interactionist. Gleason (1983) sees Cooley (1902) and Mead (1934) as originators of symbolic interactionism.

Blumer (1969), a sociologist, termed the phrase symbolic interactionism, which was based on Cooley (1902) and Mead's (1934) earlier work conceiving the self as “an inherently and thoroughly social phenomenon” (as cited in Ashmore & Jussim, 1997, p. 13); a belief that individuals created their own social reality through individual and collective actions and experiences. Gleason (1983) traces the sociological path of identity theory from Mead to Blumer and describes this style of thought as the symbolic interactionist conception of identity, wherein the self and identity are seen as social and fluctuating (Ashmore & Jussim, 1997).

Blumer (1969) was largely influenced by Mead’s social psychology and argued that social reality is a continual process of creation that relies on interaction to form meaning (Reynolds & Herman-Kinney, 2003). Although Blumer’s symbolic interactionism is broader than a single identity theory the tenets are often applied to concepts of identity formation and can be traced from Dewey’s writings with recurring themes emphasizing that humans are best understood in relation to their environment, to Tajfel and Turner's (1979) social identity theory in which a person’s social identity is based upon group membership, to the variance within identity that is captured by the term *selfing* proposed by McAdams (1988), which describes an “appropriation of...[personal] experience;” a continual integration of past and present selves with the anticipated or desired future selves (as cited in Ashmore & Jussim, 1997, p. 6).

The symbolic interactionist perspective of identity assumes that identity construction is continual and social, which allows for the repositioning of questions, assumptions, and explorations of traditionally static identities. This postulation is carried into the transnational framework, wherein classic containers of identity are deconstructed to better understand the fluidity, multiplicity, and complexity of identity in transnational spaces, which includes the concept of national identity.

Transnationalism is the theoretical framework used in this study. Transnationalism designs a space for the exploration of new abstractions of the world, “in which borders and boundaries of nation, culture, race, and gender need to be reconceptualized, blurred, challenged, and, potentially, eliminated” (Friedman & Schiltermandl, 2011), especially for those that have previously been assumed to have the indications of a stable identity. Transnationalism emphasizes the symbolic interactionist conception of identity wherein identity is conceived of as “social and variable” (p. 9) (Ashmore & Jussim, 1997), which aligns with the construct of national identity as one form of social identity and allows for multi-national identities as they are “not simply about our own senses of self, but whether or not we accept the claims of others” (McCrone, & Bechhofer, 2015, pp. 20-21).

In this section, the theoretical framework is presented in further detail. Context for the framework is provided within an abbreviated historical account, as well as how it served this study and why they were appropriate for this qualitative endeavor and the guiding research question.

Multiculturalism, Anti-multiculturalism, Cultural Relativism and Globalization

Multiculturalism has a spectrum of meaning within and across different academic and public spaces. One of the meanings is simply the coexistence of multiple cultures (Fieser, & Dowden, n.d.). This concept is not new and has several examples throughout the course of human history including Ancient Greece and the Ottoman Empire, and more recently, Canada and the United States (Fieser & Dowden, n.d.). In truth, many countries worldwide are culturally diverse, meaning that different groups of people within a single nation have distinct religions, languages, territories, or races. As all of these aspects can be features of different cultures, cultural diversity within a nation is common. The U.S., with its history as a nation of immigrants,

is no exception. The plurality of American identities (i.e. African-American, Chinese-American, Native-American, etc.) contrasts the idea of assimilation (Butera, 2001). Therefore, multiculturalism becomes more than just the coexistence of cultures, but social policy aimed to protect cultural diversity from a *melting-pot* sensation historically endorsed by national and local government policies (Courage, 2012; Fieser & Dowden, n.d.; Willinsky, 2012; Wright, 2012). Throughout the course of history, the social policy of multiculturalism has meant different things including: tolerance and diversity, anti-racism, inclusiveness, and social justice (Henry, 2012; Willinsky, 2012). According to Willinsky (2012) the latest transformation of multiculturalism has manifested within education and through international education initiatives.

Multiculturalism grew out of national movements for equity and social justice (Henry, 2012) and has come to address the problem of identity in pluralistic societies. As Wright et al. (2012) stated, “What counts for multiculturalism is the problem of identity and the accommodation of diversity---who am I and how do we live together...[Multiculturalism] focuses on struggles over identity---often more than one...and reminds us of the heterogeneity of identities, and challenges stereotypical reductionism” (p. 7). A contemporary conception of multiculturalism is presented by Grant and Chapman (2008):

Multiculturalism---seeks to promote the valuing of diversity and equal opportunity for all people through understanding of contributions and perspectives of people of different races, ethnicity, culture, language, religion, gender, sexual orientation, and physical disabilities. A multicultural curriculum provides a more comprehensive, accurate, intelligently honest view of reality; prepares all students to function in a multicultural society, and better meets the learning needs of all students (as cited in Henry, 2012, p. 48).

This is an understanding of multiculturalism that has been expanded throughout history prompting Wright's (2012) argument that "multiculturalism" is a floating signifier, indicating ever-shifting possibilities. Many scholars argue that multiculturalism is complicated, and that keeping it complicated and complex is its most positive attribute (Harreveld, 2012; Kymlicka, 2009; Ozdowski, 2004; Wright, 2008, 2012). Some refer to this as liberal multiculturalism including Kymlicka (2009):

It is not a single principle or policy, but an umbrella of highly group-differentiated approaches. And each of these approaches is itself multidimensional, incorporating economic, political, and cultural elements in different ways. Each has its own complex links to policies and practices of nation-building (as cited in Harreveld, 2012. p. 262).

It is the complexity that ensures debate and deters complacency and continues to encourage critical conversations regarding diversity and equity within society.

Multiculturalism rejects the assimilationist paradigm. Assimilation is a process by which people add unique social characteristics to the pot, but do not alter the mainstream values of society. Thus, in the melting pot we all become more like each other as mainstream values and expectations dominate and cultural distinctions are absorbed (Butera, 2001; Jucan, 2010). Such a model assumes that assimilation is a voluntary and inevitable phenomenon, which "preserves and, at the same time, exalts the superiority of the mainstream culture of the host country" (Butera, 2001, p. 3). Multiculturalism would favor integration over assimilation; a word often synonymous with acculturation, adaptation, inclusion, and incorporation, all of which imply reciprocal change, learning, and accommodation and presuppose no necessary assimilation to the dominant culture (Favell, 2005).

Multiculturalism's project of replacing assimilation with integration extends into education. Under assimilationist paradigms students were studied through an adjustment lens, which requires the student to adjust to the 'norms' of the host country (Marginson, 2014). In this model, the student is seen as deficient until he or she completes a period of acculturation, which inherently denotes cultural superiority (Marginson, 2014). Tange and Kastberg (2013) refer to this framework as the, "exclusive interpretation (i.e. the conventional understanding of international students as the net receivers of Euro-American wisdom)" (p.1). Tange and Kastberg (2013), Franken (2012) and Marginson (2014) are calling for a shift from the "adjustment," or "cultural fit," perspective to a transition perspective, where the personal experience, background, culture, and knowledge of an international student are considered and integrated to enhance the learning experience and make the academic information relevant as the student manages his or her own identity formation. Each of the aforementioned authors has a different name for this new framework: "inclusive approach" (Tange & Kastberg, 2013, p. 1), "re-situation" (Franken, 2012, p. 845), and "self-formation process" (Marginson, 2014, p. 6), but the message is the same. International students are not deficient, they bring valuable information and experience to the learning environment (Franken, 2012). Learning is not a one-way street by which the international students must absorb the norms of the host country, with nothing to reciprocate to an academic setting (Duffy et al., 2003). Instead, they can help create a setting of intercultural learning and awareness (Tange & Kastberg, 2013). International students are in a complex situation that requires consideration and integration of old and new identities (Marginson, 2014).

Multiculturalism is able to highlight the positive aspects of a philosophy of cultural pluralism, however the term, along with the sociopolitical issues and politics that surround the philosophy, can be limiting and problematic (Courage, 2012; Henry, 2012). The lack of a general

definition has made multiculturalism a problematic social movement (Henry, 2012). Teachers, administrations, politicians, states, and nations have continually re-defined the term to fit social, political, educational, and personal agendas. This manipulation of the word coupled with its less than ideal realization in most nations (Este, 2005; Lazreg, 2001; Nieto, 2009) has led to conservative backlash: *anti-multiculturalism* (Henry, 2012). This political development extends mainly from a conservative belief that multiculturalism opposes nationalism. Multiculturalism construed as the defense of a particular ethno-cultural (minority) identity over a dominant ethno-cultural identity leads to an adverse, defensive reaction (mainly by those in dominant positions). From this understanding, multiculturalism is seen as divisive (Schlesinger, Jr., 1992); some believe it erodes possibilities for coalitions (Gitlin, 1995); others argue that it promotes a *politics of resentment* (Henry, 2012; Hewitt, 2005; Hirsch, Jr., 1987), all of which threaten national cohesion, historically acceptable national identities, and nationalism itself (Hirsch, Jr., 1987; Schlesinger, Jr., 1992). This backlash concept exists in commentary such as, “The American way,” “America is a Christian nation,” “Learn English,” “Go back to where you came from,” “Make American great again,” or “America first” and fuel white resentment, xenophobia, and ethnocentrism, and promote Anglo-centric cultural imperialism (Henry, 2012). This menacing logic that multiculturalism is at odds with nationalism because it destroys a shared national identity results in anti-multiculturalism and the expectation of diverse peoples to assimilate to dominant values, practices, ideologies and beliefs (McLaren & Ryoo, 2012).

This Us vs. Them positionality taken by anti-multiculturalists is not adequately addressed by the multicultural movement itself and the contradictions between the ideology of multiculturalism and the implementations of multicultural policies and the reality of social progress raises questions regarding the limitations of multiculturalism. Many of those raising

questions also identify themselves as anti-multiculturalists, but for a very different reason. The issues this liberal group of anti-multiculturalists raise stem from multiculturalism's reduction of culture to something static (Shidmehr, 2012) and easily identifiable, and an overemphasis of culture (or a narrowmindedness of other aspects) in identity formation. Such anti-multiculturalists would contend that multiculturalism "continues to posit "difference" as something "others" bring to the nation, as something the nation can now "have" as it accepts, welcomes, integrates, tolerates or manages such others" (Arhmed, 2007, as cited in Henry, 2012, p. 42). They would argue that the emphasis on cultural characteristics of "others" causes erroneous and stereotypical representations of individuals and groups and can accentuate the Us vs. Them dichotomy of exclusion and discrimination that it is meant to reduce (Henry, 2012). Hsu's (2009) summarizes this argument in "The End of White America," arguing that we are so eager to be a post-racial society that we are not adequately considering or addressing the legacy of prejudice, privilege and injustice of our society's history. Inevitably, without careful consideration, the structural privilege and injustice remain and multiculturalism becomes a superficial, romantic philosophy. It becomes a rose-colored lens with which to consider future policy regarding inclusion, acceptance of diversity, and tolerance, while distancing the dark, damaging, and real political and social histories of the nation (Ramsey, Williams, & Vold, 2003; Willinsky, 2012). As Willinsky (2012) states it becomes a philosophy of "tolerating differences:"

Turning them [differences] into value-add for all parties, rather than recognizing that reinforcing differences based on group identification may not only exaggerate the concept of difference, [but] does not begin to deal with the root of the issue, namely that these differences originally took on significance and meaning within the assertion of privilege and power" (p. 19).

In addition to ignoring the historical power struggles and the structural aspects of discrimination this presentation of difference as positive also oversimplifies the concepts of identity and culture.

The over simplification of culture into distinct spheres is called *conservative multiculturalism* (McLaren & Ryoo, 2012), also known as *cultural relativism* (Crowder, 2008; Feuer, 1991; Marginson, 2014). It is considered to be a radical form of multiculturalism wherein all cultures are to be considered equally valid (Crowder, 2008; Feuer, 1991). The problem with this misunderstanding is that it assumes cultures are static and distinct, and that people's beliefs and values are solely products of their culture (Crowder, 2008). None of that is true, but this conservative multiculturalism is exactly what the conservative anti-multiculturalists use to make their point regarding a diluted national identity. If all cultures are equal and there are no universal morals, but each culture is distinct, then how can a shared American identity be constructed? Of course, this logic is flawed as it assumes culture to be static and distinct and does not allow for divergence from cultural norms. However, liberal anti-multiculturalists' critique is warranted because of the pervasive conservative understanding of multiculturalism. They argue that "multi-ethnic, multi-racial, [multi-national] identities are complicated and may bring about ambivalent identities" (Henry, 2012, p. 46) wherein individuals cannot be easily identified and defined to a particular cultural group (Henry, 2012; Willinsky, 2012). The differences among us are countless and the problem with multiculturalism is that it is preoccupied with categorizing the "other" (Henry, 2012; Willinsky, 2012). The multidimensionality of identities and experiences moves beyond what has become multiculturalism; education for and about the "other." "[People are] understanding "race" and cultural identifications in new ways and self-identifying in ways that require novel theories and practices in this transmigrational, transnational, globalized world" (Henry, 2012, p. 46).

Multiculturalism is losing its battle as a floating signifier as education becomes more globalized. Historically, multiculturalism has been a conceptual framework which presupposes the nation-state as a unit of examination; something Beck and Sznaider (2006) refer to as *methodological nationalism*. Multiculturalism has been forged with a national context framing the background (Wright, 2012). Willinsky (2012) agrees that the history of multiculturalism is as a social policy within a nation (albeit within multiple nations); “this very sense of the bound nation has led to the need for multiculturalism as a social policy” (p. 31). Some would argue (those that consider multiculturalism a floating signifier) that multiculturalism is turning away from the traditional nation-based approach and, while still considering the national important, is considering the effects of globalization and questioning the nation as a boundary of culture and identity.

Others disagree and are distancing themselves from multiculturalism as they call for something new because they foresee problematic limitations. They argue that multiculturalism is concerned with classifying people in order to enact a simple, concise multicultural education, what Harreveld (2012) refers to as *superficial multiculturalism* and McLaren and Ryoo (2012) call *conservative multiculturalism*. This categorizing and dividing of people based on nationality, race, ethnicity, location, politics, language, social status, sexual orientation, religion, etc. has created a culture of binaries in which the term multiculturalism now lives. Beck (2006) argues that because of these *either/or* distinctions multicultural education is an education of difference. While promoting tolerance, it is essentially education *for the other* or *about the other*. This led Beck (2006), among others, to cosmopolitanism. If multiculturalism is *either/or* cosmopolitanism is *both/and*. A cosmopolitan education affirms “the other” as both different and the same (Beck, 2006). It moves beyond binary categories and simplistic tolerance for others to

recognition of difference by “engag[ing] in “both/and” ways of valuing and interacting (Harreveld, 2012, p. 265). Cosmopolitanism, just as multiculturalism, considers integration of cultural diversity, but the concept of integration is nation-centric (Favell, 2005) and thus even if cosmopolitanism breaks free of the limitations branded to multiculturalism, it upholds a nation-centered view of society and identity development.

The nation-centered theories become problematic when considering multinational individuals, especially young international and transnational students whose national identities are multiple. For such individuals, identity is not only multidimensional in the sense of multiracial, multiethnic, multilingual, and multilayered in terms of social conditions (Henry, 2012), but also multinational and therefore increasingly multilayered in terms of both social and political conditions. As Willinsky (2012) notes:

We are already living within far wider jurisdictions than the nation state in both a cultural, as well as economic and legal sense. And what inspired advocates of multiculturalism to envision a more inclusive state, as a democratic right of participation, has now to be envisioned as a political culture operating on global as well as national terms (p. 32).

Those that recognize the “increasingly reduced cultural force of those national borders” (Willinsky, 2012, p. 32) are introducing *transnational public spheres* (Fraser, 2009).

Transnationalism

In the context of *International Education* there are many approaches to research with different concentrations that have been developed through the course of history as circumstances shift. As Dolby and Rahman (2008) outlined, a) *Comparative and International Education*, b) *Internationalization of Higher Education*, c) *International Schools*, d) *International Research on*

Teaching and Teacher Education, e) *Internationalization of K-12 Education*, and f) *Globalization of Education* (p. 676). Within each of these loosely categorized, often chronologically overlapping, research approaches there are distinct traditions (Dolby & Rahman, 2008).

Internationalization of K-12 Education is the sub-field of *International Education* “tied most closely to classroom practice” (Dolby & Rahman, 2008, p. 701), and it closely relates to the *Globalization of Education* in many aspects as it tries to answer the questions associated with educating the next generation of world citizens with global curricula in which there are four main research trajectories: peace education, multicultural education, human rights education, and environmental education. *International Research on Teaching and Teacher Education* focuses on “addressing shared, global problems in the teaching profession...and on developing research-based strategies to address these issues at the levels of policy and practice” (Dolby & Rahman, 2008, p. 695). The *Internationalization of Higher Education* and *International Schools* developed in the 18th century when higher education became a vital tool for colonialism as the European university model was imposed on colonial subjects (Dolby & Rahman, 2008). Following WWI, the fields of *Internationalization of Higher Education* and *International Schools* began to recognize the importance of promoting international peace and understanding. However post WWII, the U.S. and the Soviet Union used *Internationalization of Higher Education* as a “means of consolidating and expanding their spheres of influence” (Dolby & Rahman, 2008, p. 685), also making *International Research on Teaching and Teacher Education* and the closely related to the *Globalization of Education*.

Most of the sub-fields in *International Education* have occurred recently, but the roots of Comparative and International Education research extend to the early 1800s. Despite often being

combined into an umbrella term of *Comparative and International Education*, the two sub fields have very different research perspectives. French scholar, Marc-Antion Julien, proposed that research in education should be scientific, with standardized principles, practices, data collection, and analysis with which to compare different educational systems (Crossley & Watson, 2003). As Noah and Eckstein (1969) explain, it was the drive to create statistical information representative of educational systems that created a positivist outlook toward comparative education (as cited in Dolby & Rahman, 2008). Concurrently, Cesar Auguste Bassett, another French scholar, was interested in countering the narrow-minded, inward looking educational system that he believed existed in France. His remedy proposed that scholars should conduct research outside the country to provide new insights and perspectives to enhance the system in France (Dolby & Rahman, 2008). Research in comparative and international education becomes increasingly diverse in terms of theory, methodology, and focus, however, there is a primary distinction as Dolby and Rahman (2008) explain, “Comparativists have generally focused on systematic and positivist analysis of educational systems, internationalists have concentrated on examining national education systems within their political, cultural, social, and economic context” (p. 680).

Since the 1980s, most of the contemporary research in comparative and international education can be categorized into four general research categories (Dolby & Rahman, 2008). The first follows the traditional comparative paradigm of statistically measuring differences in educational systems across nations. A second trajectory follows the traditional international paradigm where research is focused on educational policy and practice within the context of a nation. A third approach focuses on the development of educational institutions in developing countries. The fourth trajectory concerns issues and questions of definitions, practices, and

theories; both within comparative and international education and the role this discipline has within the larger context of educational research. According to Dolby and Rahman (2008), within this fourth trajectory, recent work has begun to question the core premise of comparative and international education, that a nation state is a viable entity by which to compare, and examples of such works reevaluating this primary assumption include: Arnove & Torres (2007); Crossley & Tikly (2004); Crossley & Watson (2003); Crossley (1999); Cummings (1999); Epstein & Carroll (2005); Hoffman (1999); Marginson & Mollis (2001); Vulliamy (2004); Welch (2001); Wilson (1994). It is from this reconsideration of the importance of a nation-state in an increasingly globalized world that new theoretical and methodological paradigms have sprung, transnationalism being at the forefront.

Transnationalism, like multiculturalism, holds different meaning for different scholarly groups. At its simplest, it is “something that transcends nationalism, not limited by national boundaries of the concepts of what constitutes a ‘nation’” (Klages, 2012, p. 86). It defines activities practiced universally, therefore transcending traditional borders (Archer, 2011). In recent decades, transnationalism has developed as a field of study in anthropology, sociology, geography, economics, and political science, among others (Archer, 2011; Ley, 2009). Within the different disciplines, research has taken different forms with different agendas, but the term remains relatively new and is therefore in a continuous state of redefinition among researchers as they utilize it for their own purposes. One similar aspect across the many fields making use of the term, is that it differs from globalization, but has originated as a byproduct of the increasingly global economy and increased ease and accessibility to worldwide communication (Archer, 2011; Klages, 2012; Ley, 2009; Russ, 2013; Schiller et al., 1992). Briggs et al. (2008) explain that globalization implies many systems merging into one, whereas transnationalism directly

centers “difference, coalition, [and] misunderstanding” (p. 625). Transnationalism as a modern framework is removed from imperialistic globalization. They go as far as to say:

The concept of transnationalism has been regularly and vigorously abused as an ahistorical term implying that there were always nations to transverse, as never more than a celebration of neoliberal or corporate globalization, as just another Yankee imperialist assault on productive Third World nationalisms (Briggs et al., 2008, p. 627).

The conceptualization of transnationalism depends heavily upon the context of the researcher, but has become removed from the term globalization in its negative context as related to imperialism. Archer (2011) explores how a few of the more prominent fields use this new, popular term; revealing how it can have different conceptualizations, and at the same time move toward an established theoretical framework independent of globalization. Within sociology transnationalism is concerned with the “diversity of societies as a result of the increased movement of people across international boundaries” (p. 197). In anthropology, transnational studies are focused on the forms of cultural identity that exist and arise amidst the increased social diversity. In political science, transnationalism examines the transformation of the traditional relationships between bordered nation-states as the international transfer of goods, services, people, and ideas becomes increasingly common. Economists analyze how businesses function on an international level, the movement of goods, and global financial circulation. Finally, geographers consider transnationalism to have sub disciplines in economic, social, cultural, and political geography making their framework more holistic in perspective. Archer (2011) indicates that it is the geographic perspective that helps discern transnationalism from globalization wherein geographers “emphasize that what is really going on is not deterritorialization. But, rather, a more or less profound transformation in territorization as

human spatial relations increasingly take place across traditional international boundaries”

(p.198). It is this idea, that transnationalism is not the deterritorialization of existing states into a single state, but a redefining of traditional territories wherein the classic containers of identity are no longer practical for many people who are no longer contained in a single nation, culture, or society, that divorces transnationalism from globalization.

Proponents of transnationalism argue against using the boundary of a nation as a means by which to analyze education. Briggs et al. (2008) provide an analogy to gender in feminism to help explicate this concept:

We want to suggest that ‘transnationalism’ can do to the nation what gender did for sexed bodies: provide the conceptual acid that denaturalizes all their deployments, compelling us to acknowledge that the nation, like sex, is a thing contested, interrupted, and always shot through with contradiction (p. 627).

Clavin (2005) expands on this notion by emphasizing that transnationalism becomes difficult to designate because it is dependent on the fluidity of national, ethnic, and cultural categories.

Classifications made simple by the notion of nations become variable, flexible, and even indefinable. Due to the elusiveness of categories, statistical analysis typical of traditional comparative education becomes impossible and the contextual analysis of traditional international education within the borders of a nation is considered to be inadequate. Clavin (2005) states that, “Transnationalism...is first and foremost about people: the social space that they inhabit, the networks they form, and the ideas they exchange. The influence and character of these networks defy easy categorization” (p. 422). The essence of transnationalism is the human experience, which cannot be adequately represented statistically, and is no longer confined within the borders of a nation as “social life crosses, connects, underlies, alters, transcends, and

even transforms borders and boundaries, as well as the structures, processes, and agents ostensibly contained within them” (Khagram, 2012, p. 2037). The transnational experience cannot be captured using traditional comparative or international research paradigms, and a transnational context is anything but simple.

In addition to an ineffability of cultural, societal, and ethnic categories within a transnationalist framework, the interpretation of the meaning of “nation” adds to the complexity of the paradigm. According to Archer (2011), there are two main definitions of nation found in the literature. Nation 1 is defined as the “primordial view of nations” and considers the nation to be comprised from the instinct of humans to organize themselves by ethnic groups (p. 199). Whereas Nation 2 is established as ethnic groups are united in civic processes. The idea of Nation 1 holds that nationalism is constructed based on ethnic identity; thus, a nation is essentially “an ethnic group that has evolved state structures to govern itself” (Archer, 2011, p. 199). Therefore, the Nation 1 definition leaves no room for multicultural or transnational frameworks. However, Nation 2, despite being seemingly more open to multicultural or transnational possibilities, has historically been culturally destructive as the assumption of “assimilation...for the good of the nation” underscored the definition of nationalism (Archer, 2011, p. 198). Essentially, despite a multicultural nation, Nation 2 surrenders to the “melting pot” analogy of molding many into one, ensuring that a dominant culture defines the nation.

Since the 21st century, with the onset of globalization due to more efficient transportation and communication, social, cultural, economic, ethnic, and political relations no longer depend on spatial proximity, thereby making assimilation less necessary and the possibility of a proper Nation 2 existing, by moving away from the melting pot analogy and embracing multiculturalism. Simplistically, individuals can be described as having a positive or negative

view of transnationalism depending on how they define nationalism and the importance they place on term (Archer, 2011). Those who claim a Nation 1 definition, or even a melting pot version of Nation 2, as true, view transnationalism in a pessimistic light as they interpret it as detrimental to nationalism; a crisis of community and of national allegiance that will inevitably have negative consequences for the future of human relations (Archer, 2011). The optimistic position regarding transnationalism celebrates the diminished role of nationalism in constructing human relations and represents an ideal Nation 2 definition as Archer (2011) illustrates:

[Optimists] point to the increasing ability of people to relate on a global scale as a means to reduce mutual ignorance and antipathy. Such optimists point to what they call the increasing cosmopolitan nature of human existence emerging from the mutual recognition and performance of cultural difference... Transnationalism, by this view, is to be promoted and extended as a means of reorganizing our common human condition by way of cultural interlacing and mutual learning (p. 199).

Thus, controversy concerning the connotation of transnationalism exists due to the two camps, which are split by their understanding of nation and nationalism and how the transnational paradigm affects those constructs.

It is important to understand the differences between the terms nationality, nationalism and national identity, because, although they may be used as synonyms elsewhere, their distinction is pertinent to the discussion regarding the processes and relations that play an important role in the development of national identity in transnational space. Nationality and national identity are both used interchangeably with citizenship, however, nationality is the term most reflective of citizenship and is usually dependent on the location of birth. It is important to note however, that individuals can have dual-citizenship, which is not solely dependent on birth,

therefore nationality tends to refer to the legal status of belonging to a nation-state. While this descriptor can be multiple, it is legally determined. From a functionalist perspective, this coincides with an understanding of national identity. Smith (1991) describes “the fundamental features of national identity...[as] an historic territory or homeland; common myths and historic memories; a common, mass public culture; common legal rights and duties; [and] a common economy with territorial mobility for its members (p.14). He then defines the nation as a “named human population” (p.14) sharing the aforementioned qualities. Thus, with such a perspective, the nation is indivisible from national identity. On the other end of the spectrum concerning national identity are rejectionists such as Brubaker and Cooper (2000) who dismiss the entire concept of national identity arguing that on the one hand it is a false consciousness based on assumptions of homogeneity and on the other hand it is an applied ontological status that is accepted uncritically; explaining everything and nothing (McCrone & Bechhofer, 2015). Both understandings derive from and are perpetuated within nationalism and multiculturalism as methodological nationalism, whereas recent migration patterns and issues of globalization question assumptions made within these perspectives and the rise of transnationalism allows such positions to be challenged. As McCrone and Bechhofer (2015) have acknowledged: “We live in a situation where ‘national identity’ and ‘citizenship’ are not commensurate with each other...[because] all forms of social identity involve an ‘other’, whether explicitly or implicitly...national identity is not a straightforward matter” (pp. 2-9). By this he is referring to the nature of identity as a social structure making the formation and destruction of relationships, “intergroup processes and relations,” (Ashmore & Jussim, 1997, p. 12) and reproduction of societies explicable (Ashmore & Jussim, 1997; Reynolds & Herman-Kinney, 2003; Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

Nationalism as an ideology relates to the functionalist definition of national identity and is “extended to include a specific language, sentiment and symbolism” (Smith, 1991, p.vii). It is an ideology centering on difference, promoting patriotism, and in its extreme form it can elevate perceived national and thereby territorial, historic, cultural, economic, and linguistic superiority. It is the movement hinged on nationality as the important indicator of belonging within the borders of a nation. Therefore, it is also bound to constructs of the nation as a strict category.

From a transnational perspective, the argument Smith (1991) presents that “national identity is a mechanism for giving people a sense of individual and collective worth, without which they cannot function [and] a powerful means of defining and locating individual selves in the world, through the prism of the collective personality and its distinctive culture” (10-17) remains, however there is a distinction between the nation and national identity, which removes the boundary of the nation and embraces the messy, social nature of national identity as it relates to movement and experience across national borders. It repudiates the use of national identity as a noun or a fixed badge, but also refuses to dismiss the relevancy of group identity.

Between these ideas, the middle ground in this range of understanding, is where the concept of national identity can be regarded as “transactional and situationally flexible” (Jenkins, 2008, p. 124). As McCrone and Bechhofer (2015) wrote, “There is such a thing as society, and we constitute and create it” (p. 19), thus we cannot separate the individual from the social, which is a notion referred to as the *contextual individual* (Tamir, 1993, p. 33). Humans are social individuals and as MacCormick (1996) points out, “We are the persons we came to be in the social settings and contexts in which we find ourselves, and whatever sense we have of our identity and character as persons reflects our interaction with significant others in our social setting” (p. 163). There are two points to consider from this observation. The first is that with the

onset of globalization due to technological and economical advances, the social settings that we find ourselves in often span across the borders of nations. The second is that national identity is a two-way street. McCrone and Bechhofer (2015) illustrate this point by commenting that it “involve[s] a sense of them as well as a sense of us. It involves thinking of oneself as not being someone, as much as being someone; that is, difference as well as similarity” (p. 17). This is like the concentration of difference within nationalism except that understanding national identity as transnational refashions the concept of in-group/out-group as constrained by nationality and changes the dynamics of social relations. It also indicates an increased transactional aspect of national identity wherein we play certain parts the way we want to present self, within certain constraints, however it is not simply our own sense of self that fashions national identity, but the processes and relations that restrict us and “whether or not we accept the claims of others” (McCrone & Bechhofer, 2015, p. 21).

Transnationalism forces scholars to reposition questions of identity in transnational, rather than national, terms thereby forcing reevaluation of the entrenched ways of making meaning (Russ, 2013). According to Khagram (2012) there are five tenets of transnationalism: empirical, methodological, public, philosophical, and theoretical. Empirical transnationalism quantifies, maps, and describes the dynamics of transnational phenomena. Work in the empirical premise does not “problematize” the notion of the nation or defined borders, but focuses on phenomena that exist in spite of such traditional borders (Khagram, 2012, p. 2037).

Methodological transnationalism provides a venue for the reclassification of existing data collected with a national or international viewpoint, effectively applying a transnational framework to data that was once restricted by borders. Researchers may also construct new methodologies to better capture the “transnational realities” (Khagram, 2012, p. 2038). While

public transnationalism aims to “prescriptively de-center the ‘normalcy’ of rigidly bounded and/or bordered social or cultural units” (p. 2039). Philosophical transnationalism begins with the ontological assumption that trans-organizational reality is the norm rather than the exception (p. 2038). An ontological position not represented in this study. This research was framed with a constructivist ontological assumption wherein reality is relative and highly contextualized (Flick, 2009), one of the possible contexts being a transnational perspective.

Finally, the fifth tenet, theoretical transnationalism, is the theoretical framework guiding this study. As Khagram (2012) describes:

Theoretical Transnationalism, formulates explanations, generates predictions and/or crafts interpretations that parallel, complement, replace, or transform existing theoretical frameworks and accounts. In some cases, these transnational theories supplement conventional ones by identifying and explaining different sets and dynamics. In others, transnational accounts elucidate some aspects of forms and processes and add to what traditional theories offer. Transnational theories may also compete with and better explicate phenomena and dynamics that have already been conceptualized in local, national, comparative-national, regional, international, global, or otherwise societally or organizationally bounded terms. Finally, transnational accounts might be integrated with conventional explanations to form hybrid theories (p. 2038).

Within this explanation of theoretical transnationalism, it eloquently describes how transnationalism, as a theory, can be used to re-conceptualize national identity development, advancing it from stable within the nation-bound theory of multiculturalism to multiple and dynamic, by highlighting processes in transnational space.

Research Design

This section presents the methodological framework, methodology, as well as methods of inquiry and analysis for this study. The framework, methodology and methods were precisely selected subsequent to the formation of the research questions with careful consideration as to the purpose of this study, which is to learn about the relations and processes regarding national identity development, question the multiculturalist assumption of stable national identities, and explore the conceptualization of national identity and nationalism from a transnational perspective through the retellings of personal experience with an informant and the subsequent construction of an autoethnographic narrative. The research question previously presented is reiterated and further context regarding the participant and setting are also presented.

The methodology used was critical autoethnography as informed by the methodological framework of narrative inquiry. Narrative inquiry is a broad, meta-level framework that has its roots in the humanities as narratology (Browning, 2009; Chase, 2005; Kim, 2016). It assumes that individual interpretation of experience and construction of meaning is through storied accounts of the past and present (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006; Kim, 2012, 2016). Narrative inquirers “bracket themselves in to an inquiry,” (p. 480) giving an account, as well as questioning their role and identity in relation to the informant’s (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006).

A critical autoethnography is one methodology within the framework of narrative inquiry. *Autoethnography* turns the ethnographic lens inward while maintaining the outward gaze of ethnography (Denzin, 1997), similarly to narrative inquirers as bracketed within the inquiry. It connects the personal, lived experience with the greater social context, making it simultaneously a method of personal and cultural critique (Boylorn & Orbe, 2014). The aspect of *critical*, refers to the examination of social constructs, processes and relations within the cultural storied

accounts. A critical analysis is not only considering the sociocultural structure bounding and forming narrative, but is also concerned with investigating and challenging structures of power and injustice.

Narrative inquiry as a methodological framework informs not only the methodology chosen to align with the research question and purpose, but also the methods of inquiry and analysis. In line with the exploration of social constructs through dialogically created narrative, the methods of inquiry used are *interactive interviewing* (Ellis, 2004; Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011) and *writing as inquiry* (Richardson, 1994). Interactive interviewing consists of multiple *conversation style* (Pederson, 2013) interviews between researcher and informant wherein the researcher is also participant by contributing expertise and personal experience to the conversation, and the context of the research is focused around the retellings resulting from the interaction (Ellis, 2004). Writing as inquiry contends that through writing we can explore the self and develop personal subjectivities and identities (Richardson, 1994), corresponding to the questioning of roles and identities within a bracket account of narrative inquiry. Writing is a way of retelling, and with each retelling there is new emphasis, new questioning, and new knowledge construction. Writing as a method of inquiry took the form of writing around interview transcripts and categories to develop creative nonfiction stories to contribute to the autoethnography.

The method of analysis is narrative analysis. Narrative analysis was first a response to the lack of human stories in social science in the 1960s. It focuses on stories of the individual; highlighting personal experience within culture and society (Chase, 2005; Kim, 2016). This study employed two of Reissman's (2008) four approaches to narrative analysis, namely *thematic analysis* and *dialogic/performance analysis*. Thematic analysis utilizes qualitative coding

methods to categorize accounts or aspects of accounts in narrative. Dialogic/performance analysis is an interpretive approach to interrogate how talk among speakers is dialogically produced and performed as narrative. In the context of this study it is used as a process to gain perspective of my experience and nationality by using an informant to construct retellings to inform the autoethnography. Finally, just as writing is a method of inquiry it is also a method of analysis. Constructing the narrative, is in itself, a form of analysis (Richardson, 1994).

Appropriateness of Qualitative Research Design

It is noted by Strauss (1990) that social interactions and processes are the foundation from which qualitative inquiry sprang, they are at the center of the qualitative method. As the purpose of this research was to consider the relations and processes of teaching and learning regarding national identity development and concepts of nationalism, question the multiculturalist assumption of stable national identities, and explore the conceptualization of nationalism and national identity spaces from a transnational perspective, it is fitting that this work be conducted in a qualitative fashion. A qualitative focus allows for a larger, or perhaps different, perspective than that which is achieved by accumulation of statistics (Caulley, 2008). It also enables a work to be potentially much more far reaching and impactful as it is accessible; as Richardson (1994) said, “It seems foolish at best, and narcissistic and wholly self-absorbed at worst, to spend months or years doing research that ends up not being read and not making a difference to anything but the author's career” (p. 517). Being that the purpose of this work was to engage an international audience in a complex conversation regarding the future of education in our increasingly globalized world, with careful consideration of cultural reference frames regarding the purposes and processes of education, linguistic and societal differences, and a history of western imperial education and colonialism, it must appeal to a large social audience

beyond academic educational experts, engaging the general public in areas related to transnationalism, globalization, multiculturalism, and other important aspects of education that are relevant in U.S. classrooms as well as in greater educational spheres that extend beyond our national borders.

Nontraditional Dissertation

By examining the original purpose of a dissertation, it is not difficult to make arguments against what has become the *traditional dissertation*. Historically, the dissertation has alternated between two distinct purposes, an "original and significant contribution to knowledge" and a "training instrument" (Berelson, 1960, p. 173). The contemporary purpose of a dissertation is a combination of these two intentions (Duke & Beck, 1999). However, in a traditional form the dissertation fails to achieve either in the field of education (Archbald, 2008; Duke & Beck, 1999).

It is important to understand that the traditional dissertation format was originally adopted from Germany in the 19th century and was used to train scholars in the scientific method (Duke & Beck, 1999). Essentially, the dissertation has not changed in over 200 years. Its form, five chapters including the introduction, literature review, methodology, results, and conclusions, is reflective of the scientific method and not necessarily generalizable or conducive to the qualitative nature and complexity of humanities-oriented social science research (Archbald, 2008; Duke & Beck, 1999). This paradoxical transposing of the traditional dissertation in educational research is noted by one of education's most prominent associations, the American Educational Research Association:

Woven into the fabric of humanities-oriented research in education, as in humanities-oriented research more generally, are various forms of criticism intended to problematize

unrecognized assumptions, implications, and consequences of various kinds of educational practice, policy, and research, as well as to challenge what these approaches take for granted as beyond questioning. In this way, humanities-oriented research in education is often intended to foster dissonance and discomfort with conventional practice and, in some cases, to suggest alternatives. A prominent feature of humanities-oriented research in education is its use of interpretive methods, broadly construed, which investigate the history, meanings, beliefs, values, and discourses that human beings employ in the production of social life (AERA, 2009, p. 482).

If education, as a field, has conceded that humanities-oriented research in education is distinct and divergent from research in the physical sciences due to the complex nature of the issues with multiple causes, interpretations, perspectives, and solutions, as well as diverse expectations of outcomes and utilization of interpretative methods, then it is logical that the format of the dissertation should also be authentic to the research (Archbald, 2008).

The dissertation is immutable and thus has been analyzed as and considered to be a genre (Duke & Beck, 1999). In classical terms the dissertation is a genre because of its adherence to particular form and content as a five-chapter monograph. Dissertations provide expectations for readers, models for writers, are written with a clear motive, and stringently adhere to contextual demands, all of which satisfy the definition of genre. However, it is a problematic genre with a lack of generalizability, as well as limited audience and dissemination (Duke & Beck, 1999). In considering these problems of the dissertation as a genre neither original purpose, a contribution of original and significant knowledge nor training, is adeptly satisfied by a traditional dissertation in humanities-oriented educational research.

The two main issues with the dissertation as a genre (a lack of generalizability and limited audience and dissemination) are directly related to the two original purposes of the dissertation and provide further evidence that a dissertation in its traditional format is not necessarily appropriate in humanities-oriented research in education. The first purpose of the dissertation is to contribute original and significant knowledge, which is obstructed by the lack of generalizability of the genre. The lack of generalizability of the form and function of the traditional dissertation inherently limits research and knowledge production. The qualitative nature of humanities-oriented research cannot be regulated by the scientific method, but the traditional dissertation adheres to this way of thinking, researching, and producing knowledge.

In addition to the mismatch of the dissertation format with qualitative research agendas, its limited audience and dissemination provide additional reasoning for the development and implementation of non-traditional dissertation formats. Issues in humanities-oriented research problems are social, dynamic, complex, and ill structured, and significant contributions to knowledge must be located in a larger social sphere than academia. The lack of audience and dissemination of most dissertations, due to the inaccessible and lengthy format, hinders the purpose of the dissertation as a contribution of significant knowledge. Dissertations are rarely published, and almost never in their original form; Ph.D. recipients spend years reformatting their writing for academic outlets and larger audiences in order to make contributions to the field (Archbald, 2008). As Duke & Beck (1999) pointed out, “A more authentic rhetorical situation for the dissertation would allow it to be read and evaluated by a wider audience than its current limited distribution permits” (p. 32). The intellectual leaders of the future should be expected to produce relevant, original, scholarly work that contributes to their field, unrestricted by a narrow form of research erroneously applied outside of the natural sciences that is ineffectual as a means

of contributing and transmitting knowledge (Archbald, 2008; Duke & Beck, 1999), and fails to benefit a larger community (Archbald, 2008).

The second purpose of the dissertation is training. The dissertation should be meaningful preparation for the Ph.D. student. Yet, dissertations continue to reflect the narrow form and content of traditional formats regardless of student intentions and professional career goals (Adams & White, 1994; Archbald, 2008, 2010; Nelson & Coorough, 1994). The traditional dissertation is considered poor training for Ph.D. students (Halstead, 1988) because it isolates scholarship from practice (Archbald, 2008) and is ill suited in training of the communicative aspects of educational research (Duke & Beck, 1999). Not only does a traditional, five-chapter dissertation lack generalizability due its assumption of research as the scientific method, it also lacks generalizability for the writer. In this sense, a person only writes one dissertation in a lifetime (unless receiving multiple doctorates) and its highly specific form and function inherently limits audience and dissemination, thereby isolating scholarship from practice (Duke & Beck, 1999). The monograph form of the dissertation does not adequately prepare students because it does not train students in the communicative aspects of educational research and leadership.

Recognition of these critical insufficiencies advances the question from should a new dissertation model be utilized in the social sciences to “how can we maximize the effectiveness of the new thesis model as a significant, rigorous, and durable learning experience for our students and a productive and practical initiative” (Archbald, 2010). However, I also concede that the traditional dissertation has merit. According to Archbald's (2008) analysis of the literature, there are four qualities that all dissertations, regardless of field, should exhibit: *developmental efficacy, community benefit, intellectual stewardship of doctoral values, and*

distinctiveness of design. The dissertation in social sciences and humanities needs to be refashioned to appropriately reflect the problems and research in such fields while maintaining these four qualities scholarly work.

Dissertations should have *developmental efficacy*, which is the training element of the original purpose of the dissertation. However, as previously mentioned, the developmental efficacy of the traditional dissertation in the social sciences is inadequate as it fails to integrate scholarship with practice, an essential aspect of humanities-oriented research. It is also a poor tool for the development of communicative aspects of educational research and the interdisciplinary nature of audiences.

The second universal quality of dissertations according to Archbald (2008) is *community benefit*. Many scholars agree that though the process of a dissertation is training for the dissertator, the product should benefit a larger community (Archbald, 2008; Berelson, 1960; Duke & Beck, 1999; C. M. Golde & Dore, 2001; Isaac, Quinlan, & Walker, 1992; Nyquist, 2002; O'Brien, 1995; Richardson, 2003). This correlates with the other original purpose of a dissertation, which is to contribute original and significant knowledge. According to Archbald (2008) the dissertation should “yield new scholarly knowledge,” however, the *community benefit* perspective contends that the traditional focus on scientific advancement is unnecessarily narrow and restrictive (Archbald, 2008; Boyer, 1990; Braxton, 2005; Bridges & Hallinger, 1995; Malen & Prestine, 2005; Riehl, Larson, Short, & Reitzug, 2000) and argues that non-traditional dissertations “can benefit communities of readers beyond university-based academics and scientists” (Archbald, 2008, p. 723).

Golde, Bueschel, Jones, and Walkern (2006) outlined the purpose of doctoral education as developing scholars to be “entrusted with the vigor, quality, and integrity of the field” (p. 2),

as previously mentioned, in accordance with this idea, Archbald (2008) identifies *intellectual stewardship of doctoral values* as the third quality of dissertation work. He distinguishes critical thinking, disciplined inquiry and argumentation, intellectual reflection and curiosity, and competence for composition as essential capacities for Ph.D. students to master, communicate and preserve.

The fourth and final quality is *distinctiveness of design*. By this Archbald (2008) means that the design of the dissertation must serve the other functions of the dissertation: developmental efficacy, community benefit, and stewardship of doctoral values. Thus, the design should be produced and adapted for different interests, purposes, and intended audiences. However, no matter the format of the product, the dissertation process and product must exhibit the stewardship of values such as critical thinking, disciplined inquiry, intellectual curiosity, and reflection.

This is not an argument for a change to the traditional values. In fact, Archbald (2008) and Duke and Beck (1999) argue for both the importance of these qualities, and the necessity for non-traditional dissertations in upholding them in the social sciences. By allowing generalizability of the format of scholarly work the dissertation can become meaningful for the student as a process and a relevant contribution to the field as an outcome. It promotes critical questioning by the student of how to best structure the dissertation to meet the intended purposes of the work. It compels students to be autonomous and active in their learning as they consider the purpose of their work, the intended audience, realistic avenues for dissemination, if the format is appropriate for the intended audience and methods of dissemination, as well as the research and writing styles that are of interest and relevant for the type of work they will be

expected to do throughout their career (Archbald, 2008; Duke & Beck, 1999). Consider the purpose of doctoral education as Golde et al. (2006) do:

The purpose of doctoral education, taken broadly, is to educate and prepare those who can be entrusted with the vigor, quality, and integrity of the field. This person is a scholar first and foremost, in the fullest sense of the term— someone who will creatively generate new knowledge, critically conserve valuable and useful ideas, and responsibly transform those understandings through writing, teaching, and application (p. 2).

The narrow form and function of the traditional dissertation does not necessarily train scholars as creative generators of new knowledge or as transmitters of valuable ideas and understandings as previously discussed. A more authentic dissertation in the social sciences, including education, would be a more appropriate choice if it gave the student agency in constructing a dissertation with multiple and often ill-structured problems, as opposed to a single hypothesis, and in exploring ways of substantiating problems from varying perspectives, as opposed to defining a narrow hypothesis, and in utilizing interpretive research and analysis methods, as opposed to the assumed objective role of the researcher when using the scientific method, and in deciding an appropriate form for a particular audience and strategy for dissemination, as opposed to “conform[ing] to expectations concerning the format and exposition of scholarship” (Archbald, 2008).

Setting: A Brief History of the Marshall Islands

As this study explored the nature of national identity in transnational space the setting was a Kwajalein Atoll in the Republic of the Marshall Islands. The Marshall Islands is a sovereign nation that was once a territory of the United States, and continues to maintain military and economic ties with the U.S. It lies just north of the equator in the middle of the Pacific

Ocean and consists of 29 atolls comprised of 1,225 islands and islets across 750,000 square miles of ocean (Embassy of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, 2015d). The educational system in the Marshall Islands has recently been reinvigorated and many of the changes made in the K-12 sphere have been modeled after trends in the U.S. (Embassy of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, 2015c). However, grades nine through twelve are not considered part of compulsory education and the majority of Marshallese students only complete eighth grade due to the extreme costs, both socially and economically, of relocation to one of the few high schools among the low-lying islands (Embassy of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, 2015c). The Compact of Free Association allows Marshallese citizens access to the U.S. for work and educational purposes. Similarly, it allows the US to maintain two Army installations on the largest of the atolls, Kwajalein. Due to this Compact, subsequent a long history between the two nations, the American presence and influence within the Marshall Islands, particularly on Kwajalein, is substantial and greatly effects the daily lives of natives.

Transnationalism implies a reconceptualization of borders. It dictates that we consider relationships, identities, and processes as intertwined networks across borders, to the extent that the borders of nations become inconsequential. The Republic of the Marshall Islands provides a unique glance at what it means to be transnational because of its long, complex and often obscured history with the U.S. This complicated history between two nations, as well as the region's history of occupation renders it an interesting and dynamic case for transnationalism.

The most accepted theory of migration places early Marshallese people on the low-lying South Pacific atolls roughly 5,000 years ago (Barker, 2004; Simon, 1997). Initial settlers were possibly from Southeast Asia according to similar traits in the linguistic record (Howe, Kiste, & Lal, 1994). However, little evidence of early life on the islands exists because of the delicate

nature of local resources. Durable elements that can stand the test of time, such as stone, clay, or metal are nonexistent. Instead, coral, palm fronds, and sea shells, items much more vulnerable to damage and decomposition, were used to fashion the tools of life. Not much was made to last and much of what might have weathered the wind, rain and sun was probably lost to the sea, a permanent disappearing act leaving behind no trace of clues or history for the future archeologists.

Modern history is easier to trace. The Republic of the Marshall Islands is a recently sovereign nation that was once a U.S. trust territory. Previously occupied by Japan, before them the Germans, and before them the Spanish. Its namesake, British captain John Marshall, *discovered* the islands in 1788, a mere two hundred and fifty-nine years after the Spanish had begun using the islands to support long voyages and thousands of years after the Marshallese had traveled within and lived upon the low-lying atolls in the South Pacific (Barker, 2004; Simon, 1997).

The Spanish rule of the Marshall Islands began officially with the Treaty of Tordesillas in 1594. First recorded contact between Westerners and the Marshallese people was in 1529, but the contact was minimal and usually consisted of seafarers stopping to trade for supplies on long journeys. During Spanish rule, the Marshall Islands appeared on no Western maps of the world, and were almost certainly unknown to the rest of global inhabitants (Barker, 2004).

Centuries later, after the voyage of John Marshall, the islands began appearing on Western maps. The location of the islands made it a convenient stop for transpacific ships, and shortly thereafter American Protestant missionaries arrived and forever shifted society of the islands (Barker, 2004). Christianity was to bring an uncivilized people into the light of the Western world. Marshallese were to be convinced that their traditional clothing was immodest.

Analogous to original sin being introduced to the Garden of Eden, concepts of shame, modesty, and indecency were transformed. Not all Marshallese took kindly to the imposition of missionaries; many island tribes fought off and killed many missionaries, but in the end, Christianity murdered almost all trace of the polytheistic religion of the island nation (Barker, 2004).

While Christian missionaries destroyed the religious aspect of Marshallese culture, the Germans exploited the islands for economic gain. German rule was indirect as their main interest was control of trade operations (Barker, 2004). However, the introduction of a Western economy through trade was in direct contradiction to the Marshallese way of life. Within and across islands, the Marshallese worked together to use and preserve their limited natural resources and to sustain life. The introduction of money and economic power with outsiders destroyed much of this sense of collectivism and thrust them into a global economy for which they were unprepared and readily abused (Barker, 2004).

German oversight of the islands carried on for decades until the Japanese captured the islands during World War I. Although Germany can be blamed for the downturn of “communal self-sufficiency and family [and the shift] to individual income generation” (Barker, 2004, p. 17), Japan can be blamed for effacing much of the history, culture, and independence of the Marshallese people. Japan came to the islands with clear imperialist objectives: “economic development and exploitation, colonization for Japanese emigration, integration with Japan, and militarization” (U.S. Department of Interior, 1987). During the onset of military occupation before World War II, the new Japanese regime effectively isolated the islands from the outside world. Japan declared the islands a closed military area, controlled all travel into and out of the restricted zone, and built schools to educate Marshallese in Japanese culture and language

(Barker, 2004). The traditional government structure of the Marshall Islands, a complicated construct of multiple royal bloodlines and varying levels of royalty, all while maintaining a socialist perspective representing something closer to communism than capitalism, was rendered nonexistent, as all Marshallese became second-class citizens to their Japanese rulers (Barker, 2004).

Even still, the worst of what happened to the Marshallese transpired at the inception of U.S. involvement. The Japanese island territory was recognized as a strategic position during World War II. When the U.S. entered the war, one of their main objectives was to gain control of the tactical Pacific position. In an effort to achieve control of the islands, the U.S. cut off all food and supply ships to the Marshall Islands. Unfortunately, this meant not only starving the Japanese, but also the Marshallese (Barker, 2004). Food and supplies became extremely limited as the U.S. Navy prevented any shipments to the desolate coral atolls on which not much food could grow. Japanese began hoarding all resources for themselves and beat, hung and beheaded Marshallese for attempting to pick coconuts from their own trees (Barker, 2004). These tiny specks of land in the middle of the Pacific became the site of a barbarous, blood-soaked, and merciless conflict between the Japanese and American governments. Marshallese people were caught in the middle.

After starving many Japanese soldiers and natives alike, the U.S. bombed entire islands with no regard for Marshallese villages or lives. This infernal bombardment strategy defeated Japan and won the U.S. an advantageous wartime location in the Pacific in 1944 (Barker, 2004; Simon, 1997). Shortly after, the battle in the Pacific ended, as did the war, and despite information having been received by the U.S. government that Japan was to surrender (recently declassified documents cited in Alperovitz et al., 1996), the U.S. carried out their plans to drop

two atomic weapons. Hiroshima and Nagasaki are considered by many to be the first unethical and unnecessary use of nuclear weapons. This legacy of *testing* would continue in the Marshall Islands.

While the islands were under the control of the U.S. Navy, Marshallese leaders were asked if the U.S. could perform nuclear tests. It was framed as a matter of life and death, and it was insisted that America needed their nation to conduct nuclear testing in order to “learn how to use it for the good of all mankind and to end all wars” (Weisgall 1994:107, as cited in Barker, 2004, p. 19). Navy Commodore Ben H. Wyatt proceeded to ask, “Would Juda and his people be willing to sacrifice their island for the welfare of all men” (Weisgall 1994:107, as cited in Barker, 2004, p. 19)? Juda, the Marshallese *Iroij*, or chief of Bikini Atoll, chose to lend his island to the allies who had just liberated them from Japanese rule and promised to bring world peace. Never mind the lack of accurate interpretation and legal representation or the intended manipulation of the Iroij and his people by the Navy, the U.S. had God on its side and would use weapons of mass destruction to ring in an era of world peace, right after an era of cancer, deformities, sickness and death from radiation exposure.

In 1946, Operation Crossroads detonated two bombs on Bikini after evacuating Bikinians from their home island (Brown, 2013; Niedenthal, 1997; Simon, 1997). In 1947, the UN placed the Marshall Islands in a trusteeship with the United States. The Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands was designated a strategic territory and the U.S. used this title to justify closed military operations and the detonation of 67 atomic and thermonuclear bombs despite being charged with the responsibility “to promote the health and well-being of the citizens” (Barker, 2004, p. 20) and “to protect the inhabitants against the loss of their land and resources” (UN Trusteeship Council, 1954).

The U.S. detonated 108,496 kilotons, in the course of twelve years, a total yield over 7,200 times more powerful than the atomic weapons dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki (Embassy of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, 2015e). The BRAVO Test alone was a 15-megaton hydrogen bomb, which was 1,000 times larger than the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima. It was detonated in Bikini on March 1st 1954 (Brown, 2013; Embassy of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, 2015e; Niedenthal, 1997; Simon, 1997).

In 1983, the Marshall Islands signed a Compact of Free Association, which granted the island nation independence in 1986. However, although a sovereign nation, the Marshall Islands conduct all foreign relations under the terms of the Compact. The Compact also assigns all responsibility for security and defense of the islands to the U.S. and the Marshallese government is restricted from acting in a manner that would impede or oppose these responsibilities. The United States and the Marshall Islands have full diplomatic relations, therefore Marshallese citizens may work and study inside the U.S without a visa, and join the U.S. military (U.S. Department of State, 2014; Underwood, 2003).

The U.S. and RMI have become intertwined in issues related to education, economics, democracy, and military. The Education Act of 1991 launched an era, that continues to this day, of expectations, standards, and priorities such as highly qualified teachers, standardized testing, and early childhood education that are modeled after recent movements in the U.S (Embassy of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, 2015c; Lane & de Brum-Abraham, 2005). The mainstays of the economy for the nation is the assistance and lease payments for the use of Kwajalein Atoll as a U.S. military base and government employment (Central Intelligence Agency, 2017; Embassy of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, 2015b; Simon, 1997; U.S. Department of State, 2014). The Marshall Islands maintains much from its original clan culture system of land

ownership, but officially became a democracy in 1986 upon gaining independence; a presidential republic paralleling the old system thereby maintaining foundational power structures among Iroij (chief), Aļap (clan head), and Rijerbal (workers) (Barker, 2004; Brown, 2013; Embassy of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, 2015a; Hess, 2007; U.S. Department of State, 2014, 2015). Over 60 years of U.S. military control has resulted in the relocation of Kwajalein natives from 93 islands to two locations, primarily Ebeye, also known as the slum of the Pacific, and a small number to Enniburr. With Army bases at both the north and south ends of the atoll, and use of the lagoon as a missile testing range, mobility is restricted and the rights and responsibilities surrounding land ownership and clan culture have been upended.

Narrative Inquiry as a Methodological Framework

The methodological framework for this qualitative endeavor is narrative inquiry. Narrative inquiry is the study of experience as story (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin & Huber, 2002; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, 2006; Kim, 2016). It is the process and product of research wherein narratives (stories) become the main source of data and the researcher's interpretation (analysis) is the story told (product) (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006; Kim, 2016; Kramp, 2004; Wortham, 2001). Polkinghorne (1995) illustrates the general argument for narrative inquiry in qualitative research:

Interest [in narrative inquiry] is merited because narrative is the linguistic form uniquely suited for displaying human existence as situated action. Narrative descriptions exhibit human activity as purposeful engagement in the world. Narrative is the type of discourse composition that draws together diverse events, happenings, and actions of human lives into thematically unified goal-directed processes (p. 5).

Connelly and Clandinin (1990), expand by stating, “The study of narrative is the study of the ways humans experience the world” (p. 2). Thus, narrative inquiry serves as an appropriate methodological framework because it is not limited by national boundaries, and is able to address the complexities of human relationships, as well as the ongoing process of identity formation. It is a method focused on the human experience with a holistic quality (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Narrative inquiry is concerned with the personal story and simultaneously with the social story (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006; Kim, 2006, 2016).

Connelly and Clandinin (2006) describe three commonplaces that when considered simultaneously, define narrative inquiry and set it apart from qualitative research in general. These three commonplaces are: temporality, sociality, and place. Temporality refers to understanding and presenting the research as “in temporal transition” (p. 479), thereby acknowledging and describing participants as having a past, present, and future. Sociality refers to a researcher’s ability to consider how personal narratives can speak to social conditions. It is by relating individual narratives to the larger issues in societies that the narrative inquirer can answer the question, “So what?” The third commonplace defined is place. To a narrative inquirer, place provides boundaries for narratives. The physical place of a narrative impacts the personal and social aspects of the study. These three commonplaces become starting points for a narrative inquirer.

There are other considerations to make in narrative research expanded on by Connelly and Clandinin (2006) and related to the three common places, these include: (1). Imagining a lifespace. Using imagination as a researcher to consider all aspects within an ever-changing space. (2). Living and telling as starting points for collecting field texts. Examining both “life as lived in the past (telling) and life as it unfolds (living)” (p. 482), with temporality in mind and to

find where the two perspectives can complement each other. (3). Defining and balancing the common places. Simultaneously imagining a whole changing lifespace and managing it as researchable components. (4). Investment of the self in the inquiry. “In designing a narrative inquiry researchers need to deliberately imagine themselves as part of the inquiry” (p. 482). (5). Relationships. The nature of narrative inquiry generally requires empathy and close relationships. (6). Duration of study. Starting points and ending points must be determined as the narrative is never complete. (7). Relationship ethics. Narrative research is a process of negotiation between researcher and participant and therefore ethical issues pervade the entire process. Each of these seven aspects of narrative research were considered in the design of this study. They are attended to using various approaches including: using longitudinal, interactive interviewing to create retellings of the living, recognizing positionality and locating the self in juxtaposition to the informant, and implementing reflexivity through writing as inquiry and writing as analysis. These methods are further explained in the following section.

While these aspects are important in conducting narrative research, the concepts of telling and living are essential to this research as the purpose of a critical autoethnography is to better understand human experience and illuminate larger social issues related to those experiences (both past and present). Going one step beyond telling and living are the concepts of *retelling* and *reliving* (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin & Huber, 2002; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, 2006), which acknowledge the continuity of time by accepting the complexity of stories, including how they change; how they change over time, with altered perspective for different audiences, as aspects of identity develop, and even due to something as seemingly nominal as a mood on a particular day. Therefore, stories are artistic compositions and composites of the informant and researcher/participant as well as the multiple perspectives of living, telling,

retelling and reliving (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin & Huber, 2002; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, 2006).

Sermijn et al. (2008) elaborates on the concept of temporality as well as the *investment of the self in the inquiry* as it was referred to by Connelly and Clandinin (2006), and terms his understanding a *rhizomatic story*. Essentially, as the narrative presented may be entered from many points, is multi-voiced due to the various points of influence in life, and representative of the projected self not necessarily a *true* self, a narrative is never whole. Sermijn (2008) summarizes, “The narrations someone tells about herself or himself are never complete; they form an ongoing process of co-construction and co-reconstruction” (p. 644). The rhizomatic understanding of narrative construction positions me, as a researcher, within the stories, similarly to the bracketed narrative inquirer. Moreover, given the informant’s involvement in the process through interactive interviews, stories are co-constructed. In this study, the intricate relationship and experiences of the informant and myself are inextricable as our international experiences involve each other; in addition, the very act of conducting this research adds another layer to this interwoven experience. Thus, the concept of rhizomatic story as co-constructed, incomplete, and temporal is a key tenet guiding the inquiry, analysis and resulting autoethnographic narrative of this endeavor.

Critical Autoethnographic Methodology

The goal of this qualitative study is to better understand conception of national identity in transnational space by using narrative inquiry to create an autoethnographic story that can address and illuminate the processes and relations of national identity disruption and development. The experiences of the researcher are used to explore constructs of national identity, question multiculturalist assumptions of national identity as stable, and frame national

identity construction with a transnational lens. Accordingly, *critical autoethnography* (Boylorn & Orbe, 2014; Cann & DeMeulenaere, 2012; Kempster et al., 2008) is the methodology informed by narrative inquiry and used in this study. Critical autoethnography as methodology drove the methods of inquiry and analysis, which were an iterative practice. In this section I illustrate this circular nature of data collection and analysis by discussing my role as researcher and participant, the nature of *writing as inquiry and analysis* (Richardson, 1994), the methods of *interactive interviewing* (Cann & DeMeulenaere, 2012; Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011; Ellis, 2004) and *thematic analysis* (Reissman, 2008) that aided in the collection and analysis processes, and collapse the term *critical autoethnography* to illustrate the important aspects of the methodology and how they align with the purpose of this study.

Autoethnography is a research method that “connects the autobiographical and personal to the cultural, social, and political,” (Ellis, 2004, p. xix). Autoethnographers research themselves in relation to others and it is therefore a method that allows for both personal and cultural critique (Boylorn & Orbe, 2014). It is through a better understanding of personal experience that we can explore a phenomenon more comprehensively, as opposed to taking it apart into analytic categories (Clandinin & Huber, 2002). This manner of research aims to represent culture and society with as many dimensions as possible and embraces the complexity of lived experience as something that cannot be reduced to analytics, especially when using narrative as a research medium. The convoluted, aesthetic dimensions of life are the richness that bring the research and lessons to be learned to life (Caulley, 2008; Richardson, 1994). This study explores conceptions of national identity within a transnational space through everyday experiences as processes and relations. Creating a highly-personalized story piece that highlights the disturbance of my assumed stable identity and that delves into the richness of experience and

culture by incorporating the complexities of identity formation through lived experience to explore how and why beliefs are structured and individuals function within and across larger societal expectations.

Denzin (1997) interprets autoethnography by explaining that it involves the “turning of the ethnographic gaze inward on the self (auto), while maintaining the outward gaze of ethnography, looking at the larger context wherein self experiences occur” (Denzin, 1997, p. 227). Mosselson (2010) argues that researchers cannot be objective as they have subjectivities and biases, and “by recognizing subjectivity in the research process, we can contribute to a fuller understanding of power in culture and society” (p. 493). We are immersed in our research and therefore the argument can be made that the best research we can do is that which is based on personal experience. Using reflexivity to understand personal background as positionality and recognizing how positionality is involved in the research process is a vital aspect of quality research (Mosselson, 2010). Locating the self is imperative to better understand the complexities of the research. Similarly, the use of the rhizomatic story in research further indicates the entangled nature of the researcher and research. As Sermijn et al. (2008) explain using the principle of multiplicity, narrative self-hood cannot be reduced to a single whole as it is a fusion of accounts. Pillow's (2003) interpretation of the purpose of reflexivity, or interrupting comfortable reflexivity, is fitting with this concept of autoethnography. He constitutes reflexivity as something more than a methodological exercise to a questioning of “whether and how differences are constructed and the way in which these constructions are linked to the process of domination” (Moors, 1991, p. 122, as cited in Pillow, 2003, p. 187). This has now become something central to my understanding of reflexivity as well as the purpose of my work as a whole. The nature of ethnographic work is to “uncover meanings and perceptions on the part of

the people participating in the research, viewing these understandings against the backdrop of the people's overall worldview” (Crotty, 1998, p. 7).

Critical autoethnography is used to “understand the lived experiences of real people in context” (Boylorn & Orbe, 2014, p. 20), but places emphasis on the examination of social conditions and constructs to challenge processes and power dynamics. It requires researchers to acknowledge subjectivities through reflexivity, recognize privileges and injustices within a lived domain, and address processes of inequality as an ethical responsibility (Boylorn & Orbe, 2014). Critical autoethnography is obviously situated within the long tradition of critical theory (Cann & DeMeulenaere, 2012), however it highlights the use of narrative in critical theory, which inserts the researcher into the *rhizomatic* (Sermijn et al., 2008) story as described previously. This bracketing of self in research relates to Freire’s use of *praxis as process* in activism research for all participants (Cann & DeMeulenaere, 2012; Mayo, 2004). In allowing for individual reflection of structures of oppression and critical awareness, it necessarily accepts and considers the relational characteristics of power and oppression and is therefore a methodology wherein the uncertainty, temporality, and complexity of human relationships and processes is acknowledged (Cann & DeMeulenaere, 2012). This study balances the unknowable complexity of human relationships and experiences derived from postmodernism with the essence of critical theory as a critique of social structures related to national identity conception and construction.

A *critical autoethnographic* account is built from a dialogue that focuses on “illuminating and linking tacit and explicit knowledge of social and relational practice[s] with related theory” (Kempster et al., 2008). It is a methodology that allows for participation and knowledge construction across difference, often connecting privileged with marginalized to better understand human and social experience. (Cann & DeMeulenaere, 2012). By nature of the study

as an autoethnography, I am an *insider* (Bhattacharya, 2013; Ellis et al., 2011; Quicke, 2010) as it is my story told. I am both researcher and participant as my history fuels the inquiry. However, as Kempster et al. (2008) and Cann & DeMeulenaere (2012) have emphasized to be critical and to locate the self within the research it is important to engage in dialogue. As a method of locating the self and of developing the autoethnography as critical *interactive interviewing* (Cann & DeMeulenaere, 2012; Ellis, 2004; Ellis et al., 2011) was used with an informant, Tai. The interaction with the informant was a way for me to understand my national identity juxtaposed with her experiences. The criticality occurs in the differences of our positions and conversations with her allowed me to acknowledge my centrality, and reflect on the power relations and structures of oppression in the transnational space, while widening my perspective to reflect on national identity disruption and conceptualization.

The informant Tai, is from the Marshall Islands, but has been attending high school in the Northeast United States for four years. She moved away from her family when she was 14 years old to live with an American family in the U.S. to attend high school. Her native language is Marshallese; however, English is taught beginning in most Kindergarten classes in compulsory education, and she was bilingual when we met. I was introduced to her as a sixth-grade student on her home island of Enniburr on the Kwajalein Atoll when I was serving as a volunteer 1st-8th grade English teacher. The intricate relationship and experiences of Tai and myself serve to add depth and perspective to the autoethnography and she was chosen because inquiry is usually conducted between those that have well-established relationships (Adams, 2008).

Interactive interviewing as a method of data collection was chosen specifically to engender *reflexivity* (Bhattacharya, 2007; Denzin, Lincoln, & Rolling, 2006; Guillemin & Gillam, 2004; Kempster et al., 2008; Mosselson, 2010; Pillow, 2003; Quicke, 2010; Sermijn et

al., 2008) in terms of my positionality as researcher/participant and insider due to the nature of writing about my personal experiences. Constructing *retellings* (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990) with the informant and understanding each retelling as incomplete, informed by the previous story and by the other person; a rhizomatic understanding of story construction acknowledges each of the stories brought into the interaction and is concerned with better understanding a situation or phenomena (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011; Ellis, 2004). It was through this method that my perception of reality, meaning, and my own experience, was retold and reevaluated allowing opportunity for reflexive practice.

My positionality within this research is one of power and privilege. There are several dynamics that I had to continually consider to check my assumptions, language, influence and domination including the fact that I am conversing and constructing a narrative with a young adult and therefore as an adult have an implicit authority despite being in a friendly relationship. This authority as an elder is compounded by our past relationship as teacher and student and this dynamic has persisted in a mentor/mentee regard in recent years. Also, as the writer and researcher, I am considered the expert and scholar despite being a novice researcher myself and attempting to conduct research in which I am also the participant. We are not equal participants, rather participant and informant as I guide the conversation and the constructed narrative is filtered through my position to be representative of experiences. Therefore, the result is ultimately my interpretation of my experiences informed by perspective gained through Tai's stories.

Power and privilege, despite recognition, persist in our affectionate, personal relationship, but also beyond our association. In terms of my experience traveling and working the Marshall Islands I held a historically powerful position as an American, a white person, a native English

speaker, and an educated person. My privilege was manifested in my ability to travel and work in another country and culture without having to learn the language, traditions, practices or histories of the native people, all the while thinking I could help improve their situation. My ignorance, my savior complex, exhibited my privileged position. I was immediately an honorary, perhaps obligatory, member and authority of the community. The acceptance of my existence and expectation of my “help” illustrated my privileged and powerful position. Regardless of my lack of knowledge and novice professional standing I was treated as the expert because of my nationality, and skin color. I was given power to educate people I knew nothing about. I was expected to be a leader upon my arrival responsible for teaching students and faculty alike.

Recognizing my positionality within the context of this research does not eliminate the structures of privilege and power existing between our two nations, nor does it change my position, however constructing retellings with an informant is an attempt to check my privilege and expand on the understanding of my own experience by considering Tai’s perspective. While all information is filtered through my lens, the acknowledgement of positionality allows me to admit and appreciate the effects of historical relations, how they influence current power relations between nations and individuals, and identify, incorporate, and analyze my subjectivities and experience in the resulting narrative.

Working with an informant was also necessary to develop a critical lens to connect individual reflexivity with writing ethnographically to relate a broader human experience. In this sense, I was able to explore my positionality as an *outsider* (Bhattacharya, 2013; Ellis et al., 2011; Quicke, 2010) experiencing national identity disruption in a transnational space. Furthermore, interactive interviewing was used as a method to mitigate and acknowledge the imbalance of power between myself as participant and Tai as informant. Interactive interviewing

employs conversational interview techniques of narrative interviewing (Pederson, 2013). Allowing individuals to respond however they like as it is important to follow the construction of narrative as people “work through their own stories” (Pederson, 2013, p. 415). Using these techniques, Tai could also question me and guide the conversation to topics of interest and relevance through her stories, thereby shifting the authority and making the interview collaborative rather than one-sided and reflective of our power positions. This allowed us the freedom to speak colloquially and enabled the conversation to unfold naturally, reducing the effects of my position as adult, teacher, mentor, and researcher to help me gain perspective and understanding as the participant of the representation of my nationality in the Marshall Islands.

Longitudinal interviewing was critical to this study as the retelling of stories requires trust and rapport, as well as depth and clarification (Grinyer & Thomas, 2012; Pederson, 2013). Interviews took place in the form of emails, Facebook messages, Skype calls, phone calls and even texting. Interviews were conducted over a four-year period while I had access to the informant in the United States during the tenure of her high school education beginning in the fall of 2013. Interviews were typically done via Skype, other forms of video conferencing, or over the phone and lasted between 45-90 minutes. Twelve interviews were audio recorded and transcribed, and notes indicate dozens of informal interviews spanning the four-year period. The research began with open-ended, conversational interviews with Tai reminiscing about our time together on Enniburr; sharing stories the other was unaware of, differing perspectives of the same event, using each other to recall the details of fond memories, and asking questions of each other about thoughts and feeling associated with our history.

Focus questions related primarily to her experiences having American volunteer teachers (including myself) on her home island, the entwined nature of American and Marshallese

cultures, languages, and people, as well as the divisions and contrasts, and the capacity for power present on the atoll on which she grew up while looking specifically at national identity development within a transnational framework. However, guiding prompts were open-ended and colloquial in nature prompting responses in a storied form. Examples include: What do you remember about when I arrived on Enniburr? Tell me what you think about American volunteers. What were you taught in school about the history between the Marshall Islands and the United States? How do you remember what happened with Rentin? What do you think about Americans renting Kwajalein and Roi?

This study employed one of Reissman's (2008) approaches to narrative analysis, *Thematic Analysis*, along with Richardson's (1994) understanding of *writing as inquiry and analysis*. Narrative analysis, as an instrument for qualitative research, is a response to the lack of human stories in social science in the 1960s. It focuses on stories of the individual; highlighting personal experience within culture and society (Chase, 2005). Thematic analysis applied qualitative coding methods to categorize accounts or aspects of accounts in the narrative. And writing as a method of inquiry and analysis was used to explore emotions, positionality, and perspective to contribute to the resulting autoethnographic representation.

Data management of transcribed interactive interviews was done primarily with Nvivo software. As the research question was intended to be broad the *data chunks* (Bhattacharya, 2015), or initial codes, were also extensive. I implemented Saldaña's (2013) *Holistic Coding* to initially chunk the data to preserve entire stories or narratives, often retellings of past events, whenever possible. Holistic coding “applies a single code to a large unit of data in the corpus, rather than line-by-line coding, to capture a sense of the overall contents and the possible categories that may develop” (Saldaña, 2013, p. 264). This was an exhaustive form of coding

used to acquaint myself with the data by applying general codes to sections that usually consisted of an entire conversation or response stemming from questioning wherein all words, phrases, sentences, and pauses within the data were included and coded as direct quotes. This decision to retain data as stories was an attempt to honor the voices within the retellings and maintain the nature of the everyday lived experience. This form of coding was used to analyze main themes within the talk and to preserve the retelling in as much detail as possible to capture everyday processes and relations. The following is an example:

Figure 1: Holistic Coding Example

1 S: When you met your American host-Dad and brother in the Marshall Islands, how did it
2 work out for you to go back and live with them?

3 T: Well, I don't know actually. They came, and they brought like sports stuff and we
4 were playing baseball there. And, they came to our school and we were talking and everything,
5 then when we went for a walk around the island. I went with them and we were just talking, and
6 yeah, I was kinda weird, cause I didn't know them. I don't know. Samantha [American
7 volunteer] and Amanda [American host-Dad's sister] were talking, talking, talking, and then
8 Samantha told me that they want me to come live with them. I was scared at first and then,
9 actually, she told me to bring my parents and I thought I was in trouble, then I was like what did
10 I do, and she said it's okay you're not in trouble or anything, I thought she was lying to me. She
11 waited until everybody was there, but my mom wasn't there because she was busy making
12 donuts, she was making donuts and my Aunt. Um, so...so yeah, so they were there and my
13 grandfather too and we were talking and they were telling them about this and everything, so my
14 grandfather says no first. He didn't say that to them, to Samantha and Lloyd and Leah, but he
15 said it to me, like I'm not going anywhere, but last minute he changed his mind. Yeah, so, and
16 then, a few months later, I ended up here.

17 S: Was it your grandfather's decision? Did you get to decide or did he just want you to
18 go?

19 T: Well, he told me what I want to do. And, I wasn't sure. My dad, my grandfather, my
20 mom, and everybody were talking about it and so they all decided that it was gonna be better to
21 go to the U.S. and so I don't know, and then they told me, all of them told me that I should come
22 here because it's for the best. So, I was like okay. So, I decided to come here.

23 S: What were you feeling?

24 T: Scared. I though like it's gonna be really hard and I'm gonna miss them so much and
25 I'll be living with a new family that I really don't know and everything and I was like oh I'm
26 gonna have two sisters instead of one and one brother and I was...I don't know. So, it was hard
27 for me. Like I had to, I don't know, it was really hard, and after school ended I was like okay this
28 is gonna be great, and bad at the same time. Yeah, it was really hard to make a decision.

29 S: Why did you decide to come?

30 T: Yeah, I was thinking about it a lot. Like thinking about all the stuff that I'm gonna do,
31 like the things that I couldn't do there. Opportunity, I guess. Better school, and I will learn
32 English better too. Then people starting to know, like I didn't want anybody to know, but it was
33 really hard to keep a secret. I was afraid they was gonna say Samantha was doing a favor to me,
34 but not to them, and I was right, and they keep talking to Samantha asking, "Why Tai?" I was
35 like, "That's what I was afraid of." So people, everybody at school and all the people called me
36 an American person, I was ugh, ha. Yeah. I didn't even leave yet and they were calling me
37 Ripälle. I was like, I'm not Ripälle just because I am going to the U.S. I still am Marshallese, and
38 to some people it was only kidding, but I didn't like it. And I was like oh god, what have done?
39 And I hadn't even done anything yet. And, my grandfather just kept saying over and over and
40 over, "It's for the best." My mom didn't come to the airport, but she stayed on Kwaj, my dad
41 didn't come to Ebeye at all, he stayed in Santo and stayed with my sister and brother, and my
42 mom went to like, she came to Kwajelein but she couldn't came to the airport because she, she
43 said it was too hard for here. She was crying and didn't want to let me go. "You're not going
44 anywhere." And I was like, "Mom, I have to go, let me go, let me go." She was crying really
45 hard. Ugh, it was really bad, and there was some, umm, people from Santo there and people

46 crying and they were looking at me, they were really sad too, I was...ughhh! Yeah. And,
47 my mom's oldest sister and my grandfather and his girlfriend bring me to the airport. It was
48 raining.

49 S: Did you cry?

50 T: Of course I did! It was hard. I was hard seeing my mom like that. So, I had to like, I
51 don't know, I tried not to cry but, it's really hard seeing my mom like that and it's like oh no.
52 I'm like, "Mom come on, you're supposed to let me go," and I say, "I thought you said it was for
53 the best," she's like, "I didn't think it'd be this hard, it's really hard." So, even though I talk to
54 her on the phone or on Skype she keeps crying, like every time she hears my voice or she see me
55 she cries again, an I'm like, "We don't have to talk," and she's like, "Are you crazy, I'm happy
56 to see you that's why I'm crying!" "But you're making things for me, you're making it harder for
57 me, Mom," and she's like, "I know, I'm sorry."

58 S: When people say it's for the best, what do you think they mean? Why is it better?

59 T: Don't know. I never asked. Well I think because they said I would get better education
60 and I can get my dream to come true and stuff like that, I don't know.

Not all data collected and coded was in story form, especially in early interviews as familiarity and rapport was being built, short responses, questions posed, and even silences were also noted. As time passed, correspondence became increasingly colloquial as our rapport strengthened and stories more often frequented our discussions. To address this non-storied form of talk as well as a second cycle of coding, I used *In Vivo Coding* (Saldaña, 2013). In Vivo Coding was applied to highlight direct quotes from the transcripts to maintain language and “terms of a particular culture” (Saldaña, 2013, p. 264). This method was used to note important words and phrases, especially in Marshallese that I felt were relevant, or had forgotten, as well as to honor the voice of my informant as distinct from my own which is especially important in autoethnographic work as a technique to appreciate perspective while ensuring that I do not speak on her behalf as a result of unacknowledged positionality. See Figure 2 for examples of In Vivo codes.

Figure 2: Example In Vivo codes and corresponding categories.

<p>“I want to stay here first and then try to go back and then come back. The best of both worlds.”</p>	<p><i>Difference, agency, acculturation, power, nationalism education, culture.</i></p>
<p>“Are you going to become a citizen? I think I might because it's going to be easier.”</p>	<p><i>Culture, expectations, nationalism, agency.</i></p>
<p>“I was thinking of writing my own ukulele songs and record [sic] them and also like, um, write all about it, explain what they mean and everything, before I can't anymore. [Pause] I just don't want to forget my own language. Like that would be bad [chuckle].”</p>	<p><i>Education, culture, language, assimilation, difference.</i></p>
<p>“You are Rimajel.”</p>	<p><i>Nationalism, ethnicity, difference, culture, language, acceptance.</i></p>
<p>“Ripälle.”</p>	<p><i>Nationalism, ethnicity, difference, culture, language.</i></p>
<p>“Emeļokļok niñiñ nuknuk.”</p>	<p><i>Relationships, power, agency, expectations.</i></p>
<p>“She yells a lot. And she like, she was really mean. Yeah, she didn't help us at all. She got “sick” [sarcasm] a lot to go to Roi with her boyfriend, now her husband, or whatever, and she tells us that she's sick but she not, she is just somewhere else with her boyfriend. So, um, one time I was after school I went to Roi and I saw her with her boyfriend and I was like, geez I thought she was sick. Why is she lying? Is her boyfriend more important than us? I was really mad.”</p>	<p><i>Curriculum and instruction, relationships, power, difference, expectations, education, nationalism.</i></p>

The Holistic and In Vivo codes were then categorized as possible aspects of relations and processes related to national identity development. Codes were often ascribed to multiple categories. Such categories included: *education, curriculum and instruction, language, culture, religion, ethnicity, diversity, relationships, difference, agency, assimilation, acculturation, expectations, acceptance, collaboration, nationalism* and *power*. The previous Holistic Code example was categorized under education, relationships, agency, expectations, and power.

As all data collection was not recorded and transcribed it was also done manually using *field notes* (Goodall, 2001). Field notes were not transcriptions of our stories, rather they included summaries of the topics and events that we covered in a session, as well as aspect of the session itself. This included elements I found pertinent in our conversations, details regarding place and time of past events, our behaviors during the interactive interview, and documentation of my emotions as they developed throughout the retellings; staying close to what I saw and experienced throughout the process. It was used as a method to question and clarify the historical timeline of events, and prioritize stories with the informant, but it was also an exercise used to explore the retellings further through creative writing techniques. Using Richardson's (1994) concept of "*writing up*" *field notes* (p. 525) I wrote around the filed notes I took to explore emotions with a sense of anonymity and work out how and which retellings were important to my national identity development; allowing my imagination to search for significant connections, and their relation to larger issues.

Throughout the data collection and analysis, including: conversational interviews, informal correspondence, thematic coding, and writing, I had to consider my positionality. *Writing as inquiry* (Richardson, 1994) was used because it aligns with the critical autoethnographic methodology, and the purpose of this study. Understanding writing as inquiry,

as Richardson (1994) explains, begins with understanding writing is not only a way of telling, but also of knowing. He argues that our sense of self should not be diminished within our work, rather we should explore the Self and its relation to the subject as they are intertwined. Through writing we can explore and develop personal subjectivities and identities and through such exploration it is possible to identify "unspecified assumptions" (Richardson, 1994, p. 524), connections, and alternative perspectives that aid in the attempt to more fully understand. Writing as a method of inquiry took the form of writing around interview transcripts and categories to develop creative nonfiction stories to contribute to the autoethnography.

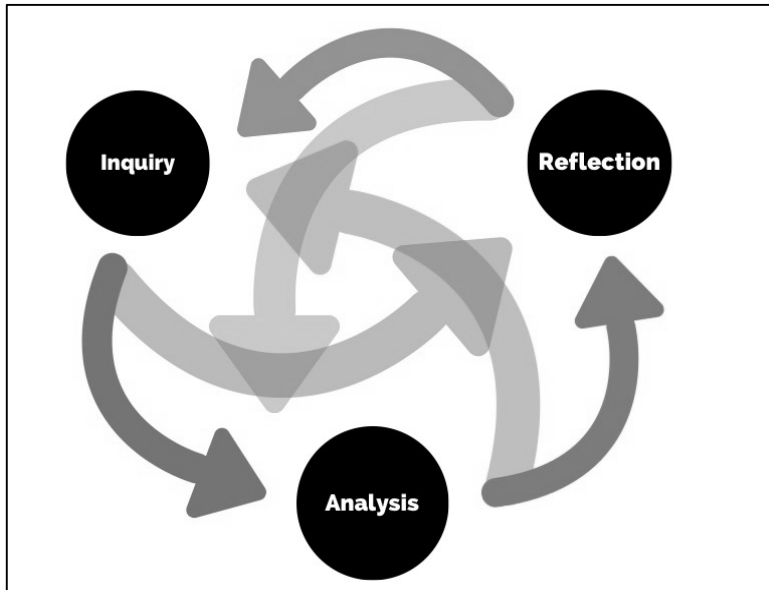
This required reflecting on my role in the research as participant constructing retellings of everyday lived experience with Tai as an informant and reconciling that role with the one I had as researcher and autoethnographic writer, while examining my relationship with Tai from both places to consider how these dynamics affected the retellings produced in interactive interviewing. Navigating retellings for thematic analysis and writing around the events and themes was especially difficult and necessitated that in constructing autoethnographic representation I was careful not to speak for the informant. There was a delicate balance of incorporating her experiences, viewpoints, and voice as juxtaposed to my own to add perspective without speaking for the marginalized perspective from a position of power. It is important that our retellings are understood within the narrative as my interpretations of our experiences. For this reason, *member checks* (Bhattacharya, 2009, 2013; Pillow, 2003; Tracy, 2010) were conducted to ensure that the narrative constructed fairly represented her stories after being filtered through my lens.

Constructing the autoethnographic narrative based on our retellings, was in itself a form of inquiry and analysis, as Caulley (2008) notes, "when you write about an experience, you cast

it in a new form and therefore furnish it with a new purpose” (p. 447) as well as new understanding. Writing as inquiry and analysis required that I recognize and explore my positionality and the power dynamics inherent in our retellings; acknowledge how the dynamics between myself and Tai change the retellings as we preform them and bring these issues to the forefront to consider the perspective this adds to my understanding. This further illustrates the rhizomatic nature of the retellings as interconnected, incomplete and dependent on the participating contributors.

This combination of data collection, management and analysis techniques, interactive interviewing, extensive Holistic Coding In Vivo Coding, categorization, as well as writing as inquiry and analysis served the research purpose by not delimiting the categories or stories and allowing for a multitude of everyday experiences to be examined and considered as important to the process of national identity development, and to the creation of the resulting autoethnography. It also made data analysis practical as it was a continual procedure throughout the data collection process. The process was a circular production of collection, analysis, and reflection where each informed the other; conversations often guided the inquiry and analysis while analysis created questions for inquiry to be explored through conversation.

Figure 3: Iterative Process of Critical Autoethnography



Recurrent analysis required reorganization and reduction of codes and categories. Eventually, as datum expanded, categories reflecting the main topics of our storied experiences were reduced in Nvivo to *acceptance*, *exclusion*, *acculturation*, and *language*, although language had several sub categories such as *language as divisive* and *language as fellowship*. In *Themeing the Data*, a process described by Saldaña (2013) as identifying the meaning of the data at both *manifest* (observable) and *latent* (underlying) levels to design an overarching, integrating theme across the data, it became evident that belonging was the theme pervading our interactions and retellings. The theme of belonging connected the categories to weave a coherent narrative with insight based on our experiences and divergent understandings in a uniquely transnational place, a story was constructed to illuminate the complex nature of identity formation, while simultaneously identifying key processes and relations to its construct.

Creative Nonfiction as Nontraditional Representation

Creative nonfiction is a method of writing nonfiction using fiction techniques. It arose as a representation of research in the 1960s when it was called *The New Journalism* (Caulley, 2008,

p. 424). The word creative in creative nonfiction does not indicate that the narrative is fictional, rather the purpose is to capture the content in a form where even “the most resistant reader will be interested in learning more about it” (Caulley, 2008, p. 2); but it is important that works for impacting social change remain nonfiction (Richardson, 1994). Creative nonfiction is a method utilized to preserve factuality while simultaneously compelling emotional vibrancy (Caulley, 2008; Dunlop, 2002; Richardson, 1994). Cheney (2001) elaborates:

Creative nonfiction doesn't just report facts; it delivers facts in ways that move the reader toward a deeper understanding of a topic. Creative nonfiction requires the skills of the storyteller and the research ability of the conscientious reporter... [Creative nonfiction writers] must not only understand the facts and report them, they must also see beyond them to discover their underlying meaning, and they must dramatize that meaning in an interesting, evocative, informative way—just as a good teacher does (p. 1).

Caulley (2008) notes that this method is important as cognitive research indicates a connection between memory and concepts that enter the brain in an “envelope of emotion” (p. 432). As a piece on human processes and relations, international educational experiences, and exploring national identity development this study is reflecting on human experience in culture and society. Thus, it is a study meant to engage an international audience in a complex conversation regarding the future of education in our increasingly globalized world, with careful consideration of cultural reference frames regarding the purposes and processes of education, cultural, linguistic, and societal differences, and a history of Western imperial education and colonialism. To be engaging to the various constituents of education the research must evoke emotion in the reader, but also must maintain realism and authenticity, while being accessible (Caulley, 2008).

Accessibility is another strength of creative nonfiction and also a reason this form of representation was chosen. Dunlop (2002) writes in support of narrative experimentation in research across disciplines, including the use of nonfiction, because it is accessible to multiple, wider audiences. It is a genre of research that, as Denzin (1997) remarks, refuses “to impose meaning on the reader” (p. 224), instead it fosters inquiry by “mak[ing] readers work while resisting the temptation to think in terms of simplistic dichotomies; difference, not conflict is fore grounded” (p. 225). Following this line of logic, the purpose of the research is not to offer solutions to a clearly defined problem or hypothesis, rather, it is an invitation for engagement in the societal issues of national identity development and educational experiences reflected in the narrative; with each reader making their own entry point into the rhizome and finding relevance based on personal experience. The narrative itself is highly personalized (Richardson, 1994) as an autoethnography, as is the informative nature of the work, which allows for a broader audiences than that of traditional dissertations (Denzin, 1997; Dunlop, 2002; Richardson, 1994).

Finally, creative nonfiction as a form of representation allows for messy text; a necessity when interpreting narrative as a rhizome. There are several qualities of messy text that align with the concept of the rhizome as well as the purpose of this study, which is to explore, reflect and critique both the personal and cultural: (a) Writers are incorporated in the narrative; they are emotionally invested, have subjectivities and “have no intention to maintain a balanced or objective tone (Caulley, 2008, p.444). They state their subjectivities forthright and they understand that the message of the text will depend on the reader’s interpretation. Sermijn (2008) says it best: “A messy text announces its politics and ceaselessly interrogates the realities it invokes while folding the teller’s story into the multi-voiced history that is written” (p. 225); (b) Messy texts are more than just “subjective accounts of experiences” (p. 225) because they

“attempt to reflexively map the multiple discourses that occur in a given social space and hence they are always multi-voiced” (Sermijn et al., 2008, p. 225). Therefore, while the subjectivities and experiences of the author are inextricable from the resultant narrative recognizing positionality through reflexive process and practice produces a narrative beyond a confessional; lastly, (c) just like the rhizome, messy texts are always open ended, multifaceted, and “resistant to theoretical holism” (Sermijn et al., 2008, p. 224). This resistance to theoretical holism is critical as the study asks readers to engage, thereby reflecting on their own positionality and connecting the narrative with their personal experience. The narrative is never whole, not just because of the rhizomatic nature of storytelling, but in large part because the reader is also a participant.

This study is a critical autoethnography, wherein, as a researcher, I examined and extended personal experience into the larger realm of society to shed light on identity issues, provide critiques of institutional forces, and engage the public in conversation (Boylorn & Orbe, 2014; Denzin, 1997; Ellis, 2004). As such, the format of this study is considered non-traditional in that as a methodology I use rigorous, critical qualitative research methods in conjunction with creative nonfiction in the form of autoethnography to appeal to academics, as well as non-education experts.

This decision is deliberate and reflects my understanding of the purpose of higher education and the dissertation process, which aligns with Four Arrows' (2008) concept of formal education as “a major resource for maintaining and improving the social, economic, physical, and spiritual health of our world” (p. 1). As the dissertation is the capstone of formal education it should reflect the author’s intention to act as an agent of change. This parallels the sentiment of Richardson's (1994) statement regarding traditional dissertations as often inaccessible,

embodying the essence of exclusory elitism within the academy. Nontraditional dissertations are often more apt to resonate with the underlying principles of what I think a dissertation should be, that is a collaborative educational experience whereby the student can simultaneously become versed in research processes and create scholarly work to be distributed. Especially in education, the research done should pertain to the students, teachers, parents and other constituents of the institution and should be readily available for them to use as agents of change for the very social/human oriented issues being addressed. An authentic dissertation brings this perspective to the forefront highlighting the “actor’s viewpoints for understanding, process, and social change” (Strauss, 1990 as cited in Agee, 2009, p. 432) in an interesting and accessible format that emphasizes the author’s sense of self, thereby avoiding the *professional socialization* and *homogenization* of academic texts (Richardson, 1994). In various degrees, a non-traditional dissertation employs a postmodernist perspective challenging the correct or privileged form of academic knowledge and offering alternatives (Richardson, 1994).

Creative nonfiction utilizes fiction techniques in nonfiction writing. It conveys real experience through storytelling, as well as the researcher’s analysis of the deeper meaning within the narrative. It relates such information with *emotional vibrancy* (Cheney, 2001), connecting the reader emotionally as well as intellectually. Creative nonfiction, as one manifestation of a non-traditional dissertation, has social value because it offers intelligible research, that compels people to imagine what it’s like to be someone else, something Dunlop (2002) argues is increasingly important. It embeds the researcher’s socialization with informant’s viewpoints and experiences, and should be an enlightening, personal process for the researcher, but, most importantly, it is a social commentary despite its intimate, compelling narrative (Atwood, 1982; Dunlop, 2002). Simultaneously, however, it also refuses to “impose meaning on the reader”

(Sermijn et al., 2008), refraining from oversimplified dichotomies and allowing for readers' interpretations based on their own socialization. Thus, creative nonfiction is a method divergent from traditional academic texts that makes it possible to extend research beyond the academy with a dual purpose of informing, but also raising questions.

Trustworthiness, Quality, and Ethical Considerations

As the purposes for conducting qualitative research differ from those in quantitative work the methods, measures of trustworthiness and quality, as well as the ethical considerations are also distinct. This research has combined many ideas regarding what quality and trustworthiness signify in qualitative work and what I, as a researcher, have recognized and utilized as criterion to insure ethical, quality qualitative research.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in qualitative research regarding human experience, identity and perspective of and within various social constructs is difficult to measure in the traditional sense of the word, however AERA (2009) has indicated that to establish trustworthiness there are several considerations to be made regarding perspective, voice and bias. Perspective, voice and bias pertain to the contemplation and examination of moral, political, cultural, and situational matters entangled in the research at all levels; from the socialization of the researcher and dominant historical perspectives that guide the construction of the research questions to the social, cultural and linguistic differences among the researcher and participant that may produce divergent perspectives and interpretations. It is vital for trustworthy research to acknowledge the various perspectives and biases especially as they relate to issues of power and privilege, and to review how the perspective and voice of the participant are deliberately being represented and honored (AERA, 2009). I have considered this aspect of trustworthiness by designing the

research question to balance my perspective with that of my participant, by conducting longitudinal interviews (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990) coupled with debriefing and member checks (Pillow, 2003), by utilizing the rhizomatic (Sermijn et al., 2008) understanding, wherein the experiences of Tai and I are simultaneously inextricable, but also revealing because of their duality, by locating myself within the research through subjectivity and reflexivity; providing a subjectivity statement as a researcher acknowledging my values, perspectives and assumptions, and employing reflexivity (Bhattacharya, 2013; Guillemin & Gillam, 2004; Mosselson, 2010; Pillow, 2003; Quicke, 2010; Richardson, 1994; Sermijn et al., 2008) throughout the research process, wherein I continually critically reflect on positionality (Agee, 2009; Frank, 2000; Mosselson, 2010; Pillow, 2003; Straubhaar, 2015) in relation to the informant and the research and how I construct knowledge given the influences of my subjectivities.

Criteria for Quality

There are six criteria that can be used to establish quality within this qualitative research; they are compiled from three primary sources, and are as follows: Conceptualization, substantiation, coherence, social significance, generativity, and resonance.

Conceptualization. AERA (2009) states that conceptualization is closely related to the measures of trustworthiness, perspective, voice and bias. Conceptualization consists of providing the reader with a conceptual framework that is congruent with the methods and analysis and deliberately identifies perspective, purpose, scope and limits of the research. This research is interpretivist, and the purpose, scope and limits of the research reflect the nature of such qualitative work. This is done by indicating that Tai and I have distinct voices within the narrative, but that it is ultimately my own voice deconstructing the narrative within a transnational framework to uncover questions related to national identity.

Substantiation. AERA (2009) also refers to the critical awareness of the researcher's perspectives, but includes what Tracy (2010) refers to as "rich rigor," the use of scholarly literature, theoretical constructs, empirical evidence, and explanations of data collection and analysis processes. My research has outlined transnationalism as a theoretical construct and identified the type of transnationalism I align with, but also draws on literature to define and guide inquiry related to multiculturalism and nationalism regarding identity formation in a transnational space given a symbolic interactionist understanding of identity development. The empirical evidence is the narrative of the combined experiences of myself and the participant, Tai, and explanations of the experience collecting data, constructing and analyzing the narrative align with the interpretivist epistemology behind this endeavor.

Social significance. Also referred to as *worthy topic* (Tracy, 2010), social significance (AERA, 2009; Barone & Eisner, 2012) refers to research that is timely and relevant, addresses gaps in the literature and/or raises important questions about existing knowledge, is significant to the scholarly community, and informative to the larger society. In an era of increased globalization, and American nationalism with the incoming administration's platform of "Make America Great Again," the study of national identity development is timely, and focusing on the transnational experience in primary education for both teacher and student in a transnational space addresses a gap in the literature as currently most research concerns the transnational adult-student experience in higher education. As the purpose of this research is to investigate national identity development through narrative, it is expected that multicultural curriculum and instruction in the U.S. and the identity formation of transnational students is considered from an alternative perspective, which can perhaps raise questions regarding how to best provide for students in this somewhat unique position that is becoming increasingly common.

Resonance. Tracy (2010) refers to the work's ability to influence or affect the reader, which I combine with *evocation* and *illumination* (Barone & Eisner, 2012), wherein the reader has a vivid cognitive and emotional experience. The purpose of using narrative in an autoethnographic form is to emotionally connect the reader to concrete, authentic personal experiences to illustrate the importance of considering not only the unique experience of transnationality and identity reconstruction, but also the phenomenon of transnational education as the global terrain continues to change.

Coherence. A term incorporated by several authors, *coherence* (AERA, 2009; Barone & Eisner, 2012; Tracy, 2010) describes the way in which the components of the research come together to create a cohesive final product. Internal coherence reflects the meaningful connection of the research topic, purpose, conceptualization, methods, and analysis (AERA, 2009). Furthermore, internal coherence “enable[s] readers to understand and/or re-experience educational events, concepts, value systems, or issues in comprehensible and illuminating ways,” while external coherence should “exhibit an awareness of, and, as appropriate, engage alternative or competing cultural, social, political, or intellectual perspectives” (AERA, 2009, p. 485). I consider coherence to be somewhat a combination of *substantiation* (AERA, 2009) and *resonance* (Tracy, 2010), essentially creating a final product that is both academically rigorous, artistically refined, and above all, accessible.

Generativity. The final criterion, *generativity* Barone & Eisner (2012) that may be used to measure the quality of humanities oriented research, such as this, and is not to be confused with the term *generalizability* (Winter, 2000) in statistical research, although the two are similar in concept. While generalizability cannot extend to research with $n=1$, generativity allows for readers to experience a phenomenon from a different perspective, but invites them to include

their frame of reference, and determine and act upon their own interpretations. It is the idea that each reader will learn something, possibly different, due to varying reference frames and experiences, but that lessons learned and questions that emerged can be applied and explored to address the larger phenomena highlighted by the research. Tai's unique position and my relationship to her make this study a unique inquiry that may have larger implications for other transnational students, teachers, and spaces.

Ethical Considerations

Procedural Ethics. Ethical considerations regarding the physical and psychological protection of the participant have been considered and approved by an external IRB board. There are no foreseeable risks, but the participant might experience stress or discomfort discussing experiences of discrimination. After the data collected has been analyzed I will conduct peer debriefing sessions. Themes gathered from the research and consequent narratives produced will be presented to the participant; no information will be published without consent. The participant has been informed of the purpose of the study and has signed to indicate her understanding and voluntary participation.

This study involving human subjects is compliant with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Code of Federal Regulations, 45 CFR § 46.102 (2009). The study is deemed to be one of minimal risk to participants and the probability and magnitude of harm or discomfort anticipated in the research will not be greater than any ordinarily encountered in daily life. See Appendix B for letter of direct participant email solicitation, and letter of informed consent.

Relational Ethics. The distinction that Guillemin & Gillam (2004) make between procedural ethics and "ethics in practice" (p. 263) is important for this work. As an

autoethnographer, understanding what is meant by ethics in practice is especially important given that procedural ethics exist primarily for quantitative research and the procedural ethics for qualitative are not rigorous considering many institutions may require IRBs to be submitted, but ultimately exempt qualitative research, as is the case for this study. Ethics in practice refers to the everyday ethical considerations involved in conducting humanities oriented research. While procedural ethics still exist and include anticipated ethical dilemmas, working with a human participant warrants understanding that ethical decisions are made in every interaction to protect the participant's comfort, respect vulnerabilities, appreciate experiences, and produce research that values the participant's voice. Furthermore, as Ellis et al. (2011) explain, autoethnographer's relationships with informants are often interpersonal, making relational ethics in practice an important aspect of conducting and producing such qualitative research. An aspect of relational ethics is covered by the procedural ethics of submitting an IRB, such as discussing and fulfilling the level of confidentiality and anonymity the informant desires, and conducting continual conversational interviews and debriefing sessions to ensure that the product is a piece accurately representative of the participant's voice and experience (Ellis et al., 2011). However, it also comprises balancing existing relationships beyond that of informant and researcher including, student/mentor and friendship to ensure that the research process "recognizes and values mutual respect, dignity, and connectedness" (Ellis, 2007, p. 4).

Personalized Conclusion

It is the intent of autoethnography to write a highly-personalized story that can provide insight to human experience (Burdell & Swadener, 1999; Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011; Ellis, 2004; Richardson, 1994). However, the autoethnography also refuses to "impose meaning on the reader" (Sermijn et al., 2008), allowing for readers' interpretations based on their own

socialization. This function is represented in the form of two chapters, divorcing the story from the study as scholarship allowing readers to access the autoethnography to derive their own connections, conclusions, and questions. Of course, autoethnography is also an enlightening and personal process for the researcher (Burdell & Swadener, 1999; Ellis et al., 2011; Quicke, 2010). Retelling and analyzing past experiences to construct the narrative permitted me to approach and ponder my moment of disruption from a temporal perspective combining past experience with present recreation to develop personalized conclusions. The following section highlights the insight I gleaned from experiencing this study, reconceptualizing national identity and its development in my mind, and the significant implications of this new understanding in my field.

Conceptualizations of National Identity and Nationalism

National identity is ubiquitous in a world comprised of nation-states, but also inexplicit and monolithic (Bhattacharya, 2009; Jenkins, 2008; Jucan, 2010; MacCormick, 1996; McCrone & Bechhofer, 2015; Skinner & Kubacki, 2007; Smith, 1991). It differs from nationality, which is also an aspect of social identity. However, nationality is a qualifier denoting citizenship, whereas national identity is individually and socially constructed, negotiable, and part of culture (Jenkins, 2008; Skinner & Kubacki, 2007; Vonk, 2012). This autoethnography is a social commentary on assumed stable national identity.

With increased globalization multiculturalism becomes more prevalent within the borders of the nation, however, the historical purpose of education to educate for citizenry to strengthen nationalism remains an underlying assumption. Curriculum and instruction in the United States reflect this nation-centered ideology that is fundamentally incompatible with the notion of inclusivity within multiculturalism. Consequently, multiculturalism in the classroom is reduced to the *heroes and holidays* (Banks, 1994) of *culturally and linguistically diverse* (Gersten, 1998;

Rhodes, Ochoa, & Ortiz, 2005) students. Othering people outside of the Euro-American mold. Thus, the resulting implementation of multiculturalism is shallow, centers whiteness, and maintains dominance.

The conflicting nature of espoused multiculturalism in an era of globalization and a historical presumption of education for nationalism engender an understanding of national identity as monolithic. National identity is often simply equated to nationality due to the inattention of this aspect of social identity in education. Sociologists McCrone and Bechhofer (2015) comment on the inattention to national identity in literature on social identity construction, noting that, “Identities of social class, gender, age, [and] ethnicity are deemed, or asserted to be more significant to people in their everyday lives” (p. 15). Individuals do not tend to consider their national identity until some *dramatic event* or disruption, especially when away from home, forces explicit recognition (Billig, 1995; Miller, 1995; Social Issues Research Centre, 2007). Disruptions of this monolithic national identity ensue and require reconceptualization of national identity development.

This disruption occurred for me while living in the Marshall Islands teaching English. As a product of shallow multiculturalism in K-12 and higher education in the United States my national identity was limited. Nationalism, as the goal of public education, inundated my experience from the contrived memorization and performance of the national anthem every morning to curricula focused on national holidays and heroes with little trace of the forces of transnationalism. I conceptualized nationalism as a requisite of education, as patriotism, and as positive. As a part of the white majority I had never explicitly considered my national identity. I was simply American, which I could best describe by referring to America as the melting pot, an ethnocentric perspective, which even as an analogy has implications for assimilation (Jucan,

2010). Beyond this, there was little thought as to what it meant for me to be American within the context of the United States, let alone within a global context. My national identity was my nationality, which was American, and which I could not necessarily describe in further detail. It was assumed to be stable, something I was born with, had had my entire life, and didn't have to negotiate throughout the stages of my life.

This stable identity was challenged in the Marshall Islands where I did not expect to see an American presence, but was faced with a history of imperialism and abuse of power. A witness to the fallout of decades of U.S. control and the culture-clash still existing on the atoll on which the U.S. maintains Army bases while continuing to displace Marshallese. Learning of my nation's history of occupation and atomic testing while living amongst and witnessing the treatment of Marshallese as second class citizens in their own country made me consider my national identity and shattered my concept of nationalism as blind patriotism, which had been relatively easy to maintain in the U.S. as a huge, militaristic, geographically isolated superpower. Developing an understanding of the history of U.S. and my presence as a volunteer teaching English as a second language called attention to the long history of imperialism in the Marshall Islands and highlighted the perceived superiority of Western culture and language that promoted the savior complex in myself. After the shattering of the glass I viewed nationalism as exclusive and a powerful political strategy used to drive a Western perspective and an American agenda.

Enniburr was rife with the forces of transnationalism and as the atoll was a place of dual national interests. Everything was a compromise between two nations. The U.S. provided military protection, postal services, assistance in the form of reparations, opportunities for work and education in the U.S., and in some instances fresh water while the Marshallese leased the little land they had for U.S. bases and offered their lagoons for weapons testing. While

participating in democracy due to U.S. influence the royal family lines maintained are concurrent to the system of democracy. Generations of natives alive today cannot remember a day in Marshallese history when the U.S. wasn't involved. The restructuring of the education system through the Ministry of Education was modeled after U.S. policies. On February 9th, Kwajalein Atoll Liberation Day, the American flag was hoisted above the Marshallese and Kwajalein flags. English is taught in compulsory education, mainly by young, volunteer Americans.

From the British, Spanish, Germans, and Japanese, to the United States the Marshall Islands have a long history as a conquered and occupied nation. While there is a general sense of national pride as survivors (both a tribute to their long history with other nations and the harsh environment of the small atolls), the culture, language, and religion have been drastically changed over the years. Coupled with the geographic dislocation of the islands, government agendas in global commerce through the selling of fishing rights, and options for education and occupation in the U.S., nationalism is less a political ideology and more a plea to industrialized countries, including the U.S., to curb carbon emissions as rising sea levels threaten the land.

As I navigated my national identity by questioning what it was to be “American” in the context of Marshall Islands, and how I fit in to my new home on Enniburr with a Marshallese family, teaching Marshallese children English, I observed the duality of Tai's cultural identity. She believed in God and went to a Christian church, but she also understood that Christianity was brought to the Marshall Islands by early American missionaries and engaged in stories of demons in the coconut trees from earlier religious traditions to scare younger children. She was eager to learn and use English with hopes of being educated in the United States, but was also excited about the new Marshallese alphabet and what it meant for preserving her native language. She mixed and matched her attire, on some days wearing a guam, and on others she

dressed in a Dodgers baseball t-shirt and shorts, and of course the latest style incorporating socks with sandals. She called her long black hair, flexible toes, ukulele skills, laugh, and carefree attitude Marshallese and yet she referred to her height, lighter skin, nose, love for reading and scholarship, attention to detail, her English and even her voice as American as if they were the other side of the same coin.

Tai possessed a multi-national identity, an identity created by international experiences within the borders of her own nation. She accessed language, histories, and traditions from both cultures depending on her audience and purpose. While she operated within the constructs of traditional national containers to describe aspects of herself not all her qualities were identifiably discrete, they were something in between. She had developed a transnational identity that allowed for conceptualization of national identity as transactional, situational, and multiple beyond nationality to something experiential and shifting rather than static.

Experiencing the juxtaposition of the forces of transnationalism and globalization in the U.S. versus the Marshall Islands shaped my perspective of nationalism from a positive connotation of nationalism as public spirit to a parochial, xenophobic strategy of public policy used to promote imperialistic tendencies. Through this experience my conceptualization of national identity transformed from an extrinsic, static qualifier noting my nationality to an understanding of national identity as a process of belonging individually negotiated within society.

Transnational Perspective of National Identity Through Belonging as Process

Developing a sense of belonging frequented our discussions and this concept of belonging was the theme I determined from the iterative process of inquiry and analysis. I struggled with belonging as a foreigner on Santo. Tai balanced belonging between two cultures

and languages every day. The nature of our sense of belonging was centered around our national identities. I had assumed that national identity was synonymous with nationality and therefore a static qualifier. The experiences I had in the Marshall Islands challenged that notion of stable national identity as I felt I was situated between two nations attempting to occupy the same geographical space, witness to the segregation, cultural clash, and power structures that resulted and belonging to neither as I negotiated my national identity for the first time. This new space, a transnational space, widened my perspective of what national identity could mean as I explored what it meant for me to be an American. This was a disruption of my previous experience of national identity as singular and applied rather than dynamic; forcing a new way of thinking.

The more I challenged my own identity within this new place, the more I came to understand the normalcy of the transnational for Tai. She was born into a messy reality where the boundaries of her nation, culture, and language were blurred by a history of occupation, Western influence, and dependence on the U.S. The very presence of Richard and everything he embodied, as well as American teachers like me, were constants in her life that challenged her own sense of belonging and therefore national identity within the borders of her own nation. The theme of belonging was obvious as *a personal feeling, a sense of belonging* (Antonsich, 2010; Strayhorn, 2012; Youkhana, 2015; Yuval-Davis, 2006, 2011), but recognizing this as a theme within our narratives left another question; what is a sense of belonging in terms of relations and processes?

Belongingness is viewed as a fundamental motive driving human action (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Maslow, 1962; Morieson, Carlin, Clarke, Lukas, & Wilson, 2013), most often referred to as a “feeling of connectedness, that one is important or matters to others” (Rosenberg & McCullough, 1981, as cited in Strayhorn, 2012, p. 1). Strayhorn (2012) expands by framing

belonging “as a basic human need and motivation, sufficient to influence behavior...a feeling or sensation of connectedness, the experiences of mattering or feeling cared about, accepted, respected, valued by, and important to the group...[it] is relational, and thus there’s a reciprocal quality to relationships that provide a sense of belonging” (p. 3). Wimmer and Glick-Schiller (2006) point out that studies tend to consider belonging as a naturalized concept due to methodological nationalism wherein belonging is a self-evident term that subdivides nations and cultures. This naturalization of the term is prevalent, so much so that belonging has been used synonymously, or in association with identity and citizenship (Antonsich, 2010; Pfaff-Czarnecka, 2011; Yuval-Davis, 2011). Pfaff-Czarnecka (2011) explains how senses of belonging within such a perspective maintain social, cultural, and territorial boundaries and directly connect to the allocation of citizenship rights. This is “where feelings of place-belongingness” translate into “regimes of belonging” and constitute what is understood as the politics of belonging (Youkhana, 2015, p. 12).

The politics of belonging illuminate how notions of belonging are politically influenced, maintained, and organized, thus “the most influential political project of belonging remains the nation state” (Youkhana, 2015, p. 13) and other political arenas, be they religious, ethnic, or corporate, despite operating across national borders, are structured alongside the nation-state. It emphasizes a sense of national belonging and “how national belonging is legitimized and enacted” (Youkhana, 2015, p. 13). Therefore, the politics of belonging are as Yuval-Davis (2006) insisted, “the dirty work of boundary maintenance” (p. 204), as it is a “resource that can be used to draw social demarcations and establish border regimes” (p. 11). While the politics of belonging still exist in the Marshall Islands the “border regimes,” or rather the notion of the border as a clear-cut geopolitical division is blurred by the history of the Republic of the

Marshall Islands as once a U.S. territory and the continued convoluted nature of the nations' interconnectedness through the Compact of Free Association.

Because of these two issues, the concept of belonging as traditionally framed by methodological nationalism and the convoluted geopolitical nature of the Marshall Islands and the U.S., it was difficult to conceive of processes and relations related to “sense of belonging” from a transnational perspective. Belonging is clearly a process related to national identity formation, but determining how it was conceived of beyond politics of belonging, wherein nationalism was the ideology and people were related to national territories through citizenship (Isin & Turner, 2007; Yuval-Davis, 2011), to consider a transnational framework was difficult. Enter space-sensitive approaches to belonging that provide an understanding of aspects of belonging without specific ties to location or nationality. In such approaches “space” is socially constructed as opposed to a measurable boundary or an absolute. Lefebvre (1991) commented that, “the social is lived, perceived, and conceived in space,” (p. 335) thus people reflect power relations in constructions of belonging through everyday actions, which aligns with the autoethnographic methodology as focused on everyday lived experiences as informative. This understanding of belonging, while maintaining a critical approach acknowledging power relations, frees “sense of belonging” as subdividing nations and allows for a transnational approach to understanding belonging as relational across national boundaries, and allows for the development of a transnational identity.

In constructing belonging in a space-sensitive manner as a “resource that arises by means of multiple and situated appropriation processes” Youkhana (2015) incorporates three aspects critical to the materiality of belongingness (p. 16). The first comprises individual experience due to physical dispositions, internalized biographies, and enactments of belonging. The second

focuses on “tenure relations and the allocation of resources” including land, work, and information along with other material capital (Youkhana, 2015, p. 16). The third includes “objects/artefacts [sic] or material cultural productions, forms, and images,” of representation and signification that dictate agency and categorize people (Youkhana, 2015, p. 16). These three descriptions clarify how I have reconceptualized national identity as a process of belonging.

Within the autoethnography each of these aspects of belonging occur as I negotiate national identity, a process of finding belonging in a transnational space. An example of experience due to physical dispositions is evident in my personal experience as an assumed authority in education due to nationality and whiteness. In the moment that Lloyd referred to me as the expert, despite being a novice and ill-prepared teacher, simply because I was American I was forced to recognize the privileges I was given because of my physical characteristics and how I had embodied said privilege through a savior complex. In a broader sense, this aspect of belonging is distinguishable in the recognition of my national identity as interconnected to my own savior complex through a historical reality of imperialism. This forced a renegotiation of my national identity from one naïvely emphasizing philanthropy and humanitarianism as an internalized biography to one that recognized the history of the U.S. in the Marshall Islands. This recognition was followed by an enactment of belonging, or rather alienation as I refused to belong as American and condemned Richard as a scapegoat while working to distance myself from Roi and yet struggled to associate with Rimajels because I perceived my very presence as a representation of the hegemonic existence of the U.S.

An example of belonging as considered from perspective of tenure relations and the allocation of resources can be seen in my duty to bring the baby’s clothes to Roi and wash them using the washing machine, “Emeļokļok niñniñ nuknuk:” don’t forget the baby’s clothes, an

example InVivo code represents the relationship with my host family as a daughter and the expectation to use my privilege to benefit the family. As an American, I had the power and agency to access the base and resources on the base that were otherwise unavailable, limited, or difficult to access as a Marshallese person. This is just one example of many personal experiences reflecting controlled mobility on islands and limited access to resources due to nationality. It was something obvious in the description of the U.S. military bases in comparison to Enniburr. Freshly painted structures, perfectly manicured lawns, and white sand beaches on Kwaj and Roi compared to the mismatched shanties of recycled materials, dead coral walkways, and polluted beaches of Enniburr. Understanding the historical relocation of Marshallese to Ebeye and Enniburr and their daily transport to and from Roi for work as tenure relations keeping the Marshallese in a separate class, a second class, within the borders of their own nation was disrupting. This segregation so distinctly displayed the dominance of the American presence in a sovereign nation. Negotiating my belonging between the two spaces forced a consideration of what it meant to be American in this transnational space where the Marshallese have been perceived and maintained as a separate class since the onset of the RMI as a testing ground.

Lastly, the consideration of material cultural productions in consideration of belonging manifested most prominently in the form of language communities. Language was key to all social relations. Smith (1991) discusses the “central role that language plays in delimiting and shaping the selves that individuals can experience and enact” (p. 15). Language informs social relationships by constructing social reality; language does not reflect social reality it delimits individuals in society and thus defines power (Richardson, 1994). The national languages in the Marshall Islands are Marshallese and English. This indicates the power of English and promotes bilingualism because of the social and economic capital of the language. Despite often being

bilingual, the Marshallese language is used a signifier of difference categorizing Marshallese as others, and second-class. This arose within our retellings centering on belonging as two categories: language as divisive and language as fellowship. Language as divisive was a category that included codes denoting language related to superiority, intolerance, or ignorance. This included Richard referring to a bucket shower as *improper*, referencing Marshallese as *lazy*, remarks about Marshallese *taking advantage* of me, or people calling me *brave* for living on Enniburr. This use of language served to undermine the Marshallese as wrong, lesser, primitive, and disadvantaged. It implied a superiority of American work ethic, infrastructure, education and civility. Language as fellowship featured accounts of experiences where language was used to build relationships and understanding. Examples of this include Tai helping Gerti and I communicate with each other, Gerti being eager to teach me Marshallese and to learn English, me learning Marshallese from my students, and Tai and Leah referring to me as Rimajeļ a gesture of inclusion. The division between occurrences of language as divisive as typically used by Americans versus language as fellowship exemplified in Marshallese speech illustrates the existing power struggle. Recognition of the use of language as delimiting and encouraging an Us vs. Them perspective pressed an actuality that made me question my position as an English teacher and my belonging to a country that imposed such a narrative.

Implications of a Transnational Perspective of Belonging in Curriculum and Instruction

Applying the concept of belonging to national identity development, as it has been applied to other aspects of social identity, is important for the future of curriculum and instruction in an era of increasingly globalized education. The need to feel belonging is fundamental and dominates human motivation, depressing the significance of self-esteem and self-actualization (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). How individuals perceive themselves in relation

to others through social bonds or relationships, or lack thereof, governs how they think about power and potential (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Social connectedness, even the sense of belonging, correlates with cognitive performance and increased motivation to achieve (Baumeister, Twenge, & Nuss, 2002; Walton, Cohen, Cwir, & Spencer, 2012). Consequently, the relationship between belonging, national identity development, and academic success is direct.

The nation state allocates citizenship rights and nationalism generates a “feeling of loyalty” to national boundaries by the subjects of the nation, or nationals (Yuval-Davis, 2011, p. 81). As compulsory public education is a construct of the nation, curriculum and instruction are subject to the historical purpose of education, which is socialization (Barnard & Burner, 1975). Hence, the primary assumption underlying education is nationalism. Within the U.S., this history of socialization has targeted groups of people beginning with wealthy, white men and expanded to include other groups as societal perspectives on gender and race progressed. Regardless of the expanding inclusion in education, the central purpose remained to educate citizenry for democracy (Ellwood, 1920; Resnick, 2006). Historically, this *proper* education implied assimilation of language and culture and allegiance to the nation (Barnard & Burner, 1975).

As discussed previously, multiculturalism was the response to the growing diversity among nationals in a multicultural society. As a result, it remains a nation-centric tool by which to develop increased understanding within American society. This perspective often presents difference as positive while uniting people through a common nationality. The “formative practices,” as Danzinger (as cited in Ashmore & Jussim, 1997, p. 15) refers to them, of *technologies of self* (Foucault, 1988), which are socially constructed and institutionally supported processes with implications for permissible identities and language use that prescribe and confine

the identities that individuals imagine and possess within in the national context are not examined. The result is a rose-colored nationalist perspective that often oversimplifies concepts of identity and culture and does not acknowledge or attempt to address the history of socialization and assimilation present in education (Goebel & Schabio, 2010).

Nationality is a one-way street, a signifier assigned, usually at birth, whereas “national identity is a two-way street, involving a sense of them as well as a sense of us. It also involves thinking of oneself as not being someone, as much as being someone; that is, difference as well as similarity” (McCrone & Bechhofer, 2015, p. 17). The very nature of national identity is an Us versus Them dichotomy. Multiculturalism does not acknowledge the process of belonging, and tends to celebrate difference without recognizing or analyzing how physical appearance affects experience, how resources are allocated among groups of people, or how material productions such as language are used to oppress and categorize. Instead, it disregards difference within the nation. There is a fundamental disconnect between espoused multiculturalism and the assumption underlying education promoting nationalism. Smith (1991) stated, “A sense of national identity provides a powerful means of defining and locating individual selves in the world, through the prism of the collective personality and its distinctive culture” (p. 17). However, as America is a land of immigrants and is divisive politically as it continues to struggle with equality and equity it does not reflect a collective personality nor does it have a distinct culture, thus conceptualizing national identity beyond that of nationality is often difficult and the result is a monolithic conceptualization. Divergent national identities from groups within the nation serve to continually divide the country and perspectives such as anti-multiculturalist and nationalist arise stating that difference is convoluting national identity as a “mechanism for giving people a sense of individual and collective worth, without which they cannot function.”

(Smith, 1991, pp. 9-10). It is within such misguided understandings of difference that white nationalist platforms, centering rhetoric such as “Make America great again” take hold.

Understanding national identity development as a process of belonging centers difference of experiences, expectations, cultures, and languages to better understand social structures, challenge stable notions of monolithic national identity, recognize inequity and promote social critique, thereby reinforcing the ideological inclusivity of multiculturalism while grounding the development of national identity with the understanding of belonging as a feeling reflecting the material consequences of physical characteristics, allocation of resources, and language as power. This fosters multi-national identity through processes of acculturation, liberates constructs of identity and culture from the constraints of the nation, and centers people, networks, and ideas. Such a perspective allows for a critique of multiculturalism as practice while offering a tangible tool to address the issue of national identity development in education. This is pertinent to curriculum and instruction as using a transnational perspective of belonging to inform national identity development as individually constructed and potentially multiple allows for the recognition of diversity of people within the United States without diminishing the issues of difference such as racism, sexism, classism, and xenophobia in society.

This perspective could be used in education to develop students’ national identities by purposefully creating moments of disruption to address concepts of national identity as not only capable of celebrating difference, but also recognizing inequality and promoting social critique. It could be used in education to consider structural discrimination and power struggles as national and global problems, challenge the concept of nationalism, and expand movements for social change beyond national borders with a humanist rather than nationalist perspective. The significance of material consequences of physical characteristics within a context of curriculum

and instruction can be implemented as recognition of privilege as a counter narrative to internalized biography, which once detected can offer new understandings of relations between humans and enactments of belonging. Thus, it supports many current multiculturalist undertakings to center issues of privilege, bias, and socialization. However, the implementation of multiculturalism tends to uncover white privilege while leaving students in a suspended state of white guilt. This is where incorporation of the two other aspects of space-sensitive belonging can further the inclusive agenda of multiculturalism.

The significance of understanding belonging as tenure relations and allocation of resources and of language as power to curriculum and instruction lies in developing recognition of systems maintaining dominance and responsible for erasures of culture and language. A focus on advancing such understanding enables educators to address issues of privilege from an institutional perspective providing insight into relations preserving privilege by centering processes of difference and dominance rather than focusing on individual socialization and privilege. It becomes critical to examine the acceptable identities and the language that supports delimiting narratives if we intend to expand conceptualizations of national identity to better include multi- and trans- national experiences and attempt to address underlying assumptions inherent in education.

This understanding of developing national identity through the process of belonging by addressing the materiality of belonging may not be unique. However, finding this through the process of creating autoethnography has led me to new ways of thinking about national identity and nationalism as related to the field of education. Belonging is a richer framework for understanding identity that permits space to critique whiteness, imperialism and nationalism. It allows for perspective capable of examining the current trend of white nationalism in a nation-

state where *American* can mean so many different things that it is meaningless. Ultimately, it may remove the nation as the backdrop for education and expand curriculum and instruction to align with purposes reflecting the globalization of education.

Further Research

The consideration of using space-sensitive understandings of belonging as a transnational perspective to better understand national identity becomes increasingly important as globalization of education continues and internationalization increasingly affects the K-12 setting where nationalism is the backdrop and the purpose of education is to educate citizenry. As the population of students who identify as transnational grows, how will public education as an institution respond? This is an important question as it is already a reality for many students in the K-12 system, including Tai who came to America to go to high school. She can of course do this through the Compact of Free Association, but how does a national system support a transnational student? How do we prepare U.S. teachers to serve transnational students? How does a national curriculum affect Tai's national identity and concepts of nationalism? These are all important questions that I'd like to continue to explore in the future and that all constituents of education should begin to consider, and a transnational perspective regarding national identity development is vital for such consideration.

References

- Abo, T., Bender, B. W., Capelle, A., & DeBrum, T. (1976). Marshallese-English Online Dictionary. Retrieved from <http://www.trussel2.com/MOD/index.htm>
- Ackermann, E. (2001). Piaget's constructivism, Papert's constructionism: What's the difference? *Constructivism: Uses and Perspectives in Education*, 1–11. <http://doi.org/10.1.1.132.4253>
- Adams, G., & White, J. (1994). Dissertation research in public administration and cognate fields: An assessment of methods and quality. *Public Administration Review*, 54(6), 565–576.
- Adams, T. E. (2008). A review of narrative ethics. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 14(2), 175–194.
- AERA. (2009). Standards for reporting on empirical social science research in AERA publications: American Educational Research Association. *Educational Researcher*, 38(6), 481–486. <http://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X035006033>
- Agee, J. (2009). Developing qualitative research questions: A reflective process. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 22(4), 431–447. <http://doi.org/10.1080/09518390902736512>
- Alperovitz, G., Tree, S., Winstead, E. R., Morris, K. C., David J, W., Maley III, L. C., ... Grieder, M. (1996). *The decision to use the atomic bomb*. New York: Random House.
- Altshuler, L., Sussman, N. M., & Kachur, E. (2003). Assessing the changes in intercultural sensitivity among physician trainees using the Intercultural Development Inventory. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 27, 387–401.
- Antonsich, M. (2010). Searching for belonging: An analytical framework. *Geography Compass*, 4(6), 644–659.
- Archbald, D. (2008). Research versus problem solving for the education leadership doctoral thesis: Implications for form and function. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 44(5),

704–739. <http://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X07313288>

Archbald, D. (2010). “Breaking the mold” in the dissertation: Implementing a problem-based, decision-oriented thesis project. *The Journal of Continuing Higher Education*,

58(December), 99–107. <http://doi.org/10.1080/07377361003617368>

Archer, K. (2011). Transnationalism. In *21st century geography: A reference handbook* (pp. 197–206).

Arnove, R., & Torres, C. (Eds.). (2007). *In comparative education: The dialectic of the global and the local* (3rd ed.). New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Ashmore, R. D., & Jussim, L. (Eds.). (1997). *Self and identity*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Atwood, M. (1982). *Second words: Selected critical prose*. Toronto: Anansi.

Banks, J. (1994). Transforming the mainstream curriculum. *Educational Leadership*, May.

Barker, H. M. (2004). *Bravo for the Marshallese; Regaining control in a post-nuclear, post-colonial world*. Wadsworth/Thomson.

Barnard, J., & Burner, D. (1975). *The American experience in education*. New York: New Viewpoints.

Barone, T., & Eisner, E. W. (2012). What are some criteria for assessing arts based research?

Arts Based Research, 38, 145–156. <http://doi.org/10.1080/01411926.2012.664543>

Baumeister, R. F., & Leary, M. (1995). The need to belong: Desire for interpersonal attachment as a fundamental human motivation. *Psychological Bulletin*, 117, 497–529.

Baumeister, R., Twenge, J., & Nuss, C. (2002). Effects of social exclusion on cognitive processes: Anticipated aloneness reduces intelligent thought. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 83(4), 817–827.

- Beck, U. (2006). *Cosmopolitan vision*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Beck, U., & Sznaider, N. (2006). Unpacking cosmopolitanism for the social sciences: A research agenda. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 57(1), 1–23.
- Berelson, B. (1960). *Graduate education in the US*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Bhattacharya, K. (2007). *Introduction to qualitative methods: A student handbook*. Memphis: University of Memphis.
- Bhattacharya, K. (2009). Negotiating shuttling between transnational experiences: A de/colonizing approach to performance ethnography. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 15(6), 1061–1083. <http://doi.org/10.1177/1077800409332746>
- Bhattacharya, K. (2013). Voices, silences, and telling secrets: The role of qualitative methods in arts-based research, 6(4), 604–627. <http://doi.org/10.1525/irqr.2013.6.4.604>. VOICES
- Bhattacharya, K. (2015). Coding is not a dirty word: Theory-driven data analysis using Nvivo. In S. Hai-Jew (Ed.), *Enhancing Qualitative and Mixed Methods Research with Technology* (pp. 1–30). Hershey: Information Science Reference.
- Billig, M. (1995). *Banal nationalism*. Sage Publications. London.
- Blumer, H. (1969). *Symbolic interaction: Perspective and method*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.
- Boyer, E. (1990). *Scholarship reconsidered: Priorities of the professoriate*. New York: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement for Teaching.
- Boylorn, R. M., & Orbe, M. P. (Eds.). (2014). *Critical autoethnography: Intersecting cultural identities in everyday life*. Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press.
- Braxton, J. (2005). Reflections on a scholarship of practice. *The Review of Higher Education*, 28(2), 285–293.

- Bridges, E., & Hallinger, P. (1995). *Implementing problem-based learning in leadership development*. Eugene: University of Oregon, ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management.
- Briggs, L., McCormick, G., Way, J. T., & Way, T. (2008). Transnationalism: A category of analysis. *American Quarterly*, 60(3), 625–648.
- Brown, S. (2013). Archaeology of brutal encounter: Heritage and bomb testing on Bikini Atoll, Republic of the Marshall Islands. *Archaeology in Oceania*, 48(1), 26–39.
<http://doi.org/10.1002/arco.5000>
- Browning, L. (2009). Narrative and narratology. In S. W. Littlejohn & K. A. Foss (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of communication theory* (pp. 673–677). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Burdell, P., & Swadener, B. B. (1999). Critical personal narrative and autoethnography in education: Reflections in everyday life. *Educational Research*, 28(6), 21–26.
- Butera, A. C. (2001). Assimilation, pluralism and multiculturalism: The policy of racial/ethnic kidentity in America. *Buffalo Human Rights Law Review*, 1–21.
- Cann, C. N., & DeMeulenaere, E. J. (2012). Critical co-constructed autoethnography. *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies*, 12(2), 146–158.
<http://doi.org/10.1177/1532708611435214>
- Caulley, D. N. (2008). Making qualitative research reports less boring: The techniques of writing creative nonfiction. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 14(3), 424–449.
<http://doi.org/10.1177/1077800407311961>
- Central Intelligence Angecy. (2017). The world factbook: Marshall Islands. Retrieved from <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/rm.html>
- Chase, S. (2005). Narrative inquiry: Multiple lenses, approaches, voices. In N. K. Denzin & Y.

- S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 651–679). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Cheney, T. A. R. (2001). *Writing creative nonfiction: Fiction techniques for crafting great nonfiction*. Berkeley: Ten Speed Press.
- Chow, P., & Bhandari, R. (2012). *Open doors 2012: Report on international educational exchange*. New York.
- Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, M. (2000). *Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research*. San Francisco: JosseyBass.
- Clandinin, D. J., & Huber, J. (2002). Narrative Inquiry: Toward understanding life's artistry. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 32(2002), 161–169. <http://doi.org/10.1111/1467-873X.00220>
- Clavin, P. (2005). Defining transnationalism. *Contemporary European History*, 14(4), 421–439.
- Cohen, A. D., Paige, R. M., Shively, R. L., Emert, H. A., & Hoff, J. G. (2005). *Maximizing study abroad through language and culture strategies: Research on students, study abroad program professionals, and language instructors: Final Report to the International Research and Studies Program, Office of International Education, DOE*. Minneapolis.
- Connelly, F. M., & Clandinin, D. J. (1990). Stories of experience and narrative inquiry. *Educational Researcher*, 19(5), 2–14. <http://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X019005002>
- Connelly, F. M., & Clandinin, D. J. (2006). Narrative inquiry. In *Complementary methods for research in education* (pp. 477–488).
- Cooley, C. H. (1902). *Human nature and the social order*. New York: Scribner's.
- Courage, D. (2012). Beyond illusion of inclusion: Implications for education in culturally diverse societies: Perspectives from Canadian experience. In H. K. Wright (Ed.), *Precarious international multicultural education: Hegemony, dissent, and rising alternatives* (pp. 187–

- 218). Boston: Sense Publishers.
- Cowen, R. R. (2015). Comparative education: Stories, silences, and siren songs. *Comparative Education*, 50(1), 3–14.
- Crossley, M. (1999). Reconceptualising comparative and international education. *Compare*, 29(3), 249–267.
- Crossley, M., & Tikly, L. (2004). Postcolonial perspectives and comparative and international research in education: A critical introduction. *Comparative Education*, 40(2), 147–156.
- Crossley, M., & Watson, K. (2003). *Comparative and international research in education: Globalisation, context and difference*. Routledge.
- Crotty, M. (1998a). Constructionism: The Making of Meaning. *The Foundations of Social Research: Meaning and Perspective in the Research Process*, 42–65.
<http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-0691.2011.03558.x/pdf>
- Crotty, M. (1998b). Introduction: The research process. In *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process* (p. 256).
- Crowder, G. (2008). Pluralism and multiculturalism. *Society*, 45(3), 247–252.
<http://doi.org/10.1007/s12115-008-9089-1>
- Cummings, W. K. (1999). The institutions of education: Compare, compare, compare! *Comparative Education Review*, 43(4), 413–437.
- Cushner, K., McClelland, A., & Safford, P. (1996). *Human diversity in education: An integrative approach* (2nd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- DeJaeghere, J. G., & Cao, Y. (2009). Developing U.S. teachers' intercultural competence: Does professional development matter? *Imperial Journal of Interdisciplinary Research*, 33, 437–447.

- Delpit, L. (1995). *Other people's children*. New York: New Press.
- Denzin, N. K. (1997). *Interpretive ethnography: Ethnographic practices for the 21st century*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Denzin, N. K., Lincoln, Y., & Rolling, J. H. (2006). Special issue on autoethnography, critical race theory, and performance studies. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *12*, 427–429.
<http://doi.org/10.1002/elps.201470103>
- Doctor, M., & Montgomery, L. (2010). *Using IDI Guided Development to maximize the study abroad experience: A case study*. Minneapolis.
- Dolby, N., & Rahman, A. (2008). Research in international education. *Review of Educational Research*, *78*(3), 676–726.
- Duffy, M. E., Farmer, S., Ravert, P., & Huittinene, L. (2003). Institutional issues in the implementation of an international student exchange program. *Journal of Nursing Education*, *42*(9), 399–405.
- Duke, N. K., & Beck, S. W. (1999). Education should consider alternative formats for the dissertation. *Educational Researcher*, *28*(3), 31–36.
- Dunlop, R. (2002). A story of her own: Female bildungsroman as arts-based educational research. *The Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, *XLVI*(3), 215–228.
- Ellis, C. (2004). *The ethnographic I: A methodological novel about autoethnography*. New York: Alta Mira Press.
- Ellis, C. (2007). Telling secrets, revealing lives: Relational ethics in research with intimate others. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *13*, 3–29.
- Ellis, C., Adams, T., & Bochner, A. P. (2011). Autoethnography: An overview. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, *12*(1).

- Ellwood, C. (1920). Education for citizenship in a democracy. *American Journal of Sociology*, 26(1), 73–81.
- Embassy of the Republic of the Marshall Islands. (2015a). Culture. Retrieved from <http://www.rmiembassyus.org/Culture.htm>
- Embassy of the Republic of the Marshall Islands. (2015b). Economy.
- Embassy of the Republic of the Marshall Islands. (2015c). *Education*. Washington DC. Retrieved from <http://www.rmiembassyus.org/Education.htm>
- Embassy of the Republic of the Marshall Islands. (2015d). *Geography*. Washington DC. Retrieved from <http://www.rmiembassyus.org/Geography.htm>
- Embassy of the Republic of the Marshall Islands. (2015e). *Nuclear issues*. Washington DC. Retrieved from [http://www.rmiembassyus.org/Nuclear Issues.htm#Listing](http://www.rmiembassyus.org/Nuclear%20Issues.htm#Listing)
- Epstein, E. H., & Carroll, K. T. (2005). Abusing ancestors: Historical functionalism and the postmodern deviation in comparative education. *Comparative Education Review*, 49(1), 62–88.
- Este, D. (2005). Multiculturalism. In J. Herrick & P. Stuart (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Social Welfare History in North America* (pp. 244–246). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Ezzy, D. (1998). Theorizing narrative identity: Symbolic interactionism and hermenutics. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 39(2), 239–252.
- Favell, A. (2005). Assimilation/Integration. In R. Hansen & M. Gibney (Eds.), *Immigration and Asylum: From 1900 to the present*. Michigan: University of Michigan.
- Feuer, L. S. (1991). From pluralism to multiculturalism. *Society*, 29(1), 19–22.
- Fieser, J., & Dowden, B. (n.d.). Multiculturalism. In *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.
- Flick, U. (2009). *An introduction to qualitative research* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage

Publications.

- Foucault, M. (1988). *Technologies of the self*. Boston: University of Massachusetts Press.
- Four Arrows, J. (2008). *The authentic dissertation: Alternative ways of knowing, research, and representation*. New York: Taylor & Francis Inc.
- Frank, K. (2000). "The management of hunger": Using fiction in writing anthropology. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 6(4), 474–488. <http://doi.org/10.1177/107780040000600404>
- Franken, M. (2012). Re-situation for international students "becoming" researchers. *International Journal of Higher Education*, 64, 845–859.
- Fraser, N. (2009). *Scales of justice: Reimagining political space in a globalizing world*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Friedman, M., & Schulterman, S. (2011). *Growing up transnational: Identity and kinship in a global era*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Gersten, R. (1998). *Promoting learning for culturally and linguistically diverse students: Classroom applications from contemporary research*. University of California: Wadsworth.
- Giroux, H. A. (1994). Insurgent multiculturalism and the promise of pedagogy. In D. T. Goldberg (Ed.), *Multiculturalism: A Critical Reader*. Blackwell.
- Gitlin, T. (1995). *The twilight of common dreams: Why America is wracked by culture wars*. New York: Metropolitan Books.
- Gleason, P. (1983). Identifying identity: A semantic history. *Journal of American History*, 69, 910–931.
- Goebel, W., & Schabio, S. (2010). *Locating transnational ideals*.
- Golde, C., Bueschel, A., Jones, L., & Walkern, G. (2006). *Apprenticeship and intellectual community: Lessons from the Carnegie initiative on the doctorate*. New York: Carnegie

Foundation.

- Golde, C. M., & Dore, T. M. (2001). *At cross purposes: What the experiences of today's doctoral students reveal about doctoral education*. Philadelphia: Pew Charitable Trusts.
- Goodall, B. (2001). *Writing the new ethnography*. Walnut Creek: AltaMira.
- Greene, M. (1993). The passions of pluralism, multiculturalism and the expanding community. *Educational Researcher*, 22(1), 13–18. <http://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X022001013>
- Grinyer, A., & Thomas, C. (2012). The value of interviewing on multiple occasions or longitudinally. In *The Sage handbook of interview research: The complexity of the craft* (pp. 219–230).
- Guillemin, M., & Gillam, L. (2004). Ethics, reflexivity, and “ethically important moments” in research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 10(2), 261–280. <http://doi.org/10.1177/1077800403262360>
- Halstead, B. (1988). The thesis that won't go away. *Nature*, (331), 497–498.
- Hansel, B., & Chen, Z. (2008). *AFS long term impact study report 2: Looking at intercultural sensitivity, anxiety, and experience with other cultures*. New York: AFS International.
- Harreveld, R. E. (2012). Repositioning multiculturalism in teacher education policy and practice: A case for cosmopolitan capabilities. In H. K. Wright (Ed.), *Precarious international multicultural education: Hegemony, dissent, and rising alternatives* (pp. 259–276). Boston: Sense Publishers.
- Henry, A. (2012). The problematics of multiculturalism in a post-racial America: Notes from an anti-multiculturalist. In H. K. Wright (Ed.), *Precarious international multicultural education: Hegemony, dissent, and rising alternatives* (pp. 41–60). Boston: Sense Publishers.
- Hess, J. D. (2007). *Land rights and identity in the Marshall Islands: Displacement and*

- migration*. Retrieved from Retrieved from ProQuest (UMI 1445144)
- Hewitt, R. (2005). *White backlash and the politics of multiculturalism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hirsch, Jr., E. D. (1987). *Cultural literacy*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Hoffman, D. M. (1999). Culture and comparative education: Toward decentering and recentering the discourse. *Comparative Education Review*, 43(4), 464–488.
- Howe, K. R. (2009). Epistemology, methodology, and education sciences: Positivist dogmas, rhetoric, and the education science question. *Educational Researcher*, 38(6), 428–440.
<http://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X09342003>
- Howe, K. R., Kiste, R. C., & Lal, B. V. (Eds.). (1994). Pre-colonial times. In *Tides of History: The Pacific Islands in the Twentieth Century* (pp. 3–28). Sydney: Allen and Unwin.
- Hsu, H. (2009). The end of white America. *The Atlantic Monthly*.
- Isaac, P. D., Quinlan, S. V., & Walker, M. M. (1992). Faculty perceptions of the doctoral dissertation. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 63(3), 241–268.
- Isin, E., & Turner, B. (2007). Investigating citizenship: An agenda for citizenship studies. *Citizenship Studies*, 11(1), 5–17.
- Jenkins, R. (2008). *Social identity* (3rd ed.). London: Routledge.
- Jucan, M. (2010). Cultural pluralism and the issue of American Identity in Randolph Bourne's "Trans-National America." *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, 9(26), 203–219.
- Kaplan, C., Alarcon, N., & Moallem, M. (1999). *Between woman and nation: Nationalisms, transnational feminisms, and the state*.
- Kempster, S., Stewart, J., & Parry, K. W. (2008). Exploring co-produced autoethnography.

- Khagram, S. (2012). Transnationalism. In *The Wiley-Blackwell encyclopedia of globalization* (pp. 2037–2044).
- Kim, J. H. (2006). For whom the school bell tolls: Conflicting voices inside an alternative high school. *International Journal of Education and the Arts*, 7(6), 1–19.
- Kim, J. H. (2012). Understanding the lived experience of a Sioux Indian male adolescent: Toward the pedagogy of hermeneutical phenomenology in education. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 44(6), 630–648. <http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-5812.2010.00733.x>
- Kim, J. H. (2016). *Understanding Narrative Inquiry: The crafting and analysis of stories as research*. Singapore: Sage Publications.
- Klages, M. (2012). *Key terms in literary theory*. New York: Continuum.
- Kondakci, Y. (2011). Student mobility reviewed: Attraction and satisfaction of international students in Turkey. *Higher Education*, 62, 573–592.
- Koskinen, L., & Tossavainen, K. (2004). Relationships with undergraduate nursing exchange students: A tutor's perspective. *International Journal of Nursing*, 10(3), 111–120.
- Kramp, M. K. (2004). Exploring life and experience through narrative inquiry. In K. de Marrais & S. D. Lapan (Eds.), *Foundations of research: Methods of inquiry in education and the social sciences* (pp. 103–122). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Kymlicka, W. (2009). *Multicultural odysseys: Navigating the new international politics of diversity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- La Brack, B. (1993). The missing linkage: The process of integratig orientation and reentry. In R. M. Paige (Ed.), *Education for the Intercultural Experience*. Nicholas Brealey Publishing.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). Toward a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. *American Educational Research Journal*, 32(3), 465–491.

- Lane, P., & de Brum-Abraham, S. A. (2005). *The Republic of the Marshall Islands education for all mid-decade assessment*.
- Lazreg, M. (2001). Decolonizing feminism. In K. Bhavnani (Ed.), *Feminism and "Race"* (pp. 281–296). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Lefebvre. (1991). *The production of space*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Levitt, T. (1983). The globalization of markets. *Readings in International Business: A Decision Approach*, 249.
- Ley, D. (2009). *Transnationalism*. Vancouver: Elsevier.
- MacCormick, N. (1996). Liberalism, nationalism and the post-sovereign state. *Political Studies*, 44, 553–567.
- Malen, B., & Prestine, N. (2005). The case for revitalizing the dissertation. *UCEA Review*, 7–9.
- Malewski, E., & Phillion, J. (2009). Making room in the curriculum: The raced, classed, and gendered nature of preservice teachers' experiences studying abroad. *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing*, 25(3), 48–67.
- Mallon, R. (2013). Approaches to social construction. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 1–17.
- Marginson, S. (2014). Student self-formation in international education. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 18(1), 6–22. <http://doi.org/10.1177/1028315313513036>
- Marginson, S., & Mollis, M. (2001). "The door opens and the tiger leaps": Theories and reflexivities of comparative education for a global millennium. *Comparative Education Review*, 45(4), 581–615.
- Marx, H., & Moss, D. M. (2011). Please mind the gap: Intercultural development during a teacher education study abroad program. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 62(1), 35–47.

- Maslow, A. H. (1962). *Toward a psychology of being*. New York: von Nostrand Reinhold.
- Matus, C., & McCarthy, C. (2003). The triumph of multiplicity and the carnival of difference: curriculum dilemmas in the age of postcolonialism and globalization. In M. Pinar (Ed.), *International Handbook of Curriculum Research*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Mayo, P. (2004). *Liberating praxis: Paulo Freire's legacy for radical education and politics*. Westport: Praeger Publishers.
- McAdams, D. P. (1988). *Power, intimacy and the life story: Personological inquiries into identity*. New York: Guilford.
- McCrone, D., & Bechhofer, F. (2015). *Understanding national identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- McLaren, P., & Ryoo, J. J. (2012). Revolutionary critical pedagogy against capitalist multicultural education. In H. K. Wright (Ed.), *Precarious international multicultural education: Hegemony, dissent, and rising alternatives* (pp. 61–82). Boston: Sense Publishers.
- Mead, G. H. (1934). *Mind, self, and society from the standpoint of a social behaviorist*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Miller, D. (1995). *On nationality*. Oxford University Press.
- Mills, C. W. (1959). *Wright: The sociological imagination*. New York.
- Morieson, L., Carlin, D., Clarke, B., Lukas, K., & Wilson, R. (2013). Belonging in education: Lessons from the Belonging Project. *The International Journal of the First Year in Higher Education*, 4(2), 87–96.
- Mosselson, J. (2010). Subjectivity and reflexivity: Locating the self in research on dislocation.

International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 23(4), 479–494.

<http://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2010.492771>

NAFSA. (n.d.). *Explore international education: Trends in U.S. study abroad*. Retrieved from http://www.nafsa.org/Explore_International_Education/Advocacy_And_Public_Policy/Study_Abroad/Trends_in_U_S_Study_Abroad/

Neito, S. (2009). Multicultural education in the United States: Historical realities, ongoing challenges, and transformative possibilities. In J. Banks (Ed.), *The Routledge international companion to multicultural education* (pp. 79–95). New York: Routledge Taylor Francis Group.

Nelson, J. K., & Coorough, C. (1994). Content analysis of the PhD versus EdD dissertations. *Journal of Experimental Education*, 62(6), 158–168.

Niedenthal, J. (1997). A history of the people of Bikini following nuclear weapons testing in the Marshall Islands: With recollections and views of elders of Bikini Atoll. *Health Physics*. Retrieved from <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/9199216>

Nieto, S. (2009). Multicultural education in the United States: Historical realities, ongoing challenges and transformative possibilities. In J. Banks (Ed.), *The Routledge International Companion to Multicultural Education* (pp. 79–95). New York: Routledge Taylor Francis Group.

Nieto, S. (2010). *The light in their eyes: Creating multicultural learning communities*. Teachers College Press (10th ed.). New York.

Nieto, S., Bode, P., Kang, E., & Raible, J. (2008). Identity, community, and diversity: Retheorizing multicultural curriculum for the postmodern era. In *The Sage Handbook of Curriculum and Instruction* (pp. 176–197).

- Noah, H. J., & Eckstein, M. A. (1969). *Toward a science of comparative education*. London: Macmillan Company.
- Nyquist, J. (2002). The PhD: A tapestry of change for the 21st century. *Change*, 13–20.
- O'Brien, P. (1995). The reform of the doctoral dissertations in humanities and social studies. *Harvard Education Review*, 28(1), 3–19.
- Osborne, A. B. (1996). Practice into theory into practice: Culturally relevant pedagogy for students we have marginalized and normalized. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, 27(3), 285–314.
- Ozdowski, S. (2004). Human rights and multiculturalism. Retrieved from http://www.hrec.gov.au/human_rights/children
- Paige, R. M., Cohen, A. D., & Shively, R. L. (2004). Assessing the impact of a strategies-based curriculum on language and culture learning abroad. *The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 10, 253–276.
- Pederson, S. N. (2013). To be welcome: A call for narrative interviewing methods in illness contexts. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 19(6), 411–418. <http://doi.org/10.1177/1077800413482099>
- Pence, K., & Zimmerman, A. (2012). Transnationalism. *German Studies Review*, 35(3), 495–500.
- Peshkin, A. (1988). In search of subjectivity-One's own. *Educational Researcher*, 10, 17–21.
- Pfaff-Czarnecka, J. (2011). From “identity” to “belonging” in social research: Plurality, social boundaries, and the politics of the self. In S. Albiez, N. Castro, L. Jussen, & E. Youkhana (Eds.), *Etnicidad, ciudadanía y pertenencia: Prácticas, teoría y dimensiones especiales* (pp. 197–218). Madrid: Iberoamericana, Vervuert.
- Phinney, J. S. (1990). Ethnic identity in adolescents and adults. *Psychological Bulletin*, 108(3).

- Pike, G. (2015). Re-imagining global education in the neoliberal age: Challenges and opportunities. In R. Reynolds, D. Bradbery, J. Brown, K. Carroll, D. Donnelly, K. Ferguson-Patrick, & S. Macqueen (Eds.), *Contesting and constructing international perspectives in global education* (pp. 11–25). Boston: Sense Publishers.
- Pillow, W. (2003). Confession, catharsis, or cure? Rethinking the uses of reflexivity as methodological power in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 16(2), 175–196. <http://doi.org/10.1080/0951839032000060635>
- Polkinghorne, D. (1995). Narrative configuration in qualitative analysis. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 8(1), 5–23.
- Portes, A., Guarnizo, L. E., & Landolt, P. (1999). The study of transnationalism: Pitfalls and promise of an emergent research field. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 22(2), 217–237. <http://doi.org/10.1080/014198799329468>
- Quicke, J. (2010). Narrative strategies in educational research: Reflections on a critical autoethnography. *Educational Action Research*, 18(2), 239–254. <http://doi.org/10.1080/09650791003741582>
- Rahatzad, J., Sasser, H. L., Phillion, J., Karimi, N., Deng, Y., Akiyama, R., & Sharma, S. (2013). Postglobal teacher preparation: Border thinking along the global south through international cross-cultural experiences. *International Journal of Multicultural Education*, 15(3), 76–96.
- Ramsey, P., Williams, L. R., & Vold, E. (2003). *Multicultural education: A source book*. Routledge.
- Reissman, C. K. (2008). *Narrative methods for the human sciences*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Resnick, M. A. (2006). *An American imperative: Public education*.

- Reynolds, L. T., & Herman-Kinney, N. J. (Eds.). (2003). *Handbook of symbolic interactionism*. Walnut Creek: Alta Mira Press.
- Rhodes, R. L., Ochoa, S. H., & Ortiz, S. O. (2005). *Assessing culturally and linguistically diverse students: A practical guide*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Richardson. (2003). The PhD in education. In C. Golde, A. Bueschel, L. Jones, & G. Walkern (Eds.), *Apprenticeship and intellectual community: Lessons from the Carnegie initiative on the doctorate*. New York: Carnegie Foundation.
- Richardson, L. (1994). Writing: A method of inquiry. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 516–529). Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Riehl, C., Larson, C., Short, P., & Reitzug, U. (2000). Reconceptualizing research and scholarship in educational administration: Learning to know, knowing to do, doing to learn. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 36(6), 391–427.
- Rosenberg, M., & McCullough, B. C. (1981). Mattering: Inferred significance and mental health among adolescents. *Research in Community Mental Health*, 2, 163–182.
- Russ, E. (2013). Transnationalism. In Bost, S. & F. Aparicio (Eds.), *The Routledge companion to Latino/a literature* (pp. 172–181). New York: Routledge.
- Sahin, M. (2008). Cross-cultural experience in preservice teacher education. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 24(7), 1777–1790.
- Saldaña, J. (2013). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (2nd ed.). Los Angeles: Sage.
- Schiller, N. G., Basch, L., & Blanc-Szanton, C. (1992). Towards a definition of transnationalism. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 645, ix–xiv.
- Schlesinger, Jr., A. M. (1992). *The disuniting of America: Reflections on a multicultural society*. New York: Norton.

- Schweisfurth, M., & Phillips, D. (2014). How comparative education has developed: A brief history. In *Comparative and International Education: An Introduction to Theory, Method and Practice* (2nd ed., pp. 25–40).
- Sermijn, J., Devlieger, P., & Loots, G. (2008). The narrative construction of the Self: Selfhood as a rhizomatic story. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *14*, 632–650.
<http://doi.org/10.1177/1077800408314356>
- Sharma, S., Phillion, J., & Malewski, E. (2011). Examining the practice of critical reflection for developing pre-service teachers' multicultural competencies: Findings from a study abroad program in Honduras. *Issues in Teacher Education*, *20*(2), 9–22.
- Shidmehr, N. (2012). Towards a new politics of recognition: Multiculturalism and assemblages of Iranian-Canadian identities. In H. K. Wright (Ed.), *Precarious international multicultural education: Hegemony, dissent, and rising alternatives* (pp. 83–102). Boston: Sense Publishers.
- Simon, S. I. (1997). A brief history of people and events related to atomic weapons testing in the Marshall Islands.
- Skinner, H., & Kubacki, K. (2007). Unravelling the complex relationship between nationhood, national and cultural identity, and place branding. *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, *3*(4), 305–316. <http://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.pb.6000072>
- Sleeter, C. (1994). White racism. *Multicultural Education*, *1*(4), 5–8.
- Smith, A. D. (1991). *National identity*. University of Nevada Press.
- Social Issues Research Centre. (2007). *Belonging*. Oxford.
- Song, J. (2011). Globalization, children's study abroad, and transnationalism as an emerging context for language learning: A new task for language teacher education. *TESOL*

- Quarterly*, 45(4), 749–758. <http://doi.org/10.5054/tq.201>
- Spring, J. (2008). Research on globalization and education. *Review of Educational Research*, 78(2), 330–363.
- Straubhaar, R. (2015). The stark reality of the “white saviour” complex and the need for critical consciousness: A document analysis of the early journals of a Freirean educator. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 45(3), 381–400. <http://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2013.876306>
- Strauss, A. (1990). *Qualitative analysis for social scientists*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Strayhorn, T. (2012). *College students’ sense of belonging: A key to educational success for all students*. New York: Routledge.
- Stromquist, N. (2002). *Education in a globalized world: The connectivity of economic power, technology, and knowledge*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1979). An integrative theory of intergroup conflict. *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, 33(47).
- Tamir, Y. (1993). *Liberal nationalism*. Princeton University Press.
- Tange, H., & Kastberg, P. (2013). Coming to terms with “double knowing”: An inclusive approach to international education. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 17(1), 1–14.
- Tracy, S. J. (2010). Qualitative quality: Eight “big-tent” criteria for excellent qualitative research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 16(10), 837–851. <http://doi.org/10.1177/1077800410383121>
- U.S. Department of Interior. (1987). *Integrated renewable resource management for U.S. insular areas: Office of Technology Assessment*. Washington D.C.

- U.S. Department of State. (2014). U.S.-Marshall Islands relations. Retrieved from <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/26551.htm>
- U.S. Department of State. (2015). U.S. relations With Marshall Islands: Bureau of East Asian and Pacific affairs.
- UN Trusteeship Council. (1954). *Petition from the Marshallese people concerning the Marshall Islands*.
- Underwood, R. (2003). The amended U.S. Compacts of Free Association with the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands: Less free, more compact. *East-West Center*. <http://doi.org/10.1007/s13398-014-0173-7.2>
- UNESCO World Heritage Centre. (2015). Bikini Atoll nuclear test site: Historical description. Retrieved from <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1339%0D>
- Vande Berg, M., Paige, M., & Lou, K. H. (2012). *Student learning abroad: What our students are learning, what they're not, and what we can do about it*. Sterling: Stylus Publishing.
- Vertovec, S. (1999). Conceiving and researching transnationalism. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 22(2), 447–462. <http://doi.org/10.1080/014198799329558>
- Vonk, O. (2012). *Dual nationality in the European union: A study on changing norms in public and private international law and in the municipal laws of four EU member states*. Martinus Nijhoff Publishers.
- Vulliamy, G. (2004). The impact of globalisation on qualitative research in comparative and international education. *Compare*, 34(3), 261–284.
- Walters, L. M., Garri, B., & Walters, T. (2009). Learning globally, teaching locally: Incorporating international exchange and intercultural learning into pre-service teacher training. *Intercultural Education*, 20(sup1), S151–S158.

- Walton, G. M., Cohen, G. L., Cwir, D., & Spencer, S. J. (2012). Mere belonging: The power of social connections. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *102*(3), 513–532.
- Welch, A. R. (2001). Globalisation, post-modernity and the state: Comparative education facing the third millennium. *Comparative Education*, *37*(4), 475–492.
- Willinsky, J. (2012). What was multiculturalism? In H. K. Wright (Ed.), *Precarious international multicultural education: Hegemony, dissent, and rising alternatives* (pp. 15–40). Boston: Sense Publishers.
- Wilson, D. N. (1994). Comparative and international education: Fraternal or Siamese twins? A preliminary genealogy of our twin fields. *Comparative Education Review*, *38*(4), 449–486.
- Wimmer, A., & Glick-Schiller, N. (2006). Methodological nationalism and beyond: Nation-state building, migration, and the social sciences. *Global Networks*, *2*(4), 301–334.
- Winter, G. (2000). A comparative discussion of the notion of validity in qualitative and quantitative research. *Qualitative Report*, *4*(3). Retrieved from <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR4-3/winter.html>
- Wortham, S. E. F. (2001). *Narratives in action: A strategy for research and analysis*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Wright, H. K. (2008). Multiculturalism. In *Encyclopedia of Race and Racism* (pp. 321–323). Michigan Reference.
- Wright, H. K. (2012). Between global demise and national complacent hegemony: Multiculturalism and multicultural education in a moment of danger. In H. K. Wright (Ed.), *Precarious international multicultural education: Hegemony, dissent, and rising alternatives* (pp. 103–114). Boston: Sense Publishers.
- Wright, H. K., Singh, M., & Race, R. (2012). Multiculturalism and multicultural education:

- Precarious hegemonic status quo and alternatives. In H. K. Wright (Ed.), *Precarious international multicultural education: Hegemony, dissent, and rising alternatives* (pp. 3–13). Boston: Sense Publishers.
- Youkhana, E. (2015). A conceptual shift in studies of belonging and the politics of belonging. *Social Inclusion*, 3(4), 10–24.
- Yuval-Davis, N. (2006). Belonging and the politics of belonging. *Patterns and Prejudice*, 40(3), 197–214.
- Yuval-Davis, N. (2011). *The politics of belonging: Intersectional contestations*. London: Sage.

Appendix A - Operationalization of Constructs

Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI)

After gaining military control of the Marshall Islands from Japan in 1944, the United States assumed administrative control of the Marshall Islands under United Nations auspices as part of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands following the end of World War II. The Marshall Islands signed a Compact of Free Association with the United States in 1983 and gained independence in 1986 with the Compact's entry into force. From 1999-2003, the two countries negotiated an Amended Compact that entered into force in 2004. The Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) is a sovereign nation. While the government is free to conduct its own foreign relations, it does so under the terms of the Compact. The United States has full authority and responsibility for security and defense of the Marshall Islands, and the Government of the Marshall Islands is obligated to refrain from taking actions that would be incompatible with these security and defense responsibilities. The United States and the Marshall Islands have full diplomatic relations. Marshallese citizens may work and study without a visa, and they join the U.S. military at a higher rate than any U.S. state, but they are not U.S. nationals (U.S. Department of State, 2014).

Globalization

“Intensification and rapidity of movement and migration of people, ideas, and economic and cultural capital across national boundaries” (Matus & McCarthy, 2003, p. 73).

Autoethnography

“A research method that connects ‘the autobiographical and personal to the cultural, social, and political,’ (Ellis, 2004, p. xix), but its myriad forms and creative representations make it difficult to precisely define (Adams & Holman Jones, 2008; Bochner, 2012; Ellis & Bochner, 2000; Ellis,

2004)” (Boylorn & Orbe, 2014, p. 15). Autoethnography involves the “turning of the ethnographic gaze inward on the self (auto), while maintaining the outward gaze of ethnography, looking at the larger context wherein self experiences occur” (Denzin, 1997, p. 227).

Autoethnographers research themselves in relation to others (Boylorn & Orbe, 2014, p. 16) and this is therefore a method that allows for both personal and cultural critique (Boylorn & Orbe, 2014, p.17).

Critical autoethnography

A critical method used to: “understand the lived experiences of real people in context, to examine social condition and uncover oppressive power arrangements, and to fuse theory and action to challenge processes of domination” (Boylorn & Orbe, 2014, p. 20). It requires researchers to acknowledge subjectivities through reflexivity, recognize privileges and injustices within a lived domain, and address processes of unfairness as an ethical responsibility (Boylorn & Orbe. 2014).

International Education (as a practice)

A reform movement born of globalization, which suggests a movement away from nationalism as a tenet of education and toward an “exchange of knowledge, students, and professors between institution in different nations” (Pike, 2015, p. 13).

International Education (as a field of study)

Explores how the new dynamics of globalization affect analysis within the field of comparative international education. Concerned about the limits of comparative education as an approach that is focused on a positivist, scientific outlook on statistical data collected from different nation-states, internationalists concentrate on “examining national education systems within their political, cultural, social, and economic context” (Dolby & Rahman, 2008, p. 680).

Multiculturality

“The juxtaposition of various cultures in community or society” (Wright et al., 2012, p. 5).

Multiculturalism

Policy, pedagogy, education, and everyday practice concerning the issues of identity development and diversity accommodation within a national context (Willinsky, 2012; Wright et al., 2012).

Nationality

The legal status of belonging to a nation-state (Vonk, 2012), most often a descriptor naming the country within which a person is born.

Nationalism

“The nation state is the political project of nationalism and this is where that allocations of citizenship rights meets imaginations of national belonging and a “feeling of loyalty” within national boundaries (Yuval Davis, 2011, p. 81)” (as cited in Youkhana, 2015, p. 13).

National Identity

Distinct from nationality within a transnational perspective. National identity is regarded as “transactional and situationally flexible” (Jenkins, 2008, p. 124). It is not a noun or a fixed badge such as nationality. “We are the persons we came to be in the social settings and contexts in which we find ourselves, and whatever sense we have of our identity and character as persons reflects our interaction with significant others in our social setting” (MacCormick, 1996, p. 163). It is a two-way street that “involve[s] a sense of them as well as a sense of us. It involves thinking of oneself as not being someone, as much as being someone; that is, difference as well as similarity” (McCrone & Bechhofer, 2015, p. 17).

Transnationalism

A perspective acknowledging that migrant patterns and social relations have changed with the onset of globalization (Russ, 2013; Schiller et al., 1992; Vertovec, 1999) and that identity formation of individuals has transcended international political boundaries, effectively removing the nation state as a category of analysis (Klages, 2012; Pence & Zimmerman, 2012; Portes, Guarnizo, & Landolt, 1999; Schiller et al., 1992; Vertovec, 1999). Transnationalism centers human social relations as the correct unit of analysis, asserts that identities are fluid and multiple in individuals, and centers difference to contrast the seemingly ubiquitous nature implied of globalization (Briggs et al., 2008; Pence & Zimmerman, 2012; Portes et al., 1999).

Cultural Competencies

Abilities to recognize that personal worldviews are co-created within a particular context, in that experience and learning are shaped by this context and worldview in a habitual manner, and that worldviews and perspectives are multiple and that each is relatively true within its own context (Nieto, Bode, Kang, & Raible, 2008; Sharma et al., 2011; Vande Berg et al., 2012). In addition to reflexive abilities, the concept of cultural competency development is contingent upon gaining the capacities to shift cultural frames of reference, or consider multiple perspectives simultaneously, to challenge deeply engrained personal, cultural, and societal perspectives, and effectively employ these capacities to more effectively and appropriately consider cultural difference, increase willingness to interact with the culturally different, and to actively challenge misconceptions that promote discrimination (Nieto, 2009; Sharma et al., 2011; Vande Berg et al., 2012; Walters, Garri, & Walters, 2009).

Narratology

The “study and theory of narratives, or complex stories—what they are made of, how they are structured, and what we gain from using them as a vehicle for communication” (Browning, 2009, p. 673, as cited in Boylorn & Orbe, 2014, p. 27).

Narrative Inquiry

“The study of experience as story” (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). It is the process and product of research wherein narratives (stories) become the main source of data and the researcher’s interpretation (analysis) is the story told (product) (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006; Kramp, 2004; Wortham, 2001).

Creative Nonfiction

“Creative nonfiction involves writing nonfiction using fiction techniques... The word creative in creative nonfiction might imply that it does not keep to the facts, but the aim of creative nonfiction is to tell the truth, and this certainly applies in its application to writing qualitative research reports” (Caulley, 2008, p. 424).

Nontraditional Dissertation

Dissertation work that does not adhere to the traditional format or conventional rules and is often “critical of cultural and educational hegemony” (Four Arrows, 2008). Culminating graduate-level work capable of being innovative, authentic, and “honor[ing] the centrality of the researcher’s voice, experience, creativity and authority” (Four Arrows, 2008).

Appendix B - Email Solicitation and Informed Consent Forms

Direct Informant Email Solicitation

Dear Tai (pseudonym),

First, I want to describe what I am doing with you and why, then I'll give you an overview of your role should you decide to act as an informant for this research.

I have chosen to conduct the research for my dissertation (to finish my Ph.D. for school) using my experiences in the Marshall Islands to consider relations and processes that inform conceptualization of national identity by writing a story about the disruption of my stable national identity. The objective of this research is to be a qualitative, introspective, and autoethnographic work, which means that the real purpose is to uncover how the experiences during the time I spent in the Marshall Islands shaped how I view national identity and the concept of nationalism. It will be a story depicting my experience. However, to do this effectively, I want to speak with you about the time we shared, how you remember stories, events, and feelings, and your perception of the issues I was dealing with during my own identity crisis. Your perspective will add depth and perspective to my own story, and that is your primary role as an informant.

The primary method for collecting data will be informal conversational interview. Basically, we will have conversations over Skype. I might have certain questions to guide our conversation, but you can ask me questions, change the topic, tell me an interesting story, etc. It will not be an interview where I have a list of questions for you to answer. Rather we will have conversations and tell each other stories about what we remember while I was a volunteer. I will have a video recorder going to make recalling our conversations more accurate and easy to transcribe so that I

can look for themes in what we talk about, but I will always let you know when you are being recorded.

As I've already said, but it is very important for you to understand, I will be the only person that has access to any data, including our recorded conversations, and anything else used for the purposes of data collection. You must sign a waiver saying that you want to participate as an informant. And your guardian must also sign since you are under the age of eighteen. You will be able to review and comment on the findings from the data, which means you will know what I write and have a chance to add, change, approve, or disapprove before I any of the narrative is finalized. If there is something you do not like, or disagree with, it will not be included in the research. You will also be able to choose a pseudonym (fake name) that I will use to represent you within the resultant autoethnography. You can pick the pseudonym that you want me to use or I can pick one for you.

The attached consent form has more information regarding the research. There is no risk expected as an informant; however, if you experience discomfort or stress during our conversations, you may choose to discontinue your participation in the study without any penalty. If you are interested in being an informant in this study, please contact me at the information provided below.

Thank you for your consideration, Stephanie

Stephanie McCutcheon

Curriculum and Instruction, Kansas State University

smccutcheon@ksu.edu

(909) 562-2735

Informed Consent

Title of Study: The process of belonging: A critical autoethnographic exploration of national identity in transnational space.

Principal Investigator: Kakali Bhattacharya

Researcher: Stephanie McCutcheon

Institute: Kansas State University

Purpose of this research study: The purpose of this research is to learn about the relations and processes of teaching and learning abroad related to national identity development and concepts of nationalism. By critically examining my experience as a teacher abroad in the Marshall Islands and engaging in the retelling of experiences with you I will question the multiculturalist assumption of stable national identities and explore how we think of national identity and nationalism.

Procedures: The interaction with you through conversations is a way for me to understand my national identity juxtaposed with your experiences. The discussion our positions and differences will allow me to reflect on the power relations and structures of oppression in Marshall Islands as a transnational space, while widening my perspective through better understanding your experience in order to reflect on national identity disruption and conceptualization.

Possible risks or benefits: There is no risk involved in this study.

Right of refusal to participate and withdrawal: You are free to act as an informant in the study in any capacity that you feel comfortable. You are free to refuse to answer some or all questions, or end a conversation at any time for any reason. You may also withdraw as an informant at any time from the study.

Confidentiality: The information provided by you will remain confidential at your request. If

you request to maintain confidentiality, nobody except the principal investigator and researcher will have an access to your name and identity. However, the data, in the form of stories that you provide, and subsequent analysis of said data may be seen by the ethical review committee and may be published in journal and elsewhere without giving your name or disclosing your identity.

Available Sources of Information: If you have any further questions you may contact Principal Investigator, Kakali Bhattacharya, at kakalibh@ksu.edu, researcher, Stephanie McCutcheon, at smccutcheon@ksu.edu, IRB Committee Chair, Rick Scheidt, at rscheidt@k-state.edu or the University Research Compliance Office (URCO) Program Director, Heath Ritter, at hlr@k-state.edu.

AUTHORIZATION

I have read and understand this consent form, and I volunteer to assist as an informant in this research study. I understand that I will receive a copy of this form. I voluntarily choose to participate, but I understand that my consent does not take away any legal rights in the case of negligence or other legal fault of anyone who is involved in this study.

Informant's Name: _____

Informant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Guardian Name: _____

Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher's Signature: _____ Date: _____