LIVING HERE WITH LESSONS FROM THERE: COSMOPOLITAN CONVERSATIONS AFTER AN INTERNATIONAL SERVICE-LEARNING TRIP

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Abstract

This research looks at four participants' identity formation 3 years after their international service-learning (ISL) trip to Kenya. It focuses on life after ISL and the challenges of translating lessons learned abroad into meaningful action upon return. In the process, it speaks to participants' struggles in resisting social conformity, conflicts with opinions of friends and family, consequences of challenging the status quo, ambivalent and contradictory commitments, and cosmopolitan identity formation attaching them to multiple global locations beyond the local. Findings are threefold: 1) ISL trips provided experiences, stories, relationships, challenges, and opportunities that contribute to various identity narratives; 2) struggles and conflicts experienced upon return destabilized participants' sense of identity leading to, 3) an embodied cosmopolitan identity. Implications of these findings suggest educators recognize both the challenges and opportunities students may face when confronting hegemonic norms post-ISL.

Acknowledgements

This project has come to fruition with the help of some generous people. First, I must acknowledge my friends-turned-participants, who braved to tackle difficult questions and so genuinely entertained my provocations. Those in Kenya, particularly Mum, from whom we learned so much, thank you. The lessons I've learned from you all will last a lifetime. Thanks to the kind professors at York University's Faculty of Education who taught me so much. I am particularly indebted to Joy Mannette for encouraging me as she did and, of course my supervisor Dan Yon who patiently pushed me to think through this project from its inception. Finally, thank you Mom and Dad for all that you do.

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THE GUEST HOUSE[1]

This being human is a guest house,
every morning a new arrival.

A joy, a depression, a meanness,
some momentary awareness comes
as an unexpected visitor.

Welcome and entertain them all!
Even if they are a crowd of
sorrows,
who violently sweep your house
empty of its furniture,
still, treat each guest honorably.
He may be clearing you out
for some new delight.

The dark thought, the shame, the
malice,
meet them at the door laughing and
invite them in.

Be grateful for whatever comes,
because each has been sent
as a guide from beyond.

مهمانخانه

هست مهمانخانه این تن، ای جوان
هر صباحی ضیفِ نو آید در آن

نی، غلط گفتم که آید دم به دم
ضیف تازه، فکرت و شادی و غم

میزبانِ تازه رو شو، ای خلیل
در مبند و منتظر شو در سبیل

هر چه آید از جهانِ غیب وش
در دلت ضیف است، او را دار خَوش

هین مگو که ماند اندر گردنم
که هم اکنون باز پَرّد در عدم

[1] *By Mawlana Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, translated by Coleman Barks in Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, & Barks (1995). Original Farsi taken from Masnavi Book 5.*

Chapter 1: Setting the stage

1.1. Conceiving the research idea: A personal account

This research project is inspired by my personal experience of participating in four month-long international service-learning (ISL) trips to various countries. With each trip, I found myself in a different place with different languages, people, cultures, communities, and societies. I learned many important lessons from these trips, lessons I would not have learned otherwise. I made friendships, had fun, and learned to look at the world and myself differently in the process. I was also brought face-to-face with difficult social and political issues such as extreme poverty, gross inequality, disease, corruption, drug abuse, and aboriginal rights issues. While some of these issues do exist in Canada[1], I had not yet been aware of them and I had not encountered people experiencing them first hand. And so, I made friends with those who faced these issues in their daily lives. While our differences were vast, we tried to overcome them by sharing stories, meals, and laughter; by working and learning together; by disagreeing and arguing with one-another. To this day, I hold on to these memories and experiences fondly as significant life lessons.

But each departure accompanied an inevitable return. So, for instance, after working with HIV positive women and children in the slums of Kenya, I would return to my

suburban life working a retail job to cover university tuition. I found the re-acculturation[2] of return to be challenging, even more so than the initial transition into a host country. My views and perspectives on the world had shifted over the course of my stay. The lessons I learned about the significance of community and relationship-building, respect for elders, hospitality and care for the stranger, fair and just consumption, and an all-together different pace to life had become a new addition to my values. So when I returned, I realized that many of my new-found values were less emphasized, if at all present, in Toronto, the place I called home. I faced both internal conflict with my own shifting values, as well as external conflict with the opinions of friends, family, acquaintances, classmates, co-workers and the like.

Internally, I felt my long-held assumptions and ideals fall apart. Things I had not even considered or given second thought before my trips were now my primary concerns like my choices in eating locally-grown food, drinking fair trade coffee, and purchasing fairly made clothing. I quit my job at an athletic clothing store, which I enjoyed working in before my trips. Afterward, I could barely bring myself to go to work because of my new-found opposition to consumerism. I joined protests and demonstrations against

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[1] My realization of these issues in Canada only occurred upon return. It was not until I had travelled abroad and then returned that I realized, through the help and guidance of my teammates, particularly my team leader, that Canada too has a laundry list of social ills.

[2] For more on re-acculturation as it deals with identity formation, see Onwumechilia et al. (2003).

tuition fee hikes, wrote columns in my school newspaper about electoral reform and homelessness in Toronto. I organized a 'justice café' at my university in an attempt to bring together the various organizations on campus that also held social justice in high regard. I even began to dress and behave differently, forgoing parties at friends' houses in favour of more solitary pastimes. Altogether, I was beginning to subscribe to social justice ideals. My sense of self was beginning to shift.

As my internal changes manifested outwardly in my speech, behaviour, and appearance, I began to see resistance and witness its consequences. These seemingly abrupt changes in my behaviour, dress, vocabulary, and my overall personality were not always welcomed by my peers and those closest to me. While some failed to understand my new-found affinity for justice issues, others challenged my new beliefs. After all, I was not merely choosing a vegetarian plate for example, but admittedly I had an attached passion (often seen as arrogance by some) for my choices and I was not afraid to voice them. In hindsight, I did not voice my new beliefs with my peers' perspectives in mind. To me, my lessons and experiences abroad were all the justifications I needed to condemn what I saw as harmful and unjust.

For a while I maintained this passion, reigniting the flame by occupying myself with work related to my new passion, by keeping in touch with those I had met in these far away places, and by spending more time with my friends

with whom I had travelled to these places. These friends were the only ones who I felt could relate to my experiences, my passions, and my overall general disposition. Those who had not travelled with me just did not get it and only seemed polite listeners. Still, I felt little in the way of reciprocation.

Implementing lessons learned elsewhere in a place that did not seem to welcome them proved an exhaustive task. My opinions were not welcomed. I found I was being challenged, questioned, even mocked and ridiculed sometimes because of my new-found alien beliefs and commitments.[3] The challenges from peers seemed endless and soon I found myself not reverting to my old beliefs, but silencing my real ones. On occasions I would nervously anticipate conflict, especially when I ran into someone who I knew to hold beliefs that challenged mine. It became a regular exercise. Sometimes I would be overtaken by a fit of nostalgia, reminiscing about times where conflict was not the norm, when I did not need to be on the defensive; there was no need to silence myself. Soon, this act of self-silencing and self-masking became the norm. Although I never let go of my true desires, I found that voicing them was not worth the anxiety and conflict. I learned that the consequences of challenging the status quo

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[3] This tendency to reject or exclude, Ruitenberg (2005) argues, is just as much a part of the concept of community as its tendency to include. Thus the concept of community relies on exclusion for self-identification. Instead Ruitenberg pushes for a "community-to-come," similar to Martin Luther King's "beloved community" and Derrida's (1976) push for a community that "welcomes the stranger." My feeling of exclusion upon return was similar to this in that while I was not strange, my perspectives were.

were far greater than I had anticipated and something I was not prepared for. While part of me anticipated some resistance, I admit to a certain naivety that left me hoping for a positive reception to my new-found 'enlightenment.'

It has been roughly two and a half years since my last trip to Kenya [4] and I have since managed to negotiate differences in opinion with friends and peers. There are still times, though, when I find myself biting my tongue and keeping my frustrations and objections concealed in hopes of evading conflict. In conversing with my friends who also participated in ISL trips, I found I was not alone in this challenge. As such, I decided to interview my friends, compile their reflections, and hopefully come to address these challenges 3 years after return as they continue about their lives. I am curious to question what happens to these masked feelings and suppressed objections. Does the holder of these outlooks merely relinquish them and revert to those assumptions about the status quo? Or does it take on a different form? Can these dispositions live in a seemingly hostile hosting society? [5] Can one learn to evolve their beliefs about justice in a way that allows for its expression without offending the status quo of its host society? If so, how? At its core, this research is a personal quest to find ways of living in a place where my

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[4] This was not an organized trip through WYG, but one organized between a group of friends who wanted to return to APL.

[5] In the way that Ruitenberg (2005) expresses in the idea of a "community-to-come" that is welcoming to the stranger and the strange.

beliefs and perspectives are, at least to most people, alien or unwelcome.

1.2. Rationale: An ethical concern

Service-learning, both its international and domestic versions have become increasingly popular in recent years. World Youth Group (WYG), for example, the organization through which I have participated on these trips, sends out upwards of 150 students to various destinations locally, nationally and globally. WYG is a relatively small organization, but there are others like it that do similar work and gather far greater numbers of participants.[6]

Aside from the NGO/charity sector, service-learning has become a major means through which schools, both public and private, engage students with intricate concepts, complex ideas, and communities. In Ontario, Canada, 40 hours of community service have become a prerequisite for secondary school graduation. A heavy aim of this community service is to create an active citizenry using structured reflection and planned activity. Service-learning gives the student an opportunity to take learning out of the confines of the classroom and into the 'real' world where the knowledge of the book can marry that of the local, national, and global world.

The internationalizing of service-learning (ISL) is largely a phenomenon of the 21st century where technologies

widened the doors of the classroom beyond the local and into the global. ISL trips and courses tend to focus on developing a different kind of citizen, a global citizen, "by immersing [students] in situations that involve interacting with community residents while carrying out a project intended to benefit the community" (Prins & Webster, 2010, p. 5). While the impacts of domestic service-learning have been studied extensively, understandings of the impacts of international service-learning are limited, only highlighting short-term and positive impacts (Kiely, 2004, p. 5). Kraft (2002) writes of a limited understanding of international service learning that is "anecdotal,"[7] (p. 303) not critical. Recent scholars have attempted to remedy this by approaching service-learning from various angles, either through a predominant lens of social justice (Monard-Weissman, 2003; Varlotta, 1997), transformation[8] (Kiely, 2004; Eyler & Gyles, 1999), identity (Mather, Karbley & Yamamoto, 2012; Darnell, 2011; Prins & Webster, 2010), global citizenship (Sobe, 2009; Hendershot & Sperandio, 2009), or cosmopolitanism (Rizvi, 2005). I will expand on these later.

As I began to delve into the literature, I could not relate to many of the findings. This is, until I came across

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[6] Me to We – the Canadian social enterprise associated with Free the Children – for example, sends out teams of youth from elementary to middle and high school, university teams, families, corporate teams, and adult teams.

[7] By "anecdotal," Kraft (2002) is referring to studies that lack critical depth, not those that are ethnographic studies or narrative-based inquiries.

Kiely (2004) who writes of returning ISL participants who experience "extremely powerful visceral, emotional, [and] cognitive reactions to… unjust hegemonic dimensions" (Kiely, 2004, p. 18) materialized through their ISL experience abroad and upon return. Kiely (2004) noticed a peculiar phenomenon amongst his participants who would conceal their desired thoughts and avoid certain actions in an effort to avoid conflict, much like myself. To refer to this, he uses the term the *Chameleon Complex* and describes it as a phenomenon where returning ISL participants mask their true desires as a result of their "ongoing struggle[s] to translate their perspective transformation into meaningful action," (p. 16) like a Chameleon with a complex.[9] Those who return from an impactful ISL trip

> begin to critically reflect on long-held and taken-for-granted assumptions about themselves, their lifestyle, career, relationships, social problems, and unjust hegemonic dimensions of the world around them. (p. 18)

So, when such a person becomes conscious of the injustices in the world, they may simultaneously realize their own implications in these injustices, however minute. In an effort to correct these injustices, such a person might alter their lifestyles to right wrongs, continually becoming more conscious and reflective in the process. But consciousness-raising and critical reflection (Brookfield,

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[8] Using Mezirow's (1978) theory of perspective transformation that looks at psychological, convictional, and behavioural changes.

[9] Even though Kiely, (2004) has chosen six categories of transformation – political, moral, intellectual, cultural, personal, and spiritual – he recognizes Taylor's (2000) extensive empirical study that found no clear indication of what warrants perspective transformation. As such, my research does not create such categories of transformation.

2000) require a questioning of cultural hegemony and a challenging of dominant ideologies and powers of relation (Freire, 2000). To reflect on this hegemony is one matter, but to take some sort of action, to implement this reflection may bring resistance, even hostility, especially in a place that may not be welcoming to these ideas. These are the repercussions of challenging the status quo or what Brookfield (1994) calls the "dark side of critical consciousness."[10] Perhaps this is what I was experiencing, the darker and more difficult side of what was encouraged by my teachers and mentors as a positive thing.

Kiely (2004) raises this as an ethical concern when he reflects on many study participants' words that there is "no turning back" (p. 16) from their emerging global consciousness. He cautions service-learning educators with "transformative intentions" to recognize the "long-term struggles inherent in the nature of service learning" (p. 18). Did those teachers who, using a social justice pedagogy, encouraged my involvement in such ISL endeavours recognize the repercussions of my emerging "conscientization" (Freire, 2000)? Had I known about these repercussions, would I have still agreed to partake in these trips? Is there any real preparation for this "dark side"? In hindsight I feel I could have been better prepared. It is

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[10] Brookfield (1994) uses phenomenography to investigate how adult learners understand the visceral and emotional dimension of the process of conscientization. Brookfield highlights five themes including "cultural suicide" – the recognition that opposing the status quo risks existing relationships that have already come to define and sustain the social group.

important to note that this is not an attempt to discredit social justice pedagogy or those who encourage their students to think reflexively about their world; rather, I mean to point out that some students face challenges post-ISL and that in dealing with this "dark side" there are questions of identification that need to be addressed.

Keeping the above ethical matter in mind, for me, the difficult experience of return has highlighted the ways in which my identity has been shaped in at least two different ways. First, ISL experiences allowed me to build relationships, have experiences, and learn about the world while exposing me first-hand to issues such as poverty, inequality, disease, hunger, drug abuse, etc. Collectively, the trips themselves left a lasting impression on how I saw myself and how I related to and acted in the world. Second, my return to life in suburban Toronto, accompanied by a hostile reception of my new-found perspectives, placed me at-odds with those closest to me. My peers' challenges forced me to reconsider again my identity, obliging me to make difficult choices including decisions about my relationships with them. Documentary filmmaker Matthew Cassel [11] struggles with his own identity as a Jewish American, pro-Palestine activist and the impacts his beliefs and perspectives have had on his relationships with friends and family. I too have had to had to take my relationships

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[11] In Al Jazeera's "Identity and Exile," pro-Palestine activist Matthew Cassel looks at how Jewish Americans can defend Israeli occupation in the face of its injustices.

to task and ask who I am and where I stand on various social issues, even if this means upsetting friends and family.

In looking at Black cultural forms, Mercer (1990) observes that identity is not always an issue when it is stable and left unquestioned. But, it falls into a state of crisis when things once thought "fixed, coherent and stable [are] displaced by the experience of doubt and uncertainty" (p. 43). My identity fell into a state of crisis because of Brookfield's (1994) "dark side" that accompanied my perceived transformation. It is in this way that my sense of self was being questioned and put to test as I returned from ISL trips. This is why, in the case of returning ISL participants, identity matters.

My goal, then, is to look at the impact of our ISL trip and the experience of return on the identity of four of my friends who travelled with me to Kenya 3 years ago. My attempts in this project provide a response to Kiely's (2004) call for further research on the "mediating factors"[12] that lead to the abovementioned *Chameleon Complex*. Our experience in Kenya exposed us to extreme poverty, HIV, hunger, and survivors of sexual violence to name a few. Being exposed to these issues and hearing the stories of people who have gone through this first-hand have left, I assume, some sort of an impact on my participants. Coupling this with the fact that we are still in contact with some of

[12] *Kiely (2004) calls for further research on the mediating factors that "support and/or hinder" individuals' transformation and the challenges of acting on this transformation.*

these people and some of us are returning to visit these people who we consider our friends, leaves open the question of how we live our lives in Canada with the lessons we have learned in Kenya – how do we live here with lessons from there?

The 21st century has presented the field of education with a plethora of opportunities. One such opportunity lies in the opening of the classroom to the world.[13] These opportunities, however, come with consequences and educators should not adopt these opportunities without asking critical and difficult questions. One critical question, which has long plagued philosophers and social commentators alike, is how to deal with the Other? As the globe is transformed into a classroom, educators must be cautious of how students deal with the various peoples of the globe they may encounter. There is a need to suggest ways in which we can understand our relationships with the people in these far away places. As the doors to the globe begin to creak open, our relationship with the peoples behind these doors needs attention. This is what I hope my research helps to accomplish. Perhaps as significant, is the question of how to take the lessons learned abroad and apply them at home? Surely, as students travel abroad, their ways of seeing the world and their relationship with its various inhabitants will shift. These shifts can have significant impacts on

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[13] Rennick & Desjardins's (2014) forthcoming book entitled "The World is My Classroom" looks at the sharp rise in international education and asks pedagogical questions.

students' lives. Left unattended, students process of re-integration into their home culture can be devastating as their worldviews come to collide.

1.3. The thesis at a glance

The above two introductory sections accomplish two tasks: first to explain how I came to be associated with this research idea, and second to justify its necessity. This research question, I must admit, was not an obvious choice for me. It came to me with the help and encouragement of my thesis supervisor who encouraged this as a topic, who pointed out its promise. It was not until that point that I began to reflect critically on my ISL experience, particularly my experience of return and its impact on my sense of identity. It was then that I saw the promise of the topic, especially given the unique pathways of my friends-turned-research-participants. As such, I engage with the stories of 4 friends 3 years after our ISL trip to Kenya asking a threefold research question: How has our ISL trip to Kenya contributed to our sense of identity? In what ways have our identities been changed and challenged upon return? And in what ways have we acted on our world using lessons learned from our trips?

To address these questions, I have borrowed prudently from the literature areas mentioned above – social justice,

identity, global citizenship and cosmopolitanism.[14] These literatures are vast and wide-ranging and I have been selective in my presentation of them. In essence, my review follows the trail left behind by my own exploration in preparation for this thesis project.

I have begun my literature review with the topic of identity. My brush with conceptions of identity has been mediated largely by Stuart Hall's (1987, 1992) writings and those he has cited. Throughout his explorations he investigates how identity has interacted with and been shaped by society, modernity, human migration, and cultural flows. In this section I have attempted to lay the terrain on which my research rests. I begin by providing three conceptions of identity along with its historical and contextual development. I draw parallels between each conception of the individual and its associated historical and societal landscapes from the birth of the individual in the Enlightenment era up until the emergence of the postmodern individual in late modernity. I end by taking a brief look at globalization in the late modern period where the flow of cultures, peoples, ideas, thoughts, etc. have wreaked havoc on stable notions of identity. In adapting to this new global condition, identity has become dislocated, multiple and fragmented (Hall, 1992).

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[14] Much of the literature treats global citizenship and cosmopolitanism similarly and sometimes uses the terms interchangeably. I prefer the latter to the former and avoid using them interchangeably as I see a difference in the terms.

I then map out a conceptual terrain for social justice, following its various iterations, the tensions between its various conceptualizations, and its shortcomings as a concept. I draw mainly on two conceptualizations of social justice, the distributive and recognition paradigms. I recognize the latter as being more in line with my ISL experiences – that social justice should be seen more from a perspective of the relationships we forge rather than the equal distribution of resources.

I then turn to cosmopolitanism, which presents a certain promise, as scholars seem hopeful that cosmopolitanism would provide a means through which we may deal with newly emerging social, cultural and political forms of the 21st century (Sobe, 2009). In particular I am interested in cosmopolitanism as *a way of being* in the way that Cheah & Robbins (1998) suggest, as something embodied in the character of a person, something that manifests in a person's actions, choices, behaviour, and attitudes. This notion of cosmopolitanism is largely referred to as *actually existing cosmopolitanism.* I focus on *actually existing cosmopolitanism* because it functions well as an identity form, best describing my participants' thoughts and feelings.

I conclude my review with a glance at international service-learning. First, I outline its recent growth as a pedagogical tool, its various iterations and complications. There exists a healthy literature on ISL and I turn to those

scholars in particular who have looked at ISL from an angle of social justice, identity, transformation, global citizenship and/or cosmopolitanism.

In Chapter 3 I lay out my methodological practices beginning with a description of World Youth Group (WYG), the organization that facilitated my participants' ISL trips. Being that I am interviewing my friends, I thought it necessary to dedicate a section in my methodology addressing the pros and cons of interviewing close friends. This is an attempt for me to outline my hopes and fears of how this may benefit or hinder my research. I end the methodology section by providing my data analysis procedure. I have structured my findings within a feminist epistemology provided by Williams & McKenna (2002) with a threefold outlook that focuses on questions of self-affirmation and identity building, understandings of the self as a construction, and the real-world application of the lessons learned.

With this, I delve into my interview data, dedicating one chapter to each of my four friends whom I interviewed. The aim of these chapters is to 'paint a portrait' in the way that Yon (2000) describes, using "thick description" (Geertz, 1973) to give substance to each person's character, beliefs, desires, lifestyles, habits, ambivalences, and passions. In these chapters (4-7) I have emphasized description over analysis to stay loyal to my friends' narratives. To accomplish this, each chapter contains three subheadings with my participants' quotes. These three quotes

work as both headline and segue, allowing discussion and transition into other related remarks and moments in our conversations. I end each of these participant-dedicated chapters with a "Talking Points" subsection that covers major take-away points of that particular participant. It is something of a summative section.

Altogether, my participants' narratives reveal unique experiences and interpretations of their ISL experiences as well as their experiences of return and reintegration. After collecting these narratives, I revisit Williams & McKenna's (2002) feminist framework, which they suggest researchers utilize in interpreting ISL experiences. I split chapter 8 into three sections dedicating one section to each of Williams & McKenna's (2002) threefold epistemology: *affirmation of self, self as construction,* and *a call to action*. In the first section I elaborate on how my participants' ISL trips provided moments, experiences, stories, challenges and relationships that served as tools for them to use for identification and self (re)construction. Second, their ISL experiences, particularly their experience of return, set my participants up for a realization of how their identity is socially constructed and contextually dependent. And, finally my participants exhibited a push away from the concept of social justice and toward a cosmopolitan outlook, as though a cosmopolitan outlook is displacing social justice. I wrap

up the research by delving into the implications for research and pedagogy.

Chapter 2: Literature review

This review of literature explores a few overlapping fields: 1) matters of identity, 2) the search for social justice, 3) the cosmopolitan promise, and 4) international service-learning. These literatures are all vast and I do not attempt to consolidate them in a summary; rather, I address them briefly only to create a space from which to interpret my participants' responses.

While looking at literature on identity, I will cover three conceptions of identity and how each conception interacts with and understands society and the individual. Second, I will cover some major ways of conceptualizing social justice as well as some tensions that have surfaced in the literature. Third, I will turn to cosmopolitanism, particularly looking at how cosmopolitanism mediates the relationship of the self to the world in a promising way. Finally, I will move to look at the context of my study, international service-learning, and some of its conceptual slants. In the last section of this review I will bring all these sections together to synthesize a theoretical and conceptual foundation for my research.

2.1. **Identity matters**

The central debate in identity literature largely deals with the tension between seeing identity as a category as opposed to a process (Yon, 2000, p. 13). Understandings of what identity (and the individual subject) is and how it works are evolving in response to structural transformations

and changes in society in the latter part of the twentieth century (Hall, 1992). There are two fundamental impacts of this shift in society: first, that these changes in the terrain of society are "fragmenting the cultural landscapes of class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and nationality" (p. 275). And second, being that these markers place us within society, their shifting also shapes our personal identities destabilizing our sense of self and our sense of being whole, complete and fully "integrated subjects" (Hall, 1992).

Identity of the individual subject can largely be conceptualized in one of three dominant ways as outlined by Hall (1992): the Enlightenment subject, the sociological subject or the post-modern subject. The Enlightenment subject assumes the human subject to have an innate, centered and unified core emerging at birth and unfolding linearly over time. Usually described as male, Hall (1992) points out the individualistic nature of this conception of this human subject.

This stable inner core of the Enlightenment subject, though, was soon understood not to be as autonomous and self-sufficient as once thought. Hall's second category, the sociological subject, is an indication of the "growing complexity of the modern world" (p. 275). The Enlightenment subject's inner core was no longer self-directed; rather it was now being mediated by numerous factors including culture and society. This view acknowledges that the subject is not

autonomous but "interactive" (James, Mead, Dictionary of Social Sciences); that is, identity is constructed in the interaction between self and society. This process of identification allows for the self to be situated within the growing complexity of modernity, while keeping one's sense of self coherent, secure and stable. Hall (1992) points out that the sociological conception works between the dichotomy of the inside and the outside, the personal and political. While the subject interacts with society, s/he in turn begins to internalize aspects of society and begins to make these social forms "a part of us" (p. 276). In this, there is an interaction between what is seen as 'out there' in society and what is deemed to be 'in here' within the individual. Also, in this process we not only make sense of our identity or our subjective feelings, but also the objective places in society we associate ourselves with. This process works to make sense of both the subject 'in here' and the cultural world 'out there'.

However, these stable and predictable subjects and the cultural landscapes they occupy are fragmenting as a result of social, cultural, political forces. These changes begin to give way to Hall's (1992) postmodern subject where identities can be seen as fragmented, multiple, situational, and historical. Individuals are capable of holding two or more, even contradictory identities. Simultaneously, structural and institutional changes are leading to the break up of the cultural landscape needed for one to attach

to and make sense of the self. As a result, the identification process has been thrown out of loop leading to the beginnings of the postmodern subject. The sociological subject's process of identification has become "more open-ended, variable and problematic" (Hall, 1992, p. 277) giving way to more complex ways of understanding self. Identity for the postmodern subject is continuous, never complete and always in relation to surrounding cultural systems (Hall, 1987). Within a single subject there may exist multiple, even contradictory identities pulling the self in different directions. Identities are created and new ones may be derived continuously without linearity.

Therefore, three overlapping notions of identity emerge in the literature. First is the notion of an essential subject where identity is fixed and can be recovered and recorded. This is the essentialist notion of identity. A second notion sees identity as transactive, created in the exchange between self and society. The third sees identity as a process of identification, whereby identity becomes unfixed, fluid, contingent, situational and historic (Yon, 2000[1]). Postmodernism, with its attention to fragmentation, multiplicity, and displacement (Harvey, 1989), allows for a more open way of engaging with identity. This latter understanding of identity asks us to pay attention to the

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[1] Yon (2000) looks at the many complex ways youth in a Toronto high school mark their identity in terms of race, gender, ethnicity, and sexuality.

relationships and identifications the individuals in this research project are (or are not) making as they describe their experiences of discovering, implementing, living, and embodying various discourses at home and abroad.

These conceptions of identity, though, come accompanied with longer histories that associate them with other historical phenomena such as the Enlightenment, modernity, globalization, and postmodernity. Each adds to the complex evolution of identity and, more importantly, the relation of the self to the world. Hall (1992) marks three strategic points in history that shifted conceptualizations of the individual: its birth, the emergence of the social subject followed by the de-centering of the subject.

The birth of the individual can be traced back to a time between the Renaissance humanism of the 16th century and the Enlightenment of the 18th century. In this time, shifts in the structural arrangement of Western society stripped the subject free from traditions and structures that initially thought them divinely ordained, eternal, and not subject to change. Hall cites the Reformation and Protestantism as significant in placing Man (*sic*) at the center of the universe. Also at this point was René Descartes' infamous "*cogito ergo sum*" which placed the reasoning and thinking individual at the center of the mind. John Locke also contributed with his ideas of the sovereign individual who was the same and continuous throughout his (*sic*) life (Hall, 1992).

There develops a break in this thinking, though, with the emergence of Darwinian biology, where "the human subject was 'biologized' – reason was given a basis in Nature, and the mind a 'ground' in the development of the human brain" (Hall, 1992, p. 285). Alongside Darwinian biology there was, at this time, a surge in the new social sciences. While some in the new social sciences still clung to ideas of the sovereign individual and the Cartesian subject, some provided critiques of the rational, thinking individual.

The final significant shift in the conception of the individual, beginning in the latter portion of the twentieth century, consists of five major advances in social theory, which have worked to fragment and dislocate the subject from its firm, stable roots. These five contributions include: Marxist thinking, which worked to displace individual agency; Freud's writings on the unconscious, which debunked assumptions about a reasoning and logical individual; Ferdinand de Saussure's assertions that language transcends the individual and is, rather a social system; Foucault's conceptions of disciplinary power which work to regulate, surveil and govern individuals to ultimately produce "docile" (Foucault, 1983) human bodies; and the numerous political, social, intellectual and civil contributions of the feminist movement.

These shifts in the late 20th century modernity have changed society such that they are "by definition societies of constant, rapid and permanent change" (Hall, 1992, p.

277). This "postmodern condition" makes our time in history unique as we face challenges and opportunities like never-before. To convey this postmodern condition, Amin (2007)[2] provides a helpful summary of five major shifts in contemporary social topology that make for a unique postmodern condition: 1) virtual and non-virtual communication that have co-located people (time) and spaces[3]; 2) global circulation of commodities that remake mutuality and dependence; 3) a global cultural mingling of diasporic peoples; 4) a "trans-human seepage... of viral, digital, animal and plant life... from the bodily to the cosmological scale" (p. 103) and; 5) an extrapolating of political spheres from the communal to the global. These shifts do not necessarily result in a clean substitution of the local for the global, place by space and history by continuity; rather this shift in the new urban is

> a subtle folding together of the distant and the proximate, the virtual and the material, presence and absence, flow and stasis, into a single ontological plane upon which location – a place on the map – has come to be relationally and topologically defined. (p. 103)

These changes come as implications of the spatial juxtaposition of "placing variety and difference in close proximity" (Amin, 2007, p. 104). From an educator's perspective these are truly unique times, which the human race has never before faced. For instance, in an urban

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[2] Amin (2007) makes this commentary to call for a new sociology and geography that is relational in its focus.

[3] Giddens (1990) notes the removal of social interactions from the confines of the local into newer, indefinite time-space notions.

Toronto classroom of 30 students, a teacher might have just as many racial, ethnic, linguistic, cultural and religious diversity. Such concentration of diversity is new to human experience.

The ambiance of late (or post) modernity can be understood as one of constant change. Bauman (2005) remarks on our contemporary age as one shifting from a "solid" to a "liquid" state where, social forms are "melt[ing] faster than new ones can be cast" (p. 303) leading to a "liquid modernity." Harvey (1989) has made a similar suggestion in that society has become one of "never-ending... internal ruptures and fragmentations within itself" (p. 12) making for a "dislocated" (Laclau, 1990) society. It is a decentered social order consisting of not one, but "a plurality of power centers" (Hall, 1992, p. 278).

Coupled with this intense concentration of difference, unceasing change, and dislocation is the intensifying process of globalization. Globalization refers to "the internationalization of capitalism and the rapid circulation and flow of information, commodities and visual images around the world" (Yon, 2000, p. 15). While the material impacts of globalization on the world are apparent, Hall (1992) looks to the unique impacts of globalization on time and space, where societies and individuals are no longer bound to local and communal parameters of time and space. Yon (2000) comments on how globalization has changed the arena in which identity, culture and race are being played

out and its paradoxical nature where, on the one hand, globalization "erodes national identities" and, on the other, "identities are being strengthened as resistance to globalization"[4] (p. 15).

2.2. The search for social justice

What emerged from my investigation of social justice literature was a tension in conceptualizing social justice in one of two ways. While the *distributive paradigm* sees justice as the equal distribution of resources throughout society, the *relational paradigm* looks at justice through the types of relationships that connect individuals across different places.

The search for social justice in contemporary Western academia was largely animated by John Rawls' (1971) seminal book *A Theory of Justice,* with other scholars joining the conversation in the years to follow (Young, 1990; Fraser, 1998; Gewirtz, 1998; North, 2006; Johnson, 2008). I will begin with L. B. Johnson's (2008) argument that individuals' ideas of social justice are informed by their ontological and epistemological commitments. I have chosen this as a starting point because it connects well with Hall's (1992) commentary on conceptions of the individual. Being that Johnson's focus is epistemology and ontology, he creates an objectivity-subjectivity spectrum, along which he situates opposing philosophical commitments. One's understandings of

[4] For example, Hall, (1992) looks at the rise of religious extremism, as in the Taliban, as one such example of a resistance to globalization and modernity.

social justice, he argues, depend on whether one affiliates with either the *correspondence view of knowledge/truth* or *the interpretive-coherent view of knowledge/truth*. The former aligns with *objectivist*[5] *ontology* where "reality is experienced more or less the same by all through the senses" (p. 305), while the latter, aligning with subjectivist ontology[6], assumes knowledge is created and understood at the level of the individual, and is relative to the knower (p. 306). From the beginning I can see the significant role the *individual*[7] plays in Johnson's articulations of social justice. That is, if reality exists at the level of the individual as opposed to outside the individual, then greater emphasis needs to be placed on how we see the individual.

Referring to Hall's (1992) conceptions of the Enlightenment, sociological, and postmodern subjects, we can see an association between way of seeing the self and ways of seeing the world, or the "cultural landscapes" as Hall (1992) puts it. In this way, I begin to see mutuality between conceptions of the individual and social justice, their definitions play off one another.

Just as Hall (1992) provides three conceptions of the individual, Johnson too proposes three theoretical models of

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[5] The philosophical orientation that reality exists independent of consciousness, directly mediated by human senses.

[6] The philosophical orientation that mental activity is the unquestionable fact of human experience.

[7] Hall's (1992) commentary on the development and various conceptions of the individual subject prove vital in Johnson's (2008) understanding of conceptions of social justice.

understanding social justice: the modernist, the interpretivist, and the postmodern. The modern perspective, rooted in objectivist ontology and the correspondence view of epistemology, takes Descartes' view of the *thinking self*[8] as its foundation. This perspective is hopeful and optimistic in humanity's ability to discover and solve societal problems. It asserts that life is experienced the same by all and is interpreted through the senses. As such, when it comes to social justice, the modernist seeks the universal. Modernists tend to be preoccupied with enacting social justice through structural processes and cultural organization (p. 308) in an effort to reach the masses. I would pair the modernist understanding of social justice with Hall's (1992) Enlightenment subject given their positivist orientation[9] of the world.

Johnson's (2008) second model of social justice, the interpretive theoretical perspective, steers clear of modernists' universalism, and instead focuses on differentiation and the subjective nature of experience that gives meaning to those differences. Individuals "interpret… experiences by imputing meaning to them" (Johnson, 2008, p. 308). As such, interpretivists encourage a culture of

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[8] *Descartes' philosophical orientation "cogito ergo sum" places the thinking, reasoning human mind at the centre of epistemology.*

[9] *A philosophical orientation of science that argues for a logical and mathematical treatment of human sensory experience to derive authoritative knowledge.*

dialogue and work towards finding group consensus.[10] This would align with Hall's (1992) sociological subject.

The postmodernists, finally, would not seek this consensus that the interpretivists would, as consensus is an attempt at seeking absolute Truth.[11] Thus, the postmodernist seeks and embraces fragmentation, which is, from this perspective, the true nature of life. Moreover, postmodernists place much emphasis on power and how "multiple interpretations of reality compete for dominance" (p. 310). Injustice occurs when truth claims of the powerless are silenced by truth claims of the powerful. Hall's (1992) postmodern subject would align with this particular model of social justice.

Now, with Johnson's ideas as a foundation, I return to Rawls' (1971) contributions – distributive social justice. Distributive justice has long been seen as synonymous with social justice (Gewirtz, p. 470) and prevails as the most common interpretation of social justice today. Images prevail in popular media of orphaned, mainly African children without adequate food, water, shelter, education and clothing. These images utilize the discourse of distributive justice to transmit their message and better the world. This paradigm concerns itself with the question of how goods and resources are to be fairly distributed

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[10] Interpretivists work towards universalism believing it to come out of human interaction, cooperation, and interpretation.

[11] Postmodernists see universal Truths as socially constructed, a deployment of power and a system of control and thus oppressive.

within society (Rawls, 1971, p. 7) and how major social institutions allocate rights and duties to facilitate social co-operation.

However, distributive justice has been criticized as individualistic (Gewirtz, p. 471) and materially focused[12] since the chief question lies in the dispersal of resources amongst individuals in society. In response to the shortcomings of the distributive paradigm, Young (1990) proposes a *relational paradigm* for social justice. In her book *Justice and the Politics of Difference* she argues for a reconceptualization of social justice that is not focused on the distributive paradigm's individualistic allocation of resources in society, but one that focuses on the nature of relationships that shape the world. Young argues that a social justice focused on distribution "may contribute to and result from … [various] forms of oppression" (p. 9). Instead, Young's justice-as-recognition model is contingent on *injustice* and emphasizes the diversity of social (in)justice experience – "someone unjustly treated in the workplace can act oppressively in the domestic sphere and the victim of that may, in turn, resort to cultural imperialism against others" (Harvey, 1993, p. 107).

But, what happens when these ideas of social justice contradict? What happens when, for example, "a feminist

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[12] *It is individualistic because it does not take into account interactions and relationships between individuals, and is materially focused because it sees justice as a question of goods and services rather than human interaction.*

group, in the process of seeking the revaluation of a 'feminine trait'… unintentionally legitimates an unequal division of labor founded on essentialized group differences" (North, 2006, p. 511)? It is due to such a circumstance that Fraser (1997) struggles with what she calls the "recognition-redistribution dilemma" and presents the *critical theory of recognition model.* The redistribution-recognition dilemma recognizes a dichotomous tension between the two justice paradigms, as the politics of each "appear to have mutually contradictory aims" (Fraser, 1997, p. 16). For example, while the recognition model tends to promote group differentiation, the distributive model has a tendency to undermine it.

Fraser attempts to appease these tensions with the *critical theory of recognition model.* While some have discounted Fraser's (1997) redistribution-recognition dilemma (Gewirtz, 1998[13]; Philips, 1997[14]), the *critical theory of recognition* model has been recognized as a significant contribution. In response to Young (1990) who places much emphasis on difference, Fraser proposes four categories of difference meant to examine critically the value given to difference. This model asks whether or not difference should be respected and welcomed wholesale without question. If not, then on what criteria will

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[13] Gewirtz (1998) criticizes Fraser because she fails to apply her own critical theory of recognition to working-class cultural affinities.

[14] Phillips (1997) calls Fraser's cultural deconstruction an assimilationist project aimed at dissolving difference into a cultural "melting pot."

difference be valued and judged? Which kind of difference will be accepted and which rejected? Fraser (1997) lists four types of difference; the first two approaches – differences that oppress and the differences that are manifestations of cultural superiority – are not to be celebrated. The third approach sees difference as mere variations and should be affirmed and valued. The last, and the one for which Fraser advocates, acknowledges differences within differences, not just differences between[15].

These criteria of difference makes me consider my own encounters with difference on my ISL trips, when, for instance, we would experience cultural practices which we had a difficult time accepting as morally right. But, nervous not to offend and disrespect, we often silenced our criticism. There were also encounters with difference within our own group, being that our team was a collection of students from the very non-homogenous Greater Toronto Area.

Just as this sense of difference helped me define myself within a group, North (2006) also looked at how difference helps the self to relate to others. She suggests that differences can help us address questions of *equality* and asks whether *equality* is a question of sameness or a question of difference. She suggests a quagmire where the promotion of the sameness discourse, for instance, can open the door to the deeply oppressive violence of essentialism,

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[15] This is similar to Yon's (1999) exploration of the privileging of the discourses of "differences between" as opposed to "differences within."

while a promotion of the difference discourse can lead to an intolerance of the stranger. In some ways, this is an extension of Fraser's (1997) critical theory of recognition where we are left asking what to do with our relationship with those who are different from us.

North's second contribution deals with the attention given to macro-level processes such as policymaking and social movement organizing versus the attention given to micro-level processes such as individuals' daily social interactions (p. 525). The micro-macro question poses another problematic where macro-level processes often cast a shadow over those micro-level processes that individuals adhere to day-to-day. I connect this micro-macro question to the overwhelming feeling of defeat when I would reflect on the enormity of injustices to which I was exposed[16]. Some of my peers would mock my decisions to choose fair-trade, for example, suggesting it would make little, if any difference. Eventually, I too began to dismiss the significance of such micro-level decisions, conforming to my peers' suggestions. North (2006) points to this as problematic and emphasizes a need to bring more attention to micro-level processes and the significant impacts these micro-level processes can have on society as a whole.

My investigation of the literature on social justice has left me with more questions than answers. While I find

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[16] *Like combating the social stigmas associated with HIV.*

myself aligning more with Young's (1990) recognition model that emphasizes relationships, I also acknowledge the importance of Rawls' (1971) distributive model and the equal distribution of goods throughout society. And what happens when there are contradictions between the goals of these two models? Fraser's (1997) critical theory of recognition model brought some clarity in suggesting a topology of difference. Yet I am unsatisfied with what I am to *do* with difference. The question of "How am I to relate to those who are different from me?" has been left unanswered.

Being an Afghan-Canadian living in a diaspora, I often find myself in situations where my differences were more apparent than others. On these ISL trips, I would describe myself to people I had met in Kenya as a Muslim Canadian that was born in Afghanistan. These marked differences between my ISL peers and me were not negligible. The vast majority of WYG's membership is white, female and, as I have learned over the years, are people who hold forms of capital beyond the financial[17], which allows for their social and geographical mobility[18]. On some trips there was sometimes more difference within our own ISL group than between our group and the community in which we were being hosted. And, as North (2006) would ask, is difference what makes us equal or is it sameness? In one scenario, I felt more difference

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[17] Bourdieu (1990) refers to these non-financial assets as cultural capital and includes such things as education, intellect, speech, dress, appearance, etc.

[18] Mobility, as Rizvi (2005) points out by referencing Bauman (1998), is a privilege in and of itself under the conditions of globalization, and is an act largely reserved for the elite.

between my teammates and I than my team and our host country. Does the difference between me and my white, female, Christian and socially mobile WYG peers suggest that we are equal or does it make us unequal? Which should be emphasized? How are we to relate to each other's differences?

I walked into the social justice literature hopeful for a way to conceptualize and think about the questions posed by my post-ISL experience, but I walk away dissatisfied and with more questions. While the literature does address questions of equality in society, it does not fit well with my focus on identity. There is little in the literature in the way of social justice as a way of identifying with the world. At the end, it is the micro-macro question postulated by North (2006) that has me situate social justice as a literature meant for larger, society-level issues, not so much for personal identity formation. I find it curious that I now feel so distant from the concept of social justice when a few short years ago, I adhered to it so closely. The participants of this study too, I will show, exhibited similar difficulty in relating to and aligning with social justice.

2.3. The promise of cosmopolitanism

There are a few reasons I turned to cosmopolitanism. First, my friends and I participated in transnational ISL experiences that were not necessarily confined to the local and national. Our ISL experiences, stories, relationships,

lessons, and memories are tied to places far away.[19] Second, as I will show in the chapters to follow, my participants found it difficult to relate and adhere to social justice as a mediator of our identities. Much of the debate in the social justice literature surrounded questions of how I am to relate to those who are different from me and how we come to see each other as equals. But the questions felt unresolved. This had me look elsewhere for ways to conceptualize what my participants and I were feeling and how we were relating to our new friends in these far away places. Finally, the literature on identity led me in the direction of cosmopolitanism as a tool to think through the problems posed by emerging social, cultural, and political of the 21st century (Sobe, 2009).

You will recall my discussion of the seemingly chaotic picture I pointed of modernity earlier in section 2.1. It is in the face of this chaos that some scholars have turned to cosmopolitanism for answers (Sobe, 2009; Rizvi, 2005; Gunesch, 2004; Hendershot & Sperandio, 2009; Hansen, 2010). Cosmopolitanism promises a response to the shifting patterns of human interaction, the shift of power from the local to the global, changes in time/space dimensions, the global circulation of goods, human migration and its accompanied cultural flows, and the emergence of diasporic cultures. In

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[19] Cosmopolitanism literature contains much criticism and deconstruction of the concept of the nation, which is beyond the scope of this research. For an eloquent elaboration of the nation, see Anderson, (2006).

sum, cosmopolitanism provides new ways of thinking through the "new world-generating optics [20] and multilayered geographies" (Sobe, 2009) that have been surfacing with globalization in the 21st century. However, cosmopolitanism is not to be confused with globalization or modernity; indeed, they are different. While globalization and modernity are things that happen to people, cosmopolitanism is what people themselves actively do (White, 2002, p. 681). In this way, I am looking at cosmopolitanism not as a passive state, but as a choice that is actively made by my participants in response to their lived realities.

The roots of cosmopolitanism lie in ancient Greek stoic philosophy. Literally meaning 'citizen of the world,' cosmopolitanism was an idea taken up by those who saw humanity as more significant than their own state or immediate locality. The cosmopolitan was a sophisticated person, loyal to their locality while remaining open to other cultures and ways of life[21] (Rizvi, 2005).

Its roots, though, are clearer than its convoluted history. To sum up two millennia, as Gunesch (2004) puts it, cosmopolitanism in the West has had three major surges: first, during its inception with the ancient Greek stoics; second, in the 17th and 18th century; and third, in the early 1990s[22]. Definitions of cosmopolitanism are wide-ranging and

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[20] Sobe (2009) borrows "world-generating optics" from Appadurai (2000).
[21] For more on origins and histories of cosmopolitanism, see Cheah & Robbins (1998), Appiah (2006), Lu (2000), and Kleingeld & Brown (2013).
[22] With writers such as Derrida (1997), Carter (2001) and Kristeva (1988).

its uses have been up to debate because neither cosmopolitanism nor cosmopolitans can be "foreclosed by the definition of any particular society or discourse" (Pollock, Bhabha, Breckenridge and Chakrabarty, 2000). While some iterations foreground human solidarity and similarity (Nussbaum, 1996), others center on difference as a common human bond (Appiah, 2006) – an echo of questions posed by Young (1990), Fraser (1997) and North (2006). Still, some point to universal morality while others point to locally derived moral responsibility (Hansen, 2010). Some go as far as envisioning a global government based on the ideals of cosmopolitanism (Benhabib, 2006). Its varieties, too, are many, namely global citizenship, which looks at the possibility of creating a global community; moral cosmopolitanism, which rests on open-mindedness and mutual regards; economic cosmopolitanism, which extends the distributive paradigm of justice from the boundaries of the nation to the globe; and cultural cosmopolitanism, which appreciates a hybridization of social configurations that embraces people, ideas and activities of all people (Kleingeld & Brown, 2006). Because much of the theorizing of cosmopolitanism has been speculative and the debates are far from settled, Gunesch (2004) provides a literature synthesis, not a review. He turns to Brennan's (1997) book title for a useful catchphrase to capture the general idea of cosmopolitanism: "being at home in the world."

Its various conceptions aside, cosmopolitanism has had a significant impact on the social sciences and humanities research agenda. Beck & Sznaider (2006), for instance, urge social scientists to tear away from nationalist orientations of research and instead embrace a cosmopolitan social science research agenda. Indeed, cosmopolitanism proves a useful research tool in the tumultuous research arena of late modernity (Hall, 1992). Cosmopolitanism comes with an alluring promise to help with situating emergent social, political and cultural forms (Sobe, 2009) and pointing a way to work with the postmodern condition (Lyotard, 1984).

My study, however, is interested in one particular orientation of cosmopolitanism discussed by Hansen (2010) and Cheah & Robbins, (1998). Hansen's philosophical perspective of *cosmopolitanism from the ground up* cultivates "thoughtful receptivity to the new and reflective loyalty to the known" (p. 5). It is crafted from the perspective of education and is rooted not in the macro-level but in everyday, actually existing, lived realities of individuals. Hansen (2010) grounds his work in the philosophical tradition of the art of living [23] or philosophical anthropology that is concerned with "the study of images, ideas and ideals regarding what it means to be human" (p. 6). Similar to Socrates' interest in living life according to others' values, the cosmopolitan is more than tolerant;

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[23] *Where philosophy is not seen as a practice bound to the ivory tower, rather as a practical day-to-day aspect of life.*

rather, s/he is open to the ways of the other, s/he is transactive, "heeding others, participating and keeping thought open to influence critically rather than blindly" (p. 6). My study situates cosmopolitanism as a personal identity form.

Hansen (2010) goes on to link *cosmopolitanism from the ground up* with field-based research that, while not citing cosmopolitanism outright, their findings point to a certain "care for the self" (Foucault, 1994) that resonates with cosmopolitan sentimentalities. He creates a parallel with cosmopolitanism from the ground up and what Robbins (1998) calls *actually existing cosmopolitanism* and uses the terms interchangeably. The only marked difference is that Hansen's (2010) cosmopolitanism from the ground up focuses more so on education. Furthermore, this variety of cosmopolitanism differs from the cosmopolitanism of Emmanuel Kant and his Enlightenment contemporaries in that it is not "a view from above;" it is not elitist. Rather, *actually existing cosmopolitanism* adheres to a wide variety of "transnational experiences that are particular rather than universal and that are unprivileged – indeed, often coerced" (Robbins, 1998) making cosmopolitanism not necessarily a restricted identity category for the elite.

Actually existing cosmopolitanism looks at numerous facets of the individual. For instance, the cosmopolitan person is one who engages simultaneously with the local and global world and finds in that engagement, either directly

or indirectly, the virtue of a way of being. In this, the cosmopolitan is not absent and does not lack belonging, but is forever at home in the world. The cosmopolitan embraces her/his humanity and, in the process, obliterates concepts of the other, the foreigner and the stranger (Hansen, 2010, p. 16). It is very similar to Foucault's care of the self in that the cosmopolitan is immersed in lifelong work on one's body, mind, and spirit to live well with other people and live ethically. This cosmopolitan has "deliberate ways of speaking, listening, interacting, reading, writing and more, which are at all times arts in development because their aim is not serving the self, but improving it" (p. 9). In reference to identity, Hansen (2010) suggests that *cosmopolitanism from the ground up* is not all-encompassing or dialectical but phasic. Much like Kamau Brathwaite's *tidalectics*,[24] "It comes and goes. It finds expression in particular moments, spaces and interactions" (Hansen, 2010, p. 5).

Hansen's (2010) central thesis argues for receptivity and openness to the new with a simultaneous reflective loyalty to the known. The first considers openness toward the abundant variability that flows persistently through our world, especially in the period of late modernity (Hall, 1992), "from other persons, from events, and from people's own imaginations, thoughts, inquiries, undertakings and

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[24] Professor Kamau Brathwaite, New York University, writes of tidalectics in his poetry as a rejection of the dialectic, tidalectics is "the ripple in the two-tide movement" (Naylor, 1999).

experiences" (Hansen, 2010, p. 19). The latter, "loyalty to the known", allows the cosmopolitan to "leave home" and explore the foreign and different while keeping in mind that which is known. In sum, cosmopolitanism is no end; rather it is a way of being, a continual way of existing in the world. Appiah (2006) cautions against taking cosmopolitanism as some divinely ordained remedy, instead he warns that cosmopolitanism is the name not of the solution, but of "the challenge." The challenge lays in Hansen's very definition of the term: *participating* (emphasis) "in pluralist change as an agent, as an actor, rather than remaining passive or reactive to events" (p. 24).

Altogether, cosmopolitanism, in particular the cosmopolitanism of Hansen (2010) and Cheah & Robbins, (1998) seems more accommodating to my general dispositions than that of social justice. My pull away from social justice, as mentioned in the introductory chapter, occurred because I ended up negotiating it out of my social repertoire, silencing it in exchange for less conflict with my peers. There was no room it seemed, for both a social justice outlook and my existing social world. But Cheah & Robbins' (1998) *actually existing cosmopolitanism* or Hansen's (2010) *cosmopolitanism from the ground up* with its "reflective openness to the new and reflective loyalty to the known" allows me to embrace the new knowledge, friends, experiences and perspectives I have gained abroad, while simultaneously remaining loyal to the realities of my suburban life in

Canada with my family, friends, coworkers and their varying beliefs and dispositions. The opposite is possible too – return home post-ISL, continue living life while simultaneously remaining loyal to the lessons learned elsewhere. This is the promise I see in cosmopolitanism.

2.4. Relating to the context: International service-learning

The three above sections on identity, social justice, and cosmopolitanism must be thought of within the context of international service-learning. Service-learning is generally defined in the literature as a pedagogic tool and learning strategy that integrates the offering of service with guided instruction and reflection. A bulk of the literature looks at service-learning from the perspective of Mezirow's (1997) transformative theory (Boyte, 2008; O'Connor, 2006; Kiely, 2004). As such, there is an appeal for schools and teachers to utilize service-learning as a pedagogic tool for the transformation of the pupil. Service-learning rejects the banking model of education where knowledge is deposited from the enlightened teacher into the passive, empty vessel of the student (Freire, 2000). It takes place outside the traditional classroom and entails learning from communities, organizations, and the real world and thus bridges the gap between "theory and practice, school and community, the cognitive and the ethical" (Butin, 2003, p. 1675). Because of this service-learning is appealing to both educators and students alike and likely to remain a prominent fixture of the educational landscape for

some time. Butin (2003) reports that more than half of all high schools use service learning in their curriculum. Campus Compact, an American campus-based civic-engagement organization, boasts an impressive membership of 1200 college and university partners representing some 6 million students. In the Canadian context, all Ontario students require 40 hours of community service as a prerequisite for graduation with a majority of other provincial ministries following suit. The Canadian Alliance for Community Service-Learning partners with 43 educational institutions across the country including universities and colleges, holding annual conferences and workshops propelling the idea of service-learning for the Canadian educational landscape.

In spite of these positives and the huge support that service-learning has acquired from various institutions and policymakers, Butin (2003) finds that the goals of service-learning remain troublingly ambiguous: is it a pedagogical tool, a philosophical stance, an institutional mechanism, or a "voyeuristic exploitation of the cultural other that masquerades as academically sanctioned servant leadership?" (p. 1675)[25]. A legitimate question, the goals of ISL trips left unqualified open doors to possible oppressive behaviours and attitudes dangerously cloaked behind the veil of service as some scholars have shown (Butin, 2003, Gunesch, 2004, Hendershot & Sperandio, 2009). Butin (2005)

[25] *Service-learning can become a means for the powerful to perpetuate unequal power relations (Butin, 2003, p. 1682).*

argues for service-learning to be seen as postmodern pedagogy "as it is a direct outgrowth of the postmodern condition" (p. 89) and to ignore this fact, he points out, is to compromise its transformative potential.

Even so, service-learning is not applied the same by all who use it, its conceptualizations vary. Butin (2003) lays out four different conceptualizations of service-learning – technical, cultural, political, and poststructural – in an effort to address concerns that have surfaced in recent literature regarding presumptions of neutrality, the privileging of Whiteness, and the imbalance of power relations.

First, a technical understanding of service-learning sees it as nothing more than a pedagogical tool or innovation that comes as part of an innovation of technology, largely muting any question of legitimacy and implications (p. 1679). Second, the cultural perspective emphasizes individuals' meaning-making and embraces difference while allowing its participants to foster respect and tolerance for diversity, gain awareness of social issues, develop morality and ethicality, and encourage civic engagement (Coles, 1993).[26] Third, the political perspective fronts issues of power imbalance and questions of legitimacy and objectivity.[27] It sees the potential for transformation and the danger of repression through service-learning. The

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[26] This paradigm fits well with multiculturalism discourses within educational boards and ministries.
[27] Butin (2005) locates social justice pedagogy as fitting well within this paradigm.

poststructural paradigm finally, concerns itself with how and whether this innovation "constructs, reinforces, or disrupts" tacit norms (p.1683) or metanarratives (Lyotard, 1984). Seeing reality as fragmented, fractional and often obscure, this latter paradigm sees service-learning as a site for *subjectification* (Foucault, 1983), making service-learning an ideal arena for identity formation, a playground for the deconstruction and reconstruction of self. It is the latter most conceptualization that allows for an in-depth investigation of self (re)formation.

So, how do the literatures on social justice, identity, and cosmopolitanism relate to service-learning? Scholars have looked at some of this overlap in attempts to deepen their conceptualizations of service-learning and understand its potential impacts. First, at the intersection of social justice and international service-learning I found ample research similar to Monard-Weissman's (2003) suggesting a strong relationship between ISL participation and an increased desire for social justice (Monard-Weissman, 2003; Eyler & Gyles, 1999; Varlotta, 1997). Monard-Weissman's (2003) study in particular conceptualized social justice using Rawls' (1971) distributive paradigm as "a set of beliefs that a person holds" (Monard-Weissman, 2003, p. 164) through which they maintain fair social cooperation. This conceptualization is similar to what Yon (2000) calls attribute theory – a problematic understanding of culture "a set of knowable and stable attributes" (p. 7). Some term the

changes in returning ISL participants as a transformative impact that places in students a desire to see and participate in initiatives that aim to bring change in society (Rhoads, 1997; Kellogg, 1999; Kiely, 2004). Monard-Weissman's (2003) study, for example, found that students 1) acquired a deeper understanding of societal issues, 2) nurtured a sense of responsibility, and 3) planned for social action, which could be associated with their exposure to moral dilemmas and having their assumptions of society challenged (p. 166-167).

Others, however, have been less general with their findings of what kinds of changes take place with ISL participants post trip. Cermak, Christiansen, Finnegan, Gleeson & White's (2011) study of post-ISL life suggests that service is displacing activism in participants' social and personal contexts (p. 6). The authors found that while activism was stigmatized on the studied campus, service, on the other hand, was preferred with its competitive application process for ISL programs. This study saw activism and service as competing identity projects after a "major event where new information and experience may be used to assess continued commitment to a certain identity" (p. 9). In search of the lessons gained by students on ISL trips, Cermak et al. (2011) have seen the significant role

that identity plays in the interpretation of self and the lessons learned on these trips. [28]

Further to Cermak et al.'s (2011) suggestions, social justice education often runs the risk of falling into the trap of a banking model of education (Freire, 2000) as the material, especially in international cases of social justice, can be distant, abstract and extraneous to the context of Canadian students' daily lives. To curtail this risk, Butin (2005) has encouraged a social justice pedagogy that engages in students' process of identity (re)construction rather than merely proposing content knowledge for the student to regurgitate.

As such, service-learning literature has also begun to pay attention to how students interpret their identity in circumstances when they are interacting with people from different cultural contexts. Scholars have approached this intersection of ISL and identity from myriad angles. For instance, a handful of research looks at the development of students' sense of global citizenship as a result of participation in ISL programs (i.e. Dower & Williams, 2002; Osler & Vincent, 2002). The experience of moving outside national boundaries and seeing how their nation is viewed from outside provides students with an awareness that can either strengthen or challenge their sense of national identity. From this, students may come to question long-held

[28] *But this study did not look at longer-term challenges and changes in students' sense of identity.*

and taken-for-granted hegemonic assumptions about themselves, their lifestyles, and national & cultural norms (Kiely, 2004). Others have shown how ISL participants may come to grips with their perceived sense of privilege and their implications in global injustice (i.e. King, 2004[29]; Rhoads & Neururer, 1998). My research treads these same boundaries and looks to see the interaction between students' sense of identity, social justice, and their relation of self to the world.

Mather et al. (2012) look at the experiences of two ISL participants whom reflect on their two-week service-learning trip to Honduras. The authors make the argument that ISL experiences lead to valuable "extrospection" and "introspection" that nurture complex understandings of self and one's identity. Central to this study is the concept of the "personal myth"[30] formed and reformed during ISL trips and continued into their lives after their international experiences. Personal myths can be paralleled with the idea of personal identity narratives as in how a individuals construct stories that situate, refine, characterize, and personalize their sense of self.

Darnell's (2011) research looks at the experiences of students in a sports-for-development volunteer trip, looking

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[29] Employing a "defamiliarization" subjective process, this study looks at ways in which students come to break with the taken-for-granted and familiar. This is one study related to my ethical concern raised in the introduction of this research.

[30] Borrowed from McAdams (1993), the personal myth refers to "the psychological structure that evolves slowly over time, infusing life with meaning and purpose" (p. 20).

at participants' confrontations with notions of expertise, privilege, and "First-World guilt" all of which troubled participants' secure sense of self while allowing students to comprehend and engage deeply with inequality and development justice.

Finally, Kiely's (2004) research, entitled *A Chameleon with a complex: Searching for transformation in international service-learning,* suggests a more complex and problematic occurrence, which I have discussed earlier. Kiely (2004) posits the chameleon complex as a struggle on the part of ILS alumni to translate their perspective transformation into meaningful action. What do these perspective changes look like and what counts as transformation still remains elusive, even to researchers. Upon return, students struggle to communicate their transformation and desires for change (p. 15) and consequently face conflict with opinions of friends, family, and coworkers (p. 16). Researchers too have yet to figure out what constitutes perspective transformation.[31] Keily (2004) further suggests that students actively circumvent their desired actions and instead conceal their thoughts, like a chameleon, to avoid conflict. The chameleon complex represents "the internal struggle between conforming to, and resisting, dominant norms, rituals, and practices" (p. 15).

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[31] Taylor (2000) conducted an examination of 45 empirical studies and concluded that what warrants perspective transformation remains elusive to the point that the term has begun to lose its critical edge (Brookfield, 2000; Kegan, 2000).

But, as Kiely suggests, shifts in service-learning participants' perspectives and identities do not always influence them for the positive. In fact, there is evidence that these experiences may reproduce oppressive structures and ways of thinking. It may happen that ISL programs may work to reproduce oppressive power relations by, for instance, maintaining in students inaccurate perceptions of social problems (Ver Beek, 2002) or perpetuating stereotypes of the poor (Hollis, 2004). It might also be that students do not experience any transformative change in perspective at all (Eyler & Giles, 1997, p. 68).

But the majority of the scholarship does report some sort of change in the attitudes of returning ISL participants. In search of literature that comments on an emergence of cosmopolitan-mindedness through ISL trips, I ran into a few noteworthy studies.[32] Some of what I encountered commented on the internationalization of education, in particular institutions that adhere to an international focus. In these studies, while much attention was given to making the institutions themselves more internationally-minded, there was little focus on the individual. For instance, Gunesch, (2004) reports on a gap in literature for the "international-mindedness" of those students that international education presumably seeks to develop. He mentions the peculiar tendency of international

[32] *I kept my terminology wide-ranging to include cosmopolitanism, global-mindedness, global consciousness, global critical consciousness, and global awareness.*

education institutions to develop cosmopolitanism in their institution rather than the individual.[33] While institutions' goals for global citizenship may be clear, the goals for developing their students' sense of global citizenship have yet to be clarified (Hendershot & Sperandio, 2009). As such, Gunesch (2004) proposes a model for these institutions for the development of the individual learner, calling it cosmopolitanism as a personal cultural identity form (p. 253).[34] In this model, Gunesch (2004) shows cosmopolitanism to be an individual identity form rather than something associated with an institution.

Following the trail left by Gunesch's (2004) references and citations, I was able to find other scholars who looked at cosmopolitanism as an individual identity form (Sobe, 2009; Appiah, 2006; Robbins, 1998; Waldron, 1995; Rizvi, 2005; Hansen, 2010). These scholars refer to cosmopolitanism as an individual identity form in the same way, referring to it as *actually existing cosmopolitanism*. *Actually existing cosmopolitanism* is seen as a personal identity, a general disposition, an individual's way of being in the world as mentioned earlier through Cheah & Robbins (1998). Sobe (2009) attests to the usefulness of *actually existing cosmopolitanism* to help understand "new world-generating

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[33] Sobe (2009) makes a similar commentary on the lack of pedagogy on the development specifically of the student.

[34] Gunesch (2004) provides a literature synthesis and compiles a list of attributes of the cosmopolitan-minded person which consists of straddling the global and local, encompassing questions of cultural mastery, metaculturality, mobility and travelling, tourism, home and nation-state attachments.

optics and multi-layered geographies that appear to be emerging with globalization" (p. 6). Forgoing any institutionalized understandings of cosmopolitanism, Sobe (2009), instead, turns to "cosmopolitan attitudes" (Appiah, 2006) or "cosmopolitanism as a way of being in the world" (Waldron, 1995).

But given that ideas of cosmopolitanism are not fixed to any particular definition (Pollock et al., 2000), some scholars have found that international experiences may form cosmopolitan sentiments in students that are "systematically contradictory" (Rizvi, 2005). Rizvi's (2005) study found Australian students' conceptions of cosmopolitan identities as garnered through corporatized narratives of international educational institutions that "perpetuate an instrumentalist view of the world". This goes to show that understandings of a cosmopolitan self may not always be neat and containable; rather they are vulnerable to discourses that may perpetuate oppressive narratives of the world. This reminds me of the unpredictability of identity as it is continually reshaped by cultural experience in non-uniform ways.

But even with these criticisms, my encounter with literature at the intersection of international service-learning and cosmopolitanism has left me hopeful. I was hopeful because I saw potential in the concept of *actually existing cosmopolitanism* as a tool to help me understand my (and perhaps my participants') feelings, attitudes, behaviours, commitments, and challenges. More significantly,

I saw the potential of *actually existing cosmopolitanism* to provide an alternative to social justice while still allowing me to look at this study from the angle of identity.

I will end this review with Sobe's (2009) two suggestions on how researchers can recognize "vernacular cosmopolitanism"[35]. First, he suggests that the cosmopolitan attitude should be "viewed as a question of identity and identity formation, [which] concerns self-definition in relation to and in relationship with the world beyond one's immediate local conditions." Second and equally as important for the researcher is to see cosmopolitanism "as a form of political action, [which] can be seen as a strategy for locating self and community amidst local and global formations" (Sobe, 2009).

[35] *Sobe's (2009) use of "vernacular cosmopolitanism" aligns with Hansen's (2010) "cosmopolitanism from the ground up" and Robbins' (1998) "actually existing cosmopolitanism" in that it looks at the term as an identity form, as "a way of being in the world" (Waldron, 1995). Werbner (2002) comments on the oxymoronic desire of vernacular cosmopolitanism to bring into harmony the local, parochial, culturally specific, and demotic with the translocal, transnational, transcendent, elitist, enlightened, universalist and modernist.*

Chapter 3: Methodology

This research was conducted by posing open-ended interview questions to four ISL alumni. The questions initially surrounded six general themes: motivation for involvement, personal history, perception of self, perception of ISL work, perceptions of social justice; and post-ISL experience/reintegration. [1] But this list of questions evolved with every interview as I learned through my findings. By the last interview, I had learned to include questions geared towards perception of the other, perceptions of culture, understandings of difference, and questions of guilt and privilege.

In the data analysis stage, I faced some difficulty as my participants' responses and experiences were unique and varying, making it difficult to collapse their responses into categories or themes. Seeing this, I chose to focus on what stood out as significant or poignant moments in our conversations. This step was made easier by my previous years of friendship with each participant. I had a sense of each participant's character. This said, however, I was surprised by much of my friends' responses. Our interviews allowed for us to discuss issues and matters that we did not have a venue to discuss beforehand.

Having conducted the interviews and working off of its transcribed versions, I decided to speak to my participants'

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[1] *A list of sample interview questions is attached in the appendix.*

responses using 3 subheadings quoting them directly. These subheadings deal with what I felt were of most significance in our talks, such as pressing concerns or central ideas that served the crux of each conversation. But I also ensured that these subheadings did not hinder my explorations or shortchange the complexity of their responses. In the discussion section, I make use of Williams and McKenna's (2002) suggestion to utilize feminist epistemology and put a loose structure around my data. But before that I feel it is important to discuss the ISL organization through which my participants travelled to Kenya.

3.1. Description of the organization

The organization that facilitated our ISL trips, World Youth Group (WYG)[2], is a registered Canadian charity operating as a not-for-profit, non-governmental organization. I began volunteering with WYG in 2007 and since then have participated in several trips. My first trip was to Peru followed by Venezuela where my role changed from general 'member' to 'intern' – meaning a leader-in-training under the guidance of a more experienced leader. The following trip to Kenya put me in the position of a leader. I returned to Kenya a second time, again, as a leader. It was through this latter Kenya trip that I met all of my participants.

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[2] *Pseudonym.*

While WYG operates a handful of different programs I have been involved with just the Teams Abroad Program (TAP)[3] – the ISL component of WYG. The TAP program collects teams of 10-12 post-secondary-aged youth and sends each team to various countries abroad where they work with up to three different organizations. One's involvement with TAP starts with recruitment around October each year. By December teams are selected and all members attend bi-weekly team meetings until the departure date. During these meetings much is discussed; everything from practical matters like what to pack and where to obtain a Visa, to discussions of poverty, inequality, and social justice. These topics are negotiated collectively. During the first weekend of May all teams from the southern Ontario region collect at a camp for 3 days of discussions, workshops, films, activities, games, etc. all surrounding issues that participants may encounter while on the trip or upon return.[4] This orientation weekend serves as preparation for the experience ahead. After this, participants board planes and are off to their respective destinations.

Activities during the trip vary depending on the in-country hosts, team leaders, country conditions, etc. All team leaders are expected to facilitate discussions of various sorts while in country. Daily talks sometimes called "daily life checks" or "ups and downs" serve to bring to

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[3] *Pseudonym.*

[4] *This orientation weekend is put together and organized by volunteers, usually former members of WYG.*

surface participants' experiences, concerns, questions and other issues. The extent of these discussions depends very much on the group and the knowledge, experiences, and dynamics within. Each team member is also given an opportunity to share his or her "life story" during the course of the trip. This can serve as a significant activity as it allows participants to share their stories, the way they wish to present themselves all members of the team. Near the end of the trips, participants undergo the debriefing segment – a mandatory 3 to 4 day breakdown of the happenings, lessons, questions, challenges, etc. of the trip, facilitated by the team leader(s). The debrief segment is intended to prepare participants for re-entry into Canada and allows for a smoother and less traumatic re-integration process.

All participants of this study, myself included, were members of team Kenya. Lana[5] and I were co-leaders and Tom, John and Angela were team members. Our hosts in Kenya consisted of two contacts – A Positive Life (APL)[6] and the Kenyatta Community Centre (KCC)[7]. APL is an organization that works to support HIV-positive women and children living in two slums. Operating in a small industrious and quickly-growing town outside Nairobi, they offer various types of support for the women and children involved including a

[5] *Pseudonym.*
[6] *Pseudonym.*
[7] *Pseudonym.*

feeding program; a physical, mental and emotional healing program; a microfinance program; a daycare in the slum for children who live the slum; and an economic empowerment program including skills training and business planning. While the organization started out without any funding or support, over the years it has garnered the attention of various Kenyan and international funders.[8] Our work with APL was mainly educational, that is, for us to learn about HIV/AIDS and the people in working with the organization. We did 'home visits' where we visited the homes of women in the program and heard their stories. After being oriented with the organization and its current issues, our team decided to participate in some sort of activity for which we budgeted and planned. APL is headed by Anne[9], or as everyone calls her, Mum. Mum organizes our stay with the program in a way that allows us to see as many aspects of the organization as possible. Mum has come up in a few of the participants' comments and has left quite an impression on many of my participants, myself included.

The second contact, KCC, is in western Kenya near Kisumu and is a rural setting. While working with KCC we lived in mud huts, in the compounds of KCC's workers. We had no electricity, no running water. This was different from APL

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[8] Stopping and reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS by 2015 is target 6A and 6B of the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals and thus funding for programs that focus on HIV/AIDS prevention & treatment is available from local, national and international sources. Because it is an MDG, funding groups from western countries are encouraged via tax benefits to contribute to HIV/AIDS prevention, particularly in the African continent.

[9] Pseudonym.

where we stayed in the home of one of APL's workers, with electricity and running water at our disposal. KCC is a very well organized program working in various aspects of community development. It operates as a non-governmental organization and was founded by a group of women in 1988 who met to discuss emerging farming technologies. Since then, the organization has grown to put up their own medical clinic, high school with personalized curriculum, library, and has come to stand as an umbrella organization for up to 60 other local and regional organizations. Our work with KCC varied widely as we were moved from one umbrella program to the next.

The end of our trips is marked by our arrival at Pearson International Airport where members are dismissed. While WYG has no debriefing segment for its general members as of yet all interns and leaders are required to attend a leaders' debrief weekend just days after arrival. This debrief is organized and hosted for us by a Toronto church that deals with international missions.

3.2. Interviewing my friends

The participants for this study were collected using purposive sampling. In 2010, all participants of this research as well as 3 others (who are not participated in this study) and myself travelled to Kenya together for a month-long international service-learning trip. I served as co-leader of the trip and we have all since kept in touch. I chose the participants because of their unique post-ISL

pathways, making this a maximum variation sampling.[10] I realized that these four particular alumni had taken differing paths post trip. As such, I felt to best address my research questions I would select these four varying trajectories of post-ISL life.

One aim of this research is to capture best the characteristics of each participant. I have known each participant, all of whom I could comfortably call my friend, for about 3 years and I attempt to paint portraits of each using, for instance, the setting of the interview.[11] Lana's messy room littered with paint and canvases, the upscale restaurant where John and I met, the coffee shop in Kensington market where I met Angela, and Tom's studio flat for instance all thicken my descriptions (Geertz, 1973).

There is also something to be said for the fact that all four participants of this research are my friends, some closer than others. While I knew none of the participants before the trip, I have developed different relationships with each post trip. This helps me in at least one way and serves as a challenge in another. The helpfulness of our close relationship lies in the depth of our conversations and the trust that they placed in me as they shared their stories. During the interviews, for example, there was a brief moment of formality when I would explain the research,

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[10] Maximum variation sampling because these four participants seemed to me to represent four divergent post-ISL pathways.

[11] Borrowing Yon's (2000) use of "portraits of identity" leaves room for both the object of the description and my subjective way of 'seeing' them.

hand them the informed consent form to sign and begin my recording device. Afterwards, however, our conversations were casual and quite revealing, as my friends felt less apprehensive and opened up to a conversation with their friend. Had we not shared 3 years of friendship and a bonding ISL experience I feel my interviews would have proved less fruitful.

Harris (2010) explores the "friendly interview" and contrasts it with more formal interviews between "the researcher and the researched" (p. 45). She suggests that interviews where a friendship existed before any interviewing has been done exist in an entirely different context than those interviews without a preexisting friendship. In the case of the former, the interview act is likely seen as an act of friendship, not as an act of research (p.52). Being that the researcher-researched relationship hierarchy is deemed absent and there is less of a power imbalance, issues of "pre-existing knowledge and power relationships" (p. 45) can be discussed better in friendship interviews. While Harris (2010) does point to significant benefits of interviewing friends, I could not help but feel certain challenges, particularly after my interviews had been recorded and transcribed. The challenge lay in my balancing of the role of friend and researcher. Before beginning my interviews, I ensured to relay the message that I would act as researcher.

As I sat with my transcribed interview data, however, I found myself hesitating to interpret my friends' words as not only do I owe them my loyalty as a researcher, but also the loyalty of a friend. In hindsight, I now recognize this remembering-of-loyalty as my coming to terms with the power granted to me as researcher. There is an objectivity assumed in my writing, but this objectivity, has been criticized plenty with recent, particularly feminist research (Harris, 2010, p. 44)[12]. This objectivity infers a distance between the author and the research. However, from the get-go I will confess to the difficulties in interpreting my participants' quotes and words, but I have done my best not to stray from their remarks. All work written in this project should be seen as a collaborative project between my friends and me. From the time I began writing my research until now, I have begun to come to terms with that fact that I am both friend and researcher; I also have come to see this project as not solely my work, but a collaborative exercise between my friends and me. I feel it is better to acknowledge and commit to both roles.

3.3. Data Analysis procedure

In thinking about my method of data analysis, I kept Sobe's (2009) two suggestions in mind that cosmopolitanism should be: 1) "viewed as a question of identity and identity formation, [which] concerns self-definition in relation to

[12] Harris (2010) cites many academics who have demystified and discredited the positivist notion of the distant and objective researcher.

and in relationship with the world beyond one's immediate local conditions," and 2) "viewed as a form of political action, [which] can be seen as a strategy for locating self and community amidst local and global formations" (Sobe, 2009). I particularly liked this these remarks because they formed something of a framework around how I should think about my own research. I then found a similar framework with Williams & McKenna's (2002) because it too values identity formation and political action, but within a threefold, feminist epistemology. These authors argue that a feminist epistemology works well with the personal experiences of ISL participants, as feminist epistemology does not discount experience from the academic context. At the same time, feminism ensures not to "uncritically valorize" (p. 143) experience without due analysis.

Williams & McKenna propose a method particularly for those researchers looking into service-learning experiences as the focus of study. Their method, which coincides with the three fundamental principles of feminist pedagogy, looks into participants' "affirmation of the personal, the personal made political, and [a] call to action" (p. 151). I have made slight alterations to Williams & McKenna's (2002) model to allow it to serve my research purposes. This first step, which I have altered to *the affirmation of self*, looks at participants' subject positioning, ways of "self-

representation[13]" and instances of "authentication" (p. 151) in all aspects of ISL participants' experiences, before during and after their ISL experience. In other words, I search my interview data for ways my participants came to build their identity, particularly those identifications that deal with their ISL experiences.

My second step, *the self as construction,* addresses ways my participants came to recognize their identity as (re)construction within given contexts. But beyond just the self, I also look for how participants saw their understandings of the world as construction. This step asks how they may see themselves being perceived by others including the people they met in Kenya, the perceptions of their friends, family, co-workers, acquaintances, in Toronto, and why/how have these definitions come to be? This way, I move away from superficial understandings of my participants and attempt to look deeper into the ways the self is tied with the other, society, culture, fashion, and so forth. To explore fully questions of identity, Williams & McKenna (2002) encourage an extrapolation of the question "Who am I?" into more complex questions like "Who have I been defined as? Who has defined me? What has defined me? How do I define others? Why have I defined and been defined in given ways?" This second, *self as construction* step of my

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[13] Williams & McKenna (2002) problematize representation and expand its applicability beyond the textual and into the "experiential" or "living" text. They suggest that just as textual representation has the potential to be oppressive, so too can experiential representation if their encounter with the "other" is not a self-reflexive one.

analysis allows me to see my participants outside of the "I" as an endpoint and instead allows me to position them in the contexts of their daily lives.

My last step, *a call to action*, looks at ways my participants have committed to and/or acted upon their world in given ways and what challenges, opportunities, shortcomings, benefits, ambivalences they may have encountered in this process. Thus I look for political manifestations of the personal, internal conflicts expressed externally, and outward manifestations of those changes many studies have shown to appear in students.

I have decided to utilize this threefold approach in interpreting my participants' responses to give some structure and organization for the sake of presentation and clarity. But I do fear and recognize that this approach runs the risk of shortchanging the complexity of my participants' experiences. I do not, in any way suggest that my participants' experiences may or may not have followed this three-step process, be it linearly or chronologically. I have attempted, in the pages to follow, to capture the complexity of my participants' responses as best as possible in order to make sense of research problematic.

Individual experience alone, however, as some post-structuralists may argue, is insufficient evidence to provide "proof" of social reality; rather, experience provides a window into the ways in which people come to know themselves and who they are (Scott, 1991). Consequently, the

crux of this study relies on identity construction, deconstruction and reconstruction. This way, by looking at the process of identity formation as interpreted through their experiences, I can get a sense of the social realities of my participants and combat dualisms of theory and practice[14].

To sum up my data analysis procedure, I can allude to Foucault's (1983) subjectification with a feminist twist. It is subjectification because I am concerned with how my participants have come to take on certain identities, particularly through their ISL experience (*affirmation of self*). How their actions, and the identities which these actions reference, are regulated within power relations (*self as construction*) and the process by which these individuals come to know themselves in given contexts. The feminist twist comes with the question of how these participants' use their ISL lessons and apply them in their daily lives upon return (a call to action).

[14] The dualism of theory and practice comes about in the case of experience/service literature when the academic prowess of experience is "discredited" or when experience is "uncritically valorized" (Williams & McKenna, 2002, p. 141).

Chapter 4: Tom[1]

Tom is 25 and a recent graduate of Ryerson University. He was one of 3 male members on our team – only 2 others aside from myself had applied – the remaining 7 being female. Tom tells me that he had always wanted to do "something like this," but had never had the opportunity. When he saw the poster advertising a trip to Kenya hanging above a men's room urinal – strategic advertising on the part of team leaders for more male applicants – he was in the middle of exams and was "tired of... studying from a textbook." In this poster he tells me he saw a chance to learn about "real life" and himself – an echo of Hall's (1992) assertion that "cultural landscapes" situate us as individuals. I met to interview Tom for this research on a weekday afternoon after his volunteer work with a local housing project in midtown Toronto with which he has been involved for about 3 years. We sat in an espresso shop a block away and talked over some coffee and pastries.

Since returning from Kenya, Tom has launched a clothing line. Initially entitled "Bedlam Belief"[2] the clothing line has had healthy sales and was doing well. He has recently rebranded the line though, with a total new look, concept and name. He has explained these changes in branding and I will address his responses later.

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[1] *Pseudonym.*
[2] *Pseudonym.*

My second interview with Tom took place at his downtown apartment. We sat in his small studio apartment, he on his recliner and I at his work desk. I pushed aside sketches of jackets and vests to place my laptop and notepad. Behind me is a stack of cardboard boxes half way up the bare brick wall with t-shirts and black and grey pants hanging off the lips of some.

My interview with Tom focuses, first, on ideas of personal growth and self-improvement. I look at Tom's remarks about how his experience in Kenya allowed him to get to know himself. Second, I read into Tom's recollection of his privileged past and the influence these memories have had on his motivation for involvement in WYG. Last, I look at Tom's take on activism and what he calls "rebel[ing]... in a smart way" and how he acts on his world.

4.1. "'Even if the rain comes,' right?"

All four participants in my study have noted among their main motivations for involvement in WYG has been for personal development – a chance to get to know themselves, "rough it," as Lana says, and prove to themselves that they can endure a month in Kenya. Tom wanted to "learn about life" and see what "kinda things [he] could take." As I was trying to get a sense of the allure of ISL trips from Tom, I asked what he came away with from this trip that was of most significance. He told me he got "a sense of personal growth... I know myself a lot better now." He has used this experience as a way of growing as an individual and building

for himself a sense of self, to see "what [he] can handle... what [life] is like, the ups and downs of life." Tom sums it up with a single word: "perspective." The experiences in Kenya and the people he had met, along with the lessons he learned come down to him gaining a certain outlook. He reflected much, as I will show in the next section, on his privileged life growing up in Vancouver. Staring at the poster above the men's room urinal in the middle of exam period, I sense Tom saw a chance to gain that perspective he had longed for.

To get a sense of what Tom means by perspective, I feel it is important to first tell the story of Peter[3], which Tom and I knew and could refer to while we talked without need for elaboration. Peter's story came up in all of the interviews and proved a significant reference point. Our team's brush with Peter left a lasting impression, as he is often the topic of discussion when we meet and reminisce. One hotter-than-usual afternoon during our stay with APL, Mum got a call to go and check up on Paige[4], one of the WEEEP[5] women, who had not shown up to the office that day. Mum decided to walk to her house in the nearby slum to check on her and asked if any of our team members would like to join her. A few of us did. We had walked through the slum before but not near Paige's house, which was adjacent to a

[3] *Pseudonym.*
[4] *Pseudonym.*

garbage dump. We usually do not bother anyone when we walk through the slums. The garbage dump, though, is an area that Mum generally avoids taking her volunteers, as there have been issues with some volunteers taking pictures of people scavenging without their consent and the residents becoming agitated as a result of this intrusion.

Paige's house was locked and no one answered our knocks. Nearby we saw a child, about 7 years old, sitting beside the house playing with some toys. My group, Mum included, was taken aback by the conditions in which he was playing – garbage and open sewage near his play area. His clothes were wet and he seemed to be shivering. Mum chatted with him for a while, brought him to us, told us his name was Peter, and asked if we could take him back to her co-worker's house (where my team was staying at the time) to get him cleaned up. After a shower and a meal the shy and cautious Peter began warming up to us. He played with one person, then the next. My team connected well with Peter.

The slum where Peter and his mom Paige live had been hit by some flooding during this particular year's rainy season. We had heard much about the floods and Mum had told us many of the women at APL were concerned as it could bring with it other illnesses that would make life for the HIV positive

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[5] *Women's Empowerment and Economic Education Program (pseudonym) – one of APL's main programs which develops women's skills and talents and helps them fund an individual or group business upon graduation.*

women more difficult.[6] We later found out from one of Paige's neighbours that she had become ill from the flooding water that came through her house and had gone to the hospital. She had left Peter behind because of a lack of money for the Matatu[7] fare.

Near the end of our stay at APL to Mum's suggestion, our team decided to take a few of the women out for a nice dinner. We did this because we thought while getting a gift would be nice; the memory of a nice dinner would last longer. And so, on Mother's Day, 2010 our team decided to take some of the women out for *niama choma* – barbequed lamb. At the end of the dinner one of our team members turned and asked Peter how he liked the meal. Peter approved saying, "I'll be happy tonight, even if the rain comes."

A month after our return to Toronto, a few of us met at a tattoo parlor in downtown Toronto to support our two friends as they got Peter's words tattooed on them: "Even if the rain comes." Back in Tom's apartment in Toronto as I take notes and record Tom answer my interview questions on my voice recorder, I ask Tom if he found coming back home from Kenya a challenge, to which he responds, "yea of course, even if the rain comes, right?"

4.2. "[Everything] was on a silver platter [but] with a note ... [on it]"

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[6] HIV positive people can have their illness treated and live long and healthy lives, given a nutritious diet and lack of added sickness. Poverty makes HIV more difficult for these particular women because they lack warmth, good and regular nutrition and sanitation.

[7] 14-seater public transportation vehicles.

A year after our trip to Kenya, I was in Vancouver and Tom picked me up from downtown, took me to his house as guest and showed me around his neighbourhood. I was there for only a month revisiting a few friends I had made from a previous service-learning trip and spent the day with Tom. Much of what he showed me were things he had mentioned to us in Kenya; specifically a place he and his friends call "heaven." Heaven was a place he mentioned on the trip a few times as the best view of Vancouver and an overall beautiful place that came to epitomize his idea of home. That particular day it was relatively cloudy and was nearing the evening as we drove up the steep hillside toward heaven. With the clouds obstructing most of the city and harbor, only the tops of the skyscrapers and downtown high-rises were visible, lit up in various colours. It was a place deserving of its name. Tom's house is not far from heaven. Located on a hilltop, almost all of the houses had a beautiful view of the Vancouver Harbour and downtown Vancouver.

Back in the coffee shop in midtown Toronto, I ask Tom of his reasons for joining WYG and going to Kenya. He tells me his main objective was to gain perspective. While his childhood upbringing was "fortunate," Tom seemed troubled by the idea that his privileged upbringing might become central to his sense of identity, particularly with how others may perceive him. I probed and asked why. Tom recognizes that his privilege was not something typical. "I mean, what, like

only 5% of the world has had the childhood [and privilege] that I've had." He also connects his privileged upbringing with the friends he has had around him. While he does have many friends from his days growing up in privileged Vancouver who were equally as privileged, he tells me of his friends who lived less privileged lives yet he considers them to be close friends – "I could get along with them." It occurred to me that Tom was downplaying his privileged past because it does not coincide with the identity he wants associated with him, especially the identity he had gained after his experience in Kenya; after gaining some "perspective." Tom has been living alone in Toronto for 6 years while in school supporting himself and launching his clothing company.

Tom tells me he has always been cautious of his privilege, even as a child. As I ask him to elaborate on his sense of privilege growing up, he tells me "everything that I wanted when I was young, I could more or less get" with the exception of anything "extravagant and unnecessary of course." While his requests for a new pair of shoes, for instance, may have been served to him on a silver platter, "it was on a silver platter with a note that was like, you know this isn't normal... this isn't how everybody lives." Tom sees his decision to volunteer in Kenya as a way of reading into that "note" on the silver platter. He wanted to see/read it for himself and meet the people who are telling the stories. He recalls his childhood as a sheltered one,

which led to his rebelliousness while growing up. He attributes his rebelliousness as a motivator for his involvement with WYG.

4.2. "I don't believe in that [activism] shit."

In my 7 years of involvement with WYG, I have noticed a general activist presence amongst some members. While not everyone would consider themselves activists there are definitely a strong number each year. During the orientation weekends or the leaders training meetings, there are often pockets of discussions with people exchanging experiences at this protest or that rally. Others, though, do not necessarily involve themselves in any activism or protests. Tom aligns with the latter. I asked Tom whether he was involved in any sort of activism or whether he had participated in public protests and he responded with a swift, "I don't believe in that shit." Although I knew he did not participate in such things, I was taken aback by his abrupt response. "What? Why?" I asked. He told me its too "loud" and "crazy" and it ultimately was not his "style." His perception of activism and protesting was formed in a way that did not align with his sense of self and creative expression. His follow-up elaboration clarifies this:

> If you're trying to make a point, make a point in a smart way. Don't just go out there yelling and screaming and making all sorts of noise. Like, that'll just piss some people off and [they won't] pay attention to what you're actually saying... I mean think of your best teacher in school. They didn't just tell you that 'oh, be socially conscious' or whatever. No, they did it in a unique way. They made it interesting and made it make sense.

I find his disapproval of the disorder of protests ironic, considering the name of his clothing line, *Bedlam Belief*. His perception of how a point was to be made and how activism and change is to be brought about stood very much on the personal, individual level – "its up to the individual to make the change."

This way of thinking has seeped into Tom's work with his clothing line. Tom does not make what he calls "street wear," rather he is targeting a different group, a group much like himself that is making the transition from youth to adult. After his trip to Kenya, he had toyed with the idea of incorporating a "social justice" aspect to this clothing company. It was a question he asked me about around the same time he had the official launch for his line. He was looking for another organization he could partner with for the social justice aspect of the line. I told him perhaps there is something he could do that deals with that same target group he is designing for – youth transitioning into adulthood.

Tom's designs do not deal with graphics and they are not blatant. He straddles that fine line between youth and adulthood. I found it curious that the social justice element that he had asked me about earlier did not show in his design. Inquiring about this, he tells me, "it has to be a subtle message, like when it clicks, it clicks...It can't just be like, 'stop wasting food'" he says running his finger across his chest. "It has to be something more witty,

more creative than that." This "witty" way of thinking runs right into the name of his clothing line. After the rebranding process the new name of the company is *3WK*, meaning *When We Were Kids*. When he first told me the new name of the company as being *3WK*, I asked why this and not the whole name. He told me he wants people to think.

> Like when you first see *3WK*, its gibberish, it's a blank slate, its computer code, its three random numbers and letters. That way, when I tell people what it means, it evokes a memory, an emotion at a deeper level.

4.4. Tom's talking points

I was fascinated by Tom's disapproval of activism because of the alternative he provides – to make the change in a smart and subtle way. His use of this subtly is apparent in his clothing design too - cardigan sweaters with a subtle gloss, tightened collar, and shorted sleeves; jackets with an elongated back hem and side seam zippers; hooded sweaters with leather patches and slanted zippers; ruching cotton pants with a thick rope draw string. What is striking here is that activism and social justice comes secondary to a subtle, witty, smart character that he fronts before all else. The noise and craziness of the protest, thus, is at odds with how he situates himself. He would rather operate within those seemingly negligible places that do just enough to sit in the corner of the mind – the angled zipper of a jacket, the dropped back hem of a wool jacket that does just enough to break from conformity without making a scene.

The figurative “note” on the silver platter is of most interest to me. Tom tells of his emergent consciousness from a young age with a characteristically subtle metaphor. He did not know what the note meant when he was younger; this was something he would figure out in the years to come. But what this metaphorical note did at the time was to keep him distanced from a sense of entitlement. He acknowledged that “like only 5% of the world has had the childhood [and privilege] that I’ve had.” He knew that he was an exception to the norm. He gave chase to this note in the form of an ISL trip to Kenya. What he walked away with from this trip was a sense of perspective best summarized by the words of a 7-year-old Kenyan boy. These words and the stories with which they come serve to create an identity narrative.

Tom’s idea of heaven, particularly the way he had described it to me while in Kenya, had all the renderings of a place called home. In fact, when I asked him about heaven during the interview he responded with “its home, a place to relax.” The researcher in me wanted more, an elaboration, an explanation, reasons and metaphors, comparisons and the like. But I knew what he meant; the side of me that is not researcher, the friend (Harris, 2010) already knew what he meant. Sarup (1994) writes about the meanings of home and the politics of place, which I read less as an exploration of a concept and more a description of a feeling and a sense

of belonging[8]. But what Tom was addressing is closer to hooks' (2009) concept of belonging. hooks' "culture of belonging" looks at the loss of a deep connection with the land and seeks a "positive, life-affirming, spiritual, and healing effects of a connection to nature" (Epstein, 2010). This healing process is to climax with the realization of the "beloved community" of Dr. King's dream. King's (1968) beloved community is very much cosmopolitan in its outlook:

> We must all learn to live together as brothers or we will all perish together as fools. We are tied together in the single garment of destiny, caught in an inescapable network of mutuality. And whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly. For some strange reason I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be. And you can never be what you ought to be until I am what I ought to be. This is the way God's universe is made; this is the way it is structured.

This beloved community that hooks (2009), King (1968) and Josiah Royce[9] ask for is a different kind of community, even a paradoxical one, some might suggest. It is paradoxical because community, by definition, relies on exclusion for its existence (Ruitenberg, 2005). That is, the belonging that community provides is only made possible because others who do not belong are disallowed membership. However, Ruitenberg does entertain the idea of a community that can identify itself without exclusion and othering. This idealistic "community-to-come" is not so rigid in its self-identification, it is weak and malleable; it is not fixed in its locality, but hospitable to the stranger.

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[8] Sarup's (1994) look is largely from the angle of migration and refugees.

[9] Josiah Royce, founder of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, is the philosopher-theologian who coined the "beloved community" concept.

Tom's cosmopolitanism surfaced for me in the moment he showed me hospitality and invited me to witness and be a part of "heaven," the place he calls home. I was indeed a stranger, a traveller, a tourist even, taking in the Vancouver experience for only a few weeks. Add to this that my upbringing was dissimilar to Tom's in that I was not so privileged as he said he was in his upbringing. Heaven, though, is in a privileged area, surrounded by grand homes with large plots and each with an incredible view. Even still, Tom invited me in and shared his version of heaven. The view of heaven is majestic as nature, although the view is primarily of the city, is not absent. Towering redwoods compete with the skyscrapers for dominance in the sky. I find it fitting that both Tom's heaven and hooks' (2009) "belonging" hold prevalent ideas of nature and the environment.

Chapter 5: Angela[1]

Angela is a 23-year-old York University alumna, and like most of WYG, happens to be white. I had not kept in touch with Angela as well as I had with the other participants of this study after our trip. This was partly because Angela travelled to Belgium for a year on an international student exchange program a few weeks after coming back from Kenya. Upon return, she found a job in a clothing shop in Toronto's Kensington Market – a distinctive, partly outdoor, highly diverse market-neighbourhood, recently designated a National Historic Site. I met with Angela in *Moon Bean Café* right off Kensington Street, a fair-trade, organic coffee shop specializing in unique coffee blends from around the globe. I poured a mug of "Kenya Peaberry" at Angela's suggestion. We walked toward the back of the shop, through the crowded, narrow, squeaky hallway of the shop, which sits in what used to be a home, past a line of vertically stacked burlap sacks, and into the backyard-turned-patio.

Our talk surrounded three major points, the first deals with her calling her motivation for her involvement as being "selfish." Angela was not alone in this revelation as other participants shared this sentiment. I have selected this as a finding because it seemed to be a recurring theme among most of my participants. None mentioned that their intentions were solely to "go and help," as Lana put it.

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[1] *Pseudonym.*

Second, I focus on Angela's involvement in multiple volunteer organizations and how these extracurricular activities have developed interests in different social justice initiatives. Third, my talk with Angela brought about talk of culture, as the cultural aspect of an ISL trip was a real "plus" for her. We spoke about the cultures we witness and participate in in Toronto and the cultures we were exposed to on our trip and how they compare.

5.1. "It was an escape... I'd say selfish reasons."

Angela's story of finding WYG and her motivation for getting involved in an ISL trip was intriguing as it really highlighted her heavy involvement in extracurricular volunteering programs. She traces it back to "white little Sarnia," Ontario where she was heavily involved in her high school's Multicultural Awareness Committee. "Like, I'm not kidding, this was the biggest club in my high school and we had so much fun," she tells me as she chuckles at the irony. At York University, Angela got involved with an environmental justice organization as well as a center for women and trans-gendered people, "One volunteering group led me to the next and the next."

Angela describes volunteering in a way that goes beyond the simple definition of offering free service. Rather, she has been immersed in a handful of organizations that have offered Angela purposes besides service without charge. Angela describes involvement in her high school's multicultural group as something that was "fun" and

“informative” and as something that opened her eyes to various social, political, cultural issues. Volunteering also allowed Angela to meet new people, socialize and network. Because of these enjoyable aspects of volunteering Angela tells me she wanted to continue her involvement in other volunteer groups.

My conversation with Angela began with her citing her reasons for her participation in ISL trips. Among her reasons, she cited needing to feel “fulfilled or purposeful”, “a mental vacation” to distance herself from the familiar, to get involved in something she deemed positive, and to fulfill a need for an “escape.” My interview with Angela was one of the last and by then I had heard my previous participants cite that their reason for doing these trips were largely for themselves as well. I asked Angela for her motivations, to which she replied, “Yea, I’d say selfish reasons.” I then asked her how she negotiates doing these two seemingly contradictory things: service-learning, an act done for another person and these “selfish” motivations. Angela tells me that “those two actions are inextricably connected” because she finds that in helping others she finds the purpose and fulfillment she cited as her selfish reasons for doing this trip. “It’s kinda like two birds, one stone, you know?”

I then asked Angela why it was necessary for her to travel to Kenya to find this sense of “fulfillment” and be “purposeful”. I pointed to the many service opportunities

available locally. She referred me back to her use of the word "escape." Volunteering locally differs from what WYG had offered her. Locally, volunteering is typically an extracurricular endeavour and can sometimes "be shunted to the side" after work, school, family, and/or friends. Volunteering abroad, however, allows for one to escape in a fuller sense of the word – "you're diving into it completely," Angela says.

Beyond the notion of an "escape," Angela brings up a desire to travel. She finds her preoccupation with the idea of travel interesting, "I don't know when I latched onto this obsession with travel." She attributes it to her "changing world-views," which she mentioned as though it were something inescapable. "You learn so much in school or on the news," she says. Angela is pointing, perhaps, to one byproduct of a globalized curriculum, where the world and the different places in it are inescapable. That is, her reference to what she has learned in school points to an ever-internationalizing curriculum that references various global contexts. Angela's use of "the news" does not just consider newspaper periodicals and television programs, but also Internet sources, which now serve as a major source for news. As Angela points out, in the 21st century it is difficult to ignore the world outside the local. Having heard and read so much about the world outside of Sarnia and Toronto, she had to take the opportunity to "experience it."

I asked Angela whether she needed the escape and whether she got what she was searching for on this trip to Kenya. It was then that she shared with me her battle with depression, which was something she did not share with our team while in Kenya. “I kept it a secret because I was ashamed,” she explained. Before bringing up her depression, Angela used the words purposeful and fulfillment in response to my queries about her motivation for participation. She referred back to these words to clarify how her ISL experience served as a means for gaining purpose and not feeling “useless.”

5.2. “These memories...”

Angela’s hometown of Sarnia is also home to the Aamjiwnaang First Nation – an aboriginal group of 850 Chippewa-Ojibwe who reside adjacent to the St. Clair River. Beside this reservation operate a number of chemical plants, the numbers of which are large enough to have the region coined the chemical valley. The close proximity of these chemical plants have had adverse affects on the Aamjiwnaang community, who insist, among other effects, their askew male-female birth ratio of approximately 33% boys and 67% girls is due to the chemical pollution. “They’re not necessarily injustices against my person, but they’re injustices nonetheless,” Angela tells me of Aamjiwnaang.

Angela brings up the environmental racialization of Aamjiwnaang (Sabzwari & Scott, 2012) after recognizing her own privilege. “I mean I am female and that carries certain implications but I have not been subjected to huge

injustices that outraged me," she says, cautious not to claim others' suffering as her own. Her affinity for environmental issues took root from the Aamjinwaang issue and has led her from one place to another. I ask what she has pulled out of these experiences with WYG, APL and even Aamjiwnaang. Which lessons are "applicable to your daily life here, like going to work?" She tells me that it's a difficult question to answer. "[It's] difficult to pin point," but the memories of these ISL trips "have stayed with me and I think influenced me in the person I am turning into." But there is no "direct translation," she insists, "its not like 'oh I saw people in Kenya suffering in this way, so in... Toronto, I should do this." I point to the impact of drugs and HIV in Kenya and, challengingly, ask her why not get into drug and HIV issues back in Toronto? She tells me that one must first have a passion for an issue. We were exposed to so many different issues in Kenya; we have to find an issue that we feel avidly for.

I particularly like Angela's reference to the idea of memory. Experiences like the one we had in Kenya serve as poignant memories for "when you're put in the position to either support or not support this company with your business and to join or not to join this activist march," she says gesturing with her hands. Other participants, namely Tom, also address this ISL trip as something "in your memory bank" to refer to while making life decisions here in

Toronto. “I guess it just brought to light other issues that are also faced in this corner of the world,” Angela ends.

Whether recruiting members for a WYG trip or explaining to inquiring friends and acquaintances about the social justice aspect of WYG, I am often faced with the challenges of relating an idea of social justice that is relational (Young, 1990) as opposed to distributive (Rawls, 1971). During our orientation weekends when participants sit in on workshops, discussions, activities as training for their trip, there is usually heavy emphasis on building relationships. Angela references the relationship aspect of her time in Kenya and connects it with the idea of sharing stories. “We basically just visited people and heard their stories,” she says, seeing the simplicity of our work. But she placed an “implacable value” on the sharing of stories, cautious not to sound too “wishy-washy.”

During these “home visits,” as Mum had termed them, we would be invited to the home of one of the women at APL, all 10 members would go to that particular woman’s home where we would sit and hear that particular woman’s story. Mum would encourage the women to be open with their stories, asserting that being able to speak and share one’s story of struggle is a significant step towards recovery and healing. The women’s stories varied and were often emotionally challenging for us to hear. Our team was a relatively lively and exciting bunch, but after a day of a few home visits, we

would all be emotionally drained, many of us wanting alone time to process each story.

I asked Angela what she thought of these home visits, particularly how she felt about sharing stories. Combining the ideas of relationship building and stories, Angela told me she saw these two as significant contributors to the impact of our trips. "I can see how building relationships played such a big part in the trip and I like the idea of finding some common ground." She particularly like that stories helped her realize similarities "even though you and this other person come from halfway across the world and are totally different." I liked this response from Angela as it points to how she came to deal with difference. She begins with the idea of finding "similarities," which she seems intrigued by, given the vastly different life situations and apparent differences. Angela does not seem to be absolving difference, pretending it does not exist; instead she leaves space for the difference and works with it to "find some common ground."

5.3. "A stronger idea of culture."

A significant topic in my discussion with Angela was the cultural aspect of our Kenya trip. When I would return from any trips abroad, friends, family, co-workers, etc. who have not experienced a WYG trip or visited Kenya would ask me about my own experiences on these trips. Usually, they want to know about 'the culture.' My responses are typical and vague – "they are very hospitable, I would say" or "they are

very kind." While these are positive qualities, I am troubled with the idea of having to summarize 'the Kenyan culture,' in such a totalizing way. Sometimes I notice my qualifications of 'the Kenyan culture' shift and change arbitrarily. Other times I find myself resorting to what Yon (2000) terms attribute theory, "the understanding of culture as a set of stable and knowable attributes" (p. 7). It is a slippery task to try and pin down something as elusive as culture.

I have always found it curious as to why we had to leave Toronto, one of the most culturally, linguistically, racially diverse places in the world to witness culture. I mentioned to Angela that in my walk from the bus stop to this coffee shop where we were sitting, I had probably passed by as much if not more cultural, racial, linguistic, and religious variety than we had come across in our entire month in Kenya. Angela agreed, she told me in Toronto, culture "shouts at us from every street corner and billboard" but these cultures get sort of mixed together... or diluted by so many [other cultures] around it." The culture we experience in Toronto is "transplanted from the original," Angela tells me, "which isn't to discredit it in any way because transplanted cultures take on their own meaning," she elaborates.

Angela then referenced our experience in a Maasai [2] village as an example of what she meant by culture. During our first few days in Kenya, Mum had told us during our stay that a Maasai group had invited our team to a circumcision ceremony. A joyous and celebratory event, the circumcision was held at 2 am under moonlight with the aid of flashlights as two 14-year-old boys were undergoing the surgery. We spent the night in Manyattas (Maasai-style mud huts), watched the slaughtering of a goat, saw a fire starting and a tree-planting ceremony.

Our experience with this Maasai village and the ceremonies that we witnessed were quite different from the culture that we might see in, say Toronto's Chinatown. When I initially brought up this seemingly paradoxical desire of leaving one of the most culturally diverse cities to be able to witness culture, Angela prefaced her response by with "well, it's an echo of the 'why volunteer abroad rather than locally' question" which I posed to her earlier in our talk. To this latter question Angela replied by pointing to an immersion factor – that volunteering locally sometimes got "shunted to the side," whereas volunteering abroad is more holistic because one is completely immersed in the experience. Her response to my question about culture took a similar angle; although there is culture in Toronto, we are often distracted by urban life. Even with my observation about witnessing more diversity on my walk from the bus to

[2] *Semi-nomadic indigenous in habitants of Kenya and northern Tanzania.*

the coffee shop as opposed to Kenya, it is true that I was not necessarily conscious of this diversity. My mind was elsewhere. By contrast, in Kenya I recall trying to decipher conversations and practicing my own Kswahili, or even jumping into heated debates in bars about the upcoming Champions League finals between *Inter Milan* and *Bayern Munich*. Our team would insist on eating Ugali – maize flour and water mixed to a dough-like consistency – as opposed to spaghetti and meatballs, which was what Mum was used to making other Western volunteers. In essence, Angela had a point that while in Kenya we made a conscious effort to, for the lack of a better word, *do* culture, not just witness it. Whether that took the shape of food, language or politics, we tried to participate.

Angela also brought up an interesting note about the difference between participation and observation in regards to culture. While provoking her about what she meant by culture, Angela turned to language as being her understanding of what the bulk of what culture referenced. With this, she reminisced on the overwhelming feeling she had when she first arrived in Kenya. Because of this overwhelming feeling, Angela told me she felt like an observer as she would "sit back and take it all in." But, she said, as we began working with APL, with Mum, the kids and the women, she got "swept up in this way of life. It's sort of liberating to participate or attempt to participate in something that is so foreign to you." What I enjoyed most

about this remark was her qualification of "attempt to participate." With this, I feel she is pointing to the messiness of the situation we were in while in Kenya. There were both comical scenarios where, for instance we would mispronounce a word and unintentionally be saying something completely different, and those scenarios that would highlight our Whiteness and/or privilege.

5.4. Angela's talking points

Sometimes I am asked why I decided start doing these trips. I often get the sense that people assume I began these trips for some altruistic reason – "to help." And so, when friends and acquaintances inquire about my motivations I am often put in an awkward position. To cite that I have done this reason for myself, to "escape" and to achieve some sort of personal fulfillment would be deemed selfish and thus inappropriate. Conversely, when I cite more altruistic reasons such as wanting to help others in the world that need it, I am deemed to be an arrogant person with a "messiah complex." [3] ISL participants' motivations for involvement are troublingly seen in this dichotomous way that provides no right answer. This is why I find it necessary to discuss Angela's self-proclaimed "selfish" motivation. During our conversation I provoked Angela in this same dichotomous way of thinking. Her response was revealing and very helpful in my thinking through this

[3] *This term was suggested to me by a friend who helped me deal with the repercussions of post-ISL life.*

problem. Helping others, she says, and helping the self are "inextricably connected... its like two birds one stone." Angela's conjoined conception of the self and the other is at the root of some world-famous conceptions of ethics. Foucault's "care of the self" for instance, takes this same stance that leading a life-long commitment to improving "ones' mind, body, and soul in order to better relate to other people and lead an ethically-driven life" (Batters, 2011).

At one point in our discussion I asked Angela if she were to summarize her ISL experiences, what would she say she learned? I recall immediately apologizing to Angela after posing this question in recognition of the difficulty of the question – to summarize, an entire month of people, experiences, stories, feelings and memories in a short, containable sound-bite. Like a good sport, Angela gave my question a try. She said "these memories" have stayed with her and have influenced her into improving herself as a better person. At the end of the day these ISL experiences, the people, the feelings, the challenges and all, will be banked in memory to either escape, take root, be influenced by other memories, and/or manifest in another way. She insisted there is no "direct translation"; that just because we worked with HIV issues in Kenya does not necessarily mean we should then return to Canada and continued to work with HIV issues. The changes experienced in these ISL trips work in varying ways, they store in memory and might be taken on

as personal identity forms, ways of seeing the world, and ways of "being in the world" (Waldron, 1995). To think there should hold some sort of direct translation between ISL experience and life upon return is a mistake. Participants take away various lessons from their experiences abroad.

Our discussion on culture and what constitutes culture was fruitful in that it came to address some of the pressing questions I had asked myself when developing the interview questions for this research. Why is it that some look to ISL trips to fulfill a need to "experience culture." Why leave arguably one of the most culturally diverse cities in the world to go and witness culture elsewhere? Is there some 'purity' in culture what we I was looking for when I got excited to learn we were invited to a Maasai circumcision ceremony? If that is so then it implies 'impurity' in the cultures of the West as though they are contaminated. These questions point to the discussion of difference I struggled with in the social justice literature – in the age of identity politics, what do we do with difference? I asked Angela why we needed to travel all the way to Kenya to see culture when we can see many cultures in Toronto. In response she pointed to the emersion factor and saw this question as very much an echo of my earlier provocation for the motivation for involvement inquiry. Being on an ISL trip is an immersive experience, you are "in it completely" whereas in Toronto, volunteering comes secondary to work, school, friends, family, etc. At the same time cultural

"participation" is not necessarily required or encouraged. For example, while in Kenya we were encouraged to *participate* in culture, in Toronto, I can walk down the streets of Chinatown and not have to speak any language other than English or adhere to any 'Chinese customs.' [4] Concurrently, Chinatown is a sort of mosaic of a variety of national, ethnic, linguistic, and cultural identities. While restaurants may advertise their food, for example, under various national categories (i.e. Vietnamese, Chinese, Korean, Philippine), their plurality is often lumped together into singular markers (i.e. Chinese food, Middle Eastern food, etc.) so differences between *pho, dim sum, and kimchi* [5], for instance, disappear. In Kenya we became conscious of difference, particularly cultural difference both within and between (Yon, 1999) our team, whereas in Toronto, I could walk through countless cultural, linguistic, ethnic, national varieties without notice.

[4] I put quotes around this to remind myself and my readers that I do not mean to resort to simplistic understandings of culture as some attributes (Yon, 2000). Rather, I want make a point of the lack of consciousness of cultural diversity on my part in Toronto.

[5] Vietnamese, Chinese, and Korean delicacies, respectively.

Chapter 6: Lana[1]

Lana is 25 years old and, like much of WYG's membership, is a white female. Raised in London, Ontario, Lana attended Wilfred Laurier University where she was struck by what she calls the "volunteer culture." Her first ISL experience was not with WYG, but another organization that did similar work, focusing instead on medical support. Lana has participated in 3 trips with WYG in various roles – member, intern, and leader. When Lana came back from Kenya, she started an organization called *Art at Work*[2], which uses art as a medium for social change. Lana sells her own paintings and sends a portion of the proceeds to help with specific projects in APL. Lana's connection to *Art at Work* is significant and takes up much of my discussion with her.

Lana invited me to her house for the interview. She lives near High Park – a major, mixed recreation-and-natural park – in an older model home. As I step through her hallway I dodge canvases and hop over paint bottles. There are dried paint marks on the hardwood floor on top of which lie half-completed paintings. The walls of her living area and hallways are lined with paintings, some hung up and some leaned against the bare brick walls next to a fireplace. The day I was interviewing her, Lana was working on a painting of a pelican, which, she told me was far overdue for completion.

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[1] *Pseudonym.*
[2] *Pseudonym.*

Lana and I had a very interesting talk, much of which was dominated by her connection with and experiences through *Art at Work* and her difficulties while negotiating her identity through *Art at Work*. Our conversation began with her volunteering in Laurier University and a similar "volunteer culture" that Angela described earlier. She also discussed at length conflicts, both external and internal, with friends and family when she began doing volunteer work, particularly when she returned from her trips abroad. Finally, Lana ended our talk with fascinating remarks about a desire to continue her work without the scrutiny she feels she receives.

6.1. **"The cool kids are the volunteers."**

We begin our talk with her reasoning for participating in an ISL trip, which, like the others I interviewed began as fulfillment of her own desires than for serving others. "I think my whole reasoning for [volunteering abroad] was, it was so in the Laurier culture to get involved and do something," Lana explains. WYG had a strong presence in Wilfred Laurier in 2008. Another WYG member had mentioned that the president of Laurier had mentioned WYG in his convocation speech. Because of this, Lana describes this large presence of ISL organizations as a culture. "You know, the cool kids are the volunteers," she tells me jokingly.

> I remember the year I went on my first global trip to India, all my roommates were going on a global trip. One was going to Morocco and two were going to Thailand. Outside of that house where we lived, all our close friends were going on WYG trips either as like a first-time team member or as an intern, as team leader. Like, it was just such a strong year for [WYG] at Laurier that it was kinda

> like there were tears when people didn't make a team, you know, like, it was very hard.

WYG and other volunteer organizations have made a strong presence on university campuses, particularly those where the majority of the students live on campus like Wilfred Laurier University. Universities located closer to major cities like the University of Toronto, York University and Ryerson University tend to have less interest. This is symptomatic of how much more difficult it has been for me, being that I have led WYG teams out of the Toronto region, to recruit members. When Lana and I led this team to Kenya in 2010 she had finished her undergraduate degree at Wilfred Laurier and had moved to Toronto working as a waitress. When it was time to recruit members for our team, she was shocked to find that people were "not interested."

The contrast between the presence of WYG at Wilfred Laurier and the Toronto region was striking. She describes Laurier as having a "community culture" that she felt right from her first day when, for instance, frosh volunteers had surprised her right as she got out of her car to move into her residence and sang "happy first day to you." She says,

> they [helped] bring all your stuff up to my room... introduce you to your roommates and hand your keys over.... And they're volunteers! Your first experience with Laurier is with a volunteer welcoming you in. So you know, the cool kids are the volunteers.

Lana told these stories with a certain expressions of joy; it seemed they were fond memories for her. I could somewhat understand where she was coming from. In my first few years with WYG, I remember seeing how close the teams

from Laurier were. In contrast, the teams out of Toronto were nowhere near as close. Because of the sheer size of the Toronto region and the scarce interest, members would be pulled in from all around the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). This would make pre-departure meetings difficult, members saw each other only a few times before heading out on their trips. This is, I feel, why Angela said she "hated" orientation and Tom and John were ambivalent towards it. Discontent with the orientation weekend was a common thread for most of my participants and with most members of Toronto teams I have been part of. While John, Tom and Angela shared these thoughts about the orientation weekend, Lana, on the other hand, seemed fond of the orientation weekend.

These points are significant as they shed light on a certain volunteer culture that seems to be surfacing from Lana's interview. I can see similarities with Angela's affinity for volunteering and Lana's remarks on volunteering being "fun" and allowing her to meet new people. Angela, on the other hand, felt like an outsider at the orientation weekend. For instance, she recalls other teams having "little songs" and her team just "awkwardly" eating. The point here is that when my participants say, for instance, that they volunteer, they mean something more than providing free service for someone else. Rather, volunteering has become a portion of their lifestyle where they socialize, network, spend time, make friends, and even use as a stage for understanding their sense of self.

Yon (2000), in his ethnographic study of a school in urban Toronto, suggests that the school cannot be a mere "container" of static identities, rather it is implicated in the production of identities (p. 32). Similarly, WYG has played a significant role in understandings of self and relations to the other when it comes to my participants. We were part of teams, represented various universities and where from various regions around Southern Ontario[3]. All of these groupings and categories, which for WYG was a matter of organization, became markers of identity and provided participants with feelings of belonging. There were revelries and competitions, mostly friendly, between regions and schools. WYG was very much an arena for the playing out of various identities.

6.2. "'First-world problems' or ... 'white girl problems.'"

Lana has been on a handful of trips, the last of which had been about 3 years ago. Much has happened since. A significant portion of our discussion surrounded her difficulties interacting with friends. She tells me of the times she would get frustrated with friends who would not understand her ISL experiences and could not relate to her perspectives. Save for our team members and those who have had similar ISL experiences, there are few who, she tells me, can really understand her perspective. This idea of a

[3] There were several regions, each responsible for recruiting members for a predetermined number of teams set to travel to a predetermined country. While participants did not necessarily have to be associated with a school, universities made for perfect recruitment sites.

new-found perspective was brought up by Tom as well, who mentioned it was something he consciously pursued when signing up for the trip. For Lana, it seems, this same perspective is now serving as a point of frustration because people around her cannot relate and understand her perspectives.

I asked Lana how her friends, family and acquaintances reacted to her when she would return from her trips abroad. In my other interviews, participants have hinted at having to be selective in the way they share their stories about their trips. To no surprise, Lana tells me much of the same. "[I get] an array of different reactions," particularly after coming back from Kenya. When Lana had told her acquaintances, friends and family about working with HIV positive women and children in Kenya, she was surprised by the "ignorant questions" they asked about whether she had to wear masks and gloves; whether she had to touch them or not. These questions were offensive to Lana as they were not patients or clients to us, they were friends who we cared about and spent time and ate food with. I asked how she responded to these inquiries, to which she seemed simultaneously understanding – "everyone's education level is different" – yet frustrated – "[I couldn't] get too complex with them." It seems to Lana that there are some people who are genuinely interested while others want a quick summary, as though they are asking for mere courtesy with little genuine interest. Having to "decipher" between

earnest and insincere queries has become tiring, which is why Lana has decided it is better to avoid discussions about her trips altogether. Having participated in a handful of trips with WYG and having dealt with the return phase as well, Lana has developed her own tactics for alleviating this difficulty.

> I have three kinds of stories when I come back: There are the funny, cute stories that I tell everyone, cuz it's what they wanna hear sometimes. And there are the sad stories that I sometimes bring up. And there are those really hard stories that I haven't told anyone because I can't even say them out loud yet.

Lana, it seems, does not have the luxury of being able to share her experiences openly without hesitation, without feeling judgment. Talking with her cousin, one day, Lana found herself in the defensive, having to stand up for *Art at Work* and its "overhead issues"[4] and why it supports initiatives overseas as opposed to locally.

Lana's frustrations did not necessarily end here. She tells me that socializing with her friends can bring up bouts of irritation and annoyance. At times she sits with her friends and has to hear them complain about "problems that aren't actually problems." But she is unable to "vocalize" her frustrations. Lana has decided to give up on trying to voice her true thoughts and feelings in such scenarios:

> I've stopped trying to [vocalize my frustrations] because I don't want to be the annoying one who's become like the martyr in the whole conversation. I hear girls complaining about wedding dresses or not having enough money to buy clothes they really want or just complaining about stuff that aren't really problems.

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[4] *Expenses incurred for operating a business.*

What Lana has shared is very similar to Kiely's (2004) chameleon complex where she is consciously censoring her genuine thoughts and feelings in an effort to avoid conflict.

She tells me that she juxtaposes these problems with those of the kids in Kenya "who don't have access to education or shoes or food or clothes or a safe home... and women who are dealing with issues of HIV and rape and cancer and lack of income [as] they're about to get evicted from their homes." Her friends' problems, by comparison, cannot compare up to the problems of those she met in Kenya. "They're not problems," she tells me, referring to the former, "they're 'first-world problems' or they're 'white girl' problems." I am reminded of Tom's comment about wanting to gain "perspective" from his ISL trip. The perspective that Lana has apparently gained has shifted her conception of what may qualify as a problem. Indeed, if we were to juxtapose the problems with which we were confronted at APL such as poverty, hunger, HIV and cancer, to name a few, it would dwarf what Lana calls "first-world" or "white-girl" problems.

6.3. "I wish it could be like the Wizard of Oz."

It was shortly after her last WYG trip to Kenya when Lana started *Art at Work*. She thought of the concept for the business in Kenya. "I paint pictures people send me, they pay me, and I send half of it to [APL]." *Art at Work* has really taken off in the past few years, she has held a

handful of art shows in downtown Toronto and has managed to raise enough money to cover most of the cost of 1/8th of an acre of land to purchase for APL to use for farming. Lana's success from *Art at Work* has landed her name and picture in newspapers, blogs, and magazines. She even had a major multi-national beverage company do a short video spotlight-feature about her and *Art at Work* for online publishing. Her success with *Art at Work* has left an impression on Lana as she navigates the way she is seen and the way she sees her self in the midst of all the attention from her business.

The reputation she has garnered from *Art at Work* and the perceptions that people now have of Lana, though, do not sit well with her. Much of this attention has come to land on her as an individual and less so on *Art at Work.* But before delving in to her frustrations with this, she prefaces it with how grateful she is for the success of *Art at Work* and the "strong group of friends" that have helped bring her such success. She includes me in this group and hesitates a little before continuing. She explains what she means using an example:

> I'll be out with friends and I'll get introduced to someone and [my friends will] tell them about *Art at Work*. So then I have this half-an-hour conversation with some stranger explaining my whole life story of, like, what got [me] into [it]. And I have to talk about [DREAMS] and India and Peru and Kenya and how *Art at Work* started and they'd be like 'you're such a good person.' And I don't wanna hear it, cuz it's like, I don't know why [but] I get so mad.

Two things came out of this example. First, she speaks to the exhausting task of having to explain an extensive and personal story of how her organization came to be. Second

she brings up her discomfort with being perceived as "such a good person." She explains this by pointing to the tendency of her work with *Art at Work* to eclipse "50%" of who she is.

> The other 50% ... is just Lana. If you take away ... *Art at Work*... and you take away my travel life, there is still this person who lives in Toronto who works two jobs, who pays her student loans, who likes to go out with her friends and who cares about shopping and these, like, vain, vapid things.

Art at Work has "definitely defined" who Lana is in the eyes of some people and its something that, she says, she is still coming to terms with.

She references the Kielburger brothers who started *Free the Children* and those who started *Invisible Children* as examples of how "shit can hit the fan really quickly." By this, Lana is referring to the scrutiny under which both the organizations and their founders live. For example, after Invisible Children's highly publicized *Kony 2012*[5] video that went viral, the founders of the organization came under extreme scrutiny as their proposal to mobilize Western youth to lobby American intervention in central Africa was called into question. In March of 2012, Ben Keesey, CEO of Invisible Children released a statement after Co-Founder, Bill Russell was hospitalized and a video of Russell was released showing him running naked, interfering in traffic and acting in a "bizarre and irrational manner," to quote San Diego police.

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[5] *Invisible Children's Kony 2012 video has been the center of public controversy and academics have stepped in as well. For further reading on Kony 2012 see Branch (2012), Cavanagh (2012), and particularly Zuckerman (2012) who writes about Kony 2012 from a cosmopolitanism framework.*

The scrutiny of her work with *Art at Work* brings Lana to a place of caution. She is always careful the way she interprets her work and the message she puts out. "It's hard being the poster child of an issue like this because as much as *Art at Work* is cute and sweet and made from the best intentions, it's not a cute issue [it's] dealing with." The fundraising events that I have attended for *Art at Work* are indeed, to use Lana's word, "cute." And I feel it is because of this "cute" marketing of the organization that, at least partially, it draws as much attention as it does. Her last art show, for instance, held in downtown Toronto in a bright and modern foyer of a corporate building, generously donated for the evening, drew a polished and well-dressed crowd. The ceilings were covered with colourful helium-filled balloons with long, shiny tape dangling from their ends, the walls lined with colourfully painted canvases on beige easels and a few tables decorated with wine, cheese and an assortment of pastries. The crowd would chat and frolic while artists demonstrated their talents live on a small stage. On a few walls were mounted flat-screen televisions that played, on loop, a 10-minute video Lana had shot while in Kenya the year before. While the events were successful and did help raise money for APL, there were always one or two people who came equipped with subtle but loaded questions that would call into question the ethics of the organization, asking for example if these projects were indeed what the community in Kenya wanted or it was something we were enforcing. Lana

has told me she likes to have John and I around in times like these.

Back in Lana's canvas-littered apartment, she reflects on this time in her life as a "breaking point" where she must decide who she wants to be. "Am I gonna be... this socially aware person for the rest of my life... a leader of this idea of social enterprise and a not-for-profit company that does good and [spreads] the word about what is going on in Kenya," she says while pointing both hands to one side. "Or [am I going to] be that person that everyone says I am?" she ends as she points her hands to the other as though she is referring to two different and opposing things. She refers to the discomfort she sometimes feels when being praised for her work, being told she is a "good person," and adds, "I'm not doing [*Art at Work*] for a compliment; I'm doing it because I find it genuinely interesting to learn about. I like to travel, I like to paint, I love Debby," her sponsor child. These are great things and she has found a way to "connect them all," but these pros come with the uneasiness of dealing with others' "perception[s] of what it means to be doing all [this]." She sighs, "I wish it was like the *Wizard of Oz* where I could be behind a curtain and people [won't] know it was me doing it, it would be a lot easier."

Later that week, after I had transcribed her interview, I caught Lana on Facebook and I followed up on her *Wizard of Oz* reference. She told me she, like the Wizard, wants to

control Emerald City, metaphor for *Art at Work*. But the great and powerful *Wizard of Oz* was really a "little man behind a curtain," she wrote. When everyone found out who he really was, they were disappointed, "maybe that's why I don't like it [because people] will be disappointed when they find out about me," she says, referring back to the scrutiny of being such a "poster child." She used the word "fear" and clarifies it as being a fear of her being questioned on her knowledge of international development "because its so layered and tricky." She says she is self-taught only through "experience and self interest, no degree certifications and all that jazz," she ends as I ponder on her use of the word "jazz" (Humphreys, Brown, Hatch, 2003) [6].

6.4. Lana's talking points

My talk with Lana brought forth three main concerns: the culture of volunteering and the serving of self versus the serving of the other; troubles interactions with friends, a symptom of the chameleon complex; and a fear of scrutiny. First, Lana's discussion of how she came to start volunteering with WYG helped to shed further light on a volunteer culture that Angela spoke to earlier. This culture, she said, was something she wanted to be a part of because, as she said mockingly, all the "cool kids are the

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[6] *Entitled 'Is ethnography jazz?,' this article looks at the ways in which ethnographers are engaged in an improvised quest for self-identity and empathy. The authors' conceptualization of the ethnographer as an imaginative, experimental and collaborative character resounds with my understandings of how Lana (and my participants in general) have worked to formulate and struggle with their own sense of self.*

volunteers." Her desire to be like the "cool kids," and be belong to a subculture of volunteering pushed Lana to join WYG. This is an important point to consider, especially when connected with her discomfort with being praised for volunteering. Lana started volunteering to fulfill a personal desire – to be accepted and to be a part of a wider school culture. So when people praise her for her volunteering abroad they are confusing her personal or "selfish reasons" for some altruistic desire to help the other. Lana feels uncomfortable taking complements for her volunteer work because she recognizes that her volunteering began to please the self. There is a difference, though, between Lana's and Angela's understandings of this same issue. While Angela recognizes a certain connectedness between helping the self and the other, Lana did not seem to make that connection. In fact international volunteering has come under fire in recent years, as some have questioned whether it lies on the side of volunteerism or tourism.[7]

Lana also spoke of occasions when she had difficulties interacting with her friends. Occasions when her friends would complain of "first world," "white girl" problems frustrated her. But at the same time her fear of becoming the "martyr in the conversation" held her back from voicing these frustrations – symptomatic of Kiely's (2004) chameleon

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[7] Volunteer tourism or 'voluntourism' has been the focus of much debate in recent years. Lana, like many other WYG, participants feels uncomfortable being perceived as a 'voluntourist.' For more on volunteer tourism see: Vrasti, W. (2012). Volunteer tourism in the global south: Giving back in neoliberal times.

complex. If she were to outwardly criticize her friends' problems and compare them with the problems of her sponsor child, Debby, who is HIV positive and living in extreme poverty, she would be shunned by her friends. Instead, Lana chooses silence, masking her frustrations to avoid any conflict.

Most interesting on Lana's part was a concern of the responsibilities associated with the identity that was being ascribed to her. This responsibility comes with working in "international aid" and the fact that aid is not neat and clean, but "layered and tricky." She felt that her association with *Art at Work* eclipsed part of her identity, the part that is living alone in Toronto, working to pay off her debts, and sometimes caring about "vain, vapid things." But being in aid and simultaneously caring for vanity and vapidity are contradictory. So, she fears that showing people this latter portion of her identity would compromise the legitimacy of *Art at Work.* Because of this she wishes she were not the "poster child" of the organization, but running the organization from behind the scenes like the great and powerful *Wizard of Oz.* Her simultaneous love and fear of her role as founder of *Art at Work* has brought Lana to a place of ambivalence[8] – loving and fearing parts of her ascribed identity simultaneously.

[8] *While the intersection of ambivalence and identity is beyond the scope of my research, it is a fascinating field, which is being explored thoroughly by psychoanalysts, particularly Elliot (1996, 1994).*

Chapter 7: John[1]

I first met John in October of 2009 while recruiting team members for Kenya. We were conducting multiple interviews over a span of several hours in a Tim Horton's coffee shop near Dundas Square in downtown Toronto. I saw John's name on the list but did not realize he was early for his interview; this was because I had dismissed him. John was dressed in dress pants, a polo shirt and a blazer. He did not fit my understanding of a WYG member – white, male, usually dressing formal, complete with blazers. When I mentioned this to him during the interview for this project, he said he was not surprised. Apparently, two of the three team-leaders from his previous WYG trip to Morocco were vehemently against recruiting him onto the team for similar reasons. My initial dismissal of John at the interview in the Tim Horton's coffee shop is symptomatic of a typecasting or stereotyping of what a WYG member looks like. I admit to doing this myself.

John is 26 years old and currently works for a privately owned multinational food company operating in 25 countries. His has a strategy and finance role in the company and part of his work is "penetrating new global markets." Because of this, John is often traveling around the world analyzing markets and proposing business plans on behalf of the company. It was a bit of a challenge for me to get an interview time with John when he was in Toronto and

[1] *Pseudonym.*

available. In 2010 when we travelled to Kenya, he had just received the job offer and was considering his options. Today, of all the team members (myself included) John seems to be the most involved with Mum and APL. If there are ever any developments in APL or with Mum or any of the women, John is usually the one to know first.

7.1. "I'm a capitalist pig."

I arrived early to our interview location, *Luma* – a restaurant in the *Bell Lightbox* building home of the *Toronto International Film Festival* (TIFF) – John's choosing because of its proximity to his workplace in the nearby financial district. I felt a bit out of place surrounded by people in suits and dresses. John arrived shortly after. After reminiscing for a while about our time in Kenya, he ordered a scotch, neat, and asks me about the research. We got into addressing some questions about his motivation for involvement and soon he asked me to explain my research. I say I'm mainly looking at questions of identity and how we may see ourselves as individuals and how our ISL experiences have influenced this. "Oh, I'm a capitalist pig," he says, without letting me finish my thought. "Look at me, I'm sitting here in a suit... with my Esquire [watch]," he says with a silent chuckle. On that same wrist, John was fiddling with a Maasai beaded-bracelet, which I had couriered to him from another WYG member who recently returned from APL. It was a gift from one of the women at APL. A confident and charismatic speaker, the women of APL have grown fond of

John. John is no less fond of them. I point to the bracelet and say "and a Maasai bracelet," pointing out the clash of the Maasai bracelet and the Esquire watch and what they represent. "It's balance," he tells me. I probe, asking if he is ever questioned on these two seemingly contradictory commitments. He answers me with a question, "but why can't you do both?" He asks me why he can't live a "socially conscious" life while working for Barrick Gold "who's mining the shit out of Sierra Leone." He explains:

> Like, I know it's hypocritical, but this is what enables me to do those things I do in Kenya. I work here but help there. I don't turn a blind eye to it. No, I can't turn a blind eye to it. Its not like I don't know about the [impact of] mining.... But I also know that for me to do what I love and what I think is best for Mum and APL and those women... in the slum and the kids I sponsored, I gotta do this too.

But corporate lifestyle is not merely a matter of necessity as though he were obliged to do this work against his will. He makes this clear by telling me he enjoys the life he lives. John likes wearing suits and having his office a few strides from the CEO's. He recognizes his privilege but living with "guilt does nothing", not for him nor for those in Kenya.

At this point, I bring up a conversation he and I had back in Kenya during our first trip, which was about guilt. John had asked me if I felt any guilt about my lifestyle in Canada when visiting these women's homes in the slums and hearing their stories. Using that conversation as a reference point, I ask what he thinks now about it. "It's something I still struggle with today." He pauses and

ponders, his face showing a hint of grief. He starts again, "You walk down the ... slum, you see a boy sitting down in the dump eating a banana peel. Okay, so this little boy, how is he in this situation? Well he was born into it. How am I in this situation? Well I was born into it." This little boy he is referring to is likely Peter whom we met in similar circumstances and whose story came up a lot more poignantly in Tom's interview. "So what does that mean? Okay, take a step back again. It's a role of the dice. It's luck," he says matter-of-factly. "And I don't think everyone still gets that – 'oh, I'm entitled because I am,'" he says mockingly refereeing it seems, to those with a sense of entitlement to their privileged way of life. "No, no, no, it's a role of the dice. You are born into your situation." He qualifies this by stating that "in a western society [being] in the right skin and the right body" also work to your advantage.

"So, what is your responsibility in all of this?" I ask John. "Who knows? Maybe one day I'll go and adopt a kid sitting in the dump," he says sarcastically because he already does sponsor a few children and a family. Provokingly, I say to John, "To quote you, why not be a hippie and drop this corporate world?" He responds: "Why? I like my Esquire. And I have a fiancé who likes money too," he smiles.

7.2. "Continual investment and relationship..."

When I had initially asked John to participate in this research, my focus was more on the concept of social justice as a significant marker of identity. But, as mentioned earlier, I had revised my research questions because I felt it was obscuring rather than revealing the concerns of my participants. Initially, I was looking at whether my participants were coming to see themselves, in some way, as subjects of social justice. Having explained this to John initially, he struggled with the term, as did I. In fact, Lana and Tom too found the concept of social justice troubling and obscure. WYG, however, has the concept of justice as central to its motto, which reads "Faith. Justice. Community." So, I asked John if justice was something he saw or learned about in his visit to Kenya. He shot back with a quick and frustrated "what is justice?" I changed my choice of words, "let's say injustice," I said, hoping it would satisfy. It did not, and we went on until we eventually settled on "inequality." Not fully satisfied, John tells me "inequality and injustice is all over the place. There is injustice right now on the street not too far from here... [but] if you go [on WYG] trips and donate funds, invest in specific organizations, whatever, what good has that done?" John seems dissatisfied with the idea of treating an ISL trip as a singular experience. He tells me that by treating this experience as a one-time event, thinking "[I'm going to] save the world and I'm gonna be done with that for the rest of my life; no, that is more

injustice than anything." Instead, he tells me that what matters most is that

> ongoing continual investment and relationship [which] is more important than anything. That is what creates this kind of 'justice' or whatever that [WYG is] looking for.

In jest and admittedly in an attempt to agitate, I asked why he would not just move to Kenya and work with APL. He laughed off my suggestion and addressed it by saying he belongs here and so do his friends and family.

The "ongoing, continual investment" that John spoke of is something he has tried to live up to. The 12,000 kilometers of distance between Toronto and Nairobi, of course, has served as a difficult obstacle. But this is something that has been partially remedied through the convenience of the Internet. When we first met Mum and the women at APL, they had tried to use Facebook, Twitter and other social media tools to keep their volunteers in the loop, but without much success. With our second trip to APL, John, Lana and I insisted that Mum revamp APL's focus on social media. After a week of overcoming some technological issues, I managed to familiarize Fiona [2], Mum's administrative assistant at APL, with the basics of Facebook and Twitter. Since then, Fiona has been maintaining the sites and updating them with pictures and videos of the women and their kids' progress, special events, seeking donations, etc. Fiona has even managed to take advantage of

[2] *Pseudonym.*

some Internet memes[3] to keep their social media membership up-to-speed.

Beyond pictures, videos, and even memes, what APL's cyberspace and social media upkeep has enabled is to encourage its volunteers to maintain contact with the happenings of the organization. For instance, as I write this, an email thread is circulating between about 30 committed foreign volunteers at APL who are raising funds to bring Mum to Canada. Her goal is to come to Canada to visit past volunteers and also to raise awareness and funds for APL.

I make it a point to mention this cyber activity to show that the continual investment that John thought was significant is reciprocal and that recent shifts in technology and cyber connectivity has enabled us to maintain connection with APL in a way that was not necessarily possible before. This is, perhaps, what Amin (2007) means by the "subtle folding together of the distant and the proximate, the virtual and the material, presence and absence, flow and stasis, into a single ontological plane upon which location" (p. 103). John's maintenance of a connection between him and APL is very much a postmodern practice; it is a connection that can only occur in the time-space topology of the 21st century. It is a connection

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[3] Memes have recently become prominent in cyber culture as they share ideas and comment on social behaviour – usually comprising of images and videos that have a common base but are altered slightly to make some sort of social commentary.

that renders the concept of locality archaic. "A place on the map," as Amin, (2007) puts it, "has come to be relationally and topologically defined" (p.103).

7.3. "Not... charity, that's different."

Over the past few years, John has become a good and reliable friend, the basis of which has been our commitment to APL and our attempts to fundraise money for the purchase of farmland for the organization. We had attempted to create a not-for-profit and have it registered with the Canadian Revenue Agency so we could provide donors with tax breaks as incentives; however, this was short-lived as our application was denied.

John's balancing of the corporate life and his simultaneous commitment to APL has always been a point of interest for me. So, it goes without saying that I focused quite a bit of time in asking him questions about this topic during the interview. In the midst of explaining his commitment to APL he makes a distinction between charity and what he considered himself to be doing. "[It's] not a sense of charity, that's different," he tells me. I ask how, he says that with charity "you give," he gestures as if dropping change in to a cup, "and you go," he points away from us. "With [APL], we give and they give us and we keep going back, man. You've gone back a couple of times, I've gone back a handful of times." It seems to be a reciprocal relationship for John, though his implication in it seems to bewilder him. Williams & McKenna (2002) shed light on this

and explain this bewilderment. They point to a similar distinction between charity and service as they comment on the words of privileged Christian students who claim it is merely their "Christian duty" to do "for others" (p. 142). But these same students "are thrown off balance" when it is suggested that they engage in a project *with* others as opposed to *for* others. This is the case because service, if done right[4], forces a critical examination of place and self, at least on the part of the server. Charity, on the other hand, "leaves the sense of self and place untouched" (p. 142) or, as John puts it, "you give and you go."

This is the reciprocity that I believe WYG had been aiming to instill its members – one that has its members feel implicated in these communities so as to overcome the tourist role and even the role of the volunteer who sees their trip as a singular and disconnected event rather than a lesson to help shape an ongoing commitment. In conversation with one of the founders of WYG, I recall him explaining his imagined goals for the impact of WYG on its participants. He began by asking me to pick any world issue, be it an epidemic, a poverty issue, a political or cultural one, etc. He answered his own question by using HIV as an example knowing I would be going to Kenya. Now, he says, take a WYG participant who may or may not be well versed in

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[4] "Done right" is my addition and not those of Williams & McKenna (2002). I say this because sometimes service-learning, if not done in a deliberately self-critical way, can work to promote oppressive narratives of the world as mentioned earlier (Ver Beek, 2002; Eyler & Giles, 1997; Hollis, 2004).

the issue of HIV. Even if s/he is knowledgeable about HIV, he continues, HIV is often an abstract thing that occurs in books in far off, poor continents. After a WYG trip, though, after this student has had the chance to meet the people impacted by HIV, after they have had the chance to visit HIV+ people's homes, played with their children, shared a meal or two, what have you, HIV begins to solidify. That is, it is no longer an abstraction, something existing only in school textbooks, found in far-off places, rather it is Margaret (he selects a random name) and Margaret's daughter. When HIV goes from being an abstracted idea to Margaret – a friend – in that student's mind, that student is far more likely to do something about HIV when s/he return home.

Back to John, his attempt at distinguishing between charity and his relationship with APL can be better explained through another story he shared with me outside of this interview, which he agreed to have me share. About a year after first going to APL, John had been engaged and took his fiancé to Kenya to meet Mum and the women. When he had arrived at APL, a few of the women had invited John over to their house for some tea. However, that year there was a new cohort of women at the program and he had a busy schedule in doing 'home visits' with Mum to get to know all of the new women. Paige, one of the ladies at the program John had met the year before, had invited him over to her house. In the busyness of the day, John and Mum realized they could not make it to Paige's house and sent a message

to Paige that failed to reach her. The next day, Paige was upset and when John walked into the APL office, Paige was waiting for him. Paige voiced herself and, through a translator (Paige is Maasai), fervently criticizing John's insensitivity.

When telling me this story, John told me of his realization that he has reached a certain relationship with these women and that his days of being a mere Canadian visitor have come to pass. The chance to take in the sites and meet new people, consume their stories and move on without obligation and repercussion has seemingly passed with this incident as though this chiding served as a breaking point from that past. Now, he felt a certain obligation and connection with Paige, Mum and many of the other people in this organization. I recall sensing a puzzling peak in his speech and look on his face as though he felt privileged, even honoured by Paige's reproach. Oddly, this seemed to me to be mixed with a nostalgic reminiscence – one I interpreted as looking back at the days of careless meandering through the slums, meeting new people with incredible stories of struggle, survival and heroism without worry of any real sense of responsibility. He told me to keep this in mind the next time I go to Kenya, to make sure I keep my commitments and meet my obligations. From my experience, I find it not too often that participants reach this level of reflection as they maintain a charitable perspective where they work "for" others.

7.4. John's talking points

John made a distinction between charity and service. Williams & McKenna (2002) elaborate on this distinction by arguing service can lead to critical self-examination, which does not necessarily occur with charity. This critical examination of self and place that service leads to is the crux of my research, particularly what this criticality may lead to. What are the implications of this reflexivity? I am not satisfied with victory narratives of some who suggest that arriving at a place of critical consciousness is sufficient and the story ends thereafter. What my research is beginning to point to, though, is that after arriving at such a critical place, participants begin to shape and reshape their identification with the world.

In the case of John, there are two implications to his critical mindedness. First, John has come to recognize and come to terms with a sense of identity that I can only describe as ambivalent – embracing a side that he considers "a capitalist pig" that simultaneously commits to the justice issues concerning the women at APL. I also felt contentment from John, contentment for is privileged position in the world – a position he acknowledges.

Second this critical examination of self and place has also brought John to a place where he has begun to attach himself with APL and the people therein. Local and national boundaries serve nothing more than an inconvenience for him. But his attachment to those in Kenya has not taken away from

his attachments to family and friends in Toronto. John's reply to my mockingly posed question of why he would not move to APL and work there was a laugh and a citing of his friends and family who live in Canada. What John is doing here is showing symptoms of a cosmopolitan way of thinking, in the way described by Cheah & Robbins (1998) where attachment is not restricted to the local; rather it is multiplied and can occur at a distance. It is not as if John is not attached to anyone or any place, this is not what makes his case a cosmopolitan one. Rather, his case is a cosmopolitan one because he is attached to people and places in different areas in the globe. And these attachments, be they cultural, social, ethnic, whatever, as we have learned from Hall (1992), come to define the self in numerous ways. This style of residence of earth[5] is far different from what some on the left have manufactured (Robbins, 1998) – a lifestyle shaped by anti-capitalist and anti-globalization embracing an exclusive localism. Robbins (1998) challenges this localism because the reality is that we are indeed connected to the entire earth and just not "a" place on it. We are connected to multiple places on earth whether we have travelled to these places or not through what we eat, what we wear, what we think, and the like. The world and our connections to its various locations has become an unavoidable reality through globalization that cannot be veiled by shortsighted conceptions of locality.

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[5] *Pablo Neruda's phrase (taken from Robbins, 1998, p. 3).*

Chapter 8: Thinking through the narratives

Once I finished transcribing my interviews I sat overwhelmed by the sheer amount of work ahead of me. Putting a framework around my friends' subjective narratives seemed an impossible task. When reading over my participants' transcribed interviews, I saw the complexity of their narratives and realized that my idea of their transformations may be limited. It became clear that I was thinking of my participants' feelings, motives, dispositions and overall transformations in a linear way – they went on an ISL trip and as they returned they experienced a change. This however, was not necessarily the case, participants noted that they embarked on ISL trips for various reasons and their transformations were not necessarily neat, linear, and containable, particularly when dealing with identity[1]. Some spoke of their transformations as sporadic and induced not by the ISL trips themselves, but as a result of encounters with their peers in Toronto. Some saw changes occur gradually while others noted an immediate difference. Still, others did not necessarily know how to comment on their perceived changes as though it were an indefinable thing, difficult to pin down and put into words.

It is because of this variety and complexity of narratives that I turned to Williams & McKenna (2002), who

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[1] Rizvi (2005) shows in his study of cosmopolitan sentiments of ISL participants the unpredictability of identity as it shaped and reshaped by personal histories, cultural traditions, professional aspirations and new cultural experiences.

ask researchers to view ISL participants' perceived transformations in three ways: the affirmation of the self, the personal made political, and a call to action. In employing this threefold approach I attempt to interpret and bring some clarity and structure to my participants' complex life experiences. I have tried my best not to shortchange or simplify my participants' complexities by framing them within this structure, indeed I have dedicated the previous chapter as a conscious effort to avoid this simplification and remain loyal to their narratives. Furthermore, I do not suggest that my participants have followed this threefold process, whether before, during or after their ISL experience in some linear or chronological order.

As mentioned above, Williams & McKenna's (2002) approach looks at three things: 1) the affirmation of self, 2) the personal made political, and 3) a call to action. While I have left unchanged the first and last of Williams & McKenna's (2002) methodology list, I felt a need to slightly change the second in the list from 'the personal made political' to 'self as construction: identity challenged'. I did this not to take out the political aspect of their changes, but rather I wanted to focus more so on identity, particularly how my participants came face-to-face with situations wherein they found their sense of identity being put to question. I look for the political aspects of my participants' changes in the third step. This way, I leave

room for the political yet focus my attention toward identity as more foundational.

At the onset of my literature review, I cited studies that have noted the changes or transformations in ISL students' in various ways. A large number saw in students' responses a clear commitment to social justice, particularly desires to engage in social justice work upon return (Monard-Weissman, 2003; Eyler & Gyles, 1999; Varlotta, 1997) Others saw post-ISL impact as a transformative one (Rhoads, 1997; Kellogg, 1999; Kiely, 2004). Some qualify that justice is being displaced by service, (Cermak et al. 2011) while others suggest that students actively circumvent their desires upon return to avoid conflict (Kiely, 2004). Collectively, these studies make it clear that *something* happens to ISL participants as a result of their trip. Deviations in the above findings, however, make it unclear as to what specifically occurs. My project does not attempt to resolve this lack of clarity; it only complicates it further by adding to this list. I suggest (at least) a threefold, interrelated occurrence that ISL experiences can 1) serve as experiences of self affirmation, 2) work to challenge students' stable notions of self, and 3) work to foster a cosmopolitan outlook.

8.1. Self-affirmation: Constructing the self

Always check your inner state
with the lord of your heart.

– Rumi[2]

Williams & McKenna (2002) suggest that ISL participants' experiences should first look to their sense of self or their "subject positioning" (p. 151), which emphasizes self-representation and identity in all aspects of their experiences – before, during, and after ISL experiences. This means I must ask how have my participants configured a sense of self, and how does this making-of-self relate to their ISL experience? In this section, I suggest that my ISL participants have used stories, experiences, relationships, encounters, etc., from their ISL experience to produce what Mather et al. (2012) refer to as their "personal myths" – "a psychological structure that evolves slowly over time, infusing life with meaning and purpose" (McAdams, 1993, p. 20). Butin (2005) reinforces that service-learning can act as significant arenas of self (re)construction.

My friends and I had experiences in Kenya that served as lessons for how we came to see ourselves, what values we hold, and how we made daily life choices that conform to our identities and "personal myths." That said, I preface this suggestion by acknowledging that it is not merely my participants' experiences in Kenya that have served as significant moments of identification; rather, each participant has come into their ISL trip with histories that

[2] This is an excerpt from one of Rumi's untitled poems. Each of the three sections of this conclusion section begins with two of its line as they bring more elaboration to the work of the chapter.

are as (if not more) significant in their identity formation.

We began our ISL experience as strangers. Angela reflected on the feeling of " being thrown in with strangers" on our ISL trip and how this allowed her to feel "less inhibited" because she thought "I'm only gonna know these people for a short amount of time, so I'm just gonna be totally me." She added that it was interesting how much less "cautious" she was with strangers than those with whom she already had history. ISL trips can indeed serve as a 'fresh start,' with strangers in a completely different social, cultural, political and/or geographical environment. This gives participants a prime opportunity to negotiate and (re)construct an identity, as Butin (2005) suggests. I too recall something of this kind when I think of my first ISL trip. My entire team was essentially full of strangers, at least when I had first met them. While in some cases, a few people on my previous teams did happen to know one another, it was often the case that my team was made up of strangers with whom we had no histories.

Furthermore, without exception, all participants in the study alluded to at least one or more reasons for involvement that served their own purpose. That is, they did not join WYG strictly for altruistic reasons to 'help others;' rather, their decisions were dominated by, as Angela put it, "selfish reasons". While I did anticipate this, I did not necessarily think that all four of my

interviewees would address it. Tom, for instance, mentioned being "sick and tired" of the same old learning-from-the-book and wanting to experience the "real world." Angela echoed Tom's words with her desire to experience what she had learned and read about in school, experience it "for real." This, I regard is less a desire to see the exotic and more about the fact that curriculum has become scripted, predictable and detached from the everyday lives of students. In search of real life, my participants have ventured out and "escaped"[3] education (Prakash & Esteva, 2008) on a journey to find learning. Here, they have discovered the unpredictable, the spontaneous, the other, and ultimately a sense of self. Indeed, "escape" is precisely the word Angela uses to describe one of her central motivations for leaving "white little Sarnia" and going to Kenya. Angela regarded her escape as a "mental vacation" to feel "fulfilled and purposeful." No participants mentioned that their decision to join an ISL organization was purely for altruistic reasons. Only Lana acknowledged a desire "to help," but reflected on this as a "naïve" aspiration in hindsight. Angela saw the act of helping others as "inextricably connected" with a simultaneous "care for the self" (Foucault, 1994).

I have realized that to separate my participants' initial intentions for involvement and their later

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[3] *Prakash & Esteva (2008) challenge the modern educational institution and push for alternative learning and living at the grassroots, with those non-educated who constitute the majority of the world.*

realizations – that is, to treat their desire to help others and themselves as separate – is not only difficult, but also does not allow for a fair analysis of their motivations, indeed they are mutually dependent – one relying on the other to function. In this line, I recall Lana's self-proclaimed "naïve" desire to help people whom she ultimately thought needed her help. In hindsight, Lana recalls the large amount that she herself took away from this experience. This realization brought her to question who was really being helped – herself or those in Kenya – and eventually led to a breakdown of the dichotomy of the 'helper' and the 'helped' and subsequently, the power relations implicit therein. The initial desire to venture out, to engage with and help the other, has brought Lana to a place where she has recognized the help that she herself needed. In the act of providing service to others, Lana found the help that she needed. This can be said of Angela as well, who recognized the mutuality in her service act; in helping others, she fed her desire to feel "useful," adding that the two are "inextricably connected." Similarly, all participants recount in some way how their experiences in Kenya helped them to situate and formulate their own sense of identity.

This mutuality is not a new finding and not mine alone. Hansen (2010) points to the seemingly paradoxical ability of cosmopolitanism to bring people home in a "reflective, aesthetic and moral" (p. 18) way. While my participants

ventured outside of their "comfort zones," as Lana termed it, beyond their national boundaries, away from their friends and family, they found that this act of distancing brought them closer to a realization of self. "I mean you [get to] know yourself, you know what you can handle, you... know the ups and downs of life," according to Tom.

But beyond just the realization of self when encountering the other, one can also find ways of self-expression. For example, in reference to the rapid diversifying of artistic movements in 1920's Latin America, Jose Carlos Mariategui wrote, "these paths of universalism and cultural ecumenism, for which we are so often reproached, are bringing us gradually closer to ourselves" (Salomon, 1979, p. 103). Similarly, Fojas (2005) and Loss (2005), who both explore cosmopolitanism in Latin America, discuss writers who discovered of their own art form while immersed in that of another. In this light, for the act of identification to feel complete, one must not just understand the self, but proclaim it. This why Williams & McKenna (2002) phrased this first step as the *affirmation* of self and not knowing the self. An intransitive verb, to affirm is "to assert strongly and publicly," to "testify or declare." The affirmation of self, then, requires a declaration, and by extension the affirmation of self requires some form of declaration or announcement about the self. This gives reason to my need to make my views on social justice known to my friends when I returned from my

trips. It was not enough to merely hold these beliefs and not declare them, keeping them under wraps away from my peers.

A significant moment of affirmation also lies in my participants' motivations for involvement. Being that ISL trips can stand as significant and transformative life experiences (Kiely, 2004), the justifications these participants provide for their involvement can be seen as moments of "self-representation [and] authentication," (Williams & McKenna, 2002) and by extension moments of self-affirmation. First, Lana spoke of the "volunteer culture" at Wilfred Laurier University where WYG had a "strong presence that year," which encouraged her to get involved. Here Lana associates herself with the volunteer culture on her school campus thereby identifying herself through it. She spoke fondly of her memory of her first day, being pampered with a "happy first day to you" song upon arrival at her residence dorm. Her realization that "the cool kids are the volunteers," left an impression on Lana, leaving her wanting to participate as well.

Angela shared ideas of a similar volunteer culture in which she had participated since her high school years. Interestingly, the largest student club in her school in "white little Sarnia" was the Multicultural Awareness Committee where Angela's fascination with culture instilled a desire in her to get "a stronger idea of culture" leading her to WYG and eventually Kenya. Starting in high school,

Angela bounced from one volunteer group to another, each with an emphasis on providing service. Also, referencing a symptom of a ubiquitously globalized world, Angela spoke of "learn[ing] so much in school or on the news" about the different places in the world that she wanted to "experience."

Just as Angela and Lana had motivations that served their own desires and goals, Tom too referenced the metaphorical "note" that accompanied his childhood "privilege" as a cause for his ISL participation. He mentioned that while his childhood was a privileged one, his parents made sure to remind him that his privilege "was not normal," instilling in Tom a desire to see the not-so-privileged world. His trip to Kenya, then, was an effort to appreciate his privilege, to investigate that "note" and discover its cautions.

The above motivations, then, are not entirely rooted in a desire to "help," serve, or volunteer, rather they are examples of my participants taking part in what they deemed appealing to their own desires. From this angle, their participation has to do more with association with a "volunteer *culture*" than the act of volunteering itself. Put another way, *volunteering* takes a back seat to the allure of *culture* and belonging to that culture. What this culture looks like or how it may operate is beyond the scope of this research, perhaps it was the "fun" and "friends" my participants alluded to, but the fact remains that it was

this culture that had a significant pull for Angela and Lana as much as, if not more than, the act of volunteering or service and it cannot be discounted or overlooked. Tom's pursuit of the symbolic "note," too, had a self-serving aspect.

This is not to suggest, though, that my participants involved themselves in this ISL program for purely "selfish" reasons, to quote Angela. We cannot dismiss their motives for joining this ISL trip as purely self-serving since their desire was also "to help." However "naïve" Lana may think herself in hindsight in thinking she could make a significant impact in Kenya, the fact remains that her desire to lend a hand was genuine. I find it difficult to draw an arbitrary line, designating one side selfish and the other altruistic. Not only is this a difficult task, it is unnecessary to delineate who was genuine in their desire to help and who was selfish. The more significant point that I have tried to pull from these narratives is two-fold. First, that these two actions of helping the self and helping the other work simultaneously, mutually, and in concert. And second, in the act of helping and engaging with the other, my participants have come to affirm their own self.

Delouze's (2000) elaborations helped me to put this into perspective. He emphasizes that engagement with the other can be a significant step in creating a stronger sense of self. Engagement with the other, particularly the difference perceived in the other has served as consequential moments

of self-realization for my participants as well. Angela reflected on seeing the difficult situations of the women she met in Kenya, particularly April[4] who was quite ill at the time, which got her thinking of her own struggles with depression and her need to feel "useful." As Delouze (2000) suggests, engagement with others and the perceived differences between the other and the self – be they ways of living, food, culture, family, or difficulty – work to crystalize a sense of self. These encounters with difference help to both break down barriers between the self and the other while simultaneously working to create a stronger sense of identity.

Further, Foucault's "care of the self" helps us understand the connection between the self and the other – that leading a life-long commitment to improving "one's mind, body, and soul in order to better relate to other people and lead an ethically-driven life" (Batters, 2011). This conception erodes the separating line between *helping the self* and *helping the other* and instead allows for a more holistic understanding of care that makes room for both, simultaneously and inseparably. Angela brilliantly breaks down this dichotomy by asserting that caring for the self and caring for the other is "inextricably connected," in helping others, I am simultaneously helping myself.

8.2. Self as construction: Identity challenged

Copper doesn't know its copper,

[4] *Pseudonym.*

until it's changing to gold.
- Rumi

Following the affirmation of the self, Williams & McKenna (2002) suggest that researchers must ask how students might recognize their "identity as [a] construction" (p. 151). Following this prompt, I look at my participants' realization of their identity as a (re)construction within different settings. Specifically, I have searched my interview data for instances where my participants either realized their sense of self as a construction or came to see their sense of self challenged in any particular way. It is often at this point, when identity becomes challenged, that the personal begins to be made political. I did this because it is at this juncture that identity begins to matter, when our perception of who we are is disputed, disrupted, or distorted. As Mercer (1990) observes, identity falls into a state of crisis only as things once thought "fixed, coherent and stable [are] displaced by the experience of doubt and uncertainty" (p. 43). It is when the self is challenged, critiqued or called into question that identity falls into crisis, giving rupture to and making possible a more fluid, fragmented and postmodern identity as discussed by Hall (1992).

For my participants, this challenging of identity often occurred post trip, usually in conversation with family, friends, coworkers, and acquaintances, whose comments, observations and general ideas induced feelings of

frustration, fear, and discomfort. Provoked by such experiences, participants moved from the preliminary and less consequential question of "Who am I?" toward more complex questions ones like "Who have I been defined as? Who has defined me? What has defined me? How do I define others? And why have I defined and been defined in given ways?" (Williams & McKenna, 2002). These questions enable me to see my participants outside of the 'I' as an endpoint and instead positions them in the contexts of their complex daily lives.

I will begin with Lana, who ended her work with WYG after starting *Art at Work,* where she came across the ambivalence of being "in international aid." She told me that while she enjoys operating *Art at Work*, she concurrently fears the scrutiny the role brings, leaving her conflicted. This scrutiny comes from the attention she is getting as the face of *Art at Work* as opposed to the work of the organization itself. Lana struggles to balance the "cute" marketing of *Art at Work*, which has proven successful in fundraising for the not-so-cute difficulties of the people it is striving to help in Kenya. She speaks of the eclipsing effect that *Art at Work* has had on her life, highlighting half of who she is and covering the other half who "works two jobs... pays loans," and "cares about... vain, vapid things."

Others' perception of Lana and what it means to be involved in "international aid" have had a significant

impact on how Lana comes to see herself. In her 20's, she feels she is at that "breaking point" of deciding who she wants to be and how she wishes to be perceived. Her dedication to *Art at Work* and what it has helped her accomplish, both for APL in Kenya and for her personal gain, seem unshaken. Her affiliation with *Art at Work* and the aid it provides for APL have come to define her identity, she feels, at least in the eyes of others, which is something she is still "coming to terms with." Here, Lana's sense of self becomes implicated with *Art at Work*. The "layered" complexities of "international aid" are too ambiguous to decipher, leaving Lana always cautious – she feels "watched." As people question the legitimacy of *Art at Work* they are, to Lana, simultaneously questioning her – prodding at her sense of identity, causing it to falter and lose stability.

Another revealing moment in my discussion with Lana was her frustrations with what she referred to as "first-world" and "white-girl" problems. We were talking about her interactions with friends post ISL and the ways her interactions with friends have shifted since her return. Lana would get frustrated with "problems that aren't actually problems," giving examples of complaints about wedding dresses, and lack of money for shopping. Lana then juxtaposed this with those "seriously devastating issues" she was exposed to in Kenya. Not only did she feel there was no comparing them, but also, put side-by-side, she felt her

friends' complaints were unwarranted. But Lana does not voice these frustrations. In fact, she has stopped trying to vocalize them because of its associated implications.

There are two noteworthy points I would like to pull from the above example that Lana calls "first-world" or "white girl" problems. The first has to do with Lana's decision to cease her objections and silence her vexations. Her conscious decision that her vexations will not be validated within the context of her friends in Canada, that she will become the "martyr" in the conversation is a telltale sign of her recognition that her personal frustrations have become politicized. There is recognition that if these feelings were to be vocalized and made public, she would have to deal with the repercussions. There are also hints of Lana recognizing the privilege of her friends, the privilege that enables them to "complain about problems that aren't actually problems." There is arguably a certain level of critical consciousness in these reflections, which serve as the reason for her frustrations.

My second observation has to do with Lana's shifted perceptions of what constitutes a problem and warrants complaining. This shift in perception is relevant particularly because Lana's understanding operates by comparing her friends' troubles with those problems she encountered in Kenya. Put side-by-side, the worries of those Lana referenced in Kenya whose worries were things like lack of safety and education, no shoes and no clothes, trumped

the worries of her friends in Canada. In comparison, one dwarfed the other and her friends' lamentations were not acceptable to Lana.

I can use this example of Lana's shifting conception of what constitutes a problem to return to Tom's use of the word "perspective" as a one-word response to my question soliciting his motive for joining WYG and participating in an ISL. "Even before joining WYG," Tom said, he was looking for "perspective." Having grown up "fortunate," Tom wanted to "experience... what it was like," referring to the lives of those we met in Kenya. I got a grasp of what he meant when he mentioned that his privileged childhood had him "get anything" he asked for. "It was on a silver platter, but ... with a note [on it]." This note, he said was a reminder that "this isn't how everybody lives." It seems Tom joined WYG in an attempt to investigate that metaphorical note, to read what it has to say, to see what caveats it warns of.

But as Brookfield (1994) warns, there is a "dark side" to critical consciousness, a side that comes loaded with somber implications of what it means to challenge and question the status quo. Indeed much of this darker side emerges alongside moments when my participants' identities are challenged. For instance, Lana's new-found knowledge and perspective is accompanied by a necessary silencing of self. Lana has decided to silence her self, unwilling or perhaps unable to deal with the consequences of vocalizing her new-found perspectives. Recall Kiely's (2004) chameleon complex,

the "internal struggle between conforming to, and resisting, dominant norms, rituals, and practices" (p. 15). Similar to some of my findings, Kiely (2004) noted, upon return students fell into conflict with the opinions of friends and family. As a result of, and in an effort to avoid this conflict, students actively circumvented their desired actions, concealing their thoughts, much like a chameleon with a complex.

Correspondingly, in reference to coordinating *Art at Work* and being "in international aid," Lana wishes it were "like the Wizard of Oz," wishing to not be perceived a particular way, to be scrutinized and "watched." Because of this scrutiny, Lana is "afraid" that *Art at Work*'s followers might be "disappointed" with her "lack of knowledge of international development" as well as her business model which might come back and "bite [her] in the butt." She mentioned being weary and cautious of the way she runs the organization, careful to balance the "cute" attributes of *Art at Work* with the not-so-cute realities with which it deals. She mentioned in a later personal correspondence that she feels others' perception of her and her identity is tied to *Art at Work's*. "*Art at Work* is me and I am *Art at Work...* but I wish it was separate." Lana's situation is interesting because it appears as though her sense of self has become entangled with *Art at Work.* Whenever she discusses some flaw or strength of *Art at Work,* she relates it back to herself.

So, whatever political or moral criticism may find its way to *Art at Work* is likely to find its way to Lana.

While Lana struggles with how she may be perceived, John does not seem to bother himself with how others perceive him. When I asked how he responded to friends who would sarcastically mock him about "going to save the African children," John brushed the air with his hand, kissed his teeth and dismissed my question much like he would dismiss such mockery. John does not see his relationship with APL the way some of his friends might imagine it – as a charitable relationship. In fact, John openly disassociates his affiliation with APL from the idea of charity. The difference between his relationship with APL and the idea of charity lies in the reciprocity of John's involvement in APL. "With charity, you give and you go," he explained gesturing with his hands, but, "with [APL], we give and they give us and we keep going back, man." I recognized that John was describing his relationship with APL as just that, a relationship. There exists reciprocity in his relationship with APL that was absent in his conception of charity, (recall Williams & McKenna's, 2002, criticisms of charity) which he described as dropping some change in a coffee cup and walking away. I asked John if he felt "implicated" in APL, but he did not like the negative connotations attached to the word but I did not offer an alternative word. In hindsight, I wish I had, this way perhaps I would be able to describe his connection to APL more accurately.

Before I had begun my interview with John, we sat and discussed some concerns we had with a few developments at APL and I recall him mentioning he was “losing sleep” over it. John’s attachment to APL is something of interest to me considering his corporate life and the contradictory implications. It would be unlikely to, at a glance, connect a 26-year-old working in Toronto’s financial district to HIV+ women living in slums in Kenya, at least not in the way that John is connected. John’s commitment to APL runs deep, he is deeply fond of APL and the people therein.

When looking through my interview data for instances of the personal being made political or moments when participants discussed their identity being put to question, it was often that my participants arrived at not-so-neat and messy conclusions as though they had not yet reached any resolution. There were few, if any, indications that my participants had come to neat solutions to the challenges they faced post-ISL. While some had to learn to “come to terms,” as Lana related, with their situations, others seemingly embraced the contradictory circumstances in which they found themselves.

An ancillary example of this embracing the contradictory would be John’s recognition of his conflicting position working for a multinational corporation while concurrently showing commitment to APL and those involved therein. He had referred to himself as a “capitalist pig.” He had said this while wearing a suit and an Esquire watch, which he pointed

out as part of his elaboration on his capitalist comment. When I probed further, asking how he managed to negotiate these two clashing commitments, using the clash of his Maasai bracelet alongside his Esquire watch, he told me, "It's balance."

"But why can't you do both?" he continued, "why not live a 'socially conscious' life and at the same time work for Barrick Gold, "who's mining the shit outta Sierra Leone?" I did not respond to this. John acknowledges his contradiction and admits he enjoys the corporate life, "why do I have to be hippie?" he asked rhetorically. I asked these admittedly probing questions *not* in an attempt to resolve the contradictions I saw, rather just to recognize them. My attempts at understanding these contradictions and ambivalences in identity are, of course, limited, as pinning down identity is a slippery task and identities themselves can only tell us so much, they are "always partial, capable of telling us something but unable to tell us all" (Yon, 2000, p. 72).

I too have experienced incidents where I had come to question my sense of self, particularly my commitments to social justice ideals. For example, Aaron[5], a youth leader in KCC – our second contact in Kenya – of whom I thought very highly pulled me aside on the last day of our visit and praised me for my international volunteering. This was my

[5] *Pseudonym.*

second time visiting Aaron and his small town in Western Kenya. He was impressed with this and told me "you are such an amazing person for coming half way around the world just to help my little village." I was flattered, but just as I moved to thank him, he caught me off guard by adding, "and I can only imagine what you do in your own community." In that moment I paused and thought of the little, if anything, I did in comparison to Aaron. At the time, I was a 4th year undergraduate student working a retail job. I was not the person he may have thought me to be. Much like my participants, I too had a realization of who I was being perceived as, who I may have thought myself to be, and how that conception of myself shifted in that moment.

Delouze (1996) looks at the significance of experiences that "take the individual from the home and out into the world and back again" (p. 38). With my participants, it is at the latter point, when coming "back again" that participants' sense of self comes to be challenged and critical understandings of self begin to emerge. It is after our travels and sojourns abroad when we have returned home, when my participants and I would share our stories with our peers that our personal experiences and our identifications with these experiences are put to question.

The experiences above, mine included, point to incidents where individuals' sense of self have come to be disturbed, questioned, or put to test. They are moments when individuals come to critically examine their positions

within the complexity of the world around them. With their identities put to question participants react to this destabilization. Reactions vary; while Lana showed frustration with her friends' "problems that aren't really problems," John embraced the contradictory position in which he found himself. Tom distanced himself from the activism but still tried to marry his clothing company with a greater justice aspect. These destabilizations cause students to question not just their own identities but also those cultural landscapes that situate our personal identities in the way that Hall (1992) observes. Tom used the word "perspective" to highlight this change; Lana too found a shift in her conceptions of what qualifies as a "problem." The close relationships we built with our new friends in Kenya now puts a face on the far off places, epidemics, diseases, social issues, etc. that were once abstractions in our psyche. Ergo, HIV is no longer a disease in Africa, it is the struggle that Paige and her son Peter which they shared with Tom, Angela, Lana, John and I, and we have come to identify with it, making it "part of us." (Hall, 1992, p. 276).

8.3. A call to action: Actually existing cosmopolitanism

Your loving doesn't know its majesty,
until it knows its helplessness.
– Rumi

In line with Willams & McKenna's (2002) third suggestion, a call to action, I question whether my participants have committed to and acted upon their world in

given ways and what challenges, opportunities, shortcomings, benefits, ambivalences they may have encountered in this process. This step is quite significant in the threefold feminist epistemology as it addresses the real-life impacts this ISL trip has had on my participants. These are the manifestations of the experiences, stories, relationships, lessons, and identity formations. This last section of my analysis consists of two major observations: participants' shifts away from social justice and their simultaneous cosmopolitan expressions and dispositions.

I begin with the former, by pointing to instances where participants seem to be distancing themselves from the concept (or even the word) social justice for different reasons. However, while they distance themselves from social justice they are simultaneously showing symptoms of a cosmopolitan outlook. Said differently, my data suggests that social justice is being displaced by what Cheah & Robbins (1998) call "actually existing cosmopolitanism", that my participants' responses contain occurrences of cosmopolitan discourse, cosmopolitan behaviour and a general cosmopolitan disposition.

In the previous subsection of this analysis, *self as construction,* I elaborated on moments when my participants experienced their identities being challenged, leading to their questioning of self. In other moments they were left in a place of contradiction, as their desired actions seemed to clash. In such moments when my participants' identities

are faltering and they are making seemingly contradictory commitments, cosmopolitanism proves a useful, even necessary tool to help grasp and make sense of these happenings. Like Robbins (1998) mentions, cosmopolitanism "offers something other than a gallery of virtuous, eligible identities," rather it allows us to entertain and even embrace "a domain of contested politics." Seen this way, my participants' responses can now be seen as complex and promising, not convoluted and problematic. In sum, there is optimism from academics who see cosmopolitanism as an alternative to traditional paradigms, a tool to understand emerging social, political and cultural forms.

However, while cosmopolitanism allows room for a fragmented postmodern identity (Hall, 1992), it has proven difficult for me to pin down cosmopolitanism itself given it is not "foreclosed by... definition" (Pollock et al., 2000). In lieu of definition then, I look for instances of what the scholarship refers to as "actually existing cosmopolitanism" as discussed by Cheah & Robbins' (1998) wonderfully titled collection of essays, *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and feeling beyond the nation.* This title beautifully captures my participants' attitudes and sentiments. The authors in these essays understand cosmopolitanism as something "embodied" (p. 3). Robbins (1998) pulls this cosmopolitanism away from

"an ideal of detachment,"[6] not allowing the cosmopolitan to float freely without being implicated in the various places s/he may find him/herself. Instead, *actually existing cosmopolitanism* is "a reality of (re)attachment, multiple attachment, or attachment at a distance" (p. 3). This expansion allows room for me to think of my participants as attached simultaneously to multiple places with multiple ways of identifying with each, like John's multiple commitments to both the women of APL and his family and friends in Toronto. It is in this spirit, with this distinct lens that I try to frame my participants' responses.

At its inception though, my research sought the possibility that my participants may be seeing themselves as subjects of social justice; that social justice served as a significant contributor to their conceptions of self. What I later discovered through my conversations was that my participants found it difficult to relate to social justice, either because the term had no real meaning for them or because they seemed to be experiencing something beyond it, which could not be translated into or contained by the term social justice. I should also mention that this finding, the move away from social justice, particularly activism, is not unique to just my research. Cermak, et al. (2011) also found

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[6] Here Robbins (1998) is addressing the critics of cosmopolitanism who suggest the cosmopolitan is elitist like the cosmopolitans of ancient Greece freely floating with an ideal of detachment and lack of responsibility.

that their participants were aligning their identities with service rather than activism. They too found that activism was being displaced. Similarly, my project found that indeed social justice was being removed as a relevant term to address my participants' concerns, but not by 'service,' rather by cosmopolitanism.

All participants showed some form of discomfort with the concept. For instance, I recall using the words 'social justice' when asking whether John had learned anything about the idea through his trip. He resisted the word, turning the question onto me, asking whether I had any idea what it meant and forcing me to negotiate another term that he would entertain. Tom also struggled with the term, particularly when attempting to marry a social justice element to his clothing line. More significantly though, it was Tom's sharp rejection of activism and protesting that highlighted his feelings toward the term. "I don't believe in that shit," he had said about activism. Tom's perception of activism does not mesh well with his sense of identity, "It's loud, its crazy, its just not my style," he qualified. Rather, Tom makes his point in a way that is more "subtle... it can't be like, 'stop wasting food,'" he said, running his hand across his shirt, criticizing graphic-print t-shirts with loud colourful print. Social justice, particularly activism and protesting are not "witty" or "smart" enough for Tom and, consequently, at odds with choice of expression.

When confronted with a question of what she learned about social justice, Lana asked me what the word meant, "Do you mean social awareness?" she curiously followed. I do not see this as Lana's lack of knowledge about the term; rather it is her inability to situate her experiences within the confines of the term. She found it difficult to relate her experiences to the idea of social justice. Lana's responses pointed to her unease with being scrutinized due to the "international aid" realm in which her organization, *Art at Work*, operates. She regarded a "fear" of being questioned on her knowledge of "international development." Ultimately, this unease fed a desire in her to be "like the Wizard of Oz," controlling Emerald City, or *Art at Work*, from behind a curtain where she felt safe from the scrutiny her position brought forth.

Angela's response to my question about social justice was quite telling, not because of how she answered the question, but because of her shift into what I deem as a cosmopolitan response. "My knowledge of social justice is limited on the academic side of things," she started, "[but] what travelling and volunteering taught me was... how it's an individual commitment to change the injustices of society." Here Angela pulls away from the idea of social justice, saying that while she does not know much about social justice to align herself with the idea, she looks at

the change in herself as "individual commitment,"[7] which I see as a cosmopolitan sentiment. Here, social justice is taking a backseat to individual commitment, to a certain way of living. She justifies choosing this "lifestyle...because these memories serve as a reminder of when you're put in a position to either support or not support this company with your business... [or] to join or not to join this activist march." While Angela lives and works in Toronto, her justification for her actions – her purchasing habits and her choices in activism – in this corner of the globe cite people and experiences in another – a telltale sign of a cosmopolitan outlook. Here, Angela is, like Cheah & Robbins' (1998) book, *Thinking and feeling beyond the nation.*

Lana related the story of having to deal with her cousin's incessant delegitimizing of *Art at Work* because of its support of international aid as opposed to local needs. "[*Art at Work*] is directly connected to a story in Kenya and that's what I like about it," she said, "I can't just [change that] because some people don't agree with it," she justified, frustrated. For Lana, this organization itself is connected with a story that, while intimately supported by the local – "I'm making sure it's locally-built" – it is dependent on its Kenyan connection. This interrelation between the local and the global comes to surface in Hansen's (2010) research as a pivotal characteristic of

[7] *Recall that I am looking at cosmopolitanism as a personal identity form in the way that Sobe (2009) has urged.*

cosmopolitanism – in fact, some (Bruckner, 2000) suggest that cosmopolitanism may be impossible without the local. Much like Angela, who uses her experiences in Kenya as a reference point to make daily decisions in Toronto, and Tom who banks these experiences in "memory" to withdraw later, John too manifests instances of cosmopolitan-mindedness. Most significant was his "losing sleep" over a land purchase with which we had been helping Mum. His connection transcends the local; he sleeps in Toronto with his mind in Kenya.

The above examples demonstrate two things. First, that my participants are distancing themselves from social justice. Each mention of the term either has them resist or preface their response with their inadequate understandings of the concept. Subsequently and almost simultaneously, these same participants are commenting on their daily lived realities with cosmopolitan sentiments. They are acting on their local lives with their ISL lessons in mind.

But why are my participants displeased with social justice? I too have shown these symptoms. After a brief chapter of my life where I was beginning to abide by social justice ideals, I began to turn away from these ideals. My participants, it seems are turning away too. I think this has to do with the images conjured up when social justice is mentioned. Cermak et al. (2011) explain their participants move away from activism as due to personal discomfort with

its tactics, the structural barriers to pursuing activism, and a negative perception and stigmatization of activism.

Further reasons for this move away from social justice is perhaps because distributive justice has been traditionally linked to the nation state (Rizvi, 2005) – that the state is responsible for the distribution of justice in a fair and equitable way. But this conception of justice and fairness does not seem to resonate with my participants for a few reasons. First, while distributive justice contains justice within the confines of the nation state, ISL participants are not bound by national boundaries – they transcend them. Second, distributive justice by definition is at odds with service-learning practices. While the former looks at allocation of goods, services, rights, etc., service-learning participants, specifically my participants, spoke of their experience from the perspective of relationship-building, sharing stories, personal change, and personal investment. If we were to 'locate' the change that took place, my participants have largely pointed to themselves. Tom for instance, stressed how he intended to shift his own "perception" – the experiences in Kenya served as references "stored in your memory bank" to reflect on later. In a globalized and postmodern world in which our problems transcend and transgress national boundaries, distributive justice seems insufficient, able to respond to some issues, but unable to respond to what my participants

felt in Kenya and what they continue to feel upon return to Toronto.

While distributive justice might seem inadequate, a relational model of social justice, which I have touched upon earlier in the literature review, might seem compatible with the responses of my participants given the several instances where they pointed to relationship-building and sharing stories. The relational model of justice looks not at the allocation of goods and serves, but the nature of the relationships that shape our world (Young, 1990).

As Angela said, the sharing of stories can function as a poignant way for ISL participants to relate with those who are different from themselves. She said that stories offered a way to "find some common ground" through the mounds of perceived difference. Here, difference can be seen as penetrable, not absolute, providing opportunity rather than an end. The permeability of difference in this instance can be attributed not to the lack of difference between Angela and the women of APL, for their differences in culture, race, class, context, etc. are vast. Rather, Angela's ability to "find some common ground" aligns more to "a fluid and negotiable definition of identity which is tied primarily to the assumption of shared experience rather than place" (Alexander, 1996). Put another way, the sharing stories and meals with the women at APL has trumped the vast differences between my participants and the women at APL

allowing them to overcome difference. Difference was not erased, but dealt with.

Furthermore, relationship-building in itself is a holistic act involving listening, speaking and interacting. For Hansen (2010), this is part-and-parcel of the art of a cosmopolitan way of being. To nurture a relationship, in the way that John has with a handful of women at APL, is a "transactive process," to quote Hansen (2010). It involves "heeding others, participating and keeping thought open to influence critically rather than blindly" (p. 6). Discussion, particularly discussion with the other, as is the case with my participants, is not a means to some imaginary end; the process itself is an enactment of significant value. Studies have shown that among the most effective cosmopolitan-building experiences [8] are those educational programs that allow students "engagement with the other" (Sobe, 2009) or "those who are different" (Hendershot & Sperandio, 2009, p. 53). They serve as a pivotal element in developing ISL participants' self-ascribed global citizenship and cosmopolitan-mindedness. Interpretations of difference, as I mentioned earlier referencing Delouze (2000), work to both crystalize a sense of self and manifest solidarity between the self and the other, serving as an inducement to cosmopolitan-mindedness.

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[8] *Schattle (2009) identifies 5 major ways individuals develop global citizenship: "through experiences during the childhood years, immigration experiences, political and social activism, professional opportunities, and educational programs" (Hendershot & Sperandio, 2009, p. 53).*

But beyond mere interaction, familiarity, and association with the other, my participants exhibited signs of ethical care, emotional investment, and attachment. That is, one can go out and interact with those different than themselves, but without a conscious sense of attachment (Robbins, 1998) they merely walk away as strangers-turned-acquaintances. What I sense from my participants is something deeper than familiarization. I can explain this best by using Cheah & Robbins (1998) example of geographer Yi-Fu's conversation with Buddhist monks and merchants who distinguish between cosmopolitans – "basically indifferent to where they lived," and cosmopolites, "habitants of a vast universe" (p. 3). The former gives a trace of detachment and disassociated observation while the latter implicates one as an "inhabitant." Angela spoke similar words when speaking about her coming to face culture in Kenya. While she initially felt an "observer" of culture, soon she "couldn't help but" be pulled in and "participate". In becoming a participant, Angela loses her impartiality, becoming a member of the place in which she finds herself, no longer an observer. Angela's distinction between observer and participant starkly mirrors White's (2002) distinction between globalization or modernity and cosmopolitanism: while the former are things that "happen to people," cosmopolitanism "is something that people do" (p. 681). Using this as a central marker of cosmopolitanism, Hansen (2010) defines cosmopolitanism as "*participating* in

pluralist change as an agent, as an actor, rather than remaining passive or reactive to events" (p. 24).

Similarly, recall John's story of being scolded by Paige after skipping his tea appointment with her. I recall sensing in his speech and on his face a privilege, even honour from Paige's chastisement. At the same time, I sensed in his speech a reminiscence of the days when he had no such attachment, no sense of 'responsibility' in his relationship with Mum and APL. These examples go to show that both Angela and John are not "indifferent," as the earlier Monks mentioned, but "(re)attached," as Cheah & Robbins (1998) say, in multiple ways to multiple places. John's (re)attachment to APL occurs simultaneous to his attachment to Toronto. This attachment to Kenya is not singular and solitary, but accompanied with multiple other attachments including attachments in Toronto and whatever other associations their histories may bring.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

9.1. A brief summary

I began this research after reflecting on my personal experience of returning from multiple ISL trips with a changed attitude and new world-view. I have reflected on my four friends' stories of return by focusing primarily on their sense of identity asking a threefold question: How have my participants used their ISL experiences as a source of identity affirmation; how have their sense of identity been challenged, questioned or otherwise destabilized; and how have they acted on their world upon return?

My research revealed a handful of findings. First, I saw that participants came into their ISL trips with a history and an already operating sense of identity. However, they used experiences, relationships and stories from their ISL trips as references to narrate their identities. Second, I found participants were being put in situations where their sense of identity was being questioned, challenged, politicized, or otherwise put to test. As their identity began to falter, so too did their long-held assumptions about society to which they attached their identity (Hall, 1992). Through this, participants came to see their identity as no longer stable, innate and fixed but as fluid, changing and constructed. In some cases, participants were realizing this during their ISL experiences, but in most cases participants experienced this upon return when they were

confronted with challenging questions or conflict by friends, family, coworkers, acquaintances, etc.

In my final step, I sought ways in which my participants acted on their world using their ISL lessons. How did my participants act on their world in their day-to-day lives in Toronto? I found my initial assumptions about social justice as a foundational motivation for action fall through as participants distanced themselves from the term. But, at the same time, I found another disposition emerge in our discussions – a cosmopolitan disposition. Particularly, my participants exhibited a disposition aligning with what Robbins (1998) and other scholars have dubbed *actually existing cosmopolitanism. Actually existing cosmopolitanism* differs from the cosmopolitanism of the Enlightenment whose "view from above" (Hansen, 2010) was more elitist. Conversely, *actually existing cosmopolitanism* is "a view from the ground up" (Hansen, 2010). In their day-to-day lives in Toronto, my participants spoke of making decisions with memories of friends, places, and experiences from Kenya in mind – living here with lessons from there.

9.2. Implications for pedagogy and research

My rational for perusing this research was to respond to Kiely's (2004) call for further research on the mediating factors that lead to the *chameleon complex.* Kiely was also concerned about returning ISL students' struggles to translate their "perspective transformation into social actions that challenge unjust and oppressive aspects of the

status quo" (p. 18). As my personal account in the introduction of this paper addressed, challenging hegemony and questioning unequal power relations is not an easy task, indeed it is rather difficult and comes with ramifications. My concern lies with those educators or educational institutions that aim to foster critical social awareness/consciousness in their students, but do not give adequate attention to the struggles and ramifications of challenging the status quo. Such educators or institutions must recognize the difficulty of the task with which they charge their students, and must better prepare their students for the implications of challenging the status quo.

Brookfield (1994) cites a "dark side" of fostering critical reflection, where one runs into the consequences of "questioning cultural hegemony and relations of power through critique" (Brookfield, 2000). As Kiely (2004) finds, returning ISL participants often confront "extremely powerful visceral, emotional, cognitive reactions" when re-integrating and moving about their lives. The transition is often rough. Should educators and educational institutions be charging their students with the task of challenging the status quo without adequate preparation? Is this not setting that student up to deal with consequences they might not be prepared for? What can educators and educational institutions do to make this a less difficult process? The weekend-long debriefing sessions provided by WYG to its team leaders is a great example of how participants' anxieties,

concerns, stresses, challenges can be addressed, heard, and acknowledged. But it does not seem adequate as the general membership, the vast majority of its participants do not receive any post trip – counseling.

In the field, when I found social justice to stand as an inadequate term for my participants, I began to question whether they were indeed acting on their new-found transformation or whether they suppressed their desires? In fact, some outright resisted social justice, not merely distancing themselves from the term, but questioning the term's validity as a whole. But their dismissal of social justice did not invalidate their participation as agents of change for they were, as Cheah & Robbins (1998) put it, *Thinking and feeling beyond the nation*. This is a significant implication of this study; that these participants did not suppress their desires to change and act on their world. Rather, in response to an inhospitable host society that rejects their worldview, they began to adapt their perspective to that of *actually existing cosmopolitanism.* Instead of adhering to a provocative social justice ideal that would cause conflict with friends and family, my participants acted on their world in a more subtle way that was less confrontational. Their agency did not always lie in overt acts of activism and protesting, rather it took a different form, one with more longevity and consistency contained in a disposition and attitude. Social justice proved incapable of this.

My participants' stories show that the experience of return from an ISL trip can take various forms. Along with the trauma or "extremely powerful visceral, emotional" challenges that Kiely (2004) cites, there can also be a new-found sense of awareness that accompanies these challenges. Lana spoke to this:

> when I came back I felt like I was just that much more aware of everything in our own community and...society and the world or whatever and how we all connect to each other.

There are a few things to pull from this comment. First, Lana's idea of being much more aware resonates with findings in literature that link awareness of issues with cosmopolitan-mindedness. Hendershot & Sperandio (2009) found that their respondents placed awareness of global issues highly in their understanding of global citizenship. What is also noteworthy is the way Lana mentions her "own community," "society," "the world or whatever." For Lana, awareness seems to be all encompassing.[1] She seems to treat awareness of the local and the global simultaneously, acknowledging the linkages between her own locality and its connection to the world. She ends by stating "it's all connected" signaling again at the emergence of a cosmopolitan outlook. Similarly, Hansen (2010) cites Bruckner (2000) in stating that a cosmopolitan outlook may be impossible without a sustained engagement in a local.

Another sign of Lana's local-global connection would be her story of having to defend *Art at Work* to her cousin who

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[1] *Add to this that Cermak at al.'s (2011) study found placed awareness at par with action/activism.*

was criticizing her decision to support initiatives overseas in Kenya as opposed to local initiatives. She acknowledged the work that needed to be done at the local level, but she did not understand why the geographic location of her support has to matter.

These cosmopolitan conversations sourcing people, places, stories, and experiences from another continent are what Angela uses as reference for her day-to-day decisions in Toronto. Exchanges that took place in Kenya cause John to "lose sleep" in Toronto. The art of speaking, listening and interacting have served as the basic building blocks of these relationships that infuse a sense of connectedness and belonging, which ultimately transcend the vast distance between Kenya and Canada. Our experiences in Kenya both with locals and with those on our ISL team have trumped differences in context and instead have worked to crystalize a sense of connectedness causing, for example, Angela to be cautious of her purchasing habits, influencing Tom to use these banked memories to make daily life decisions, triggering Lana to start an organization, making John lay awake at night, and causing me to undertake a research project.

From a researcher's point of view my participants' responses are exciting. Their cosmopolitan responses offer me the opportunity to engage with their lived realities in the complex milieu of urban diversity (Amin, 2007) and modernity (Harvey, 1989) in an increasingly globalized and

"liquid-modern" world (Bauman, 2005). While this is all good and fair it is also possible, as Hansen (2010) suggests, to view cosmopolitanism as merely a way of being, as an art of living that provides "answers to life's unimagined possibilities and its all too determinant predicaments." Just like John, who seemed content with his contradictions, other studies have found students embracing "a culture of the cosmopolitan" (Hansen, 2010) where the participants show not just awareness, but critical appreciation of different places and people in the world (Osler & Starkey, 2003; Szersznski & Urry, 2002; Mitchell & Parker, 2008; Lamont & Aksartova, 2002; Werbner, 1999; Englund, 2004; Papastergiadis, 2007). Cosmopolitanism proves a compatible analytical device to interpret the ways in which my participants have formulated an understanding of their cultural landscapes (Hall, 1992) as it pertains to their sense of self. These 4 ISL participants, living in Toronto, Canada show instances of cosmopolitan thinking and decision-making with a "world-generating optic" (Appadurai, 2000, p. 8) that transcends the local and the national. But I must be careful not to glorify my participants' responses, to treat their situations as though they have found the singular solution to the immense complexity of living in a postmodern, globalized world. As Appiah (2006) warns, cosmopolitanism "is the name not of the solution but of the challenge" (p. xv). Using cosmopolitanism, then, I can now see my participants' responses pointing to ways in which

they are making day-to-day local decisions, difficult as they may be, with the global in mind – living *here* with lessons from *there*.

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Appendix A: Sample interview questions

- Motivation for involvement
  - How did you learn about WYG.
  - Where did the idea for going abroad come from?
  - What motivated you to be a part of it? What factors influenced you to do a trip with WYG?
  - How did you view your role before going on the trip?

- Personal history
  - Tell me about yourself.
  - Has your involvement with WYG been influenced by anything from your past?
  - Have you experienced anything that has to do with social (in)justice that made you want to get involved in such an organization?

- Perceptions of self
  - So, tell me about WYG and your involvement in it.
  - What did you feel your role was in it?
  - How did you feel being a part of an organization like WYG?
  - Were you surprised with what you saw? Did you have any expectations? Did it meet your expectations?
  - Why did you go with WYG and not alone?

- International service-learning
  - Did you have a place in mind when you made the decision to go on a trip?
  - What where some of your impression about *WYG* before you went on the trip?
  - What were some of your impressions about *Kenya* before you went on the trip?
  - Would you recommend WYG to others? Why?
  - How much did know about the work you'd be doing in Kenya (APL & KCC) and people in Kenya before you left?

- Social justice
  - What is social justice to you?
  - Did you learn anything about justice from your experience?
  - What has your experience with WYG and Kenya taught you about social justice?
  - Are you involved in activism or advocacy? If so, when did this start? Why? If not, why have you chosen to not to get involved?

- Experience of return
  - What are some of the things you envisioned doing after coming back? What was on your mind?

- When you came back to Canada, what happened then? Do you feel that what you learned was applicable to your daily life in Canada?
  Did you observe/notice any changes in your daily routine/life? Give me some examples.
- Who did you talk to about your global trip?
- How did you describe your experiences to others? How did people around you (friends, family, coworkers, etc.) react after learning you did a global trip? How did they treat you?
  How do you think they perceived you? Any examples/encounters?
- How did you describe your experiences to others: friends, family members?

Appendix B: Informed consent form

Researcher:

Mateen Khalid
M.Ed. Candidate, Faculty of Education, York University
mateen_khalid@edu.yorku.ca

Description of research:

My research asks two questions: 1) how do individuals come to understand social justice and how they may put their ideas of social justice into practice; 2) examine how individuals may come to see themselves as subjects of social justice.

To undertake this research, I will need to interview 4 former ISL participants using open-ended questions to reflect on their experiences both on trip and upon return to Canada.

This research is conducted as part of the completion of a Masters' thesis at York University's Faculty of Education in Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

This consent letter also serves as an invitation asking for your participation. You have been selected because your position is unique in your input would help provided valuable insight. Your participation requires and approximately 1-hour interview which will be audio-recorded.

My expectations of you:

The protocol for this research consists of an interview in which I will prompt using a set of open-ended discussion questions. This is a one-time interview of approximately 1 hour. The discussion will be recorded using an audio recorder and then transcribed for use in the research paper. The interview can take place anywhere at your convenience and comfort as long as the environment allows for our discussion to be clearly audio-recorded.

Risks and discomforts:

I do not anticipate any risks associated with participation in this interview.

Benefits and rewards:

While there may not be a direct and immediate benefit to yourself, by participating in this research, you may help inform the post-ISL experiences of future ISL alumni and help them in understanding their thoughts, feelings and emotions.

Voluntary participation:

Participation in this interview is entirely voluntary. You may choose to stop participating at any time or choose not to answer some questions. Be sure that if

you do choose not to participate, it will not influence our relationship negatively in any way or your relationship with York University and it will not impact my discussion of your input in the research paper.

Withdrawal from the study:

You, as participant, may cease participation at any time for any reason. If you decide to stop participation, all information you provide will be destroyed. If you refuse to participate, your decision will not influence your relationship with York University or me negatively in any way.

Confidentiality:

The only people who have access to the information you provide in this interview include yourself, my thesis supervisor and me. The transcribed interview discussion notes will be stored on my personal laptop and my home desktop, both of which are password protected with the password known only to myself. Transcription documents will also be password encrypted for extra security. Audio-recorded notes will be destroyed permanently upon transcription. Transcribed notes of audio recordings will be destroyed 5 years after the completion of the research.

Be assured that your identity will not be disclosed to anyone for any reason and that confidentiality will be provided to the fullest extent possible by law.

Uses for the data:

I may quote some of your responses to the interview questions in the final paper that is a required part of my research project. As well, I may present part of the findings in other papers and/or publications in classes at York University or in other academic and research contexts. No information that identifies you personally will appear in any papers or publications resulting from this study. I will use pseudonyms to refer to you, your school, your organization and any person to whom you may refer.

Questions/concerns:

If at any point you have any questions regarding the research in general refer to these contact numbers:

Mateen Khalid	Dan Yon
M.Ed. Candidate	Associate Professor
Faculty of Education	Faculty of Education
York University	York University
mateen_khalid@edu.yorku.ca	dyon@edu.yorku.ca

For questions regarding research ethics contact the Graduate Program in Education Human Participants review Committee at 416 736 5018.

This research has been reviewed by the Graduate Program in Education Human Participants review Committee and approved for compliance on research ethics within the context of the York Senate Policy on research ethics.

I_____
consent to participate in *Living here with lessons from there: Cosmopolitan conversations after an international service-learning trip* conducted by Mateen Khalid. I have understood the nature of this project and wish to participate. I am not waiving any of my legal rights by signing this form. My signature below indicates my consent.

Participant Signature: _____

Date: _____

Principal Investigator Signature: _____

Date: _____