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Butterflies, Boundaries, and Breadfruit: The Shared Story of a Service Learning Experience in Jamaica

Adam Renner
University of Tennessee - Knoxville

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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Adam Renner entitled "Butterflies, Boundaries, and Breadfruit: The Shared Story of a Service Learning Experience in Jamaica." I have examined the final electronic copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Education.

Barbara Thayer-Bacon, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation and recommend its acceptance:

Diana Moyer, Faye Harrison, William Morgan

Accepted for the Council:

Carolyn R. Hodges

Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

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Barbara Thayer-Bacon
Major Professor

We have read this dissertation
and recommend its acceptance:

Diana Moyer

Faye Harrison

William Morgan

Accepted for the Council:

Anne Mayhew
Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate
Studies

(Original signatures are on file with official student records)

**BUTTERFLIES, BOUNDARIES, AND BREADFRUIT: THE SHARED
STORY OF A SERVICE LEARNING EXPERIENCE IN JAMAICA**

A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Adam Renner
December, 2002

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my partner, Gina Stiens, who has shared in each moment of work in Jamaica the last five years. Her tireless commitment to the Jamaican schools and orphanages; her remarkable example of love and caring; and her patient and listening ear during the writing and rewriting of this dissertation have encouraged and inspired me throughout. This body of work is very much *our* work.



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There are many people who have had a hand in the ultimate completion of this dissertation. For their love, support, and guidance, I am eternally grateful.

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I would like to acknowledge the role that many educators have played in my intellectual, emotional, and spiritual growth. Although they are certainly too numerous to name, I want to at least acknowledge the noteworthy influence of two teachers at Elder High School and two instructors in my master's degree program at Northern Kentucky University. At Elder, I would like to thank Thomas Darnell and Fr. Thomas Kuhn for their keen guidance and motivation to follow my dreams. At NKU, I would like to thank the late Dr. Lorena O'Donnell for the chance she took to admit me to the Alternative Teacher Certification Program. This program changed my life. I would also like to thank Dr. Long Tran, an instructor in this program. Thanks for taking me under your wing and introducing me to Paulo Freire, Henry Giroux, Peter McLaren, and bell hooks.

There are several graduate student colleagues and faculty at the University of Tennessee that I met along the way in my doctoral work whom I would also like to thank. These colleagues and faculty are also too numerous to mention, but I want to especially acknowledge Chris Demuth and Matthew Masucci for the friendship they shared with me over my three years in Knoxville. Chris, thanks for introducing me to a whole new world and giving me laughter when I needed it most. Matt, thanks for your partnership in the development of critical service learning. You are the most intelligent and insightful

person I know. I would also like to specifically acknowledge a few faculty who had a profound impact on my stay in Knoxville. I would like to thank Dr. Laurence Coleman, now at the University of Toledo, for his early guidance in qualitative studies. I would like to thank Dr. Olga Welch for her continual support of and inquiries about my work. I would like to thank Emile Catignani for talking to me about something other than my doctoral work. Thanks for the many mornings and afternoons on the tennis court. I would like to especially thank Dr. Clinton Allison, now retired from UT, for the fatherly role he played for me while I was away from home. From the first time to the last time I visited your office, you always stopped what you were doing to visit with me. You'll never know how much that meant. I hope I can be half the professor you are. Finally, I would like to specifically acknowledge a number of the faculty in our cultural studies in education department for their supportive roles: Dr. Joy DeSensi, Dr. Leslee Fisher, Dr. Craig Wrisberg, and Dr. Handel Wright.

In addition to these faculty mentioned, I would like to especially acknowledge the role of two other cultural studies faculty who served on my doctoral committee: Dr. William Morgan and Dr. Diana Moyer. Thank you, Bill, for always being in my corner, for directing me in my research on social justice, and agreeing to stay on my committee when you left for Ohio State. Thank you, Diana, for agreeing to be on my committee so short into your tenure at UT. Your expertise in qualitative research made this a stronger study. You are an asset to the Cultural Studies department at UT. I would also like to thank Dr. Faye Harrison from UT's Anthropology department for agreeing to serve on my committee. From my first contact with you in your Social Issues course and, then, discovering your background in Jamaica, I knew you would be ideal for this committee.

Thank you for your critical reads, your listening ear, and your encouraging comments throughout my stay in Knoxville. UT is lucky to have you back.

Finally, from UT, I would like to thank my committee chair, Dr. Barbara Thayer-Bacon. I could not have asked for a better scholar, teacher, and confidante to help lead me through this dissertation research study. Your support, critical reads, critical re-reads, direction, and advice have made this a much stronger work. How you found so much time to dedicate to this study, I will never know. You are a model of caring and have constructively shown what is possible between advisor and graduate student. I look forward to being your colleague and being the same type of scholar, teacher, and confidante in the future.

I would be remiss if I did not also acknowledge my Jamaican partners and the participants in this study. Although I cannot mention you by name, know that because of your time, interest in my work, and willingness to become my co-investigator in this study, more critical possibilities now exist for service learning and the future of the partnership in Jamaica. I cherish the friendships that have formed as a result of our work together.

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years in whatswithwillard? has been my outlet and my sanity. Thanks for sharing your talents, your passions, and your friendship with me.

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ABSTRACT

This study documents the problematization of service learning, the activation of a practice for cultural studies, and the use of a particular framework and theory called critical service learning. The framework centers around praxis and is comprised of four-stages—pre-action reflection, theory, action, and reflection—which articulates Freirean, critical, and engaged pedagogies with cultural studies theory in the reflective and theory stages and targets social difference and resultant injustices in the action stage. The theory articulates the feminist ethic of care and social justice theory within a frame of the generalized and concrete other, and promotes caring solidarity as the ultimate ameliorative aim of service learning partnerships.

This seven-month qualitative study details a service experience which partners US college students with two schools and two orphanages in Jamaica, and marks the first activation of critical service learning. Cast as an ethnography, this cultural study asks one over-arching question: “How does the critical service learning framework and theory play out in a partnership that seeks ameliorative change?, and seeks answers as to whether social justice and/or care may result from experiences in the partnership, what the potential enduring effects may be, and how the relationship of ‘server’ and ‘served’ might best be democratized.

The ethnography covers four and a half months of class-work and preparation, fifteen days working in Jamaica, and two months after re-entering the US. The “shared story” that results from the multiple data collection strategies thickly describes several

key places visited and events that occurred during the experience. The data is interpreted and analyzed using a critically-interpretive approach.

From the analysis, three symbols emerge—butterflies, boundaries, and breadfruit—with attendant metaphors and limitations that provide (1) advice for enhancing and evolving the critical service learning framework and theory, in particular, and improving service learning, in general, (2) evidence that service learning is a viable practice for cultural studies, and (3) consideration for how the relationship of ‘servers’ and ‘served’ might best be democratized and what might lead to and encourage long-term ameliorative effects.

PREFACE: LIFE AFTER RESURRECTION

Like an ocean of desire
I'm reaching out through the noise
Across the dusk of time
Within the lilting lies
I'm singing out to you
(Billy Corgan¹)

This is the story of a boy on a journey—a boy often afraid, lost, and/or naïve, but committed. The dissertation to follow is only one slice of this journey, unevenly but thoughtfully cut to serve at this moment—this banquet of reflection. The courses and the portions have been chosen carefully so that anyone who reads these pages may do so critically, but comfortably, leaving plenty of room for dessert—the part of the meal that we must all create together in the future praxis, which we can all choose to make our own.

The boy in these pages is me, trying to sing out, grabbing up at your shirttails, and asking you to listen—to listen to what I hope is in your heart as well. For some time I have looked at the world as if resurrected, like a boy on a bike who has turned the corner of his familiar neighborhood and traveled down more unfamiliar streets, experiencing a new life in a whole new world. My goal is to bring you this world through these bright eyes, to cut through the noise and bring you something real—like a crisply wrapped package within a package, within a package . . . that you open and discover, and discover, and. . . .

¹ Smashing Pumpkins. (1999). The crying tree of mercury. *The Machines of God*. Faust's Haus Music.

I bring you the story of this resurrected life, though, somewhat sheepishly, as it represents a drafty window on my soul—a wide open look at how I see the world. While we may not agree on some of the particular issues in the following pages, I hope that we may at least find ourselves nodding in agreement with one another over the general spirit and aim of this dissertation.

Know that this new life and resurrected view of the world has not been possible without the immense sacrifices of others and the stories that they were not too shy to tell even if it meant ostracization or persecution. This ocean of desire that ripples over these pages is my response and my thanks to them. Enjoy the banquet while it is here, “for today we eat and drink; while tomorrow . . .,”² we create a new beginning: a new resurrection.

² U2 (1983). Sunday bloody Sunday. *War*. Island Records.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
I.	INTRODUCTION: LIVING PRAXIS	1
	A Brief Look at What Has Led Me to this Moment	3
	Cultural Studies	9
	Service Learning	12
	Critical Service Learning	15
	Pre-action reflection	15
	Theory	16
	Action	17
	Reflection	18
	Freirean, Critical, and Engaged Pedagogies	18
	Freirean Pedagogy	19
	Critical Pedagogy	20
	Engaged Pedagogy	22
	Social Justice	23
	Caring	25
	The Research Study	28
	Methodology	30
	Participants and Methods	33
	Analysis	36
	Time Frame and Organization of Study	38
	Time Frame	38
	Outline of Forthcoming Chapters	39
	Limitations and Implications of this Study	42
II.	AN INTELLECTUAL JOURNEY: ACTION AND REFLECTION IN THE EVOLUTION OF CRITICAL SERVICE LEARNING	46
	Speaking Autobiographically: Digging Up Old “Weather Reports”	47
	Weather Report 1: <i>The Day I Met a Savior</i>	51
	Weather Report 2: Farfrümsheltôrd	53
	Weather Report 3: Looking in the Mirror— <i>Savage Inequalities</i>	55
	Weather Report 4: The Winton Homes Library Project and the Emergence of Cultural Studies	57
	Weather Report 5: ‘Circling the Wagons—A Discussion about Social Justice	59
	The Role of Cultural Studies in Education and Service Learning	61
	Service Learning	71
	History	72
	Research on Service Learning	74
	Examples of Service Learning Projects in the Literature	77
	Evolving Beyond the NASSP/QI: My Service Learning Course at the High School	80

Revisiting Freirean, Critical, and Engaged Pedagogies	83
The Critical Service Learning Framework	90
The Four-Stage Framework	91
A General Look	91
The Stages Applied to this Project	95
The Critical Service Learning Framework Applied to this Dissertation	99
Problematizing the Framework: Searching for an Appropriate Agenda	100
Participation in Projects vs. Future Participation in Society	101
The Immediate Practical Implications of Service Learning	101
The Role of Teacher Education	102
The ‘Server’ and the ‘Served’	106
A New Hybrid Theory?: An Emerging Critical Service Learning Discourse	111
Social Justice	112
John Rawls: <i>A Theory of Justice</i>	113
Michael Walzer: <i>Spheres of Justice</i>	114
David Miller: <i>Principles of Social Justice</i>	116
Examining these Three Theories of Justice	118
Caring	120
Nel Noddings and the Feminist Ethic of Care	121
Critiquing an Ethic of Care	123
The “Generalized and Concrete Other”	125
Caring Solidarity	129
Conclusion	131
 III. EXPLORING THE CONTEXT: MAPPING THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPES OF JAMAICA	135
Our History in Jamaica	137
Four Theoretical Concepts	140
Hegemony	141
Counter-hegemony	142
Reproduction	143
Resistance	144
The Historical Landscape	146
The Religious Landscape	149
The Political Landscape	156
The Economic Landscape	160
The Social Landscape	164
The White/Brown/Black Divide	164
Family	166
Conclusion: An Articulated Landscape?	170
 IV. METHODOLOGY: DEVELOPING A PRACTICE AND WORKING TOWARD (EVOLVING) A THEORY	174
Part One: Methodology—Seeking a Consistent Political and	

Theoretical Paradigmatic Frame for Praxis-Driven Research	176
Exploring the Three Paradigms	176
My Approach to this Qualitative Research Study: Ethnography	179
Positing a ‘Critically Interpretive’ Paradigm	180
Part Two: Participants and Methods	184
PHI 220 and the Participants from the US	184
“Sharing Stories” with Jamaican Participants	186
Informants	190
Data Collection	192
Interviews	192
Participant Observation	195
Document Procurement, Photographs, and Audio-tapes	195
Email Correspondence, Student Evaluations, Student Papers, and Journals	197
Part Three: Analysis	199
Interpretive Interactionism	199
Analyzing and Interpreting the Collected Data	202
In-the-Field Analysis	203
Tidying-up the Data and Working Toward a More Formalized Analysis	204
Part Four: Last, but not Least—Validity, Triangulation, Limitations, and Reciprocity	209
Validity	209
Triangulation	211
Limitations	212
Reciprocity	214
 V. DATA: BUILDING A “SHARED STORY”	216
Part One: Preparing for Jamaica	220
PHI 220: Part One—The Spring Meetings	221
Readings	222
Reflections	223
Paper Assignments	223
Reflections About the Way the Spring Semester was Unfolding	225
Arranging Accommodations	228
Preparation of Lessons for Jamaican schools: Some Early Small Group Work	232
Collecting Supplies and Fundraising	234
Part Two: Jamaica	238
Accommodations	240
Arrival in Jamaica	240
The Manor at First Light	241
Jamaica in General	244
Scenic and Climatic Considerations	245

Headlines in Jamaica	247
Changing Perceptions of Jamaica by the US Informants	252
Contradictions and the Emerging Symbol of the Butterfly	257
Cambridge International Children's Home	260
The Agenda	260
Boundaries	262
A Description of Cambridge and What We Did There	264
The Emerging Issue of Attachment	269
'Server' or 'Served'? : Some Initial	
Conclusions/Contradictions	272
New Oxford Children's Home	274
A Description of New Oxford	277
More Boundaries	276
And, Then, Came the Attachment	280
Crossing Boundaries and Opening our Eyes: A New	
Sensitivity to Ability	282
Again, "Who is serving and who is served?": Understanding	
More About 'Server' and 'Served'	284
In the Words of the 'Served'	285
Breadfruit	291
The Future: A Process of "Becoming"	293
Westminster Holy Church/School	294
<i>Life in Schools</i>	294
The Lessons: "Sharing Stories"	296
Tuesday Evening Youth Service: Promoting a "Shared Story"	299
The Roof: Different Stories?	301
The Breadfruit is Good Here Too, Though (For Some)	303
Benson Basic School	305
Description of Benson Basic	306
More Issues of Attachment	307
My Own "Shared Story" with Two Caribbean Colleagues	311
"Becoming Fast Partners at Benson	313
The Columbus Project	314
A Description	314
"Something is not Right Here": Juxtaposing The Columbus	
Project with the Rest of our Experience	317
Seeing Theory in Real Life: The Beauty of Praxis	321
PHI 220: Part Two—The Group Meetings in Jamaica	323
The Setting for the Meetings	324
Large Group Meeting 1	325
Small Group Meetings	326
Large Group Meeting 2	327
Large Group Meeting 3	331
Large Group Meeting 4	334
Considering Re-entry	336

Part Three: Re-entry	338
PHI 220: Part Three—The Final Meetings	338
Summer Meetings	341
Evaluative Feedback: Class Meetings, Readings, Theory, Reflection, and Service Learning in General	342
Final Response(s) from the Jamaican Informants	350
Member-checking, Ongoing Correspondence and a Conclusion	352
 VI. ANALYSIS: DECONSTRUCTING AND PROBLEMATIZING CRITICAL SERVICE LEARNING.....	355
Why is this a Cultural Studies Project and Where Will the Analysis Go From Here?	356
Visual Analysis: Figure 1	358
Butterflies: Dialectics and the Long Term Personal	360
Butterfly as Dialectic	361
The Long Term Personal	365
What are the Potential Enduring Effects?	368
Dissecting the Butterfly and Troubling the Enduring Effects	371
Issue 1: A Seven-Month Ethnography	372
Issue 2: Who was ‘Serving’ and who was ‘Served’?	373
Issue 3: Varying Levels of Partnership	373
Issue 4: The General and the Concrete	376
Issue 5: Service Learning as a “class”/”project”	378
Boundaries: Fears/Surprises/Epiphanies and the Short Term Personal	383
Crossing Boundaries	384
What is the Possibility of these Projects to Work Toward Social Justice and/or Care?	386
Digging Beneath the Boundaries	387
Issue 1: “Boundaries” as a US Construction	388
Issue 2: What Can be Concretely Gleaned from One Experience?	389
Issue 3: How much theory is too much?: “When is this Class Going to be Over	391
Breadfruit: Attachment/Detachment and Communication	394
Attachment/Detachment	395
Communication	396
How does this Framework Help to Democratize the Relationship of ‘Server’ and ‘Served’?	398
Peeling Back the Layers of the Breadfruit	398
Issue 1: Sharing ‘Which’ Stories?	399
Issue 2: Wearing Too Many Hats	401
Issue 3: Staying in Touch	404
Conclusion	406

VII. RECONSTRUCTING AND EVOLVING CRITICAL SERVICE LEARNING	408
How Critical Service Learning Emerged	409
Activating the Framework and Theory of Critical Service Learning	412
What did this Fifth Trip Look Like in the US Side?	413
How were our Jamaican Partners Involved in the Planning?	414
What did the Fifth Trip Look Like in Terms of my Study?	414
What are the Potential Enduring Effects of this Project Beyond our Presence in Jamaica?	416
What is the Possibility of these Projects to Work Toward Social Justice and/or Care?	416
How does this Framework Help to Democratize the Relationship of ‘Server’ and ‘Served’?	417
Implications for Critical Service Learning	417
Implications for the Framework and Theory of Critical Service Learning	417
Butterflies	417
Boundaries	421
Breadfruit	422
An Evolved Version of Critical Service Learning	425
Contributions of this Study	432
A Practical Way to Activate Cultural Studies	432
The Promise of Discursive Articulations	432
Praxis as the Key to Democratization	433
Critical Service Learning as a Contribution to the Conversation of Service Learning	433
Focusing on Social Difference and Inequality: “Boundaries”	434
Embracing Differing Perspectives, Privileging Knowledge on Both Sides, and Making Use of the Tension Between Theory and Action: A Further Enhancement of the Theory Stage	434
Enhancing Reflection as a Process of Becoming: “Butterflies”	435
Food as Sustenance for the Life of the Partnership: The Action of ‘Breaking Breadfruit’	435
Caring Solidarity	434
The Contribution of Teachers to Critical Service Learning	436
Future Considerations	437
Implications for our Partnership in Jamaica	438
Research Considerations	440
Longitudinal Study to Gauge the Effects of Critical Service Learning on ‘Servers’ and ‘Served’	440
A Study Involving Teachers Only	441
Evaluation in Critical Service Learning and the Possibility Of Something Other Than a “Class”	442
More Development of the Context of Critical Service	

Learning Experiences	442
Studies on the Context of Place	448
A Few Closing Remarks	449
LIST OF REFERENCES	451
APPENDICES	469
VITA	498

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: LIVING PRAXIS

...the moment of writing becomes a time of creation and recreation of the ideas with which we come to our desk. (Paulo Freire)³

This dissertation is a cultural studies project. This dissertation is also the story of my life with service. I come to this moment of writing, as Freire (1992) suggests, to both create and re-create several ideas about service and cultural studies that I not only bring to my desk, but that I also carry with me in the open spaces and crevices of my conscious and sub-conscious mind. These ideas are sometimes memories—remembrances of past events that require context and reflection in order to see how I might make use of them presently or in the future. These ideas are also sometimes epiphanies—moments of new understanding, resurrection, or, as Norman Denzin (1989) describes as “interactional moments of transformation” that have changed the way I previously thought about the world. Finally, these ideas are sometimes dreams—hopes for a new tomorrow and a “movement of history” toward a more just and caring future.

Throughout this cultural studies project, which documents the experience of leading a fifth service learning trip to Jamaica, I make use of these memories, epiphanies, and dreams to exemplify how I have attempted to make my life one of praxis. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire (1970) claims praxis is the dialectical interplay between reflection and action, arguing that one is necessary for and, subsequently, enhances the other. Therefore, this dissertation is not only a record of our action in Jamaica, but it is also one of reflection both prior to the action (making use of memories

³ *Pedagogy of Hope* (1992), pg. 53

of past action and epiphanies that have led me to this moment) and also one of reflection after the action (revealing the resultant epiphanies and dreams for the next action).

So, how does this study take shape? An explanation of what I plan to do with the rest of this introduction should provide a good initial roadmap. To continue this introductory chapter, I briefly outline my experience with service, which has led to this moment of writing—my dissertation research study, which involves the activation of a particular form of service learning, called “critical service learning” (Masucci & Renner, 2000b), for an ongoing service project in Montego Bay, Jamaica. This outline of experience accomplishes three things: exposes the current problem with service learning, helps frame the type of research study I plan to conduct to tackle this problem, and subsequently reveals the major and minor lines of inquiry that I address in this study. Next, I introduce the concepts of cultural studies, service learning, critical service learning, three pedagogies that largely inform this new conception of service learning, as well as the concepts of social justice and caring. These concepts are crucial to understanding both the evolution of and also the promise I see for critical service learning: a four-stage framework and emerging theory for activating projects that work for ameliorative change. Following the discussion of these concepts, I turn my attention to a brief discussion of my methodology in this dissertation, highlighting some of the key methods, participants, and analytic strategies that make up this ethnographic study. Next, I provide previews of the chapters that follow this introduction and show what I plan to do and hope to accomplish through this dissertation research study. To conclude this chapter I examine the possible implications and probable limitations of this ethnography and hypothesize what contribution I might make to the field of cultural studies, the

activation of service learning projects, the discipline of education, the theories of social justice and care, and the lives of the Jamaicans I have come so close to over the last five years.

A Brief Look at What Has Led Me to This Moment

Beginning in the eighth grade, as I prepared to make the sacrament of Confirmation, and continuing through today as a graduate student, taking up an ethnography of a service learning experience, my life has been influenced by (and made better by) service to others. My work with *service learning* began as a teacher in an all-female, Catholic high school in Cincinnati, OH. As the faculty moderator of our community service club (CSC), I had the opportunity to coordinate and participate in numerous service activities in and around the Cincinnati area with more than 200 students from our high school over a three-year period. During my second year as the moderator of the CSC, I noticed that some students, however, who wanted to participate in projects, could not take part in the after-school or weekend projects because of their commitment to other extra-curricular obligations (e.g., employment, athletics, family, and other clubs). Additionally, I also noted that we allowed very little time for reflection on the numerous projects in which we were engaged: serving in soup kitchens; rehabbing old apartments for low-income families; tutoring in after-school, inner-city programs; working on an earth lab; cleaning up local city streets; visiting the elderly; and working with physically and mentally disabled residents in Cincinnati.

It was also during this second year that I received a pamphlet produced by the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) and Quest International (QI), called *Service Learning: Raising service projects to the next level* (1997). In this

publication, the NASSP/QI claimed, “[S]ervice learning goes beyond volunteering, and even beyond traditional community service. Performing service is not all that is involved; service learning also includes thoughtful preparation, structured reflection, and demonstration of what has been learned” (pg. 1). Based on the latter concern above regarding reflection, service learning seemed like a more ideal form of service (rather than “community service” as we had identified it) that would help me to design future projects (or to improve current ones) toward a more reflective experience that could better address why we were engaged in these projects in the first place. This information encouraged me to develop a curriculum for a service learning course that could be taught during school hours, allowing students whose schedules conflicted with the CSC, to take action in and reflect on service projects during the school day. During my third and final year as a high school teacher, along with activating more reflective practices in our CSC, I implemented this service learning course, teaching and learning with nearly fifty seniors who served as tutors and mentors in Cincinnati public schools.

Simultaneous to this time of development of more reflective practices in the CSC and creation of a service learning course, I was approached by one of my more socially conscious students about the possibility of making a service intervention abroad. Several other high schools in the area made trips in the past, but these were all-male high schools, and I had already encountered some opposition from parent groups in our all-female high school regarding the “appropriateness” of some of the projects we had taken up in the inner-city. Only after a series of phone calls, letters, and dead-ends, did I remember a friend of mine who had made a “mission” trip to Jamaica a year or two prior as a project for his Bible School. I contacted him and he subsequently put me in touch with the

organization that had arranged his accommodations on the island, just outside of Montego Bay. This particular facility was very agreeable to the possibility of a group of our students staying there and offered to help with planning our itinerary while on the island. The presentation of these plans to the parents and administration of my high school were met with mixed reactions, but generally supported. The summer before my third and final year of teaching, we made what has been the first of five consecutive summer trips to Montego Bay Jamaica, taking ten students and five adult chaperones that first year.

Once it became clear that I would not be permitted to expand upon my service learning course, beyond a one-period-a-day offering, and as my desire increased to attend graduate school full-time to pursue a terminal degree in teacher-education, I left the high school after my third full year to begin my Ph.D. work in the Cultural Studies in Education Program at the University of Tennessee. Here, not only has my work on service learning continued and evolved, the summer interventions to Jamaica have continued and evolved. In my graduate course of study I have had the opportunity to take part in a service learning project as a partial requirement for one of my courses, and have taken the initiative to augment my understanding of service by researching and exploring new possibilities for service learning with fellow graduate student Matthew Masucci. During these past two years, I have presented at a number of national and regional conferences (Masucci & Renner, 2000a, 2000c, 2001a; Renner, 2001a, 2001b, 2001d) and have written and published (jointly and solely) several papers (Masucci & Renner, 2000b; Masucci & Renner, 2001b; Renner, 2001c), examining our continued work with service learning and my ongoing leadership of the interventions in Jamaica.

What I've discovered as a result of this continued research is a lack of agreement as to what service learning is or what service learning should work toward (Fisher, 1997; NASSP/QI, 1997; Prosser & Levesque, 1997; Burns, 1998; Warren, 1998; Barlow, 1999; Rosenberger, 2000; Wright, 2001). For example, advocates of service learning run the political gamut: from leading figures on the Right such as President George W. Bush and Secretary of State, Colin Powell to Senator Edward Kennedy and political activist Ralph Nader on the Left. Considering that 12,605,740 students in grades 6-12 are involved in service initiatives; 86% of school districts offer some form of community service (88% of which is referred to as service learning); 18% of school districts nationwide require service (National Center for Education Statistics, 1997); and given the recent initiatives proposed by President Bush to financially support faith-based organizations for service and to develop a Freedom Corps, one begins to wonder what counts as "service" in all of these locations, what outcomes are promoted, and how "reflective" these experiences might be.

Alongside these statistics, teachers are increasingly (based on the numbers above) expected to activate service projects in their curricula and/or schools without sufficient preparation in their teacher education programs. Service programs certainly do exist (and are actively promoted) in some teacher-preparation programs (Waterman, 1997; Hamm et al, 1998; Hrabowski et al, 1999; Swick & Rowls, 1999; Barton, 2000), but I argue that these represent only a minority of cases, leaving most teachers to fend for themselves in the development and activation of service initiatives for their students. The expectation for teachers to launch projects, coupled with poor preparation, can lead to potentially hurried and less reflective projects for the students (i.e., the 'servers') and potentially

ineffective, or perhaps even harmful outcomes for the community (i.e. the ‘served’).

Thus, I recommend service learning should become a more prominent feature in teacher education programs and should take a more serious approach to examining the relationship of the ‘server’ and the ‘served’ and what potential enduring effects these projects might have for our students who will eventually become citizens of the world. This research study details the use of critical service learning that I argue addresses the concerns above and provides a pliable framework and theory from which teachers, introduced to service learning in their teacher preparation programs, can adapt projects to the given context of their schools, classrooms, and communities.

I return to the initial concern raised above regarding the various agendas associated with service learning. These concerns are epitomized in my ongoing work in Montego Bay, Jamaica. As I indicated earlier, my first contact with Jamaica was brought about because of a friend’s “mission” trip to Jamaica. At the time, as a teacher in a Christian school, I was uncritical of the baggage inherent in this term. It was not until the middle of our second intervention that I realized the problematic of referring to our trips as “mission” trips. Standing outside of a Jamaican church, confronted by a young Christian from a southern US Bible school, who was trying to “fill” me with the Holy Spirit, and who later revealed a list of names that he alone had “saved” while on the island, I realized the potentially colonialistic nature of this Christianizing attitude. While I, personally, still view Christ as one of my central inspirations for service, we as a team have decided to drop any mention of “mission” as it relates to our interventions. None of our work necessarily must be premised on Christianity as our service involves working in schools as teachers and tutors, and helping in orphanages by playing with, feeding and

clothing the resident children. The concern of Christianization refers back to the relationship of the ‘server’ and the ‘served’ that I offered previously and relates specifically to what an agenda for service learning should entail. As my research of and experience with service learning has continued and evolved, I believe the only appropriate agenda can be service learning that addresses social justice and caring—what I will refer to as “ameliorative change.” Through this research study, attempting to follow both the “service learning for social justice” path that others (Fisher, 1997; Wright, 2001) have laid out before me and the sometimes divergent path toward caring (Noddings, 1984; Benhabib, 1992; Thayer-Bacon, 2000) that I believe is also necessary, I deconstruct the literature toward an understanding of where they might intersect. As a result of this deconstruction, I hope to contribute a *practical* understanding of how we might achieve both social justice and care through service projects and, subsequently, create a more-informed and updated articulation of a service learning framework and discourse—critical service learning—that posits reflection, theory, action, and caring solidarity as the means toward ameliorative change.

Due to my experience with service projects, my concerns for the preparedness of teachers to launch effective and meaningful service learning projects, and my continued exploration and evolution of a reflective method for completing projects, I take up this research study of a service learning experience in Jamaica as a cultural studies project. In this project I ask one main, qualitative question, *How does a critical service learning framework and theory play out in a project that seeks ameliorative change?*, and several qualitative sub-questions, *What is the possibility of these projects to work toward social justice and/or care? How does this framework and theory help to democratize the*

relationship of the ‘server’ and the ‘served’? And, what are the potential enduring effects of this project beyond our presence in Jamaica?

With these questions in mind, I turn my attention to introducing some of the concepts that are germane to this project. While further explanations and a more critical analysis, using these concepts, is yet to come in Chapter 2, this introduction helps form a clearer understanding of what this ethnography is hoping to accomplish.

Cultural Studies

As I indicated earlier, my return to graduate school full time landed me in a cultural studies in education program. Cultural studies is an unusual field because its origins are contested. While many consider the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) in Great Britain to be the genesis of cultural studies in the 1960s, the movement of cultural studies in Great Britain actually began in adult education several years before its institutionalization at the CCCS. Additionally, others (particularly Wright, 1998) argue that cultural studies may actually have various prior points of origin, including Kamiriithu African theater and Miles Horton’s grassroots community organizing at the Highlander Center in East Tennessee. With this disagreement of the origins at least noted, I will, for sake of time and some amount of clarity, attempt to follow the lineage from the CCCS to describe what comprises a cultural studies agenda (particularly pertaining to education).

According to Kathy Hytten (1998), cultural studies in education is first and foremost political, positing a framework for social justice. Second, cultural studies works are interdisciplinary and “more inclusive of a wide range of social and cultural representations, particularly popular culture” (pg. 250). Third, cultures studies in

education concerns itself with diversity, multiculturalism, and power. Similar to Hytten, Giroux (1999) claims that cultural studies attends to issues of gender, class, sexuality, national identity, colonialism, race, ethnicity, cultural populism, textuality, and critical pedagogy. Moreover, Giroux claims that cultural studies helps us to think about history differently. Giroux argues, “History is not an artifact, but a struggle over the relationship between representation and agency” (pg. 242). Along these lines of history, Lawrence Grossberg (1992; Wright, 2000) adds that cultural studies focuses on contextuality and historicity, teaching us that the world is not a ‘given’ world, but a constructed one; thus, it does not have to be the way that it is. Stuart Hall (1992) makes the ultimate case, however, that cultural studies has done very little unless it makes a practical contribution to society. Hall argues,

“I think anybody who is into cultural studies seriously as an intellectual practice, must feel on their pulse, its ephemerality, its insubstantiality, how little it registers, how little we have been able to change anything or get anybody to do anything. If you don’t feel that as one tension in the work that you are doing, theory has let you off the hook” (pg. 285).

In this same vein Giroux (1999) argues, “Cultural studies advocates that the vocation of intellectuals be rooted in pedagogical and political work tempered by humility, a moral focus on suffering, and the need to produce alternative visions and policies that go beyond a language of critique” (pg. 244). So, just as Wright (2001) has claimed, I believe further work on service learning is important and promising since it provides a practical avenue on which to launch ameliorative cultural studies projects. Therefore, we must endeavor to practice what we, as intellectuals, find ourselves theorizing about, becoming,

hopefully, an example of Gramsci's (1971) "organic intellectual"—someone with access to theory and the knowledge of the controlling elite who democratizes and localizes this information for disbursement and subsequent empowerment of the people.

Because I take the field of cultural studies seriously, it is important that I reveal how I see cultural studies applying to *practical* projects based on the concerns above regarding over-theoreticization. This focus on the practical is an important contribution to an otherwise heavily theorized terrain (Hall, 1992; Wright, 1995), providing an example for how the agendas described above (Hall, 1992; Grossberg, 1992; Hytten, 1998; Giroux, 1999; and Wright, 2000) and the theory of cultural studies play out in practice. While no one definition is apparently possible for what cultural studies is (Grossberg, 1992; Gray & McGuigan, 1993; Wright, 2001b), it may be best explained by a series of characteristics, similar to how Wright (1995) explains the field to graduate students entering the cultural studies program at the University of Tennessee. The following list of nine characteristics of cultural studies influence my current work for both my research of service learning in general and also my current project in Jamaica in particular. I believe these characteristics form the foundation for activating an example of a practical cultural studies project. This cultural studies project involving service learning is:

1. A contextual, historical, and qualitative study of people's lived experience (Willis, 1980; Giroux, 1995; Hytten, 1997; Wright, 2000)—including *my* lived experienced, which I have and will continue to demonstrate autobiographically throughout this and other chapters of this dissertation,
2. Political (Hall 1992; Wright, 1995; Giroux, 1995, 1999),

3. Concerned with the pedagogical (Hall 1992; Wright, 1995; Giroux, 1995, 1999),
4. Counter-hegemonic (Giroux, 1995; Wright, 1995),
5. Influenced by and acknowledging of popular culture (Williams, 1971; Wright, 1995),
6. Deconstructive (Landry & MacLean, 1996; Giroux, 1995)—but only to a point before taking up the practical work,
7. Praxis-driven (Freire, 1970; Hall, 1992; Wright, 1995),
8. Informed by and creative of theory (Hall, 1992; Wright, 1995; Wright, 2000), and
9. Interdisciplinary (Hall, 1992; Wright, 1995; Hytten, 1997)—trying to bring together what appear to be disparate discourses into a new articulation.

This ethnography of a service learning experience in Jamaica endeavors to incorporate all of the above characteristics, showing how they work within the project and hopefully providing a model for others to critique, contextualize, and incorporate in their own work.

Service Learning

I move on to describe another key concept in my research project, service learning. As I have indicated, service learning has become a multivocal and fashionable phrase in education today. In its simplest form service learning is community service plus a reflective and more formal learning component. The following descriptions of service learning from the literature are only a few of the numerous conceptions currently available. I select these particular examples purposely because they help lead to how I ultimately conceptualize service learning.

According to Leonard Burns (1998), service learning is a more evolved form of community service because it is a “structured learning process.” Further, Burns claims:

Without the structure of service learning, mandated community service [programs] become controversial, centering on the use of community service by the judicial system. Consequently, community service may be perceived as punishment for criminal activity (pg. 38).

Additionally, V. Ann Paulins (1999) argues the purpose of service learning “is to increase learning capacity by allowing students to apply knowledge rather than simply receive information in a lecture setting” (pg. 67). In the same way, Theresa Prosser and Jeri Levesque (1997) claim, “Service learning programs are designed to build, improve, or advance participants’ ability to solve problems and assume the responsibilities of community membership” (pg. 33). Finally, according to Learning in Deed, an initiative of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, service learning is quite simply intended to accomplish change in three groups of people: individual students, schools, and communities.

For the purposes of my use and incorporation in this study, I ultimately define service learning as an articulation of three notions. Angela Barton (2000) provides a nice foundational definition and a good starting place by defining service learning as, “...activities that combine classroom work with social action and service in order to promote development of students’ subject matter knowledge, practical skills, social responsibility, and civic values” (pg. 803). Novella Zett Keith (1997) builds on this foundation and provides additional ingredients for consideration, characterizing service learning as a “bridge over borders” that plays a role in three key areas: *pedagogy*—that emphasizes community-oriented, culturally-relevant service; *curriculum*; and *community*

building—made up of “two-way bridges” across bounds of diversity, facilitating cross-cultural understanding, relationship building, and creating communities of support. Last, Stephen Fisher (1997) provides the final ingredients of the “political” in his notion of a “service learning for social justice” by bemoaning the current apoliticalness of many service initiatives (that lack a vocabulary of power, policy, politics, and social justice) and conceiving of service learning as the lynchpin endeavor for “seeking the common good” and making “critical citizens.”

Therefore, based on this articulation of definitions from Barton, Keith, and Fisher, I conceive of service learning as working at multiple levels in the school in terms of pedagogy and curriculum, showing students the link between the classroom and the world outside of it. In addition, I see service learning working at multiple levels in the field in terms of community-building and developing a sense of social responsibility, helping students to understand the political nature of service as they work toward some type of ameliorative change.

As a result of this articulation, my experience with activating service learning projects, and my understanding of various “critical” pedagogies (e.g., Freirean pedagogy, critical pedagogy, and engaged pedagogy), I have continued to conceptualize a framework for launching these more critical projects. The current evolution of what Masucci and I refer to as “critical service learning” involves four stages: pre-action reflection, theory, action, and reflection, and an emerging hybrid theory that seeks to articulate theories of social justice and care in a caring solidarity.

Critical Service Learning

In this dissertation I attempt to establish critical service learning as both a practical framework for launching service learning projects and also as a theory that articulates why projects should be launched and towards which agendas service learning should aim. The critical service learning *framework*, created and evolved by Masucci and I (2000c) follows a four-stage process that can be implemented over a short (one quarter) or broad (x number of years) span of time for students in middle school through graduate school. The framework is also intended to be malleable, instituted as a stand-alone course, or incorporated as a requirement of an existing course. The framework is not, however, intended to be a panacea for or final word on service learning projects that seek ameliorative change. Instead, Masucci and I see this framework as a *guide* for teachers trying to put projects aimed at ameliorative change into practice. As a practical framework, critical service learning focuses on the pedagogical and the activation of projects using the steps of: pre-action reflection, theory, action, and reflection.

Pre-action reflection

The first stage of the framework is pre-action reflection. This step allows the student to address issues such as who they think they are and what they believe, working toward Freire's (1987) notion of "political clarity." According to Freire,

A politicized person is one who has transcended the perception of life as a pure *biological* process to arrive at a perception of life as a *biographical*, *historical*, and *collective* process. A politicized person is one who can sort out the different and often fragmented pieces contained in the flux.

Political clarity is possible to the extent that we reflect critically on day-to-

day facts and to the extent that we transcend our sensibilities so as to progressively gain a more rigorous understanding of the facts (pg. 130, my emphasis added).

As a result of moving toward political clarity, students can begin to think about what they hope to glean from the upcoming project, how they might define success for the project, and who they think they will be ‘serving’. As indicated by its title, this step occurs before any action in the project takes place and may also serve as an opportunity for the teacher to collaborate with the students and local community on what project might be taken up (if one has not already been defined by the teacher or the community). This stage is the first step in getting the student to begin thinking about social difference and how they are either privileged or dis-privileged by the culture and/or world in which they live. This reflection is also an initial step toward what bell hooks (1994), in her conception of “engaged pedagogy,” considers *self-actualization*—where one seeks to be enlightened and made whole in mind, body, and spirit—well-grounded in “a context of spiritual well-being” and “care of the soul.” That is, in this process of getting to know oneself better, individuals can more easily consider how they connect to others. Finally, in terms of cultural studies, this step allows for students to talk about their own lived experience, begins an autobiographical journey for them, focuses on the political, and allows the teacher to engage in a more effective pedagogy—creating knowledge *with* her/his students.

Theory

The second stage in the framework is theory. This stage may also occur before any action in the project takes place, but it may also happen simultaneously (and/or

spontaneously) while work in the field is conducted. Thus, this stage plus the one to follow—*theory* and *action*—work together as the internal praxis for the project. Since service learning is intended to attach itself to the curriculum of a class in school, this is the portion of the project where the student has an opportunity to better understand the action they are performing by wrestling with the ‘theory’ of the work (e.g., if one is engaged in a literacy project, some of the coursework covered in the class might focus on both the theories and the necessity of literacy). Thus, considering Freire’s (1987) notion of “reading the word and the world,” as students come to understand the words (i.e., theory), they should be better able to interpret and take a more critical view of the world (i.e., the service environment). Particularly in a curriculum that takes seriously issues of social difference, the instructor may consider covering issues of social theory that address notions such as hegemony, reproduction, and resistance. Not only are these three theories worth covering with our team for our project in Jamaica, but discussions involving, for example, the effects of global capitalism, missionization, colonialism, etc., are pressing and quite appropriate to the work we are doing there. In this step, the teacher begins to reveal her/his role as an organic intellectual (Gramsci, 1971; Giroux, 1999), taking complicated theories and contextualizing them to the current, more local project. In terms of cultural studies, this is exactly what a project requires: the understanding and updating of theory, along with a deconstructive and counter-hegemonic attitude.

Action

The third stage in the framework is action. Through the action of the project, then, students can begin theorizing and considering how the current theory can be updated or amended because of their experience in the service field. In this service learning

experience the action in the project will involve working as teachers and tutors in two schools and serving as respite care workers for children in two orphanages in Montego Bay, Jamaica.

Reflection

The final stage in the framework is reflection. This step allows the project to end as it begins: with the student and the teacher considering where they have come to as a result of this experience and reaching, ideally, some form of what Freire (1970) refers to as “conscientization”: understanding that the world is not a given world, but a constructed one—one that can be deconstructed and reconstructed in a more just way. The student can now consider what they reflected on at the outset of the project—who they are now, whether or not they believe they have been ‘successful’, what they have gleaned from the project, and what they believe now about the people they have worked with during the experience. This hopefully becomes not only an additional pedagogical moment for the teacher, but also becomes an opportunity for students to reveal their new sensitivity to issues of social difference, reaching a new heightened level of self-actualization where a new healing or caring solidarity has developed between team members and/or among the ‘servers’ and ‘served’.

Freirean, Critical, and Engaged Pedagogies

This discussion so far has revealed a closer, albeit cursory, look at the framework for critical service learning. While a more in-depth exploration of the framework will follow in chapter 2, I turn briefly to a discussion of three particular pedagogies that have influenced my understanding of service learning, the evolution of critical service learning, and the politically pedagogical nature of launching these types of projects.

After a closer look at Freirean, critical, and engaged pedagogies, I attend to two pivotal elements in the emerging theory for critical service learning: social justice and care.

Freirean Pedagogy

No one person has had more effect on my pedagogy than Paulo Freire. During my master's coursework, reading Freire completely revolutionized my thinking as a teacher and as a citizen of the world. Freire specifically impacted my pedagogy in Chapter Two of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) in his discussion of the “banking method” of education. Comparing students to depositories, schools to banks, and teachers to bankers (maybe tellers would be more accurate—the administrators are the real bankers), Freire laments the traditional method of schooling where knowledge is perceived as external and apolitical, and is poured into the unknowing student by the expert teacher. Regular withdrawals are then made in the form of exams and, in the end, the student, regrettably, may end his or her schooling as he or she began, as an empty receptacle—devoid of much of the ‘knowledge’ deposited during the school years.

In response to this banking method, Freire advocates for a “problem-posing” method of education where the student is perceived as already-knowing and his or her knowledge is shared, generated, and mined from their own lived experiences. Thus, knowledge in the problem-posing method is seen as both intrinsic and political. With this understanding, then, education can be used for emancipation and becomes a political practice toward the development of a language of critique and possibility.

This problem-posing method greatly informed my service learning class at the high school level. When we met as a class once a week, Freire's problem-posing approach helped me to better frame these meetings and encouraged me to supplement the

discussions with both critical readings such as *Amazing Grace* (1995) and *A Simple Decent Place to Live* (1995) and provocative speakers from the local community who spoke on issues such as poverty, injustice, and diversity. In turn, these discussions led to richer reflections in the journals of my students, helping them to draw tighter connections between what we were reading and talking about as a class and what they were experiencing in the local public schools.

Critical Pedagogy

My exposure to critical pedagogy during my master's degree coursework also influenced the evolution of critical service learning. Although many definitions for critical pedagogy are offered in the literature, I prefer the one offered by Peter McLaren. In his excellent foundational text for education, *Life in Schools*, McLaren (1994) claims,

A critical pedagogy examines schools both in their historical context and as part of the existing social and political fabric that characterizes the dominant society. Critical pedagogy poses a variety of important counterlogics to the positivistic, ahistorical, and depoliticized analysis employed by both liberal and conservative critics of schooling—an analysis all too readily available in the training programs in our colleges of education (pg. 167).

Further, according to McLaren (1998), critical pedagogy has descended from numerous theoretical developments: Latin American philosophies of liberation, the pedagogy of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire, the anti-imperialist struggle of Che Guevara and other revolutionary movements, the Frankfurt school of critical theory, feminist theory, and neo-Marxist cultural criticism. As a result of these influences, McLaren adds to his

definition of critical pedagogy above and suggests that it “is a way of thinking about, negotiating, and transforming the relationship among classroom teaching, the production of knowledge, the institutional structures of the school, and the social and material relations of the wider community, society and nation state” (pg. 441). McLaren builds on this historical knowledge base by adding that critical pedagogy was developed by progressive teachers, literacy workers, and radical scholars attempting to eliminate inequalities of social class. Critical pedagogy has more recently sparked various anti-sexist, anti-racist, and anti-homophobic classroom-based curricular and policy initiatives. Thus, critical pedagogy has come to be known for wrestling with issues of race, class, and gender (and most recently, sexual orientation) in its curriculum for our classrooms.

Dealing with these issues of race, class, gender, and sexual orientation should be an important aspect of any agenda for service learning. As a high school teacher seeking a connection for my classroom with the world outside of it, I was energized by McLaren’s treatment of critical pedagogy and sought to incorporate aspects of it in my service learning framework. Two issues that we tackled immediately with *our* service learning course were issues of class and gender. As a teacher in an all-female high school, issues of gender were often at the fore of any of our discussions of social inequalities. Additionally, as students in this private high school mostly came from a more privileged social class, and the public elementary school students where we served came from a less-privileged social class, issues of economic inequalities were also prevalent in our discussions. My understanding of critical pedagogy allowed me to more easily facilitate our weekly conversations, bringing to bear the political and historical nature of knowledge and inequalities.

As a result of its past influence on my service learning framework, and its continued role in shaping my view of teaching and service learning, the discourse of critical pedagogy provides an essential pillar to critical service learning, contributing not only the prefix of *critical*,⁴ but also requiring that issues of race, class, gender, and sexual orientation be at the fore of discussions and possibilities for projects. Critical service learning also follows critical pedagogy in continuing to emphasize the connection of the classroom to the world outside it.

Engaged Pedagogy

In addition to the influence of Freirean and critical pedagogies, bell hooks has also contributed immensely to my pedagogy and, more recently, to my theorizing about justice. In her notion known as “engaged pedagogy” (1994), hooks argues for a pedagogy that helps students “come to voice” and comprise the following characteristics—(a pedagogy that is): liberatory, political, counter-hegemonic, exciting, critical, problem-posing, healing, dialogical, self-actualizing, performative, and reciprocal. hooks makes both a significant modification of and intervention into what educators consider a *critical* pedagogy. Working from a feminist perspective, hooks helps us to consider the emotional (which is just as important as the rational) aspects and outcomes of our pedagogy. Additionally, alongside justice, hooks (2001), in a more recent work, urges us to consider both love and care in our pedagogy and praxis, claiming

We need a progressive, transformative vision of social justice that would
combine the wisdom of a successful, non-violent, love-based freedom

⁴ This assertion of “critical service learning” (Masucci & Renner, 2000a) mirrors Rosenberger’s (2000) insertion of “service learning” between “critical pedagogy” to consider what a “critical service learning pedagogy” (pg. 30) might look like if Freire is applied to service learning.

struggle with the insights of a direct action, decolonizing movement . . .
(pg. 212).

It was hooks' earlier work, however, in *Teaching to Transgress* (1994), that first focused my attention on a feminist perspective for my service learning agenda—a needed perspective since I was teaching in an all-female school. What engaged pedagogy did for my service learning class at the high school level and what hooks, in later works like *Salvation* (2001) and *All About Love* (2000), has done for the developing framework of critical service learning is remind us that we need to think about the healing aspect of pedagogy (given the objectifying and oppressive nature of schooling that both critical and Freirean pedagogies point to) and the possibility that our students might find their voice within the projects. We need to think about the possibility of our service projects working toward healing through ameliorative change. Additionally, hooks' focus on the issue of self-actualization urges us to focus on the need for service learning projects to help students learn more about themselves and figure out who they are. I believe it is only in figuring out who we might be that we will best be able to relate to others in service projects or, more generally, in life.

Social Justice

I have already pointed to social justice and caring as worthy agendas in any service project that one deems to be a service *learning* project. Of course, defining social justice or caring is a contested terrain. In these introductory remarks I provide first a conceptualization of what a service learning for social justice and caring could be—later articulating this theory as a “service learning for caring solidarity” in my development of a critical service learning discourse. Next, I reveal a brief review of the literature on

social justice and relate some of my ongoing experiences in Jamaica that continued to make social justice an issue. Finally, I review some of the specific literature on caring that has facilitated the ultimate conception toward a critical service learning theory.

In my experience with and review of the literature on service learning I have come to claim that a service learning for social justice and care should be a project toward *solidarity*, where we (in concert with our local and global communities) work for and constantly (re)evaluate *justice and fairness*, understand our *responsibility* (with love and caring) toward one another as *global citizens*, appreciate and cherish *diversity*, and maintain and create open and equitable lines of *communication* so that as many voices as possible can join the conversation on ameliorative change and be heard. How these ingredients take shape in practice is, of course, a more difficult matter to undertake or define.

For our particular ongoing project in Jamaica, for example, I have struggled in my theorizing about how social justice might look there or how this project can really promote a social justice agenda. In a conversation during the summer of 2001 with one Jamaican professor (who works on social justice initiatives with local street gangs and political interest groups), he indicated that the single greatest challenge facing Jamaica is not poverty, nor is it race; rather, it is simply justice. One of the ways he believes injustice can be battled in Jamaica is through education (given the fact that there is limited access to education and there are no apparent standards for the poorer schools, particularly in the countryside).

Practically working on social justice, however, can (and may) be complicated by some danger (as this is not popular work among some political interest groups in Jamaica

and abroad). It is fraught with all types of inconsistencies and/or feelings of hypocrisy based on the privilege that we, the ‘servers’ from the United States, will bring to our interactions with the ‘served’, the Jamaicans, living in a Third World nation. This issue of social justice and how it is discussed and theorized among all participants in the study/intervention, Americans and Jamaicans alike, is an important dynamic to follow as I attempt to continue to develop what David Miller (1999) describes as “solidaristic communities”: communities that work together to define and meet each others needs.

As I will show in the next two chapters, for our work in Jamaica, Miller’s more *practical* conception of justice is preferable to more traditional and theoretical works (e.g., Rawls, 1971 and Walzer, 1983). Considering the situation of injustice in Jamaica that I outlined above and given the fact that we are working in a cross-cultural context where undergraduate students from a First World country are going to work with Third World partners, the most practical way that I believe we can work toward justice is through the continued development of solidaristic communities. It is in these types of communities that I believe we can work toward some kind of common ground and reflect on what our needs are and, subsequently, how we might envision a more just condition, together. Thus, service towards justice and care will be a two-way street, creating bonds between and change within people who otherwise may have never crossed paths.

Caring

As I have noted, in order to activate a more “practical” theory for social justice, I have turned to the work of Miller (1999). However, only talking about social justice leaves me with a feeling of incompleteness, that there is more to consider; thus, I have begun to explore how service learning should be concerned not only with justice, but also

with *care*. This type of exploration, though, reveals a much larger tension. An attempt to articulate justice and care into a cohesive discourse uncovers some of the theoretical binaries of our time: the modern vs. the postmodern, the universal vs. the individual, and the rational vs. the relational. Seyla Benhabib (1992) has two key ideas that can help form a bridge between the justice and care camps.

My theorization of a critical service learning discourse first makes use of Benhabib's "enlarged thinking." Using enlarged thinking, one is willing to understand or reason from another's point of view or even anticipate communication with people yet to come. Thus, an important component of a service learning project involves students and teachers reflecting on who they are in order to know themselves better. Only through this type of introspection can students and teachers alike begin to understand from another's point of view, which makes a strong case for reflection in any framework for service learning.

Secondly, my theorization of a critical service learning discourse considers Benhabib's concept of the "generalized and concrete other" by which she claims we must consider at once both structural issues of injustice that seem to affect large numbers of "general others," and also the unique, individual experience and reaction to these injustices by "concrete others." On the one hand, Benhabib argues we must be able to think beyond individual (concrete) cases to see the larger, structural (general) issues that may be limiting current situations. On the other hand, and, in the other direction, Benhabib also argues that we must go about our work in a personalized and sensitive manner, trying to understand structural issues by working at the local and individual level.

Thus, a critical service learning discourse wrestles with the classic modern/postmodern, universal/individual, rational/relational binaries, attempts to make an intervention that shows how these poles are connected along a continuum, and posits that service learning works in various places along this continuum. In other words, if we consider the ahistorical, universal Enlightenment ideas of modernism to exist at one end of the continuum and a form of postmodernism that supports situated, historical, local ideas at the other, I argue that critical service learning operates somewhere in between. Therefore, Miller and Benhabib's work provide the foundation for a critical service learning discourse that attempts to articulate *justice* (which is a more universal/rational idea) with *care* (a more contextual/relational idea) by focusing on structural/classical issues of oppression/injustice and working with concrete others (in a caring solidarity) on practical projects toward ameliorative change. Only by working in solidarity with one another and leveling (to the extent that it is possible) the relationship of the 'server' and the 'served' in service learning projects, do I believe we will be able to practically work on ameliorative change together. This change, then, can only be determined by communication of shared goals within a close association of 'servers' and 'served' where both parties serve and both parties are served.

In sum, then, I argue a critical service learning theory, coupled with its practical and pedagogical framework, makes two potentially beneficial contributions to social theory: (1) critical service learning provides both a theory and a practice for negotiating between the poles of justice and care, the modern and the postmodern, or the local and the universal, and (2) critical service learning provides both a theory and a practice for

the development of caring, solidaristic communities that can work toward ameliorative change and more just and caring conditions.

This cultural studies project attempts to make clear these contributions, considering structural issues of injustice and oppression (e.g., global capitalism, racism, and colonialism) while working with individuals in Jamaica who are suffering from them. In this work, we seek ways to understand what we might learn from one another—how we might “grasp the most valued things” (Renner, 2001a) as an insightful Jamaican teacher said to me in the summer of 2000—toward the development of a solidaristic community through our shared story. It is in this type of community that we might decide together how we can best work toward more just and caring conditions as a result of our association. This work is not easy, and we may never realize the full potential or fruits of our labor given: the cross-cultural context within which we will be working, our physical separation for much of the year, and the risk of working on ameliorative change in a place of injustice—as the Jamaicans stand to lose much more than us since they may have to live with the consequences of our actions when we are gone. Therefore, this service learning project begins and ends with communication and reflection; reflection that centers ourselves in the project and communication that works passionately toward a shared understanding of common goals: a caring solidarity toward social justice.

The Research Study

During this evolution of critical service learning, I have continued (since 1998) to lead our service intervention with students, former students, and friends to Montego Bay Jamaica—teaching in and providing supplies to local schools; serving as child-care workers in and providing needed medical, clothing, and food supplies to orphanages; and

visiting residents of the surrounding communities of Montego Bay. These interventions in Jamaica continue to be at once challenging and rewarding as we develop both a better understanding of the context within which we serve and how we might sustain relationships with a number of Jamaicans. Our experiences (five interventions ranging from eleven days to four weeks: 1998-2002) and my past research (Renner, 2001a, 2001b) reveal an island in political and economic turmoil and a people, according to the politically active professor in Jamaica I spoke of earlier, in need of justice (Farmer, 1997; Harrison, 1997; Lake, 1998; Robotham, 1998). As we continue to be invited back to help in the orphanages and to teach in the schools, we hope to more definitively address this issue of (in)justice in order to relieve some of the suffering that exists on this scenically beautiful, yet abjectly impoverished island.

In order to better understand how we might assist in relieving some of this suffering, I have conducted an ethnographic research study of our 2002 intervention in Jamaica. This year, along with five friends who have made previous trips, I traveled with a group of eleven undergraduate students, six professors from a private college in northern Kentucky (where I attended as an undergraduate and whose administration has recently made a strong commitment to service learning initiatives), and one teacher from the community surrounding the college. As an example of this school's commitment to service, this service experience was offered as a formal course at the college. Along with the eleven undergraduates who participated in this trip for the first time, three of my friends who have made previous trips took PHI 220: Service Learning, for three hours of course credit. Another friend who has made three of the previous four trips helped to direct this course (taking an administrative role: handling reservations, accommodations,

travel itineraries, etc.) alongside both myself and a philosophy professor from the college who more formally instructed this course. In addition to teaching this course, and, along with working in the schools, orphanages, and communities as we have done in the past, I designed a methodology to study the developing culture among our team *and* between our team and our Jamaican partners in order to better understand how we might work together toward ameliorative change in service learning projects.

This section explains how I carried out this study. First, I discuss the methodology that is appropriate for this qualitative study. Next, I illustrate more fully who the participants are in this study and discuss which methods I employed to collect the data. Finally, I discuss how I analyzed my data, using a *critically interpretive* approach to tell the story of this ethnography.

Methodology

For purposes of clarification in this study, I define qualitative research as a mode of investigation that: is inductive and naturalistic (Taylor, 1994); focuses on specific situations or people, trying to understand the world through their eyes; builds a complex and holistic picture (Cresswell, 1998), using “thick description” (Geertz, 1973); emphasizes words over numbers (Maxwell, 1996); and proceeds using either a constructivist (hermeneutic and dialectic) or critical (dialogical and transformative) methodology (Guba, 1990). A qualitative methodology using *ethnography* is preferred for a cultural studies project that attempts to record and examine (in part): how ‘servers’ and ‘served’ define a purpose for service learning, what the experience of using a

particular framework for service learning projects is like, and how these projects can work toward ameliorative change.⁵

Ethnography, according to David Fetterman (1989), is the science and art of describing culture. Further, according to James Spradley (1980), “ethnography is the work of describing culture . . . understand[ing] another way of life from the native point of view” (pg. 3). My main research question in conducting this ethnography is: “*How does a critical service learning framework and theory play out in a project that seeks ameliorative change?*” This project documents the process of using a particular approach to service learning for future critique and potential application by other educators. Since *ethnography* “generates or builds theories of cultures—or explanations of how people think, believe, and behave—that are situated in local time and space” (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999a, pg. 8) and *applied ethnographic research* is “concerned with understanding sociocultural problems and using these understandings to bring about positive change in communities, institutions and groups” (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999a, pg. 6), it is hoped that the narrative, which has evolved from the American and Jamaican participants, may shed some light on:

- (1) how service learning might better work toward social justice and caring;
- (2) how the relationship of the ‘servers’ and the ‘served’, in general, was (and can be better) democratized; and

⁵ Ethnographies, though, do not necessarily have to be inductive, critical, or constructive, as they can be deductive and positivistic (LeCompte and Schensul, 1999a).

(3) how the interventions might endure toward justice and care beyond our actual presence in Jamaica (for both the Americans and Jamaicans in particular, and ‘servers’ and ‘served’ in general).

For this research study, I believe both critical and constructivist or “interpretive” (LeCompte and Schensul, 1999a) methodologies are tenable. In terms of ethnography, Margaret LeCompte and Jean Schensul (1999a) claim that, on one hand, *critical theorists* expect to act as intellectual advocates and activists, uncovering instances of domination or injustice and working to bring about change. On the other hand, LeCompte and Schensul claim *interpretivists* believe that what people know and believe to be true about the world is a construction, built through interaction, negotiation, and participation. Since I am interested in not only how meaning and the impact of the intervention is constructed by the participants, but also on how we might work together to ameliorate the reality of injustice propagated by either a structure (e.g., global capitalism) or an entity (e.g., the global capitalists: International Monetary Fund, World Bank, World Trade Organization, etc.), a more *critically interpretive* paradigm is necessary that is at once dialectical and transformative.

It should be noted, then, that just as I attempt to articulate the notions of justice and care in a theory for critical service learning, which fall at different places along the continuum between the universal/local and the rational/relational, I consider (like others who have searched for a more emancipatory approach to research before me) the same type of articulation between the critical and constructivist camps in research. This cultural studies project attempts to weave these paradigms into a “critically interpretive” strand, which seeks transformation through the resultant dialectic that is established

between the team and our Jamaican partners. In other words, I acknowledge the potential problematic of going into this service intervention and research study with some preconceived notions of what needs to be changed and how this should be accomplished (Lather, 1986). I further acknowledge the level of power my team holds as visitors from a First World nation like the United States; thus, the continual focus on the issue of the ‘server’ and the ‘served’. A critically interpretive paradigm provides an alternative to this more hegemonic approach and hopefully posits an innovative approach to research, which recognizes that change will ultimately be decided upon by the people (in this case, the Jamaicans in partnership with this US team).

Participants and Methods

As I indicated, eleven undergraduate students, seven faculty, and five past participants made this intervention in Jamaica, working in schools and orphanages for fifteen days during spring, 2002. Since this is a qualitative study and informants were interviewed multiple times, all eleven students were not chosen as informants (those whom I interviewed in- depth). On the United States side a “purposeful sample” (Patton, 1990) of four undergraduate students was selected based on as wide a range of diversity criteria (age, gender, major, and experience with service) as possible.

On the Jamaican side, since I have worked closely with two Jamaicans involved in local Montego Bay schools and two Jamaicans in charge of orphanages outside of Montego Bay (Renner, 2001a), I selected one of the administrators and one of the teachers as informants to help inform this study through two interviews a piece. In selecting only two Jamaican informants and four American informants, I did not attempt

to dis-privilege the Jamaican voice in this study. Instead, I acknowledged that I would spend a much greater amount and span of time with the undergraduate group.

Three in-depth, open-ended, and recorded interviews were conducted with each of the undergraduate informants (pre-intervention, during intervention, and post-intervention) and two each with the Jamaican informants (before and after our intervention). Again, I elected to interview the Jamaicans fewer times than the undergraduates because I spent nearly eight months with the US team versus only fifteen days with our Jamaican partners. In these interviews I sought the informant's interpretation of what was going on in the project—what service learning meant to them, how they were perceiving each other (how Jamaicans perceived this US group and how our team perceived Jamaicans) how this project might have been working toward social justice and caring, and what the lasting impact of the intervention could be.

This method of data collection—interviewing—is, according to Grant McCracken (1988), “an agile instrument with which to capture how the [participant] sees and experiences the world” (pg. 65). Further, Corrine Glesne (1999) argues the reason for interviewing is to “capture the unseen that was, is, and will be, or should be; how [participants] think or feel about something; and how they explain or account for something. [This] broad-scale approach is directed to understanding phenomena in their fullest possible complexity” (pg. 93). Thus, the interview, particularly in an ethnography that is documenting the process of a project, is a data collection strategy intended to help put the informant's words on the experience and a tool to help better understand their feelings and actions toward the developing culture.

In addition, along with interviewing the informants, voluntary, focus-group interviews (Morgan, 1998) were held for the entire team from the United States (one during our spring, 2002 meetings prior to going; one while we were in Jamaica; and one after we came home during our follow-up meetings in summer, 2002) in order to better understand the culture from the viewpoint of the entire team, and so as not to exclude the participants on the trip who are not informants who may want to offer valuable information. Additionally, to the extent possible (depending on their availability and willingness to talk to me), I also spoke with other Jamaicans about their impressions of our intervention.

Interviews, however, were not the only way I tried to understand the developing culture between our team and Jamaican partners. Participant observation (Denzin, 1978, Jorgensen, 1989, Maxwell, 1996) was also employed. Joseph Maxwell claims,

Observation often enables you to draw inferences about someone's meaning and perspective that you couldn't obtain by relying exclusively on interview data. This is particularly true for getting at tacit understandings and *theory-in-use*, as well as aspects of the participant's perspective that they are reluctant to state directly in interviews (pg. 76).

Further, Norman Denzin (1978) argues that participant observation, "is a commitment to adopt the perspective of those studied by sharing in their day-to-day experiences. . . . The intent is to record the ongoing experiences of those observed through their symbolic world" (pg. 185). Thus, not only does this ethnography detail the unfolding story through the words of the participants, but it is also informed by observations of our joint experiences together.

In addition to these observations and interviews, I also gathered other documentary evidence: news articles from the Jamaican *Daily Gleaner*, *Observer* and RadioJamaica, audio-tapes, photographs, email correspondence, student papers, and student evaluations, and journal transcripts from participants who were willing to share them with me in order to add to this description. According to LeCompte and Schensul (1999a), as many data collection strategies as possible enhances the richness of the developing ethnography. Once the data are collected, it is then necessary for the researcher to become as familiar as possible with the transcriptions of the taped interviews, the field notes from the observations and non-taped discussions, personal memos/reflections, and documents collected. The process of data analysis subsequently begins.

Analysis

In order to analyze my data, I employed a constant-comparative (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) method of analysis and followed loosely a methodological paradigm that Denzin (1989) developed called “interpretive interactionism.” Keeping in mind, that I want to remain *critically interpretive* in my qualitative methodology, I am intrigued by Denzin’s approach to comprehending human phenomena through biography and trying to understand people’s experience with epiphany—those interactional moments that leave marks on people’s lives and create transformational experiences for the person. By becoming artful biographers of and locating moments of epiphany for people, Denzin claims that we then can learn how to relate public issues to personal troubles and to the problems of individual life. For the developing ethnography, an important aspect of the overall project was to gain a perspective on how we (‘server’ and ‘served’) might battle

injustice through taking up service learning initiatives. By understanding ourselves and the experience of the Jamaicans we worked with through *biography* and *emergent epiphanies*, it was hoped that these could provide an interesting insight into how service learning may act as a *transformative* project.

In terms of analysis in “interpretive interactionism,” the next steps, after what Denzin describes as *deconstruction* (critical analysis of literature) and *capture* (data collection) are the analytical steps of *bracketing*, *construction*, and *contextualization*. During *bracketing*, the data is viewed on its own terms—it is abstracted, attempting to set aside the literature and any preconceived notions, and seeking codes or metaphors within the data that speak to how meaning is being structured. *Construction* takes what was taken apart (abstracted) during the bracketing stage and begins reassembly into a whole. Denzin (1989) states, “The goal is to find the same recurring forms of conduct, experience, and meaning in all of [the lived experiences]” (pg. 60). *Contextualization* then begins the final process of interpreting the developing themes by trying to locate them back into the natural world (making the abstract more concrete). Denzin (1989) concludes, “The intent of contextualization is to show how lived experiences alters and shapes the phenomena being studied” (pg. 61). Thus, using an interpretive interactionist approach—with its emphasis on “biography,” “epiphany,” and the five steps above—leads to a richer understanding of the developing culture in the ethnography and provides a thick description of what it has been like to take part in a critical service learning project. In more general terms, this method of analysis (bracketing, construction, and contextualization) made use of the constant-comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) that I mentioned above where “ethnographic and qualitative data are formulated

and reformulated repeatedly into models consisting of relationships; these models [are then] tested continuously against what researchers encounter in the research site” (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999a, pg. 158). From this analytical method, then, interpretation followed and both provided new insights into and evolutions for existing theories used, and also helped create the possibilities for new theories based on this cross-cultural work.

Generally, in terms of education, I hope through this interpretation to act as an “organic intellectual” (Gramsci, 1971) and make recommendations for teachers of service learning on how transformation is possible: how the relationship of the ‘server’ and the ‘served’ was or could be better democratized, how this may help other projects to work toward ameliorative change, and what the lasting impact of this project may be.

Time Frame and Organization of the Study

Now that I have laid out what was intended both in this intervention and ethnography, I turn my attention to a discussion of the time frame in which this study took place and an outline of the chapters to follow this introduction.

Time Frame

As I have indicated previously, this ethnography takes place over a span of more than seven months. While preparations for this trip began in the fall, 2001, actual meetings with the team, and subsequent data collection for the ethnography, began as of our first class meeting for PHI 220 on January 11, 2002. Preparations for the trip took place throughout the spring term, working with the US team and communicating with our Jamaican partners, which led up to our departure for Jamaica on May 14, 2002. During this spring term, I began my data collection: interviewing the four US informants,

individually, and the entire US team, collectively; observing and keeping copious field notes of our meetings; journaling on various aspects of our preparation and email correspondence; and keeping up with the news in Jamaica through RadioJamaica at www.radiojamacia.com/rjrnews.

During our fifteen day stay in Jamaica, I continued my data collection: interviewing the US informants, individually, and the US team, collectively, for a second time; interviewing the Jamaican informants; observing and keeping copious field notes of our daily activities in the orphanages, schools, and communities of Jamaica; reflecting nightly on these events in my journal; taking photographs; audio-taping portions of our day in the schools and orphanages; and keeping up with the news in Jamaica by purchasing a *Daily Gleaner* or *Observer* each day.

We returned to the US on May 28, 2002 and the final stages of data collection were activated. I conducted final interviews with the US informants and US team in person and a final interview of the Jamaican informants through the mail. I continued observations and copious field note taking through the end of PHI 220, which officially concluded June 7, 2002. I wrote my reflections of the experience and began sharing these with the team through email and invited their reactions and reflections to these events. This sharing lasted throughout the summer, but I cut off my analysis of these email strands as of August 15, 2002 in order to launch the interpretation phase of the data I had collected over the more than seven month period. As the analysis formalized and interpretations emerged over the summer, “member checks” (LeCompte and Schensul, 1999b) were sought from both the US and Jamaican participants in order to increase the

likelihood of validity in this study. An overview of this study and its findings was presented at the University of Tennessee in the form of my public dissertation defense.

Outline of Forthcoming Chapters

This study and its findings are compiled as a seven-chapter dissertation. This first chapter serves as an introduction and provides a wide overview of several issues at stake in this ethnography, which I claim is a cultural studies project.

The second chapter serves as literature review and a development of the framework and theory for critical service learning. I begin it with an autobiographical sketch, revealing five reflections on my past experience with service. I continue by extending the conversation begun in this chapter regarding cultural studies, service learning, and the three pedagogies that I claim largely inform the framework for critical service learning: Freirean, critical, and engaged pedagogies. Through their articulation and the influence of cultural studies, I show how the framework has evolved into its present form as it was used in this service learning intervention. I conclude this chapter with a discussion of the emerging critical service learning theory that articulates the concepts of justice and care and posits caring solidarity as a ‘practical’ possibility for service learning projects.

The third chapter provides a historical, religious, political, economic, and social analysis of Jamaica in order to more fully develop the context of our service learning site. In the first of two parts of chapter three I introduce four theoretical concepts that have informed my past work in Jamaica and served as pivotal constructs in the preparation of the US team: hegemony, counter-hegemony, reproduction, and resistance. In the second part of this chapter I cover portions of the historical, religious, political, economic, and

social aspects of Jamaica—what I refer to as cultural landscapes—showing how the theoretical concepts above play out in Jamaican culture and how we might serve together (the US team and our Jamaican partners) as ameliorative agents to battle current injustices.

In chapter 4 I provide an in-depth look at the qualitative methodology I use in this ethnography. In the first part I lay out my theoretical approach to this study, positing a ‘critically interpretive’ frame that can be both dialectical and transformative. In the second part I reveal how participants and informants were selected and describe my numerous data collection strategies: interviews, participant observation, document procurement, photographs, audio-tapes, email correspondence, student papers, student evaluations and journals. In part three I show how I proceed analytically in this ethnography, describing more fully Denzin’s (1989) “interpretive interactionism” and how I made use of Glaser and Strauss’ (1967) “constant comparative” method. In the final part of chapter 4 I discuss validity, triangulation, the limitations of the study, and the ethical issue of reciprocity.

In chapter 5 I reveal the data collected in this ethnography in narrative form as a “shared story.” It is here that the reader becomes more acquainted with the participants, Jamaica, and the possibilities for service learning as I provide both rich and “thick” descriptions of the experience through the words of the people who informed this study. Using the various data collections strategies cited in chapter 4, I attempt to weave the words of these participants into a cohesive story that brings the reader as near to the experience as possible.

In the sixth chapter I provide a critical analysis of the data and work toward an interpretation of the findings. I refer back to my initial research questions and evolve both the framework and theory for critical service learning by analyzing and interpreting the emergent symbols (butterflies, boundaries, and breadfruit) and the problematics they posed.

In the final chapter, chapter 7, I decide on future directions for this specific project in Jamaica, posit some potential implications of this study, and suggest some future directions that both this ethnographic research and this critical service learning project should take.

Limitations and Implications of this Study

Although I provide a more in-depth look at these issues in chapters 6 and 7, in order to conclude this introduction, it may be helpful for the reader if I immediately point to some of the limitations of this study, which may help better frame the reading of the following chapters. While I believe this work in Jamaica and the results from the impending ethnography may yield some viable information for the practice and theory of education, the field of cultural studies and the activation of future service learning initiatives, this project is limited in at least four ways.

First, I am limited by the size of this study. Although the team for this intervention spent more than seven months together, our intervention in Jamaica only lasted fifteen days. Additionally, (somewhat as a result of this tight time frame) I was only able to work closely with six informants—four undergraduates and two Jamaicans. While the testimony and observation of many other participants are present and several

previous years of experience provide additional context to this ethnography, a more expanded research study could be launched in the future.

Second, while a major focus in this study has been on service learning and the development of a new dynamic practice and hybrid theory that I call critical service learning, the length of time spent with our Jamaican partners is a limitation. Ideally, work with the partner in a service learning effort would span several months or years. Although our work with Jamaicans has actually spanned over years, this particular team's involvement was only fifteen days.

The third limitation deals with the imbalance of power between the United States and Jamaica. One of the main foci of this ethnography and one of the major issues that critical service learning tries to treat involves the relationship of the 'server' and the 'served'. However, when attempting to work toward the development of a caring, solidaristic partnership, it is difficult to move beyond the great differential of power that exists between the 'First' and 'Third' Worlds. While we have continually attempted to democratize this relationship, this imbalance of power must always be kept at the forefront of one's analysis.

Fourth, my role as a leader *and* a researcher is often a limitation in this intervention. Bringing a vested interest to this project, as I had created it and led it the first four years, I often found it difficult to delegate some of the responsibilities, which took time away from the research aspect of this project. This statement should, in no way, diminish the leadership role that others certainly played in this intervention. My heartfelt thanks continues to go out to them. Instead, I am pointing to the particular tension I felt as a researcher, feeling often like I was torn between my role as

organizer/teacher/hand-holder/friend and data-collector. Perhaps, in some way, these multiple roles actually become a strength in my efforts to posit a caring solidarity as a way to achieve justice, but they often felt like a limitation during this project.

Aside from these limitations, I am, nonetheless, at once excited and guarded about the story I tell about this intervention. I believe that the critical service learning framework may provide teachers with a user-friendly, pliable framework that will be attentive to the relationship of the ‘server’ and the ‘served’, may lead to some type of enduring effect for students beyond the project, and may potentially make some ameliorative change in the world toward social justice and caring. Additionally, I believe the emergent theory of critical service learning—positing a particular articulation of pedagogies for the framework and helping to contribute a fresh take on the universal/rational vs. the local/relational—may reveal “service learning for caring solidarity” as a way to work toward ameliorative change. Subsequently, I believe the study may help reconceptualize the theory and practice of education in at least three ways: this ethnography (1) shows an example of a cultural studies project in *action*; (2) adds a practical example to the proliferating scholarship on service learning by building both a new dynamic framework and hybrid theory; and (3) makes an attempt to bridge the gap between justice and care orientations by addressing structural issues of injustice through work with concrete others in a caring, solidaristic project toward justice. Ultimately, the hope is to foster new sensitivities to social difference and social injustice within a group of students, who may potentially teach in the future (thus giving them a pliable framework to launch later), as they become citizens of the world, and to help

improve the lives of our Jamaican partners through stronger bonds and continued commitment.

These contributions aside, however, what must remain foremost in my mind are the safety of my team and the reality of the situation for the Jamaicans we are coming to work alongside. The Jamaicans we serve with are real people who have suffered real injustice. While this cultural studies project has its theoretical moments, what I want to keep out front is this practical realization. The story I attempt to tell is the one about what practically working toward ameliorative change was like, if service learning is a way to go about it, and what we think we accomplished together. As this project has a past, I likewise expect it to have a future; thus, I look to the present (armed with theories, a framework for practice, good intentions, and a passion for justice) to define these directions for us. This is my living praxis.

CHAPTER 2

AN INTELLECTUAL JOURNEY: ACTION AND REFLECTION IN THE EVOLUTION OF CRITICAL SERVICE LEARNING

“We mostly understand ourselves through an endless series of stories told to ourselves and others” (Winterson)⁶

I now turn my attention to sharing a portion of my intellectual journey and a more critical analysis of many of the concepts described in chapter 1, as I work toward the development and evolution of a framework and theory for launching service projects: critical service learning. In a pedagogical effort to demonstrate how I see a critical service learning framework (pre-action reflection, theory, action, and reflection) playing out in a project, I begin the remainder of this dissertation with some of my own pre-action reflections that have led me to this moment of preparation and analysis. In the first part of this chapter, I reflect on five previous experiences with service that I believe largely inform and influence my imminent work and study in Jamaica. Next, I review the concept of cultural studies, raised in chapter 1, in order to remind the reader of the influence it has over my pedagogy, conception of service learning, and this ethnography. Following this review of cultural studies, I move into a discussion about service learning and review a number of articles and book chapters that reveal the promising possibilities and varying agendas of current projects. After this review, I reflect on my first endeavor with service learning as a high school teacher, revealing how the agenda for this project evolved from the National Association of Secondary School Principal and Quest

⁶ *Art Objects: Essays on ecstasy and effrontery*. Toronto: Alfred A. Knopf Canada. Found as quote in Laidlaw, 1999.

International's (NASSP/QI) framework (1997) and also providing a closer critique and examination of Freirean, critical, and engaged pedagogies, which largely influence the current pedagogy and practice of critical service learning. Building on my experience and this literature, I next reveal the current form of the critical service learning framework. I discuss the framework in three ways: how it plays out in general, how I use it for this service learning project, and how I use it as a guide to writing this dissertation. Next, in a deconstructive move, I show how my theorization of this framework has continually evolved through problematizing critical service learning and examining two subsequent problematics: the role of teacher education and the issue of the 'server' and the 'served'. In the final section of this chapter I discuss the emerging theory of critical service learning and provide what I hope to be a contribution to the literature on social justice and care, showing how both can work together in a relational discourse: a caring solidarity toward justice. Thus, as I begin this chapter in *pre-action reflection*, I conclude it with a move into the next stage of the critical service learning framework: *theory*, supplying the reader with some of the literature that is critical to the activation of service learning projects. This focus on theory continues in the next chapter, but in such a way that the theory becomes localized as I seek to map the historical, political, economic, religious, and social landscape of Jamaica: our place of intervention in this service learning project.

Speaking Autobiographically: Digging Up Old “Weather Reports”

As I indicated previously, I begin my analysis of the framework and theory for critical service learning with a reflection on a portion of my intellectual journey. I believe this reflection is an important step toward my forthcoming project in Jamaica,

leading a group of fourteen undergraduate students on a service learning project to work in schools and orphanages in and around Montego Bay, Jamaica.

This type of sharing, however, is not unproblematic. For some in the academy, sharing personal experiences may be an unworthy or, at best, a peripheral component to an academic work such as a dissertation. Noting, but looking beyond this advice, I, instead, want to make it one of the central components to this research study. Using both Peter McLaren (1994) and Gloria Ladson-Billings (1994) as a model for this type of writing, I concur with Ladson-Billings' claim that this approach helps to "diminish the primacy of 'objectivity'" (pg. xi) and allows me the space to provide a backdrop—some context—to my current work. Additionally, I believe this act (what I am calling an example of pre-action reflection) demonstrates how I, myself, have "come to voice" (hooks, 1994), "moving from silence into speech [as] a revolutionary gesture" (pg. 12). As a result, I hold this same hope for my students who make this intervention in Jamaica.

According to Henry Giroux (1992),

To speak of voice is to address the wider issue of how people become either agents in the process of making history or how they function as subjects under the weight of oppression and exploitation within the various linguistic and institutional boundaries that produce dominant and subordinate cultures in any given society (pg. 205).

Thus, in my quest to lead these students toward a more "critical-consciousness," I hope that my reflections serve as an example of finding this voice and how one becomes (to the degree it is possible) "an agent in the process of making history." In addition, I continue to seek, through these reflections and in our preparations, what effect I may

have on the lives of the Jamaicans—how I may work with them toward the change they want to see in their schools, orphanages, communities, and/or nation.

These following reflections will be a risk, but a necessity. As I both argue in the development of the new dynamic framework and discursive formation for service learning, and also demonstrate in this ethnography of a service learning experience in Jamaica, biography (particularly, *auto*-biography) and epiphany are critical to an understanding of how service learning might work toward ameliorative change. In his development of “interpretive interactionism,” Denzin (1989), speaking on biography and inquiry, argues,

The world does not stand still, nor will it conform to the scientist’s logical schemes of analysis. It contains its own dialectic and its own internal logic. This meaning can only be discovered by the observer’s participation in the world. The world does not stand independent of perception or observer organization. In these respects, interpretive interactionists find that their own worlds of experience are the proper subject matter of inquiry (pg. 25).

Therefore, as a participant-observer in my own world, I believe I must first make sense of my own experience before I can make sense of anyone else’s (as the researcher in this ethnography). Just as I expect the team to think about their own stories and attempt to position themselves in the world, I make a pedagogical and political move here to reveal some of my own pre-action reflections. By providing the following italicized⁷ vignettes, I am once more re-telling portions of the story of my life in order to try and make sense

⁷ Similar to how Gloria Ladson-Billings provides her own personal experiences in *The Dreamkeepers* (1994).

of my past experiences, to notice the epiphanies, to make connections between the dreams and their eventual fruition or fade into background, and to “find out.” According to the brilliant lyricist Linford Detweiler (2001) of the band Over the Rhine,

We have to write to discover what wants to happen. We have to write to know where the story needs to go. We have to write to learn why we are here. We have to write to find out we are not alone.

Importantly, in this act of writing, I am also, as Linda Laidlaw (1998) argues, *thinking*. In support of this claim, Laidlaw offers,

When I write I discover more about myself. Of course, there are gaps and inconsistencies. There are lies and fictions when I do not wish to reveal myself . . . and, I may subsequently ‘change my mind’ about something I have written, about the self I have uncovered. Identity is fluid and everchanging... (pg. 128).

Thus, I write/think/theorize about my identity, not only for the reasons above, but also to re-contemplate the work I have completed in my life in order to better reflect on, analyze, critique, and use it for this impending service learning experience in Jamaica.

In the following reflections I seek to excavate my past, sharing five “weather reports,” (Norris, 1993) which detail an early experience with community service, a pivotal community service project I led as a teacher, an excerpt from the service learning course I taught at the high school level, a more recent graduate service learning experience, and a provocative meeting with a Jamaican professor on the topic of social justice. I borrow this concept of naming my reflections “weather reports” from Kathleen Norris’ evocative examination of life in *Dakota*. Although Norris’ use of the term is not

explained in her book, I take this concept of weather report to mean brief, factual (to the extent possible given Laidlaw's claims above), and descriptive snapshots of a moment in time. I now run the film of my life, stopping five times along the way, to report on significant, perhaps epiphanous, moments that I believe provide some helpful clarity to my current work on service learning.

Weather Report 1: The day I met a savior

In this report I reveal one of my first experiences with community service, working as a high school student on a weekend volunteer project in a nearby downtown community, Over the Rhine. During this project, which had me stripping wall paper, painting, moving appliances, shoring up walls, and carrying out trash, I encountered a homeless man on the street below the apartment where I was working. The following vignette is part of our conversation and the resultant sensation with which I left the meeting. To conclude the report, in order to provide further helpful background information for later analysis in this chapter, I detail some of the history of *community service*.

As we speak, our breath meets in little clouds above, reminding us what a cold day in February means in Cincinnati. The man wears a flannel shirt, red hat, and scruffy gray beard, and carries a confident, smooth tone. I wear my purple letterman jacket and consider I should have worn a hat today.

I approach the conversation with a boyish naïveté, awestruck by his knowledge. We talk about everything under the sun and I ease into a comfortable pose as he no longer seems like a stranger; that is, until he blindsides me: "You know," he says, "I'm homeless."

Of course, I know homelessness exists in our city—I’ve read about it in books; however, I’m now experiencing it firsthand. This man is one of the most intelligent and wisest men I’ve ever encountered. Homeless?! He doesn’t match the image of homelessness I had conjured up in my head...

Several weeks after this experience, I continued to reflect on the experience by writing what would become my first song: *The day I met a savior*. In this song, which is mainly a dialog between myself and this man, I point to how his words and his revelation turned my world upside down and marked a resurrection into a new life. Through this community service project, I had come into personal contact with the pain and injustice that existed in the world, listened, and felt compelled to reflect on and eventually do something about it. Community service, then, was the first way I understood that I could (or wanted to) make change in the world.

Simply defined, community service is “a service performed by individuals for the benefit of others” (Burns, 1998). And, this kind of service (like the high school service project I completed above) is, of course, nothing new to schools and young people. As far back as the New Deal Era under President Franklin D. Roosevelt, service to the nation was promoted through the development of the Civilian Conservation Corps—created to help restore our nation’s parks and revitalize the economy, and the GI Bill—which developed a link between service and education, offering citizens educational opportunities in return for their service to the country. Later, Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson would also show their support of service through the development of the Peace Corps (1961) and Volunteers in Service to America (1964), respectively. More recently, in the 1980s, grassroots organizations came to the fore of

community service by founding and supporting organizations such as the National Youth Leadership Council and Youth Service America—organizations that promoted service among K-12 age students as well as older students. In the decade of the 90s, the federal government again played a role in the advancement of a community service agenda by passing the National Community Service Act of 1990 (crafted by Senator Edward Kennedy and signed into law by President Bush) and The National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993 (President Bill Clinton) for the purposes of authorizing grants to schools for service initiatives and increasing opportunities for Americans of all ages to serve their communities (Learning In Deed, 2001).

After a brief hiatus from education, having taken a job with State Farm Insurance upon completion of my bachelor's degree, I returned to community service as a teacher in an all-female Catholic school adjacent to the all-male high school from which I had graduated. The following weather report discusses one of the many projects I led as a teacher there.

Weather Report 2: Farfrümsheltôrd

It's an unusually chilly evening in May, one last reminder that winter was longer than we wanted it to be and will probably be on vacation for a shorter period than we had hoped. Students begin to arrive with their tents and boxes, preparing to turn our school's courtyard into a temporary community of shanty's—what will be our domicile and community over the next three days and two nights. During this project, students will sleep in these temporary quarters, skip showers, forsake lunches, eat "soup-kitchen" style breakfasts and dinners, learn from educational seminars regarding the plight of homelessness in the United States and abroad, participate in prayer services, take time

for reflection, and hold small and large group discussions regarding what effect we might have on homelessness—all the while attending regular classes on the second and third days of the demonstration. I've been pleasantly surprised by the enthusiastic turn out so far: forty-four students in all.

I continued to be pleasantly surprised by the level of commitment of over 200 students (who logged more than 8000 hours of service) during my two years as moderator of our community service club (CSC). This project stood out for me, like it did for many of the forty-four who participated over the three days, as one of the most significant service experiences with which I had been involved. I doubt it is coincidental that one of my most significant service memories as a high school teacher was leading a demonstration regarding the plight of homelessness.

In light of the historical perspective, provided in the first weather report, on support and promotion of community service, recent statistics indicate that these acts have had their desired results (and the high school where I taught was no exception) since the United States Department of Education (1997) reports that 12,605,740 students in grades 6-12 are involved in service initiatives, 86% of school districts offer some form of community service and 18% of school districts nationwide require service (National Center for Educational Statistics). But, more recently, *community* service has lost some of its luster for a new brand of school/community activism: service learning. In the next weather report I reveal an epiphanous moment I had while facilitating my service learning class that I had created the semester after the Farfrümsheltörd project.

Weather Report 3: Looking in the Mirror—Savage Inequalities

During the height of my experience as moderator of the CSC, I came across a pamphlet produced by the NASSP/QI (1997), entitled: *Service Learning: Raising projects to the next level*. As I stated in the introduction, the NASSP/QI claimed in this pamphlet that more could be learned from *community service* projects and reflection should become a critical component of our actions. The NASSP/QI posited a four-step framework (as Burns, 1998, explains) of: *Preparation*—assess the needs of the community, identify the core content of the curriculum, conduct orientation and professional development, and collaboratively plan the instructional unit or project; *Action*—facilitate development of the knowledge and skills needed by students to initiate and complete the project; *Reflection*—Involve students in continuous reflective processes during the planning and implementation phases through writing, speaking, and demonstration activities; and *Demonstration*—Involve students in reporting to peers, faculty, and/or community members.

Upon this advice, I created a course in service learning that placed my senior-level students in the local public elementary schools who had expressed a need for tutors during the school day. Students in the service learning course spent forty-five minutes/day, Monday through Thursday, assisting in these schools and spent Fridays in my classroom discussing and reflecting on their experiences. In order to help provide some context to the work the students were doing in the schools, I brought in speakers from the local community to talk on current issues that the poor faced and assigned appropriate readings that critically addressed issues of poverty and social injustice. Some of these readings included excerpts from Jonathan Kozol's *Savage Inequalities* (1991)

and *Amazing Grace* (1995). One Friday, while reading aloud the last four pages of Kozol's *Savage Inequalities*, I had a moment of epiphany. After reflecting on this moment, I sent an email to two of the universities where I had applied to begin my doctoral work the following fall. The following is an excerpt from that message.

Recently, I read a portion of Kozol's Savage Inequalities to my service learning class. Even after having read books about this book and his later work, Amazing Grace, I remained unprepared for the last four pages of Savage Inequalities. Kozol writes:

I stopped in Cincinnati on the way home so that I could visit in a school to which I'd been invited by some friends. It was, I thought, a truly dreadful school and, although I met a number of good teachers there, the place left me disheartened. The children were poor, but with a kind of poverty I had never seen before. Most were not minority children but the children of poor Appalachian whites who'd settled in this part of Cincinnati years before and led their lives in virtual isolation from the city that surrounded them. The neighborhood in which they live is known as Lower Price Hill. Farther up the hill, there is a middle-income neighborhood and, at the top, an upper-income area—the three communities being located at successive levels of the same steep rise... The division of neighborhoods along this hill, with an apportionment of different scales of economics, domicile and social station to each level reminded me of a painting by Giotto: a medieval setting in which peasants, burghers, lords and ladies lead their separate lives within a single frame” (pgs. 239-230).

I teach at the top of that exact hill. Imagine the strongest person you know punching you in the gut—that's how I felt after reading this. I am aware of the disparity in economics of my community and actually take a very active role in trying to create equality and promote justice. The Service Learning class that I created was intended to help the very school that Kozol mentions in his final stanzas. The Community Service Club that I created has performed more than 8000 hours of community service to communities just like Lower Price Hill (and beyond), but I still felt ashamed when I read Kozol's remarks. In my reflections upon this reading I have reached the conclusion that I live in the middle of this hill, literally teach at the top of this hill, and volunteer at the bottom. What I have decided I want to do with my future is to teach at the bottom of the hill and volunteer at the top.

Weather Report 4: The Winton Homes Library Project and the Emergence of Cultural Studies.

In order to find the tools necessary to one day “teach at the bottom of [that] hill,” I took up a graduate course of study in cultural studies in education at the University of Tennessee. In one of my first classes as a student there I had an opportunity to take part in a service learning project as a partial requirement for the Issues in Cultural Studies course, taught by Dr. Handel Wright. The following vignette details one of my reflections regarding work at a library in a housing project in the southern part of the city, initiated by a downtown, upper-class, Protestant church.

As I pass though the one lane tunnel under Suburbia Blvd., I can't help but feel that the world around me has subtly changed. The words of my friend still echo in my ears from week's before, “This place might as well be a million miles away from our

university, if it's two [miles].” So true, I reflect, as my world has not been this world. And my world will be a long shot for many of the kids that I will be sharing with today.

As I drive along the boulevard on this crisp fall afternoon, the kind you want to bottle and save for a drearier version of these same late afternoon hours, I feel a sense of elation and spirit that I am doing just what I should be doing today. My eyes drift up to the colorful foliage framed within a cool blue canvas. I can't help but think this looks the same as my world. However, as my eyes turn downward toward the horizon, I meet with contradictions and dis-similarities to my experience: old tire graveyards, The Tobacco Stop, bars, quickmarts that advertise beer and pagers and lottery tickets, railroad tracks, and buildings that would have been condemned and razed in my neighborhood. These sites fill my disappointed vision.

Pulling into the Winton Homes community, I still remain somewhat elated despite my melancholy trip down Critical Awareness Blvd. The railroad tracks that I crossed about a mile back, I cross again before seeing the first buildings of the community. Surrounded by woods, this community is cut off from the main road. Red brick two-story quads litter the community, and surprisingly well-paved roads connect these buildings. As I pull off the access road, I turn into the driveway of the library. Although my car has a bad suspension, a taillight that does not work, and failing brakes, I feel as though I am pulling up in a luxury automobile—all that is missing is the chauffeur.

I enter the building to find other friends preparing food for the children that are soon to arrive. I wonder on how many levels we are feeding the children (physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually). And, I wonder on how many levels these children are also feeding me (physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually). The children

begin to arrive and I'm looking for my favorite seven-year-old, Bobby. I'm hoping today, like the many other days I have spent with Bobby, I might learn more about life through his eyes than twenty-nine years through my own.

As a result of this project, two fellow graduate students (Douglas Molnar and Matthew Masucci) and I prepared a report of our experience that examined, in large part, the role religion played in the creation and day-to-day operation of the library. Out of this report, which claimed to be an example of cultural studies analysis, two important issues emerged that have affected my long term work on service learning:

- (1) Molnar, Masucci, and I exposed an interesting dynamic at the library, which we designated as a three-pronged theme—a(n): evangelism vs. mission vs. cultural studies approach to service. This analysis has had its lingering effects as I continue to explore the role religion plays in Jamaica, particularly when considering the relationship of the ‘server’ and the ‘served’—an important relationship that I explore in later sections of this chapter.
- (2) In addition to this issue Masucci and I have continued our work together, reflecting on this experience further and evolving the service learning framework I had developed at the high school level more formally to consider how service learning projects, taking a cultural studies approach, should be launched. It was in this partnership that the name, “critical service learning,” and the subsequent framework emerged.

Weather Report 5: ‘Circling the Wagons’—A Discussion about Social Justice

This last weather report describes one of my many experiences in Jamaica. Immediately following the Farfrümsheltørd experience, I led what has been the first of

five service trips to Jamaica. The following vignette describes an experience that my team and I had during our last visit to Jamaica as we visited a professor at the University of West Indies, just outside of Kingston (about a four-hour drive from our accommodations in Montego Bay).

As we sit, six of us, in a tightly huddled circle in a foodcourt on campus, I watch the professor's eyes. He speaks directly at us, but his eyes are constantly scanning behind us. "The police basically executed those boys," he laments, as he describes one of many harrowing instances of police brutality in Jamaica. "They herded them up and shot them one at a time in the back of the head." He speaks this last statement in a very hushed tone and then I begin to understand—the professor is watching to see if anyone is listening to our conversation.

After warmly greeting one of his comrades, who is passing by, with a firm handshake and kind, soft-spoken words, "Peace and love, my brother," the professor redirects his conversation back toward us, "Talk of justice or police brutality is not looked on very kindly, it is very unpopular speech, even here [at the university]." He continues, "In my opinion, the single greatest issue facing Jamaica is not poverty, nor is it race, it is simply 'justice'." The passion the professor expressed in this last word was not lost on any of us as we felt an already warm day become much warmer, and an already long return ride across the island seem even longer.

It was, during this last experience that I began to more fully appreciate some of the issues facing Jamaica. After completing two full years of doctoral work in cultural studies and continuing to pursue an appropriate framework and agenda for service learning, I made the decision to make Jamaica the location for this dissertation research

study. The issue of social justice, raised by the professor, has been an important, as well as problematic, aspect of my theorizing on service learning.

I now turn my attention from these pre-action reflections in order to review and critique some of the issues raised in chapter 1 as I move into the theory phase of critical service learning toward a clearer explication of both its framework and emerging theory.

The Role of Cultural Studies in Education and Service Learning

As I pointed out in chapter 1, a precise definition for cultural studies is somewhat contested. In fact, in response to the question, “What is cultural studies?” Ann Gray and Jim McGuigan (1993) respond,

Although the question as posed is reasonable, there is no easy or satisfactory way of answering it. It is one of those questions which tends to come up against evasions, and, at best, to spawn other questions that are much more pertinent than the desire to achieve comfort by fixing too precisely the coordinates of an unruly and rapidly developing field of study. We do not intend to evade the question, but we also believe there is no single answer that would not do violence to the values of openness (pg. vii).

Therefore, those of us who work in cultural studies often find ourselves on uncharted land, staking out new, and sometimes contested, territory as we go. However, this exploratory attitude or refusal to fit discreetly into one disciplinary definition should not minimize the potential power of cultural studies projects. As I noted in chapter 1, although the path oftentimes varies, the projected endgame appears to be fairly consistent and there is, as Stuart Hall (1992) claims, “something at stake” (pg. 278). Kathy Hytten

(1997), while premising her following agenda for cultural studies with a warning similar to Gray and McGuigan above, provides a good initial understanding of what is at stake:

Cultural studies is about investigating the connections among culture, power, knowledge, authority and meaning. It is both a critical project and a political project. *Critically* cultural studies aims to interrogate the power dynamics which structure how particular cultural symbols, artifacts, forms, and practices get valued and deemed important and worthy, and conversely, who and what gets marginalized in the process. *Politically*, cultural studies begins with a commitment to disempowered populations and to the idea that academic work should make a difference in the world (pg. 41, my emphasis added).

Thus, like the other theorists I pointed to in chapter 1 (Grossberg, 1992; Hall, 1992; Hytten, 1998; Giroux, 1999; and Wright, 2000) most cultural studies' scholars seem to agree on a political, historical, contextual, and interdisciplinary approach to projects, which seek some sort of ameliorative change through both theory and practice. These issues of ameliorative change, theory, and practice are the foundations upon which I have tried to evolve a framework and theory for critical service learning in education. Before we look more closely at cultural studies influence over education, in general, and critical service learning, in particular, however, let us first consider some of cultural studies own historical and theoretical legacies.

As I've mentioned, the origins of cultural studies are contested (Wright, 1998), but for sake of time and space (only after having offered some other possibilities: Kamiriithu African theater and Miles Horton at the Highlander Center in East

Tennessee), I have decided to follow the lineage as it became institutionalized at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (Centre) in Great Britain in 1964. As was noted, the Centre mainly grew out of adult education and the work of Richard Hoggart (1957) on literacy and working class culture. Hoggart, the founder and first director of the Centre, was joined initially by Raymond Williams and E.P. Thompson, who were doing similar work (Williams, 1958; Thompson, 1963), and they began by offering graduate research courses in the study of culture. At the start, the Centre's main focus revolved around *working class* culture and both literary and textual analysis. This study and these analyses, however, would only be the genesis.

Hall (1992), who joined Hoggart, Williams, and Thompson in 1966, and later became director in 1969, provides an insightful lineage of the historical and theoretical developments that built upon this genesis in his "Theoretical legacies of cultural studies." Theoretically, the Centre was premised on Marxist theory, but not unproblematically. As Hall puts it, even though cultural studies was heavily influenced by the questions Marxism put on the table involving class, power and exploitation, and the history-making capacities of capital,

There was never a prior moment when cultural studies and Marxism represented a perfect theoretical fit. From the beginning there was always-already the question of great inadequacies, theoretically and politically, the resounding silences, the great evasions of Marxism—the things that Marx did not talk about or seem to understand which were our privileged object of study: culture, ideology, language, the symbolic. These were always-already, instead, the things which had imprisoned Marxism as a

mode of thought, as an activity of critical practice—its orthodoxy, its doctrinal character, its determinism (pg. 279).

This example of problematizing theory became a hallmark of cultural studies and has been coined by Hall as “wrestling with angels” (pg. 280).

Providing a better fit for the cultural studies mission, the Centre turned to the work of Antonio Gramsci, who updated and better contextualized Marxist theory to contemporary culture. Gramsci posits two concepts, in particular, that continue to have salience for cultural studies (and my current project) today: hegemony and the role of the organic intellectual. Hegemony (which I discuss in greater depth in chapter 3) involves the power the controlling elite holds over the masses. This power is ideologically viewed as a common sense, ahistorical fact and is promoted without the use of physical force as the dominated, with negotiation, accept this power. The organic intellectual is an instrument used to subvert this hegemony. As Gramsci puts it, “It is the job of the organic intellectual to know more than the traditional intellectuals do: really know, not just pretend to know, not just to have the facility of knowledge, but to know deeply and profoundly (In Hall, 1992, pg. 281). Continuing in this vein, Hall argues,

If you are in the game of hegemony you have to be smarter than ‘them’. . . .

[Hence,] the organic intellectual cannot absolve himself or herself from the responsibility of transmitting those ideas, that knowledge, through the intellectual function, to those who do not belong professionally, in the intellectual class (pg. 281).

These two concepts, hegemony and the role of the organic intellectual, do provide some needed enhancements and context to traditional Marxist theory. However, one should

still note the almost singular focus on class. This fact was not lost on many at the Centre and two “interruptions” were soon to follow that have helped evolve the theoretical legacy of cultural studies: gender and race.

In terms of a feminist critique, Hall provocatively states, “As the thief in the night, it broke in: interrupted, made an unseemly noise, seized the time, and crapped on the table of cultural studies” (pg. 282). With the publication of *Women Take Issue* (1978), feminists enhanced the theoretical possibilities for cultural studies by articulating the issues of personal and political and by positing the notion of the “personal as political.” Feminists also expanded the understanding of power by opening up questions on gender and sexuality. Finally, feminists re-addressed the articulation of social theory and the theory of unconscious in terms of psychoanalysis.

In addition to this feminist interruption in the early 1970s, there was also an interruption involving race. Two books, *Policing the Crisis* (1981) and *The Empire Strikes Back* (1982) sought to end the Centre’s unconscious silence over racial matters and created (similar to the feminist interruptions) both new articulations between and discursive formations of power and race.

According to Hall (1992), beyond the problematizing and updating of Marxist theory, the interruptions involving gender and race, cultural studies has more recently made “a linguistic turn: the discovery of discursivity, of textuality” (pg. 283), which centers on structuralist, semiotic, and poststructuralist work. As the Centre has always been focused on literary and textual analysis, the textual now has been expanded beyond simply books in order to both acknowledge this historical moment of multi- and mass-

media and to include any number of “aural, visual, and print materials” (Hytten, 1997, pg. 44).

With this historical and theoretical legacy outlined, then, I want to return to one of the central concerns regarding cultural studies that I raised in the first chapter: over-theoreticization. According to Hall, cultural studies has done little if (with these theories) ameliorative change cannot be activated; thus, we must find a practice. As Lawrence Grossberg (1992) points out, we must take these theories and “do” cultural studies. In fact, as Grossberg points out in his interview with Handel Wright (2000), in its interdisciplinary approach to projects, cultural studies tends to promote an “eclecticism” through its use of theory. Additionally, Grossberg argues that doing cultural studies is not so much about proving your ‘theoretical credentials’ or even necessarily getting the theory ‘right’ (as we know there is really no ‘correct’ reading of a text), but rather using theory to produce new, useful, and rigorous knowledge. This dissertation is a careful example of this theoretical eclecticism as I attempt to articulate several theoretical positions in both the framework (Freirean, critical, and engaged pedagogies) and theory (justice and care) for critical service learning, and my methodology (pulling from both criticalists and interpretivists) in an effort to provide an example of a new, useful, and rigorous *practice* for cultural studies projects as they apply to education.

In thinking about cultural studies connection to education and my desire to focus on its ‘practical’ possibilities, I have turned to the work of Henry Giroux, who, through his critique of and suggestions for cultural studies, has helped focus my attention on issues of pedagogy. According to Giroux (1992),

Cultural studies provides the opportunity for educators and other cultural workers to rethink and transform how schools, teachers, and students define themselves as political subjects capable of exhibiting *critical sensibilities*, *civic courage*, and forms of *solidarity* rooted in a strong commitment to freedom and democracy (pg. 201, my emphasis added).

Building on this possibility for cultural studies in “Cultural studies as public pedagogy: Making the pedagogical more political,” Giroux (1999) provides practical advice for moving toward critical sensibilities, civic courage, and solidarity by positing six “schematic and incomplete elements” (pg. 2), which he thinks are useful for thinking about what has been done in cultural studies and pedagogy. In addition, though, Giroux also provides some insightful critiques of what cultural studies has failed to do and establishes a smooth segue into my current theorizing on and practice of service learning, which may be considered, in part, a response to these critiques.

Giroux begins,

I want to argue that central to any viable notion of cultural studies is the assumption that culture and power must be organized through an understanding of how the political becomes pedagogical; that is, how the very processes of learning constitute the political mechanisms through which identities are shaped, desires mobilized, and experiences take on form and meaning (pg. 2).

Following this argument, Giroux puts forward his six “elements” which, based on some work already being done, should be considered and enhanced in future cultural studies projects. First, projects should focus on renewing civic life and address pressing social

problems. Second, projects should be handled “contextually,” focus on “doing” cultural studies, and begin where the student is—building on their experience and often incorporating elements of familiar popular culture. Third, projects should be interdisciplinary and ask new questions across disciplines. Fourth, projects should teach students how to use popular culture, particularly how to critique it and become cultural producers themselves. Fifth, projects should teach students to analyze history as a “series of ruptures and displacements” (pg. 4). Sixth, and finally, projects should promote a new and enhanced pedagogy, “not reduced to the mastering of skills or techniques, [but rather] as a cultural practice that must be accountable ethically and politically for the stories it produces, the claims it makes on social memories, and the images of the future it deems legitimate” (pg. 4).

While these six elements hold promise for a more critical practice of cultural studies in the future, the field is still marked by a number of weaknesses that must be continually addressed and wrestled with. First, Giroux points to cultural studies consistent inability to move beyond deconstruction. Second, he reminds us that cultural studies is still “largely an academic discourse and as such is too far removed from other cultural and political sites where the work of public pedagogy goes on” (pg. 5). Third, Giroux warns that as educators, we have often forgotten and/or stopped problematizing our own role in historic hegemonic forces. By this warning, he urges us to continue to seek a more counter-hegemonic role as educator. Finally, Giroux suggests that the role of educators—who historically as well as presently are bombarded and minimized by critics on all sides—must be enhanced to the status of “public intellectual” and further, I would

argue based on the statement below, to that of Gramsci's "organic intellectual." Giroux claims,

Unlike traditional vanguardist or elitist notions of the intellectual, cultural studies should embrace the notion that the vocation of intellectuals be rooted in pedagogical and political work tempered by humility, a moral focus on suffering, and the need to produce alternate visions and policies that go beyond a language of critique (pg. 6).

Giroux concludes this insightful piece, that provides both critique and direction, by stating,

If cultural studies is to address its role as a public pedagogy, it will have to provide a new language for educating teachers, students, administrators, and others around the issue of civic leadership and public service. In this perspective, making the pedagogical more political as a central dynamic of cultural studies is fashioned not around particular dogma, but through pedagogical practices which promote the conditions for teachers, students, and others to be critically attentive to the historical and socially constructed nature of the locations they occupy within a shifting world of representations and values (pg. 6).

Thus, taking Giroux's (1999) charge in this article to heart, I am interested in seeking this new language, practice, and perspective of "pedagogical as political" that can lead to a critical transformation for schools, teachers, and students. I believe service learning, particularly critical service learning, holds this promise and is one way to help produce

the “critical sensibilities,” “civic courage,” and “solidarity” that Giroux (1992) posits for cultural studies.

In claiming service learning as a way to promote an “active” cultural studies agenda, I cannot underestimate the role Handel Wright has played in my initial theorizing regarding this connection. Promoting service learning initiatives in his “Issues in Cultural Studies” course at the University of Tennessee as a way to introduce students to the practical possibilities of cultural studies, Dr. Wright advances a notion of “service learning for social justice,” initially suggested by Steven Fisher (1997), as an appropriate agenda for projects. Through this course, Wright requires work in self-selected service placements⁸ at least two hours a week, a class presentation and formal report on the experience of working in the placement, and engagement with articles designed to underscore the history and philosophy of both cultural studies and service learning. I took this course in my first semester as a graduate student and it not only helped to introduce me to cultural studies theory (particularly Hall’s work on the theoretical legacies of cultural studies), but it also significantly evolved my previous understanding of and experience with service learning. Using Fisher’s notion of “service learning for social justice” put forward by Wright, Masucci and I explored the same type of agenda and jointly formulated “critical service learning” (Masucci & Renner, 2000a, 2000b), through which we drew several connections between service learning for social justice and two of the discourses that largely informed my early understanding of projects: Freirean and critical pedagogies. However, as my theorizing, experience with, and

⁸ As much as possible, Wright helps direct students to particular placements that have been arranged through the university’s Community Partnership Center—an organization on campus who works to build relations between the community and the university.

problematizing of critical service learning has continued, I now seek an even more informed and updated agenda for critical service learning, through a cultural studies lens, that extends beyond simply *social justice* and considers where *care* may also be an appropriate goal.

In the spirit of this cultural studies project, then, recalling and making use of my list of nine characteristics of a practical cultural studies project that I posited in chapter 1, considering the historical legacy of cultural studies theory, and heeding Giroux's advice, I conduct this ethnography of a service learning experience using the critical service learning framework. As I seek the *lived experiences* of the US and Jamaican participants in this project, I provide a *historical, contextual, and qualitative* account of what it was like to activate this framework and work in Jamaican schools and orphanages. As an openly *politicized* researcher, I continue my *praxis* upon the world through this study and *ask questions across disciplines* (especially history, sociology, anthropology, philosophy, and religion), seeking to *uncover injustice* and examine how service learning projects, in general, might seek *ameliorative change*. At the outset, I believe caring solidarity should be sought in service learning projects as a way to work toward social justice and care. The study hopefully reveals how and to what extent this is possible, and further helps me to continue to evolve a more emancipatory and pedagogical *theory and framework* for critical service learning.

Service Learning

Before moving into a more in-depth explication of both the framework and theory for critical service learning, it may be instructive to consider some of the literature on

service learning: what research has been done, what types of projects are promoted, and what kinds of frameworks currently exist for launching projects.

History

As I noted in weather report 1, formal community service can be traced back to the Civilian Conservation Corps. According to Carolyn O’Grady (2000), service learning traces its history back to the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), a group performing service projects in Oak Ridge, TN in 1969. The SREB was the first to coin their combination of service and educational growth, “service learning.” This articulation of service and learning actually extracts its roots, as O’Grady points out, from well before 1969, drawing, historically, from the work of educational theorists like John Dewey, Jean Piaget, and David Kolb, and more contemporary to the 1960s, Paulo Freire—all of whom theorized on the ‘experiential’ nature of education. As I noted in chapter 1, service learning goes beyond simply ‘action-oriented’ community service or volunteerism because of the addition of an educational component and emphasis on reflection. In support of this O’Grady claims, “In a service learning program, individuals engage in community activities in a context of rigorous academic experience. Service learning allows teachers to employ a variety of teaching strategies that emphasize student-centered, interactive, experiential education” (pg. 7).

Although beginning as early as 1969, service learning as an educative practice has only proliferated in the last ten to fifteen years with the passage of the National Community Service Act (1990) and The National and Community Service Trust Act (1993). In this later act, the authors highlight four themes of service learning: collaboration with the community, the importance of reflection, active learning, and the

development of a sense of caring. With these themes, the authors of this act also posit two goals for including service learning in the curriculum: to promote a sense of civic responsibility among students and to ameliorate societal problems (O'Grady, pg. 8). While these themes and goals are exemplary, O'Grady points out that little evidence of their efficacy is available except through mostly anecdotal evidence. Additionally, O'Grady laments the politically neutral language often used to describe these projects and believes analyses of power and democracy would be worthwhile endeavors for future researchers of service learning.

Building on this short history and outline of goals and themes offered by O'Grady, I move forward recognizing her concern and hoping to address at least one of her suggested analyses above in terms of power in the later analysis of this ethnography. One of the issues that Masucci and I (2002) have continued to grapple with is the dynamic of power present in the relationship of the 'server' and 'served', which I tackle more in-depth later in this chapter and give significant treatment to in my analysis of this ethnography in chapter 6. Immediately, however, I proceed by first examining some of the limited research done on service learning projects, looking specifically at two edited volumes: O'Grady's (2000) *Integrating Service Learning and Multicultural Education in Colleges and Universities* and Alan Waterman's (1997) *Service Learning: Applications from the research*. Next, I review a number of examples of actual projects and/or service learning agendas that reveal at once the openness of possibilities, but also, in some cases, the limited, politically-neutral language that O'Grady laments. Finally, before moving on to discuss critical service learning in particular, I offer my service learning class that I taught at the high school level as one more example of a project/agenda.

Research on Service Learning

While the space obviously does not exist to provide copious coverage of all the works contained in O’Grady’s and Waterman’s edited volumes, I want to at least outline the topics covered in their books and point to specific pieces that both present a better understanding of the possibilities for service learning and that also help to inform my current work.

O’Grady’s *Integrating Service Learning and Multicultural Education in Colleges and Universities* is divided into three parts: “theoretical frameworks,” “reports from the field,” and “promises and possibilities.” The first part offers two chapters in particular that provide compelling evidence for seeking an agenda of ameliorative change in service learning projects. Cynthia Rosenberger’s (2000) “Beyond empathy: Developing critical consciousness through service learning” cautions service learning educators about focusing on an agenda for projects that is simply intended to “help other people” (pg. 23). Rosenberg follows a similar path that I do to her theorizing about service learning, making use of Freirean pedagogy to create a more critical form of service learning aimed at uncovering imbalances of power and intended to bring about conscientization in the student server. In addition Rahima Wade’s (2000) “From a distance: Service learning and social justice” provides an interesting personal reflection on her experience with teaching service learning and how she chose service learning as an academic field to pursue in her academic training, rather than social justice. Wade was concerned that the mostly conservative, middle-class teachers in public schools, whom she would be training with her degree, would not be able to relate to issues of social justice; thus, by

pursuing service learning, she believed she would have a tool to introduce and, subsequently, show her teachers how to battle injustice.

One other chapter in O'Grady's volume merits mention here before moving on to Waterman. In the second part of this edition, Robert Koulish (2000), in "Teaching diversity through service learning immigrant assistance," discusses a college immigrant assistance program in which college students and recent immigrants partnered to complete, among other forms, the immigrant's naturalization application. Through this project, Koulish argues that one of the most valuable lessons learned "is the melting away of ethnic and racial stereotypes and the recognition that diversity matters" (pg. 186). This particular emphasis in Koulish's project, which "recognizes that diversity matters," provides support for Masucci's and my (2001, 2002) theorizing on an agenda for critical service learning that focuses on social difference.

Waterman's (1997) *Service Learning: Applications from the research* is divided into four parts: "methodologies for the study of service learning," "research on the elements of effective service learning," "research on the contexts for service learning," and "conclusions." A couple of chapters in this volume merit special mention. In part one Dale Blythe, Rebecca Saito, and Tom Berkas (1997) provide some of the first and only evidence for the impact of service learning programs that O'Grady laments is lacking in the literature. In "A quantitative study of the impact of service learning programs," Blythe et al ask four questions: What is the nature of the service learning programs? What are youth's perceptions of their service learning experiences? What changes in attitudes and behaviors do youths in service learning programs experience? And, are any of these changes related to any specific program characteristics? Through a

series of surveys of 6th through 12th grade service learning programs in the early 1990s, Blythe et al were not able to draw any clear conclusions; however, they did provide three findings that they believed would have implications for practitioners: (1) many of the students in service learning classes saw the benefits of these type of classes and found them less boring and more related to real life; (2) absence of reflection in projects led to problems in understanding the significance of service work being done; and (3) service learning activity as a strategy in regular classrooms seemed to help “at-risk” youth and prevent those who were already disengaged from school from falling further away.

In the third part of Waterman’s edition, Novella Zett Keith (1997) offers evidence of the promise for activating service learning projects in urban schools. In “Doing service projects in urban settings” Keith questions: “What contributions can service learning make to improving student achievement in such settings?” And, “how can the research help us design and implement successful service projects for these environments” (pgs. 127-128). Keith, as you may recall from chapter 1, views service learning as a “two-way bridge” (pg. 132) that plays a role in three key areas: *pedagogy*—that emphasizes community-oriented, culturally-relevant service; *curriculum*; and *community building*—made up of “two-way bridges” across bounds of diversity, facilitating cross-cultural understanding, relationship building, and creating communities of support. Aside from this bridge metaphor for service learning, Keith focuses her attention in this chapter on how service learning offers a tool “for promoting agency in students . . . by opening the school door to activities that potentially can change the quality of relationships between students and teachers: leveling power differences” (pg. 137). Keith concludes,

Service learning can be an important catalyst in breaking down the barriers between school and community, making the school a bridge between the local community and the outside world, and reintegrating the school as a community institution; it can do so by contributing to the understanding of local knowledge and local ways, and by building on them (pg. 143).

Now that I have reviewed two key volumes in the recent scholarship on service learning, I turn my attention to a review of a few specific projects in the literature that show some of the promising possibilities of projects, but also show, in some cases, the lack of politicized language that O'Grady thinks is necessary for the future of service learning. In consideration of the two volumes above, and the projects and programs below, then, I move into a more cohesive conversation about service learning, offering some critique of this literature, but also showing how it has influenced the development of critical service learning.

Examples of Service Learning Projects in the Literature

In "Educating for social justice in service learning" Karen Warren (1998) discusses her college course, "Women, Leadership, and Change," for which she required the completion of a service learning project. Student's projects included creating an outdoor adventure-based role model project for young girls, working in a battered women's shelter, organizing a human rights campaign, and designing a women's leadership program, among others. Warren shows how she used the in-class portion of the course to provide guided reflections and to wrestle with issues of power, class, gender, and race by building on student's experiences in the community. Pedagogically,

Warren promoted the use of “engaged pedagogy” (hooks, 1994) as she believed this was the best way to develop a learning community and to foster a process of self-actualization. Warren states,

As a teacher of a course that has social justice at its very roots, my own self-actualization process included not letting my voice of authority and experience silence the students’ voices in struggles to understand how social justice affected them. Experiential education is so important in building an engaged learning community because it puts the students’ experiences, rather than the teacher’s, at the center of knowledge construction (pg. 135).

Through this engaged and self-actualizing process that combined service and learning, Warren hoped to develop a “cultural dexterity” (Overton-Adkins, 1997) in her students. According to Warren, cultural dexterity, “which is characterized by empathetic connections to groups other than one’s own, is necessary for students to develop understanding and affinity with communities they serve” (pg. 134).

In “Implementation and impact of college community service and its effect on the social responsibility of undergraduate students” Nweze Nnakwe (1999) discusses a community nutrition class in which students worked in community-health and food-assistance agencies as partial fulfillment for the requirements of this course. In-class time for this course was spent preparing the students to work in these agencies and to administer a food insecurity questionnaire as part of a larger hunger awareness project in that community. In addition students also spent class time discussing their experiences in the placements. In terms of assignments, Nnakwe required students to keep a reflective

log and to complete a paper about the agency where they worked. As part of the author's own quantitative research on student's impression of world hunger and homelessness, Nnakwe also surveyed the students to find out how and to what extent student's impressions changed from the beginning of the project to the end. Using student journal entries to corroborate the statistical data, Nnakwe concluded that this service learning project significantly increased students' concern about world hunger and homelessness. In order to improve future projects and to enhance this new sensitivity even more Nnakwe recognized and suggested that readings that deal with hunger, poverty, and homelessness should be included in the course.

In "Supporting literacy through service learning" Theresa Prosser and Jeri Levesque (1997) discuss a literacy project in which students sign up for a college course, entitled the "Student Literacy Corps," and agree to work every Tuesday and Thursday afternoon for a semester at an after-school tutoring program. Prosser and Levesque describe how they, along with their students and the administrators and teachers from the school where the project took place, collaborated on developing lessons for the tutoring sessions. Aside from this tutoring work, students were required to keep a reflective journal about the experience and to read assigned readings intended to increase their sensitivity to diverse learning styles, comprehensions strategies, multiculturalism, and reflective journal writing practice. Prosser and Levesque focus their conclusions in this article on the benefit of connecting undergraduates to the "real world" (pg. 37) and on the value of building partnerships between universities and local communities.

In his opening remarks to the "Service learning for social justice" workshop in 1997, Steven Fisher (1997) did not provide information about any one particular project;

rather, he focused his attention on establishing an agenda for service learning that addressed and eliminated the apolitical nature and vocabulary of many current service programs that O'Grady showed concern about earlier. Fisher expresses concern about paternalism existent in many projects that have resulted in "therapeutic exercises" (pg. 3) for the volunteers who simply feel good about their service. Additionally, in terms of faddish political agendas, Fisher warned that "while encouraging students to pursue community service might produce former President Bush's famous 'thousand points of light,' it might also produce a thousand points of status quo" (pg. 3). In his argument for a service learning for social justice, Fisher attempts to reorient an understanding of politics to "something profoundly humane; it involves listening, empathy, memory, ritual, struggle, sacrifice, imagination, responsibility, uncertainty, hope" (pg. 4). Through this reorientation, Fisher urges scholars and activists to promote a notion of community service that stresses involvement in the "public life of the community" rather than just the "private lives of the inhabitants" (pg. 4). This take on involvement, then, advances a reconceptualized notion of a citizen politics that focuses on ameliorating structural issues of injustice.

Evolving Beyond the NASSP/QI: My Service Learning Course at the High School

Earlier in this chapter, during weather report 3, I revealed the four steps the NASSP/QI recommend for launching service learning projects: preparation, action, reflection, and demonstration. Using these steps as an initial point of departure for planning my course at the high school level, the following paragraphs show not only how the steps helped frame our class, but also how I began to critique and move beyond them.

In the semester prior to the activation of my high school service learning class, I began my preparations for this course by surveying the local community to find out what needs we might be able to meet during the school day. This type of investigation is critical to the success of service learning projects as both David Mathews (1997) and Lee Benson and Ira Harkavy (1997) point out, since it is best for the community to present their needs, rather than a school or service organization to enter a community and tell them what their needs are. In addition to my survey of the local community I also met with active students in our community service club, who would likely take this course, to find out what projects they would be interested in. The possibility to serve as tutors and mentors in the local public schools emerged out of many conversations.

With the target of our project identified, I turned my attention toward the curriculum for the course. While the NASSP/QI identify reflection as an important, if not critical, improvement over community service (which is often simply action-oriented), they position it as the third step in the process. I, instead, saw reflection playing a much more central role to the process and began the course with reflection. In their initial reflections, prior to beginning their action in the project, I asked the students to think about why they wanted to take this course and what their expectations in working in the local schools might be. I believed these initial reflections could be revisited later (and prove informative) in order to see how the student grew as a result of the service learning experience. In asking students to begin reflecting before they even began the project, I was attempting to apply some of bell hooks' concepts in an engaged pedagogy, which seeks, in part, to help students "come to voice" and seek "self-actualization."

Along with attempting to apply my understanding of an engaged pedagogy, I also sought to employ my understanding of Freirean and critical pedagogies by adding what I considered to be “critical” readings and speakers to our curriculum that would help inform the work that the students were doing in the local public schools—producing a sort of internal praxis to the project: theory that informs action that later informs reflection and provides (hopefully) an update to the theory. Thus, as I hoped to start bringing my students toward a state of “political clarity” (Freire, 1992) early on, I believed this dual second step of critical readings/speakers + action would help to heighten this clarity in the students’ weekly reflections on their experience with the service partners and with the readings and speakers. Now, while service learning obviously posits a “learning” component to service—a curricular component, if you will—I suggested nothing new by assigning readings or bringing in speakers to the class (as Prosser & Levesque, 1997 and Warren, 1998 show). However, I claim that the types of readings and speakers are central to the contribution and evolution I promote. Taking seriously Freirean, critical, and engaged pedagogies, I thought it crucial to introduce my students to issues of power differentials, social difference, and social injustice in a problem-posing, liberatory, and dialogical manner. As an example, for the readings in the course, I selected Millard Fuller’s (1995) *A Simple Decent Place to Live* for the first semester and, based on the feedback and suggestions for readings by the students, I selected Jonathan Kozol’s (1992, 1995) *Savage Inequalities* and *Amazing Grace* in the second semester. In terms of speakers, I brought in a number of community activists: an administrator of a homeless shelter, the creator of a mentoring program in a low-income public school, and three authors from a local homeless newspaper who were homeless

themselves. These readings and speakers helped to inform much of what the students experienced in the schools and gave the students some of the discourse with which to discuss in their journals (an example of Freire's "reading the word and the world").

Following the example of the NASSP/QI my course ended with an opportunity for the students to demonstrate what they learned from the project. One group of students created a PowerPoint presentation that could be used to recruit future students to the course. Another group of students created a web page that chronicled their experience working in the schools and shared many of their journals entries which talked about their new sensitivity to issues of difference and social justice.

I had used the NASSP/QI steps as a guide, but attempted to contextualize them according to our situation and move beyond them with the help of my master's coursework where I studied Freirean, critical, and engaged pedagogies. It is informative now to take a closer look at these pedagogies and discuss the possibilities and problematics of articulating these discourses as I believe they continue to inform my conception of critical service learning and our ongoing trips to Jamaica.

Revisiting Freirean, Critical, and Engaged Pedagogies

In chapter 1, I provided an overview of these three pedagogies. Briefly, to recapitulate, I want to reiterate the major contributions each of these pedagogies made to my growing understanding of how service learning projects could be activated. In terms of Freire, he supplies four major concepts that apply to the launching of a critical service learning framework. They are:

- (1) "political clarity" (Freire, 1992)—helping students to better understand their own politics;

- (2) “reading the word and the world” (Freire, 1987)—understanding that as we become more literate with the *word*, we also become more literate of the *world*;
- (3) “praxis” (Freire, 1970)—understanding how theorizing informs action informs theory; and
- (4) “conscientization” (Freire, 1970)—helping students to achieve a more critical consciousness.

Based on the explanation of my high school service learning course, one notes that each of these concepts informed, at least, in part, portions of my high school service learning class and, as I will show in the next section, continues to inform the current framework for critical service learning. Additionally, Freire continues to provide the foundation for a problem-posing pedagogy to be used within the classroom portion of service learning projects, helping the students to understand the world not as a ‘given’ world, but a world ‘dynamically in the making’ (Freire, 1985).

In addition to these critical concepts, supplied by Freire, my concept of service learning has been, and continues to be influenced by critical pedagogy. Freire, of course, largely informs critical pedagogy, but critical pedagogy has helped me move beyond simply issues of class (that Freire focuses on) and has helped me to focus on other issues of social difference such as gender, race, ability, age, and sexual orientation. Recall that critical pedagogy descends from numerous theoretical developments that include Latin American philosophies of liberation, the Frankfurt school of critical theory, and new-Marxist cultural criticism. Building on McLaren’s conception of critical pedagogy I offered in chapter 1 as a method “to examine schools in their historical context and as

part of the existing social and political fabric that characterizes the dominant society,” Christine Sleeter (1995) adds, “critical pedagogy seeks to reinvigorate democracy as a public process [and] grapple with ethical issues of domination and control” (pg. 415). Further, Geneva Gay (1995) offers,

The centerpiece for critical pedagogy is how the institutional ideology and cultural ethos of schools reflect and perpetuate the oppressive practices of society. It argues that the fate and future of public education cannot be separated from the social problems facing the larger society, especially those having to do with political exploitation, and social and cultural domination (pg. 162).

In addition to its renewed focus on democracy, exposing issues of exploitation and domination, and broadening the scope of difference that it attempts to consider (McLaren, 1994, 1998; Giroux & McLaren, 1989), critical pedagogy also provides a good entry point for considering what a pedagogy for cultural studies might look like (Giroux, 1999). Thus, in taking a more historical, contextual, and political approach to both the curriculum and the service project, I have attempted to “critically” enhance the general framework for service learning supplied by the NASSP/QI.

Finally, bell hooks provides an enhancement to the contributions of both Freirean and critical pedagogy through her development of an engaged pedagogy. While hooks claims Freire as an inspirational figure in her development of an engaged pedagogy, she moves beyond his pedagogy when she considers the more emotive side of teaching and learning. Through an engaged pedagogy, hooks claims that the classroom should be a place of healing, an opportunity to “come to voice,” and a chance to move toward “self-

actualization”—that point of realization where we make connections between the mind, body and spirit (hooks, 1994). In her development of an engaged pedagogy, which is also intended to be exciting, reciprocal, and empowering, hooks promotes education as a practice of freedom and seeks to infuse theory as an integral feature of educative work. As part and parcel of a more liberatory practice, she invites educators to critically reflect on their practices and to engage in *theorizing as a practice* in their work. This type of critique and reflection is profoundly important in order to enhance the possibility that education can be a practice of freedom. Through my overall understanding of an engaged pedagogy, hooks helped to infuse a feminist perspective into my classroom—a helpful addition, considering I was teaching in an all-female high school at the time.

It is instructive to stop at this point and provide some critique and analysis for my combined use of these pedagogies. I posit the combined use of these pedagogies with confidence as part of this overall cultural studies project. However, as a critical (and cultural studies) scholar, there are some important critiques that I should acknowledge and note as I continue as the use of these three as an articulated pedagogy may not be completely seamless. While it has been my experience to use them together (as informing and improving one another in my classroom), some scholars, in particular feminist scholars (Ellsworth, 1989; hooks, 1994; Lather, 1998) continue to provide cautionary statements about the potentially paternalistic and strangely hegemonic consequences of Freirean and critical pedagogies.

For example, Freire acknowledges the paternalistic flavor of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) when revisiting it in *Pedagogy of Hope* (1992). As an educator in search of a more liberatory practice, Freire consistently lamented (and realized the irony

of) his male-centered writing in *Oppressed*. While discussing the importance of language and his thanks to the many women who brought his own sexist language to his attention, Freire specifically states, “[L]et it not be said that this is a minor problem. It is a major problem [...] Discrimination against women, expressed and committed by sexist discourse, and enfolded in concrete practices, is a colonial way of treating them, and therefore incompatible with any progressive position...” (pg. 67).

In terms of its strangely hegemonic consequences, Patti Lather (1998) refers to critical pedagogy (and, by association, Freirean pedagogy as one of the progenitors of critical pedagogy) as a “boy thing” (pg. 487), since it is a discourse dominated by male voices. In her article, “Critical pedagogy and its complicities: A praxis of stuck places,” Lather responds to McLaren’s (1998) “Revolutionary pedagogy in post-revolutionary times: Rethinking the political economy of critical education,” by lamenting even the current status of critical pedagogy as complicit in a “too-dogmatic relation to its own discourses” (pg. 496). As a result, Lather’s response centrally argues that critical pedagogy risks becoming, instead of an emancipatory discourse, a new, limiting, and “Enlightened” narrative that is oddly ironic. Much of the critique of critical pedagogy revolves around this very point—that although it claims to be an emancipatory and liberatory approach to education and teaching, it often becomes as dictatorial, indoctrinating, and dis-empowering as the less-emancipatory, less-liberatory, “reactionary,” and conservative pedagogies it critiques; thus, as hooks suggests, progressive educators must maintain a critically reflective attitude even if they presume to be engaged in “revolutionary” educative work. Lather concludes her response to

McLaren's (1998) updated piece on critical pedagogy, by calling it a "praxis of stuck places." She argues,

Ontological changes and category slippages mark the exhaustion of received categories of mind/body, nature/culture, base/superstructure, and spiritual/secular. The goal is to shape our practice to a future that must remain to come, in excess of our codes but still, always already: forces already active in the present. As an area of practice, critical pedagogy might serve a transvaluation of praxis if it can find a way to participate in the struggle of these forces as we move toward an experience of the promise that is unforeseeable from the perspective of our present conceptual frameworks (pg. 497).

Therefore, taking this analysis and critique seriously, I posit an articulation of these pedagogies with caution, but I posit them, nonetheless because I believe this very "transvaluation of praxis" is possible within the project of service learning. In terms of using these pedagogies together, what I have done (and what cultural studies allows me to do) is pulled from the best these authors/theorists have to offer in order to develop an ameliorative pedagogy that can be practically implemented and activated in service learning projects no matter what the context. Keeping these critiques in mind, however, and consistently taking a deconstructive stance of the framework, I continue to seek the most emancipatory and ameliorative direction service learning—influenced by Freirean, critical, and engaged pedagogies—can take.

Since a lot has been covered in this section on service learning, it may be instructive to review what has been said before moving on to the current framework for

critical service learning, which is used to activate this service project in Jamaica. From the review of the literature, it has been shown that the possibilities for projects are expansive, but any kind of overarching analysis of their efficacy is generally missing from the literature. The one analysis offered in this review of the literature (Blythe et al, 1997) provided some insight into service effectiveness, but, overall, it produced inconclusive evidence. Additionally, from this review, it has been shown that most educators, who consider their projects to be service learning projects, make use of reflective tools in the classroom (Prosser & Levesque, 1997; Warren, 1998; and Nnakwe, 1999) and, in some cases, supplement the service work and discussions in class with critical reading material (Prosser & Levesque, 1997 and Warren, 1998), which seeks to enhance students' new sensitivities gleaned from the projects. This, however, was not evidenced in all projects (Nnakwe, 1999) and signals one weakness, in my opinion, in how some projects are launched and, as a consequence, end up missing an opportunity to develop an even more critical awareness in our students. An additional weakness in the literature can also be found in that fact that the results of most service learning projects seem to only be discussed in terms of the 'server' and not the 'served' or the 'server' and 'served' in partnership (Blythe et al, 1997; Keith, 1997; Warren, 1998; Nnakwe, 1999; Rosenberger, 2000). Regarding O'Grady's lament about politically neutral language in describing service learning, many of the articles and chapters (Fisher, 1997; Keith, 1997; Prosser & Levesque, 1997; and Warren, 1998) assuage these concerns by focusing on social justice as a goal, and making use of Freirean, critical, and engaged pedagogies. What social justice means, however, and, even further what problematics may exist when

‘servers’ and ‘served’ work toward social justice *together* are not treated with any regularity or depth.

As I now move into a discussion of both the *framework* and *theory* for critical service learning, I show how they inform and how I share some of the same outlooks and agendas (e.g., focus on social difference) for service learning with these authors. In addition, however, I attempt to augment an understanding of and possibility for service learning by positing a *framework* that provides an enhanced view of reflection and calls for the use of theory in the classroom. Moreover, in terms of the *theory*, I also move beyond the language of social justice to consider how, when it is articulated with caring, an even more ameliorative and practically realizable eventuality is birthed for ‘server’ and ‘served’: *caring solidarity*.

The Critical Service Learning Framework

Now, I turn my attention to the framework for critical service learning. In this section I explore more in-depth the four stages of critical service learning that I revealed in the first chapter. To begin, I discuss the current critical service learning framework, showing how it can work for service learning in general. Next, I show how I use the framework specifically in this current project in Jamaica. Finally, in terms of the stages, I also demonstrate how I follow them in writing this dissertation. In the last part of this section, as part of an evolving, deconstructive, and cultural studies approach to this framework, I show how Masucci and I have continued to problematize the framework toward a richer and more critical evolution, looking specifically at the connection of service learning to teacher education and the issue of the ‘server’ vs. the ‘served’.

The Four-Stage Framework

A general look. Recall in chapter 1 I provided an explanation of the four stages for critical service learning, revealing, in part, how Freirean, critical, and engaged pedagogies; cultural studies; and my prior experience with service learning played a role. Now, I return to these stages in order to talk first, in general, how they can be activated.

While the four stages to critical service learning are listed in a particular order, it should be noted that they do not necessarily happen one after the other or, even, perhaps, in the order they are listed. Instead, Masucci and I see these stages as a dynamic process—one informing the other and occurring simultaneously at varying degrees. The fact that we see the framework as a dynamic process allows critical service learning to be contextualized to many different settings (middle school through graduate school, public school or private school), giving the teacher the freedom to adapt and reconfigure the stages as necessary.

In general, *pre-action reflection* is the first stage. At this stage, decisions about which project will be taken up and reflections about what the students anticipate will happen in it should take place. It is, again, important that conversations with the community take place in order to develop (to the extent that it is possible) a more equitable partnership between the school and the community partner. Once a mutually agreeable project has been reached between the community and the school (students, teacher, and administrators), reflections on the project should begin. Example questions to consider for these reflections that should help center the student in the project may include: “What do you know about the community we will be ‘serving’?” “Talk about your experience with service in the past. How do you think your past experience will

inform this current work?” “If this is your first service experience, what do you think it will be like?” “Talk about who you are.” “What do you think the outcome of this project will be?”⁹ While some of these questions may spill over into the actual involvement in the project, they should be tackled as early on as possible. This allows the student to begin excavating some of their own experience and beliefs, helping them to “find their voice,” moving them toward a more critical state of “political clarity,” and planting the seeds for a self-actualizing process.

The *theory* stage of critical service learning involves the curricular component that the teacher should cover in class. While it is impossible to think (and write) about what content should be covered for every potential project, it should be noted that Masucci and I refer to this stage as *theory* and not *content*. We make this provocative move knowing that problematics exist, however. What we are hoping to accomplish by this more intellectual endeavor is to begin introducing our students, as soon as possible, to important social theories that inform the structural issues of injustice that are facing the partners in the critical service learning project, showing not just examples of injustice (content), but attempting to show how it has been explained by scholars and why it happens. The approach to theory should be on both a macro and micro level, demonstrating the larger social issues facing oppressed groups and also localizing the

⁹ At the outset of the four-stage framework we encounter an immediate limitation that I referenced as problematic in the literature in the last section. Since service learning is activated in the school, the students (‘servers’) are the ones with the access to the classroom learning, and, thus, have an opportunity at these more formalized reflections. Certainly, reflective questions can be provided to the service partner, but the variables are too extensive to treat here with some general rule. While this fact presents a limitation, I move forward with it in mind and consider, more appropriately to this study, given the current conditions, how we can create an environment where the relationship of ‘server’ and ‘served’ can be made more equitable. Finding out what the community needs is a first step in that direction. Continuity and constant communication is also important as I show with this project in Jamaica. Based on our continued participation with our Jamaican partners, I have been able to mine some of these same reflective questions from their perspective. A first-time project would probably not be able to do this.

theory as it relates to the specific community partner. Thus, readings, speakers, and classroom activities should be planned with this in mind. Obviously, introducing Gramsci's notion of hegemony to a classroom full of fifth graders may not be appropriate. However, introducing a more easily digestible version of this theory may be appropriate. Therefore, whether this service learning project is an aspect of a larger course (e.g., a partial requirement of a social studies or reading course) or a stand-alone course, the content selected for the curriculum should address theory and, subsequently, theorizing. This notion of theorizing becomes clearer in the final stage of reflection.

The *action* in the project is, of course, too varied to discuss in one paragraph. What Masucci and I believe classrooms and community partners should work toward, ideally, is a sustainable type of project, focused on social injustice and social difference (Fisher, 1997 and Prosser & Levesque, 1997; Koulisch, 2000) that allows the student to engage with the community partner for a couple of hours per week for a minimum of several consecutive weeks. This allows the student and the partner to develop a relationship over time and, perhaps, allows for the possibility that the partners will see change occur from the outset of the action to the conclusion of it. Certainly, longer interventions, in terms of weekly involvement or overall involvement, increase this likelihood, but nevertheless, teachers should push for protracted involvement in projects.

The fourth stage is *reflection*. This should not, however, actually be a *final* stage. Instead, reflection should be seen as an integral aspect to the entire endeavor. Just as theory and action will occur simultaneously in the project, reflection should be an ongoing process that works seamlessly alongside the curricular content and work in the community. In fact, where *pre-action reflection* ends and *reflection* begins should be

blurred. Thus, the framework takes on a circular type of nature where reflections from one critical service learning project become pre-action reflections for other critical service learning projects. Through these ongoing reflections we hope to work *with* the student toward a heightened state of “political clarity” or, ultimately, a more “critical consciousness.” Reflections should, at the very least, be a weekly requirement to the course and should investigate what meaning the student is deriving from the project as it evolves. Final reflections should focus on readdressing some of the pre-action reflections, helping the students to see where they have come to as a result of the project. Final reflections should also focus on the theoretical content covered in the course. Subsequently, students should be given the opportunity to provide their own updates to the theory. Students might be asked: “How did the theory covered assist in the intervention?” In addition, students might also be asked: “How might work on the local level inform some of the larger, more general issues we covered in class?” Alongside these final reflections, in this final stage, students may also be asked to perform some type of “demonstration” project that shows students’ new sensitivity to issues covered in the service learning project. This demonstration, coupled with the journal reflections, should help to evaluate both the student’s new sensitivities to the issues dealt with in the project and the future of the project itself.

Again, only a rough outline of what can be covered in the stages is given since the possibilities for projects are infinite, and, also, since Masucci and I want to allow teachers the freedom to contextualize projects to their own circumstances. What should not be lost in this freedom, however, is the type of project that should be selected that concerns itself with issues of social injustice and social difference. Selecting these types of

projects and providing the applicable social theory are in the spirit of critical service learning.

The stages applied to this project. In order to give some context to the stages above, however, I now show how the critical service learning framework plays out in our upcoming intervention in Jamaica. Again, this is only one possibility among many, and the framework has been adapted to fit our team's purposes.

As has been made clear, the action in this project will involve working in schools and orphanages in and around Montego Bay, Jamaica. On our last visit to Jamaica, one of the major purposes for my team's visit was to discuss the possibility of a large group coming to Jamaica the following year (this year).¹⁰ During these conversations, we discussed how we might be of assistance and arranged loose itineraries for our future visit. During the following fall, I contacted a college in northern Kentucky and asked if they would be interested in forming a team of undergraduate students and faculty to make this next intervention. The offer was met with open arms and students began signing up in the fall. The students making this trip were offered course credit for their involvement with the service learning project and signed up for PHI 220: Service Learning. This course was co-taught by a philosophy professor at the college, Professor Mark,¹¹ and myself, and met every other Friday, starting in January, in order to cover a course curriculum and to plan for the intervention.¹²

¹⁰ This particular team was made up of six people, all of whom had been there at least once before, and four, including myself, who have made all four trips.

¹¹ Aliases have been provided to protect the identity of the people and places in this and all remaining sections. Their words are used through permission they offered in the Informed Consents required by the University of Tennessee's Research Office of Compliance.

¹² See chapter 4 and appendix 1 for a more in-depth analysis of the formation of this team and the content for the course.

Thus, the pre-action reflection stage was well underway for me in the fall as the overall project was taking shape based on communications with the college and our Jamaican partners. Once regular meetings with the student team started in January, their pre-action reflections began. In these reflections students were asked to think about the same issues that I raised above. Reflection topics included: “Who am I?” “Think of the people we will be working with in Jamaica and describe what they look like. Describe how their lives have been different from your own. How have they been the same?” “Talk about your past experience with service. How do you think your past work will inform this current work? Talk about what you think we will accomplish on this trip.” And, “What are some of the things that you are looking forward to and concern you about this upcoming trip.” These pre-action reflection prompts took place at most meetings and students were given the opportunity to reflect in their journals on one question per meeting for twenty to thirty minutes.

These pre-action reflections kicked off our meetings that lasted from 1:30 to 5:00. Next, most meetings then moved into the curricular content for the course (see appendix 2 for a sample agenda for these meetings). Since this was a class solely focused on the service learning project itself, Professor Mark and I focused our content, and subsequently our theory, directly on our upcoming intervention in Jamaica. In order to cover what we thought would be applicable and useful theory for the intervention, we thought about the content in terms of topics. We selected ten topics (the number of meetings prior to our intervention) to cover and we both selected readings that we thought would apply. The topics we decided on were: history, religion, politics, economics, social/familial/cultural, service learning, education, multiculturalism, praxis

and liberation, social justice, and care. The readings were meant to cover both the general issues, as they might apply globally or to the U.S., and the local issues as they related specifically to Jamaica (see appendix 1 for the syllabus for this course). The selection of these readings sought, in part, to expose the student to important theories that we felt applied to the context of our intervention in Jamaica. For example, these readings led us into discussions of hegemony theory, reproduction and resistance theory, liberation theology, democracy, capitalism vs. socialism, and colonialism/imperialism. The hope, in exploring these issues, was that the students would begin to develop a toolbox of critical terms that they could apply both to their pre-action reflections and their journaling over the readings that they were doing on an every-other-week basis. In addition to the journal that they kept over the readings, students also completed two 4-5 page papers and one 8-10 page paper that sought to weave the readings with both the students' preparation for and action in the project.

The action in this critical service learning project was a fifteen day intervention in Jamaica that spanned May 14 to May 28, 2002. Ideally, as I stated above, the action in the project should be ongoing over several weeks. However, given the unique nature of this project, and the near economic impossibility of working in these schools and orphanages over a more-extended period of time, we had to settle for this shorter time frame. With this in mind, though, the hope is to continue to foster this relationship between the schools and orphanages in Jamaica with the college just as a few of us have been able to do over the previous four years. Therefore, ideally, this action will continue next summer with some of the same undergraduate students and, hopefully, new recruits.

The final stage in this current intervention was reflection. Meetings continued while we worked in Jamaica, gathering in the evenings after our service was concluded in the schools and orphanages. During these meetings, students were given an opportunity to reflect both in verbal and written form on their work. Here, as I noted above, pre-action reflections blurred into reflections as the action began to take place. These reflections continued when we got back to the United States as we held two meetings (June 5 and June 7) within two weeks of our return and one additional meeting (July 1) in order to continue to process and reflect on the experience. In addition to these meetings, and outside the auspices of this course, however, students were also given the opportunity to reflect with each other via email regarding prompted questions (from myself and anyone who wanted to pose them) or requests to share (to the extent they wanted to) some of their thoughts about the trip. Additional to these continued reflections, students will also have an opportunity to demonstrate what they learned from this project in several of their new classes in the fall should they choose to share some of their experience. Students may also have an opportunity to demonstrate what they learned to the next group of students who may be interested in making the next trip. In this case, should the student sharing plan to attend this next trip, this demonstration becomes a pre-action reflection on another critical service learning project.¹³

Continual communication and reflection, however, did not solely take place state-side. Ongoing correspondence also continued with our Jamaican partners as a follow up to this experience and as an opportunity to begin planning the next intervention for summer, 2003.

¹³ Critique and analysis of this course can be found in chapters 6 and 7.

The critical service learning framework applied to this dissertation. In addition to thinking about the critical service learning framework as a way to launch service learning projects, I have thought about how it applies to my actual writing about the project. Although I am not attempting to posit a new template for writing academic theses, I do not find it ironic that the way this dissertation is put together follows roughly the critical service learning framework. In terms of pre-action reflection I have used the introduction and the first part of this chapter 2 to discuss my previous experience with service learning and what has led me to this moment of writing. In terms of theory, I have used earlier portions of this chapter 2 to discuss the makeup of a critical service leaning framework, and will conclude this chapter with the evolution of a new hybrid discourse for service learning. Taking this more general theory into chapter 3, I then localize the theory for Jamaica and develop the context for our impending intervention. To conclude this initial bout with theory, I launch into the theoretical makeup of my methodology in chapter 4 and begin to talk more about the action in the project toward its conclusion. Chapter 5, then, follows with a record of our action as I document the interviews, observations, and other data collected from our intervention. In chapter 6 I move back into a reflective mode as I begin to critically analyze the data and push toward some conclusions or, at least, implications of this study. Here, not only do I reflect on the experience, but I theorize anew as I consider how the framework and theory for critical service learning can be improved and updated. Additionally, I also consider how future interventions can be even more fruitful and further democratized. The final chapter, chapter 7, blurs these reflections into pre-action reflections for yet another service learning experience in the future.

Now, before moving on to discuss the evolving critical service learning theory, I discuss some of the deconstructive steps Masucci and I have taken that have helped bring the critical service learning framework into its current form. More importantly, though, these deconstructive steps have led me to consider what might make up a *theory* for critical service learning. Following this deconstructive section, then, I move on to this theoretical discussion.

Problematizing the Framework: Searching for an Appropriate Agenda

Shortly after publishing on our experience at the Winton Homes Library Project and putting forward our concept of and framework for critical service learning, Masucci and I, in the deconstructive spirit of cultural studies, went back to the drawing board and began pulling apart and problematizing the framework. Along with revisiting the literature on service learning, we also considered what was lacking about critical service learning. In our deconstructive move, Masucci and I (2000c, 2001b) settled on at least four problematics: (1) Participation in projects vs. Future participation in society, (2) How critical service learning projects can be practically implemented right now, (3) The role of teacher education, and (4) The dynamic of the ‘server’ vs. the ‘served’.

For purposes of this chapter, it will be most instructive to give the more significant treatment to the latter two problematics as these form the basis for my thinking about a theory for critical service learning. However, I will at least mention the first two to provide some continuing context regarding the issues facing service learning and the implementation of any type of practical project. In addition to my treatment of the last two problematics, I will also discuss how my evolving relationship with the

Jamaicans and my American team members has influenced my theorizing about service learning.

Participation in projects vs. Future participation in society. As noted earlier, one important aspect of service learning is its link to civic education. One reservation that Masucci and I possessed was whether or not students would be able to make the link between the projects they completed in school and how this might inform their role as citizens once they graduated. Since the structured learning process will be absent, we wondered to what extent our former students would make more critical decisions when operating in spheres of social difference in society.

The immediate practical implications of critical service learning. When putting forward the framework of critical service learning, Masucci and I did so cautiously. What we wanted to do was to provide some type of operational framework that could be contextualized to a particular school or community. Additionally, we understood that the use of theory would not be an easy step for teachers since teacher education often focuses more on the methodological than the theoretical. We hoped this operational framework might bind together some of the disparate literature on community service and service learning (Benson & Harkavy, 1997; Carver, 1997; Clark et al, 1997; Fisher, 1997; Hepburn, 1997; LeSourd, 1997; Prosser & Levesque, 1997; Waterman, 1997; Burns, 1998; Warren, 1998; Barlow, 1999; Nnakwe, 1999; Paulins, 1999; O'Grady, 2000) and begin a new (or contribute to an already existing) conversation on how we might work toward a common agenda for service learning that seeks ameliorative change. My attempt at a new articulated agenda for service learning is a further attempt in this vein.

The role of teacher education. One critical area that Masucci and I noted in our review of the literature and our deconstruction of the framework was the expanded role that teacher education would have to play in order to be able to launch a critical service learning agenda. We realized that teachers would have to be trained in service learning in order to activate service learning initiatives in their classrooms. Considering, once again, that 12,605,740 students in grades 6-12 are involved in service initiatives; 86% of school districts offer some form of community service (88% of which is referred to as service learning); and 18% of school districts nationwide require service (US Department of Education, 1997), one realizes that teachers are already expected to initiate projects for their schools. However, teachers' valuable time is continually whittled away by more and more focus on standardized curriculums and tests. In a presentation given to the American Educational Studies Association (AESA), Masucci and I (2000c) argued

While many teacher education programs feature coursework in the area of multicultural education, critical pedagogy, diversity training and the like, many more do not.¹⁴ It is imperative in our estimation to equip teachers with the same kind of critical thinking skills that we would expect them to foster in their own students. However, the reality of many teacher education and certification programs is that the teacher-in-training can become overwhelmed with the nuts and bolts of their particular program, including the many hours of 'best' methods courses that prepare pre-service teachers for the standards-driven (non-critical) curriculums they

¹⁴ In hindsight, Masucci and I recognized that this statement may be hyperbolic. We understand that in order to comply with NCATE standards, teacher education programs are required to include issues on multiculturalism and diversity. However, it is still our contention, and perhaps better stated, that many programs bury this aspect of teacher training.

will more than likely be expected to take on in the field [. . .] In our view it is essential to restructure teacher education so that issues of social justice, tolerance of social difference, and an orientation to action become more central to the mission of teaching.

In this argument one continues to see the influence that Freirean, critical, and engaged pedagogies have over my theorizing about critical service learning. Further, one also continues to see how our evolving understanding of cultural studies helps us to unravel the tensions present in our critical service learning framework. Ultimately, what we know for sure is that teacher education is important to the success of service learning, since it is teachers who will launch (potentially ameliorative) projects in the future.

Taking the role of teacher education seriously, I continue to review the literature to find out what others write about the intersection of service learning and teacher education.

Although there are some excellent examples of teacher education programs that implement service learning projects focused on social difference in the literature (Hamm et al, 1998; Hrabowski et al, 1999; Swick and Rowls, 1999; Barton, 1998, 2000; Erickson and Anderson, 2001), and there are some programs that I know of that haven't published on their success, I was dismayed to find so few examples for other scholars to review.

Next, I review some of the better examples I discovered that show how powerful (and necessary) the link can (and should) be between service learning and teacher education.

Deborah Hamm, David Dowell, and Jean Houck (1998) best encapsulate the challenge facing teacher education programs:

College students preparing to be elementary teachers often come to the university with a humanistic philosophy, sharing that they are going into

teaching because they love children, they want to give back to the community, and they desire to help people learn and do better. The majority of the students entering the teacher program continue to be white females from lower-middle and middle class homes. Often when they speak of the ‘children they love’ they are referring to the students who look like themselves, not like the school populations found in the diverse urban classrooms. Teacher preparation programs face the continuing challenge of preparing teacher candidates who can be effective instructors in contemporary classrooms with *poor and culturally and ethnically diverse* children (pg. 196, my emphasis added).

Given this dilemma, Hamm et al discuss their program at California State University-Long Beach, called Service Experiences for ReVitalizing Education (SERVE) and conclude how service learning helps to meet the challenge stated above:

SERVE has a ‘theory of change’ suggesting that college students in training to be teachers can gain insight from a service learning experience into the importance of individual and social factors in child development. By gaining insight into the importance of these factors, they will be more likely to attend to learning about individual and *social differences* (pg. 201, my emphasis added).

Along these same lines, Freeman Hrabowski, Diane Lee, and John Martello (1999) discuss teacher preparation at University of Maryland—Baltimore County (UMBC) where graduating teachers are encouraged to be creative in their teaching approaches in order to most adequately respond to the needs and experiences of minority

students by connecting these needs and experiences to a “challenging curriculum.”

According to Hrabowski et al, five elements embody successful teacher preparation: (1) High expectations for academic achievement, (2) Service and practical training, (3) Academic reflection, (4) Continuous program evaluation, and (5) Emphasis on institutional values and community. These five elements are supported and activated, then, by service learning projects and a belief that, “Teachers cannot model strategies for thinking and learning if they have not been exposed to such habits of mind and had opportunities to go beyond the information derived from institutions and think about the students they will be serving” (pg. 297).

From these general examples, one can already see the potential of connecting service to teacher education. Now, in order to provide a more specific teacher education experience with service learning, Angela Barton (2000) discusses how service learning enhanced the teaching of multicultural science. Barton’s particular service learning project places pre-service teachers in an after school science program, “Science Time,” for homeless children. Barton reflects,

The service learning project provided these pre-service teachers with opportunities to explore education in out-of-school settings, develop relationships with children and families in non-school contexts, learn to see children as children rather than as students, develop ties with the community, develop social and interaction skills, and gain greater awareness of other cultural and social norms and values as well as their own strengths and weakness (pg. 817).

Because of this experience, teachers were able to further reconsider their ideas about multiculturalism in science education. Barton states, “We speculate that a community context could be vital in creating a multicultural science education because it forces the teaching and learning—and the knowing and the doing—of science to occur in ways that are integrally connected to the students” (p. 803).

Therefore, based on this compelling evidence demonstrated by the aforementioned service learning programs that shows how teachers’ sensitivities to social difference and social injustice expands as a result, I believe that service learning must be a prominent feature in our teacher education programs. In particular, teachers introduced to critical service learning in their teacher training will be given the tools to implement ameliorative projects in their own future classrooms that both focus on social difference and social injustice and also feature reflection and theory.

The ‘server’ and the ‘served’. The final problematic that Masucci and I address involves the relationship of the ‘server’ and the ‘served’. Any service learning project implies that there will be a ‘server’ and there will be a ‘served’. However, what we want to try and avoid through our framework of critical service learning is a hierarchy of power and privilege that is easily a part of most projects. In my presentation at AESA (2001d) I asked the provocative question: “Who can take up service learning projects?” To answer I argued that often the assumption exists that service projects are performed by the ‘more-privileged’ for the ‘less-privileged’. Additionally, I offered that it is often the case that this service work is done out of a sense of mission or pity for the less fortunate. In our conception of service learning projects, Masucci and I have continually interrogated this notion of the ‘server’ vs. the ‘served’. In our opinion service projects

can be activated from a number of different locations for a number of different constituencies.

This notion of who can serve ties in, then, with what the goals of service projects should be. In my own general experience with service projects, I have found the performance of service often results in the ‘server’ feeling better about themselves and a resultant belief that one has done something good for someone else. In particular, I have made note of these feelings from my experiences working in the orphanages and schools in Jamaica.

Speaking with many of my former students who were a part of the first two trips, I discovered the main reaction to the service performed was how much *they* got out of it. Secondly, the students also noted how they believed *they* had done something good *for* someone else. Rarely, if ever, did the student mention anything about working for a more just condition *with* the people they had come to ‘serve’. Recall that while work in my master’s degree coursework was helping to better inform our preparation and more critical possibilities for these trips, the interventions were still marked by some naiveté. However, three core team members were much more critical of our involvement in Jamaica and considered whether or not we were working toward social justice to be far more important than how they were *feeling* (like many of the other students). This focus on social justice has been a building block not only for our interventions in Jamaica, but also for Masucci’s and my theorizing on service learning in general. In an effort to show how this focus on social justice played out, I reflect in the next several paragraphs on how our ongoing interventions in Jamaica began to consider and centrally focus on social justice as an agenda. In the next section on the critical service learning theory, I show

how I have moved even further beyond this agenda to consider how care might be articulated with social justice to create new possibilities for service learning.

In our ongoing experiences with the project in Jamaica, the voice of the Jamaicans has played a much more central role. Our naiveté during those first couple of years has given way to a much more critical awareness of what we are doing there and what we might accomplish there. After my first year of coursework in cultural studies and our first publication on critical service learning, I conducted a study (2001a) in the summer of 2000 (my team's third trip to Jamaica) in an effort to advance an agenda of service learning for social justice. In this study I intended to find out how we might improve our interventions in the future by asking our Jamaican partners how they perceive their relationship with Americans. In the past a few of our Jamaican partners had been quite open about their displeasure with several American groups who had acted disrespectfully at their schools and orphanages. However, when I showed up with a tape recorder and formal questions, they were not as open. What I discovered through this experience was how much was at stake for our Jamaican partners. While they may have remained critical amongst fellow Jamaicans about the heavy-handed or disrespectful attitudes of First-world groups coming to help on the island, the sad reality may be that they need the help as a Third-world country as evidenced by some of the statements given to me by orphanage and school administrators in Jamaica. When formally asked what he thought about America and his experience with American mission groups, Mr. James, the director of New Oxford Children's Home, who had been quite open in his displeasure with some groups in the past, stated,

I think my answer would coincide with most others—[America] is a friendly country. It's a great country. And, countries like ourselves, Third-world countries, feel quite secure knowing that we have such a great nation so close to us. Apart from the security aspect of it, the social and human development programs that your country has established to assist countries like ourselves [have been] considerable throughout the years.

Similarly, when asked about his impression of America, one school administrator said, "Dealing with America gives me a good feeling, honestly."

Now, while the majority of experiences with Americans may have been positive, both of these men, whom I respect greatly, knew that I was seeking negative instances so that I could provide a point of critique for service initiatives that do not keep the service partner in mind. However, I was not able to extract this type of information during the interviews with any of the administrators, which made me realize the tenuous position our partners, the 'served', were in. My reflection on these interviews, in part, helped Masucci and me both frame this fourth problematic of the relationship of the 'server' and the 'served' and consider to what extent service learning can achieve social justice.

In addition to enhanced dialog with our Jamaican partners, as our interventions have progressed, my dialog with our American team has also intensified. During this same trip that I was conducting interviews with our Jamaican partners, I discovered through my shared reflections with our team that I was not alone in hypocritical feelings about these interventions. I had been feeling like the good we were doing there was undone by the fact that we return home every year, while our Jamaican partners had to remain in their impoverished condition. In her reflection about work in some of the

orphanages, one of the core members, Adah¹⁵, writes after a long day of changing diapers, feeding infants, and holding numerous children at one time in ninety-plus degree heat:

We get on the bus and rinse our hands—the germs, the diseases we could get. But, we leave behind children—individuals with thoughts, lives to live, feelings, maybe even hopes and dreams that belong to those germs.

We come back to the room and smell the orphanage on our clothes, but do they know any other smell?¹⁶

Similarly, in her reflection about her own pain in what she saw at the orphanages and in the communities versus what it must be like to live constantly under these conditions, another core team member, Leah, writes, “Our pain?! What about the crippled children we left who are still behind the bars of their cribs, or the families we left who are still impoverished?”¹⁷ This type of sharing among our team helped us to bring out our feelings of hypocrisy and made this an important issue to deal with. Upon critical consideration of these reflections, I note that these feelings of hypocrisy were a pre-action reflection to a deconstructive investigation of the ‘server’ and the ‘served’. Not only was I beginning to acknowledge the tension that exists in this relationship, I was also noting the hierarchy within it.

Currently, as I noted earlier, there exists a strain within service learning called “service learning for social justice” (Fisher, 1997; Wright, 2001). Again, initially, this is

¹⁵ Readers may note the names used for some aliases are similar to or the same as several of Barbara Kingsolver character names. As her works of fiction are particularly meaningful to me, I have used these names as Kingsolver’s character profiles match many of my participants.

¹⁶ Journal excerpt used with her permission.

¹⁷ Journal excerpt used with her permission.

what Masucci and I had in mind for critical service learning (i.e., the critical service learning framework was a practical way to implement a service learning for social justice project). However, as my experiences grow and as I have gotten deeper into the literature, I realize that simply working on social justice may actually worsen the already hierarchical power relation of the ‘server’ and the ‘served’. Social justice is certainly something to strive for, but there may be more to consider, particularly on the side of the *served*. The relationship of the ‘server’ and the ‘served’ is an important dynamic for critical service learning to wrestle with if ameliorative change is the agenda. Additionally, as part of a larger cultural studies project, this power dynamic should be of central concern. Thus, the very notion of ameliorative change needs to be deconstructed as a result because social justice may actually look differently with a more democratized relationship between ‘server’ and ‘served’.

A New Hybrid Theory?: An Emerging Critical Service Learning Discourse

These thoughts then lead into the theory for critical service learning that seeks an agenda of “solidarity.” In this section I review the literature on the concepts of social justice and caring—the two concepts I am trying to articulate for a theory for critical service learning that works toward ameliorative change. In order to facilitate this articulation of two seemingly disparate concepts, I use the work of Seyla Benhabib to talk about how they may work together toward an emerging, discursive formation for service learning: a service learning for *solidarity* rather than *social justice*. I conclude this section with the theory and close this chapter with a concluding overview section that

provides a final weaving that reveals the contribution I hope to make toward a more democratic and emancipatory theory and practice of education.

Social Justice

I want to begin by stating that I do not take the following discussion lightly. From my experience the last five years, I have come to realize that any “open” discussion of justice could be dangerous to our ongoing interventions in Jamaica. While not trying to sound melodramatic, I believe this discussion of justice could be a matter of life or death for someone working against the status quo in Jamaica. Far too often I have taken discussions about justice for granted based in part on my citizenship in a relatively free country, the United States of America, and also on my current status as student in a large public university. Not until my conversation with the Jamaican professor in the summer of 2001 did I realize how free I really was (or was not). Recall that while huddled in a tight circle, sitting in an open-air foodcourt in the Southeast of Jamaica, my team and I were engaged by this professor about the current state of justice in Jamaica. Story after story revealed grave injustices leveled at the masses in Jamaica. Stories that attested to both the high murder rate (34 per 100,000 overall, 150 per 100,000 in Kingston) and also police brutality and corruption (150 reported police killings per year—as high as 350 per year in 1998), revealed a country suffering from injustice. As a member of two organizations for social justice, this professor believes the biggest issue facing Jamaicans for the 21st century is not race, nor is it poverty; rather, it is simply justice.

This plea for justice is not a lone cry in the wilderness either. Instead, it has been corroborated many times over by other conversations and observations I have made during my stays in Jamaica over the last four years. Both men and women, professional

and otherwise have revealed harrowing instances of injustice, propagated by their fellow citizens and government. Whether it is theft at gunpoint, lack of jobs, lack of access to medical care or education, the common Jamaican must deal with issues of injustice everyday. Of course, people all over the world (including many in the United States) face these same issues everyday, so I don't want to characterize Jamaica as an island of injustice in a sea of justice, but rather I use this information to shed some light on the crisis that is currently facing this particular island.

In order to show the development of my understanding and theorizing about justice, I turn to the work of three highly regarded, current liberal theorists who have helped to shape my sense of social justice: John Rawls, Michael Walzer, and David Miller.

John Rawls: *A Theory of Justice*. Rawls' *Theory of Justice* (1971) represents a groundbreaking, liberal theory of justice. As an extension and modification of Locke, Rousseau, and Kant's notions about the theory of the social contract, Rawls hypothesizes that the *principles of justice* for the basic structure of society *are* the object of the original contract, rather than the traditionally more popular notion that entrance into society or the formation of a particular government makes up the accord to the contract. That is, "The justice of a social scheme depends essentially on how fundamental rights and duties are assigned and on the economic opportunities and social conditions of various sectors of society" (pg. 7). Further, Rawls believes these principles of justice must be chosen behind a "veil of ignorance," where "no one is advantaged or disadvantaged in the choice of principles by the outcome of natural chance or the contingency of social circumstances" (pg. 12). In other words, people agree to something in advance of knowing what their

stake is in the decision to be reached. Thus, this idea promotes the greater likelihood that people would create a system of justice that is fair and has the best chance at equal distribution.

According to Rawls, the *role* of justice should be considered the first virtue of social institutions. In *A Theory of Justice* he posits, “[L]aws and institutions no matter how efficient and well-arranged must be reformed or abolished if they are unjust” (pg. 3) For Rawls, “[J]ustice denies that the loss of freedom for some is made right by a greater good shared by others” (pgs. 3-4). This role for justice, of course, flies in the face of many of our country’s ‘capitalistic’ beliefs—and, thus, represents a particularly radical vision for justice.

In his theory, Rawls identifies two *principles* of justice: (1) each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive basic liberty compatible with a similar liberty for others and (2) social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both (a) reasonably expected to be to everyone’s advantage and (b) attached to positions and offices open to all (p. 60). These two principles lead to one ultimate principle known as The Difference Principle: “Inequalities are justified only if they are designed to bring the greatest possible benefit to the least advantaged social class” (Miller, pg. 15).

Michael Walzer: *Spheres of Justice*. Walzer’s *Spheres of Justice* (1983) represents another major step in liberal thought regarding justice. In *Spheres of Justice* Walzer advocates a “complex equality” where the distribution of goods determines the distribution of justice. According to Walzer, this *distributive justice* has “as much to do with being and doing as with having, as much to do with production as with

consumption, as much to do with identity and status as with land, capital, or personal possessions” (pg. 3). Additionally, in this notion of a distributive justice, Walzer argues,

The principles of justice are themselves pluralistic in form; that different social goods ought to be distributed for different reasons, in accordance with different procedures, by different agents; and that all these differences derive from different understandings of the social goods themselves (pg. 6).

In other words, access to, possession of, and need for goods will determine how justice is distributed to people in a society.

Walzer’s “theory of goods,” then, makes material what may be only an abstraction in Rawls’ theory. According to Walzer, the theory of goods is made up of six propositions: (1) All the goods with which distributive justice is concerned are social goods, (2) Men and women take on concrete identities because of the way they conceive and create, and then possess and employ, social goods, (3) There is no single set of primary goods conceivable across all moral and material worlds, (4) The meaning of goods determines their movement, (5) Social meanings are historical (and can change), and (6) When meanings are distinct, distributions must be autonomous. While a dissertation in and of itself could be written on an exposition of these steps, permit me to at least say in summation that Walzer’s theory of goods, in general, gives us a more concrete way to think about justice and its materiality.

Finally, understanding that goods are at the center of a distributive justice, Walzer argues that a complex equality—an established set of relationships where domination is impossible—is brought about by considering three spheres of society: wealth, office (or

power), and education, and three distributive principles: free exchange, desert, and need. Briefly, what Walzer argues is that no citizen's standing in one sphere should undercut or enhance his or her standing in another sphere (e.g., poverty should not bar one's access to political office, nor should wealth guarantee it). Additionally, with regard to the distributive principles, Walzer is arguing that (1) goods will not be distributed based on one's standing in a particular sphere (free exchange); (2) while what one *deserves* is difficult to pin down, men and women should receive their "appropriate reward" (desert); and (3) what one lacks within a particular sphere will determine one's need. Thus, Walzer's theory of justice (like Rawls) creates a type of welfare state that might be summarized by the following statement:

Every political community must attend to the needs of its members as they have collectively understood those needs; that the goods that are distributed must be distributed in proportion to need; and that they distribution must uphold and recognize the underlying equality of membership (pg. 84).

David Miller: *Principles of Social Justice*. Finally, another addition to a liberal perspective on justice is found in the work of David Miller. In *Principles of Social Justice* (1999), Miller conceives of justice as "a social virtue [since] it tells us how to order our relationships, what we must rightly do for one another" (pg. 21). Similar to Rawls and his concept of the "veil of ignorance," Miller argues, "Justice fundamentally requires us to treat people as equals; or we should understand justice as what people would agree to in advance of knowing their own stake in the decision to be reached" (pg. 23). Unlike Rawls, however, Miller considers a theory of justice, like Walzer, as starting

from practice and moving to the abstract, rather than the other way around. But, in contrast to Walzer, Miller believes that the form of distributive justice that is used should not be based on goods, but rather on modes of human relationships. The three distributive principles of justice in Miller's conception are need, desert, and equality, which are distributed successively by the following modes of relationship: solidaristic communities, instrumental associations, and citizenship.

According to Miller, need is the substantive principle of justice associated with *solidaristic communities*. These types of communities are one's in which people share a common identity as members of a relatively stable group with a common ethos (e.g., families, clubs, religion groups, work teams, professional associations, etc.). Thus, in other words, Marx's maxim: "From each according to his or her ability, to each according to his or her need" is a close approximation of the exchange in a solidaristic community.

In *instrumental associations* people relate to each other in more utilitarian ways: "To each according to what they put in." Thus, desert is the distributive principle of justice associated with this mode of human relationship. In our own country, we characterize this as meritocracy¹⁸—the more one puts in, the more one can get out.

Finally, equality is the substantive distributive principle of *citizenship*. According to Miller, anyone who is a full member of such a society is understood to be the bearer of a set of rights (or obligations) that define the status of citizen. In other words: "To each equally because they are citizens."

Thus, in consideration of all three modes of relationships and distributive principles, Miller argues, "Justice means treating each person in the way that is

¹⁸ Of course, there is argument as to whether this really exists or not in our country.

appropriate to that individual personally” (pg. 33), which means that: (1) a certain mode of relationship may be required to make a principle of justice feasible to use, and (2) a mode of association makes the use of one particular principle of justice fitting in a more direct sense (pgs. 34-5).

Examining these three theories of justice. While Rawls and Walzer certainly inform my ultimate conception of justice, I am not sure they go far enough in helping to activate a *practice* in this case. For example, Rawls’ Difference Principle is at the heart of what I believe about justice—in essence, that equity must be considered over equality until there is actual equality. In other words, unequal distributions to those who have suffered inequalities in the past are justified in order to level the playing field. I don’t feel, however, that Rawls provides enough clues about how we might actually do this; therefore, he must remain in my *theoretical* toolbox until I can find a place to employ him during the actual *practice*. Walzer also provides some theoretical tools that may be of advantage later (particularly considering the three spheres and how our position in one sphere should not advantage our position in another) and he tries to make some practical suggestions, but I’m not sure they represent a fit for our particular work in Jamaica. My sense in reading Rawls and Walzer is that they are writing about justice only from a United States perspective. By this I mean, their theories about justice seem possible for the US—a country that has achieved a number of democratic victories, is ‘free’, and has a critical potential (with a lot of hard work) to achieve what they propose in theory. Jamaica, on the other hand, is not in this same position. They are suffering from grave injustices. While I know a subtle distinction exists here, I believe the corner must be turned on *injustice* before justice can even be considered. Am I claiming that the US is at

this corner? Probably. At least, I think we are closer to the corner where these theories might be employed.

The critique above, then, leaves me with Miller. While Miller is also writing from this US perspective, he offers some practical nuggets in his theory that may be useful in combating injustice towards turning the corner. Miller's concept of solidaristic communities and the distributive (justice) principle of need is particularly cogent and central to a critical service learning agenda both in general and specific to this project. In general, solidaristic communities represent an opportunity for the 'server' and the 'served' to move closer together on common ground and address needs that are present in collaboration. Again, traditionally, the needs are seen to be present in the 'served' and served by the 'servers'. At worst, with this realization, the needs of the 'served' are met more compassionately, and the 'servers' learn about their own lives through the experience. At best, however, a closer bond—a *solidarity*, perhaps—between the 'server' and the 'served' is achieved, a sense of responsibility to one another exists, and a realization of how our deeper mutual needs are met is recognized as a result of the project.

Because of the community our team and the Jamaicans have been able to establish in the past, needs on both sides have been met. And, I think this is the only way we can conceptualize an actual *practice* toward justice for the future. Considering Miller's other modes, Jamaicans have no equality based on citizenship (either as Jamaicans or world citizens as part of the 'Third' world) and desert based on instrumental associations is not possible given the corruption that exists on Jamaica's political and economic scene. Also, for a service learning that seeks ameliorative change, justice based on desert seems

to contradict the spirit of the project. Thus, the way I see us continuing to work for justice in Jamaica is first through the establishment of a solidaristic community where the distributive principle of justice will be based on need—both theirs and ours.

These three theories (Rawls, Walzer, and Miller) represent important (and sometimes radical) interventions into Euro-Western thought about justice. As a result, these theories inform my conception of justice (in small and large ways), and play a figural role in the exploration of how my team, in cooperation with the Jamaicans, might practically advance a notion of social justice. This issue of social justice and how it is discussed and theorized among all participants in the upcoming study/intervention, undergraduates and Jamaicans alike, is an important dynamic to follow as I attempt to continue to develop “solidaristic communities.” However, only talking about justice leaves me with an incomplete feeling—that perhaps there is more to consider in attempting to facilitate ameliorative change at the level of the individual. Therefore, I have supplemented my review of the justice literature with a review of the feminist ethic of care literature in order to more fully develop a theory for critical service learning.

Caring

As Masucci and I continued to problematize and evolve the critical service learning framework, it seemed that we reached (like Fisher and Wright) the ultimate agenda for service learning: social justice. However, during my second year of Ph.D. coursework, I was introduced to the scholarship of Dr. Barbara Thayer-Bacon, who has developed a concept called “caring reasoning.” In her presentation of caring reasoning, which posits a relational epistemology, Thayer-Bacon (2000) revealed the feminist ethic of care to me for the first time. What struck me immediately was how male-centered my

approach to amelioration was. While reviewing the literature, I had chosen the work of three male authors to frame a vision of justice. I realized, then, that a feminist perspective for the emerging *theory* of critical service learning would be equally as valuable and necessary. Therefore, I believe taking up this critical service learning project—attempting to form this solidaristic community, attempting to democratize the relationship between the ‘server’ and the ‘served’, and theorizing (from the practice) about the possibility of service learning to work for social justice—will be necessarily dependent upon a sense of responsibility to, connection with, and “care” for our global citizens.

Nel Noddings and the feminist ethic of care. In order to discuss this feminist ethic of care, it is necessary to make some decisions about who to cover based on the proliferating scholarship on caring. I begin with one of the progenitors of feminist writing on caring, Nel Noddings (1984), who I believe provides a good overview of what “caring” entails. After a description of her conception of caring, I turn to a critique of “caring,” using the work of Thayer-Bacon (2000) and Alison Jaggar (1995). With the explanation of this critique, I set the table for a revelation of the theory for critical service learning, which posits a version of Seyla Benhabib’s (1992) “generalized and concrete other.”

Although they were the first to introduce gender into consideration for caring, Thayer-Bacon (2000) points out that feminists were not the first to break ground on the ethic of caring. One of the most influential books in the development of an ethic of care is Noddings’ (1984) *Caring*. According to Noddings, a caring relationship is made up of “one-caring” and one “cared-for.” The one-caring is “engrossed” with the cared-for and

recognizes a motivational shift, a “feeling with” the other. In this reciprocal relationship, the cared-for also has responsibility by recognizing this act of caring. Noddings points out that the cared-for does not also have to be one-caring, but that this relationship at least requires “the engrossment and motivational displacement of the one-caring and it requires the recognition and spontaneous response of the cared-for” (pg. 78).

Noddings further argues that caring relations are made up of “circles” and “chains” of caring. Our inner circles are made up of the intimate relationships in which we share, while the concentric circles around the inner circles represent our relationship (and looser attachment) to strangers and people who have not made it into the inner circle, yet. Noddings then uses the metaphor of “chains” to characterize these potential relationships, using the example of a future son-in-law to signal her “preparedness to care” for someone in the future who is linked to someone she cares for now.

Finally, Noddings argues that there are limits to our obligations to care based on our proximity and ability to complete the act of caring with another. In other words, my “preparedness to care” should focus more on the inner circle relations than on, say, starving children in Africa (an example Noddings uses) because I have more of a chance of establishing and completing this caring relation with persons in the inner circle.

This discussion of obligation leads into a discussion of ethics and morality and will thus help round out the discussion on Noddings’ conception of an “ethic of care.” Historically, philosophers conceptualize ethics as a study of morality. Noddings, a philosopher, argues accordingly, “To behave ethically is to behave under the guidance of an acceptable and justifiable account of what it means to be moral” (pg. 27). Therefore, Noddings’ ethic of care “is not [based] on judgment, not [based] on our acts, but [based]

on how we meet the other morally...[and] our insistence on caring for the other” (p. 5). As an active virtue, this morality requires two feelings: natural caring (like a mother caring for her child) and a feeling of “I must.” I find this feeling of “I must” to be particularly compelling because of Noddings’ recognition that this feeling may be characterized by two different cases: (1) when the “I must” equals an “I want to” and (2) when the “I must” is complicated by a resistance to care for the other (given a personal dislike or possible hatred for the other). With this caveat in number two, Noddings readdresses one’s obligation to others by offering, “We are never free to abandon our preparedness to care, but if we are meeting those in our inner circles of relation as one’s-caring, we have no obligation to summon the “I must” if there is no possibility of completion in the other” (pg. 86).

To round out her description of this ethic, Noddings claims, “For an ethic of caring, the problem of justification is not concentrated upon justified action in general. We are not *justified*, we are *obligated* to do what is required to maintain and enhance caring” (pg. 95). Further, since it is impossible in Noddings’ view to achieve “universal love,” “universal justice,” or “universal principles,” “everything depends upon the will to be good, to remain in caring relation to the other” (pg. 105).

Critiquing an ethic of care. This final section regarding the “ethic” of caring leads into a critique of this work and provides some of the connections I want to make with the literature on justice through the work of Seyla Benhabib (1992). While the issue of referring to this as an “ethic” of caring is an important one, I do not want to become overly bogged down in a discussion of “ethics” per se as it may lead us tangentially away from my ultimate goal of revealing the theory for critical service learning. Suffice to say

at this juncture that a decision to refer to this as an “ethic” of care is an interesting, if not, ironic, turn of phrase since “ethic” implies the general and “care” implies the particular. Although Noddings attempts to cast caring as a “moral orientation,” she is often critiqued for the connection she draws between ethics and caring. This connection is interesting based on Noddings assumption that there can exist no *universal* (or *general*) love, justice, or principles. Moreover, according to Thayer-Bacon (2000), Noddings runs the risk of being criticized for a theory that is either too dichotomous or inadequate. Since ethics is a study of morality—what is right or what is good—this would imply that “caring” is based on an assumption of essentialism and/or absolutism (e.g., absolute Truth), which it is not intended to be. Therefore, in my own use of this concept, I will only refer to it as “caring” in order to provide the particular, relational focus that I believe is necessary for a theory of critical service learning.

This contrast between the universal (or general) and particular that I have now staged provides the backdrop against which I can posit a theory for critical service learning. Just as my review of Rawls and Walzer left me with the feeling that the work was too theoretical or too general for application, Nodding’s conception of caring concerns me in an opposite way: that it is too particular. Like Thayer-Bacon (2000), I fear that the “particularist perspective [of caring] obscures the large-scale social context in which these care relations are embedded” (pg. 28). Therefore, what I seek in a theory for critical service learning is reconciliation between the particular and the universal.

Alison Jaggar (1995) summarizes this tension and provides a nice transition to the work of Benhabib by both extolling and critiquing the concept of caring by the following two statements. Jaggar first argues,

Care's insistence on personal engagement and individual responsibility is a useful corrective to the impersonality, insensitivity and frequent ineffectiveness of social engineering. It reminds us not only that a new society needs new people to make it work, but that social change requires individual action and challenges each of us to act now rather than wait for the authorities or the revolution (pg. 196).

But, Jaggar also cautions us by further arguing,

Despite the virtues of care thinking, its emphasis on the quality of individual relations seems to preclude its addressing the structural oppositions between the interests of social groups that make caring difficult or unlikely between members of those groups. Similarly care's reliance on individual efforts to meet individual needs disregards the social structures that make this virtually impossible in many cases. Care thinking seems unable to focus on the social causes of many individual problems such as widespread homelessness and hunger (pg. 197).

Therefore, I turn to the work of Benhabib to help provide the reconciliation between social justice (the universal) and caring (the particular).

The "Generalized and Concrete Other". An attempt to articulate the theories of social justice and caring into a cohesive discourse reveals some of the classic binaries of our time: the modern vs. the postmodern, the universal vs. the particular, autonomy vs. nurturance, independence vs. bonding, and the rational vs. the relational. As I have come from a mostly critical past, I venture into the more postmodern, particular, and relational realm with some caution, but with a belief that it is a necessary corrective (like Jaggar,

1995) to the more abstract, disembodied notions of the Enlightenment ideals (of which social justice and critical pedagogy is a part). If we consider, again, the ahistorical, universal Enlightenment ideals of modernism to exist at one pole of a continuum, and a form of postmodernism that supports situated, historical, local ideals at the other, I am attempting to articulate a theory for critical service learning that operates somewhere in between. To facilitate this articulation, I turn to the work of Benhabib.

According to Benhabib (1992),

Among the legacies of modernity which today need restructuring but not wholesale dismantling are moral and political universalisms, committed to the now seemingly “old-fashioned” and suspect ideals of universal respect for each person in virtue of their humanity; the moral autonomy of the individual; economic equality and *social justice*; democratic participation; the most extensive civil and political liberties compatible with principles of justice; and the formation of *solidaristic human associations* (pg. 2, my emphasis added).

Benhabib seeks what she refers to as a “post-Enlightenment interactive universalism” (as opposed to a “substitutionalist universalism” that she claims Rawls embraces), and she argues that this universalism would be “interactive not legislative, cognizant of gender difference, not gender blind, contextually sensitive and not situation indifferent” (pg. 3). This interactive universalism seems to strike right at the heart of the modern vs. postmodern debate and perhaps creates a new direction to consider for people like myself who straddle the fence between the universal and the particular. Problematic, of course, throughout my entire study is that sense of paternalism that can be inherent in any

discussion of “universals,” especially when considering, in my case, the relationship of the ‘server’ and the ‘served’. That is, if we only theorize at the academic level and seldom, if ever, engage in practical applications of the theory, we risk minimalizing (or, at worst, obliterating) the particularity of individual experience in favor of some overarching, universal theory. The particular voices of those suffering at the hands of structural oppression must be deeply considered and listened to—and this can only be done through acts of care (like that offered in service learning).

In order to help me reconcile this gap between the universal and the particular, I have looked to Benhabib’s description of the “generalized” and “concrete” other, which provides the backdrop against which I posit a theory for critical service learning. As an extension of Hannah Arendt’s “enlarged mentality”—where one is willing to try to understand or reason from another’s point of view or even anticipate communication with people yet to come—Benhabib articulates an insightful epistemology that considers the “generalized” *and* the “concrete” other. “According to the standpoint of the ‘generalized other’,” Benhabib claims,

Each individual is a moral person endowed with the same moral rights as ourselves; this moral person is also a reasoning and acting being, capable of a sense of justice, of formulating a vision of the good and of engaging in activity to pursue the latter (pg. 10).

Benhabib adds, from this standpoint of the generalized other,

Our relation to the other is governed by the norms of formal equality and reciprocity. . . . The moral categories that accompany such interactions are

those of right, obligation, and entitlement, and the corresponding moral feelings are those of respect, duty, worthiness, and dignity (pg. 159).

In contrast, from the standpoint of the concrete other, Benhabib posits

We abstract from what constitutes our commonality and focus on individuality. We seek to comprehend the needs of the other, his or her motivations, what s/he searches for, and what s/he desires. Our relation to the other is governed by the norms of equity and complementary reciprocity: each is entitled to expect and to assume from the other forms of behavior through which the other feels recognized and confirmed as a concrete, individual being with specific needs, talents, and capacities. . .

The moral categories that accompany such interactions are those of responsibility, bonding, and sharing. The corresponding moral feelings are those of love, care and sympathy, and solidarity (pg. 159).

I believe this notion of the generalized vs. concrete other not only blends appropriately with Miller's "solidaristic communities," but also advances the potential for a critical service learning theory to work toward a "caring" solidarity. By attempting to understand the structural issues of injustice that oppress the generalized other (from a critical/modernist/rational standpoint), critical service learning allows us to make a local, practical, and contextual intervention with concrete others. Therefore, we no longer stand behind a "veil of ignorance," but rather awaken to injustice firsthand. We seek the understanding and experience of the oppressed (from a relational/particular/postmodernist standpoint—thereby augmenting our "enlarged

mentality”) in order to work together in caring solidarity on a practical project toward ameliorative change—the heart of praxis in a cultural studies project.

Caring Solidarity

To be clear, then, I claim that critical service learning is both a framework and a theory. The framework, which is an articulation of three pedagogies and a cultural studies discourse provides the “how” for launching service learning initiatives. The theory, which may more specifically be thought of as *service learning for caring solidarity*, provides the “why.” An agenda of “service learning for social justice” may be putting the proverbial cart before the horse and may, to some degree, be nothing more than a paternalistic extension of the status quo. By this I mean, service learning that works for caring solidarity continually agonizes over, wrestles with, and problematizes the relationship of the ‘server’ and the ‘served’ and considers how ameliorative change can be activated *together*. While Masucci and I, along with others, would like to see this relationship democratized or the possibility to exist for ‘servers’ of varying privilege to serve others of varying privilege, the fact remains that the hierarchy of power and privilege rests with the ‘server’ currently. Thus, any type of work toward social justice that does not consider the ‘served’ and what they want or need, may only exacerbate an already abominable situation. Therefore, I argue that the most appropriate goal for service learning is caring solidarity where the more polar notions of social justice and care are articulated within the frame of Benhabib’s theory of the generalized and concrete other.

A caring solidarity extrapolates from the social justice pole the notion of solidarity, particularly Miller’s conception of solidaristic communities where the

relationship is based, in a more general way, on need, and works toward a common understanding of how these needs can be met. Social justice, however, is thought about much more concretely as it emerges in communication with “concrete” others, rather than solely through abstract theoreticization. Additionally, a caring solidarity gleans from the caring pole the notion of “feeling with” and “engrossment” with a particular “cared for.” The notion of “the chains for caring,” however, is extended beyond Noddings’ limitations of proximity as critical service learning advocates for a definitive shift outside of any type of “inner circle” and keeps the larger, more structural view in focus as a backdrop to individual relationships. These poles, then, come together within the frame of Benhabib’s generalized and concrete other as critical service learning has us consider both the universal and the particular at once through both theory (considering the structural issues of injustice through study) and practice (working alongside those facing injustice) in a new discursive praxis of *caring solidarity*. In seeking caring solidarity I believe ‘servers’ and ‘served’ can reach a shared understanding of the world and, subsequently, work together to achieve this ameliorative change (which may eventually move beyond the scope of any one service learning project, critical or otherwise).

As I see it, we, as citizens of the most powerful and wealthy country in the world have three options: (1) do nothing—thereby complicitously (or actively) allowing injustice to proliferate in the world; (2) seek more just and caring conditions *for* the oppressed—thereby, perhaps naively, promoting and prolonging the status quo, and reminding the oppressed of their position of voicelessness and powerlessness; or (3) seek more just and caring conditions *with* the oppressed—thereby participating in a shared communion of ideas toward ameliorative change. In positing and promoting a service

learning for caring solidarity, I claim that social justice is not possible without caring and intimate dialog between ‘servers’ and ‘served’ in a service learning project. Out of a caring solidarity, then, this evolving dialectic might create the possibility for a more just and caring condition to emerge. Much in line with this agenda for a service learning for caring solidarity, Benhabib concludes, “[The] qualities of civic friendship and solidarity mediate between the standpoints of the ‘generalized’ and the ‘concrete others,’ by teaching us to reason, to understand and to appreciate the standpoint of ‘collective concrete others’” (p. 10-11).

Is a caring solidarity possible for service learning projects in general or for my project in Jamaica in particular? I am not sure. Will associations between ‘servers’ and ‘served’ still be marked by some hierarchy of power and privilege? Probably. What should we do about it? At least commit ourselves to avoid choosing to do nothing or to seek more just and caring conditions *for* the ‘served’. I am committed to continually working toward caring solidarity in Jamaica and further considering how and to what extent working toward caring solidarity is possible for service learning projects in general. If caring solidarity is practically realizable, I am interested in what may come next either within the realm of service learning or beyond it.

Conclusion

We are members of each other. We belong together. That is the source of our joy in life, although, that is, as well, the source of tragedies of life, the dark side of our history, which, on all too many occasions, makes us shudder and anxious about our destiny.
(Douglas Sturm)¹⁹

¹⁹ *Solidarity and suffering: Toward a politics of relationality* (1998), pg. 7.

So what does all of this mean? Throughout the excavation of my experience and review of the literature, I have pointed to a number of the problematics that exist for service learning and how a more critical and ameliorative agenda can be found in critical service learning. There exist a number of educators who undoubtedly take a more critical and ameliorative approach in service learning; therefore, I claim nothing new in trying to move projects in this direction. Instead, I am attempting to contribute a framework and a theory that may give educators a common point of departure for an educational practice that has the potential to attack injustice, create a more critical citizen, and form caring, solidaristic partnerships between people who would have never crossed paths otherwise.

In terms of cultural studies this type of practice and theorizing shows how projects can be taken up, *practically*, answering Hall's lament and furthering the work that others (like Wright) have begun in this field. In terms of pedagogy, the framework offers a provocative blend of pedagogies, articulating Freirean, critical, and engaged pedagogies, and showing how they may work together toward achieving higher states of political clarity and a more critical consciousness. This focus on the pedagogical within critical service learning, then, hopefully contributes one example of what a pedagogy for cultural studies (Giroux, 1999) may look like.

In terms of service learning, critical service learning helps to direct projects toward more just and caring conditions in the world, suggesting that the projects selected should address issues of social injustice and social difference toward a greater understanding of the structural issues that individuals face. Focusing on the relationship of the 'server' and the 'served' is particularly important in this vein, as service projects

must constantly wrestle with the hierarchy of power and privilege that exist in the partnership toward a more equitable bond.

Critical service learning also seeks to understand how service learning projects may last beyond the actual work in the project. In claiming that service learning projects should first work toward caring solidarity I am already suggesting that something must exist beyond the project if ameliorative change can occur. Could ameliorative change come about as a result of several consecutive service learning projects? Yes. But, more likely, ameliorative change will occur beyond the parameters of service learning. Thus, it is paramount that projects seek the development of a sustainable, caring, and solidaristic community (because service learning may only be a first step toward ameliorative change). Only then might we feel the caring connection to others, which allows us to continue this work outside of the project, outside of our time in school, etc. Then, we will have common interests with our partner and hopefully continue to work together on the change we want to see in the world. This is where the role of the teacher is paramount and why teachers need to be trained in how to launch service learning projects in their own preparation programs if we want projects to seek such radical ends. Just as teachers prepare students to use what they learn in school in their future *occupations*, teachers should also continue to help prepare students to use what they learn in school to live more critical, democratic, and self-actualized *lives*. Critical service learning is a crucial component towards this end. Using the practical and theoretical tools gleaned from critical service learning projects and continuing to work toward these solidaristic communities with their service partners, this more liberating experience is possible for

our students. I know I will continue to seek these ends for my students and our Jamaican partners in upcoming projects.

By putting forward both this framework and theory for service learning—critical service learning—I, once again, acknowledge its evolving nature. But, as Gayatri Spivak (in Landry & MacLean, 1996) and Stuart Hall (1992) point out, there must be a time when our theorizing and deconstructing ends and we take up the practice. My theorizing and deconstructing ends here for now in favor of the practice I write about in the following chapters. As part of this ongoing praxis and in the spirit of cultural studies, however, I will return to this framework and theory in order to inform it and evolve it further from the results of this ethnography of a service learning experience.

CHAPTER 3

EXPLORING THE CONTEXT: MAPPING THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPES OF JAMAICA

*We inhabit a small garden, collectively and individually, but the bitter weed of King
Sugar sprouts back in many forms of the same bitter weed
of capitalism. (George Beckford and Michael Witter)²⁰*

So far in this dissertation, I have discussed the literature on service learning and excavated my experience with it, demonstrating how I continue to seek, through the evolution of critical service learning, a more caring and solidaristic practice and theory for activating and completing these projects. In the development of critical service learning, over these first two chapters, I have pointed to some of my experience in Jamaica, briefly recounting instances of working alongside my team in schools and orphanages and recalling an epiphanic meeting with a Jamaican professor. Now, in an effort to better develop the context of our service learning project, I use this opportunity to explore the cultural landscapes of Jamaica: the historical, religious, political, economic, and social.²¹

By particularly naming the historical, religious, political, economic, and social aspects of Jamaican society as cultural landscapes, I acknowledge and argue the following. First, I acknowledge that these constructs are multi-perspectival. In the acknowledgement of the multiple viewpoints of these aspects, I admit the subjectivity of

²⁰ *Small Garden . . . Bitter Weed: Struggle and Change in Jamaica*, 1980, pg. xviii.

²¹ Since several volumes of dissertations could be written about these aspects of Jamaica, my intention is not to “fully” develop all of these. Instead, I treat these cultural landscapes in a way that provides sufficient introduction to Jamaica for my students in PHI 220: Service Learning. This example of contextual treatment for the theory step of critical service learning will vary from teacher to teacher and project to project. The following is intended as an example of how one might introduce students to an already-developed project.

my forthcoming account. In addition I also acknowledge their ever-changing nature and how they consistently flow into and inform one another. And, second, I argue, that these constructs, as an articulation, form, in part, what is Jamaican “culture.” Here, I consider both Raymond Williams’ (1983) treatment of the term culture as “the relations between general human development and a particular way of life” (pg. 91) as it relates to both *material* and *symbolic* production, and also Peter McLaren’s (1994) definition of culture as “a set of practices, ideologies, and values from which different groups draw to make sense of the world” (pg. 180). While considering Williams’ and McLaren’s claims about the meaning of culture and attempting to map the cultural landscape through a historical, religious, political, economic, and social understanding of Jamaica, I, again, note that fissures and inconsistencies exist given what can only be a subjective, albeit rigorously researched, account and examination. This mapping, however, does help provide a more grounded context for this trip and for future interventions.

As I noted in the previous chapter, an important aspect to the theory stage of critical service learning is not only examining the macro theoretical issues, but localizing the theory to the particular intervention. I use this chapter to demonstrate how Professor Mark and I attempted to map the Jamaican cultural landscapes with these theories by covering both general *and* specific theoretical issues that affect Jamaica.

To begin this mapping, I briefly summarize the interventions made over the first four years to Jamaica in order to provide some background as to what has been done and who has been involved with these projects on both the Jamaican and the United States (US) side. Next, I review four theoretical concepts—two sets of dialectical pairs—that I have wrestled with in these continuing interventions, which I believe have ongoing

implications for our current project and service learning in general: *hegemony* and *counter-hegemony*, *reproduction* and *resistance*. Following the coverage of these four general concepts, I divide the remainder of this chapter into the five cultural landscapes: the historical, religious, political, economic, and social. As I examine each of these, I make efforts to localize the general issues of hegemony, counter-hegemony, reproduction, and resistance into how I see them playing out in our intervention.

Our History in Jamaica

As I noted in the first chapter, my trips to Jamaica began in 1998 as a secondary school teacher in an all-female Catholic high school in Cincinnati. As our itinerary the first year had been arranged by the organization that sponsored my friend's mission trip (that I discussed in chapter 2), we were heavily reliant on their guidance to specific sites for our service projects. As we did not have a firmly articulated plan as to what our "project" was, we just cast our trip as one of wanting to go and help in anyway we could in schools and orphanages. Help, we found, was something most of these places were looking for—along with long lists of supplies. During that first year, which was an intervention of eleven days, ten students, five adult chaperones, and myself visited several orphanages and two schools. Unfortunately, most of the places we visited were not expecting our arrival as the individual who had designed our itinerary had not bothered to inform any of these locations that we were coming. I caught on to this pattern by the third day and began to reconfigure our itinerary based on our limited experience in the few places we had been. During that first trip, then, we focused our attention on three orphanages and two churches, where we regularly attended services at night and on the weekend. As a result of this first experience, I knew we would be back.

Plans for the second trip began taking place shortly after our return to the US as thoughts of what we had seen and experienced remained near. Five of the students who had gone the first year, now seniors, signed up to go again and agreed to serve as leaders of the many students who were to sign up for this second trip—a trip we thematized as “Mission 99.” Preparations for this second trip were much more involved as we planned our own itinerary with the organizations we had visited the previous year and engaged in fund-raising activities to help offset our own expenses and to raise money and supplies for the needs of the orphanages and one school (affiliated with one of the churches we had visited). We successfully raised quite a bit of money and awareness regarding the trip and twenty-one students, along with seven adult chaperones and myself, made the second intervention in Jamaica. This trip focused on the three main orphanages we had visited the first year, bringing supplies, changing diapers, feeding, clothing, and playing with children. In these orphanages, like the first year, we encountered rooms full of children with little support staff to handle the overwhelming needs of the children. We also had an opportunity to teach in the school that was housed inside one of the churches just east of Montego Bay. Here we encountered a school/church covered with a tin roof, supported by concrete block walls, and filled to the brim with homemade desks, fifty children, and one teacher.

Recalling my critique of this “mission” theme and my meeting with the Christian group outside of a church during the second year, plans for the third year did not include any hint of mission. During this third year, we framed our trip as one of “building bridges” and I developed a research study (as I had begun my cultural studies coursework by this time) designed to understand Jamaicans’ impressions of mission and service

groups from the US. A group of eight of us went that third year—six of whom had been previously—and we stayed for twenty-eight days, working in two of the orphanages and the church/school. For this intervention, we again brought supplies to the orphanages and school and taught a week's worth of self-developed lessons at the school.

The fourth intervention in Jamaica was completed by a team of six, all of whom had been to Jamaica at least once. During this fourth trip, we stayed for two weeks and, again, worked with the same three placements we had previously and began work with a new school, started by a former teacher at the church/school. Alongside this work, our team also made our first trip to Kingston, the capital of Jamaica, where we met the professor I have spoken about over the first two chapters. It was this intervention that helped to frame the trip that involves this ethnography. While working with the orphanages and schools on this fourth trip, we jointly planned what our next intervention should entail and made arrangements to stay in regular contact over the year as their needs and the makeup of our team became clearer.

The framework of our jointly developed plans for this current intervention is discussed at length in chapter 4 as I reveal my methodology for this ethnography. From the numerous data collection strategies used in this study (interviews, participant observation, document procurement, photographs, audio-tapes, email correspondence, student evaluations, student papers, and journals), I tell the story of this ethnography—what actually happened—in chapter 5. Now that I have offered an abridged history of our trips to Jamaica, I turn my attention more fully to the present intervention and use the remainder of this chapter: (1) to discuss several concepts that framed this (and past) experiences and (2) to develop a more contextual understanding of Jamaica.

Four Theoretical Concepts: Hegemony vs. Counter-hegemony and Reproduction vs. Resistance

Over the last five years, I have wrestled with a number of issues that remain at the fore of my theorizing about our involvement in Jamaica. Although other issues are certainly present, and inform our ongoing work there, hegemony, counter-hegemony, reproduction, and resistance continue to surface as important theoretical constructs that need to be better understood vis-à-vis our evolving relationship with the Jamaican schools and orphanages, in particular, and the relationship of Jamaica and the US, in general. Particularly while preparing for my third visit to Jamaica, as I initiated the use of my cultural studies toolbox, I began to take a more critical stance regarding our ongoing interventions. After completing a series of interviews with an administrator and employee of a school and an administrator and employee of an orphanage that third year, I realized that our relationship with our Jamaican partners was a complex dynamic framed by (perhaps among others) issues of hegemony, counter-hegemony, reproduction, and resistance. As a result of this realization, then, I have wondered to what extent our team is acting as counter-hegemonic and resistive agents vs. hegemonic and reproductive ones. In the remainder of this section I provide general definitions of these terms. In the sections to follow, as I develop the historical, religious, political, economic, and social landscapes, I localize these theoretical constructs and discuss how they specifically frame and inform our complex relationship with our Jamaican partners.

Hegemony

Hegemony is a concept most fully developed by Antonio Gramsci (1971). Using Gramsci as his starting point, Randolph Persaud (2001), a scholar on counter-hegemony in Jamaica, argues,

Hegemony designates a system of social control, and specifically the control of the subaltern classes and groups, without the preponderant use of force/coercion. . . .The strategic purpose of hegemony is to preempt the possibility of any fundamental challenge to a particular social order of the social system in general. . . .Hegemony, therefore, is a moment in a war of position insofar as it organizes resistance to any fundamental transformation of the production structure and attendant social relations (pgs. 37-38).

In other words, hegemony is the way a dominant elite persuades the remainder of society—particularly the oppressed or underclass—to conform in prescribed ways without the use of physical force. For example, in the state of Tennessee, where I am completing this doctoral research, there exists no state income tax. State programs are funded by an 9.25% sales tax that is added to all purchases (including food and clothes). While the poorer residents of this state would benefit greatly from a graduated state income tax coupled with a reduced sales tax, polls consistently indicate they would vote against its passage. Additionally, in turn, these same residents continue to vote for more conservative leaders who campaign against the income tax.

This prescription of domination—promoted from, as Stuart Hall (1996) describes, several ‘positions’ (e.g., television, newspapers, textbooks) rather than as one general

‘maneuver’ (e.g., martial law or dictatorship)—is, subsequently, internalized as ‘commonsense’ or ‘normal reality’ on the part of the subordinated (Williams, 1983). Continuing the example above, then, the poorer residents of Tennessee may believe (or may have been convinced to believe) that more government, in the form of a state income tax, equals more control of their life. Thus, hegemony is termed “reciprocally confirming” since it becomes consensual on the part of those subordinated to it (Apple, 1990). Peter McLaren (1994) further adds to an understanding of this prescription of domination by arguing,

Hegemony refers to the maintenance of domination not by the sheer exercise of force, *but primarily through consensual social practices, social forms, and social structures produced in specific sites such as the church, the state, the school, mass media, the political system, and the family* (pg. 182, author’s emphasis).

Therefore, those subordinated in the oppressive dynamic created by hegemony often unknowingly participate in their own subordination: no graduated income tax means the poor will continue to pay more in taxes through the general 9.25% sales tax. However, hegemony, as both Hall and McLaren point out, is never about pure domination or pure victory. It is never a “zero sum game” since people can and do resist. Enter counter-hegemony.

Counter-hegemony

While one of the goals of the dominant elite is to preempt any resistive move on the part of the subordinated, resistance theorists (Hall, 1996; Giroux, 1983a, 1983b; McLaren, 1994; and Persaud, 2001) argue that this domination is never complete.

According to Robert Cox (in the foreword to Persaud, 2001), “Hegemony implies resistance” (pg. xi). In fact, just as hegemony is a war of position taken up on many fronts, counter-hegemonic practices are also involved in this positioning, as Persaud claims, “proceeding from one trench to another.” Thus, through this trench warfare, or dialectic, in which hegemony and counter-hegemony appear to be engaged, Persaud encourages us to consider how and to what extent each informs the other. That is, while the subordinated appear to be dominated and accepting of a manufactured reality, one must not lose sight of the potential agency present in each individual to deconstruct the ‘taken for granted’ or ‘commonsense’ in order to foster transformation and activate ameliorative change. For example, one should critically consider to what extent Tennessee’s poor are acting with agency by blocking the passage of—as they see it—any *additional* taxes. This potentially counter-hegemonic practice, then, creates a contested terrain over social and cultural forms, meanings, and practices, and, in turn, informs the ongoing dialectic with hegemony.

Reproduction

Given my connection to education and the importance I see for service learning to act as an ameliorative agent, I now turn my attention to a discussion of a second dialectical pair: reproduction and resistance. While similarities exist between this pair and the pair above—hegemony and counter-hegemony—this discussion is warranted since reproduction and resistance provide, in part, the practice by which hegemony and counter-hegemony are exercised.

Henry Giroux (1983a, 1983b) supplies an overarching view of reproduction from his extensive research of critical theorists such as Louis Althusser (1971), Bowles and

Gintis (1976), Pierre Bourdieu (1977), and Basil Bernstein (1977). Giroux (1983a) claims,

Reproduction theories focus on how power is used to mediate between schools and the interest of capital. . . .[S]uch theories focus on how schools utilize their material and ideological resources to reproduce the social relations and attitudes needed to sustain the social divisions of labor necessary for the relations of production” (pg. 76).

In other words, reproduction theory purports that schools systematically reproduce whatever inequities exist in the broader society (Allison, 1995). As an arm of hegemony, then, reproduction acts in the interest of the dominant elite in order to foster a sense of pre-determination or immutability of the stratified society to the subordinated. This transference of ‘commonsense’ is then conferred to each subsequent generation (through the schooling process, the mass media, families, churches, etc.); thus reproducing the inequities *ad infinitum* into the future. Using the example of Tennessee, one can easily see how an ideology of “more government equals more interference and/or more control” might be reproduced generation after generation, particularly through the medium of the family.

Resistance

However, reproduction, like hegemony, is overly-deterministic. Inequities are not simply reproduced without being contested. As McLaren (1994) reminds us, “People do resist” (pg. 183). Therefore, just as reproduction acts as an arm of hegemony, resistance acts in the same way as a counter-hegemonic practice.

By deconstructing the reproduction theories of Althusser, Bowles and Gintis, Bourdieu, and Bernstein, Giroux leads us toward a new, more rigorous theory of resistance for education—one with a moral and political interest for “radical consciousness-raising” and “collective critical action”—in order to subvert the status quo. “The oppressed,” according to Giroux (1983a), “[should not] be viewed as simply passive in the face of domination” (pg. 108). Instead, he argues,

[This] notion of resistance points to the need to understand more thoroughly the complex ways in which people mediate and respond to the interface between their own lived experiences and structures of domination and constraint (pg. 108).

In the case of the poorer Tennessee residents, then, one would want to dig deeper below just the surface issue of the state income tax in order to determine more about why many vote against its passage. It is instructive to stop and note here that resistance can lead to both ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ outcomes. For example, Tennessee residents’ resistance to a state income tax will not necessarily lead to an economically beneficial outcome. As a more general example, in terms of schooling, students may resist in the form of dropping out of school. Dropping out, however, seldom leads to any type of positive change. Thus, in using the ‘educational’ dialectic of reproduction and resistance, I want to emphasize the more transformative, ‘positive’ possibilities of resistance and counter-hegemony that lead to ameliorative change.

Although the previous subsections provide only brief explanations of rather complicated concepts, the above introduction helps lay the overall groundwork as I begin to map the cultural landscapes of Jamaica. In the sections to follow I show how I see

them specifically playing out in relations between the US and Jamaica, in general, and between our team and our Jamaican partners, in particular. While other concepts could be considered and may apply to these interventions, these two sets of dialectical pairs have related specifically to my theorization and reflection on past trips. Additionally, in my attempt to develop a more caring and solidaristic framework and theory for service learning, I believe these four concepts are central to this realization.

The Historical Landscape

Who controls the past now, controls the future. Who controls the present now, controls the past (Rage against the Machine)²²

This initial section, devoted to the historical landscape of Jamaica, portends to give a broad overview of Jamaican history from the arrival of the Spanish Conquistadors to the present day, where new ‘capitalist’ conquistadors have taken over. Each of the historical benchmarks pointed to in this section are more fully developed in the four cultural landscapes to follow—religion, politics, economics, and social—as they all flow into and out of these periods.

I begin my survey of Jamaican history with the arrival of Christopher Columbus in the late 15th century. Shortly after Columbus’ ‘discovery’ and dealings with the indigenous people, the Arawaks, the slave trade in the Caribbean begins. In regards to this trade, George Beckford and Michael Witter (1980) note, “From as early as 1517, Africans were brought to the island as household slaves to tend to the personal needs of their Spanish masters” (pg. 14). Obiagele Lake (1998) additionally notes, “Indigenous

²² From the song, “Testify,” on *The Battle for Los Angeles*. NY: Sony Music Entertainment, 1999.

Arawaks were also enslaved and subsequently wiped out by disease, terrorism, and inhuman labor conditions” (pg. 17).

While the slave trade continued, the English took control of the island from the Spanish in 1655. Lake comments on this transition and adds that the English continued an active trade in slaves in order to develop a thriving plantation economy.

As was the case on other Caribbean islands, African slaves fueled capitalistic production and advanced the development of European economies. Between 1700 and 1786 more than 600,000 Africans were transported from the west coast of Africa (pg. 17).

The original crop that fueled this thriving, capitalistic plantation economy was sugar—a crop that would lead this economy for more than four centuries.

After a series of slave rebellions in the latter half of the 18th century and beginning of the 19th century, emancipation finally came in 1838. Providing a reasonable hypothesis regarding why emancipation may have come at this time, Beckford and Witter (1980) argue,

Emancipation had come as a result of the struggles of the slaves for freedom when shifting alliances of political and economic forces within Britain left the West Indian planter class too weak to defend its ownership of property and people. The slave plantation economy was now transformed into a capitalist plantation economy (pg. 39).

Economic emancipation for the Jamaicans, however, was not as soon to come as this period of history was marked, and continues to be marked, by high unemployment. At the time of emancipation, most of the land was still owned by Europeans, so freed slaves

often remained closely tethered to their former ‘master’s’ land, working as sharecroppers and tenant farmers.

After nearly one hundred years of freedom from slavery, but continued economic bondage and terrorism, Jamaica’s first political party surfaces: the People’s Political Party (PPP), begun by a black activist, Marcus Garvey. Garvey’s party was soon followed less than ten years later with the formation of the People’s National Party (PNP) in 1938, headed by Norman Manley, and the Jamaican Labour Party (JLP) in 1943, headed by Alexander Bustamante.

Around this time of political developments, bauxite (an ore that goes into the making of aluminum) became Jamaica’s leading cash producer. It was also around this time of political developments, 1944, that England granted universal suffrage to adult Jamaicans. Independence followed eighteen years later on August 6, 1962. Since independence, control of Jamaica has continued to switch hands between the conservative JLP, which ran Jamaica in both the 1960s and 80s, and the more liberal PNP, which ran Jamaica in both the 1970s and 90s, and which continue to be at the helm of Jamaica presently.

While this more liberal party currently leads Jamaica, the Jamaican people are still hampered by high unemployment (anywhere from 16-31% depending on the source), austere social policies (i.e., limited access to education and health care), and a strong desire to modernize (to mirror the West²³). This is the historical moment at which our team enters Jamaica.

²³ I should note here that my use of “West” reflects the language of most of the scholars cited in this section. A more accurate depiction, as some other scholars, particularly scholars on Central and South America, point out would be “North” as well as “West.”

The Religious Landscape

“Faith is verified, made true, when it is informed by love solidarity, hunger and thirst for justice” (Leonardo and Clodovis Boff)²⁴

Religion is an interesting, if complex and complicated, terrain in Jamaica. Recall from the first chapter that these interventions to Jamaica began under the auspices of a “mission” trip. It was not until the middle of the second trip (a trip we designated as “Mission 99”), confronted by the young group of Protestants from a Christian church in Tennessee, that I began to understand the problematic nature of “mission.” As these Christians attempted to fill our team with the Holy Spirit, informed us that our “mission” could not be successful unless we were also “saving souls by fire,” and revealed lists of names of people they had “saved” while on the island, I wondered to what extent our Jamaican partners were receiving (and perceiving) us in the same way—a perception I wanted to remain as distant from as possible.

After this second year in Jamaica, I took part in the service learning experience at the graduate level that I spoke of in chapter 2, volunteering in the library project in Winton Homes, initiated by a wealthy Christian church in Knoxville, TN. From our experience at the library, my partners, Doug Molnar and Matt Masucci, and I, again, developed the notion of a three-pronged (evangelistic, mission, and cultural studies) approach to service that we perceived was taking place at the library. In our subsequent publication, Masucci and I (2000b) argued that an *evangelistic* approach to service is taken out of a desire to serve one’s own needs. In fact, the needs of the recipient are seldom taken into consideration as this approach to service is more about what the

²⁴ From Liberation Theology, *Philosophy of Religion*, 2000, pg. 171.

‘server’ gets out of the experience (i.e., proselytizing because one feels called to do so). This evangelistic approach to service was the stated aim of many in this wealthy, Knoxville church.

In a *mission* approach to service, the second prong, we (2000b) argued that, at least, the needs of the ‘served’ are taken into consideration, but, unfortunately, it is often only “perceived” needs that are acknowledged. That is, the ‘server’ projects needs onto the ‘served’ and works to meet those needs. In this library project, even after discovering evidence to the contrary, some members of the church remained adamant that both these children needed and their parents desired a library. Literacy is a worthwhile goal, but only if the need for it exists. Thus, many of the volunteers at the library remained deaf to some of the *stated* needs of the community.

Finally, Masucci and I argued that the third approach to service is a *cultural studies* approach. While initially naïve ourselves to the needs of this community, we, along with a couple of the more dedicated volunteers from the church continued to problematize our involvement in this project toward a more critical understanding of what could be accomplished in our relationship with the community. Sadly, our critique and recommendations from the community fell on deaf ears within the church and this particular project continues to struggle forward as a library, naïve and misguided.

As a result of this experience at the library vis-à-vis my wrestling with the evangelizing and missionizing members of the church, I further problematized my team’s role in our ongoing interventions in Jamaica and began to consider to what extent religion may be misused by mission groups from the US. As this Christianizing attitude raised a red flag in my mind for the library project, it also did for our ongoing interventions in

Jamaica, based, in part, on the fact that 76% of the population who declared affiliation with religion in the Jamaican 1982 census claimed to be Christian (Austin-Brooks, 1997). Upon further, ongoing reflections, I have wondered to what extent the US may be advancing a re-colonization effort in Jamaica by religiously indoctrinating Jamaicans for the future purposes of economic exploitation through the importation of a particular brand of Christianity. This is possible in either of two ways. One, if the people of Jamaica can be convinced (similar to how the South's brand of Christianity attempted to convince enslaved Africans and African Americans) that an impoverished condition is their lot in life—that their reward will come in heaven if they accept Jesus Christ—subsequent exploitation of labor becomes easier and cheaper. Or, two, given religion's particular ideological emphasis on merit—the more you put in the more you get out—Jamaicans may be duped into believing that advancement is possible despite the overwhelming odds or evidence to the contrary. Therefore, as one aspect of these ongoing interventions in Jamaica, I continue to explore what role religion plays: is it emancipating or enslaving—agency-inducing or reproductive of the status quo?

Support for this hypothesis, however, is not easy to come by. From a historical perspective, missionary efforts to Christianize the island have only taken place in the last 150 years or so. Both William Wedenoja (1980) and Don Robotham (1996) point out that enslaved Jamaicans were viewed as having no soul—thus, redemption was not necessary. Not until shortly after emancipation did British missionaries attempt to intervene and “save” the Jamaicans. While different forms of Christianity have been introduced to Jamaica, the particular brand that is currently most prevalent in the

communities in which we work is Pentecostalism²⁵—a form of Christianity that focuses on the New Testament and an accessible Jesus, through whom salvation is personal, unmediated, and demanding of individual effort and responsibility (Wedenoja, 1980).²⁶

Regarding my hypothesis, Wedenoja states, “Pentecostalism may be, in part an ‘opiate to mollify the masses’, but as Americans discovered in the 60s, opiates may anesthetize in the short run, but they also induce enduring change in self, patterns, of relations, values, and ideas” (pg. 43). Wedenoja also suggests that the spread of Pentecostalism is actually an indigenous movement, in which *Jamaicans* have fostered its growth and advancement.

In support of this notion, Diane Austin-Broos (1997) argues

The religion in Jamaican culture today is not there simply as a legacy of the slave plantations immediate aftermath. It is informed by this legacy extensively, but its orientations and practices, including the politics of moral orders, have been reproduced and transformed by American intervention (pg. 244).

In other words, while Christianity may have been brought to them by Europeans and/or other North American groups, Jamaicans have “indigenized” (Appadurai, 1999)

Christianity—particularly, Pentecostalism—through an “ideology of lived experience”

²⁵ Even the Church of God which sponsors one of the schools where we work refers to their religion as Pentecostal.

²⁶ I have carefully pointed out that Pentecostalism is the branch of Christianity we encounter most with our service partners—whether in schools, churches, orphanages. Thus, I have excavated the literature related to this particular brand in order to talk about its relationship to our ongoing interventions. Certainly, for a more complete picture of religion in Jamaica, and its relationship to reproduction and resistance, one would want to explore other Christian religions, particularly Anglicanism, and other religious legacies in the Afro-Jamaican tradition like Myal and Revival Zion (Simpson, 1956, 1970; Barrett, 1974, 1976, 1978; Guano, 1994; Sheller, 2002).

(Comaroff, 1985). That is, Jamaicans have changed and reinterpreted Christianity through use, articulating African heritage with colonization efforts and Americanization.

This reinterpretation is referred to by Austin-Broos as the “politics of moral orders” (Foucault, 1986). According to Michel Foucault, the politics of moral orders recognizes a negotiation of meanings and values that define a subject and creates an ethic of practice and being. Thus, the original Christianity of the missionaries has been changed (or negotiated) through use by Jamaicans to make it purposeful to their own given context. While not directly addressing my hypothesis for the use of religious indoctrination as a tool for economic exploitation, Austin-Broos concludes, “While Christianity always has been in some degree *hegemonic*, it has also been a genuine site of Jamaican cultural creativity” (pg. 5, my emphasis added).

Therefore, to simply assume that religion in Jamaica is completely hegemonic and/or reproductive of the existing status quo is to dismiss my earlier explanations of hegemony and reproduction. Recall that neither is a zero sum game. Also, I must be careful that my hypothesis is not extended to make the claim that the young group of Christians that we met during our second year are knowingly active agents of the global capitalists, consciously promoting economic exploitation through Christianization. While this type of conspiracy may exist, I doubt that it occurs to any reasonable extent. Instead, it may be occurring un-consciously, which is often the way hegemony operates. However, whether conscious or unconscious, I fear the endgame may be just as insidious and terroristic.

As Persaud (2001) points out, “Churches must be understood as part of the historic *hegemonic* bloc” (pg. 86, my emphasis added). Additionally, as Howard Adams

(1989) reveals in his excellent work, *Prison of Grass*, colonization is made up of four interrelated steps: (1) Discovery, (2) Trade, (3) Missionization, and (4) (final) Colonization. Therefore, to extend Adams' argument to the Caribbean, Jamaica has once again been discovered as a source of cheap labor. Additionally, economic relations with Jamaica has consistently gone to the favor of the US, exploiting the local people through tourism and structural adjustment programs aimed at modernizing Jamaica without programs for economic development for the masses in Jamaica (e.g., better access to education and health care). Speaking on behalf of their fellow Jamaicans, Beckford and Witter (1980) remind us, "The character of [this] economy is determined by the exploitation of our people and the resources of our country, and the subservience of the national capitalist class to foreign capital" (pg. 84). In leading to the final step of (re)colonization, missionaries from the US are in Jamaica, *en masse*, proselytizing and converting Jamaicans to a faith that would have them look to the after life for the good life.

However, this (re)colonization effort that I am hypothesizing does not exist unfettered. Thus, it is necessary to consider what counter-hegemonic practices are being taken up by Jamaicans to resist this "historic hegemonic bloc."²⁷ Additionally, it is important for me, as a professed Christian, to consider the resistive and emancipating possibilities of religion. Finally, as a cultural studies scholar, it is important for me to continue to examine how service learning ('servers' and 'served' together) might act as a

²⁷ An important resistive religious component to consider for future interventions should be Rastafarianism. Given that our work does not (and has not) put us in contact with many Rastafarians, this sort of consideration remains peripheral to our particular intervention. However, for a complete comprehension of the resistive and transformative possibilities of religion in Jamaica, understanding Rastafarianism, like Myal and Revival Zion, mentioned in the previous footnote, will be an important component to a more global appreciation of this 'religious' tension. In fact, one informant, Nicholas, in this study, raises this very issue in the section of chapter 5 entitled: The Columbus Project.

counter-hegemonic agent to interrupt and transform the reproductive possibilities of religion.

Although I have never felt that our interventions have been evangelistic in nature, nor, after midway through the second trip, missionizing, this continues to be an important dynamic to be aware of. Additionally, since our team continues to work with one church (that runs one of the schools) as part of our ongoing interventions, it may be necessary to focus more attention in our partnership on the resistive possibilities for religion, particularly Christianity, we need to find out, through the “ideology of lived experience,” how our Jamaican partners have re-interpreted its potentially hegemonic message and changed it through use. This may be an interesting dynamic/dialectic to follow as we seek caring solidarity with this particular church. Finally, for me personally, in an effort to pursue a counter-hegemonic practice in my own faith, I continue to explore the possibilities of Liberation Theology toward this end. Again following in the footsteps of Paulo Freire, widely considered a liberation theologian himself, I am first impressed with Liberation Theology’s professed praxis approach to work with the oppressed: Libera[c]tion and Faithful reflection. Second, I am invigorated by its conceptualization of many types of poor: indigenous peoples, people of color, women; deprived and degraded; and the disfigured Son of God. Third, I am enlivened by Liberation Theology’s claim that ‘servers’ must move beyond “aid” (treating the poor as objects of pity, rather than subjects in partnership) and “reformism” (modernizing without development). Fourth, and final, I am motivated in its beliefs that the Bible should be read contextually and that we should begin building the “Kingdom now,” here on Earth (Boff, 1987).

The Political Landscape

“You can fool some people some of the time. But you can’t fool all the people all the time” (Bob Marley)²⁸

Politics in Jamaica is intricately linked to economics. As I discuss the recent political history of Jamaica, it is important to keep in mind that many of the issues presented will be dealt with again, and, subsequently, developed fuller, in the next section. Additionally, it is also important to note that some decisions about what areas to map, within this cultural landscape, had to be made. For such a young country, Jamaica has an interesting and rich political history. For my purposes in helping to prepare our team, I think it most instructive to consider the political life of Jamaica in the 1970s and 80s.

Recall when developing the historical landscape, I outlined how the Jamaican Labour Party (JLP) and the People’s National Party (PNP) had basically been trading control of Jamaica by the decades. I pick up, then, in 1972, when Michael Manley, son of Norman Manley (founder of the PNP), became Prime Minister of Jamaica.

Remember, also, that the PNP is the liberal alternative to the JLP. Part of what won Manley this election in 1972 was the liberal alternative he offered to the more conservative policies put in place in the 1960s that led to a high rate of unemployment: 23% (Payne, 1988). According to Persaud (2001), Manley won the ’72 election, in part, because he sought a more self-reliant Jamaica, not dependent on the West. As part of this thinking, Manley wanted to move Jamaica toward a more democratic socialist state because he believed that the underdevelopment of small states and the Third World was

²⁸ From “Get up, stand up” on *Burnin’*, Island Records, 1973.

due to the structure and operation of the capitalist world economy; thus, Manley was able to draw a connection between capitalism, colonialism, and slavery, which made him quite popular among the poor (the majority) in Jamaica.

Manley, however, not only won the favor of the poor, he also won the favor of a wide cross-section of Jamaica. According to Anthony Payne (1988), Manley could be considered a “populist,” having a genuine and extensive support, but not organized along class lines. Payne argues, “[Populism] is a weapon which synchronizes divergent class interests, achieving this by means of a fertile mix of charismatic leadership, nationalistic rhetoric, and redistributive neo-socialist ideas on economic and social issues” (pg. 67). Slogans like “Better must Come” and “Power for the people” were examples of this charismatic and nationalistic flavor in Manley’s campaign.

Manley’s slogans, however, provide some foreshadowing as to what may have been his ultimate undoing as leader of Jamaica in 1980. By 1974, Manley had declared democratic socialism as the economic policy of Jamaica, a policy that was not received well in the US. In coming to this economic scheme—democratic socialism—Payne cautions us that a few things should be kept in mind: Manley was a nationalist, an egalitarian, an *anti-Marxist*, and a believer in the reformist capability of the state. Nevertheless, once democratic socialism was declared, Manley’s popularity waned among the wealthy and middle classes. In addition, he was propagated as a threat to the interests of the US. As a result of challenging the link between democracy and socialism, Persaud argues, “The Jamaica danger lay in the fact that socialism was in the backyard of the US via the democratic choice of the people” (pg. 146). Further, by forging a

relationship with Castro in Cuba, Jamaica became a potential threat. This relationship with Cuba, according to Lake (1998),

added to his democratic socialist rhetoric and alienated local capitalists and foreign interests. Given the central place held by the United States within the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and its antipathy for Castro's Cuba, Manley's new alliance did not set well with the United States government. With the help of the JLP opposition, foreign and local elites reacted to these attempts at resource redistribution by launching a campaign to destabilize the PNP and ultimately oust it from power.

Tourism was discouraged by the American press which wreaked havoc on Jamaica's second largest foreign exchange earner (pg. 55).

While economic difficulty did, indeed, continue up to the 1976 election, this first period of Manley's leadership, according to Don Robotham (1996), was a period marked by substantial social programs: employment relief, public housing initiatives, expansion of secondary education, provision of free education at the tertiary level, and improved health services.

Manley won the 1976 election, but soon after would make the decision that would signal the death knell of his administration. Shortly after an "emergency production plan" was sought in cooperation with the people (January, 1977). Manley claimed that Jamaica would never take a loan from the IMF, stating, "We are not for sale." He made an agreement with the IMF in April, 1977 for \$75 million. Later that year, Jamaica would fail the first IMF test by 2.6% and was economically reprimanded and forced to secure another loan (with much stiffer requirements) in the amount of \$240 million. This turn to

the IMF marked the beginning of a period of *structural adjustment*, which Faye Harrison (1997) characterizes as a

recolonization of Jamaica by the “New Conquistadors”—the policies and programs of the IMF, the World Bank, and the Reagan and Bush administrations of the United States government designed to “adjust” and “stabilize” the country’s revived export economy (pg. 451).

By March, 1980, Manley broke from the IMF (after failing another test in 1979), but not before his support by the masses had completely eroded. Beckford and Witter (1980) claim that Manley’s slogan, “Power *for* the people” instead of “*to* the people,” signaled this future policy-making, claiming that perhaps Manley did not fully trust the poor black masses to lead Jamaica out of their economic difficulties. Manley lost the 1980 election in a landslide to Edward Seaga of the JLP.

Seaga’s policies were the antithesis of Manley’s early economic policies. Seaga immediately took up a policy of “exceptionalism” (making Jamaica look Western, Christian, and anti-communist). Seaga believed that “Follow[ing] the West” would lead Jamaica out of its economic difficulties (Persaud, 2001). According to Beckford and Witter, the JLP’s promise in the 1980s was one of “deliverance” from communism and poor economic decisions made by Manley in the 70s. The new path, according to the JLP, was export production, industrialization by invitation, and unfettered rule of the market. This period of the 1980s was marked by “massive loan making” with the IMF (Robotham, 1998), which resulted in restriction and reduction of the role of the state in the economy, restriction of the increase of the real wage, restoration of the ‘free market’, and assurances of a hospitable investment climate for foreign capital. Thus, according to

Beckford and Witter, the two pillars of this new regime were foreign investment and internal repression. Jamaica's economic woes never recovered under Seaga. In fact, they continued to worsen as Jamaica found itself more in debt, more out of work, and further trapped in the hegemonic web of capitalism. Jamaica would oust the JLP in the late 80s in favor of Michael Manley, once again. Due to Manley's failing health, however, PJ Patterson, Manley's foreign minister during his first terms in office, would, in short order, assume the leadership of Jamaica as prime minister—a post he continues with today.

The Economic Landscape

“The world that is satisfying to us is the same world that is utterly devastating to them” (Father Juan Luis Segundo)²⁹

The hegemony of the West over Jamaican politics is clear from the previous section. Manley's decision to turn to an economic policy of democratic socialism and to forge a relationship with Cuba was not received well by the US. As a result, the US drove down the price of bauxite and limited tourism, crippling the Jamaican economy, and eventually forcing the hand of Manley to take loans with the IMF. And, as Beckford and Witter (1980) point out, all IMF agreements are meant to keep the borrowing country within the world capitalist system—the system Jamaica remains mired in, and, I will argue, terrorized by.³⁰

²⁹ Originally in Robert McAtee Brown's (1993) *Liberation Theology: An Introductory Guide*. Louisville, KY: Westminster. Found in Paul Farmer's (1993) excellent article regarding multiaxial modes of suffering: “On Suffering and Structural Violence.”

³⁰ This terrorism was particularly evidenced in the poignant depictions of government violence perpetrated over the last twenty years (beginning with the election of the JLP in the 80s) presented by the Jamaican professor we visited with on our trip in 2001.

As was noted earlier, Jamaica remained a plantation economy up until WWII when bauxite became the leading export cash producer for Jamaica. During these early stages of Jamaica—after the Spanish conquest and during British control—direct investment was made by European metropolitan capitalists in the colony. This period, which lasted from roughly 1492-1838, was followed by a period of neocolonialism—when world capitalism became dominated by finance capital.³¹ Enter imperialism. “Imperialism,” according to Lenin, “is a system of monopolies under the control of finance capitalists (banks) which [seek] to divide the world and its resources in order to make profits” (Beckford & Witter, pg. 49). This form of neocolonialism, according to Beckford and Witter has been the “handmaiden of capitalism.” They continue,

For the world economy, imperialism meant the export of capital, and in particular from the advanced countries to the backward countries of the world economy. Capitalism was exported in search of greater profits that could be obtained with the same investment at home (pg. 33).

If slavery and colonialism made Jamaica the subservient slave-child of the West (a subservience that Manley tried to resist) the eventual loan-making with the IMF made it the puppet child (with the absentee puppeteer pulling the strings from a distance in the US and other Western capitalist economies).

Seaga’s exceptionalist policy sealed this relationship. No longer could Jamaica be in charge of its own affairs (in its short-lived ‘independence’). By 1981, Seaga had taken

³¹ Beckford and Witter (1980) refer to this neocolonialist stage as “colonialism: stage 3.” Stage 1, 1492-1655, was marked by conquest and plunder, while stage 2, 1655-1838, was characterized by the direct investment mentioned above (pg. 33). This period of neo-colonialism is a fluid one as Haitian independence stands out as a marker for the shift of stages from colonialism to neo-colonialism. For Jamaica, this period shift into neo-colonialism is probably more appropriately considered in the 1960s upon its independence.

a \$700 million loan from the IMF under fairly agreeable terms (as he was supported by the Western IMF policymakers). In addition, Seaga privatized several sectors of the economy and encouraged foreign competition, unlike Manley's policy of "We are not for sale." However different these economic plans were, Seaga's regime mirrored Manley's in at least one way: they both failed IMF tests. By 1983, Jamaica had again failed an IMF test and was forced to put more austere and regressive policies into place. These IMF loans and subsequent austerity measures led to a period of structural adjustment and a consistent reproduction of economic woes.

According to Anthony Payne (1988), there are five elements of structural adjustment: (1) tight monetary policies (e.g., devaluation of dollar and tax increases), (2) resource transfer from domestic to export production, (3) import deregulation to hopefully encourage competition from foreign markets, (4) incomes policies intended to strengthen the capitalist sector, (5) and borrowing (further building in dependence). While these structural adjustment programs (and austere requirements of the IMF) claim to assist in development, often they result in even more depressed conditions, particularly for small farmers and local producers who cannot compete cost-wise with larger, trans-national corporations. Additionally, these programs often result in reduced funding of education and health care, which deleteriously affects the lives of the masses of poor people in Jamaica.

In our work in the orphanages and schools, we work with those whose lives have been altered by these policies. While the IMF loans have paid, in part, for a new building for one of these orphanages, the lingering effects of structural adjustment and its terroristic attack on most social programs, has not 'adjusted' the lives of most Jamaicans

for the better. Payne (1988) thusly concludes that what the Jamaican economic collapse shows is that structural adjustment does not [and probably cannot] stimulate an economy by deregulating imports, switching to an export economy, and constantly borrowing.

One has to question, then, given the earlier claims that hegemony is never a zero sum game, what counter-hegemonic practices have been launched or what resistive measures can be taken up in the future? Persaud (2001) offers at least one perspective, arguing, “Despite its small size, relative weakness, and structural dependence, Jamaican foreign policy during the 1972-1980 period was quite forceful, challenging as it did some of the entrenched structures of power” (pg. 206). Beckford and Witter (1980) also offer us some counter-hegemonic possibilities from the past (again, considering if Manley had put more faith in the people). In their economic plan Beckford and Witter advocated for labor intensive techniques and mobilization of artisan and community labor as the way to bring about a transition to socialism that could provide: adequate food, adequate shelter, clothing, adequate health facilities, and access to education for all Jamaicans. Certainly, this period from 1972-1980 marks a potentially counter-hegemonic era in Jamaican history along with the numerous slave rebellions in early Jamaican history and the social uprisings in the 1950s and 60s. Unfortunately, the more conservative 1980s quelled these resistive movements toward tighter control by foreign capitalists. Is it possible to recapture the counter-hegemonic spirit of the 70s in a nation consistently buffeted and terrorized by capitalistic whims? What part might our interventions play in this resistive movement? To what extent can service learning in general, through solidarity building, act as a transformative agent? These are questions that this study seeks to address, at least to some degree.

The Social Landscape

“Out of many, one people” [?]³²

I now arrive at the final cultural landscape of Jamaica: the social. Just as I had to make decisions about what to map in the previous landscape, I must also make decisions here. In order to prepare our team for this upcoming intervention, Professor Mark and I decided to focus our attention on two aspects: the white/brown/black color divide and family life. These two aspects are particularly instructive given the macro-theoretical concepts that I introduced earlier, since white/brown leadership of Jamaica has served as a hegemonic force and family life is a strong aspect of Jamaican life that influences each new generation.

The White/Brown/Black Divide

In terms of the color divide, it is instructive to consider Jamaica at the time of emancipation. According to Beckford and Witter (1980), the post-emancipation class system broke down as follows (from top to bottom in five tiers): White European plantocracy; Merchants: foreign-born, Syrian, Chinese; Mulatto middle-class; agro-proletariat; and Jamaican peasantry: ex-slaves. Obviously, in this post-emancipation, triangle scheme, Whites, who were a significant minority, assumed the upper tier. Next, in slightly larger numbers, Merchants, who were considered “socially White” assumed the next tier. Below them, the Mulatto middle-class emerged. This middle class is the “Brown” in the white/brown/black divide that I refer to. This class largely emerged from the rape of African slave women by their White masters. Below this Brown, middle-class

³² Motto found on the Jamaican Crest that has been problematized by critical Jamaican social theorists. Given the wide economic disparity among rich and poor Jamaicans and the hierarchical division of society based on color that the first part of this section covers, one has to question what “one people” really means; thus, I have inserted the question mark.

group, a Black agro-proletariat emerged who had deep ties with the bottom tier (who made up the majority): the newly-freed, Black Jamaican peasantry. This social structure of Jamaica is characterized by Payne (1988) as a “polarized and discordant class system” and by Lisa Douglas (1992) as an “aristocracy of skin.” Payne also argues that this social structure is characterized by “an equally sharp division of labor by race and color. The relationship between race and class is symbiotic and structural rather than contingent, deriving as it does from the institution of slavery and plantation society” (In Persaud, 2001, pg. 78).

This acknowledgement of the white/brown/black divide is informative when considering what has already been covered in the political and economic landscapes since Jamaica, from independence until the most recent Prime Minister, has been led by either “socially White” or Brown leaders. This understanding of the ‘lighter’ color of Jamaica’s historical leadership may also help better illuminate Beckford and Witter’s claim that Manley, a member of the mulatto, middle class, perhaps did not trust the Black masses to lead Jamaica out of their economic difficulties. This white/brown/black divide was made no better in the 1980s when Seaga, a “social White” of Syrian descent, took office. Often these two tiers have had to serve as the buffer in Jamaican society between the White, controlling minority, and the Black majority.

It is instructive for our team to note, that all of our service work (with children in the schools and orphanages) involves working with the darker end of the spectrum in the white/brown/black divide. It is also instructive to note that these “darker Jamaicans” (parents, teachers and administrators of these children) often look for White or Brown leadership to help solve issues facing them. This concept, according to Persaud (2001), is

called the “Dependency Syndrome.” Persaud states, “Darker Jamaicans tend to look for lighter leaders of any nationality for deliverance” (pg. 91). This syndrome has certainly been evident in Jamaica’s political history, at least up until the 1990s with the election of Prime Minister Patterson, and has been echoed in the voices of some of the Jamaican administrators I have worked with in the past. Additionally, one should not overlook the lack of irony in the fact that we are an all-White team working in these schools and orphanages. It seems to me, then, that the hegemony of ‘lighter’ leadership is clear. One needs to question then to what extent Patterson, Jamaica’s first elected Black leader, serves as a counter-veiling agent to this hegemony. A cursory look at Jamaica’s current economic despair, particularly for Black Jamaicans, reveals that not much has improved. One might also question, then, to what extent an all-White service group from the US can serve as a resistive agent. Can a caring and solidaristic association (i.e., a more democratic partnership of Black and White) create a transformative practice? Does service learning, in general, have the capability to interrupt this hegemony? Again, these are the questions for which this ethnography continues to seek answers.

Family

Another instructive feature of the social landscape of Jamaica is family life. As I have become close to many families over the four years of our interventions, it is instructive to add a few words about family in Jamaica as our team encounters it on a daily basis—and it informs much of the work that we do there.

Upon entering the first orphanage we visited on our initial trip in 1998, I was presented with a roomful of infants and toddlers (perhaps totaling 50), who had been abandoned by their parents. These children, when not in this front room, were crammed

into three dormitory style bedrooms where they shared beds and, subsequently, illnesses with one another. While orphanages are certainly not unique to Jamaica, my initial reaction was to fault the Jamaican parents for this pathetic site. Also, given the fact that over 70% of Jamaican babies are born out of wedlock (Douglas, 1992), one might draw the naïve conclusion that Jamaicans are irresponsible and uncaring for their children. Both of the assumptions above (while perhaps true in some cases) are mostly mistaken.

From my continued experience (in these orphanages and in the schools, neighborhoods, and churches), I have found, instead, a relatively loving people with strong familial ties. Additionally, from further experience and research, I understand the plight of the orphans is not necessarily a personal failing, but is more likely a structural condition based on the previous political and economic discussion involving structural adjustment.

My first experience of family in Jamaica occurred during an evening service at a church outside of Montego Bay on a steamy Tuesday evening in 1998. My former wife had accompanied me on this trip and had just arrived in Montego Bay before we headed out to this service. Upon arrival, I explained to the congregation in my opportunity to share at the service that my wife had just flown into Jamaica a couple hours before we got to the church. The pastor stopped the service and asked her to stand, at which time she and I were showered with applause at the fact that we were married. This pastor, whom I have grown to know well and admire is also married (for several years) with several children and serves as what he considers an example to the community by his fidelity to and doting on his wife. It was with great personal disappointment that I shared with him three years ago that my former wife and I had divorced.

This pastor's case, on one hand, shows the emphasis that can be placed on marriage and togetherness. In a different experience, on the other hand, I have also seen where togetherness is not necessarily a prerequisite (or even possibility) to a successful marriage. Given the overwhelming economic obstacles (cited earlier) facing the common Jamaican, it is often necessary for one of the spouses (normally the man) to travel abroad for work. This fact begins to shed some light on the social landscape regarding the uneven roles of men and women. Over my five years in Jamaica, I have come to know a very hard-working woman in Montego Bay who has nearly single-handedly raised her three children while working a full-time job and while her husband has worked abroad in the US. While this God-fearing, Christian woman seems quite content to stay in Jamaica in order to work and care for her three teenage children, her husband has lived and worked in New York for more than ten years, visiting Jamaica only occasionally. One has to wonder (or at least I do) about the augmented opportunity and fidelity of the traveling spouse who only returns once per year and the simultaneous lack of opportunity for the spouse (i.e., the woman), who cares for the children and also works (if work is available) to meet her own needs. Although this long-distance situation seems to work in this case, my sense is that this uneven opportunity does not work in other cases and provides a small window on the inequitable treatment of women in Jamaican culture.

Finally, perhaps providing an example of my hypothesis above, I have come to know a woman with four children who is unmarried and has three different fathers for her children. This situation of numerous fathers for her children, though, matches her own experience growing up since her father has nineteen children (all over the world) with no less than eight different mothers—a fact that her father wears as a badge of honor. This

mother of four, working mostly alone to care for her children, is the epitome of what Sparr (1992) refers to as the “social shock absorber.” As a result of structural adjustment policies that tend to slash social spending—particularly, health care—women, who head nearly 50% of Jamaican households (Deere et al, 1990), tend to bear the brunt of economic hardships, becoming this shock absorber (e.g., raising increasingly malnourished children; lacking access to good health care; depending on absentee partners or spouses for support, or having to work and raise the family alone; and/or suffering the physical or emotional wrath of frustrated, unemployed or underemployed live-in partners or spouses).³³

My point in describing these three families has to do with the diversity of situations that exist on the island of Jamaica. No one snapshot can accurately capture the family life in Jamaica, but one should get a sense from the short photo album provided above that the brunt of the work and effort toward raising and providing for children falls in this paternalistic society on the woman. This responsibility when tethered to economic hardships, then, leads to many of the dire situations that we encounter in Jamaica, either in the orphanages or in the communities. Thus, this information needs to be kept at the forefront of an intervention that intends to work for solidarity and ameliorative change.

In addition, it is instructive to pause here before concluding this chapter to acknowledge that the lens through which I view the family is a culturally-constructed, European perspective of nuclear families and monogamy. As this perspective accurately captures my experience in family life, I want to be clear about the *constructed* nature of

³³ Aside from my personal witness to this phenomenon in our interventions, Harrison (1997) provides an additional compelling example in her characterization of the Jamaican woman Beulah Brown in the “Gendered Politics and Violence of Structural Adjustment.”

this perspective. To attempt to view Jamaican families through the exact same lens would be, at best, naïve, and, at worst, racist. Although this dissertation does not profess to provide an in-depth study of families, I believe it is important to acknowledge the potential and real differences in the construction of Jamaican family life.

Even with just a cursory exploration of the anthropological and sociological literature on Afro-Caribbean family life, one immediately notices three issues that need to be considered vis-à-vis this similar type of lens through which I view Jamaica. First, one has to acknowledge the role slavery has played in pan-African family and marital structures, and particularly consider how it informs the construction of masculinity and femininity (Patterson, 1973; Greene, 1995; Clark, 1999; Fox, 1999). Second, one must understand the role kinship relations and extended family arrangements have played in the overcoming of economic obstacles, particularly as Jamaica moved into a cash economy from subsistence living (Whitehead, 1976; Greene, 1995). Third, and finally, based on the first and second issues raised, one should understand the multiple roles women, particularly mothers, play in Jamaican society, specifically in terms of what Beverly Greene (1995) refers to as “multiple mothering” and “gender role flexibility” (Momsen, 1993; Handa, 1996; Clark, 1999). Thus, I carefully note these issues and consider their implications as they continue to inform our service partnerships in Jamaica.³⁴

Conclusion: An Articulated Landscape

“The very least you can do in your life is to figure out what you hope for. . . . And the most you can do is live inside that hope. What I want is so simple I almost

³⁴ A more nuanced discussion and suggestions for future coverage of the final three landscapes—political, economic, and social—are proffered in chapter 7.

can't say it: elementary kindness. Enough to eat, enough to go around. The possibility that kids might one day grow up to be neither the destroyers nor the destroyed" (Barbara Kingsolver)³⁵

Hopefully, through the explanations provided in the previous cultural landscapes, one has a better sense of the context within which these service projects have taken place. As I noted at the outset, it is difficult to completely separate out each of these cultural landscapes as they constantly flow into and inform one another. Additionally, it is instructive to keep in mind that, undoubtedly, gaps and fissures exist in my particularized account since I am not trying to write a complete religious, political, economic, or social history of Jamaica. Rather, I have purposefully selected particular aspects that I believe shape our ongoing interventions and inform the possibility of the caring solidaristic theory I am trying to build for service learning through the evolution of critical service learning.

To review, then, in the historical landscape, I attempted to show how the legacy of slavery, imperialism, and capitalism has been a harbinger for today's economic turmoil and an impediment to future development. In terms of the religious landscape, I considered the role religion has played historically in the domination and conquest of societies and wondered to what extent religion continues to work as a hegemonic force in Jamaica today. This is of particular concern to me since many in Jamaica homogenously view our team as simply another "mission" group from the US; thus, I have also considered to what extent religion may work as a critical, counter-hegemonic, and transformative agent. In the political landscape, I outlined the leadership of Jamaica in the 1970s and 80s, contrasting the leadership and economic policies of Manley and

³⁵ Codi Noline, speaking about the life of her sister, Hallie. In Barbara Kingsolver (1990). *Animal Dreams*. NY: HarperPerennial.

Seaga. For Manley, I tried to show how he attempted to throw off the hegemonic control of capitalism and the West, but how he eventually had to kowtow to this power by making Jamaica's first loan with the IMF. For Seaga, I tried to show how his "Follow the West" doctrine and massive loan-making with the IMF only mired Jamaica deeper in economic turmoil through the subsequent structural adjustment policies and widening gap between rich and poor. In terms of the economic landscape, I more closely examined this loan-making with IMF and revealed the austere elements of structural adjustment. In addition I explored how Jamaicans have historically resisted this economic hegemony and wondered, as I did in the religious landscape, how service learning and our team, in particular, might assist in future resistive movements. Finally, in the social landscape, I considered family life and the white/brown/black color divide. As our service partnerships involve both *orphanages*, where the parents are relatively absent from these children's lives, and also *schools*, located in communities where we have an opportunity to interact with the children's families, trying to understand the dynamics of family life is an important aspect to our intervention. In addition, having an understanding of the color divide in Jamaica (how it has developed historically and how it is related to power) is also crucial, since we are an all-White team from the US partnering with mostly all-Black Jamaicans.

At the very least, from these cultural landscapes, one should take away an understanding that Jamaica is faced with many obstacles under the rubric of hegemony. The goal in presenting these landscapes in this way was to wonder aloud how our intervention, in general, might play a transformative role in seeking a counter-hegemonic practice for the Jamaicans we work with who are subjected to the hegemonic practices of

both their own government and the West. Presented in this way, then, one may conclude with me that a caring solidaristic partnership, where we decide jointly on future directions for this project, is the only way a counter-hegemonic practice, and, ultimately, ameliorative change, might develop. In the previous chapter, I attempted to characterize the possibility of working toward this two-way, communicative union as an articulation of David Miller's (1999) "solidaristic communities" and Nel Noddings' (1984) "caring" within the frame of Seyla Benhabib's "generalized and concrete other." Given this articulation of cultural landscapes I can come to no different conclusion for the evolution of critical service learning. Therefore, with the theory articulated and the context mapped, I turn my attention toward the practice that activates this theory and look forward to the possibility of ameliorative results.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY: DEVELOPING A PRACTICE AND WORKING TOWARD (EVOLVING) A THEORY

In closing the last chapter I pointed to the need to start looking at the “practical” in our project—this chapter on methodology ventures into this more action-oriented aspect of the intervention. In terms of critical service learning chapters 2 and 3 served as the pre-action reflective and theoretical components of the four-stage framework. Now I consider stage 3—the “action” component—as I map out my methods and procedures in this chapter and record our actions—the data—in the next. As part of this cultural studies project, then, these two chapters are perhaps the most pivotal in attempting to demonstrate a practical possibility for cultural studies. Recalling Hall’s (1992) charge that cultural studies has done little unless we can activate theory, I seek to find a practice here.

I have arrived at the following overarching question to guide this current study: *How does a critical service learning framework and theory play out in a project that seeks ameliorative change?* Under the larger umbrella of this question, I also seek to answer three pertinent and pressing sub-questions: *What is the possibility of these projects to work toward social justice and/or care? How does this framework and theory help to democratize the relationship of the ‘server’ and the ‘served’? And, what are the potential enduring effects of this project beyond our presence in Jamaica?*

This chapter discusses how I intend to answer these questions in four parts. In part one, methodology, I discuss the political and theoretical frame through which I view

this project. As a cultural studies project, I explain why qualitative research, particularly in the form of ethnography, is the most appropriate research strategy for this study. Additionally, I examine why I have chosen to use both a critical and interpretive approach in my collection and analysis of the data.

In part two I describe the participants and my data collection strategies. First I outline the course, PHI 220: Service Learning, which most of the US participants took in preparation for this intervention. Along with the US participants, I also describe who participated on the Jamaican side and how informants were selected from both sides. Finally, in this section, I describe the numerous data collection strategies I use—in-depth interviews of informants, focus-group interviews of US participants, participant observation, document procurement, preparation notes from meetings, photographs, email correspondence, journals, student evaluations, student papers, and audio-tapes.

In part three I examine my analytical strategies. As Denzin's (1989) methodological perspective of "interpretive interactionism" is advanced throughout the data collection, I analyze participant's individual biographies, my autobiography, and the group's (US and Jamaican) collective experience through the various data collection strategies, using a constant-comparative method that seeks to evolve the framework and theory for critical service learning posited in chapter 2.

Finally, in part four, I discuss the issue of validity as it relates to this research project. In addition, I also describe how I attempted to triangulate my data and propose some possible limitations to this particular study. Before moving on to tell the story of this potentially transformative project in chapter 5, I conclude this chapter with a

discussion of reciprocity: the importance of considering it and how this project attempted to work toward it.

Part One—Methodology: Seeking a Consistent Political and Theoretical Paradigmatic Frame for Praxis-Driven Research

At the outset, it is important to establish my paradigmatic perspective as these research paradigms vary widely from researcher as ‘objective’ observer of empirical facts to researcher as subjective recorder of participant’s stories. The research models run the gamut from more statistical, ‘numbers driven’, quantitative studies to more interpretive, ‘narrative driven’, qualitative studies. Actual paradigms are broken down in many different ways by research theorists, but there seems to be fairly wide agreement over *at least* three particular frameworks of interpretation: positivist, critical, and constructivist (or interpretive) (Guba, 1990; Glesne, 1999; LeCompte and Schensul, 1999a).

Exploring the Three Paradigms

Each of the paradigms that follow center on the same three concerns—ontology, epistemology, and methodology—but each, of course, views them quite differently. To be clear, then, *ontology* focuses on the nature of the ‘knowable’ or as Guba (1990) questions, “What is the nature of ‘reality’?” *Epistemology* focuses, in general, on ways of knowing and, specifically, on the relationship between the knower and the known. Finally, *methodology* focuses on how inquirers seek out information/knowledge in their world. How each of the paradigms wrestles with these issues is outlined below.

In the *positivist paradigm*, researchers’ ontological concern is with the self as defined by society or social structures. That is, as Guba claims, reality is “out there” or external to the self and is driven by natural laws and mechanisms. “Knowledge of these

entities, laws, and mechanisms,” Guba continues, “is conventionally summarized in the form of time- and context-free generalizations” (pg. 20). Epistemologically, positivists view knowledge as originating in deduction from laws and experience.

Methodologically, the researcher is detached, the researched is affectively neutral, and the research focus is on observable behavior (that is usually quantified in some form or another).

In the *critical paradigm*, researchers’ ontological concern is with the self as defined by a structure of domination (i.e., as the world imposes on the self) given material and historical conditions. Epistemologically, criticalists view knowledge as originating from differential access to knowledge based on material and historical conditions. Methodologically, the researcher acts as teacher and learner engaged in the process of transformation, the researched also acts as teacher and learner engaged in the transformative process, and the research focus is on achieving higher levels of critical consciousness and uncovering patterns of oppression.

Finally, in the *interpretive paradigm*, the researcher’s ontological concern is with society, forms, or social structures as defined by the self. In other words, as LeCompte and Schensul (1999a) point out, researchers are concerned with “what’s going on within and between individuals” (pg. 59). Epistemologically, interpretivists view knowledge as originating from shared and negotiated understandings based on historical and social context, where “inquirer and inquired are fused into a single entity” (Guba, pg. 27). Methodologically, the researcher is inextricably linked to the research process, the researched is involved and subjective, and the research focus is on eliciting meanings for observed behaviors through “intersubjective understanding” (LeCompte and Schensul,

pg. 59). In terms of cultural studies, then, the most appropriate research methods are more qualitative in nature and the paradigmatic perspective chosen, as I have schematized them, should be either a *critical* or *interpretivist*.

Let me say some more regarding the appropriateness of a more qualitative method in this research study. Since traditional social science research descends from more positivist perspectives that use quantitative methods, it may be informative to pause here and provide a few remarks regarding the appropriateness of using a more qualitative method in this research. Since this study is an attempt to record, in part, how ‘servers’ and ‘served’ work together in this service learning project, what the experience of using the critical service learning framework is like, how service learning projects can work toward ameliorative change, and what the enduring effects of these projects may be, a qualitative approach that seeks the participants’ meaning in the study is preferred. The particular qualitative method I use to uncover these meanings in this study is ethnography. Before I describe what ethnography is and why I have chosen it, it is instructive to conclude this discussion of research in general by returning to my own articulated definition of qualitative research, which may help to provide further clarification for why I proceed the way I do in the remainder of this chapter and study. I define qualitative research as a mode of investigation that: is inductive and naturalistic (Taylor, 1994); focuses on specific situations or people, trying to understand the world through their eyes; builds a complex and holistic picture (Cresswell, 1998), using “thick descriptions” (Geertz, 1973); emphasizes words over numbers (Maxwell, 1996); and

proceeds using either an interpretivist (hermeneutic and dialectic) or critical (dialogical and transformative) methodology (Guba, 1990).³⁶

My Approach to this Qualitative Research Project: Ethnography

In consideration of this definition for qualitative research I turn my attention to how I broadly conceive how I have gathered and made sense of the resultant data in this service learning experience: ethnography. According to Margaret LeCompte and Jean Schensul (1999a), ethnography is

an approach to learning about the social and cultural life of communities, institutions and other settings . . . that takes the approach that human behavior and the ways in which people construct and make meaning of their worlds and their lives are highly variable and locally specific (pg. 1).

Additionally, according to David Fetterman (1989), ethnography is the “science and art of describing culture.” And, further, ethnography, according to Kathy Hytten (1997), “involves trying to get an emic picture of the way of life of people through fieldwork—observations, interviews, and analysis of artifacts” (pg. 50).

Although several qualitative research approaches exist (e.g., case studies, focus groups, phenomenological studies), LeCompte and Schensul suggest that ethnography, as a research approach, is best used (among other possibilities) when documenting a process. Since this research study focuses not only on the implementation and evolution of a particular approach to service learning, but also examines the resultant relationships formed and possibilities for projects, ethnography, with its focus on writing about the culture of groups of people, seems a most appropriate research strategy. This study, then,

³⁶ I return to the caution I provided in chapter 1 regarding the fact that ethnographies can also be deductive and positivistic.

documents the process of this service learning project by detailing the developing culture among the US participants and between the US participants and our Jamaican partners in order to better understand how service learning:

- (1) may better work toward ameliorative change;
- (2) democratizes the relationship of ‘servers’ and the ‘served’; and
- (3) endures toward justice and care beyond our actual presence in Jamaica (for both the Americans and Jamaicans in particular, and ‘servers’ and ‘served’ in general).

Positing a ‘Critically-Interpretive’ Paradigm

Now that I have chosen ethnography as my research approach under the larger umbrella of a qualitative methodology, it is instructive to return to the discussion of paradigmatic perspectives in order to put forward how I will both politically and theoretically approach the participants and data in this study. Just as the theory for critical service learning attempts to bridge the more modernist, rational discussions of justice with the more postmodern, relational discussions of care, my paradigmatic perspective attempts to bridge the more critical and transformative research paradigm with the more interpretive and hermeneutic research paradigm to create a ‘critically-interpretive’ frame.

For this research study, I believe both critical and interpretive methodologies are tenable. In terms of ethnography, LeCompte and Schensul (1999a) claim that, on one hand, critical theorists expect to act as intellectual advocates and activists, “interested in how the history and political economy of a nation, state, or other system exerts direct or indirect domination over the political, economic, social, and cultural expressions of

citizens or residents, including minority groups” (pg. 45). Additionally, they claim that the final aim of critical theorists “is to call attention to the inequitable actions and policies of the dominant social paradigm or institutions and to engage in selected activities or actions in order to bring about change” (pg. 47). On the other hand, LeCompte and Schensul claim interpretivists believe that “what people know and believe to be true about the world is constructed—or made up—as people interact with one another over time in specific social setting” (pg. 48). Further, for the interpretivist, cultural beliefs are “situated, not fixed, negotiated, multiply-voiced, and participatory” (pg. 50). Since I am interested in not only how meaning and the impact of the intervention is constructed by the participants, but also on how we might work together to ameliorate the reality of injustice propagated by either a structure (e.g., global capitalism) or an entity (e.g., the global capitalists: International Monetary Fund, World Bank, World Trade Organization, etc.), a more *critically interpretive* paradigm is necessary that is both:

(1) *dialectical and hermeneutic*: “individual constructions that are elicited and refined hermeneutically, and compared and contrasted with the aim of generating one (or a few) construction(s) on which there is substantial consensus” (Guba, pg. 27) and

(2) *dialogical and transformative*: “energize[s] and facilitate[s] transformation” (Guba, p. 25).

It should be noted, then, that just as I have tried to articulate the notions of justice and care, which fall at different places along the continuum between the universal/particular and rational/relational, I consider the same type of articulation between the critical and interpretivist camps in research. Although not fitting neatly into these categories

developed earlier, the critical paradigm is related to a more rational/universal approach, while the interpretivist paradigm is related to a more relational/particular approach. This cultural studies project attempts to weave these paradigms into a ‘critically interpretive’ strand, which seeks transformation through the resultant dialectic that is established between the American team and our Jamaican partners as we work together on a future for service learning.

Already considering how these two camps may be connected, Gary Anderson (1989), who writes on critical ethnography in education, claims, “Critical ethnographers seek research accounts sensitive to the dialectical relationship between the social structural constraints on human actors and the relative autonomy of human agency” (pg. 249). And, later, making this connection more transparent, Anderson posits,

...critical ethnographers aim to generate insights, to explain events, and to seek understanding. They . . . share with interpretivist ethnographers the view that the cultural informant’s perceptions of social reality are themselves theoretical constructs. That is, although the informant’s constructs are to use Geertz’s (1973) expression, more “experience near” than the researchers, they are, themselves, reconstructions of social reality. (p. 253).

Like Anderson, I view the researcher through this ‘critically interpretive’ frame as taking a praxis approach to the research, demonstrating a firm grasp of social theory and knowledge of social structures/constraints while acknowledging and respecting the lived experience of the participants, who, through their nearness to the experience, both provide the promise for evolution and update to the theory, and also help to cultivate the

terrain for transformation. Patti Lather (1986) reminds us in her development of “emancipatory social research,” through which researchers and researched together become “changers of the changed,”

For theory to explain the structural contradictions at the heart of discontent, it must speak to the felt needs of a particular group in ordinary congruence. If it is to spur toward action, theory must be grounded in the self-understandings of the dispossessed even as it seeks to enable them to reevaluate themselves and their situations [...] In sum, the development of emancipatory social theory requires an empirical stance which is open-ended, dialogically reciprocal, grounded in respect for human capacity, and yet profoundly skeptical of acceptances and “common sense” (pg. 269).

So, as a final cautionary note-to-self in consideration of Lather’s and Anderson’s comments vis-à-vis my desire to remain critical *and* interpretive, I acknowledge, again, as I did in chapter 1, the potential problematic of going into this service intervention and research study with some preconceived notions of what needs to be changed and how this should be accomplished (Lather, 1986). I further acknowledge the level of power my team holds as visitors from a First-World nation like the United States (thus, my continued focus, for example, on the issue of the ‘server’ and the ‘served’). To restate, then, the ‘critically interpretive’ paradigm may provide an alternative to traditionally (although often unintentionally) hegemonic approaches and hopefully posits an innovative approach to research, which recognizes that transformation will ultimately be decided upon in dialog between researcher and researched, not by the researcher alone.

Part Two—Participants and Methods

In chapter 2 I examined the four steps of critical service learning as they applied both in general and in particular to this project. Recall from this discussion that this service learning project was authorized as a course, PHI 220: Service Learning, at St. James College and was open to any student who wanted to take the course with the understanding that the trip would cost approximately \$1250.00.³⁷ PHI 220 began meeting January 11, 2002, officially concluded June 7, 2002, and was co-taught by Professor Mark and myself. While planning for this course and project began in September, 2001, I started collecting ethnographic data for this study at our first meeting in January. Thus, an important part of this ethnography involves a discussion of this course: what topics we covered, who was involved, and how it prepared us for the fifteen day intervention in Jamaica.

PHI 220 and the Participants from the United States

This service learning class was offered as a philosophy course since Mark, who showed the most interest in taking a leadership role in this project from the college, had a Ph.D. in philosophy and taught in this department. The course was broadly conceived to serve as a foundational requirement for any number of majors (education, in particular) at this Catholic, liberal arts institution. As I discussed in chapter 2, Mark and I decided to break down our class meetings into a number of topics that we believed would help us prepare for this intervention: history, religion, politics, economics,

³⁷ The final cost for the trip was around \$1100.00. This cost was offset for a number of students by fund-raising activities and grants, which the students applied for and received. An important part of the fund-raising activities for this trip involved the establishment of an endowment fund for the Jamaica project, which will be used in the future for aid to our Jamaican partners and aid to students, who make this trip in the future, who may not be able to afford the cost of going.

social/familial/cultural, service learning, education, multiculturalism, praxis and liberation, social justice, and care. We both selected readings that we thought would apply, would be understandable to most of the students in the course (but cause them to stretch a little), and would all tie together. We viewed these readings as covering both macro/structural issues of social theory and injustice (e.g., exploring the issues of hegemony, counter-hegemony, reproduction, and resistance that I brought out in chapter 3), and micro/individual issues as they applied directly to Third World countries, the Caribbean, and in particular, Jamaica. Students were required to complete a journal for each topic and this journal was collected three times throughout the course. Students in the course were also asked to complete three additional writing assignments, two smaller papers due before we went to Jamaica that were designed to integrate new understandings of difference and injustice that were evolving from the readings, and one final paper due at the end of the term that was designed to articulate the readings with the students' experience in the project. (The syllabus for this course can be found in Appendix 1.)

After our first meeting on January 11, PHI 220 met just about every other week for the spring term on Friday afternoons.³⁸ The classes generally lasted from 1:30 until 3:00 and were followed by a preparation meeting from 3:00 to 5:00, which was attended by faculty and other adults who would be joining Mark, the students, and myself on the trip. At these meetings, we, as a team, prepared for the intervention: planning the itinerary, discussing tactical and procedural issues like where we should stay and how we should get around while on the island, designing the lessons for the two schools we

³⁸ We met every other week because I had to drive more than 250 miles from my home in Knoxville to get to this college.

would be working in, deciding how we might best raise funds and secure supplies to take with us (particularly for the orphanages), engaging in team-building exercises as small and large groups, and writing in our journals on reflective exercises that I prepared (a sample agenda can be found in Appendix 2).

This team of twenty-three members, more than half of which is made up of students, that met from 1:30 to 5:00 every other Friday leading up to the intervention, represents the entire pool of my United States *participants* in the study.³⁹ At the first meeting on January 11, the team was made aware of my intentions to complete this dissertation with data collected from the trip in the form of an ethnography. At this meeting, all participants were given an informed consent authorized by the University of Tennessee, notifying them of their rights as a “human subject.” All consent forms were received back by the next meeting and subsequent data collection began (see Appendix 3 for this informed consent form).

“Sharing Stories” with the Jamaican Participants

In terms of participation in my study from the Jamaican side, participants include administration, workers, and residents at two orphanages and two schools, who are covered under a previous informed consent,⁴⁰ signed two summers ago while performing some initial research regarding Jamaican social service agencies’ (i.e., Jamaican schools and orphanages) impressions of service and mission groups from the United States (Renner, 2001a, 2001b).

³⁹ In particular, this team is made up of fourteen undergraduate students (three of whom had made all four trips in the past), six faculty from the college, one teacher from a local school (a neighbor to one of the college faculty), one nurse (who has made two trips with us in the past and is the older sister of one of the undergraduate students), and myself.

⁴⁰ These informed consents have been, subsequently, renewed.

These four agencies represent the focal points of our past interventions and our work there has resulted in warm, friendly, and ongoing, evolving relations between my past teams and the administrators, workers, and students. We have worked with the two orphanages, Cambridge Children's Home and The New Oxford Children's Home, in all five of our interventions. We began work with the Westminster Holy Church/School in the summer of 1999 (our second intervention) and Ruth Matthew's school, a former teacher at Westminster, in 2001. They all graciously agreed to continue participation in my research.

Before moving on to reveal how I selected my informants and outline my data collection strategies, which will conclude this part two, it may be instructive to discuss how we established our itinerary for our involvement with these agencies, how we developed our lesson plans for teaching at Westminster and Ms. Matthew's school, and how the theme of "sharing stories," first offered by Mark, materialized. As I mentioned earlier, as our experience in Jamaica has evolved, our relationship with the Jamaicans in these schools and orphanages has developed into a cordial and ongoing partnership. In terms of the orphanages, our work at both Cambridge and New Oxford has been simple, but sought after. While Chapter 5 illustrates a more in-depth description of all of our sites of service, suffice to say now that many children reside in these orphanages and the workers and administrators are few, based on a scarcity of funding for social service programs such as these from the Jamaican government. Unquestionably, the administrators, workers, and residents make the most of this situation, but assistance is welcomed and appreciated. In planning our visits with the administrators of these homes we have always been granted the flexibility to help in any way we feel that we can. Thus,

our work at these orphanages has consisted mainly of assisting the workers with the care of the children (feeding, bathing, clothing, physical therapy, and taking the children out to play in the yard) and subsequently providing the worker (who we look to as a supervisor) with as much respite as possible. In addition to this work, we have also always brought suitcases of medical supplies, personal hygiene products, and clothes to help in the care of the children, and have brought doctors and nurses on several trips to help in the treatment of any children who may be sick.

In terms of both Westminster and Matthew's school we have also been given a great deal of flexibility. Both Pastor Paul Peters, administrator of Westminster, and Matthew's have indicated that whatever we want to teach in their school is fine with them. Each values the time that we spend with their children and hope that some type of ongoing, more formal arrangement can be made between their schools and colleges like St. James, which could provide teachers and pedagogical training throughout the year. This year, our team planned lessons focused on folk literature. While descriptions of how these lessons played out are illustrated in Chapter 5, a few comments on how they were prepared may be appropriate presently.

Our US team of twenty-three was divided into three smaller groups of seven or eight from the outset of our meetings in order (1) to foster an opportunity for participants to get to know one another better in smaller settings, thus helping to build community and (2) to delegate a number of responsibilities for planning the trip to smaller organized teams who could accomplish tasks faster and more efficiently. Each team was headed by undergraduate students—Adah, Leah, and Cody—who made each of the four previous trips to Jamaica, and were therefore proficient and knowledgeable about what needed to

be accomplished in these groups.⁴¹ By meeting 5 we had established that we would begin collecting stories and, in particular, Caribbean folktale literature to use as points of departure for our lessons. The idea was to have each team select a story (e.g., *Cinderellon*, a Caribbean Cinderella story) that would launch the school day (we taught three days at Westminster and two days at Matthews). Using the story and its characters as the focus, each team was instructed to develop both small and large group activities for the students that incorporated lessons on math, science, art, literature, drama, and social studies.⁴² In addition teams were instructed to begin collecting other cross-cultural folktales that the teachers in these schools could build lessons from in the future based on our model. Finally, teams were also instructed to collect short stories and photographs to share with the children in small group settings. As the folktale story and subsequent lessons filled our morning time, the short stories and photographs were designed to round out our days in the afternoon. The idea with the short stories was to read a portion of the story and have the children write their own endings and, in terms of the photographs, to write a collective small group story about the picture. A copy of these stories was subsequently compiled and given to the schools to document our time together. Therefore, in an effort to build a caring, solidaristic community, we poured a foundation with “shared stories.” (For a complete look at our itinerary, see Appendix 4.)

⁴¹ I cannot underestimate the importance Adah, Leah, and Cody played in this current (and four previous) intervention(s). Their experience in and tenacity for this project provided a clarion call for a dynamic service ethic to the other students and many of the other participants.

⁴² A sample of one of these stories and the subsequent lessons is forthcoming in Chapter 5.

Informants

One of the more significant ways I collected data in this ethnographic study was through in-depth interviews. In the next section I say more about this particular data collection strategy and its importance to ethnography, but for the moment I want to focus on how and why these informants were selected. According to Joseph Maxwell (1996), “Whenever you have a choice about when and where to observe, who to talk to or what information sources to focus on, you are faced with a sampling decision” (pg. 68). This dissertation is filled with all sorts of decisions. The issue of whom to interview, then, is no different. Since I planned *multiple*, in-depth interviews with my informants, in order to gauge their detailed experience as it evolved, it was not temporally feasible to interview all of the participants in the study. First, I eliminated any US participants not directly involved with PHI 220 since I would spend the most time with students and faculty associated with this course. Next, I narrowed the pool of participants to only the first-time students as including narratives from teachers or past participants may scatter the data in too many directions to allow for any kind of cohesive analysis. From this narrowed pool of participants I selected four informants based on as wide a diversity as possible (year of school, class status, gender, and ethnic origin), their willingness to participate in this expanded role, and their insight and participation provided in our early meetings. Once selected, each informant signed an additional informed consent form, indicating this more substantive role (see Appendix 5).

In addition to these four informants from the US team, I also selected two Jamaican informants from that pool of participants. As a result of my previous experience interviewing some of the administrators and teachers in these orphanages and

schools, I asked two, one administrator and one teacher, based on our past rapport, if they would continue to serve in an expanded role. Both enthusiastically agreed and were given informed consent forms to renew their role (see Appendix 6).

Upon examination of the numbers of informants I have chosen from the US participants versus the Jamaican participants, one immediately notes that I have chosen more voices from the United States. As a response to any forthcoming critique, I want to, again, adamantly declare that I am not attempting to dis-privilege the Jamaican voice through this sampling decision. Instead, I am acknowledging two issues: (1) the purpose of this study is to understand the possibility and future of service learning to work for solidarity in US schools; therefore, the voice of the US student is crucial to this understanding. However, in addition, in order to contextualize this particular service learning experience, to provide space for our service partner to include their voice, and to consider the future of this specific project as we attempt to build a caring, solidaristic community between ‘server’ and ‘served’, I have appropriately included these Jamaican voices; and (2) given the protracted period of time that I will spend with the US team versus the time I will spend in Jamaica, and the limited amount of time I will have to interview the Jamaicans while we are there, given my multiple roles as leader, teacher, hand-holder, researcher, etc., two Jamaican informants is all that is feasible.

As I noted in chapter 1, these two particular issues, the limited time we will be in Jamaica and my multiple roles, serve as limitations to this study and require constant examination toward my analysis and implications of the study offered in chapters 6 and 7.

Data Collection

With the above noted regarding selection of the informants, I now move on to discuss my data collection strategies. According to LeCompte and Schensul (1999a), researchers should employ as many data collection strategies as possible, which will enhance the richness of the developing ethnography. This ethnography makes use of several strategies: in-depth interviews of informants, focus-group interviews of US participants, participant observation, document procurement, photographs, audio-tapes, email correspondence, student evaluations, student papers, and journals.

Interviews. One of the main data collection strategies used in this ethnography are in-depth interviews of informants and focus-group interviews of US participants. Interviewing, according to Grant McCracken (1988), is “an agile instrument with which to capture how the [informant] sees and experiences the world” (pg. 65). Further, Corrine Glesne (1999) argues the reason for interviewing is to “capture the unseen that was, is, and will be, or should be; how [informants] think or feel about something; and how to explain or account for something. [This] broad-scale approach is directed to understanding phenomena in their fullest possible complexity” (pg. 93). Thus, the interview, particularly in an ethnography that is documenting the process of a project, is a data collection strategy intended to help place the informant’s words on the experience in order to understand the developing culture and evolving process.

In this ethnography, I chose to use in-depth, open-ended interviews with my informants. Although one may note the semi-structured quality to the interview protocols, I used these only as guides to elicit narrative responses from my informants, which generated various directions to the interviews themselves (see Appendices 7-11).

While it was important to explore specific questions, in terms of gauging the critical service learning framework, the more significant portions of the interviews involved the directions the informants wanted to lead me. Stephen Schensul, Jean Schensul, and Margaret LeCompte (1999) argue that in-depth, open-ended interviews are intended to “discover new information and expand existing understanding” (pg. 125), which highlights exactly what this ethnography is trying to excavate in terms of what service learning projects might accomplish. Schensul et al also point to the importance of asking for “narratives of experience” in this interviewing perspective, which draws me closer to this format rather than the more rigid semi-structured interview. These narratives of experience are important to me because of the emphasis I place on biography and autobiography (as I have shown throughout chapters 1-3) and my interest in “epiphanies,” which I will make clear in part 3 of this chapter when discussing “interpretive interactionism” and my analytic procedures.

In order to gain as much perspective as possible in this ethnography, I tape recorded interviews with my US informants three times: once in the spring prior to going to Jamaica (see Appendix 7), once while in Jamaica (see Appendix 8), and once when we came home (see Appendix 9). My intention in interviewing these informants multiple times was to try and understand their experience as it developed through the various stages of the critical service learning framework. For example, the interviews were *structured* in such a way that several of the same questions were asked in each interview in order to gauge how the response was evolving. Additionally, however, in keeping with the spirit of the in-depth, open-ended perspective, informants were asked to speak

narratively about their experience, which led us in various and unique directions in each interview.

In a similar way I also tape-recorded interviews with my Jamaican informants multiple times. Given the time constraints of the intervention, however, I was only able to tape-record interview these informants once while in Jamaica and had to use a less interactive, two-dimensional format of paper through the mail for the second interview (see Appendices 10 & 11). My intention in these interviews was to also try to understand their experience as it evolved (and continues to evolve) in this project. As I have worked with these informants in the past, the dynamic of these interviews was a bit different as we were continuing a discussion that was begun long ago; thus, I felt more comfortable with the follow up interview on paper through the mail. Additionally, this method of follow-up created the greatest potential for the informant to take some time to reflect on our time together and suggest some directions for the future, as we intend to continue and further evolve this partnership.

Finally, in terms of interviews, I also conducted several focus-group interviews (Morgan, 1998) with the US participants in order to give the rest of the team an opportunity to discuss their experience (should they want to). The questions asked in these interviews were of a similar nature to the questions I was asking my US and Jamaican informants, but in a less formal setting, as part of the agenda for our meetings, and not tape-recorded. In a similar way, I also less formally spoke with other Jamaican administrators and workers about their experience with our group and service/mission groups from the United States. These conversations were recorded in my field notes and have helped to frame and contextualize the entire experience of this ethnography.

Participant Observation. Interviews, however, were not the only strategy used to view the developing culture between the American team and our Jamaican partners. Participant observation (Denzin, 1978, Jorgensen, 1989) was also employed. Jorgensen claims,

The methodology of participant observation stresses a ‘logic of discovery’ (Kaplan, 1964), a process aimed at investigating concepts, generalizations, and theories. It, in other words, aims to build theories ‘grounded’ (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Agar, 1986) in concrete human realities. . . . [Thus;] the methodology of participant observation encourages the researcher to begin with the immediate experience of human life in concrete situations and settings, and makes the most of whatever opportunities are presented (p. 18).

Further, Norman Denzin (1978) argues that participant observation, “is a commitment to adopt the perspective of those studied by sharing in their day-to-day experiences. . . . The intent is to record the ongoing experiences of those observed through their symbolic world” (p. 185). Thus, not only does this ethnography detail the unfolding story through the words of the participants, but it is also informed by observations of our experiences together through my immersion in the cultural group, capturing in “thick description” (Geertz, 1973; Denzin, 1989) the voices of our lived experience, our “prose of the world” (Merleau-Ponty, 1973).

Document procurement, photographs, and audio-tapes. In addition to interviews and participant observation, I began collecting documents in the form of brochures from the orphanages and schools we visited, bulletins from the churches we attended,

pamphlets put out by the college where we used to reside, and two of Jamaica's most widely distributed newspapers: *The Daily Gleaner* and *The Observer*. More recently I also began visiting another of Jamaica's news outlets, RadioJamaica and their RJR News website: www.radiojamaica.com/rjrnews. These documents and news stories have helped describe and contextualize the environment of Jamaica, specifically the places that we have worked in and visited.

In addition to making use of written documents for my analysis, I have also used photographs as a way to understand the context of Jamaica. In our first couple of visits, I did not capture any photographic evidence of our time in the schools and orphanages. Although some of the members of the first couple of teams felt comfortable taking photographs, I was concerned about their potentially exploitative nature and made sure my team understood this position, but left it up to them (provided they had the explicit permission of the administrators or teachers) whether they would take pictures or not. As I felt my relationship with the administrators, teachers, workers, and children evolved, I began taking pictures during our third trip and continued taking pictures through this last intervention. It was only during this last intervention, however, that I began capturing more fully the 'faces' of Jamaica. It has been brought to my attention that most of my photographs in years three and four were mostly of the Jamaican landscape with only a few faces scattered throughout. This past year, I tried to capture more of the faces that would help to give life to the voices found in the next chapter. Interestingly, though, I chose to use black and white film to filter out what most people take pictures in Jamaica for—the rich colors that frame this scenically-beautiful island—in favor of capturing a much different and much more telling beauty. In addition, this sort of film also more

easily captured the stark contrast of black and white, which symbolically characterized our all-‘White’ team and our all-‘Black’ Jamaican partners.

Along with documents and photographs, I also experimented with audio-tapes in order to create a window on the *sounds* of Jamaica, particularly in the schools and orphanages, and on the solitude of one of Jamaica’s many waterfronts. While only experimental during this trip (as a much more elaborate sort of National Public Radio-like “sound-expedition” is planned for future trips), the richness of this form of data-gathering added, through sound, a much more expanded view of the context in which we worked.

Email correspondence, student evaluations, student papers, and journals. Finally, in addition to interviews, participant observation, document procurement, photographs, and audio-tapes, I also used email correspondence, student evaluations, student papers, and journals as a way to understand the process of this service learning experience. In terms of journals, I made use of not only my own writing in the form of my ongoing and ‘religious’ field note-taking before, during, and after events, but also the journal writing of the US participants and informants, and the resultant stories (based on the photographs and incomplete stories shared during our lessons) created by the Jamaican children and our team.

In terms of viewing the journals, evaluations, and papers the US participants and informants shared with me, I offer only those parts that they have allowed me. As a co-instructor of PHI 220, I, of course, had an opportunity to view each student’s journal regarding their reactions to the readings, but have only included portions or descriptions of these with their explicit permission. In addition to these ‘reactive’ journals that the

students were keeping, the participants and informants were also reflecting on prompted questions that were posed during our meetings. These I did not view directly, but rather asked if they would be willing to share them over email through several strands I created once we returned to the US from Jamaica. In the past I have used this email sharing as a reflective tool for the participants. The strand begins with someone sharing a reflection on any aspect of the trip. The rest of the participants are then encouraged to join the strand and provide their own reflection on the event. As this sort of sharing can continue for some time after the trip (and, in this case continued beyond the auspices of the formal meetings of PHI 220), I had to cut off my analysis of these strands in mid-August in order to report them in this dissertation; however, the strands continue, and will hopefully continue until the next intervention.

In addition to these reflective email strands, I also include email correspondence , with permission between myself and the leaders of this intervention: Professor Mark, Professor Paul, and the three student-leaders involved with this project from its inception, Adah, Leah, and Cody. In these email strands we discussed several itinerary items and organizational issues for the interventions. As I attempted to democratize the planning of this trip as much as possible, these strands reveal the discussions, which were at times very passionate, that brought this intervention together and provide a window on how service learning projects can be approached more democratically.

The data collected for this ethnography span more than seven months from mid-January to mid-August, 2002. As a result of the data collected over these seven months through interviews, participant observation, document procurement, photographs, audio-

tapes, email correspondence, student evaluations, student papers, and journals, the next part discusses how I analyzed the data.

Part Three—Analysis

As I have discussed so far, I have preferred a qualitative methodology, using ethnographic methods that incorporate a critically interpretive perspective with which to view the collected data. In this section I describe the analytic methods I used in order to make sense of the collected data. I open this description by providing an overview of Norman Denzin's (1989) "interpretive interactionism," showing how it has heavily influenced my methodology and helped frame my analytic methods. To close this description I discuss the specific steps taken to gather, analyze, and interpret the data.

Interpretive Interactionism

Denzin's mode of qualitative research, interpretive interactionism, heavily influences my 'critically interpretive' paradigm. According to Denzin, "Interpretive interactionism attempts to make the world of lived experience directly accessible to the reader. It endeavors to capture the voices, emotions, and actions of those studied" (pg. 10). In his development of this mode of research, Denzin claims there are three assumptions that guide interpretive interactionism: (1) in the world of human experience, there is only interpretation; (2) it is a worthy goal to attempt to make these interpretations available to others; and (3) all interpretations are unfinished and inconclusive. In terms of this cultural studies research project, one can already begin to see the contribution interpretive interactionism might provide for trying to understand how the critical service learning framework plays out in this intervention and what the goals and outcomes of these projects may be from the perspectives of the participants.

Building on this connection, Denzin also promotes the importance of biography, epiphany, and thick description. In terms of biography (and to a degree, autobiography) Denzin posits, “Interpretive research begins and ends with the biography and the self of the researcher” (pg. 12). Additionally, Denzin believes,

Meaningful biographical experience occurs in turning point interactional episodes. In these existentially problematic moments, human character is revealed, and human lives are shaped, sometimes irrevocably. It is necessary to discuss the structures of these moments and the experiences that flow from them (pg. 128).

Particularly in the interviewing of my informants, unearthing these “turning point interactional” moments and evolving the critical service learning theory from a discussion of these experiences was an important element in the overall study.

In terms of epiphany, Denzin describes these as interactional moments that leave marks on people’s lives and create transformational experiences for the person.

Recalling my thoughts in chapter 1, then, by becoming artful biographers and locating moments of epiphany for people, we can subsequently learn how to relate public issues to personal troubles and to the problems of individual life. Since this project seeks to comprehend to what extent service learning can work toward social justice and care, how the relationship of the ‘server’ and ‘served’ can be democratized, and what the potential enduring effects of these projects may be, understanding ourselves and the experience of the Jamaicans we have worked with through biography and emergent epiphanies provides a local and contextual insight into how service learning can act as a transformative project.

Finally, in terms of thick description, Denzin claims this as the cornerstone of write-ups in interpretation studies. This type of writing, according to Denzin is made up of the following features:

- (1) It gives the context of an act,
- (2) It states the intentions and meanings that organize the action,
- (3) It traces the evolution and development of the act, and
- (4) It presents action as a text that can then be interpreted (pg. 33).

As I have already pointed to the importance of thick description earlier in writing up ethnography, Denzin's emphasis only strengthens this influence over my outlook on this study.

The last issue that I find to be instructive about understanding interpretive interactionism is the five steps in its process: deconstruction, capture, bracketing, construction, and contextualization. At the *deconstruction* phase, prior conceptions of the phenomenon in question are laid bare—that is, previous work on the issue at hand is uncovered and critical interpretation is offered. This type of deconstruction, particularly of the literature, is put forward in chapter 2. At the *capture* phase, the researcher begins collecting the data for the study. For Denzin this revolves mainly around collecting personal histories, self-stories, and trying to locate moments of epiphany. In this study, the methods for capture are discussed in this chapter and what has been captured is discussed in the next. At the *bracketing* phase, the researcher locates key phrases and prior experience with the issue and attempts to interpret participant's meanings of these phrases. Bracketing has occurred concurrently through chapters 2 and 3 with my experience and in chapter 5 with the story of the participants' experience. In the next

phase, *construction*, the data is categorized and analyzed, which I do in chapters 5 and 6. Finally, at the *contextualization* phase, themes are compared and synthesized and suggestions are made as to how the lived experience of the participants shapes and alters the phenomenon being study. This contextualization shapes both my chapter 6 and 7.

While not meeting my exact agenda in this research study, interpretive interactionism provides enough of an influence that its main features were worthy of description above. Why it does not completely influence this current study is due to its diminutive focus on transformation and subsequent lack of focus on the critical. Interpretive interactionism clearly focuses on the individual and follows C. Wright Mills (1959) “sociological imagination” in learning how to relate public issues to personal troubles and to the problems of individual life. I want to be sure this study, however, not only understands this imagination, which would focus on care, but also imagines how structural transformation (read: social justice) might also be realized. Thus, I seek a critical strand to interpretive interactionism.

Analyzing and Interpreting the Gathered Data

With all of the procedures, paradigms, and methods for data collection revealed, I now turn my attention to what needs to be done once the data is collected. When the data is gathered the two-step analytic process of analysis and interpretation begins. According to LeCompte and Schensul (1999b), step one: *analysis* does three things:

- (1) It brings order to the piles of data an ethnographer has accumulated,
- (2) It turns the big piles of raw data into smaller piles of crunched or summarized data, and

- (3) It permits the ethnographer to discover patterns and themes in the data and to link them with other patterns and themes (pg. 3).

Step two: *interpretation*, gives meaning to the data and involves “figuring out what the crunched data mean, or what they say about the people, groups, or programs that the ethnographer has been studying” (pg. 5). Continuing, LeCompte and Schensul point out, “If analysis creates the chunks of data that portray what the researcher discovered, then interpretation of data permits researchers to answer some of the most important questions that researchers and nonresearchers ask” (pg. 5). In terms of this study, which seeks to understand how the critical service learning framework plays out in an ameliorative project, some of the questions that LeCompte and Schensul list are directly applicable: What’s going wrong—or right—with our program? What is the best course of action for us to take? What new things have we learned? And, what new insights have we gained? Answers to these and other questions are offered in chapters 6 and 7.

Having outlined this two step analytical process, we have now come to the ‘nuts and bolts’ phase of trying to understand the collected data. LeCompte and Schensul (1999b) claim this ‘nuts and bolts’ phase is made up of two stages: analysis while still in the field and analysis once all the data is collected and “tidied up.”

In-the-field analysis. According to these authors, three types of analysis occur at this first stage in the field: inscription, description, and transcription. *Inscription* involves mental note-taking or jotting down words or phrases at pauses in the action that the researcher intends to take up more in-depth later. I constantly recorded these types of notes throughout my seven months in the field: during interviews, at preparation

meetings, at lunch time in the Jamaican schools, and on the trips between our orphanage visits just to name a few.

Description occurs after inscription. This type of analysis involves writing things down in jottings, diaries, logs, and fieldnotes and producing ‘thick descriptions’, or narratives of events, behaviors, conversations, activities, interpretations, and explanations that, taken together, help to create a portrayal of the soul and heart of a group, community, organization, or culture (LeCompte and Schensul, 1999b, pg. 17).

This item of analysis was used at various times and in various settings. Many mornings and afternoons were spent in my office and in coffee shops from January through August, journaling on various events, activities, conversations, etc. Description also occurred while I was in Jamaica, mostly in the quiet hours of the late evening, sitting in the solitude of my room or in a remote area near the Caribbean Sea.

Finally, *transcription*, “involves writing down verbatim, photographing, [or] videotaping . . . what an informant says he or she knows” (LeCompte and Schensul, 1999b, pg. 19). Transcription in this study is most easily evidenced by my verbatim typed records of interviews with my informants. These transcriptions, in part, have helped put my participants’ words into this project.

“Tidying up” the data and working toward a more formalized analysis. Once the researchers’ time in the field has concluded, it is time to begin “tidying up” or managing the data and organizing toward a more formal analysis. LeCompte and Schensul (1999b) provide practical advice in terms of data management. Some of this advice includes: making copies, putting fieldnotes in order, labeling and storing all data, creating a table

of contents for all stored data, checking for missing data, and starting to read through and review the data. These data, they suggest can be organized in any number of ways: chronological, genre—transcripts, notes, journals, meetings, etc.; events; topical (places, themes); or numerical. Once “tidied,” and the data is organized, it’s time to get dirty again—as working through the data is often a complex and ‘un-clean’ process.

At this stage I had some decisions to make. Analysis can proceed in two ways from here: from the top down or from the bottom up. As a ‘critically interpretive’ study, I left myself open to either a deductive, top down approach or inductive, bottom up approach to analysis. However, since my main research question seeks to document how a process plays out in terms of the experience of the participants, a more bottom up approach (that may make use of *some* deductive reasoning) is most appropriate for this more exploratory and descriptive research. LeCompte and Schensul (1999b) argue,

Exploratory or descriptive research begins with questions. Researchers first identify a problem, question, or topic as the central domain [e.g., what can service learning projects accomplish]. At least initially, some of the variables or conditions associated with the central domain or problem may be identified or predicted in advance of the study [e.g., service learning should work toward caring solidarity], but many more may emerge in the course of data collection (pg. 179).

Although I had several over-arching questions at the outset of my study, and I had particular questions that I wanted to ask of my informants, I ended up adjusting the interview schedules in order to talk about what was most pressing for the participants. I opted for this adjustment because I wanted the analysis to occur from the bottom-up,

allowing the participants to tell the story. Again, though, interviews were not the only data collection strategy, so these data had to be placed alongside numerous other data collected in other ways. Thus, I proceed from here taking a mainly bottom-up approach in my analysis, seeking new variables, conditions, and domains with my participants towards an understanding how we might best work toward ameliorative change.

Using this bottom up approach to build what LeCompte and Schensul (1999b) call “formative theory,” three levels of analysis are necessary: the item level, the pattern level, and the structural level. At the *item* level, analysis involves “identifying in data sources those things that must be coded before they can be counted or measured. . . . [T]he inductive process [then] begins to produce items in the form of . . . events, behaviors, statements, or activities that stand out because they occur often” (pg. 69).

These items can be identified in a number of ways. For this study, I chose to use a combination of Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss’ (1967) “constant comparative” and “analytic inductive” method. In a constant-comparative method, “ethnographic and qualitative data are formulated and reformulated repeatedly into models consisting of relationships; these models [are then] tested continuously against what researchers encounter in the research site” (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999a, pg. 158). This inductive method of constant comparison allows for theories to be built from information “grounded” in the data (the biographies, the epiphanies, the field notes, documents, etc.), constructing what is known as “grounded theory” (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) through coding and contextualizing strategies that cause the researcher to constantly check back to the data. This developing, grounded theory, according to Glaser and Strauss (1967), then, should be flexible enough to fit the research findings, be understandable to

laypersons, and allow the user “partial control over the structure and the process of daily situations as they change through time” (pg. 237). Therefore, any practical uses for the evolving critical service learning theory are only valuable to the extent that this theory is “grounded” in the data that emerge from the study. In addition to this constant-comparative method, I also proceeded using analytic induction in order to search for negative or disconfirming cases (especially when checking across the interviews) and to help identify items, events, and behaviors that I thought would be present from the outset.

Through this constant-comparative and analytic inductive method, several items emerged from the data, which I labeled in my “codebook” (LeCompte and Schensul, 1999b). This item level of analysis corresponds to the “bracketing” phase of Denzin’s (1989) interpretive interactionism where “a semiotic reading directs attention to key words and terms that organize a text. It suggests that these terms (signs) are organized by a code or system of larger meanings” (pg. 57). With these items, I moved to the pattern level of analysis.

At the *pattern* level of analysis related items are organized into higher order patterns. The items were slotted into categories based on frequency with which they occurred, co-occurrence in other interviews (particularly related to similar interview questions), corroboration or dis-corroboration between interviews or between interviews and observations, and congruence and dis-congruence with prior hypotheses. LeCompte and Schensul (1999b) liken this middle stage analysis to the middle stage of assembling a jigsaw puzzle:

Once the player has found all the orange pieces and all of the blue pieces, for example, or all of the pieces with a particular pattern on them, he or

she can begin to assemble those pieces into a coherent chunk of the design portrayed in the completed puzzle. Furthermore, the player can begin to see how the orange chunks are related to the blue chunks, or where they fit in the overall picture (pg. 98).

LeCompte and Schensul (1999b) suggest these patterns can emerge in any number of ways, but especially through: declaration, frequency, omission, similarity, co-occurrence, corroboration, sequence, and prior hypothesizing (pg. 98). While the items were the participants' words, the pattern codes used were mostly my own as I began the construction phase of interpretive interactionism, "classifying, ordering, and reassembling the phenomena back into a coherent whole, . . .recreating lived experience in terms of its constituent and analytic elements" (pgs. 58-59). (See appendix 12 for a listing of pattern and item codes.)

Finally, I moved to the *structural* level of analysis. At this level, according to LeCompte and Schensul (1999b), overall themes are constructed, an ethnographic portrait begins to emerge, and a theory is born (or evolved). To help in the development of this portrait, they also advocate looking to the initial theoretical framework and reviewing the initial research questions. This reference back to the genesis of the project often helps guide the narrative (which I demonstrate in chapter 5) in the form of vignettes, histories, collections of quotations, and graphic frameworks, for example. As the patterns began to revolve around three metaphors/symbols—butterflies, boundaries, and breadfruit—raised by the participants, I made the decision to tell the narrative of this service learning experience in the form of a series of accounts of key places and events. The accounts are intended to reveal the process of this experience and to show how these

metaphors/symbols both emerge and also provide a critically interpretive way to address my research questions.

Part Four—Last, but not Least: Validity, Triangulation, Limitations, and Reciprocity

Now that I have shown how this qualitative research is to be carried out over this seven-month, ‘critically interpretive’ ethnography, it is necessary to conclude with some important remarks about issues both underlying and woven throughout this study: validity, triangulation, limitations, and reciprocity.

Validity

Validity is taken up in many ways within qualitative research so I want to address as many issues as possible without diluting its significance in this type of study. First, and foremost, qualitative research has had to defend itself as a *valid* research approach as it differs greatly from more quantitative, numbers-driven studies. Quantitative researchers seek validity through droves of statistical measures that apparently go to great lengths to validate their results. Qualitative researchers, on the other hand, do not have statistical measures to rely on; therefore, they must depend on rigorous data collection and analytic strategies that can

ensure that researchers gather data carefully, thoroughly, and in a way that is understandable to others, and that they use procedures that can be replicated by other researchers even though the field situation may change.

This rigor is what helps to produce scientifically valid and reliable data (LeCompte and Schensul, 1999a, pg. 2).

One way to ensure this form of validity is through triangulation of data gathering and analysis procedures, which I address in the next section following the other issues of validity that must be considered.

Second, Joseph Maxwell (1996) presents three main types of understanding, which are threatened by issues of validity: description, interpretation, and theory. In terms of *description*, Maxwell is concerned with inaccuracy and incompleteness of the data. One way to avoid this is to produce verbatim transcriptions of observations and interviews, which I have done throughout this study. In terms of *interpretation*, Maxwell warns against “imposing one’s own framework or meaning, rather than understanding the perspective of the people studied and the meanings they attach to their words or actions” (pgs 89-90). One significant way to avoid this threat to validity is through “member-checking,” which is the most important way of ruling out misinterpretation (Guba and Lincoln, 1989). In this study member checks operated in two ways. First, informants were given an opportunity to view the transcripts of their interviews in order to allow them a space to add, subtract, or clarify specific issues brought out in the interviews. Second, participants were given an opportunity to view my results and conclusions in order to provide feedback and to “check” to see if we were drawing similar conclusions. In terms of *theory*, Maxwell is concerned about not paying attention to discrepant data: “not considering alternative explanations or understandings of the phenomena you are studying” (pg. 90). Throughout the analysis of this study, I took advantage of these discrepancies in order to develop a fuller picture of our intervention and to show the varying perspectives of the participants.

Along with LeCompte and Schensul's, and Maxwell's concerns with validity, Lather (1986) issues four warnings regarding validity. Lather's first three are similar to issues already raised: (1) *triangulation*, which I cover in the next section; (2) *construct validity*, which is similar to Maxwell's concerns over description above and focuses the researchers attention on the theoretical tradition within which they are operating, considering its weaknesses and respecting the experiences of the participants in order to not impose theoretical constructions; and (3) *face validity*, which is similar to Maxwell's warning on interpretation above and can be prevented by "recycling description, emerging analysis, and conclusions back through at least a subsample of respondents" (Lather, pg. 271). However, Lather's fourth issue, *catalytic validity*, provides a new concern, particularly for the researcher who maintains a critical perspective. According to Lather, "Catalytic validity represents the degree to which the research process reorients, focuses, and energizes participants toward knowing reality in order to transform it, a process Freire terms conscientization" (pg. 272). One notes immediately the similarity in discourse here that I have used throughout the early chapters of this dissertation. Catalytic validity is of particular concern to this study as I seek ameliorative outcomes to service learning projects; thus, I have kept the *transformative* potentials of the research results at the forefront of my analysis.

Triangulation

One of the more specific ways to ensure rigor and validity, aside from member-checking in a qualitative study, is triangulation. In essence, triangulation means gathering information from a diversity of people, settings, and methods. In other words, if a researcher uses interviews as the sole data collection strategy, more than one

individual should be interviewed. Further, however, especially in terms of ethnography, multiple data collection strategies should be used (e.g., like I have done in this study: interviews, participant observation, document collection, photographs, audio-tapes, email correspondence, student evaluations, student papers, and journals) in order to corroborate or, sometimes more importantly, to counter data collected in one form with data collected in another (Patton, 1990; LeCompte and Schensul, 1999b). Additionally, Lather (1986) and Patton (1990) argue that theories ought to be triangulated as well in order to see how they can help explain phenomena at work and how they can be stretched. My articulation of Freirean, critical, and engaged pedagogies in the critical service learning framework; articulation of social justice and care theories in the critical service learning theory; and my offering of a ‘critically-interpretive’ frame through which to view the participants and data are all intended examples of this triangulation. LeCompte and Schensul (1999a) provide a fitting conclusion to this issue and perfectly illustrate triangulation by stating, “Just as surveyors never establish the existence of a straight line with fewer than three points, researchers try to ensure that each question asked is answered by more than one data source” (pg. 131).

Limitations

Although I have pointed to and dealt with the limitations to this study in previous chapters and previous sections in this chapter, it is instructive to point them out once again as I prepare to conclude this chapter on methodology. The first limitation involves the limited time we spent in Jamaica. While service learning projects work best when students can spend protracted periods of time in the service arena, this type of involvement is not feasible in the current project given the cost of traveling to Jamaica.

Instead, what is hoped is that the intense preparation for, complete immersion for fifteen days in, and subsequent critical reflection on the experience has offset some of this limitation.

The second limitation involves the number of American informants selected versus the number of Jamaican informants selected and the number of times each was interviewed. As I have stated, my primary goal in this study is to develop a more general practice and theory for (critical) service learning as it would operate in US schools. However, since the context of a service learning experience is important, and particularly with this specific project's personal relevance, the Jamaican voices are vital. The fewer numbers of Jamaican informants and times interviewed are more a reflection of the first limitation than a dis-privileging of their contribution.

Finally, the third limitation relates in part to both limitations one and two above: our team is a group coming from a large, economic super-power like the US to a Third-World nation such as Jamaica. A dissertation concerning this power-differential alone could be written. One recognizes immediately that this intervention, while on-going over several years for a few of us, is only temporary. Our US team returned home after the fifteen days while our Jamaican partners remained there. Since this dissertation seeks to understand how justice and care can be activated, how our partnership of 'server' and 'served' can be democratized, and what the enduring effect of the project may be, this limitation is particularly problematic and is one of the major reasons why a 'critically interpretive' frame is necessary. Empowerment and transformation will not be easy and the narratives offered by the Jamaican informants may not be marked by full disclosure

(Renner, 2001a, 2001b) given this limitation marked by the said power differential. This issue is continually wrestled with throughout the remainder of the dissertation.

Reciprocity

Although I have been critical of other researchers and research texts for placing ethical considerations at the end of their work (which often appear as an add-on), I suppose I find myself guilty of hypocrisy. I have discovered, however, that this place at the end of my chapter on methodology may be the most significant section to place it as I believe it frames the remaining three chapters of the dissertation. Traditionally, reciprocity has meant creating friendly conditions between researcher and researched so that the richest data could be extracted in the study. In her conception of “research as praxis,” however, Lather (1986) argues, “we must go beyond the concern for more and better data to a concern for research as praxis” (pg. 263). Continuing, Lather suggests “we consciously use our research to help participants understand and change their situations” (pg. 263). For both the US and Jamaican participants I hope this “change” is feasible. For the US participants I hope that they see the potential service learning provides for transformation in their lives and for education in our society—a transformation that may help lead to self-actualized lives and a more solidaristic society committed to justice and care. For the Jamaican participants I hope that they see the power our partnership may promise toward ameliorating situations of injustice they face, particularly in terms of access to health care, rehabilitation (for some of the disabled children in the orphanages), medicine, and education. This current intervention, which provides the data for my dissertation research study has hopefully reciprocally generated

some of these possibilities and will help lead us toward the ameliorative ends that we both seek.

Now, I move on to reveal the “shared story” of this ethnography. Chapter 5 provides the narrative in the form of accounts of key places and events in this service learning experience, driven by the words of the participants. Chapter 6 provides a critical analysis of this narrative as I readdress my research questions and critically interpret what happened during the process. Chapter 7 offers some possible implications of this study and reconsiders the limitation of it in order to make suggestions for future directions this research may take.

CHAPTER 5

DATA: BUILDING A “SHARED STORY”

“I am building on the story that has created me. Where for so long I was under the illusion I had created the story.” (Adah)⁴³

As noted in chapter 4, the first step when one returns from the field is “tidying up” (LeCompte and Schensul, 1999b); one must: make copies, put fieldnotes in order, create an instrument management system, catalog all documents and artifacts, label and store data, check for missing data, and start reading through and reviewing the data. Tidying up, like it does for many researchers, took longer than imagined at the outset, but this subsequent systematic cataloging of the data paid off, sorting pages of transcripts, reflections, sound files, meeting agendas, photographs, newspapers, and notes scribbled in the margins of books. Since some analysis had already begun in the field, as Margaret LeCompte and Jean Schensul (1999b) suggest, I came home with a few ideas as to how I could begin writing another part of the story that has played such a large role in my life.

As the interviews and observations progressed, I came to understand the experience of the participants better. Although interview schedules were mapped out long before I started collecting the data, I began to tweak the questions for the US informants as we went in order to allow them room to explore those aspects of the trip that were affecting them most. The spirit of what was intended at the outset (asking several of the same questions over a four-five month span) remained intact, but this move proved to enhance the richness of the collected data. Since I was interested in mining, as Norman Denzin (1989) advises, informant biographies and exposing any of their

⁴³ Excerpt from her PHI 220 final paper.

emergent epiphanies, fine tuning the interviews to their story was a necessary and worthwhile endeavor. In addition to the varying foci with the US informant interviews, I also tweaked the interviews with the Jamaican informants in order both to allow them room to speak on matters that were most pressing to them and also to allow me some space to cover topics that may have recently been brought up by the US informants.

Interviewing, though, was not the only means of data collection throughout this service learning experience. Along with these interviews I also kept copious field notes and a reflective journal, reviewed student journals, recorded sounds in and collected documents from the orphanages and schools, took photographs, perused newspapers, saved email and letter correspondence with the team and our Jamaican partners, recorded small group meetings, and reviewed students' final papers and evaluations. As each of these pieces of data were collected, I kept a mental analysis file as to how this information could help to answer my research questions: How does a critical service learning framework and theory play out in a project that seeks ameliorative change? What is the possibility of these projects to work toward social justice and/or care? How does this framework and theory help to democratize the relationship of the 'server' and 'served'? And, what are the potential enduring effects of this project beyond our presence in Jamaica?

In the process of cataloging the data I continued to keep these questions in mind and formulated a plan as to how I might present the story of this service learning class and intervention. After much consideration, I thought it best to tell the story as a series of accounts about key events and places, divided into three parts: Preparing for Jamaica, Jamaica, and Re-entry. Telling the story this way allows the (sometimes differing) voices

of the participants to emerge through the unfolding events of the service learning experience in a manner that creates the image of an ongoing conversation. Ultimately, of course, the conversation is directed and facilitated by me as there is no way to avoid this as I write. What I have tried to do, however, is to leave participants' stories relatively unfettered without much commentary from me, other than some excerpts from my own journal reflections that occurred simultaneous to the ongoing events. This, I hope, is in the spirit of the critically-interpretive methodology I framed in the previous chapter and permits the reader to see this story from many angles. Further, as I have written and rewritten the story, I have sought the feedback of the participants in an effort to continually refine and update my understanding of what happened in these places and during these events so that the narrative is as cohesive and comprehensive as it can be.

In telling the story in this narrative form, I have tried to keep with the spirit of the eventual theme that we chose for the trip: "sharing stories." As the name of the theme itself evokes, our goal from the outset centered on communication with our Jamaican partners. I hoped this communication would lead us closer, in part, to an understanding of how we might work together toward ameliorative change and how we can best democratize the relationship of the 'server' and 'served'. Also, as a result of this focus on communication, this theme of "shared stories" has, consequently, applied to more aspects of this service learning experience than originally thought, which includes the format for writing the remainder of this dissertation. Thus, I attempt to write the following accounts as a series of "shared stories" among US and Jamaican participants.

In many ways these shared stories of events and places come together in narrative form as an impressionist would paint a portrait. In fact, this type of write-up in an

ethnography is referred to by Van Maanen (1988) in *Tales of the Field* as “impressionistic accounts.” Although, for instance, one knows what Claude Monet painted as he sat in the backyard of his scenic French home, some details remain fuzzy, and, thus, are left open for interpretation. Through the following impressionistic accounts, I try to paint the big picture, give as much detail as possible, but leave room for some interpretation. I offer one interpretation through my analysis in chapter 6 and have written this story, as LeCompte and Schensul (1999b) advise, with this in mind. The way I have ultimately chosen to present the story is closely tied to how my analysis gelled around three key themes/metaphors: “butterflies,” “boundaries,” and breadfruit, which apply one each to my last three questions above regarding the enduring effects, the possibility of ameliorative change, and the democratization of the relationship of ‘server’ and ‘served’, respectively.⁴⁴ Together, they help answer question number one: how the critical service learning framework and theory played out. These themes and metaphors emerge in the following stories and are analyzed and explored more in-depth in chapter 6. For the remainder of this chapter, then, I focus on the stories. As I mentioned, the rest of this chapter is best broken into three parts: Preparation for Jamaica, Jamaica, and Re-entry. I have divided the chapter in three parts for two reasons. First, I have the critical service learning framework in mind. In part one, as we prepared for Jamaica in class and corresponded with our Jamaican partners, I show how the first two stages of the critical service learning framework played out: pre-action reflection and theory. In part two, while in Jamaica, I reveal how theory and action worked together in the central praxis of the service learning experience as we interacted among ourselves and with our Jamaican

⁴⁴ Quotation marks appear around butterflies and boundaries as these terms were introduced by informants.

partners. Finally, in the last part, as we re-entered the US, I show how reflection and theorizing played out as we wrapped up this experience and began planning for another. Second, I have the voices of the informants and the entire participant pool in mind. Dividing the story this way allows the reader an opportunity to hear their voices at various stages of the service learning experience: anticipations prior to our team's arrival in Jamaica, ongoing wrestling with the experience while we were there, and emerging reflections once our team returned to the US. At the beginning of each part I provide a reader's guide as a mapping tool in order to introduce the accounts in that section. This, now, is our shared story.

Part One: Preparing for Jamaica

This first of three parts reveals the process we went through in order to prepare for our intervention in Jamaica and illustrates the various issues that arose during our meetings as a class in PHI 220. Through this account I review some background information that led up to this intervention. While this background information is told mostly from my perspective, the voices of other participants, US and Jamaican, begin to emerge as this "preparation" account unfolds. By the end of this part, the reader will have heard at least once from each of the four US informants: Rachel, Ruthie, Gabriel, and Nicholas, and from each of the Jamaican informants: Ms. Mathews and Mr. James.

As a result of the emergent voices in these subsequent accounts, a theme of "communication," particularly within the many examples/conundrums/frustrations of our democratic planning process, is revealed. In addition, two informants introduce the theme of "boundaries" through our first round of interviews regarding their fears about

the upcoming intervention. Finally, I also describe how we came up with and intended to use our overall theme, “sharing stories,” for this service learning experience.

PHI 220: Part 1—The spring meetings

As indicated in chapter 4, this upcoming trip to Jamaica was to be offered as a three credit-hour course in the spring, PHI 220: Service Learning, with the concluding service activity and (we decided later) two follow up meetings to occur after the semester ended in May and June. After coming up with the themes and theories (e.g., hegemony, reproduction, resistance, etc.) Professor Mark and I thought we should cover in the readings at both a global and local level: history, religion, politics, economics, social, service learning, education, multiculturalism, praxis and liberation, and social justice and caring; we selected readings based on our expertise in these areas. We actually decided on the order we would cover these quite arbitrarily, much to the frustration of some of the students in the class. For example, one the of the informants, Gabriel, indicated in our initial interview (which took place during the spring semester),

[W]hen I saw philosophy of education, I was thinking more of the ethics of service learning. I know we will get into that, and I know it is important to get into the history and religion and all of that, but that’s what drew me in. I was actually looking forward to a lot of discussion on theories of ethics related to service learning.

Eventually, we would get to the service learning readings, but other students, in their final evaluations of the course, also commented that these should have come first. Nevertheless, along with the list of (arbitrarily decided upon) readings, I developed a basic frame for what each meeting should consist of in this preparatory stage of pre-

action reflection and theory and Mark and I constructed and disseminated the syllabus for the course.

Since a couple of chapters could be written solely about this spring course, I reserve the remainder of this account to highlighting some of the main issues that surfaced in these preparatory meetings in the spring: readings, reflections, student papers, US informant perspectives from the first interview, accommodations, preparations for teaching in Jamaica, collecting supplies, and fundraising. Since I talk about this course two additional times in this chapter: part two, regarding our small and large group meetings in Jamaica, and again, in the final part, providing evaluative feedback from the students about service learning in general and the course in particular—I focus mainly on the planning stages of this course here for use, critique, and contextualization by other teachers of service learning.

Readings. Each meeting began at 1:30 with a short reflection given by a team-member (a song, a poem, inspirational writing, etc.) and fifteen minutes writing on a reflection topic (at most meetings). After these reflections, we intended to spend the next hour and fifteen minutes of the meeting (until 3:00) discussing the readings prepared for that class. Each student was to complete a typed, two-page journal prior to each class that summed up our discussion of the last classes' readings, summarized the main points in the current readings, compared the readings to the student's own experiences, and covered any questions they wanted to ask in class about the material. These journals, as the syllabus indicated, would be collected three times throughout the semester and would be graded on a pass/fail basis as fifteen points of the final grade.

Reflections. As noted previously, each meeting began with a reflective piece from a team member. For example, at the first meeting, Adah and I sang an original song about our past experience in Jamaica. Personal reflections also concluded each meeting. For example, Gabriel taught us a song, “Open my eyes,” in sign language—a song he had learned doing service work back in his hometown.

Between these opening and closing reflections, our meetings covered a vast host of issues. As I also noted above and in the previous chapter, most meetings proceeded after the opening reflection with a fifteen-minute journal writing exercise that attempted to focus the participant on the upcoming experience. After the reflections and class time, meetings began around 3:00 and we were joined by some of the faculty who did not or could not share in the course aspect of this service learning experience. During this time we met in both large and small groups. We discussed itinerary items, fundraising, preparation for the lesson plans in the schools, and the list of needs for the orphanages; we brainstormed about theme possibilities for the trip; we organized community-building activities for the group in order to build team cohesion; and we spent some meetings in group-reflective time, expressing some of the joys and concerns that were going on in our lives. Many meetings, as one can imagine, went past 5:00.

Paper assignments. Along with the weekly journals worth fifteen points of their grade, students were also assigned two papers during the spring term, which were intended to help draw together the readings and journal reflections. Each of these papers contributed fifteen points to their final grade and were assigned to be four-five pages in length. In the first paper due March 8, 2002, students were asked to discuss how the legacy of slavery shaped any of the components of Jamaican culture: economics, family

structure, religion, or the socio-political structure. As an example of the quality of some of the students' papers at the early stages of this experience, informant Nicholas opens his first paper with this provocative introductory paragraph:

“Three or four perfectly virtuous pages . . . were inserted in the history book of the British Empire. One chapter—bondage—was forever closed and a new one—freedom, was just beginning” (Hurwitz, 1971). Initially, one might look at this quote and possibly respond with a sense of joy and relief. The abolishment of slavery throughout the world was a task many viewed as inconceivable in 1833. The institution possessed a historical power with origins tracing back to the beginning of organized societies. Slavery existed within ancient Mesopotamia, ancient Greece, the Roman Empire, medieval Europe, well into modern times without question. The institution underwent basic changes throughout the ages . . . , but the most basic tenet remained the same: an individual's existence could belong to someone else. . . . Common sense dictates that old institutions do not die so easily. . . . It is with this knowledge that one must assert that independence in Jamaica did not happen overnight and the effects of slavery have had a lasting influence on Jamaican society.

In the second paper, due May 8, 2002, students were asked to write on any of the following topics: the relationship between education and culture; the relationship between education and class roles; experiential learning versus traditional models of learning; service learning vs. traditional models of learning; learning, service learning, and citizenship; or education and multiculturalism. A final paper, eight-ten pages, assigned

once we returned from Jamaica, due July 1, 2002, was worth thirty points. The remaining twenty-five points of the student's grade was determined by their attendance and service work on a pass/fail basis.

Reflections about the way the spring semester was unfolding. Although much more space is reserved to discuss how this course unfolded in the final re-entry section, "PHI 220: Part 3," I reveal, here, some of the pre-action reflective comments about how informants and I were evaluating and understanding how the semester was unfolding and how we were envisioning the upcoming intervention.

In my own notes I considered how we seemed to continue to get bogged down in planning and 'house-keeping' issues that seemed to take an enormous chunk of our meeting time that could have been dealt with more expeditiously (e.g., general money matters or planning dates for fundraisers). Rather than to continually rehash issues, I had hoped more of our time might be spent in pre-action reflection and in our small groups, planning for the particulars of our trip (e.g., lessons in the Jamaican schools). Eventually, the team would get into a groove where we were able to move through decisions and spend more time in reflection and in our small groups.

During this time, "democratic planning" continued to surface as an issue for me as I reflected on the potential of a more democratized planning process. I considered in my notes that democratic planning is quite the double-edged sword—gives team members a vested interest, but is time-consuming. Additionally, I considered that many students (and teachers!) are not used to this kind of planning so, at times, we really felt as if we were in uncharted territory.

Midway through the spring term, about the time that our meetings began to run smoother and we began to spend more time in reflection, I completed the first of three scheduled interviews with my US informants. This first round of interviews, focused on who they were, why they took up this project and if their reasons have changed along the way, what they envisioned Jamaica or the Jamaican people to be like, what they thought their role in the project was, what they were looking forward to, what they feared, and what they thought we would accomplish. The words of these informants frame a good picture for how other students were also thinking about the upcoming trip, based on our discussions in class and their journal entries.

When asked about how they saw their role in this project, Gabriel described it as being a “student.” “I’m there to learn,” he would continue. “And, I’m pretty much willing to soak in whatever they teach me because it is a different place . . . , a world outside of my box.” Nicholas saw his role as “doing what I’m told.” He explained, “I’m going to a place that is very, very foreign to me. . . .I’m going to try and not overstep my bounds.” Informant Rachel saw her role as more active than both Gabriel and Nicholas. Rachel claimed, “I guess I see all of our roles as trying to help for a little bit. I know we are not going to make dramatic change or anything, but I think we can be there for two weeks and make some change for good.” Seeing her active role a bit differently than Rachel, informant Ruthie considered, “My role is not necessarily to change anything because that is just absurd.” Instead, Ruthie claimed her role was to “gain a better understanding and maybe use what I learn to affect my future.”

When asked about what they were looking forward to, Gabriel continued that what he most looked forward to was seeing the world outside of his box. He went on, “I

want to try and broaden my perception of what is out there in the world.” Similarly, Nicholas was looking forward to “settling his soul” a little bit. Given his position in a powerful nation like the US and traveling to a Third World nation like Jamaica, Nicholas was hoping that the experience would help settle some of the, as he put it, “open contradictions” in his life in order that he could push his life more in a direction toward justice. Rachel found herself most looking forward to actually being there and seeing how the team reacted to the trip, while Ruthie was looking forward to having some of the experiences that past team-members had experienced in the orphanages, particularly witnessing smiles on children that seemingly had nothing.

As far as their concerns, the issue of “boundaries” surfaced. In my interview with Rachel she made note of a number of issues (race, disease, and ability especially) that she had come to consider boundaries in her life and that she felt she would need to face and hopefully overcome on this trip. Ruthie’s boundaries also covered race and ability, but additionally consisted of feelings of insecurity or lack of safety that she feared she would face outside of the US. While Rachel and Ruthie considered the practical concerns, Nicholas thought about the question of concerns more philosophically and considered what the project may mean in the long run:

I mean, especially after you leave, you’ll probably have that initial good feeling, doing something good. But, sleeping in my bed that night, I’ll probably have some pretty sad thoughts. That’s one of my major concerns. The shock of going there is less of a concern than leaving. I just don’t picture it as something I will be able to put on the back burner of my mind ... how it’s going to influence the rest of my senior year. It’s

only two weeks, but its two weeks of something totally different. It's definitely going to change my outlook on the world.

Along Nicholas' line of thinking here, I wrapped up my first round of interviews with a question about what they thought we were going to accomplish or what the long term possibilities may be. Ruthie reverted to some of the statements she had made earlier and considered that our role was to "just be there" and provide whatever we could from abroad because of their lack of resources locally. She stated, "I think we are going to help the workers of the orphanages in their activities—not change anything, just be there, because the work is hard." Ruthie continued, "And, then, in the schools, [we will] give out a better understanding of whatever we choose to do in the activities, which they may not get because they don't have the resources. . . . They don't have that opportunity." Gabriel simply hoped that we would make a difference. He feared, "I don't want to just go down there and have it seem as if we did nothing." After a long pause in our conversation, Gabriel concluded, "I just want to know that going down there actually mattered to somebody."

Arranging accommodations. As a team, our first real test of the democratic planning process came in the form of deciding on where we would stay in Jamaica. The past four trips we had stayed in the dorms of a missionary college outside of Montego Bay. The college provided a safe residence, was accessible to all of our sites of service, was reasonably priced (in the beginning), and created an opportunity to get to know and grow with any number of Jamaican workers and students from both Jamaica and other parts of the Caribbean. In fact, several of the relationships formed at the college continue to grow today between the long-term members of our team and these Caribbean friends.

Additional to the points raised above, staying at this college both gave us, in part, an inside glimpse of religious life in the Caribbean, as we attended several services on campus, and also an introduction to authentic Jamaican cooking, as we ate as the students ate in the cafeteria. Although this college did have its drawbacks:

- (1) staying with sometimes a hundred or so US youth group members (who either had radically different Christian beliefs than we did or who were there for what they considered a summer break vacation and were inordinately loud);
- (2) recognizing that the school was not financially solvent and, consequently, often took advantage of staff and students; or
- (3) having to pay more and more each year to stay there (in sparse, but not totally uncomfortable conditions) due to number two above;

the plusses of the relationships that we had developed and the convenience of its location far outweighed these drawbacks. Thus, in our initial meetings in the fall, 2001, the faculty and staff at St. James College took it as a given that we would stay at this same missionary college as we had done in the past.

These plans rapidly changed, however, when the missionary college closed due to financial reasons. The faculty and staff at St. James, three of the original team members—Leah, Adah, and Cody—and myself were now forced to make other plans for this upcoming intervention.

Since we only had familiarity with this missionary college and a couple of nearby hotels, Professor Paul, who was making his fourth trip to Jamaica, began a search of potential places to stay. We narrowed our search to three possibilities: Coral Meadows, a luxury hotel down the street from the missionary college; The Columbus Project, an

orphanage on the south coast about an hour and a half from our service sites; and The Mission House, a retreat center near downtown Montego Bay. After much debate among the leaders through an email chain, the majority favored Coral Meadows and we decided to bring the matter to the entire group. Ironically, although Coral Meadows was a luxury hotel, it was our cheapest alternative and centrally located to our service sites.

Additionally, we were unable to gather much intelligence about the other places. During our discussions, I raised the point regarding both the potential hypocrisy of staying at a hotel while doing service work and also the potential problematics of distractions like television, air-conditioned rooms, and easy access to alcohol (even though the students were of legal age in Jamaica). Some agreed to an extent, but considered that our trip was fast-approaching and a decision needed to be made. I, along with the other dissenters, agreed that whatever the group decided would be acceptable.

During the discussion in the group, it was revealed that what the students were most concerned about was cost. Having little familiarity with the accommodations in the past or what the local geography was, most students concluded that they would like to stay wherever it might be cheapest. Some of the points from the leaders' discussion were divulged to the group, but cost, for the most part, remained the biggest factor. One student, however, did voice her concerns about the apparent hypocrisy of staying in a hotel in Jamaica. While Rachel raised the concern only briefly during class, she expounded upon her points in our first interview. Rachel worried, "I think if we stay in that resort, it'll kind of put us back into our American mode every night and I think that will change how we act, whether we try to or not." I followed up and asked, "What is

your sense of how Jamaicans would perceive us as staying in the resort? Rachel responded,

I think then it will make us look like, I don't know, like hypocrites. I think they [the Jamaicans] would see that pretty clear. [We would be giving the appearance that] their life is not good enough to live for a few days, so we're not going to. I don't know if we are shoving it in their face—[we're saying] "We're better than you," "We're helping you and you should thank us for that," so... I think a lot of people in here [on the team] are trying to rationalize. I know they want to be comfortable, and I do too, and I really can't say I am looking forward to living like that, but I think it is necessary and I think, maybe, if they don't want to do that that they should maybe reconsider their reasons for going. I mean they have a lot of rational reasons. They've got good reasons, but I think they're just trying to justify...

Ultimately, we decided to stay at the Coral Meadows. Since other alternatives were hard to come by and the time to seek them out was closing quickly, we went with the majority decision and made our reservations.

As I have demonstrated throughout the earlier chapters of this dissertation, the issue of hypocrisy has long been an issue that has been battled in our ongoing trips to Jamaica. What seemed to me like an obviously hypocritical decision to stay at the hotel, was not viewed the same by all—even by those whom I have traveled with each of the last four years. It was at this point that I realized my focus on this issue of hypocrisy may be unhealthy to the overall intervention, or was, at least, somewhat misguided and needed

further reflection. In addition to this evolving understanding of what may or may not be hypocritical, we, as a team, also began to understand through this process what a more democratic planning process might entail.

Preparation of lessons for Jamaican schools: Some early small group work. By Meeting 3, at the beginning of February, 2002, we had already begun to think about what theme would be appropriate to our upcoming trip. At the conclusion of this meeting, Professor Mark and I asked the group to brainstorm over the next couple of weeks and be prepared at the next meeting to present some ideas. At Meeting 4, on February 22, 2002, we spent some time in our small groups and talked about our ideas. Unfortunately, not many ideas surfaced and we left that meeting theme-less. This, however, may have ultimately been to our advantage.

At Meeting 4, we also began to brainstorm about what lessons we might want to teach in the Jamaican schools. Since we had been given the green light by both Pastor Peters at Westminster Holy Church/School and Ms. Matthews at Benson Basic School, we were given quite a bit of latitude as to what we could do. During the meeting with the large group, those of us who had gone in the past discussed several of the lesson themes we had done in the past: continents, climates, etc. During this meeting, I also revealed some of my ongoing correspondence with our Jamaican partners, which illustrated how much they appreciated the lessons and ideas we had supplied in the past. For example, in a letter eerily postmarked 9/11/01, Ms. Matthews, the teacher at Benson Basic School, noted, "Before I forget, our summer school was great. With some of those ideas you gave me at Westminster, the children had a good time. There were thirty-five students there. They were just excited about everything." Along with discussing some possible

themes for the trip in our small groups, we also briefly discussed the idea of the lessons and asked them to think about some potential ideas before the next meeting, hoping that this would turn out better than the brainstorming over the themes.

While no theme had yet to emerge by the next meeting on March 8, some possible lessons plans began to percolate among the group based on an idea presented by Adah. Since several of the US participants were education majors, teachers, or professors, we had hoped that this portion of our planning would be a smoother one. Although good ideas surfaced, it wasn't all that smooth. One of the problems we faced involved the fact that the lessons we needed to plan involved pre-k to 2nd grade students and most of the "education" participants had expertise in middle school and above. Additionally, most of the participants with educational experience had never been to Jamaica before so they were unfamiliar with the context within which we would be working.

Adah, as a veteran of the trip and as an education major, provided the seed that would eventually grow into the lessons we presented at both Westminster and Benson. She suggested that we focus our lessons on folk-tale literature—that any lesson we teach (in math, science, social studies, etc.) should originate in stories, specifically stories that are common to many cultures. By the end of the meeting, the small groups had agreed that this would be a good place to start our lessons and asked the team-members to do some research and present some possibilities for stories at the next meeting.

Through a series of emails among the leaders in preparation for this next meeting, it was suggested that we should all begin collecting stories having to do with any number of subjects. The stories should be simple and ones that we could tell simply. It was also suggested that we should think about telling stories and allow the children to generate and

tell their stories. Finally, it was suggested that we should consider activities where these stories could be blended. And, then, suddenly, our thematizing and lesson planning came to an exciting articulation as Professor Mark suggested that a theme of “sharing stories” would be most appropriate. Before our meeting, Mark sent an additional email message to clarify his point:

Adam,

Did you receive my email about the "shared stories" theme? I thought that something along those lines would be a good theme for the trip and for what we do. That way, we can see ourselves as sharing our worldviews and experiences, and use the story-mechanism to generate themes and dialogue (tons of Freirean possibilities here). We could also collect stories from the kids we work with (being careful not to "expropriate" them).

Ciao,

Mark.

“Sharing stories,” then, after a near consensus among the rest of the team, became our theme and we spent the next eight weeks leading up the trip, planning our lessons with this in mind. In my ongoing fieldnotes, I considered the potential fertility of this theme for characterizing a caring, solidaristic partnership. In part two, involving our time in Jamaica, I show through both the Westminster and Benson Basic accounts how some of these lessons played out concretely and whether solidarity seemed possible or not.

Collecting supplies and fundraising. As noted previously, we maintained ongoing communication with our service partners through the year. With our trip nearing in the spring, we focused our communication on what supplies we could bring on this trip.

Beginning at our third meeting, February 8, 2002, I posted the needed supplies to date on our agenda for the meeting so the team could begin brainstorming on how we might gather the desired items. The list consisted of the following:

Diapers, ointments and creams (e.g., Vaseline, aloe, etc.), wet wipes, medicated shampoo, over the counter medications for cough and cold, underwear for boys and girls, clothes, gift packages for the workers at orphanage and schools (?), plastic wear, supplies for schools (e.g., books, paper, pencils, markers, crayons, scissors, etc.); certificates for graduating students at Westminster School, soccer shoes for the New Oxford neighborhood team.

This last item is worth a special mention as it was part of a more recent project we had taken up in Jamaica on our summer, 2001 trip. Mr. James, the project coordinator at New Oxford Children's Home mentioned that he was also managing a local boy's soccer team and they could really use some uniforms for their upcoming competition. After our arrival back in the US, Paul was able to send some past St. James soccer jerseys that outfitted the entire neighborhood team. Mr. James responded shortly after receiving the gear, "First, I would like to congratulate and thank you on the speedy manner you have undertake[n] to make contact with the relevant persons re[garding] the soccer gear you and I spoke about while you were in Jamaica." Mr. James concluded the letter, "Let me, on behalf of the Home and the Children, once again, thank you for the interest you have shown ever since you came to visit with us."

With these heartening words in mind, students and faculty worked to collect as many of these supplies as possible. In the end, we had gathered more than we could take

on this particular trip, and each of the orphanages and schools were well-stocked with supplies after our departure. Particularly instrumental in this endeavor was Professor Mary who had filled a room in her basement with supplies that Paul and I spent an afternoon in April sorting through and transporting to our collection room at St. James.

In addition to the list above, Pastor Peters at Westminster Holy Church/School also kept us informed of the supplies he would need for his roof (that we had agreed to help build) and inquired as to the possibility of us bringing some power tools with us, which would greatly facilitate the deconstruction of the old roof and building of the new roof. On September 29, 2001, Pastor Peters sent us the final fax, which indicated the items he would need. Since it was easier for him to acquire the materials there, than for us to transport them from the US, we agreed to raise the requisite money and wire him the needed funds. In addition to the money that we sent prior to leaving, we also brought three suitcases of tools (power saws, drills, hammers, etc.) with us to Jamaica.

As the team decided to try and raise some money for the upcoming intervention, we created a plan late in February, 2002 for how we intended to collect the money and what we would do with it once we got it. We agreed that the first \$2500 collected would be used for what was needed for or by the Jamaicans (e.g., the building supplies, any school supplies that we were unable to obtain by donation that we would need for our lessons, etc.). The next \$2500, we agreed to use to offset the cost of our own trips (about \$100 each). Any monies collected over \$5000 would be used to set up an endowment for future Jamaica trips at St. James or ongoing expenses that our Jamaican partners were incurring that we could help with (e.g., other small projects around the school at Westminster or Benson, school fees at the local teacher's college for both Ms. Matthews

and her assistant at Benson, etc.). We appealed to local churches, local businesses, funding agencies, and friends to try and raise the requisite funds. (See appendix 13.) Additionally, we scheduled and held two car washes to help generate more money. In the end, due to the generous support of the local community and the efforts of the students and staff at St. James, we were able to raise more than \$4000 for the trip. The first \$2500 was put to use quickly to purchase supplies for the trip, which were warmly received by our Jamaican partners. The remaining \$1500 was used for two purposes. One, we held a post-Jamaica reception for the team on July 1, 2002, where we also invited our families, in order to gather once more to share in some reflective moments of the trip and to begin to build and plan for a future intervention. Two, with the remaining \$1200, we established an endowment at St. James, where we continue to plan how we can best use that money for our partners in Jamaica and/or for future team members who may not be able to afford the total cost of the trip.

Since we did not exceed the \$5000 mark as we had hoped, students graciously agreed to forego any share of that second \$2500 (other than the reception) to be used to set up the endowment. Unsure that we would even be able to raise this money, some students took the initiative and applied to other funding sources that the college offered (e.g., four of the students each received \$300 grants). Others, including myself, applied to other outside funding agencies to help offset our expenses. In the future, in order to be able to attract more students to this intervention, we will definitely need to seek out more of these types of grants in addition to the endowment as the cost for this trip will always exceed \$1000—an amount that will prevent some students, already stretched due to high tuition fees, from taking part. When asked about the long term possibilities of this

service trip to Jamaica, Nicholas especially noted that this endowment would be a key feature in attracting and allowing more people to have this “life-changing” experience.

In consideration of these last two processes, gathering supplies and fundraising, it was only in my reflective notes after the trip that I recognized how the car washes, divvying up the supplies at St. James before we left, and helping students apply for the grants aided in building team cohesion. Sometimes it’s the little things that aren’t immediately apparent that can prove to be an important part of the overall experience.

As we packaged up our supplies for the trip a couple of days prior to our departure for Jamaica, the anticipation was noticeably building for the team. Some had no idea what awaited them (would it be “life-changing?”). Others looked forward to renewing past relationships. Part two takes a closer look at how both played out and offers a “shared story” of what happened while we were in Jamaica. (Photographs of our team packing the supplies at St. James can be found in Appendix 14.)

Part Two: Jamaica

This middle portion of three parts is by far the largest written section of the chapter as it details a number of aspects of our trip to Jamaica and is the place where the US and JA voices surfaced most poignantly. It is the shortest in terms of time: two weeks, as opposed to part one, which covers five months of preparation, and part three, which covers more than two months after the trip. However, the intervention itself was the focus of both the planning and the reflection afterwards; thus, I have gratuitously infused these particular accounts with the words and actions of the participants as they prepared for, worked in, and reflected on the project. This type of infusion, then, allows

for the development of a fuller context and often shows the progression of thinking for the participant, from preparation to reflection.

Deciding which order to present the accounts was a difficult decision. While the places where we ‘served’ are presented in chronological order, many of the events or places that I include in this part were relevant at many stages during our time in Jamaica. After much consideration, I have decided on the following order: Accommodations; Jamaica in general; Cambridge International Children’s Home; New Oxford Children’s Home; Westminster Holy Church/School; Benson Basic School; The Columbus Project; and PHI 220: Part 2—the group meetings.

Like part one, several themes and images emerge in the following accounts through the voices and experiences of the participants. In the first account I discuss our arrival in Jamaica and offer some of my concerns that I feared (in part one) had come to fruition. In the account of Jamaica, I reveal the symbol of the butterfly, which comes to serve as a metaphor throughout this part for the contradictory nature of participants’ experiences and the differing outcomes with our service partners. Once into the accounts of the service placements—Cambridge, New Oxford, Westminster, and Benson—I show more boundaries that participants faced, the emerging issue of attachment, the metaphor of “becoming,” as an additional facet of the butterfly symbol, and the symbol of the breadfruit as a way to characterize community-building. Through the accounts of the two schools, Westminster and Benson, I examine how our theme of “sharing stories” played out and describe one of our lessons in detail. By providing the account of The Columbus Project, I show how the US participants both understood how hegemony and the theory of reproduction are carried out, and how they also realized why we have avoided the term

“mission” as a way to characterize our trips to Jamaica. Finally, in the last account of part two where, symbolically, theory and action merge, I discuss our group meetings in Jamaica as part of the course, PHI 220. This concluding account demonstrates once again the contradictory nature of our experiences and reveals a myriad of emotions we experienced while in Jamaica.

Accommodations

Although Coral Meadows was our intended destination once we got to Jamaica, their offer for our accommodations significantly changed three weeks prior to our flight. This left Professor Paul, who was handling the financial matters of the upcoming intervention, scrambling. Fortunately, he maintained contact with the former manager of the Meadows, who had moved two doors down to a brand new hotel: The Caribbean Manor. The Manor agreed to meet all of the conditions that the Meadows had originally agreed to, so Paul was able to handle the matter expeditiously, but not without a couple of sleepless nights.

Arrival in Jamaica. We arrived at the hotel around 7:30 PM on Tuesday, May 14, 2002 after a fifteen-minute, air-conditioned, van ride from the airport. Once outside the van, however, the humid night met us somewhat unexpectedly as we perspired under the weight of the heavy air and our three bags of luggage. We made our way to our rooms where we found above-average sized accommodations, outfitted with two double beds, cable TV, and an air-conditioning unit. Each room had a full bath and double glass doors that led out onto a spacious porch that overlooked the Manor’s yard and the ocean, just a stone’s throw away. Aside from these double doors, there were no windows in the room, but for a small vertical opening in the wall next to the doors with louvers. Since there

were no screens behind the louvers or in the doors that led to the porch, many of the team, including Paul and myself (as my rationalization had already apparently begun), opted for the AC in order to keep out the mosquitoes. Aside from the issue of mosquitoes, though, team members staying on the ground floor also opted for the AC, rather than keep their doors open, for safety reasons.

Once the team got settled in their room, many made their way around the grounds, trying to familiarize themselves with the surroundings even though it was dark. Several people hung out around the pool and talked about the comfortable accommodations, the long day of travel (three planes, twelve hours), or the work that was ahead of us in the orphanages the next morning. Others found out there was a bar nearby, three doors down, and, after having cleared out the Manor's bar, gathered up a group to go over there for a couple of drinks. Some of the concerns I had felt earlier in planning for these accommodations—staying in a luxury hotel and having easy access to alcohol—already began to come to fruition.

The Manor at first light. At daybreak, the next morning, I awoke before most of the team and took a look around the Manor in the daylight. Standing at the end of the Manor's pier, which extended out into the Montego Bay and offered a breathtaking view of the Caribbean, I noted that the Manor's grayish-green frame, trimmed in white, overlooked a front lawn which was a combination of grassy lawn and sandy beach. A neatly tiled path led out from the hotel across the lawn and onto the pier where I stood observing under a thatched-roof hut.

From the perspective of the pier, you could see directly across the bay to the small peninsula of Freeport—a port of entry for the luxury cruise-liners that frequent Jamaica.

In the opposite direction, looking back toward the hotel, the pool conspicuously separated the building that housed our rooms and the two story structure that housed the dining room. The Manor's bar was quaintly kept in a castle-like structure that obstructed the view of the dining room from the pier. Traffic could be overheard on the nearby road outside the hotel and the combination of the sweet smell of saltwater and the acrid scent of some distant burning garbage was detectable from my position out on the water.

While the accommodations were comfortable, I could not shake some of the hypocritical feelings I had before, and some of my fears, especially regarding alcohol use by students had already begun to be realized. To perhaps alleviate some of these same feelings shared by others, we quickly became involved in the lives of the small staff that worked there. Since we were the only ones staying in the hotel, but for a couple of interesting gentleman from the US that remained inebriated most of the day, we were easily the center of attention for the staff. By the second night of our stay at the Manor, we knew all about the staff and their families and had even begun helping with the evening dishes so that the workers could leave at a decent hour. Professor Mary recalled our assistance at the hotel in a reflection she entitled: "KP at the Hotel." Mary writes:

When we learned that Bonita, our server, had to do all the dishes for the evening meal, we decided to team up for the KP. What we saw in the kitchen would not please the health department, but this was not the US.

The hot water pipe was broken, so we used lots of soap to compensate.

We also used a team-member's antiseptic clean-up wipes on the faucets and counter-tops every night. The hotel probably does not get many guests like us.

In fact, the hotel probably did not have many guests like us, as they had at first thought that we were a “religious group,” then they saw the bar get drunk out of its beer by our team on the first night, and, then, we took the time to help clean and do the dishes. This was probably a very confusing image that we presented, but an interesting one, nonetheless, and one that I looked forward to learning more about as the trip progressed.

As a follow-up to the concerns Rachel expressed about our accommodations in the last section, I asked her about the issue in our second interview, which took place in Jamaica. I asked her, “One of the things you were concerned about was the issue of hypocrisy. I’m wondering how you think the Jamaicans are viewing us, especially at the service sites?” Rachel replied,

I think I felt really bad every time they would say, “Where are you staying?” And, I’d have to tell them some name that I’m sure they know and that kind of makes me feel bad. Not that I didn’t enjoy it. It’s been a lovely break: a shower, a pool, when we get back. I guess it makes you see a happier side, a touristy side of things, if nothing else. I think we’ve done a good job here of making the workers feeling appreciated, taking turns doing dishes. And maybe, that’s what we needed just because we knew we had people that without these comforts would fall off the bandwagon. I personally think we should have stayed somewhere different because I think this atmosphere kind of promotes drinking, dancing, and going out.

The provocative nature of this first account of our time in Jamaica is not lost on me. I have chosen it purposefully. For the duration of the trip (as well as in the preparations beforehand), the team continued to uplift me, disappoint me, relieve me, and

shock me. I start here because this was our introduction to our time in Jamaica. I see it fitting that it should be the readers' as well. The stories to follow explore this intervention much more deeply and hopefully reveal both the spectrum of emotions that we were all to experience in the days ahead and also the multiperspectival readings of the experience that were possible. The next account offers a generalized view of Jamaica, but begins to show the particular contradictions that were soon to surface. (Photographs of the Caribbean Manor can be found in Appendix 15.)

Jamaica in General

Now that I have offered an introduction to our arrival in Jamaica with a particular description of our accommodations, it makes sense next to reveal what Jamaica was like in general. I start this piece of the story with some scenic and climatic considerations that were immediately apparent in Jamaica. Along with my own impressions, I include some from the point of view of Professor Mary, who shared with the team what she called "reflective snapshots." Mary's "snapshots" not only provide contextualization to this account (and the one previously), but they are also important and insightful additions to later accounts as well. I continue this piece of the story with a few of the headlines that I ran across while in Jamaica. Some of these daily headlines are also integrated into other parts of the story as they apply directly to our work in the schools and orphanages. The headlines here in this section, however, simply represent a sample of my daily perusal of the papers and offer some insight into what stood out to me based on what I was observing and hearing from my informants. To conclude this account, I reveal the changing impressions of the US informants regarding Jamaica as their opinions evolved in our second interview. From these interviews the intriguing and insightful symbol of

the butterfly emerges, which becomes a way to both metaphorically describe the contradictions in our experience at the schools and orphanages, and also to characterize the overall evolving nature of this service learning intervention.

Scenic and climatic considerations. One issue that presented itself immediately in Jamaica was climate. On many mornings this was what we noticed first. As it had not rained in nearly two months prior to our arrival, we wondered when we might get some relief. The staff at the hotel even hoped aloud that we had brought some rain with us. Eventually, it began raining, sparsely, on our third day, and from the fifth day on, it poured, often. It even rained in the morning, which is quite unusual for Jamaica in May. Although the rain was usually a relief, its presence kept conditions very humid.

For Mary, Jamaica began to resemble Appalachia (for more reasons than just its humid climate in the summer). Mary writes in a reflection she entitled: “Appalachia in the tropics”:

The hillsides with their narrow, curving roads; small, poorly built homes; old cars, and roaming animals reminded us of Appalachia. Other similarities include high unemployment and bleak prospects. The families who seem to be succeeding had someone working in the States. When we asked about the apparently affluent or downright wealthy-looking homes tucked in between near hovels, we were told they probably belonged either to drug dealers or to government officials, who get rich on bribes.

Mary also thought about the overabundance of livestock, just walking around the streets, in a reflection she entitled: “Old MacDonald’s Farm?”:

If Old MacDonald has a farm in Jamaica, it may be the whole Montego Bay area. We saw cows all over the place: near the beach, by the soccer field, in any space with a speck of vegetation. Apparently no one wants to eat beef since mad cow disease, which never touched Jamaica, so the cows were just let loose. Many have ropes around their necks but aren't tied to anything. They wander anywhere they please. One night our poolside organizational meeting was punctuated by a loud "mooo" from the field next door. As the children's song says, "With a moo-moo here, a moo-moo there...."

Besides the climate and the wildlife on land, the wildlife in the water and the horizon was also noteworthy. From the pier, the team had a provocative view of sea life in the Montego Bay, which is very shallow in parts. Seaweed occasionally undulated in the water, waving back in forth in pronounced and exaggerated ways as the calm Caribbean moved just slightly. Fish mainly stayed to the perimeter of this seaweed, intermittently darting in and out of it. Schools of local fish with black horizontal stripes mixed with fish with yellow and black horizontal stripes, often forming a sort of plaid pattern in the water.

The horizon was equally as provocative. Rolling clouds would sit on the horizon. Little wisps of innocent white clouds launched in trajectories back toward us on most mornings as if in a reaching or beckoning motion. Behind us, however, on the countryside mountains, grayer clouds often sat, perched, threatening storms and enhanced humidity. Sometimes the sea and horizon cooperated in amazing ways to reveal a sort of canvas upon which impressionist paintings were captured. In the slightly rippling sea,

particularly in the evening, white clouds surrounded by the bright orange, pink, and turquoise of a day's dying sun were reflected on the surface, revealing any number of Monet's and providing a peaceful end to a long day's labor.

Headlines in Jamaica. As nights ended for me with a Monet (or an occasional Red Stripe, a Jamaican beer), most days began with a paper, either a *Gleaner* or an *Observer*, Jamaica's two largest dailies. In the paper I sought to keep up with what was happening in the world and in Jamaica, but I was also seeking headlines that might characterize our evolving experience. The first morning, the headline: "Water, water everywhere,"⁴⁵ stood out based on the lack of rain. This article discussed the lack of access to good water in Jamaica based on inefficient sewage treatment programs and degradation of forests and watersheds. The author of the article, Peter Espeut, talks about the irony of an island surrounded by water without good access to it—especially when millions and millions of gallons of their fresh water rivers run into it (the saltwater Caribbean) everyday. Espeut acknowledges the high cost of desalinization and the shrinking water supply globally; however, he attempts to urge his fellow Jamaicans to be cognizant of the issue (to be more environmentally sound and mindful) and warns of the price of privatizing the water supply as the cost for access could increase dangerously. Of course, much of that rain that was to come on our trip did not assist with the 'water shortage' because too much often came at once, and since Montego Bay has no sewers to soak up this water, it just stood there in stagnant pools (a mosquito breeding ground) or it ran off, unabated, into the ocean.

⁴⁵ Espeut, P. (May 15, 2002). *The Daily Gleaner*, Pp. A4-A5.

The next day, May 16, 2002, the headline, “Health crisis worsens,”⁴⁶ leapt off the page. One of the most significant and unjust issues facing Jamaica revolves around the lack of access to acceptable and affordable health care. Jamaica is a pay-for services only country when it comes to health care. With growing unemployment and shrinking access to good-paying jobs (that have insurance or where health care could be afforded), increasing numbers lack adequate health services. We saw the lack of access in the orphanages our first day, particularly at New Oxford Children’s Home. While some of the children do receive treatment, many more do not. And, few preventive measures are taken to avoid future problems, which is why many of the children living there are now in their untreatable condition and will die, prematurely and needlessly, in pain. Frater’s report specifically exposes the unsanitary conditions at the only slaughterhouse in the St. James Parish. The health authorities had ordered it closed until it could meet the necessary conditions to run the abattoir more sanitarily. After this notice was served, the slaughterhouse continued running while health inspectors had stopped going there, presuming it was closed. It had not been and much meat was distributed throughout the parish in the meanwhile. The health authorities had no way now of certifying whether this meat was ‘clean’ or not. In a country where access to health care is in crisis, creating potential epidemics is the last thing they need. I wondered where we obtained our ox tail for dinner the previous night.

A few days later, after having visited the orphanages and having started our work in Jamaica’s underfunded schools, I ran across the headline: “Jamaica could well end up

⁴⁶ Frater, A. (May 16, 2002). *The Gleaner*, p. A1.

like Argentina.”⁴⁷ I noticed this article because it speaks to the enormously large debt that Jamaica has accrued over the decades and how it may lead to social and political unrest as it has recently in Argentina. Currently, Dennis Morrison points out, 64 cents of every dollar collected goes toward debt repayment—both external as well as internal debt. As one can imagine as a result, it’s fairly hard to create a competitive educational or health-care system with what is left over! Morrison claims that the internal debt is much worse than the external, citing that only 13.4 cents of every dollar goes to pay foreign debt. His solution calls for taking more loans through international banks that offer lower interest rates than the internal debt rates that they are currently paying. I wonder, though, to what extent the existence of foreign debt in the past (and Jamaica’s inability to pay it off) forced them into internal loans and credit. Which came first?

A couple of days later, The Jamaican Labour Party (JLP) offered their proposal for reforms. In an article, entitled “Pathway to Growth,”⁴⁸ Audley Shaw, the JLP Deputy Leader and Opposition Spokesman on Finance, reported that Jamaica’s debt was at \$30 billion in 1989 (when the JLP left office), reached \$170 million in 1994, and has tripled to \$495 billion in 2002. Shaw identifies four problems:

- (1) Jamaica’s high cost of money and heavy debt burden;
- (2) Excessive bureaucracy;
- (3) Human resource limitations (e.g., poor public education system: 68% of Jamaicans aged 18-24 have no academic qualification); and

⁴⁷ Morrison, D. (May 22, 2002). *The Daily Observer*, p. 9.

⁴⁸ Shaw, A. (May 24, 2002) *The Financial Gleaner*, p. 5

(4) Lack of prudent management of scarce resources.

According to Shaw and the JLP, the solution to these problems lie, on the one hand, with training its citizenry, but, more importantly, on the other hand, with making provisions for entrepreneurs to “create wealth in a substantial way.” In Shaw’s six-point solution, he offers a framework that looks frighteningly similar to the International Monetary Fund’s policies for structural adjustment, which weakens national control over the economy and promotes enhanced foreign investment through open markets. Shaw concludes,

Today we are challenged, not to re-invent the wheel, but to join the rest of the civilized and fast moving world, bring real accountable first world management to our governance, free enterprise, unleash a landscape of opportunities, give the private sector with low cost money so they can feel confident to take risks once again, cut the red tape and lay out a red carpet for investors. *Jamaica is like a rocket that just won’t take off. Let us provide the framework to allow the rocket to take off. Let us provide the framework for growth. Let us free enterprise and watch Jamaica grow and blossom into peace and prosperity* (my emphasis added).

This conclusion and plan seem doomed to fail since structural adjustment programs have obviously not worked, as Beckford and Witter (1980) predicted, and more than likely will not work again as Jamaica is buried in debt. Having recently noticed the Super S+ chain supermarkets springing up everywhere in Jamaica to replace the ‘mom and pop’, locally owned groceries stores we had shopped at in the past, this financial advice only helped to dim our vision for Jamaica’s economic future. These chain stores and bleak economic

future for the common Jamaican were also noted by other participants. Cody realized in her final paper,

One great change I noticed this year [compared to] the first year I was in Jamaica was the amount of chain stores. In one of the readings, Barnet and Cavanaugh (1996) said that western culture is overpowering the media on other countries, and it so doing it “diminishes viability of local culture to accelerate standardization of markets.” Five years ago, there were no chain supermarkets and only a handful of chain restaurants. Now you can’t turn a corner without seeing a McDonald’s or a KFC. It is kind of depressing to see Jamaica being globalized so rapidly.”

Similarly, Adah commented in her final paper,

Every year I am more and more shocked at how much Jamaica changes and how more and more those changes make the island more American. There are now chain supermarkets and pharmacies, Burger Kings, KFC’s, and even old American-made pick-up trucks.

Even though globalization has had its effect on Jamaica, some small producers still seem to be able to make a living. Mary talked about one particular self-employed seamstress, Sally, in a reflection she entitled, “Sally sews a seam”:

One morning breakfast was delayed exceptionally long. In the meantime a lady was in the lobby with gorgeous swatches of cloth and sample garments she had made. When we found out she was Bonita’s mother at the hotel, we were eager to patronize her. . . .Sally wrote our orders in a little notebook, which we signed next to her price. She measured our shoulders, chest, and hips, and promised to have everything finished a few days later. On Monday she showed up with everything

finished to perfection. Some of the boys immediately sported their bright tropical shirts while the ladies and girls saved their new skirts and dresses for Sunday. I ordered print blouses for my mom and sister. I had Sally measure me and told her, a little wider here, a little narrower there. The blouses fit perfectly and my folks were very pleased with the lovely garments.

Changing perceptions of Jamaica by the US informants. Although these reflections and headlines only provide a very particular slice of what Jamaica is like, they do provide at least a glimpse of some of the issues that Jamaicans face. In order to better conceptualize and contextualize this perception, I now include the voices and experience of the informants. As the service learning experience progressed, informants' impressions of what Jamaica faced and what Jamaicans were like evolved and differed in interesting ways. Since I interviewed the informants three times, once prior to going, once while in Jamaica, and once when we returned home, I had a chance to follow their evolutionary and differing thought processes over the course of our conversations together. While still not a complete picture (as if one could be possible), a more vivid impression begins to emerge through their stories.

In the first interview, prior to arrival, informants' descriptions of Jamaica and its people ranged from "rough" to "forgotten" to "typical poor." When asked about her growing understanding of what Jamaica might be like, Ruthie responded, "I think that there life is pretty hard, that it is a struggle everyday to get food. . . .I almost picture them living in boxes. . . .I don't know if that is true or not." Similarly, Gabriel responded, "From what I've heard from you guys in class, it sounds kind of rough, especially if you are not part of the tourist industry, which is their bread and butter." Gabriel went on to

talk about the Jamaicans (and other poor) as “forgotten people” and one of the reasons we were going was to show they are not forgotten:

Well, it seems to me, when you talk about the schools and orphanages, it seems like they...I think the phrase I am looking for is forgotten people. Now, I’m not sure how true this is in terms of the area around them if they are forgotten or not, but as far as my hope is and what we do them, I hope to give them some sense that they are not forgotten, that there are people here to help them. If they’re not across the street, they’re across the ocean and they will come and help or something like that.

Finally, in this first round of interviews, Rachel considered the life of a Jamaican as “typical poor”: “I kind of picture the typical poor life. . . . I just see dirty houses, dirty kids, lots of kids, living without adult males, I don’t know. I guess I [envision] a lot of moms sitting at home without a lot of choice of what they can do.”

The responses about what Jamaica was like began to vary once we got there. In the second round of interviews, impressions about Jamaica ranged from “paradise” to a land of bland colorlessness and from “not as bad as I thought” to “shocking.” Descriptions of the Jamaicans themselves included “friendly,” “happy,” and “These are God’s people.”

Regarding Jamaica itself, many participants often referred to it as a “Garden of Eden” based on its lush, tropical countrysides. Ruthie, on the other hand, noticed a distinct lack of color in Jamaica:

There is no color in their buildings, their cars even. They’re either a dark color or they are white. I saw a pink colored car while we were running today. That’s the

first odd colored car I've seen. . . . The only place I've seen color is on the Hip Strip where tourists are. But, even around here, there are no colors in the houses, there is either white or dark. No colors of the spectrum. Even the big drug dealers' houses or whatever, they are always white. I haven't seen anything different, they are all either white or gray, and they are all worn down. . . . I mean the only color you really get is from the sunset, and that is what, one out of ten days?

It was, of course, true up to this point of our second interview, that we had seen few breathtaking sunsets, which we were used to in the past, but Ruthie's comments struck me as interesting since I had elected (as I explained in chapter 4) to take black and white photographs on this trip to eliminate what I considered to be the provocative colors of the island. From Ruthie's perspective, interestingly, there was little color to eliminate.

Similar to these contradictory depictions of Jamaica as either lush or colorless, other informants also differed. Nicholas termed what he saw "shocking," "It's so shocking . . . I mean, the poverty is so bad. I didn't know how poor it was. Mexico is actually a little worse [based on his experience in St. James Border Studies program at the Texas/Mexico border], but I just wasn't expecting it to be so poor. Some of the houses we pass on the way here just really drive that home." Rachel, on the other hand, expecting the worst, determined that Jamaica wasn't as bad as she thought it was going to be:

It seems like there are a few more males than I was thinking, so I thought that was pretty positive, but then there are the cases of just a woman with lots of kids. And, obviously, there are lots of kids—the orphanages. They

don't seem as bad as I would have thought. . . .They don't seem as miserable as some of the people back at home. Like, through their music in their church and their devotion to that sort of thing, they seem like they have found a way to deal with it better than maybe I would have.

In fact, this resourcefulness of the Jamaican people was noticed by all of the informants, noting how they were so friendly, easy-going, and smiling despite the misery they knew had to exist based on the economic conditions. Ruthie noted,

I think that they always smile and they always kind of pretend they are happy, but they are living a life of misery. I don't know. I just... just from how I live my life, I just can't see living in a house with no roof on it, falling down. . . .They are struggling. They can't even afford to send their kids to school. The struggle... at least in these communities, is unreal. I think they want what's best for their children, not necessarily themselves, but for their children—it's [the goal], getting out. As far as the people... I guess they are as happy as they can be given the circumstances.

Gabriel made special mention of how friendly the Jamaicans were:

The nice thing about Jamaica is that the people are so friendly, you know? They're willing to be lenient with you as far as language, culture, whatever. Its kind of hard...for me, it was kind of hard to see if I was stepping on people's toes because they were so friendly and lenient, not just because of the culture down here, but because they see so many tourists. They see so many people coming and going. They realize this is a vacation spot for people.

Finally, Nicholas focused on how laid-back everyone was and concluded his thoughts about Jamaicans as “God’s people”:

I’m not particularly Christian, but one of the feelings I’ve had throughout this trip, I mean, I tend to be more Eastern in my beliefs, but I still can’t avoid this idea that if there are a God’s people, these are them: the meek, the humble, those who have not, but still always have a smile on their face, happy, warm to you. That thought has occurred to me. No matter what divinity you might believe in, these are special people according to any religion. They always talk about meek, those who are poor, who are humble, who basically just get the necessities. These are those people.

In the final interviews, informants continued to consider how Jamaicans could be happy despite the overwhelming economic obstacles they faced. Ruthie, however, in addition to wondering how people could manage a smile in these conditions continued to conjure an image of Jamaica in opposition to the “Garden of Eden” idea. She remembered the trash. Ruthie recalled burning garbage and informal trash dumps littered all over the island. She explained these scenes quite vividly as she juxtaposed “trashy” sites to the Hip Strip, a popular tourist spot, where she never remembered any garbage laying around. Aside from this issue of the trash, informants in the final interview overwhelmingly recalled that the Jamaicans were “happy,” despite their need. Nicholas remembered, “They [the kids] are happy. You never saw any sad kids. They were shy at first,” he continued, “but, after a day, they were all over you. Considering more than just the children and happiness, Gabriel responded, at length,

People are really happy there in Jamaica. I know we had talked about this in class. They don't have a lot, yet they are happy, but the last impression... I'm not sure if a lot of people noticed this, but when you went into the airport, there were Jamaican singers in what is I guess traditional clothing, singing a welcome to Jamaica song, I didn't see that on the way out. I thought that was kind of funny. Just kind of like "Come in and experience us. Hey, we're here, enjoy yourself, but when you leave there is really nothing left to say good-bye. Just long lines at the airport, security checks." That's life. They have this persona that they are a great place to hang out, but when you leave and you've gone through what we went through. Just seeing, not the touristy side of Jamaica, but life in general in Jamaica, and how hard it is, I'm kind of glad they didn't have a good-bye, come back to Jamaica kind of song, because it is confusing. Not only is it confusing, but it is kind of sad that, in order to get people there, you have to come off as a welcoming, touristy kind of place. But, deep down, you know that, especially what we've been through, there are people in need. . . .So, I guess my lasting impression is that I went down there kind of expecting the touristy side, even though we were going into the normal, everyday communities, I was still expecting that touristy side, but leaving, knowing that people really do need help down here. And, it is not all white sand beaches and crystal blue waters. There really are troubled areas. There is red dirt. There is brown and green water. There are people living in shacks. That will definitely be a lasting impression.

Contradictions and the emerging symbol of the butterfly. Just as the democratic planning process that I discussed in the previous section revealed contradictory

considerations for what we were going to do in Jamaica and where we were going to stay among people who had made this same trip for three or four years, differing perspectives about what was happening and what we were seeing in Jamaica began to emerge among the first-time participants. Further, as I reveal in the upcoming accounts regarding our actual work in Jamaica, the contradiction of who was serving and who was being served surfaced and was considered by all participants, past and present. So, just as I reflected on dichotomies between ‘server’ and ‘served’ in chapter 2; reproduction and resistance, and hegemony and counter-hegemony in chapter 3; new dichotomies and/or contradictions like that of beauty and ugliness, disease and resilience, poverty and joy, also began to surface.

Gabriel visually helped me to understand these contradictions in our first interview when he likened Jamaica to a butterfly:

I think of Jamaica itself and the Jamaican people as butterflies. When you look at a butterfly, the first thing you notice are the wings, and, you know, how beautifully they flap in the air, how colorful they are, and that’s just a surface thing to notice. But, when you look closely, you see... You know, you pull away the wings and you see this ugly little caterpillar thing that really isn’t very attractive. And, that’s kind of the underlying face of Jamaica from what I’ve read. On the surface, it wants to be this beautiful place that people can come to and enjoy, but there is always going to be this ugly portion of it that it can never detach itself from.

I asked him who he thought put out this image of the butterfly. Gabriel considered,

Well, personally, I think it comes from the government. It wants to attract people. It wants people to come to Jamaica. It wants to put out a façade that it is a great place to come to. And, like most governments do, it wants to forget their problems. They want to push those problems underneath, and just not even worry about them, and try to expose Jamaica as a wonderful place to come to.

I followed up with him in the second interview about how (or if) he continued to see this image of the butterfly.

I still think that it is relevant, but the beauty of the butterfly goes beneath the commercialism. People really... from what I have experienced, most people in Jamaica really are genuinely happy people. Just from the readings, you know, before we had talked the first time. I thought the government was really just putting out bullshit, telling people to smile for the cameras, that's it. Coming down here and experiencing it, people truly are happy. It's not something that the governments pays them to do or say, but they really are happy. So the butterfly metaphor is still definitely valid, but the beauty of the butterfly goes beyond the commercialism, you know. Its, uh, just like anyplace, Jamaica has its good parts and bad parts and it's affected by its government and funding and what not. But even talking to the staff here, they're happy. I asked our cook, just getting to know him and his family, and what he did to send his daughter to college in England, I asked him, "What do you do with your free time?" He said, "I sit under my tree at home and I enjoy the stars." To me, this was

surprising because if you ask anyone in America, what do you do for fun or with your free time, they respond that they go out to the movies, or to a club, or shopping. He said, “I sit out under my tree and look at the stars.”

I don’t think you can get a more genuine answer than that.

Thus, the butterfly became a way to think about the differences of our experiences and a way to juxtapose the beautiful with the dreadful in the same frame in my ongoing reflections. When looking at a butterfly, one can either notice the caterpillar or the wings, the inside or the outside, its unsightly hairy underbelly or the elegant way it flies. Using the symbol of the butterfly allowed me to more easily take in informant’s differing perspectives—especially when they were quite different from my own. This caterpillar/butterfly metamorphosizes in many ways throughout the following accounts as I explore the tensions present at each of our service placements.

Cambridge International Children’s Home.

The agenda. Cambridge, a government funded children’s home, has been a site of service each of the five years our group has traveled to Jamaica. Often, in fact, Cambridge has been the first place that we have visited on our service trips; this year was exemplary of this as we planned to work at the home during our first three mornings in Jamaica. In organizing for our work at the orphanages, past participants and I attempted to prepare this team for what to expect. We described the work we had done in the past as “caring for children,” “holding babies,” “changing diapers,” “playing with kids,” and “giving bottles and baths,” as this institution houses children of various stages of sickness and health, ages newborn to seven. We explained that short of loving on the children and bringing some needed supplies to Cambridge, we really had no other agenda. Since this

is the purpose we had served in the past, and, in talking with the administrator of the home during our preparations for the trip, this was her expectation for our upcoming visit, loving children and bringing needed supplies, then, this was how we leaders cast this portion of the intervention to the team.

This simplistic agenda, however, caused some worry in the team as they tried to mentally prepare for their visit to the home. In our first interview Rachel revealed her confusion as to what we might accomplish:

I guess it's the orphanages where I am a little not for sure what we are going to accomplish. . . .I mean it's not like we are going to find them homes, or cure them, or make them better. I guess it's that we are going to give them a lot of attention—a week that maybe they wouldn't get otherwise.

Not only were some of the team confused about what we might do at Cambridge, but they also began to reveal some of their fears about working there. Regarding his uncertainty about visiting Cambridge, one of the first-time team members, Joseph, wrote in his final reflection paper,

After hearing stories from past years and hearing what we would see, I found it difficult to prepare myself for our first stop. I really expected to be totally shocked at what I would find. I distinctly remember that bus ride on the first Wednesday of our trip, and I distinctly remember being scared to death. In all of the sporting events that I have ever been a part of, I'd never been as nervous as I was that morning.

Boundaries. Beyond Rachel's uncertainty above as to what we might do at Cambridge, she continued in her first interview with the issue of "boundaries":

From talking to Professor Mary, she explained boundaries as those things that made you feel uncomfortable, things that you just avoid in our society, things you are not too comfortable with, and I guess I've never really thought of it that way. I kind of always thought of it as if you didn't like another race, you were prejudiced. I guess I thought you had to be one or the other, not that you had boundaries and you weren't necessarily prejudiced—things make you feel uncomfortable and that is an obstacle for you to overcome. I think, when I was thinking about this trip, I realized a lot of them that I had and I would have never thought about. I think the big one that hit me was about AIDS when we talked about it in class—that kind of went off in my head...because that kind of freaks me out a little bit. The more I think about it I know, I get rid of that fear, but I think its everyone's fear when you hear something like that...

In response I asked Rachel what about AIDS scared her. She replied, "I guess it's the fact that once you have it you can't get rid of it. It's just the horrible way they are treated and I guess... the fact that no one can figure that out [the cure]." I continued, "So, the fear with AIDS is basically your knowledge of the disease itself. Any concern about running across children in an orphanage with AIDS?" Rachel uneasily responded, "Yes, probably. . . . I think its because of my fear of AIDS, the kids, I think it would be better if we really didn't even know that." Knowing what situations, or "boundaries," we would face at Cambridge, I challenged her a bit further, "Would you consider changing the

diaper of a baby with AIDS to be crossing a boundary?” “Yeah,” Rachel countered, “I think that would be, definitely.”

Aside from the fears or boundaries that some of the team faced, other team members anticipated issues that were beyond their experience or expectation. In our interview before going to Jamaica, Ruthie responded to past team member’s descriptions of the smiling children at the orphanages with incredulity: “[I just can’t] see these poverty-stricken kids—how they can walk around with a smile on their face everyday. I think that is something that you just can’t picture. I just can’t picture it.”

It wasn’t long, though, before Ruthie was to see these smiles. In continuing his description of the trepidation he felt in approaching Cambridge that first day, Joseph went on to write,

As we walked up the sidewalk and into the orphanage I made sure that I was in the back and ready to take on whatever came my way. . . .As the leader of the orphanage began talking I heard loud footsteps coming from behind my left shoulder and as I turned to see who it was I saw a little boy with a big grin on his face run up and bear-hug Ruthie’s leg. It was at that moment that I realized how easy our job would be.

However, of course, not all of the children were smiling. In our second interview Gabriel recounted his first impression of walking into the children’s home:

The first thing I noticed when I walked into Cambridge was a little boy just sedately sitting there in the lobby...What was kind of funny was they have this sign that says, “Visitors, kindly wash your hands before interacting with children,” but Leah walks in and just picks the boy up and

holds him, and I thought, “Wow,” just the fact that he let her do that. He wasn’t fussy, he wasn’t trying to get away, wasn’t trying to push off. Just the fact that he let her do that...that was really quite surprising, and the fact that, I don’t know if Leah did not see the sign or if she just felt like she had to pick up the boy.

The issue of this sign was an interesting one, given it was the first time in our five years of visiting that we have seen it posted. The sign, I surmised, may have unfortunately been a result of a recent death at the children’s home, which was captured in a *Gleaner* headline: “Government to blame in child’s death.” The story of the death reveals a sad tale of a child who, removed from an alleged neglectful home, was placed at the orphanage several months ago. The mother of the child, when finally allowed to visit the home, claimed to have found her baby dehydrated and very sick. Her pleas to the administrator to admit her child to the hospital reportedly fell on deaf ears. The baby died a few days later and the mother was now seeking action against the home and, as a result, against the government. Interestingly, and potentially related to this matter, the administrator of this government-run home, whom I have been accustomed to dealing with in the past, no longer worked at the home, as a new woman provided the explanation and tour of Cambridge upon our arrival—and reminded us, more than once, to wash our hands.

A description of Cambridge and examples of what we did there. We received a welcome, explanation, and tour of Cambridge as soon as we arrived on our first full day of work in Jamaica, having gotten to Jamaica just the night before. To enter Cambridge you have to pass through two white iron gates. After entering the first gate there is a yard

immediately to the right, sparsely covered with grass in some sections and bountifully filled with flowers and bushes in others. Both new and ancient swing sets litter the yard. The pacific, sea-colored, blue building of the home easily contrasts itself with the earthy tones of the yard that overlooks the distant Caribbean. A red, white, and blue awning covers the front entrance as one approaches the second iron gate, which provides entrance to Cambridge and shelter from an intensely hot sun (even at 9:00 AM). Immediately upon entering the home a dramatic combination of scents: stale urine, bleach, and the day's lunch cooking in the nearby kitchen, greet the visitor. Once walking through the second gate, a narrow hallway with an antiseptic gray tile floor leads to a large foyer surrounded by white walls and adorned with a picture of Prime Minister PJ Patterson and a Bible verse: "In him who is my strength, I have strength for all things" (Philippians 4:13).

After our greeting by the new administrator, we were casually told how we could help and then were left on our own to split up and assist where we could. After washing our hands, two people ambled down to the on-campus school. A couple of people helped out in the children's rooms, changing bed sheets and diapers, cleaning mattresses, and getting kids dressed. Most of the team, including me, went out to the porch, which consists of an area of around 10' x 50' and is screened in by more iron bars. There we played with, held, and fed bottles to the smallest children at the home. A few of us were directed to clean off some of the toys with a hose down around back before letting the kids play with them.

In their final papers for the course, a couple members of the team talked about their experience sitting on the porch with the children. Cody recalled,

The first day we were at Cambridge, I spent a lot of time with a little boy named Hakeem, who has a wooden leg, just holding him. . . .One thing that was present in Hakeem, that is evident in most of the other children, is his need to be picked up by anyone within five feet of him. They crave attention so badly they don't care who it is they get it from. . . .[On the other hand,] another thing I noticed about the kids at Cambridge is that many of them seem distant, especially some of the older ones. It is as if they are depressed.

Joseph, after quickly overcoming his fear of the unknown, noted in his final paper,

Throughout our three days at the orphanage I became very attached to a little boy named Devon. On our second and third visits, Devon came right up to me and sat down on my lap without the slightest hesitation. . . .While he laid there sleeping on my lap I started thinking a lot about him and me. Why is he so attached to me? Why do I make this kid so happy? . . .It absolutely killed me inside when I had to leave him behind.

Having a slightly different experience than those of us on the porch, first time team-member, Pete—in a taped, small group meeting on our third night in Jamaica—excitedly (shaking his head in disbelief often) recounted his experience helping out in the school on the second day at Cambridge:

Adam: Let's talk about the day.

Pete: Maybe I can start us off. I just wanted to start by saying, it was pretty cool when I went back today [to Cambridge] and there were

a few kids that recognized you: “Hey, you know, what’s going on?” One kid, Michael, that Nick had mentioned yesterday, was in the classroom with us today—him and his brother Mark. And, he was actually helping me keep some of the other kids in line. He was like “C’mon, c’mon guys.” [laughter in the group]. He was really helping me out. He was older, maybe around eight. He was pretty smart.

A: Was that the guy in the tan outfit?

P: Yeah, it was actually, and he was helping me with this kid who was having a temper tantrum. This kid [having the tantrum] grabbed his shirt and ripped all the buttons off. They all just popped off except for the one right at the top. And, he just sat back down and looked at his shirt. I was like “Sorry man.” He was like “Eh, don’t worry about it.” The buttons were all kind of messed up and I was like, “Shit.” And, he just sat there like, “Oh well, just another shirt gone bad.”

A: Say a little bit more about the classroom. I mean, you and Nick were in there so you can tell the rest of us what it was like.

P: I mean, gosh, you guys have no idea. It was a whole other world. . . I walked in there and they just mobbed me. They were all trying to grab my hat and sunglasses, and I was like—“I’ll be back.” [laughter] Yeah, it was pretty rough. I think no matter how shitty a job I did, Ms. King [the teacher] really appreciated it.

Cody: What did you guys do?

P: Really? Honestly? I really hate to say it. I was just trying to keep the kids in line. I was just trying to keep them on task.

C: How many kids were there?

P: I would say probably thirty. Because there were about four tables in there with six kids at each and five or six kids running around at all times. Fighting over chairs, everything. You know how we talked about spending half our time getting organized? I found it was 70 or 80, no joke. It was pretty rough. Even when you [me] came in there, I mean, that was cool. I was trying just not to look like a dumbass.

A: Can you imagine the job of Ms. King? I mean there is normally another teacher in there, but still, even one on fifteen!

P: That was one of the first things that came to light. Right after I had gone in there...I forget what actually happened, but it was the way I looked at Ms. King, and she was like, "Yeah, now you know what I go through everyday!" That's exactly what she said, and me and Nick were like, "No shit."

In addition to working with the kids on the porch and in the school, one of the faculty at St. James, Beth, focused her attention on the workers. In this same small group meeting, Beth reflected,

I believe that I am more interested in the experience of the adults more than the kids, and I am sure it is a generational thing. That's why I zip in

there and start making the beds because I am fascinated by the lady in blue, the lady of few words. I stayed in after you all [Joseph and Gabriel] left and I just loved being in there with those women. There were two of them in there—they did this yesterday, too—and they sing spirituals. The lady in blue sings melody and the other lady sings harmony. They sing together and it's beautiful. My point is, the second lady, today, when they were singing stopped in the middle of the song and said to the lady in blue—they were singing “Jesus will make us free” or something and the second lady said to the lady in blue, just like it was a conversation, “You know, he will make us free.” And the lady in blue said, “Yes, he will.” Then they went right back into the song. It was like it was part of the song. It was beautiful. What struck me when I was paying attention to them [was] that it would be very difficult for me to do that everyday and to maintain enthusiasm.

The emerging issue of attachment. Similar stories to the ones above surfaced in many of my interactions with the team. What began to immediately surface as an issue for a number of us after just a few short days in Jamaica was that of “attachment.” Attachment, or detachment as I will reveal in a moment, first came to light in my interview with Gabriel while we were about mid-way through our work in Jamaica, a couple of days after we had finished visiting Cambridge. Gabriel, while trying to make sense of his experience at the orphanage, recounted the following:

As I was holding this baby girl, Monica, I looked into the toddler room, where there was another member of our group with another young girl,

holding her in his arms, and he was crying. And, I thought to myself, “He’s attached; he’s emotionally attached to this girl.” I said to myself “I can’t be like that. I can’t go through the rest of this trip being emotionally attached because I know that I am not going to be here tomorrow. I know that I am not going to be here a year from now, ten years from now. . . . I’m not going to be in anyway related to this person and if I become emotionally attached to a child or a group of children, leaving this place would just be that much more difficult. So, what happened at New Oxford [the children’s home we visited each afternoon after Cambridge], I’m ashamed to say, is I just basically shut down, you know. I didn’t feel like playing with any of the kids. I didn’t feel like sitting down and talking to them. I didn’t feel like I wanted to do that because I knew that if I got too attached, then I would feel, or I thought I would feel more horrible leaving in the situation they were in, rather than just spending the time with them that we had. So, that was one of the things that I was disappointed in myself.

In recollection of the same incident first time team-member, John, who was holding that child in his arms, reflected in his final paper:

One place that really tugged at the heart strings was Cambridge. . . .One thing I noticed about [the children there] is that they immediately attached themselves to whoever picked them up. That was unusual because most babies I have dealt with in the past, including my own brother, have been attached only to parental figures. . . .I spent a majority of time with one

child named Michelle, or Micky as she was called by the workers. . . .[By the third day] I held her the whole day, and even rocked her to sleep at nap time. As I sat there rocking her to sleep . . . I wondered what kind of life she would have growing up. . . .I knew she would have a hard life in front of her. . . .I wondered if Micky would make it and I prayed that she, along with all of the other children, would be able to get a loving family. As I prayed . . . I felt the hot tears streaming down my face. I cried for Micky, and for all the children, and their futures.

Trying to make sense of this pivotal moment, John went on to theorize in his reflection:

It sometimes only takes one child to tear down the emotional barriers we put up when we enter places like [Cambridge]. By [initially] setting up this barrier, [I felt like] I would be able to do the work we set out to do and not be upset when we left. I wanted to leave that place with a feeling of doing some good, instead of feeling of sadness. Micky just totally crushed that barrier with her smiles and willingness to have fun. . . .If I could go back and do it again, I would not change a thing. I would even leave the barrier up; it needed to be shattered anyway.

In addition to this barrier-breaking moment, other team members also recounted their feelings of attachment. In another of her “reflective snapshots” Professor Mary offered the following paragraph, entitled, “Lost and found: Our hearts”:

We lost our hearts to the children. The babies and toddlers at Cambridge International Children’s Home won us immediately. One unnamed infant girl was only a few days old. We watched the first time she opened her

eyes. We cuddled and played with the others, delighting when they laughed. One of my fondest memories is how nurturing our men were with the babies and tots. They fed and cuddled them, rough-housed them and rode them on their shoulders. . . .At both homes, it was heart-wrenching to go into the dormitories to the children who spend their lives in bed. Some are badly crippled with cerebral palsy; others have various severe physical and mental handicaps. Some of our group made a point of visiting these children to communicate warmth and care.

‘Server’ or ‘served’?: Some initial conclusions/contradictions. Cambridge, as it has in the past, offered a poignant beginning to our intervention. Although the agenda and planning for this part of our service was simple, the effect of working there was nothing short of complex, complicated by deadly illnesses; an over-worked, under-staffed nursing crew; and children desperately in need of affection. The future of our work there looks quite similar to the past, as the need for helping hands does not look like it will go away in the months ahead. In our second interview Nicholas cut to the essence of our past, present, and future work there by stating,

A lot of those kids just didn’t get a lot of attention, you could tell. They all just walk up to you and grab you, “Carry me around.” “Do something.”

It’s simple. You just have to put all your fears aside about what you might get from them, or from drinking the water, and just dive right in.

Adah profoundly added to Nicholas’ sentiment above in her final paper, “If nothing else, these places show the value of simple human touch and the difference you can make to one child even for a small amount of time.”

Not only was this difference made for the child, though. It was also, perhaps, made even more powerfully for the team member coming to serve. Following up on what he considered to be the mistake of “shutting down” at the second orphanage, Gabriel, later in our second interview, searched for the larger, more philosophical picture in this experience, realizing there was yet more to come. He concluded,

I mean, just the lesson I learned from that one mistake, was definitely something I will take with me. The fact that the people, no matter what their mental level or physical disability, are still very resilient. They still have that, for lack of a better term, that human spirit, that they are willing to live their lives. No matter what happens to them, they are still willing to, you know, exist and to show others that they exist and to have their existence kind of confirmed by those of us that come in for a couple of days because, honestly, these kids . . . don’t have to show us any affection. They don’t have to come running up to us. They don’t have to ask us to give them a hug. They don’t have to fall asleep when we read them a story or rock them asleep. I guess, by allowing me to confirm their existence, they have confirmed mine.

This opening story about the actual work we were doing in Jamaica shows immediately the impact our intervention was having on our team. At this stage, a few themes: boundaries/barriers, attachment, and the contradiction of who was being ‘served’, already began to surface and, as I show shortly, thread themselves through our other placements. While it remained unclear what resistive or counter-hegemonic role we might be playing in Jamaica at this stage, particularly in this home, the connection of

lives, which previously would have been impossible but for this experience, had already begun to be established. In my ongoing reflections I considered the possibilities of this attachment as an initial step toward becoming the community of caring solidarity I had theorized about in my pre-action reflections. At the very least, though, the US participants were both quickly coming to understand the emotional toll this experience would exact and inwardly revealing many layers they had heretofore been unaware existed within themselves. (Photographs of Cambridge International Children's Home are located in Appendix 16.)

New Oxford Children's Home

Like Cambridge, we have worked at the New Oxford Children's Home each of the previous four years. As we normally visit Cambridge in the morning, when we are most needed, we usually visit New Oxford in the afternoon, after 2:00, when the administrators and staff find it most convenient to receive guests. Similar to Cambridge, New Oxford is an orphanage in need of supplies and helping hands. New Oxford differs from Cambridge in at least one profound way, however, as this is an orphanage for children with some type of mental or physical disability. The objective at New Oxford, though, is no different than at Cambridge—to show love. It just becomes a bit more complicated with these children as it causes many team-members to shift far outside of their comfort zone. This challenge or complication, as I have called it, is not to say that the team (or any other visitor to New Oxford, for that matter) was not willing to provide the needed love, it is only to foreshadow the fact that once the connection was made, it was often revealed as “life-changing.”

In our group discussion the night of our first day of work, the theme of “disposable youth” kept reoccurring, especially regarding these children at New Oxford. Many commented that it seemed as though the children had been “thrown away” to a remote country-side institution—unlike the children at Cambridge, who resided just right outside the heart of the city. It is haunting to consider, as we pondered that night, that a child could be disposed of—but, the sad fact is, all around the world, children are “thrown away” every day. Ironically, our work with these children took place on one of the days hailed by the United Nations as “Children’s Day,” May 16. In the paper the following day, the Jamaican *National Observer* provided an excerpt of Kofi Annan’s speech from the 16th, which highlighted five rights that children all over the world should have. Annan proclaimed:

(1) You have the right to grow up free of poverty and hunger, (2) You have the right to a quality education, whether you are a boy or girl, (3) You have a right to be protected from infectious diseases, including HIV/AIDS, (4) You have a right to grow up on a clean and healthy planet, with access to safe drinking water, and (5) You have a right to live a safe life from the threat of war, abuse, and exploitation.

The *Observer* satirically juxtaposed this speech with an editorial cartoon that showed, in the left-hand scene, Annan, with a clown-like nose, delivering his speech before a multicultural audience of children, and, in the right-hand scene, with the caption, “meanwhile in Jamaica,” a child cleaning the windshield of a passing motorist, while the child’s comrades slept in a nearby gutter. The plight of Jamaican children was made clear by this cartoon. For me, this made our work all the more poignant, especially as we

traveled each of our first three afternoons in Jamaica to the New Oxford Children's Home.

A description of New Oxford: The butterflies are on the inside. To enter the campus of New Oxford, visitors pass through a white two-door gate that is buttressed on both sides by a plain stone wall that runs the width of the campus, topped by barbed wire. To the left of the gate a white sign with blue letters reads: New Oxford Children's Home. There is an "N" on the left door and an "O" on the right, which is initially confusing to a first-timer at New Oxford. Four white stone angels sit atop the wall between barbed wire. Two are sitting and two are kneeling, each with a hand behind their head. Passing through the gates, a gravel road leads about twenty to twenty-five feet into the campus. Three cottages line the right hand side and a school that looks like a cottage sits at the far end of the row. The cream-colored cottages have pitch-black roofs and colorful railings on the porches. A new cottage stands ready for occupancy to the left.

Looking out from inside the compound at New Oxford, the green hills that surround this orphanage are easily noticeable as they peek up over the white walls and are enhanced by a deep blue sky that provides a distant background. From the interior perspective, the stark white wall that protects the entrance assumes a different appearance upon closer inspection. Paintings of butterflies and flowers cover the inside like wallpaper, providing a contrast of perspective depending on one's inside/outside vantage point. The metaphors apparently begin immediately upon entering New Oxford.

Often, the beauty is on the inside, but it is, of course, sometimes difficult to move past the bland or ugly exterior. Just as there were boundaries that needed to be crossed at

Cambridge, there were also boundaries at New Oxford in need of breaching. But, these boundaries were additionally complicated, in a number of cases, by severe disfigurement.

More boundaries. In the discussion of Cambridge, I uncovered the boundary of disease as an issue that many of the team had to overcome. Additionally, I briefly mentioned the issue of race, as for many of us, it would be our first experience working in an all-Black environment. The issue of disease and race was also present at New Oxford. However, these “boundaries” were out-trumped by the issue most noticeable at this children’s home: ability.

Having had significant experience working with children of different physical ability, for example, Rachel even found the work at New Oxford to be troubling. In an interview with Rachel while in Jamaica, she described some of what was going through her mind at the children’s home:

I think I was the most comfortable the first day because the first day I hadn’t even walked into that one room [with children confined to their beds] and I was playing with some of the kids outside. I mean there were obviously problems, but... I don’t know, I guess when Leah got scratched [actually, bit by Sade], people started getting bit and punched and I was like, “Oh, my God!” So, then . . . everyone was getting freaked out about AIDS. I was trying to forget about all that, I guess, and be open-minded, but all of the sudden everyone was scared of it. . . .Then, seeing that one girl in that room, totally bent backwards on herself, that just made me sick.

Likewise, in an interview with Ruthie, a couple of days after our last visit to New Oxford, she recalled her first impression of the children as fragile “objects”:

The whole first day I felt, at least for the first part of it, I felt out of place, didn't know what I was supposed to do. I was afraid to go near them because I was afraid I would hurt them, not treating them like people, but treating them like objects.

And, many of the children were, in fact, fragile. In one of the more provocative reflections over our experience in Jamaica, Leah wrote, in her final paper of the course, about the soon-ending life of one of the children at New Oxford from the child's point of view:

My name is Shamika. I live at New Oxford with my sister Alana. I am not as strong and healthy as my sister. Some days I think she doesn't even remember I am here. I see her running and playing in the yard and I pray I can do that, too. I am so tired, tired of being here. Since I don't talk or communicate much, people never want to spend time with me. I've decided that I can make this all go away on my own. I won't have to watch all the healthier children play. I won't feel ignored or alone. I think the only way to do this is to get rid of all the food and drink in my body. Without that I cannot survive. I tried it and some of the workers seemed concerned—so I did it more. That is the most attention I have gotten in years. They tried tying down my hands and wrapping them in cloth, but I didn't let that stop me. My hands and face are burning and beginning to crack—the smell is sour. People are now disgusted by me and have stopped cleaning me. But, it will soon be over, they won't be burdened by me any longer. Today, new faces came into my room. I could tell some were sickened by me. They took one look at me with vomit everywhere, made a face, turned, and walked out. There

were a few that talked to me. I wanted to talk back. I wanted to cry with them, but I am so tired. They washed my face and hands, changed my clothes, fed me, and let me suck water from a cloth. That felt so good on my tongue and throat. They kept telling me to keep my fingers out of my throat, but I know they will not be here forever. I know they will give up on me like my sister has. I won't let this be a tease. Soon, my life will come to an end. I will be free from pain, exhaustion, helplessness, and loneliness.

Those few that talked to Shamika included Leah as she and two other team members were able to overcome a boundary that most of the rest of the team, and even the staff at New Oxford, could not overcome, and got her cleaned up and took her for a walk outside. Walking with the assistance of Leah and Pamela, who was making her third trip to Jamaica, Shamika seemed to greatly enjoy the outside air once again. But, as her emaciated figure was supported by the caring hands of our team-members, we all wondered if this would be her last time outdoors. Although Shamika seemed to enjoy it, did she view it as a tease?

This kind of sadness characterized much of our visit to New Oxford, but like Cambridge, the resiliency of the children was as heartening as it was astonishing. Joseph tried to make sense of this resiliency in our small group meeting after our second day of work at New Oxford:

I mean, I think, yesterday really hit me, especially New Oxford, and then going back [today]. On one hand, I was really excited going back to see them, and on the other hand, I was [not]. When I showed up yesterday, I was just like a deer in headlights. I was totally shocked and my heart just

broke looking at all those kids. Of course then, a couple came up with big grins on their faces, and that just blew me away. It was just really powerful and makes you think about yourself—especially because some of these kids seem so happy. They have these huge grins on their faces. . . . You know how crappy some people get and they just have the sniffles; these kids have it a whole lot worse...

Joseph continued these thoughts in his final reflective paper of the semester:

As soon as we arrived at New Oxford, my jaw dropped to the floor. . . . I was looking straight into sadness, yet at the same time I was staring at happiness. I saw kids on the porch that looked to be suffering through life. I saw kids that scared me. However, even though these kids were as handicapped as they were, they all wore the same thing, a smile. Each kid carried a smile that stretched from ear to ear, and we hadn't even stepped off the bus to do anything yet.

And, then, came the attachment. The smiles quickly opened the gates to attachment for many on the team, helping them to overcome any barriers they had constructed prior to coming to New Oxford. First-time team member Linda talked about her growing attachment in her final paper of the semester. Linda recalled,

Coming out of Cambridge feeling confused [about my role] didn't help me deal with New Oxford any better either. In fact, I was probably more withdrawn at New Oxford until I interacted with Malik. Malik was very physically disabled, but it didn't take me long to realize that, despite his handicaps, he was extremely

intelligent. Holding his hands while he walked and seeing his smile made me so happy, but I still held back some.

Similarly, first-time team member Jack recalled his budding attachment to Shaman:

New Oxford was a very interesting experience. . . .These kids only knew basic human emotions. When I smiled or laughed, they smile or laughed. One particular kid that I really felt connected to was Shaman. This one could not walk, talk, or even sit up when I laid him on the ground to play in the dirt. But, he loved the dirt! He would lay on the ground and try to throw rocks at me. He got the biggest kick out of that. I did not feel a connection to him until the last day we were there. I walked by him and he looked at me—so incredibly excited to see me. He remembered me. I almost broke down at that moment. I absolutely cannot wait to see Shaman next year.

Several other reflections on this issue of attachment centered on another child at the home, Emmanuel, whose actions have captured and recaptured our hearts every year we have been in Jamaica. John recalled Emmanuel's actions of sharing, likening him to a mob boss divvying up the loot. John wrote,

Emmanuel, an eleven-year-old boy, who I considered to be the 'Don of New Oxford', was a favorite among those members of our group who have made this trek the last few years. Since he was so highly loved by these members, he received a bag of candy from them. Although he was asked to keep the candy a secret, he instead shared it with the rest of the inhabitants of New Oxford, and with members of our group as well. He

divvied out the candy as a mob boss would money from the latest heist.

He seemed to be the one that ran the place, not the workers.

Joseph also reflected on Emmanuel's effect on the team, quickly understanding how easy it was to become attached him. Joseph recalled,

I think it would be impossible to talk about New Oxford without mentioning Emmanuel, and the effect he and Pam had on me. Before I start it should probably be stated that I am not the type of person that sheds tears over anything. There has never been an event that has made me cry until now. When we were preparing to leave New Oxford for the last time, I happened to wander past Emmanuel and Pam saying good-bye and I am glad that I did. Emmanuel always seemed like a strong kid to me and I couldn't help but wipe tears from my eyes when I saw the tears streaming down his face. He refused to say anything and wouldn't even let her see him cry, and it was in that moment that I got away from everyone to wipe my eyes. The love that is shared between Emmanuel and Pam is extremely powerful to me, and watching them say good-bye was like a huge blow to the heart.

Crossing boundaries and opening our eyes: A new sensitivity to ability. For those who were able to cross over their previously drawn boundaries, their eyes were opened wide to a new sensitivity on ability. Just like the butterflies and flowers drawn on the inside of what, on the outside, looks like a drab and impenetrable wall at New Oxford, the team came to recognize that it was only in moving past the exterior that

understanding these children (and, subsequently, more about themselves) was possible.

Cody now saw the butterflies and flowers in terms of the children's selfless spirit:

The spirit of the kids at New Oxford just amazes me. They are such sweet, selfless children. They are very different than the kids at Cambridge. There, the kids have a sort of 'every kid for himself' mentality. They take balls from each other and steal each others snacks. They are just the opposite of the New Oxford kids. There, they will share anything with each other.

Rachel similarly saw this selfless spirit and recognized that a 'dis-abled' appearance provides no indication of the true 'ability' of the child:

These children were horribly deformed, diseased, and malnourished in some cases. It broke my heart to look at them, but they were so full of talent. They were genuinely happy people and they had so much love to give. . . .The stronger ones would push the weaker ones in wheelchairs and they always looked out for one another.

Finally, Ruthie recalled her eyes being opened and gaining a new sensitivity on the issue of ability by coming to know Arrette and Kitrell:

Some of them were truly happy, even though they were in a wheelchair. At New Oxford, just seeing the smiles on their faces. How can someone in a wheelchair smile? That was something that was eye-opening. I mean, Arrette, just because she got to go down the sidewalk and back—whether she was pushed or got to walk herself. [It was] not what I expected. I rolled her up and down the sidewalk probably fifteen times that day. But,

to add to it, Kitrell, who's been grabbing at my arms all day, wanted to help me. I swear we spent an hour doing that and just to see them light up. And, for him to feel like he was so useful, he could do so much. It made me realize that just because someone looks like they are unhappy doesn't mean that they really are. You don't really know until you ask.

Again, "Who is serving and who is served?": Understanding more about 'server' and 'served'. As began to happen at Cambridge, the team wondered how much *serving* we were doing and how much we were actually *being served* by the experience. Unlike Cambridge, however, both the relationship and possibilities for the relationship of 'server' and 'served' became more transparent at New Oxford. In the past I have always felt like our relationship with the staff and administration at New Oxford has always been on much more solid ground than at Cambridge. Since I do not want to speculate on why this relationship may be more unstable at Cambridge, I only focus on what I have come to understand in our relationships at New Oxford.⁴⁹

First, the staff and administration recognize many of us by name—and this includes the children. Adah supports this point when she reflected on one of the reasons for why she returns to Jamaica year after year,

I would have to say that the children at New Oxford are what make me feel that I need to go back to Jamaica every year. They know me now. I know it sounds kind of weird, but that makes me feel very privileged because these children see lots of different groups come in and lots of

⁴⁹ My hesitation to speculate on our relationship with Cambridge is due, in part, to the fact that I did not have an informant there.

different faces come in and out of their lives. . . .But, some of these kids remember *me*. They know me and think I am coming back.

Second, the administration seems to show an enhanced level of trust in us. For example, upon our arrival the first day, Mr. James left most of the home in our hands as the majority of the staff attended an in-service. I think I would correctly assume that the children would not be turned over to a first-time group or a group Mr. James did not think he could trust. This second issue of trust became an important issue in my reflections and recalled the theory of one of the articles we read in preparation for this trip, R. P. McDermott's (1977) "Social relations as contexts for learning in schools." In this article, McDermott discusses the importance of building "trusting relations" between student and teacher. The same sort of "trusting relation" seemed to be forming between ourselves and New Oxford.

In the words of the 'served'. In my most recent interview with Mr. James while we were in Jamaica this year, he revealed how this "trusting relation" forms as he discussed, at length, what his experience has been with groups coming to New Oxford, what he hopes can be accomplished when groups arrive, how he views the issue of race, how relationships with groups can be transparent, and what he sees as the future of New Oxford. Toward the beginning of the interview I asked Mr. James what has been his experience with US groups in general. Mr. James responded,

It has been a learning experience. People come from varied parts of the US. And, based on the environment from which they come. They come in a sudden transition from one country to another and it must pose a sort of problem for some. Most people are not that flexible and they will try to

maintain certain customs. And, we here, we are the beneficiary of your kind thoughts and, as you can see from the operation that we have here, that we are totally dependent on donors. That is one aspect of us, and that helps us to be more tolerant of certain patterns. It makes it no use to try and make it appear that everything is ‘okey-dokey’ and everything is just fine and dandy, but we, the institution here, have to bend backward and, even though we are on the receiving end, we are not just going to discard our pride in order to accept your gifts. [Some] say they just come to help you and they say, “What are your concerns and why don’t you just sit back and let us do things?” It doesn’t work like that because there is a line that we have to abide by. I couldn’t just come to the US and walk into an institution and try to do things. No matter how good my intentions are or my actions might be, you have to find out who is in charge, if it is alright to do certain things. This is what we are asking for from our interest groups.

I moved on to ask what he hoped was accomplished on a visit by an interest group. Mr. James provided a varied response:

From a human point of view, because I am dealing with humans, the bottom line, as I have said, is the children. . . .[As you can see, though] that entails a lot of work. . . . We did some extension on the school here. We did another extension on cottage one where we put in a sick-bay. . . . Now these here are, they are qualified buildings, but there are certain building codes that we have to abide by. Our electric system, while

international, our system of wiring is different from yours, and our bottom line is protection. And, we have volunteers, who volunteer their service, and want to help, and when they are gone, I have to correct it. Of course, my profession is electrical engineering, and I know when it is not right. But, I don't want to come out and say, "That is not right" because I know your intention is good and I am not going to spoil it.

I asked as a follow up to some non-verbal inferences he was making while talking about this whether race played a role in these situations. Mr. James responded,

Not that you don't have a race issue here, because we do, but I just believe in one race, the human race. . . . So, it is one race we have. The pigmentation of our skin might be different because of millions of years of climatic condition and environment. That is my personal opinion, but I don't want to stray too far from what we are doing here.

I moved on to ask what he saw as the long-term possibilities with groups like Kingdom Now Mission [a long time contributor to New Oxford] and our team. Mr. James replied with helpful insight,

Kingdom Now Mission (KNM) is now eight years with us. They have been coming here since 1994. And, because of that, I felt that there could be some more meaningful way they could be a part of us. We exist by donation, you know that already, but the thing is that charter organizations have been known to rip off donors from time to time and if we are going to be transparent as we ought to be, the best way I thought would be to have a member from the organizing group become a part of us. That

would be the best way to be transparent, so we wrote and invited St. Timothy's [where KNM is housed] to send a parishioner to be a member of our board of trustees, which we did, and he is in his third year. We meet four times a year, once a quarter and he flies down. We had a meeting last Thursday and he was down for it. He never misses a meeting. . . . We really have to be transparent. The money that comes in we have to show how we spend it. Show that is not going elsewhere, and we have felt totally comfortable having a member that is totally apart from us, sitting among us and discussing and having the opportunity to discuss things—how we intend to do certain things, and he puts in his input.

Mr. James went on to describe what he saw as the future of New Oxford and how our group could help:

The thing is that the mere fact, that I must let you know as an interest group, that we live solely by dependence. If it weren't for groups like you, we would not exist. . . . One thing that we have to bear in mind is that there is not a cut off point for the kids, we have to keep these kids here until they die. There is no hope they are going to go anywhere, so the plan we have is very long term. . . . Our goal and vision is to have it be an ongoing institution. And, our successor, we hope will realize the vision and time behind this institution. . . . Therefore, this will just show you how groups like yours, whether cash or kind, means to us. Because you give us food or clothing, it cuts back on other expenses. . . . The unfortunate thing with our system in Jamaica is that the line is so clearly drawn of have and

have-not that. In the States, you have poverty like this, but you have to drive miles to see it. In Jamaica you can see affluence on the right and you can see poverty, just with a turn of the head, to the right. You don't have to go anywhere. I'm not saying you will not always have poor, but we could just be doing things differently. . . .I just think a man should be able to aspire to whatever his ambition may be and if he has the courage or drive to embark on a program, he should be given the opportunity. . . .The worse part of it is that they have destroyed the most important resource we have, and that is the human resource—improperly utilized. You will see boys and girls walking around doing nothing. I try to do as much as I can when I see them. When I see this developing before my eyes and they see this place [New Oxford], I know they will vandalize it sooner or later. If this place was down in Montego Bay, it wouldn't last a day. I'm telling you. You'd have guys coming off the street because they have nothing to do. They'd come in and vandalize this place. This place has been here eleven years so you have to do what you can. When they came and asked me about a soccer team, [that is] when I came to you and asked about it. That is part of it—to occupy their minds, give them a little something to build their self-esteem.

I followed up with Mr. James to try and further clarify how he saw us playing a role with the soccer team and the future of New Oxford. He reflected and responded profoundly,

Every little bit helps. What is in a grain of sand? Nothing. But, you put a whole lot of them together, and you have a desert. What is in a raindrop?

Nothing. But, you put a whole lot of them together and you have a flood. . . Groups make quite an impact. If you should take a survey, it is hard not to find a group that believes they are not making a difference in the lives they come into contact with here or the community. That is why I have tried to introduce the soccer game to you, because that will be your baby. I told them that what they have to show you is that they are helping themselves as well. . . . When the idea came to me last year and I spoke to you about it, you induced me by sending those uniforms and you give me a little more courage because I said, “Don’t I have enough to do already?” But, when I see that you, a thousand miles away, managed to mail these, then I said, “I have to make it work.” It is unconditional. This doesn’t belong to anyone. I just want to see it work. I just want to help and see good things happen. . . . I thank God and I am just trying to give a little back. I just want to know that I am helping.

Upon reflection of this insightful interview with Mr. James, I considered how we seemed to move beyond the place where we left our last interview [two years ago]. In the last interview, Mr. James seemed tentative about critiquing American mission groups. This time, perhaps because our relationship has grown, he was more open. Mr. James focused a lot on togetherness and the importance of working as a communicative partnership as being able to further the cause of the children and make of New Oxford an ongoing institution. In terms of ‘server’/‘served’, Mr. James offered insightful advice regarding the important of working through the supervisor, importance of moving beyond issues of race, planning ahead, acknowledging dependence, and expressing the

importance of a two-way relationship. Mr. James laid out quite clearly what he hopes to see in our future together: continued donations, growing together, making sure the institution is ongoing, and playing a part in the local community (through the soccer team).

Breadfruit. Thus, alongside points one and two—recognition and our blossoming “trusting relation”—this last issue above regarding community helped underscore my understanding of our strengthening relationship. Nothing symbolized this issue of community more than the roasted breadfruit, a starchy fruit with the consistency of an undercooked baked potato, we shared with the staff and children at New Oxford. Apparently, while I was interviewing Mr. James, a portion of our team accompanied Michael, one of the staff, on a tour of the garden at the orphanage. After the tour, Michael and a couple of the other staff began to roast some breadfruit over an open flame for an afternoon snack. While we enjoyed the inside of the breadfruit, the goats enjoyed the seemingly inedible outside. This led one of the team to declare, “Everything serves a purpose here. [The Jamaicans] are so resourceful.” After our snack, we traveled down the road for a scrimmage match with the soccer team for whom we had supplied the jerseys.

At our small group meeting that evening, we discussed what transpired during the afternoon,

Jack: Yeah, we started walking. I looked out there and all I saw were a bunch of trees and plants, but to Michael that was a whole field of food. We walked out there and he started pointing out every single thing you can eat, things that you can’t eat, “But if you do it this

way,” he said, “You can.” And, I was like, “Wow.” That was like a whole Garden of Eden. Everything is given to you. God just gave it to you. All you have to do is keep that up. But, we messed that up and now we can’t enjoy the fruits of God. We need to get back there. I mean, everything was just there.

Pete: Like Professor Mark was saying, “Oh yeah, Michael was telling me they use this tree for this, this tree for that.” And, just back here [at the hotel] now I was looking and thinking this place just looks like a jungle, and Mark is like, “Yeah, it’s really tropical,” and I was just looking out thinking it was just a bunch of tropical trees and stuff like that. Then, Mark, said “This is a lot of their food.”

Beth: What was bizarre was when we were at the soccer field, Martha and I were just standing there with him [Michael] watching things get started and Martha noticed that there were these big orange fruits sitting up in the tree and asked what they were and we started talking about them. And, honest to goodness, one of them fell right down. [laughter] And, he said, here I’ll show you. He poked it open and squeezed it out and it was like an orange. It was really sour, but he said you could make drink out of it.

Cody: It was just amazing walking through there [the garden] at New Oxford] and it was just cool to get to talk to Michael, too. He’s really interesting.

P: Yeah, he is interesting, with that breadfruit and stuff. They were cooking it up and you two tried this little part, and I tried this big ol'... and at first I was like "This is really bland and...

J: No, it was really good.

P: I just thought it was real smoky, and at first I was kind of like, "What the hell?" But, then, I was thinking, they probably eat that all the time. This is one of the foods they eat. After I ate a few pieces, it wasn't bad though

J: When I took a bite, I pictured a chart where there was potato at the bottom, and then there was breadfruit, and it tasted so much better than a baked potato. It was unbelievable. But, here's my thing about comparing America to Jamaica. We might have it great over there, a McDonald's every other place, [but] we can't enjoy this. We can't eat food from our trees, unless we specifically go out and buy an apple tree. And, I'm in landscaping. I know an apple tree is two or three hundred dollars. We are missing out on so much of the world—all the technology.

The future: a process of "becoming." So, as I thought about the sharing of the roasted breadfruit and the scrimmage game with the soccer team, I realized that these events happened as a result of a five-year developmental process. As children, staff, administration, animals, and US team gathered around a smoky fire on a hot afternoon, we created a new context for 'breaking bread': breaking *breadfruit*. As both black and white, man and woman, gathered on the nearby field to participate in or watch a friendly

(and, as it turns out, humorous) soccer match, we understood not competition, but community. We had engaged in two important activities that afternoon understandable and desirable to all of humanity: eating and laughter. We became a part of each other, but it had not happened over night—a sobering reminder that ameliorative change is hardly ever instantaneous. Nicholas, one of my more philosophical informants, helped to contextualize this process for me as we concluded our second interview and I thought about the future of our project. Nicholas explained insightfully, “[It’s not about] trying to change the world today. It’s all a process of ‘becoming’.” And, so, my thoughts about the long-term possibilities began to shift toward what could still “become” of this blossoming community as we continued to seek the possibility of transformative and counter-hegemonic actions. More immediately, however, we, as a team, turned our attention toward what would “become” of our next phase in the interventions: the schools. (Photographs at New Oxford Children’s Home are located in Appendix 17.)

Westminster Holy Church/School

“Life in Schools.”⁵⁰ Westminster is a basic school that is unsanctioned, and is, therefore, not funded by the Jamaican government. Basic schools are actually quite prevalent in communities like the one where Westminster is located. As the land in this community is “captured”—people put up stakes to claim their property similar to the old West in the US—people do not pay any tax on their property. While this may seem good on the one hand, this also means, on the other hand, that the government plays little role in their lives in terms of funding [e.g., education] and basic utilities. Additionally,

⁵⁰ I am making a blatant reference to Peter McLaren’s (1994) *Life in Schools* here.

though, once the government does determine that the land is developed enough, they will come in to provide these utilities and funding and, as one can guess, tax the land.

Schooling is widely embraced by Jamaicans, but it is not always easy to come by. The government claims that they have free public education, but, in cases like Westminster, which is not funded by the government, fees have to be charged. Since these children would have to travel great distances on unreliable and over-crowded buses or taxis to the “free” schools, these community schools are really their only option. Thus, help from groups like us are greatly appreciated.

Basic schools typically serve children pre-K to second grade and Westminster is no different. Serving more than seventy children for a nominal fee, Pastor Peters and his un-certificated teacher, Ms. Dakota, try to provide as educational an atmosphere as possible in his crude facility. Upon arriving at Westminster, one would likely think that it was a building in the process of falling down or one in the middle of a war torn battlefield. In fact, Linda remarked as we pulled up to Westminster the first day, “When we first arrived at Westminster, I couldn’t believe that what I was looking at was actually a school building.” This ‘bombed-out’ look is quite common to buildings in Jamaica as they are actually mostly in the process of construction, rather than destruction—they just take awhile to build as people add on to the concrete block structures as they obtain more money and supplies.

At closer inspection, however, it is much easier to tell that Westminster, a rectangular, concrete-block, fort-like structure, is in a *building* process. Pastor Peters has nearly finished one area of the compound, which serves as his church and main money generator for his family, future building projects, and the school. Pastor Peters has also

temporarily constructed a kitchen, cafeteria area, and a classroom that is walled in on only two sides by the exterior of the compound. Plastic roll-down tarps shield the classroom from the rest of the interior of the compound and a temporary tin roof (somewhat) protects the room from the oppressive hot sun and occasional impressive rain showers from above. This roof and what took place under it were our main foci for this intervention. The next three sections detail our time at Westminster: first, in the school; next, at the Tuesday evening youth service; and, finally, on the roof.

The lessons: “Sharing stories.” As I discussed in the first section of this chapter, our lessons took on a theme of “sharing stories.” With this theme in mind, our three small groups, who were each in charge of one day’s lessons, gathered stories and prepared six lessons that were to cover either discreetly or interdisciplinarily, math, science, social studies, reading, and the arts. The set-up of a typical day included an opening story that would launch the day’s lessons, followed by six small group activities, that we called stations, where groups of eight-nine Jamaican students would spend around twenty minutes at each station with three-four US team members, progressing through all of them by early afternoon. With the time remaining in the day, in an effort to continue building on our “shared story” theme, we planned to work with the children on a more individual level, two-three Jamaican students with one team member, writing stories about pictures and photographs we had collected and brought with us.

We arrived the first day before many of the children had arrived so past team-members were able to show some of the new team members around the compound. We introduced the first-timers to the cook, Ms. Lewis, and the teacher, Ms. Dakota, and we all became acquainted with the new teacher’s assistant, Ms. Roberts. Pastor Peters arrived

a short time later and he gave the group a warm welcome, his trademark smile spanning ear to ear.

Once most of the children arrived, Ms. Dakota led them in their morning routine, which consisted of a ‘call and response’ trade off where the teacher would ask a question and the children would respond in unison: “Good morning, class.” “Good morning teacher, and classmates ... , and visitors.” “What is today, class?” “Today is Monday, May 20th.” “What are the days of the week, class?” “Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday.” And, so on. The ‘call and response’ ended with a few songs and a morning prayer. After this the children sat down and the class was turned over to us.

Each morning, the plan started as scheduled with our story. Once the story ended, however, things would always go a little off track. We quickly discovered that some of the lessons we had developed went beyond the capability of most of the students in the school. Thankfully, having brought more than we needed, though, and having enough people to work with the children, we supplemented the intended lessons with other things to do or provided a lot of individualized attention to help the children with the more difficult activities. In addition to the over-complication of some of the lessons, the afternoon activities of writing stories with the children did not come off the way we hoped. Although some of us were able to create stories with the children, many other small groups struggled to work together as either the team member was unsure what to do or the Jamaican student could not understand what we intended.

By the third day, we had sort of figured out whether our planned lessons would work or not. To show the kind of stories we told and what sort of lessons we tried to

launch, I use this third day as an example of what we had planned. The day began with the story *Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears* (1975), a West-African tale retold by Verna Aardema and illustrated by Leo and Diane Dillon.

Since the story is written like a play, our team decided to act out the story. The children seemed to enjoy our rather impromptu play, and were mostly sensitive to our poor acting ability. After the play, we moved into the church to break up into our six small-group stations because demolition of the old roof was to begin sometime later that morning. Some of our team stayed behind to help with the roof, while the majority of us went into the church to launch the lessons. For this story, we developed the following activities: Station 1—making puppets of the animals in the story from cutouts.

Decorations for the puppets included feathers and glitter. Station 2—playing the telephone game, attempting to recreate the miscommunication among the animals that happened throughout the story. Station 3—learning and singing the song, “Three little monkeys,” which tells the story of a monkey who taunts an alligator in a nearby swamp. After learning the song, the children colored a picture of a monkey sitting in a tree and practiced drawing the alligator who was about to have the monkey for lunch. Station 4—coloring a Peter’s Map, which shows, more accurately the size of the continents (versus the Mercator Map), particularly Africa, from where this story originated. Station 5—learning the song, “In the tall, tall grass,” and constructing two to three line poems about animals similar to what this book does. Poems and pictures were to be collected into a book we called, “In the big, big zoo.” And, station 6—feeling the texture of different animal skins in brown paper bags and trying to guess what they were (e.g., feathers, fur, etc.).

Over the three days that we taught at Westminster, team-members began to develop an appreciation for what Ms. Dakota and her assistant, Ms. Roberts, go through everyday on limited supplies and in less than desirable conditions. Joseph, an education major at St. James, wondered, “When I think about [this] school, I can’t help but wonder if there is a single teacher that I know that would be able to put up with those conditions.” Reflecting further on the incredible work that Ms. Dakota and Ms. Roberts are able to do despite these conditions, Joseph considered in his final reflection paper,

Teaching there [at Westminster] makes me wonder if too much time is spent on fancy teaching methods rather than just teaching the kids the best way available. As an education major I have had to take classes that emphasize the work growth that children go through, and I’ve learned a lot about different guys like Freud and Piaget. Ms. Dakota has probably never heard of these guys, yet she does a better job with her students than a lot of teachers here [in the US] do with their students.

Tuesday evening youth service: Promoting a shared story. Aside from our work in the classroom, we also tried to spend some time with the community surrounding the school while we were at Westminster. One of the ways we could meet the community members was by continuing to attend their youth service. Although this service is now normally held on Thursday evenings, Pastor Peters graciously agreed to shift it back to Tuesday due to a conflict in our schedule that Thursday. As usual, Pastor Peters asked if I would speak at the service. I accepted the invitation, as if I really had a choice in the matter.

As I got up to speak that evening, I thought about what my main priority was at this meeting: to bring our group closer together and to take our group and the community to a place in our minds where we could envision a partnership. After some praise and worship, charismatic prayers from the youth minister and Pastor Peters, and a collection, I got up to speak. After urging us to reconfigure our seating arrangements so that our team was more spread out with the community, I asked everyone to close their eyes and let the evening wash over them. I asked them to imagine a long dark hall way with a swatch of light escaping under a door to the left up the hallway or to imagine a long dark alley with the same kind of light escaping from the door of a small house up the road to the left. I encouraged them to walk toward that door. “Tonight,” I said, “All I want to do is open that door.” I went on to explain that what we do in this room is up to us, but once we are all gathered there, we have to agree to do what we decide, together. The rest of my ‘sermon’ that evening proceeded to discuss issues of renewal, resurrection, and revelation and concluded with a call to open our ears, hands, and hearts to one another and agree to act together, promptly and definitively. By the time I was finished speaking an already crowded church had filled to capacity. I offered the opportunity for other members of the team to speak, which many accepted. Most team-members expressed their gratitude and deep appreciation for the way this community and Jamaica in general had received us and welcomed us. The service concluded with some final prayers and many hugs.

As it was late when the service ended, we promptly said our good-byes for the evening and headed back to the hotel, about a half hour away. As we drove home that evening, I wondered what the impact may have been on team unity. I know the impact

this service has made in the past and I hoped it had helped bring our team into a closer unity and to show the possibilities of our partnership with the community. In addition, I wondered how the *celebration* of the service affected the team. As most of the team is Catholic, many of them are not used to the celebratory nature of this kind of service, particularly enhanced, in this case, by Jamaican culture and a Reggae beat. The response, as it has been in the past was mostly very positive. Reflecting on the evening in our interview a couple of days after the service, Nicholas proclaimed,

That was awesome. If we had churches like that back home, I probably wouldn't have stopped going. I liked the prayer . . . lots of singing. I mean, I know that's all a form of prayer. . . .That guy's last prayer... I mean, normally when you have a closing prayer, it's "Bow your head and pray for God's blessing," and everyone is real quiet, put their heads down, and there's an old white guy mumbling some stuff. And he was just like, "Put your heads down for Jesus, listen to these prayers," and he was just going off, "Give me the strength..." You could hear it and think about it. . . I meditate a lot, but I don't engage in a lot of Christian prayer, [yet] I found myself doing it anyway because, you know, it was so loud, in a positive way. It was a good time.

The roof: Different stories? The day after the service, demolition of the old roof over the school began (as we implemented our lessons in the church). In her recollection of this part of our service at Westminster, Professor Mary, in a snapshot she entitled "OSHA doesn't apply here," writes,

Apparently the Jamaicans work with what they have. I wouldn't have felt very secure at Westminster on the ladder used to take down the old roof and put up the new one. The ladder was just some slender tree limbs nailed together. One of our [team-members], who sometimes does wiring, saw a man put two wires together with *masking* tape, then drop them—into a puddle. His comment: “I guess they don’t have OSHA here.”

In general, there seemed not to be a strong infrastructure in the country. We saw water pipes, just one-inch plastic tubes, often lying above ground where they may be stepped on or run over. It's not uncommon for people to pirate their water and electricity by tapping into the nearest supply pipe or wire.

The Westminster compound has electricity, so they could use the power tools sent by generous supporters of our trip. The Jamaicans were absolutely amazed at our tools. They would have had to borrow everything, even hammers, if we hadn't brought some sturdy ones along.

After the roof came down, our plans to begin constructing the new one were delayed the next morning by more rain. After the rain had cleared, though, we made our way out to Westminster as our only itinerary item scheduled for the day was the roof as the school was closed because this was the Jamaican Labor Day. We arrived at Westminster about an hour and a half after the rain had subsided to find a number of community members, with Pastor Peters, standing around the compound. Once we pulled up, though, and exited the bus, the sedentary workers got busy constructing a ladder. That’s when a curious dynamic began to develop: the Jamaicans assembled to

work there that afternoon seemed to be shunning our help. Although they seemed to wait until we got there to even begin, most of our offers to help were met with resistance. While some of our team-members (who were primarily male) were permitted to help, most of the rest of us were not.

This dynamic, while not immediately apparent at the time, was brought clearly to light by Adah that evening in our large group meeting. In her reflection about the roof, she noted how what was said at the service two nights before by both the pastor and myself did not come to fruition in the day's actions. First of all, there seemed to be a distinct delineation of gender roles in the project, and there seemed to be a clear delineation of roles in terms of nation, and, I would hypothesize, race. Admittedly, this dynamic was initially shocking and unexpected as I had never noted it before. Considering how our relationship at New Oxford had been evolving and blossoming, I just sort of assumed that the same evolution and growth was taking place at Westminster. The project on the roof showed that it was, at least, different

The breadfruit is good here, too, though (for some). In my ongoing reflections I supposed it was not as shocking as I had originally assumed. This experience simply exemplified the tenuous nature of the relationship of 'server' and 'served'. For some US team-members, though, who actually got to help on the roof, and for some others, who took the opportunity because they were not working on the roof to explore the local community, important relationships were built with Jamaican peers at Westminster. John recalled,

Some of the greatest parts of the trip were things that were not on the itinerary. For example, while we were supposed to be building a roof,

Jack and I went off with a guy named Barrett. Through Barrett, we met a few other Rastas like Callen and Saul. I learned a lot about how they live and went to their homes. The next day, Pete, Nicholas, and I hung around with Callen. Callen told us about life in the country.

Reminiscing about the same exploration and meeting, Jack reflected,

The reason I liked Westminster the most was because of Barrett, Callen, and Ricky. These three pretty much broke down a semester's worth of readings into a couple hours of talking—Barrett especially. I have never met another nineteen-year-old like Barrett. I told him everything I could think of in my life and he told me everything about his. . . .Barrett showed me his house and fed me.

It is clear that this feeding was in more than just a physical way, and symbolizes, like the breadfruit at New Oxford, the feelings of community that were being established. However, the taste of this breadfruit there was not as sweet for all and depended on the team member's orientation to and perspective on *this* butterfly (i.e., were the wings or caterpillar more figural?). For example, Rachel commented in our second interview: "I kind of felt like we weren't good enough to build their school. We were good enough to bring money and buy their supplies, but, as far as doing it, we weren't, especially because I am a girl." These differing perspectives leave us much to consider for our future there. In terms of what we were able to do, I think we were successful: we were able to bring much needed school and construction supplies, we were able to raise enough money for the new roof, and we were able to, in part, help finish the roof and paint. What we were not able to do, at least at the time, was make the same kind of profound and more all-

encompassing connection that we had at New Oxford. While not trying to over-romanticize our relationship with New Oxford and their community, and not trying to completely diminish the relationship some were able to establish at Westminster, the dynamic that played out there is illustrative of the complicated partnership of ‘server’ and ‘served’. This relationship is rarely transparent, is often contradictory, and, at the very least, is messy and difficult to pin down. Boundaries of gender, race, and nation articulated themselves into an impenetrable barrier for some, while same-sex camaraderie based on age, irrespective of race and nation abounded for others. This gave us plenty to talk about for the remainder of our trip as we began to think about what the conclusion to our own “shared story” might look like. (Photographs of Westminster Holy Church/School can be found in Appendix 18.)

Benson Basic School

Benson Basic School is located near Westminster in an adjacent community. The neighborhood of Benson is an up-and-coming area of captured land that features a diversity of homes, from sheer opulence to abject poverty. Ms. Matthews, the teacher and administrator at Benson Basic, lives with her husband and four children in a two-room home at the more impoverished end of the spectrum. We first met Ms. Matthews in the summer of 1999 while she was teaching at Westminster. We taught alongside her that summer and the next and she developed an instant bond with our team. The team was quite taken with her as well. Ms. Matthews possessed the kind of ‘educator’ spirit that teacher educators wish all teachers had. And, she possessed it without any sort of formal training. In fact, at this point in time, Ms. Matthews, while in her late twenties, hadn’t even graduated from high school.

During an interview with her in the summer of 2000, she regaled me with stories as to the hardships of growing up in Jamaica, and the mistakes she made early on in life that only complicated matters. Although not formally educated, Ms. Matthews showed the power and promise of a resilient spirit as she had become well known by the local community as an accomplished educator. Recognizing that there was a need in her own immediate community for a school, as many children from Benson came to school at Westminster, Ms. Matthews broke from Westminster after the 1999-2000 school year and opened her own school in a room that her husband added on to their very modest home.

During our short trip in the summer of 2001, our team visited Ms. Matthews in her new facility and made plans to return the following year (this year) to help out in her new school. We regularly corresponded throughout the year, as we had done in the years past, and like Pastor Peters, in our letters, she gave us a tremendous amount of leeway in what we could plan to come and do. Since the children at Benson Basic were the same age as Westminster, our lesson plans were designed to be used at both places, so the lesson theme of “sharing stories” carried over to Ms. Matthew’s school. Along with a few suitcases full of supplies, we brought our lessons and a tiring US team to the neighborhood of Benson on Friday May 24 (Day 11 of the trip), planning to teach in the school both that day and the following Monday.

Description of Benson Basic. Off the red dirt road that leads to the Matthew’s property, a wire gate provides entrance to the compound of Benson Basic. Several large drums litter the left part of the front yard in order to collect rain as Mr. and Mrs. Matthews have no access to running water. A number of fruit trees grow in the right part of the front yard: grapefruit, bananas, and passion fruit. Several building materials lay

behind the fruit trees to the right, which offer evidence that Mr. Matthews is adding two more rooms onto their house. In the back yard laundry hangs on a line that extends from one end to the other. Behind the drying laundry, an outhouse stands modestly beside a two-story chicken coup: pigeons on top, roosters on the bottom. A couple of kittens mill and meow around the yard.

From a vantage point at the rear of their property, the house spans thirty feet across. The school is the right ten feet of this and, around the corner, it extends forty feet to the front of the home. Daily, this four hundred square feet houses fifty children, one teacher, and a teacher's assistant. The school part of the house is made of plywood and has a pitched roof, high on the left and runs down away from the house to the right. Each of the screenless windows in the school are constructed in such a way that a board swings out, supported by a stick. A rusty wheelbarrow lazily leans up against the school under the open window. A home-made spade accompanies the wheelbarrow, catching a break in the shade provided by the house.

A row of three chairs face the back of the house. The middle chair supports a marbly, green and white wash basin, filled with yellowing water. A towel lies draped over an adjacent chair. A companion chair, no longer in use, lays upside down in a nearby woodpile, covered in paint splatters and accompanied by a black bucket, a torn pair of sandals, and a broom.

Despite the abject poverty depicted in this description, this landscape can still strike one, oddly, as beautiful, given that this rear view of their home and school is framed by the not-too-distant Caribbean ocean. Although the Matthews are poor by any financial standard that one may apply to them, they also live with a type of beauty

(perhaps, simplicity) that I have found hard to find at home. This same kind of beauty/ugliness, richness/poverty contradiction, of course, had shown itself in many of the places we visited on our journey.

More instances of attachment. While some of the rest of the team also noticed and talked about this beauty, many more focused on how they formed an immediate attachment to Ms. Matthews. In another snapshot entitled, “Ms. Matthews: My Inspiration,” Professor Mary writes,

Ms. Matthews conducts Benson Basic School in a room attached to her home. To say her space and equipment are meager is an understatement. In her school, as in the other places, we saw furniture that we would have discarded years ago. That didn't stop her and her aide from looking crisp and professional. Her pupils were noticeably more articulate than those at the first school we visited, and their motor coordination was more advanced. We saw lots of hanging posters and charts, which she had made, and the children knew what she had taught them. . . .Ms. Matthews goes to school four nights a week from 5-10 PM to get the equivalent of a GED so she can formally enter the teachers' college. Some of the original Jamaica team members are paying her tuition. Her dream is to go to school full-time for three years and finish her certificate. She also hopes to buy land and move the school away from her home so the government will help fund it.

As a fellow educator, Mary easily found a kindred spirit in Ms. Matthews and they shared many stories with one another about their teaching experiences. In addition to Mary's

thoughts, Joseph followed up his insightful comments about Westminster in his final reflection paper, regarding making something of nothing, with more about how he continued to be impressed by these Jamaican educators:

The last place we visited was Ms. Matthew's, and she really affected me.

Ms. Matthews really had the same affect on me that Mrs. Dakota did; only this time it was more so. Ms. Matthews taught kids in a room one-third the size of the school at Westminster, yet she still managed to get the job done. I was blown away at the decorations that she set up around the room. . . .Mr. and Mrs. Matthews are two extraordinary people, doing extraordinary work for their country, and they should both be rewarded.

Of course, much could be learned from teachers like Mrs. Dakota and Ms. Matthews as we hope to continue to be able to bring more and more present and future teachers to these schools. In my past interview with her, Ms. Matthews proposed that we work together to build some type of exchange program where teachers from the US could come to Jamaica and teachers from Jamaica could come to the US in order to learn from each other and, in Ms. Matthews words, "grasp the most valued things." We continued to consider the possibilities of this exchange program in our most recent interview.

Ms. Matthews opened our most recent discussion⁵¹ with a description of and vision for her school. She explained that Benson Basic is designed for children two to seven years old. Next, students would move to a primary school or a preparatory school. According to Ms. Matthews, the Jamaican government is making a concerted effort to

⁵¹ Due to technical difficulties with my recorder, I did not have an exact transcription of our interview; thus, I make use of shorter quotes from Ms. Matthews that I had time to copy in my notes as we spoke and paraphrase, with her permission, in other places.

shut down the operation of independent basic schools—trying to turn them into government run schools, if possible. Thus, Ms. Matthews explained, she is trying to get her school registered with the government. In order to accomplish this, she has been attending monthly training workshops. Workshop facilitators go around to basic schools to see if they are up to codes and to see if they are following the advice of the workshops. They have recently informed Ms. Matthews that she must get her college degree and move the school off the premises of her home in order for it to be certified by the government. She went on to express confidence that if she plans to move the school, the government will give her the land if they know there is private money to build it. She also feels confident that as long as she is in the process of getting her degree, that they will have little difficulty certifying it.

As Mary noted in her snapshot above, a group of us have already been helping Ms. Matthews attain her degree. Over the last two years, we have provided financial support in order that she can finish her high school equivalency and enter the teachers college. In fact, earlier on this trip, a few of us had a chance to meet with the president of the teachers college along with Ms. Matthews and we mapped out a plan to make sure that she would be prepared to enter the college in September of 2003. Plans for our future work together began to congeal quickly with Ms. Matthews: continue to assist with her school fees, work with her and the local government to acquire land in Benson, and begin lining up financial commitments to help with the building of a new school. As Ms. Matthews and I have always had the kind of transparent relationship that Mr. James spoke about at New Oxford, this type of planning, while a bit risky, can be undertaken

without much worry. Like I felt about our future with New Oxford, I saw our partnership here evolving and blossoming in the same way.

My own “shared story” with two Caribbean colleagues. As Ms. Matthews and I continued to speak during our interview, I began to realize that I was having one of those “shared story” moments that others have revealed in the prior portions of this experience in Jamaica. Ms. Matthews and I connected on a deep level and discussed several issues that afternoon: issues regarding our partnership, to problems facing Jamaica, to what we might do together in the future.

According to Ms. Matthews, the community is not really all that interested in her school, they use it as a matter of convenience. As a result, she has felt like she does not have a close companion in the community, so she is looking afar to us. She further expressed the need for her children and the community to be exposed to people different from them, so our partnership serves a dual purpose.

In terms of problems facing Jamaica, Ms. Matthews explained them as threefold, “Selfishness, illiteracy, and ignorance.” She followed up this trifecta of problems with the provocative, perhaps reproductive statement, of “[We must use the schools] to control their minds; that is best.” Having long lamented the downward spiraling nature of Jamaican culture, Ms. Matthews talked about education as the only way out. But, she doesn’t feel as though she can do it alone, and proclaimed a number of times in our interview, “We can only do this together.”

Finally, Ms. Matthews discussed specifically what our next steps ought to be for the future: (1) acquire land from government and build school (she wants us to sponsor the school totally); (2) help fund her education at the Teacher’s

College (\$1500/ year + monthly stipend beginning in September, 2003—she would apply in February, 2003); (3) help her get visa to the US to both visit schools and work while on holiday; (4) give our group a name so that she can promote us throughout the year; and (5) help hire teachers for new school. This plan, as I anticipated at the time of our discussion, is now well underway.

Not only did I connect with Ms. Matthews, though, I also made a connection with her assistant teacher, Ms. Terrell. Upon noticing me taking notes in the backyard at Benson, Ms. Terrell inquired as to how I was using all this information. I explained that I was finishing my Ph.D. with a dissertation study about this experience. Ms. Terrell responded with interest and indicated she could only wish to go so far in school. Somewhat embarrassed, I put away my recorder and notes and I sat with Ms. Terrell in the back yard of Benson. She told me what it was like to grow up in Jamaica and asked me questions about what it was like to grow up where I lived. She explained that she was in the same program as Ms. Matthews since, like her, she had not finished high school, dropping out after she had her first child at fifteen. From what I could determine at the time, though, the attainment of this certificate seems to be in little doubt since she emits the same type of resourceful and resilient spirit that Ms. Matthews does.

Ms. Terrell went on to explain that she has learned a lot since we arrived. (I thought to myself how much more I had probably learned!) Similar to Ms. Matthews sentiment of “grasping the most valued things,” Ms. Terrell commented at this point, “Just the way you do your stuff is different from us, so we can learn a lot. Ours and that together.” As the hot sun beat down around us, I remember feeling so amazed at this

rare opportunity to share and how privileged I was to be sitting here speaking with such a formative future educator of Jamaica.

“Becoming” fast partners at Benson: Where are the boundaries? Unlike Westminster, which was complicated by issues of race, nation, and gender, no clear boundaries surfaced at Benson. The possibilities for our partnership seemed so much more transparent at Benson than at Westminster. Interestingly, a similar dynamic had begun to develop between the two schools as had between the two orphanages.

Other members of the team noticed differences between our visits to Benson and Westminster as well. Ruthie saw it terms of “trust.” In our last interview, Ruthie decided this developing trust was a result of our fulfillment of what we promised we would come and do:

Well, when saying we were going to be there and then showing up and fulfilling what we were supposed to fulfill, and, then, building the relationship with the teachers and the people in the orphanages, that helps build trust. And, you could see that. At least at Ms. Matthews, going back day after day, she seemed to be talking to more people in our group, not just you and Leah, but everybody. It was the same with Mrs. Terrell, she was getting to know more people.

Rachel noticed the difference in terms of the ability of the children:

I couldn’t decide if they seemed smarter or not. I thought maybe they did because maybe they had more attention. Just her room had more things to learn, little rhymes, little. . . . They were learning harder stuff I thought. They were teaching grammar and stuff. And, I felt like at Westminster,

they were really good at reciting. I didn't know if they understood it or if they just did it everyday. I noticed that Ms. Matthew's looked like a school and Westminster just looked like a bunch of kids, trying...

Cody also noticed this difference in the children:

One difference between Westminster and Ms. Matthews's [is the fact that] we spent a lot less time organizing at Ms. Matthew's. I don't really know what the difference is other than the teacher. Ms. Matthews is an amazing woman that does wonders with her kids. . . .Ms. Matthews is definitely a much more organized teacher.

Similar to New Oxford, more team members seemed to notice our relationship with the place (Benson Basic) and the people. This relationship, while certainly noticeable by some, did not seem to exist with the same overwhelming salience at Cambridge and at Westminster. Our plans were the same. The time we spent there was the same. The service that took place was the same. The outcome, however, has been different. These differences are analyzed further in the next chapter. For now, I turn my attention toward the final place we visited: The Columbus Project. (Photographs of Benson Basic School are located in Appendix 19.)

The Columbus Project

A description. In between our two days of teaching at Benson, our team traveled to The Columbus Project, an orphanage on the south coast. As I discussed in the itinerary section toward the beginning of this chapter, we had considered The Columbus Project as a future site of service; thus, we made use of our free Saturday in Jamaica to make the journey across the island and investigate. In their brochure distributed to churches in the

US, Mr. and Mrs. Columbus, who are Americans, describe their orphanage through the following appeal:

The Columbus Project is located in the rural countryside on the south coast of Jamaica where many children are in great need. Although the land is beautiful and it is a nice place to visit, poverty is extensive. The average annual income is only \$1000. Malnutrition, disease and illiteracy are rampant and less than 15% of births are legitimate. The Columbus Project is a home for abused, abandoned and unwanted Jamaican children. Motivated by Jesus' example of compassion toward children, Mr. and Mrs. Columbus were compelled to establish a home in Jamaica for needy children. You can help provide for these children by participating in this Child Sponsorship program. Sponsoring a child at The Columbus Project is one way to share Christ's love with a needy child and provide hope to a precious young life. Your monthly donation is tax deductible, and 100% of your gift will go toward the care of the child you sponsor. Your gift will help *bring up a child the way he should go* by supplying needs like—food, clothing, diapers, clothing, education, medical and dental care. You will receive a picture of your child, information about the child and regular correspondence from your sponsored child. You will be kept up to date on the child's physical and spiritual progress. Correspondence from you is welcomed [author's emphasis].

Somewhat in contrast to the image offered by the founders, I observed the following in my field notes driving back to the hotel after our visit: *The orphanage*

facility is an opulent home where the administrators, Mr. and Mrs. Columbus, care for twelve beautiful children. The Columbus' have two children of their own and have adopted four of the twelve orphans. Eventually they want to accommodate a total of twenty children in this facility. They have acquired their current home—lavishly equipped with three floors, numerous bedrooms, and a large pool—worth at least \$1,000,000 US, by convincing the former owner to give it to them for a tax write-off. The house was sold for \$100,000—the estimated cost of the furniture. This is a gross underestimation as there are several works of art alone that appear to be worth much more than \$100,000. Currently, the Columbus' owe \$81,000 in taxes, which they are trying to raise through donations in the US. Why don't they sell some of their art or furniture? They also told us they are praying for more "saints" to come from the US to help (with hands and/or checkbooks). We wonder why the "saints" have to come from the US—why not Jamaicans? Mark asked a good question, "If God gave them all of this, why didn't he give it to the Jamaicans in the countryside? Or, to the other orphanages we have visited?"

The Columbus' self-proclaimed goal is to raise the children to become the prime ministers and business owners of Jamaica. They forthrightly claimed in our conversation with them that they do not allow the children to speak patois [a native dialect] when they are around, as it is not "proper" English and will not lead them to do great things. Additionally, they home school the children because of the rough conditions they perceive in the local schools (Mrs. Columbus claimed that most kids in Jamaican schools throw rocks at one another). Mr. and Mrs. Columbus, however, did concede that they do allow the children to eat Jamaican food in order for them to maintain their culture (!), but

they don't eat it themselves. Essentially, other than the food, they have removed them from their culture and are raising them (as future leaders) to be disconnected from their own nation. Based on this observation and conversation, The Columbus Project would not, obviously, be a future site of service.

"Something is not right here": Juxtaposing The Columbus Project with the rest of our experience. Mark and I, as the instructors of the course, were not the only ones to notice something was amiss. As we walked down to the nearby ocean after our visit at the orphanage, Nicholas whispered to me, "Something is not right here." Other team members also sensed something was *different*. Linda, in her final reflection paper of the semester, referred to The Columbus Project as an "Americanization" effort:

Saturday we took a trip to The Columbus Project about an hour away.

This was an *experience*. My perception of this place was an American family trying to Americanize Jamaican kids. The worst part of the whole situation was that they thought that there was nothing wrong with what they were doing.

Having a similar sort of "experience," Adah, while disturbed by what she saw, added that she was glad we had visited to see what we are not about:

While The Columbus Project was a disgusting place, I am so glad that we made the trip to see it. I think that it was good for the group because sometimes I think you aren't sure what you believe in until you see what you don't believe in. It was like [the children] had been stripped of their culture and then were given some false American Christianity to take the place of who they really were. . . . Those children are growing up as

orphans in a house full of Americans in a rich neighborhood on an island that they are never going to see until it is too late.

The Columbus Project provided an (unfortunate) example of what we had been trying to avoid our last four years in Jamaica. Probing further as to what team-members had taken from this trip to the south coast, I pressed Nicholas in our final interview to talk more about his experience with Mr. and Mrs. Columbus. Nicholas recalled,

‘ It just felt wrong. It was the only place I was that I did not feel right. There is something not right about this place. I think the lady [Mrs. Columbus] knew it, too, because she wasn’t too friendly near the end. She was like I know they’re not coming back so... They’re praying for all this money..., but I noticed their video collection—600 videos. They had two sides [in a living room cabinet] just all videos. And, a lot of them were educational, but most of them were just videos. I saw *Robin Hood*, the Kevin Costner version. There were some R-rated movies. And, I heard the kids talking, “We can’t watch those.” You think of Ms. Matthews—they don’t even have a TV. You think of Westminster—they don’t even have a TV. I’m sure those kids are 500 times better off. I’m really scared about how those kids at The Columbus Project will turn out. I’m sure it is the same thing with home school kids here. By the time they get to high school, they lack some social skills. They haven’t had any way to experience that except television. I’m afraid that when those kids get out, it’s going to be even worse because they are not going to have any cultural experience. They’re born into one culture and then... I mean it’s hard to

put it all on the parents, but, I mean... They even said, we don't eat the Jamaican food [although the kids do]. We don't go down to the town [either]. She thought we were going to be uncomfortable going into the town [shakes his head, No].

I followed this up and asked Nicholas how he saw religion playing out there. Nicholas claimed,

There was more of a brainwashing thing there. It would have been different if they would have had some kind of other influence. Everything I saw was... I mean, almost their entire CD collection were Jesus songs. I don't get the picture...I don't picture well-taught, upstanding children, I see more like zealots, marching... The parents knew, and this is a very dangerous claim to make [for them], that they knew what God wanted them to do. That was clear to them. This was God's will, which is scary. I mean, that is really scary.

Thinking more about how he saw religion playing out in other places, Nicholas added,

I saw religion the first week. I mean, maybe we sang some songs or something. The second week, though, I saw it at Westminster. We went to service there, so we had religion... I really liked the Rasta thing [though] going on in the town. Callen was a Rasta. A lot of the other guys were Rasta. Well, they call them Ras because they cut their hair and shave their beard. They're just Ras. I met some Rastas at [the bar], too. They were talking the same thing as Callen, one love stuff. You know,

religion does play a large part: every day life, every hour life, every minute life.

Interested in his take on Rastafarianism and how he might juxtapose it with what he saw playing out at The Columbus Project, I asked him to expand. Nicholas went on,

The Columbus Project was a unique experience. I had never seen anything like that. . . .The Rasta thing... It had a lot more practical applications, I think. It's true that it is the people's religion of Jamaica. I remember looking at the percentages... I think the Pentecostal, which is the leading religion, came in, you know, from missionary work. . . .I mean, this is a strong claim to make after being there for two weeks, but I do believe they do have their own system for the way things work. And, it works. It works well. Things get done, people survive, and life goes on. I think Rastafarianism kind of... I don't want to say that it was built to... I think it has grown and adapted to that kind of lifestyle. It facilitates it. While, the American cultural influences have been more parasitic than anything else. I mean you could just tell that walking in downtown Montego Bay. The only American influence there were places where you have to spend mass money to buy anything. . . .Every Rasta I have met seems utterly content with their little.... Most of the people I talk to say you don't have the right to have a four-bedroom house, stuff like that. You should just be happy with what you have. Everyone I've met, they're pretty content.⁵²

⁵² Recall the concerns raised in chapter 3 regarding the importance of exploring other Christian religions and more Afro-Jamaican religious legacies like Rastafarianism, Myal, and Revival Zion. I return to this point in chapter 7 when I consider the limitation of this study and some possible future directions.

Seeing theory in real life: The beauty of praxis. While not trying to dismiss the daily struggle for existence that many Jamaicans face, Nicholas points out the interesting dynamic religion takes on in this Caribbean nation. In many ways, his comments refer back to our first two classes where we explored, as a class, both the contradiction of Rastafarianism (Lake, 1997) as liberating (in terms of race) and confining (in terms of gender), and also the reproductive and resistive possibilities of religion, in general, according to Austin-Broos (1997), the Boff's (1987), and my past work. We were seeing these dynamics play out as a result of our visit to The Columbus Project. Although they were certainly happening in other places we visited, it took a blatant example, one way or another, to really bring the issue to light. Cody, based on this and past experiences, was able to articulate the theory we had covered and the actions we saw unfolding before our eyes in her final reflection paper, "[The Columbus Project] was the most blatant example of hegemony we saw on the entire trip. The children in this home are not being raised as Jamaicans. They are being raised as Americans in Jamaican society." She continued, "The Columbus' are perfect examples of the oppressors that Freire talks about. By telling the children the 'right' way, they 'deny 'praxis' to the oppressed." Following this line of oppression, Cody concluded,

They do not have a dialog going with the children, or the people of Jamaica for that matter, as to how things should be accomplished. They think that the American way is the only way and don't give the children a chance to experience their own culture. Mr. and Mrs. Columbus want their children to be elitist, not part of the community. They are acting as a

reproductive agent by educating these kids to believe that there is only one correct way to do things—the American Christian way.

Attempting his own sort of theorizing as a result of the practice he observed, Joseph provocatively remarked in his final paper, “The people at The Columbus Project were so convinced that the best thing for their kids was to Americanize them, but I think it would be better to Jamaicanize more American kids.”

While the remarks in this account have been rather disparaging about a couple who are trying to do what they think is best for those whom they consider children of God, this part of the story reveals the many differing perspectives of what it means to serve others and how religion can play out. Our team has worked hard to remove any sense of “mission” from what we do because of the tremendous baggage we perceive in the term. Here, we saw incredible efforts to maintain it and rejoice in the “baggage.” The experience allowed the students to see how Christianity can play out in an oppressive way and allowed them to consider what indigenous religions (like Rastafarianism) do for the people.

As for my take on the experience, I ended up feeling a sense of renewal with my original faith and how I saw it playing out after attending a service at Our Lady of Lost Souls the day following our visit to The Columbus Project. The mass celebrated the life of a parishioner, a local artist who had recently died of AIDS. During the service, the priest offered a space for the local art community to come and pay tribute to the man who had apparently provided so much guidance and assistance to the local community. The priest followed up these comments with a moving invitation that spoke of our duty to

serve others. In his own sort of testimony the priest offered a parable that characterized this service:

There once was a man who dreamed he had died and visited both heaven and hell. He first visited hell and upon arriving noticed they were having a banquet. He was surprised to see how much food was at this banquet and noted the people all sitting around the table ready to enjoy the feast. He noticed how hungry they were, but also noticed that they were having trouble getting the food into their mouths because of the six foot forks they had been issued. Then, the man went to heaven where, upon arriving, he noticed the same sort of banquet set-up with equally as much food. All of the people were seated around the table, each with a six foot fork. The only difference in heaven was that each of the people were sitting six feet apart and they were feeding each other.

I desired as much resourcefulness in our own community building efforts as we continued toward what I hoped would be a caring, solidaristic future with our Jamaican partners.

PHI 220: Part 2—the group meetings in Jamaica

This part of the story has probably been the most difficult to place because our small and large group meetings for PHI 220 took place throughout our stay in Jamaica. We ended our first full day of work on the island with a large group meeting and we ended our last full day of work with a large group meeting. In between these, we had two other large group meetings and three small group meetings—so where to place this part of the story among the rest is complicated. I have chosen the end of this section because

now the reader has had a chance to hear from the participants in this intervention and has some idea how our emotionally powerful days were spent.

Although our meetings started on a strong note, I feel like we slumped some toward the middle before rebounding at the end. These meetings will require close scrutiny in the future as similar types of interventions are planned. The following paragraphs describe the intent and outcomes of this year's meetings in Jamaica, which were meant to be an integral part of the course, PHI 220. The descriptions are infused with the voices of the participants as they spoke at the meetings, with the voices of the informants as they talked to me in our second interviews while in Jamaica, and with my own ongoing reflections.

The setting for the meetings. The setting for the meetings was both good and bad. As I detailed in the opening part of this section, our accommodations at the Caribbean Manor provided us with a breathtaking view of the ocean and comfortable areas of relaxation around the pool or out on the pier under one of the thatched roof huts. This setting worked particularly well for our small group meetings, as groups of seven-eight of us met in tight circles under the huts or around the pool on lounge chairs. The setting, however, did not work as well for our large group of twenty-three, as we had to gather in a common area between the bar and pool, which was a highly trafficked area by the staff and the two inebriated guests I referred to in the description of these accommodations.

At the missionary college, where we had stayed in the past, there were several areas that we could meet where we would be out of the way of the other guests and could spend some time in quiet reflection. As I prepared for these large-group meetings in

Jamaica for this year, I planned with the same kind of setting in mind. This was, I think, my first of many mistakes in planning for these large group meetings.

Large group-meeting 1. Our first large-group meeting was held in the evening after our first full day of work in the orphanages, Wednesday, May 15, 2002. I had entitled the meeting in my planning: “Agents of change in a post-9/11 world: A (re)call for non-conformity,” and, in my outline, had planned to open with a song, provide some time for open discussion of the day (about twenty minutes), read from two passages—one that I had written shortly after 9/11/01 and one from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on non-conformity—give out some possible journal topics and allow some time for writing, open the meeting again to some reactions to the readings or journals, and finish with some time discussing our joys and concerns. In hindsight, I recognize the aggressiveness of the outline and realize, had we completed all of it, we may have been up until the next morning when it was time to leave for Cambridge International Children’s Home, again.

We quickly diverted from the outline when the initial discussion lasted more than an hour. Realizing, though, that the discussion was rich and more important than anything I had planned to do, we went with it and finished the meeting after the discussion with the reading from Dr. King.

In my taped-field notes, I reflected on the meeting the following morning:

Yesterday’s large group meeting was intended to deal with issues of non-conformity as I laid it out prior to coming here. We first let everyone talk about anything that struck them during the first day—of which we had very rich discussion. Jack talked about how good he felt about being here and about the work he was doing. Tom wondered what the

lasting impact of this might be. Gabriel did as well. Linda indicated that we made a difference today.

Then, the conversation centered on why we are here. Who are these children? Are we giving them joy? Or, are they giving us joy? Will they remember us? Or, more likely, will we remember them? Professor Mary indicated they are a reminder to us that we need to be present to others in our lives. It is very easy to be present, now, with them—no other distractions—just the children, “Hold me,” “Run,” or just holding arms up in the air—simple to accomplish with no other distractions. What, then, happens when we return home? Professor Beth called the children a metaphor—a metaphor for the invisible pains others experience back home [actually, I guess they are the embodiment of them: the disfigured Body of Christ according the Boffs (1987) in Liberation Theology]. Here, these pains are enlarged and right in front of us. At home, they are often hidden and swept under the other distractions of life. How will we carry this experience home with us? How will it make us present to others? How will we try to better recognize the hidden pain of others? Aside from a couple of distractions from the other guests at the hotel, this first large group meeting went exceptionally well, my planning and outline aside.

Small group meetings. Over the next few days, we held small group meetings each day. These meetings, which we had right before dinner, were intended to last about a half hour and were meant to give the team an opportunity to talk about what was on their mind in a more intimate setting. These meetings yielded rich discussion and deep sharing. As an example, throughout the descriptions of the orphanages, I have used much of the transcript from the first small group meeting our group had, which brought to light

Pete's experience in the school at Cambridge and Jack's take on the breadfruit at New Oxford.

Large-group meeting 2. After three days of small group meetings, we held our second large group meeting the Sunday evening before we began our work in the schools at Westminster and Benson. In planning the timing of this second meeting, I thought it would be a good idea to meet once more as a large group at this point in order to wrap up the work in the orphanages and to begin preparing for the work in the schools. In fact, I had planned in my mind that as this meeting wrapped up, small groups would meet to do their final preparations for the school the next day.

I had again planned an agenda for this meeting and entitled it: "Achieving solidarity: Living a life of praxis." This time, before the meeting even started, I scrapped the outline. Since we had not gotten to the Freire reading on our syllabus in our spring meetings, Professor Mark and I instructed the class to read chapter four of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and be prepared to discuss it at this meeting. As the meeting approached, however, it was evident that most of the students had not read so Mark and I instead decided to use this meeting as an introduction to Freire and to have them read for the next meeting a few days later.

The meeting began with some reflective time in our journals. We asked the students to spend some time writing a short newspaper-like story about our trip so far. We also provocatively offered the team a chance to try and write this story about our trip from a Jamaican's perspective. Leah's story about Shamika at New Oxford, although she did not share it during this meeting, was a result of this journaling exercise. Other team members did share theirs at the meeting as both Professor Mary and Linda read their

quickly constructed stories from the perspective of the children they had grown close to over our time in the orphanages.

Once this portion of the meeting was over, however, I believe our meetings began to take turn for the worse. As is expected on a journey out of the country, living in close quarters to others you do not know too well, conflicts can erupt. Although it is important to get these issues aired, confrontation is never neat. Some concerns among team members came to light at this meeting, which involved one particular team member and his openly arrogant attitude and obvious decision to stand outside of our group. Other team-members began expressing some criticisms about the planning for the trip and the preparation for the intervention in terms of the readings or work that was required. My heart sat in my stomach for most of the meeting as I felt like the good work we had done the week prior in the orphanages and the high tide we were riding suddenly came crashing to the beach.

To attempt to clarify some of the issues that were brought to light at the meeting, I focused a good portion of my interviews with the US informants, while in Jamaica, on these issues. Much of the criticism not surprisingly involved the readings. While some of the participants and informants, upon further reflection, would cast the readings in a slightly better light in their final papers, it appeared as though they had reached some level of frustration at this point in the trip (especially being asked to read while they were in Jamaica).

Getting right to the point in my second interview with Ruthie, she responded to my question about what had helped in our preparations for this trip:

As far as the readings go, I feel, “No.” They’ve given the history and the basis for what Jamaica was going to be like, but really hasn’t helped. What has helped the most is hearing the other experiences and being able to base... Being able to connect it at New Oxford. [long pause] I think the readings were a little too out of reach. They were too in-depth, too philosophical. I didn’t like reading them. Actually, the only one I liked reading, that maybe gave you a different perspective was the one talking about the land [Martin Khor (1996): *Global Economy and the Third World*]. For example—we see the fishing boats and how they are destroying the [environment]. That reading seemed to be one of the better ones.

In consideration of the overly-theoretical nature of many of the readings, Rachel considered the possibility of doing more practical work before coming to Jamaica:

I think some of our readings helped let us see what service was about and why Jamaica is where they are at, but I think maybe we should have done more to prepare for the actual kids. I don’t think we did. I don’t even think you can read that stuff. I don’t know how able it would be to take the whole group at home once to a nursing home or have the group volunteer or something. I don’t even know if that is possible—something where you are actually doing something.

Following up on one of the comments he made during the meeting, Nicholas responded to my question about what he would have done differently to prepare for the trip with more clarification:

I know I was saying the other night that the readings were only good for a little history, but culturally I was just blown away. I don't really think there is very much reading you could do to prepare to come here. I mean you could read, read, read, read, read until you are blue in the brain, and you can come down here and you'd experience something in the first half hour that was not included in the readings.

He continued, as Rachel did, with some constructive advice for the future:

I know we had some readings on the history, but I think we should have had just one packet that had an outline, a Jamaican chronology or something like that. Put something like that together, talk about the colonial period a little bit [and] break it down into decades in the 50s and move on: who was there, talk about a little WTO history, which I tried to do in my paper. But, that's it. Everything else, all the cultural stuff I've seen play out a little bit. I'm not sure if it gave me the full impression, though.

Finally, in my second interview with Gabriel, he saw some connection of the readings to our work in Jamaica once we got to the readings on service learning (which is what he had been waiting for and expecting). Gabriel reflected,

Once we got into the service learning readings, and people's idea about what service learning should be about and what different people's roles are within the service learning experience, that has definitely helped because it has focused a lot of energy, knowing kind of a boundary about what my role should be. Granted we are here to do service, but we are not

really here to change the entire Jamaican situation. We're here to understand and learn. We have our roles and as long as we meet these roles as set out by the experience, then the experience itself will be meaningful, so once we actually got into the service learning aspect of it, I felt like, for me, it was more relevant to what we were doing in Jamaica.

Large-group meeting 3. Our next meeting of any sort did not take place until four days later on Thursday, May 23—Day 10 of the trip. Mark and I agreed to give the team some space on Monday. Tuesday, we attended the service at Westminster Church in the evening. And, Wednesday, although this was the original intended date for the meeting, I agreed to push the meeting back to the following day. I did so because many of the team members complained that it had been a long day or, as some indicated, that they really needed some space that evening since we had made our last visit to New Oxford, attending an emotional birthday party there in the afternoon after working at Westminster school all day. In retrospect, postponing the meeting was not the best idea. Although some team members used the free time in the evening for reflection, most others regained their energy and headed out to the local bar. I unfortunately carried a lot of this frustration into the meeting the following evening, noticing, more than I should, the students who seemed disengaged or who seemed to hope the meeting would end soon.

At this meeting, which I had entitled in the planning process: "Love in action: Building trans-national solidarities," I opened with some short excerpts from Mahatma Gandhi and then opened the floor for discussion among the group. The conversation was once again rich as it had been at the first meeting; however, I remained distracted at times by perceived disengagement of some of the students. The conversation focused on how

our role in Jamaica had changed from what we considered it would be at the outset.

Along with probing about our preparations for the course, I also followed up with the US informants about how they saw their role changing both in this service learning project and on this team.

In describing his role on the team as “following someone else’s lead,” Gabriel considered his changing role in the service learning project from “student” to “observer”:

I mean...just being here, learning all the time is just what happens, whether its going up to the communities, going to the orphanages, and to the school, its just all learning. Everything that goes on here is an experience that you can draw from. So, I will always be a student in that sense. As far as being here, um, you know, already dealing with some of those experiences, I guess my new role would just be observer. Instead of actively going after that knowledge, sitting back and letting that knowledge come to me. I’ve never done that in a class before, just letting the knowledge come to me. I’ve always been the kind to ask questions, to go after it, and interview people. In Jamaica, you have to do all that stuff, but its just as important to sit down and have people come up to you and tell you their stories as well, so there is definitely the two different sides to gathering information.

Rachel talked about herself as playing a role as “middle-man” on the trip, trying to balance the service work with having a good time, and Ruthie considered her eventual emerging role as leader of future trips:

I definitely realize that it doesn't necessarily matter what I think. As long as what we're doing helps somebody, it doesn't matter, my viewpoint. As long as we're helping somebody. Whether I think it is the correct way to do something . . . the whole point of this trip is that we do it as a group. I feel like if I just do what I am supposed to do, go where I am supposed to go, do the best of my ability. I'd like to see myself as a leader, but I don't feel that yet. . . . I hope that by the end of the trip and maybe it's not this trip, but if I choose to come back in the future that I am not just a follower. I may be more useful as a leader.

Finally, when asked about how he now saw his role in this service learning project, Nicholas responded that he saw himself as an "instrument":

That's a good question because it is keeping me up at night really. I try to just be an instrument. I try to have no... I try not to look into the future about stuff. I just know we are going to Westminster for the day, "Cool." I don't form any beliefs about what the day will be like. I just go, get on the bus, sleep, get there, and let it come. You really have to be an instrument of service more than anything else. I mean, you have to plan, yes, but the more... [long pause] the more ideas you form, though, then the more false pretenses you are going to have—not all of your ideas are going to be right and they might actually discourage you in the long run and they might cause you to... [another pause] It might cause resentment and you might not do your full service, what you're capable of. You just have to go in with an open mind and let it take you. I've really felt like

this, like we've been guided. I'm going to say by the tao. I mean you can feel it, there is flow. Looking around, you close your eyes, and you can feel it, that flow. The work we are here to do is good work, and if you don't worry about it, just let it go, you'll be carried in that direction. If you are really here with a good heart and you're in it to help God's less fortunate people who are really in dire circumstances, then I think you will have a hand, a guide.

Large-group meeting 4. After postponing, yet again, our next large group meeting, and only informally meeting in our small groups, we had our last large group meeting in the evening of our last full day in Jamaica. At this meeting, we scrapped any plans of going over the Freire reading (which we had again put off at the last meeting) and decided to just let the team talk about what they thought about re-entering the US after this experience. Re-entry is often a difficult process, so it was important that we offered space. Mark collected a couple of pieces of coral and began the session with a description of the rocks as "formed" by the ocean. Mark went on to reflect that, unlike the coral, we have agency over our own formation—we can change and direct, to a certain degree, our final formation. Mark passed the rock around and asked the team to consider this as they reflected on their re-entry to the US. For some, this provided a space for emotional out-pouring as they reflected on all that they had seen and how they wanted their lives to be different back at home. Others considered, similarly, but more philosophically, what the long term effects of this intervention may be. Prior to this meeting, I had talked with my informants about some of the same things.

In an attempt to follow up with Rachel about her “boundaries,” I asked her about how she thought she had dealt with her boundary of race. Rachel responded,

Yeah, I thought it was a good experience. I wasn’t... I can’t say that I felt scared or anything. I mean usually ... I mean, the people we have met so far have been really nice. But, I realize if you go to a different part, you can probably get killed. I mean, we haven’t really done that. I have noticed in towns that we have stopped in, everybody stares. Everywhere we go, people stare at us, “What are you doing here?” [But,] they seem real nice and I think they are a lot more open to us than we would be if the situation was reversed—like if they came walking through our neighborhood.

I followed up, “Does it help in thinking about relations between black and white at home?” To which Rachel replied, “I think it’s equal, too. If white people walk through a black neighborhood there, you’d get the same. I don’t know if it was Jack who said, ‘If you don’t act better than anyone, or are rude, you’ll be ok.’ I think they [the Jamaicans] are a little more open-minded.”

Considering her own boundary with race, Ruthie, similar to Rachel, responded to my question about what she would do with this experience when she goes home:

I don’t know, I think I will definitely look at things a lot differently, like not say every black man is a bad person. Not that I do that all the time already, but that really . . . the black and white issue is really . . . it’s an issue, but it has really changed my thoughts. I’m used to seeing black kids doing damage, causing problems, shooting people. And, you know, here, I know [our driver] is not

considered black, he is considered brown, so just in that. Why do we think that?

I mean, people are people, they shouldn't be excited about their race. . . . And that is something that kind of caught me.

Aside from the issue of race, Ruthie also considered other possible long term effects particular to this trip to Jamaica in terms of our growing relationship and the possibility to do more. Similar to Mr. James' metaphor of the sand at New Oxford, Ruthie considered, "The long term? If we keep coming back then I think the more expansion, deeper it goes. We learn new things. What can you do with one penny? What can you do with ten? You can do a lot more."

Regarding similar statements that Ruthie made in other parts of her second interview, Gabriel and Nicholas also focused a lot of their attention on returning to Jamaica, realizing that the work is not finished, and it is only in building the relationship with our partners that more work could be done. Gabriel saw this in terms of understanding "existence" and how we come to confirm other's existence as he had considered at Cambridge. Nicholas further wondered how he could enhance his role as an "instrument" in a process he referred to as "becoming"—a process he saw for both himself and the trip. Considering that the world is in constant flux, Nicholas finished our second interview by juxtaposing being and becoming. Nicholas reflected, "Is it stability or change that makes the world go? It's hard to think about that." Thinking on it a moment, he concluded, "Life isn't static. It's always in flux. You never step in the same river twice."

Considering re-entry. So, our time in Jamaica had come to a close and I felt quite confused as to what our team was taking away from the experience. I felt every range of

emotion in thinking about the team: joy and sadness, pride and disappointment, elation and rage. Had we done enough to prepare them? Were the readings too theoretical? Was there too much focus on action and not enough on reflection? Was I too concerned about their extracurricular activities? Shouldn't I just feel satisfied in the good work we did in the orphanages and schools? Should we have done more? And, then, I stopped before the questions completely frustrated me and undid all that we had done. In consideration of Nicholas' take on "becoming" I decided to move forward in my thinking about the trip and focus attention on what was to come when we got home. I further considered, from past experience, that the team's impression of the intervention would change as time moved on and they had a chance to process more of what they experienced through conversations and reflections. This focus on "becoming" proved sobering.

Reflecting on my own process of re-entry, I entered my last taped field note log after our final meeting ended. Along with ruminating over much of what we had experienced on the island, I ended with some of the following thoughts: *I'm still wondering what makes the world change and what part I play in it, if any, as planes light up in the distance—getting ready to land. And, I wonder if they come to tour, if they come to missionize, or if they come to make partnerships. Do they come to be partners in the struggle toward humanness, the right to be human whether newborn or elderly, man or woman, literate or not? Will they come to exploit this island? Have we exploited this island? Can we have possibly given what we have received?*

The plane coasts along the horizon, flying above the last pieces of pink and orange that this sky is going to reveal tonight. Its landing lights are on. What will they

take away? What will we take away from this experience? Are we any closer to a changed world based on this experience? Admittedly, I wonder and worry. Social justice soldiers, care-givers, cultural workers, solidaristic partners, what are we? Who are we?

Part Three: Re-entry

Part three describes the experience of coming home and represents the concluding section of this chapter. This part details our final meetings as Professor Mark and I sought to wrap up this particular experience for our students and began to look ahead to what might be next for this project at St. James and for our Jamaican partners. In particular, the first account describes our final formal meetings as a class and reviews many of the topics that my US informants talked about in our final interview and that the US participants discussed in their final papers. In the second account I offer Mr. James response to our follow up interview. Finally, in the third account, I provide concluding remarks about the writing of this chapter, which I have called a “shared story,” reveal and problematize my ongoing attempts to communicate with the participants of this research study, and point to the future in terms of both the remainder of this dissertation and the next step in this project.

PHI 220: Part 3—The final meetings

Sometimes the most difficult part of a service learning experience like this one for the US participant is re-entry to our country. Having had such an intense experience abroad, where eyes were opened to so many new issues and ideas, the return home can present itself as a huge let down. Often, participants have a hard time expressing what they experienced to family and friends who ask about the trip. Most times, this inability to communicate is a frustrating endeavor as the family member or friend seldom has a

firm understanding of the context within which the participant worked. With this in mind, Professor Mark and I tried to prepare the team, as I explained in the previous account, by asking them to think about their return home in our final large group meeting. Additionally, on the front end of the trip, we had also scheduled to meet at least two more times formally as a class with the hope of adding more informal get-togethers after that in order that we might continue to share and process the experience together.

As an example of what re-entry can be like and in an effort to try and understand what it was like for my informants, I asked them about it in our last interview together a couple weeks after we returned. Like many other first-time ‘returners’ (particularly from this trip), participants often talk about the change they feel in themselves or the way they see things differently. These informants were no different. Nicholas talked about his re-entry in this way,

There’s a strange kind of relief to it. . . . There are a lot of securities here that I missed. But, really, it has changed the way I look at things. Things seem to be a lot simpler there and work just as well. Whatever questions I had about typical American pop life-style has just been raised further. . . . There’s a lot of holes in our culture that just aren’t as apparent there. They are a whole lot more genuine—probably, more true to themselves and other people. [There is] not as much deception. You get what you ask for. [There is] just not as much BS.

Ruthie turned her thoughts upon re-entry to her own quality of life and what she really “needs”:

Well, you know when you are going shopping and you're driving your car and you realize you just came from a place [like Jamaica, that doesn't have much] and we live in so much luxury. It's unreal. It impacts, "Do I really need this?" "Do I really need these things in my life?" I really don't need that. That has really kind of opened my eyes. To see how . . . we . . . as Americans . . . just expect things to be so clean and perfect. And, that's not what we saw in Jamaica.

Rachel thought about her relationship with others: "I have begun to rethink my grudges and friendships and have made an effort the past few weeks to make new friends, let the old ones know how important they are, and to forgive grudges that have controlled my life." Finally, Gabriel reflected on how his thinking upon re-entry was different than he imagined it would be at the outset:

It's a little different. There is a lot of stuff that happens when you come back that you don't expect. Like I said in class the other day, I expected to just go on this trip and just be done with it. Say, "Yeah, I went to Jamaica," and that's it. I was using it for different purposes—information for my baccalaureate project. I didn't think that I would have a desire to come back [to Jamaica] like I do now. I'm not sure if it is so much a personal connection to the people that I have, like others who have gone before—personal connections with children, or people—I think for me, it was purely the experience, being down there. I know when I go back next year, or next time, or whenever, I'm not going to remember anyone's

name, or face, or anything like that, but I will remember the experience of going down there to help somebody.

Summer meetings. As Gabriel mentioned, prior to this last round of interviews with the informants, Mark and I held two more class sessions in order to try and wrap up the experience in Jamaica. At the first meeting, June 5, 2002, I started the meeting with a song I had written in Jamaica as our opening reflection. Next, we moved to our small groups and spent some time first reflecting in our journals about our re-entry, then, talking about it. After forty-five minutes, we rejoined the larger group to discuss any number of topics: re-entry, issues that were raised in the second set of papers that the students had written, experiences while in Jamaica, etc. We closed the meeting by clarifying the assignment for the final paper: “Write an eight-page reflection over any portion of our service learning experience,” and asking the students to think about evaluative comments for the course that they would be prepared to write about at the next meeting.

We met two days later on June 7 and opened the meeting with a reflection from Gabriel on a portion of his experience in Jamaica. Next, we spent some time looking through and trading photographs that we had taken in Jamaica. This portion of the class, of course, was characterized by a lot of laughter, a few tears, and a further opportunity to build a “shared” story. During this portion of the class, we also decided upon a future date, July 1, 2002, that we could gather for a celebratory dinner with our friends and families. We wrapped up this final meeting with students offering some written feedback on the course (that would not be looked at until Mark turned in the final grades) and a

closing reflection by Jack that described how “richness” and “poorness” lie in the eye of the beholder.

On July 1, 2002, we gathered as a community to share an evening with friends and family, reminiscing about the trip, playing games, and enjoying some Jamaican food from a local Caribbean restaurant (and, some Red Stripe). Final papers were turned in at this time and grades were recorded for the class shortly thereafter. No future dates have been definitively planned to gather once again, but email correspondence continues between myself and the team as I continue to write and rewrite the story of this experience, seeking their feedback and critique.

Evaluative feedback: class meetings, readings, theory, reflection, and service learning in general. While the critical feedback continues to trickle in regarding the emerging story I write about this experience, students did provide insightful reflection about the course and their experience in their final papers, which I have included in most of the previous accounts. In addition to these reflections, students, along with other faculty at St. James who went on the trip, also provided reflection and advice in their evaluative feedback. This feedback, like the experience in Jamaica, differed from participant to participant, and has given Mark and me much to think about regarding future service learning courses like this one.

In terms of the *course* itself, participants’ comments ranged from: the classes were “too freakin’ long” to “we needed to meet more often.” As far as the content of the meetings, most participants thought the academic content was helpful. For example, first time team member, John, stated, “[The classes were] a great tool for preparations and a great way to understand the material.” Likewise, long time team member, Cody,

commented, “The class brought an entirely new aspect of learning to my trip. It really helped me look at the people and institutions critically. It helped further instill in me the need to work for change in the world, whether it is in Jamaica or in my own neighborhood.” Rachel, on the other hand, noted the need for spending more time on the preparations for the practical side of the trip:

As far as the class part before the trip is concerned, I think less time should be spent discussing every reading in-depth and in every detail. Rather, preparations for the trip, the fundraising, etc., should be more concrete. Also, more [of an] effort to unite the ‘community’ would be beneficial.

Along the lines of this issue of community, other participants also considered that more time should have been spent in our small groups rather than large groups as we prepared. Linda posited, “I think more was accomplished in the small group meetings and I think more people were comfortable there.” Likewise, thinking that the small group setting allowed team members to get to know each other better, Joseph, considered, “I think we should have made more time to get to know each other. . . .I didn’t really know everybody until the second day of the trip.” Finally, similar to both Linda and Joseph, Ruthie, when asked which she preferred small or large group settings, decided,

The small groups, definitely—especially having a leader who has been there before. They can answer simple questions as far as what to bring or they can answer more complex questions like what am I going to feel like? Whereas, in the large group there are only a few people who stand out and talk all the time. And, I refuse... I don’t talk in that group unless I really

have to say something. . . .With the large group meetings, they seem to drag on. I feel the small groups definitely prepare you more. The large group is good to get everything organized. This is what we need to do. But still, people aren't going to do it. . . .There are some things where you need the large group, but other things you are better off in the small group.

In terms of the *readings*, feedback ranged from “hard” to easy to understand, and from “learned a great deal” to “did not prepare us.” For example, first time team member, Jack, commented, “The readings were hard . . . but you explained the readings better than anybody could do. The readings gave us background on the country, but did not prepare us on what it would really be like.” Similarly, long time team member, Adah, followed up Jack's thought with, “There is no reading that goes along with working with the children at New Oxford and there is no theory for the why's and how's of the situation.” She further considered that the readings perhaps had a different effect for first time vs. long time team members:

I learned a great deal from our readings and some of the discussion/lecture. It was probably easier for those of us who had already gone to make connections between the readings and what we were doing in Jamaica, but I felt like doing those readings and thinking about how they related to my work in Jamaica and even things I have observed about the US helped me grow in my intellectual pursuit of justice.

In support of this claim, long time team member Leah also noted,

I personally had no problems with the readings, other than the one or two that may have been a bit over my head, but others seemed to struggle with

the relevancy of a few. It may be a good idea in the future to make it clear how the readings relate to the class or to the trip.

Still more participants focused their attention on the content of the readings, which seemed to distinguish itself from previous readings that students had done. As an example, Rachel lamented,

The readings seemed rather biased towards a negative view of the US. These articles challenged my capitalistic world and I am thankful for that because I was naïve to the wrongs our country participated in; however, I also feel every government has such wrongs hidden . . . and America is also a very good place, and has good underlying values. I think our group tended to forget the oppression American once suffered and overcame, fighting for values like liberty and freedom. We are not an evil country and I think our group is a prime example of capitalist-living people that use their advantage to help others.

Aside from the actual content, other participants considered that the order of the readings should be adjusted for the future. Both Leah and Nicholas (like Gabriel before them) argued that the service learning readings should come first. Leah stated, “I think it would have been better to do the service learning readings at the beginning—the readings specifically about Jamaica more towards the time of the trip.” Similarly Nicholas suggested,

I would have maybe put the service learning readings first and then put the history stuff second. I would have done some theories on education and

service learning, then Jamaican history, and then culture, in that order. I

want that to be at the forefront of people's minds when they go to Jamaica.

In terms of the *theory*, which most participants lumped in with the readings, some demonstrated how they understood the theory by applying it to situations they encountered in Jamaica. As an example, recalling the piece of the story about The Columbus Project, both Nicholas and Cody revealed how they saw theory (particularly hegemony and reproduction) playing out at this orphanage. In a similar way John began to work out his growing understanding of “cultural capital” through the following experience:

One of the first lessons I learned was that my cultural capital (white, lower-middle class, male) seemed to work in Jamaica. As a matter of fact (probably because of the high exchange rate, 45J to \$1), my cultural capital seemed to be higher in Jamaica. This higher cultural capital was when, one night at [at the bar], I was told by a man that a woman sitting across the table from me could be mine “For a leetle bit o’ money, mon,” and that “For a leetle bit o’ money, mon, any girl in thees bar could be yours.” So, in retrospect, the foreigner in Jamaica actually has more power and more cultural capital than the foreigner in America.

While John continues to work out his understanding, the point remained, of course, that he was wrestling with it, which is exactly what Lawrence Grossberg (1992) wants us to do with theory as I pointed out in chapter 2. Adah helped capture the tension present in the theory part of this course—and praxis in general—as she related it to the readings, “I have a love-hate relationship with theory-heavy readings on education. I really enjoy

reading them and find myself agreeing with the goals, but I really struggle with the fact that they rarely deal with putting these ideas into practice.” Putting them into practice, of course, is what we hoped for in this intervention.

In terms of *reflection*, participant comments mostly focused on how the reflections helped them take a step back to make sense of the experience and their actions. Gabriel argued,

When you are in there doing service work, you are just doing it. That reflection time gives you an opportunity to examine what you have done. Not only, what you have done, but is there a way that you can do it differently? I’ve gone through several pages, times where I have written three, five, eight, twenty, twenty-five pages on something that doesn’t even answer the question. You can spend thirty, forty-five, or sixty days doing service without really servicing anybody. And, that is because you haven’t stopped to think why you are really there. The reflections really do focus yourself as far as why you are there and if what you are doing is really accomplishing what you want to accomplish. In that sense, the reflections really do help and I guess are a necessary part of doing the service.

Similarly, Ruthie offered that reflection

gives you a sense of what is really going through your mind. You can look back and say, “Yeah, that’s what I was thinking, and why I was thinking that at the time.” What really helped is when you posed those

questions on a piece of paper, it really gets your mind going to think about what the experience really is. We went to these orphanages and gave love and affection to these kids who probably wouldn't have gotten it. You get a true understanding and it helps you to find yourself.

In my final interview with her, Ruthie also provided feedback about the pre-action reflections: “[They] made me think about what I was going to expect when I got there—like the conditions of the schools were exactly what I expected and the people I expected to have smiles did.” Other participants considered that they were not yet finished reflecting on the experience. Rachel pondered, “I am not through processing this trip and I am sure much of what I have learned is still buried in my thoughts or in my heart. I look forward to discovering these things, but I am also scared of the changes they may bring.” In opposition to most of the other positive feedback about reflection, Nicholas, when asked what he thought about our time spent in reflection, countered,

I'll never understand that. I mean, I'm not trying to criticize or anything, but I'm always reflecting. I was never not thinking about what went on. Everything amazed me. I can't imagine other people not thinking about it. Maybe I'm just too pompous, but, you know, [when you said] “Talk about your day.” Well, no, I need to keep that for me. There's a lot of stuff going on in my head right now. If I start talking about it, I might screw it up. Especially the big groups meeting toward the end, “How did you feel about the trip?” I mean, bling, a million thoughts go through my head at the same time. Reflection is important . . . but as far as it goes, I don't

know how you can ask, “Think about your day.” You’re constantly thinking about it. I don’t see how you couldn’t.

In terms of *service learning* in general, participants extolled the virtues of this type of experiential education, and many, particularly my informants, talked about learning more in this class in the two weeks we were in Jamaica than they had in the rest of their schooling experience. Nicholas explained,

You know the old saying that you have to see it to believe it. You know you can read about the Bosnian/Serbian or Pakistani conflict until you are blue in the face, but will you ever know what kind of resentment a Pakistani feels for an Indian unless you go and see the conditions and see how everything plays out socially and culturally. I don’t think so. You can know about it, but I don’t know if you can fully understand it or appreciate it though. I think two weeks in Jamaica taught me more about something, anything, than any course I have ever had. I might not be able to explain what I learned, but I know it and I know it happened.

In a similar way, Gabriel expressed his take on service learning, but additionally wrestled with the notion that “education” might be a redundant, thus unnecessary component to “educational experience,” and, as a result, revealed some of the deep tensions within praxis that teachers of service learning face:

The purpose of service learning, really, [pause] honestly, is to at least attempt to create an impact in a student’s life. Basically, when we went down there, we were all students. That’s the way I saw it. We were all people trying to learn something and whether it was about Jamaica itself

or it was about ourselves, we all came away learning more than what we knew going down there. So, service learning really isn't an educational experience, I don't think. I think it is actually just an *experience*. You really don't have to put education in front of that. It is one of those things that if you truly were into it and you truly participated, you could look back on it as one of those things that if you didn't go, life would be so different. Learning things about yourself in service learning is more important than learning about the situation because you can learn about the situation in class. You, and Mark, and Paul tried to do this before we went there: history, background, social status. You can *learn* all that stuff, but when you go out and *do* a service learning trip, the experience of the trip is really what changes you. [my emphasis added]

Final response(s) from the Jamaican informants

In the previous section, I offered quite a bit of feedback from the US participants as we had an opportunity to meet on a few occasions upon our return. Although I did not have a chance to continue to meet with my Jamaican informants, I anxiously awaited their responses to the follow up questions I left with them after our first interview. Unfortunately, to date, Mr. James has been the only one to return his responses.

According to Mr. James, what stood out the most for him in our work together this year involved how we have been able to develop a better understanding of working together toward one common goal: "making a difference in the lives of these unfortunate children." In terms of what we were able to accomplish this year, Mr. James claimed, "We were able to prove beyond any doubt that people from anywhere, from different

backgrounds and cultures, can co-exist with very little effort—and that, in and of itself, is quite an accomplishment.” Finally, regarding his thoughts about the future possibilities of our work together, Mr. James turned to the philosophical and Biblical. He concluded,

I can see nothing but good coming out of any group of people working together in trying to make the world a better place by helping those that are less fortunate, remembering always that we are our brother’s keeper and cannot afford to turn away or walk on the other side of the road, as we are all travelers on Jericho’s road of life, and, at times, we may have to play the part of victim or good Samaritan.

While Mr. James provides insightful food for thought for both the last and future interventions, it would have been even more helpful to juxtapose his responses against Ms. Matthews. In conversations with both after I returned to the US, we discussed several issues involving ongoing work that we needed to maintain throughout this next year in order to plan for the next. Assuming that they would return their responses in short order, I only mentioned them occasionally. Mr. James eventually returned his by fax after a more explicit follow up request from me. When asked similarly, Ms. Matthews indicated that she was working on her responses and was close to finished, but had not sent them on as of yet. Although I provide in-depth problematization of this issue in the next chapter, it is instructive to note at this point that it was a tough call to leave the second interviews for them to send back. It seemed like a good move at the time as my second interview with them would have occurred two or three days after the first one, as our time together was limited; thus I wanted to give them some time to reflect. This time for reflection, as it turns out, has proven problematic. Either our

method of correspondence (fax, email, regular mail) has provided roadblocks to our communication or other issues have prevented the follow up response.

Member-checking, ongoing correspondence, and a conclusion (for now)

As promised in Chapter 4, once I began writing the “shared story” of this service learning experience from the data I collected, I continuously ‘checked’ my accounts with the participants who shared in this intervention with me. First, I offered both the US and Jamaican informants an opportunity to look at the verbatim transcripts from our interviews together. Next, I shared several of the accounts of the key places in Jamaica with the team and the Jamaican partner they might have corresponded with (e.g., I offered Mr. James an opportunity to view my account of New Oxford). Finally, I shared my analysis of the service learning experience with both the US and Jamaican participants. By proceeding in this way, in the spirit of my critically interpretive theoretical frame, I allowed the team and our partners to both make further observations and suggestions and to evaluate my analysis based on their lived experience. I used these comments, in some sections, to enhance the quality of the account or the analysis. I also used these comments, in other sections, as a contrast to how I may have been reading the situation based on my experience or knowledge of the literature. This way, my analysis could remain critical, situated as a response and enhancement to the literature, and interpretive, situated in the dialectic of the lived experiences of researcher and researched.

Most of the feedback on this work has occurred through email correspondence. The first reflective opportunity Professor Mark and I provided for the team was in the form of their final paper: “Write a reflective paper about any portion of this service

learning experience.” As was evidenced in early accounts in this chapter, these papers yielded a variety of rich information that led to the thickness with which I was able to describe our intervention. After these papers, I sent out a number of topics that seemed to emerge in the papers (e.g., “breadfruit”), asking for additional feedback. Following a series of these types of emails, I began sending out drafts of the accounts for comments and critiques, making sure that the story I was writing continued to be consistent with their experience. For example, with Mr. James, I have been pursuing funding for the club house he wants to build for his soccer team. With, Ms. Matthews, I have been pursuing information about acquiring land or helping to build a school in her community.

Once again, though, this correspondence has not been without its problems. Although, I talk more about this in chapters 6 and 7, as I evaluate the critical service learning framework and consider the limitations of this study, a couple of points are worth mentioning now. One, it was often difficult to elicit much feedback on the accounts or critique of the analysis from either the US or Jamaican participants. This may be due to any number of reasons: not checking email, feeling finished with the project for now and wanting a break from it, or not having had an opportunity to provide feedback or critique like this in the past. Two, correspondence with the Jamaican partners was complicated by any number of issues: faxes not going through, emails not checked, or ‘snail mail’ that was extra slow between the US and these Jamaican communities.

With these problematics aside for the moment, I use the rich data and feedback that I was able to gather in order to critically analyze this service learning experience in the next chapter. In this analysis I seek, as Winterson (1999) suggested in the opening to

chapter 2, to “understand” through this “series of stories.” This forthcoming analysis offers the opportunity to build on the story “that has created me” (as I, like Adah, have realized) and to decide on the future direction for both critical service learning and our particular project in Jamaica.

CHAPTER 6

ANALYSIS: DECONSTRUCTING AND PROBLEMATIZING CRITICAL SERVICE LEARNING

“Life isn’t static. It’s always in flux. You never step in the same river twice.”
(Nicholas)⁵³

I’ve now come full circle. As I started my praxis in this dissertation with reflections of past experiences, pre-action reflections for this project, and theorizing for critical service learning in chapters 1-3 and in parts of chapter 4, I moved into the action half of praxis in parts of chapter 4 and in chapter 5. Currently, I resume reflection and theorizing in this chapter to ‘critically interpret’ what happened in the process of this service learning experience as I unpack the data.

Recall from chapter 4 that I seek a ‘critically interpretive’ analysis, bridging the more critical and transformative research paradigms with the more interpretive and dialectical ones. Chapter 5 revealed, at length, the ongoing dialectic that emerged among the team, between the team and our Jamaican partners, and between myself and the participants. I continue that dialectic in this chapter in such a way that I continue to seek feedback and critique regarding how I analyze and interpret this experience. However, the “critical” plays a much more formative role in this chapter as I reinsert my voice more prominently in order to try and make sense of what happened in this project, in particular, and for critical service learning, in general. With this new understanding, I point to more critical possibilities for the future of both throughout this chapter and in wrapping up the entire dissertation in the next. I recognize that this analysis offers only one possible

⁵³ Excerpt from our second interview

interpretation, but now that I have both feet placed firmly in the river, I take this opportunity to report how I see it, at this moment.

Why is this a Cultural Studies Project? And, Where Will the Analysis

Go from Here?

“Cultural studies advocates that the vocation of intellectuals be rooted in pedagogical and political work tempered by humility, a moral focus on suffering, and the need to produce alternative visions and policies that go beyond a language of critique (Henry Giroux)⁵⁴

From the outset, I have claimed that this project *is* a cultural studies project. To review, Kathy Hytten (1997) argued, “Cultural studies is about investigating the connections among culture, power, knowledge, authority, and meaning” (pg. 41). She further claimed that cultural studies is, at once, a critical, political, qualitative, and interdisciplinary project aimed at interrogating power dynamics and making a difference in the world. Moreover, Henry Giroux (1992), in relating cultural studies particularly to education, charged,

Cultural studies provides the opportunity for educators and other cultural workers to rethink and transform how schools, teachers, and students define themselves as political subjects capable of exhibiting critical sensibilities, civic courage, and forms of solidarity rooted in a commitment to freedom and democracy (pg. 201).

Additionally, Stuart Hall (1992), Lawrence Grossberg (1992; Wright, 2000), and Giroux (1992, 1999) urged that cultural studies is more than deconstruction or theoreticization, it

⁵⁴ Giroux, 1999, pg. 244.

is also about “doing.” Finally, as Hall (1999) also reminded us, we must consider what is “at stake” when we take up cultural studies projects.

Keeping these claims in mind, I argued, like Wright (2001) that service learning is one way to practically activate cultural studies. Thus, I set a course to develop a qualitative research project that interdisciplinarily investigated how a service learning project played out. This particular project, which detailed the experience of working in schools and orphanages in Jamaica, was of importance to me in at least two ways. One, I both created it and have been involved with this project for five years. Two, this fifth intervention represented the first time the critical service learning framework and theory were launched and tested. Thus, not only was there something at stake for the students and our Jamaican partners, but I also had a vested interest in the outcome of this project both for our future in Jamaica, in particular, and for critical service learning, in general.

In the spirit of ‘doing’ cultural studies and because of my zeal to work for social transformation, I designed this qualitative study, to answer one over-arching question: “How does the critical service learning framework and theory play out in a project that seeks ameliorative change?, and several sub-questions: What is the possibility of these projects to work toward social justice and/or care? How does this framework and theory help to democratize the relationship of the ‘server’ and ‘served’? And, what are the potential enduring effects of this project beyond our presence in Jamaica? The study was carried out as an ethnography that documented the process of this service learning experience from the beginning of our class meetings in January, 2002, through our trip to Jamaica in May, 2002, and up to a few weeks after our last meeting in July, 2002. The process of the critical service learning framework—pre-action reflection, theory, action,

and reflection—was described in chapter 5 in the form of narrative accounts that mined the experiences of the participants at key places and during several events over this more than seven month period. The proposition that critical service learning works for a “caring solidarity” was also documented, perhaps more subtly, but no less poignantly, as the participants’ experiences emerged through their reflection on what they anticipated, what happened, and what this intervention has meant to them as a result.

This chapter takes a closer look at critical service learning based on chapter 5’s story. The chapter is broken up into three parts, represented in figure 1:

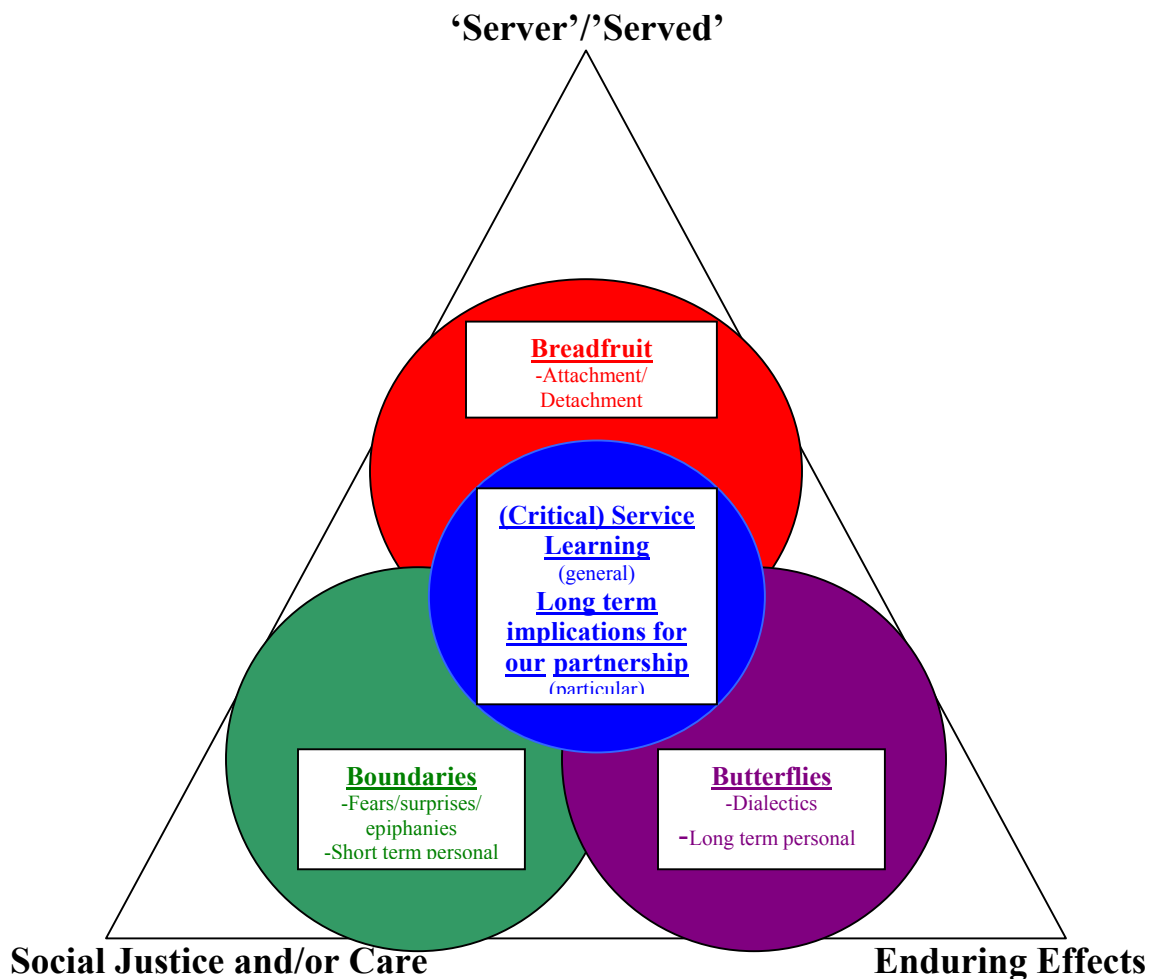


Figure 1: A Visual Analysis

The points of the triangle—enduring effects, social justice and/or care, and ‘server’/‘served’ —represent the three sub-questions that I asked at the outset of the study. The three intersecting circles—butterflies, boundaries, and breadfruit —under the central circle represent metaphors and symbols that describe ways of thinking about how one might answer these questions and what elements may be involved in an evolved framework and theory for critical service learning. The central circle—critical service learning and long term implications of this project—represents an articulation of the three symbols and metaphors as a way to consider my overarching question regarding critical service learning, in general, and this project, in particular. The figure is drawn in such a way that the circles overlap, because these symbols and metaphors overlap and inform each other much like the cultural landscapes did in chapter 3.

In the sections to follow, I first examine the three background circles, analyzing and interpreting the symbol/metaphor’s relationship to the data in chapter 5 and the questions that I asked at the outset. To continue each section in a more critical vein for this cultural studies project, I then examine the symbol/metaphor, and its relationship to how the critical service learning framework and theory played out (the central circle), vis-à-vis any number and combination of the eight limitations that are shot through various aspects of this ethnography: (1) size of the study; (2) length of time spent with our Jamaican partners; (3) power relations between the US and Jamaica; (4) my multiple roles in the project; (5) use of ongoing correspondence after our trip; (6) focus on the ‘server’; (7) use of the term “project”; and (8) service learning as a class/course.⁵⁵ As a

⁵⁵ The reader may note that the list of limitations grew from four, as discussed in chapters 1 and 4, to eight. This proliferation is due to my evolving critical analysis throughout the entire dissertation and illustrates the potential that new problematics will arise during a research study.

result of this critical interpretation, I use the final chapter to offer the practical contributions of this study in terms of both evolving the critical service learning framework and theory, in general, and also reflecting on the future of this ongoing partnership in Jamaica, in particular. I also provide some future research possibilities that should be considered as an extension of this dissertation.

Butterflies: Dialectics and the Long Term Personal

“On the surface, [Jamaica] wants to be this beautiful place that people come to and enjoy, but there is always going to be this ugly portion of it [from which] it can never detach. (Gabriel)⁵⁶

The symbol of the butterfly provides a rich backdrop against which to begin analyzing and interpreting our service learning experience. As I noted toward the end of the last chapter, this symbol of the butterfly offers at least two ways to think about this experience: the contrast of the beautiful wings and the central caterpillar, and the actual process of “becoming” a butterfly. In this section I begin by examining both of these, talking first about the contrasts as emergent dialectics, and, second, exploring metamorphosis as a process that the participants underwent as the experience evolved. Next, I explore this symbol’s relationship to the question: “What are the potential enduring effects of this project beyond our presence in Jamaica?” and consider the future for the US team member and our Jamaican partners. Finally, I deconstruct and problematize this symbol/metaphor by raising five issues that both illustrate points where several limitations of this study articulated and also provide critical points of departure for evolving and enhancing critical service learning.

⁵⁶ Excerpt from first interview

Butterfly as dialectic

Recall that this symbol emerged before we even went to Jamaica. As the quote from Gabriel above helps remind us, he offered this image of Jamaica as way to characterize his growing understanding of this complex place. Along with Gabriel's contrasting views of Jamaica, Nicholas also offered a similar sort of contrast in our first interview when he considered that there are two ways to view Jamaica: through the lens of either Hollywood or reality. Nicholas' sense of Jamaica, without ever having been there, was that the media casts Jamaica in one of two ways: either as a gangster's paradise (in Kingston) or as a tourist's dream (in Montego Bay). Both of these Hollywood versions, according to Nicholas, should be tempered by actual experience. In his opinion, that is the only way to get a true view of Jamaica. While I suppose that is true regarding just about anywhere that Hollywood takes an interest or where tourism is promoted in the Third World, these contrasts offered an interesting lens through which to view our experience in Jamaica this year. I am grateful to my informants that this image was offered so early in our experience.

Instead of just thinking about them as contrasts, though, I want to offer in this analysis, that they actually emerged as a dialectic. That is, the contrasts that we experienced: joy/poverty, smiles/disfigurement, rich colors/black and white, paradise/trash, for example, and the contrasts between our experiences, are in tension with one another, and, when both poles are considered, something new emerges. Additionally, I argue that it takes one to recognize the other. By this I mean, one doesn't appreciate the beauty of the wings of the butterfly without comparing it to the hairy caterpillar at its center. Further, one can't truly appreciate the smiles on the faces of the

children at New Oxford without first noticing and understanding their poverty, the hopelessness of their situation, or their disability. Thus, when these contrasts are considered holistically, in a dialectic, something new emerges—a new way of looking at or thinking about Jamaica, Jamaicans, the US, our team, the participants in this study, etc. Of course, the realization of this dynamic (dialectic) was aided considerably by launching this research study as an ethnography where I had more than seven months to document the varying viewpoints and to watch them evolve.

Some contrasts were both obvious to see and to understand what emerged from them. For example, my desire to use black and white film to eliminate the color of the island conflicted with Ruthie's impression that what she saw in Jamaica was gray, no color. Is Jamaica as gray as Ruthie viewed it, or is it as rich with color as I and many others have suggested? Or, is it somewhere in between and dependent upon the context? The contrast was also as obvious as the wall at New Oxford: plain and foreboding on the outside, richly colored with butterflies and flowers on the inside.

Other contrasts were obvious, but what emerged was complicated. Above, I noted the issues of joy/poverty and smiles/disfigurement. While, for example, Ruthie knew she would see smiles at New Oxford, she was still confused, like Joseph, to see them on disfigured bodies. What are we to make of these smiles? Do they serve as a reminder that we should overcome the small things in our lives (like "the sniffles" as Joseph suggested) in order to focus on the big things? What about the contrast of joy and poverty? Rachel recalled in her final paper:

I learned from the Jamaican people that happiness depends on the person and the heart, not the amount of materials or power you have. The people

we worked with were very poor and at a disadvantage they can never rise above. Despite all this, they were the happiest people I have ever met in my life.

Does one have to be poor to truly understand joy? Can rich people be happy, then?

Nicholas, John, and Jack all came to realize the joy with which people lived in the neighborhood surrounding Westminster even though these Jamaicans had nothing in terms of possessions. The children at New Oxford and Cambridge emitted a kind of joy at times that some members of our team have never felt, although they have so much more in terms of earthly wealth. The depiction of the Matthew's home and school presented an impoverished condition. Yet, they live with a type of beauty I have yet to find here in the US. These contrasts are obvious, but complicated.

Thus, this particular dialectic of joy/poverty may be read in any number of ways, but for the purposes of this study and for critical service learning it seems appropriate to promote the transformative ways we can use it. On the one hand, if we consider that this kind of joy is only possible in poverty, why would someone contemplate helping Jamaica to modernize or Americanize? This might only complicate matters and potentially eliminate this joy. On the other hand, how ridiculous is it to consider that the wealth that the US enjoys should not be shared with the rest of the world, particularly in terms of improving education, health care, and general nutrition needs. "Ignorance is bliss" only applies so far before sheer injustice takes over. What is it that our team, from the US, can offer our Jamaican partners? In turn, how do we find this joy that many of the Jamaicans we work with already experience? The answers are complicated and I argue only emerge over time and in dialog.

Another series of contrasts merits mention. Along with the dialectics that emerged in this study—joy/poverty, smiles/disfigurement—one should also recall that the preparation for this study and project began with two sets of dialectical pairs that have informed this research: hegemony/counter-hegemony and reproduction/resistance. Just like the contrasts revealed above, one can not really understand one pole without the other. The most apparent example of this happened during our visit to The Columbus Project. What emerged from this visit was an understanding, particularly from Linda, Cody, and Nicholas, of what our team does not represent, what we need to work against, and also what we need to work for. While we had covered the issue of hegemony and reproduction, theoretically, in class, it took a ‘real-life’ practical example to truly understand the theories. With this understanding, then, students better understood why we had resisted the use of “mission” in our title and had some idea about what we should be working for in Jamaica (i.e., what practices we should—or should not—pick up and what goals we should work toward). Moreover, our team came to understand that we are interested in the ‘positive’ resistance I referred to in chapter 3, in such a way that we counter-hegemonically work toward *transformation* with our Jamaican partners (e.g., building “trusting relations” with New Oxford and its surrounding communities to make the orphanage an “ongoing institution,” and working with Ms. Mathews on education efforts in her community), not just simply resisting reproductive practices.

One final contrast/dialectic was noticeable and emerged during the course of the study: who was ‘serving’ and who was ‘served’. Of course, most service learning projects are launched with the assumption that the people in the classroom preparing to work ‘out in the world’ are the ‘servers’. However, just as teams in the past have

wondered to what extent we ‘serve’ and to what extent we actually are ‘served’, this US team pondered the same issue. As some roles in the project went from “helper” (Rachel), to “observer” (Gabriel), to “I think I got way more than I gave” (Nicholas), these informants realized the blurred line between giving and receiving.

The Long Term Personal

Both the issue of transformation and the blurred line between ‘server’ and ‘served’ provide a viable segue into the second way this symbol of butterfly characterizes this service learning experience in Jamaica. Just as the butterfly provides a noticeable contrast in appearance it also provides a useful metaphor of metamorphosis or transformation. This transformative aspect of the butterfly emerged mostly from my interviews with the US informants (as I had an opportunity to formally speak with them three times over the course of the ethnography), but I argue that it also has relevance for the relationship I have share with our Jamaican partners.

In terms of the US informants, Nicholas initially offered the other way of considering the butterfly in his discussion of “being vs. becoming.” From the outset of the study, he wanted to “settle his soul a little bit” and examine some of the “open contradictions” in his life. For Nicholas, he thought this service learning project might be the experience that would push his life in a direction toward justice and helping others. In other words, this project had the potential to affect the direction of the rest of his life. As a result of this experience, what Nicholas decided to do for the future was to think of himself as an “instrument” in the flux, more in the process of becoming than being. This consistently relates with the literature on the emergence of a sense of agency in ‘servers’. From this experience, Nicholas was made more aware of his agency and, as a result, I

argue better understands his potential to be an agent “in the process of making history (Giroux, 1992) rather than being ‘made by history’.

Besides Nicholas, other US informants recognized the transformative role of this project as they considered how it would affect them personally in the future. For Ruthie, this project helped to transform her to become a more well-rounded leader, a position she takes very seriously. From our first interview together, it was clear that leadership was an important quality trait for her. She took great pride in being captain of her soccer team—a post she held for three years. What I sensed from the interview, though, was that Ruthie desired to show her leadership skills in other areas. She greatly admired Leah, Cody, and Adah for their leadership expertise in this project and often indicated her desire to have the same experiences in order that she might lead this trip in the future.

Thus, this project helped transform the lives of some of the US participants and provides additional evidence to the literature that service learning projects help to build agency in the ‘servers’ (Blythe et al, 1997; Keith, 1997; Warren, 1998; Nnakwe, 1999; Rosenberger, 2000). I argue, though, that this transformation and agency building also occurred on the Jamaican side. In terms of our relationship with Mr. James, as I noted in the New Oxford account, I showed how our partnership has evolved into a more trusting relation recently and how he is encouraged by our consistent commitment to New Oxford and the community. Through this encouragement and trust, Mr. James confided more openly with me over time and spread our work to the local community in an effort to help bring about the change he sees is needed in the surrounding area.

In terms of my relationship with Ms. Matthews, the transformation has been more subtle, but still apparent. Since Ms. Matthews was already an agent in her community, as

a teacher, and showed a great deal of trust in our relationship in the past, her transformation has resulted in an even more enhanced agency—going back to school for her teaching certificate, opening her own school at her home, and making plans to build a government-sponsored school in her community, all within the last year. Ms. Matthews has repeatedly admitted that she believes in these projects and in herself more as a result of our partnership—the only partnership or contact she has with the US.

Of course, I should note, that this sort of transformation has not taken place with all of the participants or partners—or, at least, has happened differently. In terms of the US participants, while their journals, final papers, and evaluation of the course and trip revealed new sensitivities to issues of injustice and provided insight into how this trip has changed them, the transformative effect of this experience was not always clear or discussed at length. This fact could be due to any number of reasons: they are still processing the trip, they did not want to share this particular information, or the trip may not have had as large an impact as it had for other participants.

On the Jamaican side, as I noted in the concluding paragraphs to the Westminster account, Pastor Peters took great measures to transform his school and church based on our relationship over the last five years, but, although he still envisions what we have as a partnership (the only partnership he shares with a US group, similar to Ms. Matthews), he often seems to want to act more independently of us publicly, while expressing his dependence, privately. This statement, though, I want to be clear, should not be taken to mean that I hoped Pastor Peters would somehow be ingratiated towards us or that I needed him to display any more outward signs of thanks than he did. Rather, I simply point to the interesting and differing dynamics that developed between our team and our

partners. I say more regarding this relationship in the final part of this section when I dissect the symbol/metaphor of the butterfly.

What are the Potential Enduring Effects?

Although determining the *exact* enduring effects would require some type of longitudinal study, this symbol of the butterfly helps us to think about what might promote the possibility of enduring effects. The butterfly as *symbol* reminds us that in a service learning partnership, differing views will surface. When concrete others, with differing needs, assemble, rarely will consensus be possible, and I would argue, even be fruitful. Instead, approaching the contrasts in views as a dialectic where something new can emerge, in dialog, is a more bountiful path toward achieving lasting ameliorative change, as both partners, then, have a vested interest in the long term implications of the partnership.

In addition to the emergence of something new that results from any number of contrasts, the blending of general and local perspectives is a valuable consideration toward an understanding of what the potential enduring effects may be. Through this entire experience our team had access to any number of general theories regarding injustice, yet it took the concrete experience of seeing it firsthand to truly begin to understand how and why it happens. Further, with our understanding of these theories on injustice, we also theorized, generally, about how the Jamaicans could improve their situation (e.g., Jamaicans could focus more attention on education or organize politically to subvert unjust local policies). Although these ideas have merit theoretically at the general level, they may play out very differently, concretely, at the local level. For example, by listening to Mr. James' needs for his particular community, we are able to

put him in touch with the relevant organizations (based on our access to them in the US) that can assist him. This course of action is preferable to the one that would have our team tell Mr. James what is best for his community, based on our theorizing and (perceived) knowledge of structural issues of injustice. Therefore, in keeping with the symbol of the butterfly, the blending of the contrast between general and concrete prove to be a valuable consideration in this experience and offers the potential for the emergence and existence of more *enduring* effects as the future course of action is mapped out in partnership.

The butterfly as *metaphor*, then, helps us think about the enduring transformative possibilities in our lives and in our service partnership as a process of becoming. This process can be considered from any one of three perspectives: the US team member, the Jamaican partner, and the US-Jamaica service partnership. For any of these, this process of becoming does not happen over night and it must be fed. That is, “becoming” isn’t immediate or automatic. Measures need to be put in place to ensure that the process continues and evolves (e.g., continued opportunities to reflect on or process the experience with team members, and/or consistent and ongoing communication with the project partner or with new partners if different projects are taken up in the future).

It is instructive to point out here that, in terms of the US team member, this process of becoming was easier to monitor and measure as they took part in a class that focused a great deal of attention on reflection. In comparing journal notes of individual team members from the beginning and end of the experience, it was not difficult to notice the changes that took place in a relatively short amount of time. For the Jamaican partner, this process was more difficult to measure over the span of this ethnography.

However, using my historical perspective on this experience and reflecting on how our relationships and conversations have evolved over the last five years, I did notice, as I've mentioned previously, that the Jamaican informants were much more forthcoming in terms of critique of the US in our interviews. I believe this critique showed their growing comfortableness and trust in me as researcher. Moreover, I also noticed that these partners augmented their sphere of influence (e.g., Mr. James and the surrounding community, Ms. Matthews and her own school) and revealed their desire to work directly and solely with our team on these initiatives.

One naturally wonders how long this process of becoming will last. Is it possible that a one-time service learning project will have a permanent effect for either the US team member or Jamaican partner? It could. More than likely, however, continuity and ongoing relationship-building will be a key in activating long-term ameliorative change. Can a one-time team member have an effect on a child in one of the orphanages we visited? Probably. Is it a lasting effect? Harder to tell. Would Ms. Matthews have gone back to college or built a room onto her home to open up her own school had we just come to visit one time or not at all? Maybe. More than likely, the more lasting change and possibility of amelioration has to happen over time.

It's necessary to be careful here because what has been said could be taken to mean that once someone takes up a service learning project, they can never walk away from it since, once they do, the relationship will end and the chance of ameliorative change will be reduced. While service partnerships should characterize an important aspect of all of our lives, the reality is they do not. Additionally, service learning, key to this whole study, is a project activated while people are in school. We do not stay in

school forever, thus, we need to think beyond service learning here in at least three ways. One, we need to consider staying involved with particular projects beyond our time in any educational setting. Two, we need to consider how these projects (if they are only for a limited time or even just one time), may push our lives in a direction toward justice and care as citizens. And, three, we need to consider the extent to which our partnership can be fed even while we are not in direct contact with one another.

Can a one time project be transformative in such a way that it affects our future decisions as citizens? This is where the literature on service learning is still lacking and requires a type of longitudinal study. I submit that one avenue to consider in this type of research would comprise the issue of “becoming.” Thus, for now, the enduring effect that is more measurable for service learning lies with the US participant pushing his or her life in an ameliorative direction. In terms of the ‘served’, while this project seems to indicate a transformative process of becoming for our Jamaican partners, not enough evidence exists to indicate the permanence of any enduring effects. In terms of the ‘server’/‘served’ partnership as a process of becoming, the obvious point exists that they must remain in ongoing and direct contact with one another. In a further attempt to analyze the above issue, I include particular treatment of it in the next section, as I dissect several aspects of this butterfly symbol/metaphor, and I also pose some recommendations in the final chapter in my presentation of the newly evolved framework and theory of critical service learning.

Dissecting the butterfly and troubling the enduring effects

While analyzing both the salience of the symbol and metaphor of the butterfly as a way to interpret the data in chapter 5 and also its resonance for answering the question

regarding enduring effects, a number of problematic issues were raised that require deconstruction and further consideration. In this section I dissect several of these issues through the lens of the limitations I enumerated in the introduction of this chapter. This dissection, I argue, represents the most critical step for someone claiming to do cultural studies work and explicitly illustrates what I have meant by a ‘critically interpretive’ analytical paradigm. Only as a result of the deconstruction steps at the end of each of the three symbols/metaphors have I been able to more significantly evolve critical service learning toward more potentially ameliorative ends.

Issue 1: A seven-month ethnography. Although ethnography as a qualitative research methodology helped to reveal a richly detailed portrait (due to its use of several data collection methods and expanded period of data gathering), I recognize that an even longer period of data collection with more informants would have provided an even larger, more intricate picture. Thus, the size of this study, both in terms of time spent collecting data and number of informants, illustrates one limitation. In addition, had I spent more time with our Jamaican partners investigating the contrasts that I outlined: joy/poverty, smiles/disfigurement, an even richer understanding of these dialectics would have emerged from their perspective. For example, had I recognized these dynamics developing as I was doing my interviews, I could have taken some time to investigate them with my Jamaican informants while we were together. Despite attempts to follow up on several of these issues with our partners once we returned to the US, my efforts were often thwarted by faxes not going through, emails not readily accessed, and extremely slow regular mail service. Therefore, it is instructive to note that the

description and understanding of these contrasts mostly emerges from the perspective of the US participants.

Issue 2: Who was ‘serving’ and who was ‘served’? Although the realization of the blurred line between who was ‘serving’ and who was ‘served’ occurred relatively early once we started work in Jamaica, this realization is only presented from the perspective of the ‘servers’. As I noted in chapter 2, most, if not all, the service learning literature focuses on what results for the server (e.g., the sense of ‘server’ agency in Keith, 1997). This study certainly adds to that body of literature. While chapter 5 reveals a poignant story of ‘servers’ understanding that they are not only serving, but also being served, the perspective of the ‘served’ on this matter is still deafeningly silent. I argue that many researchers and readers of the research take it as rather obvious what results for the ‘served’ in the service learning experience—they receive whatever service they need. However, while this study shows some sensitivity to the issue of what results in terms of agency for both ‘server’ and ‘served’, more can certainly be done to answer the question: How can the ‘served’ (in terms of their own agency) be more informed of the powerful ways that they affect the lives of the ‘servers’? Answering this question would certainly provide compelling evidence for how the relationship of ‘server’ and ‘served’ can even further be democratized. I make some suggestions as to how this might be accomplished in the evolved version of critical service learning in chapter 7.

Issue 3: My impression of the varying levels of *partnership* we shared with our Jamaican partners. The issue of power is one that I have tried to keep at the forefront of this entire study, but that does not mean it has not influenced the story of our service learning experience or my interpretation of it. In describing the varying transformations I

have seen in our Jamaican partners, I am constantly reminded of our history together prior to the data collection in this ethnography. While this dissertation is not intended to be a longitudinal study, my history with these service partners certainly informs this current work and shapes my understanding of what was said and not said in our interviews. For example, in the past, Mr. James was not very forthcoming with information that may be perceived as critical of US service groups. The issue of power and a certain level of distrust was evident in this early interview as he had been quite open regarding his feelings toward several US service groups, but during my taped interview with him, he was noticeably silent. During this study, Mr. James was much more open regarding his critique, but I must still consider this issue of power and view his interview transcript with a critical lens as I am sure he has not provided me total access to all of his thoughts—particularly regarding our team. Although Mr. James receives consistent support from one other group in the US, I remain confident he would not want to say anything that might jeopardize our continued support unless our misstep was so obvious and/or blatant.

This same consideration must be given to my interview with Ms. Matthews and my relationship with Pastor Peters at Westminster. For both of them, our team represents their sole partnership with a group from the US. In chapter 5 I expounded a number of times on the solidarity in purpose I feel with Ms. Matthews and how I often feel like we are on the same page. Although I see her as an agent of change in her community and a comrade in my ultimate goals for service learning, I must consider how power influences our relationship and may not allow her to fully divulge her vision based on how she may perceive the way she thinks I want things to be. Even in this consideration, then, I open

the door for further deconstruction and critique since I now have to question whether I have unconsciously reduced Ms. Matthews' sense of agency by reproducing traditional models of power, concluding that she is victimized by this power differential and is simply acquiescing in the interviews. This sort of problematization, while frustrating and potentially spiraling out of control, is necessary in a cultural studies project where power differentials need to be kept at the fore. The stark reality is that one can never be sure how power may totally color a relationship between researcher and researched or between partners in a service learning partnership. What remains important, however, regardless of whether we can ever know the degree to which power plays a role, is that we acknowledge that it is playing a role and consistently wrestle with it.

Continuing in this regard of power differentials, Pastor Peters' perspective may have been particularly insightful regarding this issue, had I chosen to include him as an informant, since he seemed to act in our partnership quite differently from both Mr. James and Ms. Matthews. My discussion of the difference between Pastor Peters and Mr. James or Ms. Matthews may lead one to question why he was not chosen as an informant. As I noted in chapter 4, sampling decisions were made regarding how many people I thought I could interview on both the US and Jamaican side. In the end, I chose one orphanage administrator and one teacher among our Jamaican partners. I selected Mr. James and Ms. Matthews because, in the past, they had shown the willingness to be critical of US service groups—although not on tape. In my past interviews and conversations with Pastor Peters, he always maintained only glowing remarks for our team and US service groups in general. Since I hoped this ethnography might reveal ways we could improve our partnership, in particular, or service interventions from the

US, in general, I made the call to avoid choosing Pastor Peters as an informant. Needless to say, the dynamic that developed in terms of him and his work crew nearly shunning our help in the building of the roof caused me to rethink my earlier decisions and has led me to want to include him more in-depth in future research.

A word or two more about this “dynamic” I keep talking about may be instructive as I continue to lay out several limitations of this study in this section. Upon rereading the story told about Westminster, reviewing the data collected regarding our time there, and reflecting on my past relationship with the pastor, I feel compelled to add a further thought about what might have been going on in this “dynamic.” The picture I have painted thus far about what happened there is fairly negative, especially when juxtaposed against our experience at New Oxford or Benson Basic. A more charitable read of this situation may go something like this: Pastor Peters waited for us to arrive in order to show his gratitude by having us watch his community build this roof with the materials we supplied. Additionally, Pastor Peters may have been trying to avoid the kind of situation that Mr. West describes in chapter 5, where he has to go back and undo what the US service groups have done incorrectly. Undoubtedly, Pastor Peters and his builders had a much better idea of how this roof needed to be built.

Issue 4: The general and the concrete. While the blending of general and the concrete knowledge in this experience has proven beneficial to our partnership, particularly with Mr. James at New Oxford, some words of caution are instructive. The assumption no doubt exists that access to the theoretical knowledge more often than not rests with the ‘server’. While this may be true, I want to be careful not to discount the knowledge that the ‘served’ may also have of theoretical (or more general)

understandings of injustice. In the case of Mr. James, on the one hand, it is important to note that he is well-traveled and has paid for the college education of each of his children, whom he sent to Canada at an early age to provide them with more opportunities than he perceived would be available in Jamaica. On the other hand, in the case of Ms. Matthews, although she is not well-traveled and not highly educated in a formal sense, she possesses an indescribable intuition that provides insight into how problems in her local community can be solved. The more important point in all of this is that both generalized and concrete perspectives ought to be applied to solving problems. What we want to avoid, and what I have been guilty of at times, is assuming that the ‘server’ is the only one with access to the generalized perspective.

In addition to understanding the way this dynamic played out in terms of what happened in this experience, it may be instructive to say a bit more about the general and concrete since cultural studies, generally, and critical service learning, particularly, advocates an immersion in theory. Recall that while cultural studies promotes theoreticization and wrestling with already-developed theories, cultural studies also advocates concrete action: putting the theory into practice. As an overall praxis, then, cultural studies is interested in both how theory informs practice and how practice informs theory. Moreover, with its focus firmly on issues of power and culture, cultural studies also attempts to equitably privilege knowledge and ways of knowing from multiple perspectives. After all, according to Raymond Williams (1971) “culture is ordinary”; thus, to privilege one knowledge or way of knowing—general theory or theorizing from a rational/logical standpoint—over another—situated, concrete experience or theorizing from an intuitive/phenomenological—runs counter to the spirit

of cultural studies. Therefore, in regards to theorizing injustice, Mr. James' more informal education in terms of traveling and Ms. Matthews' more intuitive way of knowing are every bit as valuable in terms of knowledge as our preparation with and access to canonical theoretical texts such as *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.

It is likewise important to note that while critical service learning has been created and evolved to include immersion in theory, the framework was also created in such a way that general knowledge of injustice is informed and tweaked by seeing it firsthand and developing partnerships with those who have local/concrete knowledge of the injustice. Neither knowledge nor way of knowing is hopefully privileged within critical service learning experiences, but, to be sure, recommendations are made in chapter 7 regarding how this issue should be laid bare in the preparation for and action in projects.

Issue 5: Service learning as a “class”/“project”? The last issue that I will cover in this section on the symbol/metaphor of the butterfly, which illustrates another limitation in this study, centers on the fact that service learning is offered as a class and is often cast (especially by me) as a “project.” Cast as a class that takes up a project, service learning, then, has a definitive beginning and end. While it has been mostly advantageous for schools to evolve toward and elect “service learning” projects over “community service” projects—as curricular and reflective components are added to enhance the salience and more sensitive activation of the program—the problematic is created that many students anticipate that learning ends when the class/project ends. Given this claim, I address three related problems that arose that limit the findings of this study: the way this service learning class was (or was not) implemented and managed, the double-edged sword of

reflection, and how using the term “project” may obfuscate the potential of service learning as a process of becoming.

Although the symbol of the butterfly encourages that new, better, and more beautiful conditions or possibilities emerge from differences and contrasts, the effect of multiple perspectives in the short term can often prove to be confounding. Although the overall experience was a positive one, several problems emerged early on in the course as Professor Mark and I team-taught the course. Often we were on the same page as to what material we should cover, how we should handle a particular situation that needed to be addressed, or what direction we ought to direct our conversations with the team. Sometimes, though, our differences jeopardized the short term success of the class. At the start, we definitely agreed that this experience should be offered as a service *learning* experience rather than just a service experience since we wanted to attract students to this project who would be willing to put in the time and effort for *both* learning and action. Apparently, though, this point was not made clear enough to the students who had joined the team and one student, a couple of weeks into the semester dropped the course, yet remained adamant that he was still going on the trip, claiming he had not been told that he was required to take the course in order to go. This claim turned out to be true as Professor Mark indicated that this loophole was created and there wasn't much we could do about it. This particular student served as a source of constant frustration for me throughout the study as he participated only when he wanted to and often stood far outside of the group, which came to the dismay of many of the other team members—and, eventually, Professor Mark. Although, again, the overall experience was a positive one, it is important to note that, as a class, service learning takes on a particular dynamic,

particularly with the instructors. When the course is instructed by a team, then, more complications can arise and may complicate (as it did at times in this study) the activation of the service work.

Also, related to the fact that service learning is a class, instructors must consider that evaluation becomes a relevant component to the experience. The major way that Professor Mark and I chose to evaluate our students involved students' reflections—either in the form of their reflective journals or the three papers that they turned in over the semester that were intended to show how the students were drawing the material and experience together in written form. Reflection is a major component of the critical service learning framework and thus was focused on considerably. In addition, reflection would seem to be the key component in a process of becoming where students have an ongoing opportunity to contemplate how the experience is affecting them and to see how it is changing them. It is interesting to consider, then, that the very person who introduced this idea of becoming is also the one who often refused to engage formally in this process of reflection. Although he was always reflecting in his mind, as Nicholas indicated, how does one evaluate that? How should service learning classes be evaluated? Practically speaking, since service learning is tied to a school curriculum—and is fighting for its “academic” life as a serious course of study—evaluation (read: grading) is necessary. However, it seems we must continually seek creative ways to allow students to demonstrate what they have learned through projects, in order that we may both help lead the student to understand their own growth and help reveal service learning to other academics and the public at large as a rigorous course of academic study.

Finally, in the spirit of this process of becoming, I believe we have arrived at a serious problematic by casting our service learning experiences as “projects.” Earlier, I worried over the enduring effect of an experience if someone involves themselves only once in the service arena. If service learning is to be a process of becoming, I argue that we must seek to end referring to what we do within service learning as a project since it obfuscates what our ultimate goal may be as an instructor of a service learning course: to promote new sensitivities to issues of injustice and to encourage an ongoing struggle with these issues beyond the course. First, a project sounds temporary, like it has an endpoint. “The project will end...” “When we finish this project...” Second, referring to service learning as a project promotes the image that what one is doing is something out of the ordinary, not what someone normally does, or is something to be dreaded. I imagine two high school students complaining amongst themselves, “I’m not looking forward to doing Mr. Renner’s end of the semester project.” Instead, service to others ought not to be seen as a project, but a way of being. Although the concept of service learning as a process of becoming emerged in this service learning experience, which was often referred to as “The Jamaica Project,” I am compelled to consider how this characterization of what we were engaged in may have confounded our ultimate goal for the future lives of the participating students. That is, by calling this a “project,” or by having students turn in a “final” paper, did Professor Mark and I create an easy out for our students to terminate their process of becoming? I can remember the joy with which I met the end of my World Cultures class my sophomore year of high school. I thought to myself, “It’s over. I don’t ever have to think about it again.” Could some students have walked away from this experience thinking about this ‘class’ in the same way? I consider more about this

linguistic and semantic issue in the next chapter when I reveal the evolved framework and theory of critical service learning.

In addition to the problematic of casting service learning as a class or a project to the students in the partnership, it may be even more instructive (and, as it turns out, more frightening) to consider how paternalistic or colonialistic our Jamaican partners might find the language of “class” or “project” for characterizing the premise of our partnership. Imagine the feeling of being the target audience of someone’s *project*. Although this point becomes clearer when I dig beneath the symbol/metaphor of boundaries in the next section, suffice to say for now that use of the term “class” or “project” immediately and linguistically sets up a power dynamic that is difficult to undo and may frustrate the ultimate aims of democratizing the relationship of ‘server’ and ‘served’. In other words, to use the beginning of our partnership with Jamaican schools and orphanages as an example, *we* chose the “project.” *We* chose who we would work with and what we do. Our Jamaican partners were not at liberty to select who they would work with. They had to take (to a certain degree) whoever decided to make them the audience for their service. Thus, the use of “class” or “project” to characterize what it is that happens within service learning experiences deserves close problematization within both ongoing and developing partnerships.

Overall, then, the symbol/metaphor of the butterfly illustrates some useful ways to interpret our experience this year, provides a way to respond to the research question regarding enduring effects, and offers some potential enhancements for the future of critical service learning and our relationship with our Jamaican partners. Both the embracement and merger of disparate ideas and perspectives and the vision of service

learning as a process of becoming provide useful advice for the next activation of critical service learning. These enhancements, though, are not without their problematics. Thus, as I conclude this dissertation in the next chapter with an evolved version of critical service learning, I temper my use of the symbol/metaphor of the butterfly with the general limitations I have outlined and the specific issues I have raised in this section. For now, I move on to discuss another symbol that came to characterize this year's service learning experience.

Boundaries: Fears/Surprises/Epiphanies and the Short Term Personal

"Boundaries are those things that ma[k]e you feel uncomfortable, things you avoid in our society, [and] things you are not too comfortable with." (Rachel)⁵⁷

Like the symbol/metaphor of the butterfly, the issue of "boundaries" surfaced early in this service learning experience, as Rachel revealed her understanding of them in our first interview. In many ways, I was looking for this issue by asking my informants, in particular, what they feared about the upcoming trip to Jamaica in our first interview and what surprised them about Jamaica in our second and third interviews, once we had been there and gotten back to the US. Through these questions, I was hoping to uncover those "turning point interactional moments" or epiphanies that Norman Denzin discusses in his methodology for an interpretive interactionism. What I did not expect was the rich symbol of "boundary" to emerge so early and to represent so important an issue throughout my study.

In this section I revisit how the symbol of boundary and the metaphor of crossing one emerged, and how this became an interesting way through which to view what was

⁵⁷ Excerpt from first interview.

happening in this service learning experience. Next, I wrestle with this symbol/metaphor's relevance for answering my research question involving the possibility of service learning 'projects' working toward social justice and/or care. Finally, in another effort to highlight some of the limitations that run throughout this study, I specifically point to three issues that this symbol/metaphor provokes.

Crossing boundaries

Rachel and Ruthie both discussed those issues that they feared going into this intervention: race, disease, ability, and safety. Rachel particularly discussed her boundaries of disease, race, and ability throughout her interviews, feeling like she would be and was challenged throughout the experience to overstep her boundaries. Ruthie, likewise discussed her insecurities about race, ability and safety, especially in her last two interviews.

Other team members, though, also revealed their boundaries in papers and journals. John, for example, while not calling them "boundaries," opting for the term "barriers," poignantly discussed his barrier breaking moment on the last day with Micky at Cambridge when he realized he wouldn't be coming back there any more this year. John reflected, "It sometimes only takes one child to tear down emotional barriers we put up. . . .Micky just totally crushed that barrier with her smiles and willingness to have fun." Continuing, John concluded, "If I could go back and do it again, I would not change a thing. I would even leave the barrier up; it needed to be shattered anyway."

Likewise, on the Jamaican side, both Mr. James and Ms. Matthews discussed issues of race (read: boundaries) that they have to deal with when groups visit from the US. For example, Mr. James talked about the inferior position he is often placed when

(mostly all-White) groups come from the US and want to do work at New Oxford. He relayed how he often feels like they may find it difficult to take orders from a Black man. Additionally, Ms. Matthews indicated that race is often a boundary for residents of her community since they do not often have White visitors. She perceives that most of the people of her community view White people as tourists: short term visitors in Jamaica that will take advantage of the island. This is why she feels it is a good idea to have groups like ours around doing work in the schools, working *with* her to show that White people can help in the process of ameliorative change.

Through the accounts of chapter 5, it was obvious that many boundaries were crossed and many barriers were broken. It is also true that perhaps new ones were constructed or were made more visible this time (e.g., gender in terms of helping to build the roof at Westminster). Regardless of which direction the boundaries went—either constructed or deconstructed—they are an important issue to consider for service learning and were an important short term personal issue for at least two of the US informants. For both Rachel and Ruthie, they developed new sensitivities to race, disease, and ability that, had it not been for this experience, may still represent boundaries in their life. For instance, Rachel, when thinking about the ‘disabled’ condition of the children at New Oxford, realized in our second interview,

These children were horribly deformed, diseased, and malnourished in some cases. It broke my heart to look at them, but they were so full of talent. . . .[T]hey had so much love to give. . . .The stronger ones would push the weaker ones in wheelchairs and they always looked out for one another.

Similarly, Ruthie admitted a new understanding of race in our final interview:

I guess one of the things is that I was raised to be prejudiced—blacks are bad. And, having hands-on experience in Jamaica with black people . . . I've grown up and realized that people are not necessarily bad based on their color. It gave me a different perspective on the fact that just because they are black doesn't mean they are bad. . . .I don't get suspicious anymore when I see black people walking down the street as I would have two years ago.

Both of these statements represent provocative testimonials to meeting one's boundaries head-on and shifting perspectives as a result.

What is the possibility of these projects to work toward social justice and/or care?

This boundary-crossing potential for service learning already has support in the literature (Prosser & Levesque, 1997; Warren, 1998), but the findings of this study signal the particular importance of focusing our service learning agendas toward partnerships that deal with social difference—especially when overall goals seek some sort of ameliorative change. This experience in Jamaica is a worthy example.

From the outset, I have wondered to what extent service learning can work toward social justice and/or care—what I have generally referred to as ameliorative change. In consideration of this I have theorized that simply calling for a service learning for social justice (Fisher, 1997; Wright, 2001) may be putting the cart before the horse; thus, I have theorized critical service learning's potential to create a caring solidarity as a way to bring about ameliorative change. A step in this direction should be practically assessing boundaries that may exist on the part of both 'server' and 'served'. This is perhaps

initially easier with the ‘server’ because of the classroom situation that allows in-depth investigations of these issues in theory and in reflection.

When considering the possibility of achieving social justice and/or care, my unrealistic hope has been that service learning itself can activate ameliorative change. For example, the first approach Masucci and I took with critical service learning was the service learning for social justice agenda I mentioned above. However, taking a cultural studies approach to my theorizing, when researching social justice, and juxtaposing it with the care literature, I realized that there may be more to consider if we want ameliorative transformation to result *in partnership*. Can we achieve a more just condition or establish a caring relationship as a result of a service learning experience? Yes. Will it happen all the time? Probably not. Are there intermediate steps, then, to achieving justice or care that service learning can confront and treat? Yes. Thus, I believe the issue of crossing boundaries presents us with a practically realizable goal for any critical service learning experience and may represent a transformative step to lasting ameliorative change. While I reveal how this issue of boundaries might play out and be treated within the framework and theory of critical service learning for future endeavors in the next chapter, I now turn my attention to problematizing this issue in order to gain a more critical understanding of its potential and to inform its forthcoming infusion into the framework and theory.

Digging beneath the boundaries

Although I have suggested that “crossing boundaries” is a useful and corrective aim to the problematic assumption that service learning alone can itself achieve social justice and/or care, this symbol/metaphor is not without its own problematics. In this

section, then, I dig below the boundaries to excavate three particular issues that illuminate several of the limitations in this study: boundaries as a US construction, what can be ‘concretely’ gleaned from one experience, and how much theory is too much.

Issue 1: “Boundaries” as a US construction. It is already apparent that the issue of boundaries emerged in interviews with the US informants. It is also noted that in my interviews with the Jamaican informants, both Ms. Matthews and Mr. James raised similar issues in terms of how they or their communities view or have experience in working with mainly White, US groups. What concerns me, however, is how this symbol/metaphor may ultimately be used and how our Jamaican partners might view this use. While ‘crossing boundaries’ seems to present a much more concrete goal than ‘achieving social justice’ and is something that can be worked toward from both sides, I fear that the focus of service learning may again reinforce the powerful positionality of the ‘server’. That is, I’m afraid this particular focus for critical service learning could be read as the ‘server’ decides which boundaries they are in need of crossing and becomes involved in partnerships that focus only on their individual needs. The needs of the ‘served’, then, would not necessarily be taken into account.

Critical service learning seeks a more democratized and more equitable partnership between ‘server’ and ‘served’ and is interested in meeting the needs of both, but the potential to carry this idea of boundaries too far by not taking the service partner’s needs into account certainly exists. For example, Rachel and Ruthie overcame boundaries involving race and disability. As a result, they demonstrated a new sensitivity to these issues in our final conversations together. This new understanding will hopefully inform their future endeavors. To help them in their processing of these issues, Professor

Mark and I focused their attention on them and sought the emergence of these new sensitivities in reflections and papers.

What about our service partners, though, who helped bring these issues to light, concretely? How do these new sensitivities help them if this is Rachel and Ruthie's only involvement in this partnership? Is it possible that our service partner inadvertently became the means to an end for crossing our (the US team's) boundaries? Certainly, Rachel and Ruthie may use these new sensitivities to inform future relationships, endeavors, or other service partnerships toward the promotion of a more just and caring world, but what about this service partnership? We need to take great care that the 'served' in any service partnership ought not to be made to feel as if they are a boundary to cross or a barrier to break. Thus, this focus on boundaries will need constant problematization and deconstruction throughout service learning experiences in order to avoid confounding the attempt to democratize the relationship between 'server' and 'served'. Once again, we must address the issue of power present in these service learning partnerships and be sure to methodically and sensitively work through as many of these with as much foresight as possible, making sure to prioritize the needs of the service partner so that we are acknowledging and crossing boundaries together.

Issue 2: What can be concretely gleaned from one experience? This issue ties in to both the issue above and the issue raised earlier in the butterfly section regarding use of the finite term "project." In this section I claim that while enduring ameliorative change may not be feasible for a single service learning experience, perhaps transformation begins with crossing our boundaries. If this issue of boundaries is incorporated in the pre-action reflection stage, issues of social difference are treated in

the theory stage, concrete involvement with social difference occurs during the project, and issues of boundaries are readdressed in the reflection stages, then students may move beyond what Freire (1970) refers to as “limit situations” to a more critical consciousness and will go to great lengths to alleviate the tension that Noddings (1984) discusses when our feelings of “I must” for others are complicated by feelings of resistance or fear. Service learning that directs a portion of its focus on crossing boundaries is a practical way to work toward ameliorative change particularly when this metaphor can be addressed and assessed from both sides of the service partnership

This practical consideration, then, of crossing boundaries is an enhancement over the more abstract proposition of achieving social justice and/or care. This step toward crossing our boundaries shows that we must move *concretely* toward confronting these boundaries and move beyond only reflection or theorizing. In addition, though, crossing our boundaries moves us outside of our inner circles of caring, which for some may be quite homogenous. Moving beyond our inner circles and chains in a caring solidarity promotes a larger, more heterogeneous circle where caring relations are established with diverse concrete others (race, nation, ethnicity, etc.) and structural ameliorative change is worked toward in partnership.

As Benhabib’s theory helps direct us, we cannot have a solidarity without an understanding of the general struggle, and we cannot have the caring without the individuals. Critical service learning that embraces a critical treatment of difference can lead toward these boundary crossing possibilities and, I argue, is a practical step toward realizing ameliorative change.

However, is one experience enough? If boundaries are crossed, can we be assured that both sides benefit. What does a crossed boundary mean for the future of both the US team member and the Jamaican partner? My fear in this entire discussion is that I have inadvertently suggested that to see any change occur, groups must be involved in service learning partnerships long term. Even though this study only focuses on one intervention, the reader must continually keep in the back of his/her mind that this experience was a fifth experience where the partnership had long ago been established and was ripe for much of the transformation that we experienced this year. Might this issue of boundaries play out differently for a first year, one time group? Maybe, maybe not. The best case scenario is that we maintain involvement in partnerships for long periods of time as I believe this presents the best case scenario for long term, radical, and sustainable change. The reality, though, and this is a definite limitation to service learning in general, is that experiences have a beginning and an end in the way it is currently promoted. For example, ours did. Some of us continue in the partnership, but for the great majority who participated, they have ended their communication with our Jamaican partners, at least for the time being.

Issue 3: How much theory is too much? “When is this class going to be over?”

One other issue involving boundaries is instructive to note in terms of limitations before moving on to the final symbol/metaphor of the breadfruit. Aside from the boundaries involving social difference that students faced in this project, one other boundary that they faced was theory. While Masucci and I knew that the addition of theory to any service learning agenda would not be unproblematic, Professor Mark and I faced it head on with our students in this course. Reactions to our readings ranged from “They were

hard” (Jack) to “biased toward a negative view of the US” (Linda) to “Somewhat irrelevant to our work” (Rachel) to “I learned a great deal” (Leah) to “They really helped a lot” (John). Recall that Professor Mark and I attempted to provide a series of readings that presented both a general and a local theoretical take on several topics. Having had little experience with theory and readings with this thick of discourse, many students resisted in the form of not reading, not engaging with the discussions in class, or avoiding the issues in their journals. The lesson I learned here is that, while theory is important, it must be introduced slowly and contextually. It is certainly possible that Professor Mark and I went overboard with the readings as we wanted to cover a lot of ground and both wanted to contribute to the reading list. In future activations of critical service learning, we will both have a much better idea of what we can cover and how much of it we can give significant treatment to. Having said this, I don’t want to be taken to mean that I advocate watering down the theory or avoiding the difficult wrestling that must go on with it. Rather, instructors of service learning, particularly those that want to incorporate a cultural studies focus, need, first, to seriously consider what theory will be appropriate. Second, they need to create the conditions within the course where students will understand the incorporation of its use from a general and local perspective and will also be stretched by its incorporation, forcing the student to critically interrogate and problematize the ‘constructed’ world around them.

Aside from the general boundary of reading and dealing with theory, students also resisted our attempts at having them read during the action in the project. Since this project was somewhat different than most service learning projects that are launched, as action in the project over the entire semester or year would coincide with readings and

theory in the classroom, students felt like by the time we got to Jamaica, the classroom work should be finished. Students, for example, actively resisted Mark's and my attempt to have them read Freire while we were in Jamaica. This reaction presents some interesting food for thought for future trips as we decide what to cover, how much to cover, and when.

However, without our focus on theory, one wonders to the extent that the students would have noticed what made The Columbus Project different from the other placements and opposite our intended agenda in Jamaica. Professor Mark and I attribute student's recognition of the Columbus' colonialistic attitudes and hegemonic and reproductive practices to our direct coverage of these theories. Although we certainly supplied the words, we, upon Freire's advice, helped the students in a process of "reading the word and the world." That is, as students were reading the words in a theoretical way, we also exposed them to the world in a more practical way where these general theories played out in concrete lives. Based on their experience in the world, then, students could begin naming their world with the words they covered in class and could make decisions about the relevance of the theories and more importantly could provide updates and contextualize them better. This is the beauty of praxis and what the critical service learning framework offers by its focus on theory and action. What teachers of service learning have to continue to be wary of is how much and how in-depth the theory can be covered.

In this section, then, I focused on the symbol/metaphor of boundaries. I claimed that crossing boundaries may be a practically realizable goal for both partners in a service learning experience and is a useful corrective to directing service learning experiences

toward a more ethereal, and probably unreachable, goal like social justice. This symbol/metaphor though, like the butterfly, is not without its problematics and brings to light several of the limitations in this study. This symbol/metaphor again focuses more on the ‘server’ and what he/she may glean from the project and sets up the possibility that the needs of the ‘served’ are deprioritized in favor of the server. Seen in this light, then, the ‘served’ do not have the luxury of choosing ‘projects’ to cross boundaries, they have to wait until a ‘server’ decides to choose a project in which the ‘served’ consequently becomes entangled with the boundary. In addition to this issue, I also continued to trouble the notion of what can be gleaned from one-time vs. ongoing service learning experiences. Finally, I also discussed one of the boundaries that service learning instructors will no doubt face if activating service learning using a critical service learning framework and theory: students’ inexperience with theory. Knowing how much is too much may become a tricky dance, particularly for quick interventions like the one this study covers.

Breadfruit: Attachment/Detachment and Communication

“There really is no word to describe the feeling of building new friendships” (John)⁵⁸

Although I don’t profess to have the word to describe this feeling, ‘breaking breadfruit’ became the way to characterize how these friendships were built in Jamaica. This section explores the relationships that were built during this service learning experience. First, I investigate the relationships that were forged between the US team members and our Jamaican partners and the issue of attachment or detachment that resulted. Second, I explore the general issue of communication and its (sometimes

⁵⁸ Excerpt from his final paper in the PHI 220 course.

problematic) connection to a more democratized planning process. Third, I consider my original research question regarding the democratization of the relationship of ‘server’ and ‘served’. Fourth, and finally, I examine three issues that once again highlight several of the limitations in this study.

Attachment/Detachment

Recall from the account of our time at Cambridge that Gabriel first brought the issue of attachment to light when he considered that John had become attached to the little girl, Micky, whom he was holding and crying with before we left on our last day there. Gabriel feared this attachment as he did not know if he would be able to walk away from these orphanages if he allowed himself to become so emotionally involved. Gabriel’s course of action, then, was one of detachment, especially at New Oxford—a move, upon reflection, that he would come to regret and think of differently as we moved to our work in the schools.

Gabriel’s struggle with attachment and detachment is instructive for this partnership in particular and service learning in general. As our theme for this trip entailed “sharing stories,” we acknowledged up front that we would be relating closely with our Jamaican partners. Of course, first time US team-members had no idea how closely we would be relating. Although few “stories” were shared in words with the children at the orphanages, our first service sites, close ties were established quickly for many on the team. For some, though, with boundaries to cross, they found it harder to become attached and opted for the more detached route for a longer period of time until they could wrestle over their boundaries.

Stories began to be shared at New Oxford, particularly when the breadfruit was roasted on our second afternoon there. As a result, our team realized that our work in the orphanages did not solely focus on the children, but also involved working together with the staff. Both on this occasion and when we came back for the birthday celebration the next week, we shared food and stories with our Jamaican partners and began to form a “cultural dexterity” (Overton-Adkins, 1997), or empathetic connection, as our affinity for each other began to congeal. Overall, in terms of these orphanages, as Gabriel would state, we began “to confirm each other’s existence” in our breaking of the bread-fruit.

This type of attachment and ‘breadfruit-breaking’ continued at the schools as well as we launched lessons and helped to construct a roof. As I showed through both the Westminster and Benson accounts, several US team members and local Jamaicans shared stories and forged new relationships. As a result US team members came to recognize the resourcefulness our Jamaican partners possess both in terms of nourishing themselves with the fruits and vegetables that grow naturally in their environment, and also in terms of constructing their homes and schools with crude tools and implements. Also, as a result, our Jamaican partners recognized our resourcefulness both in terms of what we could pack in a tiny suitcase and also in terms of the number of lessons we could launch from one story. Only by sharing with each other did we come to recognize these things.

Communication

Overall, then, communication is an important element to this partnership in particular and service learning in general. Two communicative unions are particularly important to consider at this stage: communication among the US team and communication between the US team and the Jamaican partners. As I noted in the three

accounts of PHI 220, communication and planning among the US team was often characterized by conflict as we disagreed about where to stay, how much free time we should plan, and how we should treat the material for the course (e.g., readings while in Jamaica). I noted before that our more democratized planning process was a double-edged sword since it allowed the team an opportunity to take a vested interest in the project, but it often slowed down our process of planning or threatened the work we were doing. These conflicts should be planned for ahead of time. In hindsight, the conflicts have allowed for richer understandings of what this project can accomplish.

This democratized planning process has to take place with the partner as well. As I also illustrated in the butterfly section, listening to our partners wants and needs has resulted in making us more culturally dexterous and has more easily allowed us to understand how we can help. In return, this two-way communication has allowed our partners to see both what we *can* offer and where we may be *limited* in what we can offer; thus we were enabled to plan an intervention that was mutually beneficial. This communication, though, is not without its problematics. For example, although we communicated often with Pastor Peters about helping him build his roof, the actual process of building it was complicated and not without some hard feelings on the part of both US team members and local Jamaican residents. Mostly, though, this ongoing communication proved beneficial as we are now able to understand and help Mr. James spread his work out into the community surrounding New Oxford. Likewise, with Ms. Matthews, we are now able to see her vision for the future of her community and are able to communicate exactly those areas where we can help.

How does this framework and theory help to democratize the relationship of ‘server’ and ‘served’?

The results and future plans of this project show the promise of ongoing communication with service partners. The results and future plans, however, are not without their problematics and need for more communication. In consideration of how to further democratize this relationship, I have considered the provocative symbol of the breadfruit and the metaphor of ‘breaking breadfruit’ as a way to characterize a more democratic partnership. Again, the main elements of this communicative union must be a spirit of sharing (as in “sharing stories”) and a willingness to listen, working toward an “interactive universalism” (Benhabib, 1992) where we figure out how to operate in between both the general and the concrete to activate ameliorative change, *together*. The priest at Our Lady of Lost Souls offered a provocative parable to characterize our sharing. What we are working toward is figuring out how we might break breadfruit sitting six feet apart in order to feed each other, rather than *either* sitting right next to one another in order to feed ourselves *or* only trying to feed others without admitting our own needs and accepting help from others. Therefore, to continue democratizing this relationship of ‘server’ and ‘served’, we must continue to seek ways to work *with* our partners instead of *for*.

Peeling back the layers of the breadfruit

While considering the usefulness of the symbol and metaphor of the breadfruit as a way to further interpret the data in chapter 5 and to answer the question regarding the democratization of the relationship of ‘server’ and ‘served’, a number of new problematic issues, yet again, emerged. In this closing section on breadfruit I discuss three issues that

incorporate several of the limitations that I mentioned at the outset and have worked with throughout this chapter: Issue 1—sharing ‘which’ stories; Issue 2—wearing too many hats; and Issue 3—staying in touch.

Issue 1: Sharing ‘which’ stories? Although I have talked about the great strides I thought our team and our Jamaican partners made this year in terms of building more solidaristic and caring partnerships (especially with New Oxford and Benson Basic), it is instructive to infuse a few sobering remarks at this stage to remind the reader how this study continues to be limited by the length of time we spent with our Jamaican partners and the differential of power that exists between the US and Jamaica. I raise these two limitations in particular because it is necessary to acknowledge that, more than likely, we did not have access to any of our partners’ full stories. That is, undoubtedly, the workers, the children, the teachers, and the administrators held back some in what they decided to share with our team.

This issue clearly comes to light in terms of my most recent interviews with the Jamaican informants. Using my knowledge of our history together and bringing to bear issues from past interviews, I noted that I felt my informants were much more open with me this year than they were previously. This fact, I claim, is due to our growing trusting relation—the more they feel comfortable with me, trust me, and know more about what our team is doing in Jamaica, the more they share with me. What I must stop and realize, however, is that I still do not have the full story, and that only through more time together, will more of the story be shared. Turning the tables for a moment, I must also consider where I have also not allowed our Jamaican partners access to my entire story. Thus, what I want to keep in mind is that while “sharing stories” is a provocative theme

and a wonderful approach to getting to know others, we hardly ever share the whole story. This point becomes even more critical when power differentials color the relationship, as they do in this case. Our Jamaican partners have much more to lose by divulging too much since they risk what they say either being overheard by or passed along to the wrong people, or being taken offensively by the US team member and limiting or eliminating future opportunities to work together.

Two examples are helpful. In the first case, I am reminded of my past meetings with the professor at the Jamaican university who was very cautious in what he said and always made sure who might be listening. In addition, I consider how Mr. James was unwilling to talk with me in the past on tape regarding certain issues and how this year he may have continued to be unwilling to take the conversation in a certain direction. The Jamaican professor or Mr. James had to both be cautious about what I was going to do with the information they divulged as it may have brought consequences for them by their own government. In the second case, some of the workers or residents in the communities where we worked may have been extra careful about what they said or how they talked about the US, as they may have feared that if they said anything too negative, the US team member may take offense and terminate their involvement with or support of what was needed in their church, school, or community.

Before moving on to the second issue, it may also be instructive to note that the journals, reflections, and interviews of the US team members did not divulge their entire story either. So, although they provided provocative takes on their perspectives and shared intimately at times, as the researcher, I must acknowledge that this is only part of their story as well. Particularly with my informants, I must also acknowledge that a

power differential existed as I was both a researcher and an instructor of the course, PHI 220. While I made it clear from the beginning that their involvement or non-involvement with the study had no bearing on their final grade in class, our relationship may still have been influenced by this dynamic. I say more about this final aspect of issue 1 in the next section as it blends directly into issue 2.

Issue 2: Wearing too many hats. As I worried in the closing paragraphs to chapter 1, I feared that my multiple roles in this project provided a limitation to the overall study. Since I wore the hats of researcher, teacher, organizer, friend, and hand-holder just to name a few, I believe the US participants were often confused as to which role I was playing when. In order to peel back the layers of this issue, I focus on three relationships in particular: my relationship with the students, my relationship with Professor Mark, and the ongoing inner struggle with myself in trying to wear all of these hats.

In terms of my relationship with the students, as I mentioned above, I tried to assure the students that their involvement in the research of this experience would have no bearing on their final grade in the course. While I do not think that their involvement or non-involvement did affect their grade, I am sure this dynamic played out differently for the various students. For some students, they focused on my role as organizer of the experience. They were aware of my past history with the development of these partnerships and saw me as a sort of leader of the team. For some students, especially those who had also helped organize this trip in the past, they focused on my role as friend. For other students, they focused on my role as hand-holder, wanting me to help them through this experience as they were stretched often by what they encountered. For still other students, particularly my informants, they focused on my role as researcher.

They saw me as someone who was going to ask them a lot of questions about their perspective on what was happening in the experience. Finally, for other students, they saw my role as teacher and focused on what they might learn from me.

Although the way students viewed my role in the experience did not break down perhaps as neatly as I described above (e.g., students may have focused on several of my roles, or other roles not mentioned, at once), the reader understands how conflicted the students may have been. In this vein, the two roles above that deserve a little closer scrutiny involve my role as researcher and teacher. As I have mentioned on several occasions now, US informants may have held back some information as they were unsure about how well I was going to manage playing teacher and researcher. Admittedly, I did find myself frustrated at times as I felt some informants may have been engaged in activities that I wished they would have avoided more regularly (e.g., drinking what I thought were excessive amounts of Red Stripe). Additionally, there were times as researcher where I wanted to tell the informant that what they were saying in the interviews did not always match what I saw in their practice. While I tried to smoothly work through some of these issues in the interviews, circumspectly directing their attention to them as we spoke, I wanted to avoid acting as some parental figure or switch to what they perceived as my more authoritative role as teacher. Although, unfortunately, I probably still switched back and forth at times, I tried to keep this dynamic in my mind as something I wanted to avoid.

My role as teacher, then, is the other role that I believe deserves some closer scrutiny and bleeds over into my relationship with Professor Mark. At the beginning of the experience, I was presented as the co-instructor of PHI 220 with Professor Mark.

Behind the scenes, Professor Mark and I shared (what I thought was) equally in the planning of the course and had little difficulty pulling the class together. As the class got under way in the spring we shared equally in the teaching half of the meetings and I mostly handled the organizational, second-half of the meetings with Paul—the professor at St. James who had been to Jamaica with the team three times previous. It became apparent, though, rather quickly that Professor Mark was seen as the instructor for the course. There was good reason for this since the students were familiar with him, as I was an outsider to the college in the minds of these students, and he was ultimately in charge of the grading. While we shared in the duty of presenting new information or leading class discussions, I often felt that Professor Mark’s word was given more credence. To address the concern that I am a complete egoist in even presenting or worrying over this dynamic, I expose this issue as it is instructive to peel back these layers to caution future instructors of service learning to the potential perils of team-teaching. Although I cannot be sure the extent to which the perception of the students that Professor Mark was the instructor of the course affected Professor Mark’s and my relationship, as we became friends as a result of the experience, I can speak from my perspective that I often acquiesced toward the end of the course in situations where we might have conflicted over how to present certain material or what activities we might do. I feared that if my exercise tanked, it might only strengthen the notion that Professor Mark was really the instructor of the course. While this dynamic may seem petty on the surface, below it there exist all sorts of potential conflicts that need to be critically worked through by the leaders of the experience so that these interpersonal relationships do not ultimately frustrate the goal of the service learning partnership.

Finally, then, one might already be able to see the inner conflict I wrestled with as researcher, teacher, organizer, friend, and hand-holder in this experience. For all of the reasons mentioned above and for some unsaid, I felt conflicted throughout various parts of this research study as I was often unsure which role I should be playing when.

Although I don't think it ultimately had a great detrimental effect on the experience, this conflict should be noted as a limitation of the study and should be used as a cautionary statement for future instructors and participants of service learning experiences: taking on too much may promote the ultimate undoing of what you are trying to accomplish.

Issue 3: Staying in touch. As I lamented at the end of chapter 5, ongoing communication with both our Jamaican partners and the US team members was difficult to maintain and presents a limitation to the overall findings in this study. Critical service learning, which seeks caring solidaristic partnerships, must be characterized by ongoing communication with service partners if ameliorative change is to emerge. Although I had the measures in place to try to continue contact once we returned to the US (e.g., meetings, ongoing emails to talk about aspects of the trip, sharing accounts from chapter 5 and chapter 6), lines of communication were often frustrated by either US team members not responding to my emails or Jamaican partners not receiving the correspondence due to emails not checked, faxes not going through, or regular mail never getting there. In terms of the US team member, I argued in chapter 5 that they may have been unwilling to continue the conversation due to any number of reasons: didn't feel compelled to be a part of the partnership any longer as the class/project was over, wanted to take a temporary break from the experience and may renew their interest as plans begin to come together for another trip next summer, or had never been asked to take part

in an exercise such as this and felt uncomfortable responding. While these are all valid reasons in terms of how this ‘project’ was cast, I must note that they serve as limitations, on the one hand, to the overall findings in the study of the experience. On the other hand, these reasons provide valuable information for how one might approach a future critical service learning experience so that participants may continue to feel a connection to the partnership once the particular intervention has ended or is in a state of hibernation (e.g., plans to go back to Jamaica will probably not begin again until late fall). I provide some potential ways to deal with this in chapter 7.

In terms of ongoing communication with the Jamaican informants, while I have spoken several times with both Ms. Matthews and Mr. James, we have often met with the obstacles that I outlined above: emails not checked, faxes not going through, or mail that never gets there or arrives after 6 weeks. The best way to communicate is by phone, which is how we have communicated mostly, but the cost becomes prohibitive of regular or lengthy communication by this means. Thus, we struggle ahead trying to find the most cost effective and available means of communication. For example, Ms. Matthews has access to email at the college where she attends, but she has to pay for every minute she is online. She has no access to a fax and our attempts at mailing back and forth have been regularly unsuccessful in the past. In hindsight, it was a mistake to leave her the follow up to our interview for her to mail, as I have still not received it. The gap provided by the lack of her follow up interview represents a definite limitation to this overall story. As another example, Mr. James does not have access to email, but has access to a fax machine. Unfortunately, sometimes this fax does not work or, as was the case at the end of this summer, he travels and I then have no way to communicate with

him. Only after returning from a two month holiday, visiting England to drum up support for his children's home and visiting family in Canada, did he realize he had not sent back the follow up to our interview.

In an effort to continue to 'break-breadfruit' within the partnerships created by service learning, crucial steps must be taken to ensure that feelings of attachment are not temporary and that ongoing communication is possible. The symbol and metaphor of the breadfruit illustrates the powerful way partners can come together to share their stories and work toward ameliorative ends. This said, though, I have also pointed to several issues in this section that limit our understanding and provide caution to future researchers and instructors of service learning. As researchers and instructors, we must understand that we will never be able to fully access the whole story, that there is danger in trying to take on too many roles, and that measures for ongoing communication among the partners should be thought out and treated as early as possible in the service learning experience.

Conclusion: Wrapping Up Towards the Consideration of Future Practice

In this chapter I tried to unpack the story I told in chapter 5. Through the presentation of the symbols/metaphors of butterflies, boundaries, and breadfruit, I sought to interpret the experience by examining particular elements of our class, our work with our partners, our final meetings, and our ongoing correspondence. While these symbols/metaphors provided a provocative way to describe the experience, partly answered my initial research questions, and suggested more effective approaches for the future, they were also shot through with a number of limitations that doubled in size from

the outset of the study. The issues that emerged at the end of each of these symbol/metaphor sections illustrated how several of these limitations articulated and showed where there is much more to think about in terms of what an evolved form of critical service learning may look like. By presenting the symbols/metaphors in the manner I did and then by focusing a great deal of attention on the limitations they raised, I claimed that this deconstruction and problematization characterized a cultural studies approach in my 'critically interpretive' analysis. I further argued that only through this approach have I been led to the more critical and creative potential critical service learning may hold for the future.

With this more critical understanding, I turn my attention to the final chapter in this dissertation where I use this information to make recommendations for the future. In particular I start by looking at the implications of this study for service learning in general. Next, I discuss the particular implications this study has for critical service learning by revealing elements to a newly evolved framework and theory. I also discuss the particular implications this study has for the ongoing relationship with our Jamaican partners. I conclude this final chapter by outlining the practical contributions of this study and by suggesting future considerations for my research or other researchers interested in service learning.

CHAPTER 7

RECONSTRUCTING AND EVOLVING CRITICAL SERVICE LEARNING

In our making and remaking of ourselves in the process of making history—as subjects and objects, persons, becoming beings of insertion in the world and not of pure adaptation to the world—we should end by having the dream, too, a mover of history. There is no change without dream, as there is no dream without hope. (Paulo Freire)⁵⁹

As a member of a team and a partnership who has been an agent in a transformative process of making history, I come to this final chapter with a renewed sense of hope and dream for the future. Through a review of what took place in the “shared story” of this dissertation, I conclude my study in this final segment by pointing to where the story may be going next. First, I revisit the context for this study by recalling how I became involved with service learning and how the initial framework for critical service learning emerged. Continuing in this contextual vein, I also revisit the initial problematics Masucci and I raised regarding critical service learning, recall what I found to be missing from the service learning literature, and discuss how I began to formulate a subsequent hybrid theory—caring solidarity— based, in part, on this problematization. Next, I review, more particularly, my partnership with Jamaican schools and orphanages and the ethnographic study I developed in order to try and understand more about service learning, in general, and how our partnership may achieve more ameliorative ends, in particular. I conclude this section with a brief overview of the story that emerged and the interpretation and analysis I took up in chapter 6. Next, I reveal the implications this study has for both the framework and theory of critical

⁵⁹ *Pedagogy of Hope* (1992), pg. 91.

service learning. Again, making use of the symbols/metaphors that emerged in the analysis, I point to possible improvements and new ways to think about the future activation of critical service learning. Next, I propose the practical contributions of this study and the general implications they provide for service learning, in general, the *practice* of cultural studies, and the potential promise for launching critical service learning in teacher education. Last, I suggest future considerations for our ongoing partnership in Jamaica and for research that could augment the findings of this study or fill in some of the noticeable gaps and silences.

How Critical Service Learning Emerged

Recall that my experience with service began in high school in the form of community service. From there, I continued to be involved in service endeavors as a college student and a high school teacher. It was as a high school teacher that I first came across service learning in the pamphlet produced by the National Association of Secondary School Principals and Quest International (1997). As a result, I created a course at the high school level that placed my students in local public elementary schools as tutors and mentors. From there, my experience with service learning continued as I entered graduate school in a cultural studies in education department. Under the direction of Dr. Handel Wright, I quickly came to see service learning as way to activate a practice for cultural studies. After a service learning experience with fellow graduate student Matthew Masucci in our Issues in Cultural Studies course, taught by Dr. Wright, we created a framework for a more critical approach to service learning—that we called critical service learning (Masucci and Renner, 2000a)—which drew upon the framework

I used as a high school teacher, our experience in the graduate service learning course, and cultural studies.

From this articulation of experience and theorizing, Masucci and I devised a four-stage framework for critical service learning that drew upon cultural studies theory and Freirean, critical, and engaged pedagogies. Through ‘projects’ focused on social difference and social injustice, the stages, pre-action reflection, theory, action, and reflection, were initially designed to bring about heightened states of political clarity toward both conscientization (Freire, 1970) and self-actualization (hooks, 1994). In addition to this focus on self, however, critical service learning held a more socially just condition for all as its ultimate aim.

Not long after formulating critical service learning, however, Masucci and I (2001b), in keeping with a cultural studies agenda, began to deconstruct and problematize our framework toward a better understanding of how it could reach even more critical ends. In our problematization, we uncovered four issues that we thought should be considered further. Two of these—the role of teacher education and the relationship of the ‘server’ and the ‘served’—became our focal points and led me on my current trajectory toward the development of a theory for critical service learning. As a doctoral student who was training to become a teacher educator, the first problematic above became central to my agenda. I wanted to figure out how critical service learning might best be used within teacher education in order that teachers-in-training could become more critical educators and would be better prepared to launch service learning initiatives in their own future classrooms. In addition, as a leader in a partnership with Jamaican schools and orphanages, the second problematic above also became a central concern. I

wanted to understand how our relationship could be further democratized and how ameliorative ends could be better worked toward in partnership as our trips to the island progressed.

In addition to problematizing the framework, I delved deeper into the literature of service learning, seeing how it was used in teacher education, what other frameworks and theories were developed, and how the relationship of ‘server’ and ‘served’ was treated. The literature revealed provocative examples of service learning activated in teacher education and illustrated the potential for teachers-in-training to develop new sensitivities to social difference, which should better prepare them for the diversity in their future classrooms. In terms of other frameworks and theories, researchers and instructors made varying use of reflection, critical reading material, and theory. Additionally, projects were not necessarily focused on social difference and often either lacked political language or failed to deal with injustice at all. For researchers and instructors who treated politics and injustice, the language was couched within “social justice” (Fisher, 1997; O’Grady 2000; Wright, 2001). In terms of ‘server’ and ‘served’, if the literature touched on it at all, the discussion mainly focused on the ‘server’ and what they gleaned from service learning.

As a result of my review of the literature, it became apparent that not enough was being done in terms of promoting service learning in teacher education, actions rarely focused on social difference, social justice was cast as the language of amelioration, and what the ‘server’ got out of service learning experiences was often privileged over what resulted for the ‘served’. Simultaneous to these findings, under the directorship of Dr. Barbara Thayer-Bacon, I was exposed to her concept of “caring reasoning” (2000) and

was further challenged to consider how caring might play a role in an agenda for critical service learning. As a result, I discursively formulated a hybrid theory for critical service learning that articulated David Miller's (1999) social justice concept of solidaristic communities with Nel Noddings (1984) feminist ethic of care. In the development of this theory, called "caring solidarity," I framed it within Seyla Benhabib's (1992) "generalized and concrete other." That is, a caring solidarity would draw on not only the more general/universal pole of social justice, by trying to understand the structural issues of injustice that affect the service partner, but also the more concrete/particular pole of caring, by engaging more concretely with the service partner in the local experience of injustice. As a result, the theory of caring solidarity emerged as an antidote to solely considering social justice, placed social difference and its connection to social inequalities squarely at the center of any agenda for critical service learning, and focused more attention on the relationship of 'server' and 'served'.

Activating the Framework and Theory of Critical Service Learning

Critical to any cultural studies agenda is the notion of praxis—theory informing practice and practice informing theory. As Stuart Hall (1992) consistently laments, cultural studies has failed unless we can move from theory into practice. Thus, while the framework and theory of critical service learning is largely informed by past experience and theorizing, its value was largely indeterminable without activation. In order to put it to use, I activated critical service learning in preparation for my fifth service trip to Jamaica.

My experience in Jamaica began in 1998 while leading a group of high school students to Montego Bay to work in local orphanages. In subsequent years, our service

became focused on two orphanages in particular and spread to two local schools. In the orphanages we brought needed supplies, helped in the care of the children, and provided respite for the under-staffed, over-worked employees. In the schools we also brought needed supplies, taught lessons, and provided pedagogical strategies for the teachers.

Over the five years of our developing partnership with the schools and orphanages, several US team-members made multiple trips. In fact, a core of four of us has made all five trips. In addition, through the course of these five years, each trip has become more critical than the one before in terms of better understanding global issues of injustice, local issues that face our Jamaican partners, how we can better serve with them, and what we can accomplish together. As an example, one of our first trips to Jamaica was cast as a mission trip—a characterization that we moved beyond once we better understood the colonialistic and hegemonic baggage this type of trip carried with it.

What did this fifth trip look like on the US side?

This fifth trip to Jamaica was offered as a course—PHI 220: Service Learning—at St. James College and was promoted campus-wide, but particularly in the education department. I co-taught this class of fourteen students (three of which were education majors) with Professor Mark, a philosophy professor at St. James. In our development of the course, we planned the material in such a way that it was presented as a series of topics related to Jamaica and service learning, which we thought would provide a helpful context to the service experience: history, politics, economics, religion, multiculturalism, etc. We began meeting as a group in January and divided our time together between covering the topics noted above and planning the itinerary. We met eleven times before

we flew to Jamaica in May. Once we returned from Jamaica, we met three additional times to reflect on and discuss the experience.

How were our Jamaican partners involved in the planning of this fifth trip?

This fifth trip was also closely planned with our Jamaican partners. Over the previous four years I became particularly close to Ms. Matthews at Benson Basic School, Pastor Peters at Westminster Holy Church/School, and Mr. James at New Oxford Children's Home. In fact, they were each part of an earlier research study (Renner, 2001a, 2001b, 2001c) where I attempted to understand more about the relationship between US service groups and Jamaican social service agencies. During the year leading up to our May, 2002 trip, I was in regular contact with these partners, along with the administrator at Cambridge International Children's Home, regarding what we might work on together this year.

What did this fifth trip look like in terms of my dissertation research study?

This fifth trip also served as the premise of my dissertation research study. Wanting to activate the critical service learning framework and theory, and wanting to continue my relationship with our Jamaican partners, I made the decision to launch my dissertation as an ethnography of this service experience. This study comprised one overarching question:

- How does a critical service learning framework and theory play out in a project that seeks ameliorative change?

And three qualitative sub-questions:

- (1) What are the potential enduring effects of this project beyond our presence in Jamaica?

- (2) What is the possibility of these projects to work toward social justice and/or care?
- (3) How does this framework and theory help to democratize the relationship of the ‘server’ and ‘served’?

The class, PHI 220, was set up in such a way that it followed the critical service learning framework (i.e., pre-action reflection, theory, action, and reflection). In addition, PHI 220 made use of the critical service learning theory of caring solidarity in terms of connecting our coverage of general theories involving injustice (e.g., hegemony and reproduction) to both reading about how they play out locally (e.g., accounts of how structural adjustment policies of the IMF play out in the Caribbean) and also theorizing about how we might work together, as both a “caring” US team and US-Jamaica partnership, to combat them (e.g., counter-hegemony, resistance, and transformation).

For the study, I selected a sample of informants from both PHI 220 and our Jamaican partners to interview multiple times during a seven month period that began at the start of PHI 220 in January and ended a couple of weeks after our last meeting of US team-members in July. In addition to interviews, I also made use of several other data collection strategies, which included participant observation, document procurement, photographs, audio-tapes, email correspondence, student evaluations, student papers, and journals. Once I collected the data I used a critically-interpretive analytical strategy that blended the critical and interpretive research paradigms towards a more dialectical and transformative analysis.

As I showed in chapter 5, the “shared story” of this experience unfolded through several descriptive accounts of key places and events over this seven month period.

From this story, which is told from the multiple perspectives of faculty and students on the US team, particular US informants, Jamaican informants, and researcher, three symbols with attendant metaphors emerged that helped to interpret the experience: butterflies, boundaries, and breadfruit. These symbols/metaphors not only go to great lengths to describe this critical service learning experience, but also provide compelling answers to my three qualitative sub-questions and point to what an evolved framework and theory of critical service learning should look like.

What are the potential enduring effects of this project beyond our presence in Jamaica? The contrast of the wings and caterpillar of the *butterfly* illustrated the importance of embracing difference. The process of caterpillars *becoming* butterflies helped highlight that ameliorative change—more just and caring conditions—is a long term process of transformation. While not pinpointing the exact enduring effects, the symbol and metaphor of the butterfly, instead, showed what might make enduring effects possible.

What is the possibility of these projects to work toward social justice and/or care? The symbol of *boundaries* revealed one of the necessary steps that must preface the establishment of more just conditions or the nurturance of more caring relations. This symbol emerged as a more practically realizable alternative for critical service learning experiences since achieving social justice and/or care may be less tenable for short term/temporary experiences. The metaphor of *crossing* boundaries helped elucidate a step that service learning partners must take in order to break down those issues that may obfuscate the eventual creation of more caring relations and/or more just conditions.

How does this framework and theory help to democratize the relationship of the ‘server’ and ‘served’? The symbol of the *breadfruit* exemplified the importance that two-way, ongoing communication plays in the ultimate democratization of the relationship of ‘server’ and ‘served’. Through both valuing and privileging the voices and knowledge of all partners in the experience, this symbol encouraged the problematization of power differentials that exist between ‘server’ and ‘served’. The metaphor of *breaking breadfruit*, then, offered ways to address and, hopefully, subvert these inherent power differentials through celebration, sharing meals, and playing together.

These metaphors and symbols, however, did not emerge as neat and tidy as the above paragraph may represent. Along with the explanations they provided and the possibilities they posed, they also brought a number of problematic issues to the fore, which have been every bit as useful in terms of understanding the experience and evolving the framework and theory of critical service learning. With these symbols and their attendant metaphors *and* limitations, I turn my attention in the next section to how they particularly inform an evolved version of critical service learning.

Implications for Critical Service Learning

To begin this section I show how each of the symbols with their attendant metaphors and limitations particularly inform and promote an evolved version of the framework and theory of critical service learning. I conclude this section with a more global view of where this framework and theory stand now.

Implications for the framework and theory of critical service learning

Butterflies. The symbol of the butterfly and its metaphor of becoming offer some support for what Masucci and I already established within our framework of critical

service learning, but it also provides some useful correctives and updates. As far as the framework is concerned, a continued focus on reflection is warranted due to the emergence of the concept of “becoming.” Students should continue to be provided a number of opportunities at various stages in the project to reflect on their ongoing experience. Achieving political clarity and self-actualization may be appropriately considered a part of this process of becoming. Teachers of service learning should recognize that their students are engaged in this metamorphosis—seeking heightened states of political clarity and achieving higher levels of self-actualization—and conceptualize service learning as a chrysalis stage within a process of becoming.

In addition to solely focusing on the student, however, or characterizing pre-action reflection and reflection as a ‘beginning’ and an ‘end’, the limitations that emerged from the dissection of the butterfly encourage us to think a little further. First, critical service learning is concerned with both what the ‘server’ and ‘served’ derive from the experience. A focus on becoming for both is a necessary and critical correction to traditional service learning agendas that over-emphasize the role of the ‘server’ and what they get out of the experience. Although this focus on becoming with the service partner may be more easily facilitated as the partnership progresses, instructors, at the very least, ought to keep this dynamic in mind and seek out ways to monitor the partners’ ongoing impressions and experience.

Second, instructors of service learning need to be careful how pre-action reflection and reflection are cast in order that these stages do not form a parentheses for a service learning experience, but rather offer their students open-ended possibilities to continue to wrestle with the place of this experience in their lives. This is why “projects”

may be an inappropriate way to characterize what goes on within a service learning experience as this term conjures a more temporary notion and frustrates the ultimate aim of a process of becoming. “Partnerships,” then, is a more preferred term to “project” as it elicits a less temporal image and presents a more unifying image of what occurs within a service learning experience. Reflections should encourage ongoing theorizing about how the experience plays a role in the ongoing partnership, future service partnerships, or life in general.

In terms of the theory for critical service learning, the symbol of the butterfly offers three useful suggestions for the development of a caring solidarity. One, the contrast of wings and caterpillar reminds us that differences will exist in our service partnerships and even among the ‘server’ community. Instead of fighting these differences and demanding consensus, partners in service learning would be better served by embracing the differences and dialogically seeking transformative possibilities for the partnership. This dialectical and dialogical approach enhances the possibility of a caring solidarity by acknowledging and privileging all of the voices in the partnership.

Two, the butterfly encourages us to embrace both the general and concrete in our service learning experiences. As critical service learning advocates significant treatment of theory at a structural level, it also promotes involvement with individuals at a local level. The dialectic of general and concrete was resolved in this particular project particularly in the understanding that emerged from our experience at The Columbus Project. Students saw the theories of hegemony and reproduction playing out concretely in the lives of the children there. As a result, the students noted how structural issues of injustice materialize locally and realized the lack of any sense of caring in this

environment. This localized appreciation is paramount for a caring solidarity in general. By balancing knowledge of the structural issues of injustice with a local, more contextual knowledge of how the injustice plays out in individual lives, students are better prepared to establish more caring relations and ameliorate unjust conditions in partnership. Additionally, by privileging the multiple forms of knowledge and ways of knowing that exist in the various members of the partnership (e.g., in our partnership with the two schools and orphanages, on both the US and Jamaican side), more critical and constructive possibilities will exist for the future of the partnership.

Moreover, this treatment of the general and experience in the concrete has a third, more general, effect that may increase the possibility and potential of a caring solidarity. Recall that I have troubled the fact that students end their involvement in particular service learning partnerships. If we consider that service learning, though, is a critical step in a process of becoming, perhaps there are some enduring long term effects that are possible beyond the partnership in any particular service learning experience. That is, by experiencing the structural issues of injustice (e.g., racism) at a local level (e.g., in the lives of the Jamaicans), a student-turned-citizen may be able to apply this knowledge (of general and concrete) in several more locales in their future experiences: as a voter, as a volunteer in other service activities, as an activist for justice, etc. The efforts of teachers of service learning to aim project goals toward a caring solidarity will help students-turned-citizens-of-the-world to both appreciate theory and use their practical experience, contextually, in their future spheres of influence. Thus, while a caring solidarity is best developed in a partnership over time (like this project in Jamaica), a caring solidarity may still be possible in a more general way if students, as a result of their experiences, are

more prepared to establish caring relations with future concrete others based on their understanding of structural issues of injustice and their connection to past concrete others.

Boundaries. Like the symbol of the butterfly, the symbol of boundaries reinforces several aspects of the original makeup of critical service learning. In particular, this symbol of boundaries provides compelling evidence that the critical service learning agenda should focus on social difference. This experience showed the potential of what may result from students facing issues of social difference that they were concerned about and overcoming their fears or misunderstandings through working in the partnership. Thus, boundaries become an innovative way to talk about social difference within a critical pedagogy in terms of thinking about what boundaries (race, class, gender, ability, etc.) one feels they may need to cross.

The limitations to this symbol and metaphor of boundaries, though, provide us with some cautionary advice for both the framework and theory of critical service learning. Instructors of critical service learning should readjust the focus of service learning to consider both ‘server’ and ‘served’. Boundaries should not only be considered from the ‘server’ side. Boundaries should be explored from both sides. In the preparation stages where boundaries are explored with ‘servers’, instructors should also investigate boundaries that may exist on the side of the ‘served’. This investigation not only acknowledges existence of boundaries on both sides, but allows for an even more critical and constructive caring solidarity to develop since ‘servers’ and ‘served’ may discover boundaries common to both that can be dispelled within the service learning partnership. Further, in terms of establishing a caring solidarity, acknowledging

boundaries on both sides will dis-privilege the notion that the ‘served’ simply serve as a ‘boundary’ for the ‘server’ to cross. Characterizing the ‘served’ in this manner not only eliminates the potential for a caring solidarity, but may also advance the very injustice that service learning partnerships aim to ameliorate.

Finally, in terms of the framework, instructors of critical service learning must consider the possibility that the theory stage may be viewed as a boundary by the students in the service learning experience. Although this may represent a particularly precarious boundary to cross, instructors are encouraged to continue to challenge their students in connecting theory to the experience. Both wrestling with structural theories of injustice and covering local accounts of experience with injustice will ultimately help to contextualize the entire experience and help the student to draw more critical connections between the general theories and their concrete experience. As a result it is hoped that the possibility of amelioration may be more practically realizable for this and future partnerships.

Breadfruit. The symbol of the breadfruit helps remind us that we must attempt to be as clear as possible in the initial planning stages of critical service learning in order to avoid the particular snafus that some teams may experience like we did at Westminster. Although this kind of mis-communication may not be totally avoidable, what ‘server’/‘served’ partnerships should strive for is as transparent a relationship as possible. Thus, one way the critical service learning framework should be enhanced is in the opening stage of pre-action reflection. Recall that this stage, besides reflection, also involves preparation for the trip. Perhaps, critical service learning is better served in reinserting “preparation” into the title of this initial stage in order to remind teams of the

important role preparation *with* the partner plays.⁶⁰ Perhaps, “pre-action reflection and joint preparation” is a better title for the first stage. This way joint preparation signals a more democratic planning process that should exist between members of the ‘serving’ team and between ‘server’ and ‘served’. Further, this terminology will focus the experience, in particular, and the partnership, in general, on communication since various power differentials will have to be wrestled with and worked through with as transparent a dialog as possible.

Additionally, in this early stage of critical service learning and later in the theory stage, the symbol of the breadfruit encourages teachers of service learning to consider the possibility of creating mechanisms that allow the ‘served’ to understand how they are also serving the ‘server’. This could happen in the opening reflective phase by having ‘servers’ consider how they may be served in this experience and revisiting this consideration in the final reflective stages. This reflective process could be enhanced by having past team members talk about how they realized they were ‘served’ throughout their service learning experiences. Importantly, though, for the ‘served’, we must be able to communicate these realizations to our partners, which may best be proposed in the post-reflective stages. Although the ‘served’ may be initially incredulous to these realizations, the long term effect of understanding how they affect the lives of people that have apparently come to ‘serve’ them may shed some light on their own sense of agency and help them recognize how they are also agents in the process of making history. This eventual realization on the part of the ‘server’ and ‘served’ that both actually ‘serve’ presents provocative possibilities for a caring solidarity where we both attempt to level

⁶⁰ Similar to the NASSP/QI’s (1997) framework: preparation, action, reflection, and demonstration

power differentials and also recognize and work toward meeting each other's needs.

Therefore, this symbol helps us recognize that only in building relationships might we be able to construct enduring ameliorative change.

In terms of the limitations that emerged in the discussion of the breadfruit, there is a relevant consideration to make here for the latter stages of the critical service learning framework. Since communicating what has been learned as a result of the experience is important to the endurance of the partnership, mechanisms must be put into place that allow for easy, ongoing communication. As this experience has illustrated, ongoing communication can frequently be frustrated. Although I thought I had taken the issue of communication into account from the beginning, I was surprised by both the miscommunication between Pastor Peters and myself and the difficulty with which ongoing communication with our Jamaican partners and among the US team took place.

This issue of communication should be made as clear as possible with the team and service partners as early in the experience as possible. Teachers should focus team-building efforts in any service learning experience on communication, clarifying that the input of each team member will not only be valued, but expected. The same type of expectation and value should be placed on the relationship of the service partners.

However, this communication may have to be realized more cautiously and creatively given the power differentials that may exist between 'server' and 'served' and because the service partner will more than likely not be 'in class' on a regular basis like the students. For service learning experiences that partner First and Third world countries, particularly, instructors should be prepared to dedicate quite a bit of time and patience to this endeavor as lines of communication are often tenuous—given the poor

communicative infrastructure that may exist in the partnering country and the inherent power differentials that more than likely exist in the partnership, especially. In addition, instructors of service learning should be prepared to bear a good deal of the economic burden to make this communication feasible, since speaking on the telephone is often the most efficient (and also most expensive) means of communicating.

Finally, in terms of both the framework and the theory of critical service learning, space should be created to literally ‘break breadfruit’ among the ‘serving’ team and between ‘server’ and ‘served’. As our meals together as a team and our meals, soccer matches, and celebrations with our Jamaican partners have shown, these moments of sharing sustenance, exercise, and stories are a powerful time of understanding how we affect and enhance one another’s lives, and offer hope for how a more transparent dialog and trusting relation may develop.

An evolved version of critical service learning

Now that I have elucidated the particular contributions of the symbols of the butterfly, boundaries, and breadfruit, a depiction of where critical service learning stands now is instructive. Just as Masucci and I developed and framed critical service learning in such a way that individual instructors could manipulate and contextualize the framework to their own given circumstance, I reveal this latest evolution in the same way. Knowing that each circumstance is different (e.g., students, service partners, length of time in partnership, etc.) and realizing that these stages flow into and out of one another, I write as generally as possible without losing the spirit of what I believe critical service learning should seek in its results: the eventual amelioration of social injustices

and a caring connection drawn among differing partners who might never have come together but for this service learning experience.

As a result of this study, the four-stage framework of critical service learning is still appropriate. In terms of launching the framework, though, two changes are considered. First, the name of the first stage is augmented to consider the service partner and a more democratized planning process: from “pre-action reflection” to “pre-action reflection and joint preparation.” Second, the framework is no longer thought of in terms of activating a “project.” Instead, the framework of critical service learning intends to facilitate *experiences* within ongoing *partnerships*. While every service partnership will have its ‘first’ experience, critical service learning should only be launched with the spirit that the partnership established has long term possibilities toward the eventual/ongoing amelioration of injustice. Although the students and members of the service partner community may change, critical service learning should be cast as a series of experiences in long term connection.

To strengthen this point, in terms of planning first experiences, agencies should be sought out that deal with issues of injustice and the inequities associated with social differences (race, class, gender, ability, sexual orientation, age, etc.) and that have an *expressed* need for which you believe your students can assist. It is then necessary to consistently communicate with the service partner as the planning for the experience gets underway. This same issue of communication is important as the partnership evolves also, as new experiences in the future may involve different needs or expertise on the part of ‘server’ and/or ‘served’.

In addition to communicating with the service partner, teachers should consistently seek input from the students in order that their voice is privileged in the partnership as well. If no particular partnership or experience is established before the service learning class starts, for example, students may contribute to the initial development of a community partnership or make some decisions regarding what the experience should entail. As another example, if multiple partnerships are established prior to the course, students can be provided the opportunity to choose the partnership/experience with which they want to become involved. As a final example, if the service learning class focuses on one partnership (like PHI 220) students can be given responsibility for shaping particular aspects of the experience (e.g., the lessons we taught in the schools).

Holistically, the emerging metaphors urge us to consider critical service learning as a process of becoming. It is a chrysalis stage for ‘server’ and ‘served’ to develop both new sensitivities to issues of difference and also a sense of how each may transform the world. The emphasis on this process of becoming should be taken up as early as possible within the framework so that the instructor can monitor and illuminate this progress for the ‘server’ and/or ‘served’.

With the focus of the partnership on issues of difference and the inequities with which they result in society, one way to show how ‘servers’ or ‘served’ evolve in their sensitivities is to uncover their “boundaries” as early in the experience as possible. In doing this, instructors can focus a portion of the theory stage of critical service learning on treating these boundaries theoretically, knowing that ‘servers’ and ‘served’ will deal with them concretely when they come into contact in the action stage of the experience.

This use of theory to premise or connect to the action continues to be a crucial ingredient for critical service learning. For instance, the results of this study show the promise of theoretically connecting structural understandings of injustice with local depictions of how this injustice plays out in concrete lives at this theory stage. In addition, the results of this study show the promise of connecting the general/theoretical to the local/concrete in terms of both reading about injustice and difference and seeing it play out in the critical service learning experience during the action stage. This approach to the theory stage in critical service learning promotes the possibility of a caring solidarity in two important ways. One, it privileges the knowledge of the both the ‘server’ and the ‘served’. Theoretical understandings of injustice are not solely taken into account. Rather, theoretical/general understandings are juxtaposed with concrete/local understandings. Two, the theory is constantly tethered to the action in the internal praxis of the experience, balancing how theory informs practice and practice informs theory.

Concrete involvement with injustice, as it relates to theory, plays a potentially transformative role for the future, particularly for those who are concerned about the enduring effects for a student who only has one critical service learning experience. By exposure to both the general and the concrete, students-turned-citizens-of-the-world should have a greater sensitivity to issues of injustice and the people oppressed by it. This exposure makes it easier to draw connections between situations of oppression, based on experience *and* theory. In turn, it is hoped that a more critical understanding of future situations, along with a greater preparedness to care, emerge, and more sensitive action results.

In addition to these foci of becoming, boundaries and praxis for an evolved critical service learning framework, this study also illuminates the importance of communication throughout the stages. Since communication is supposed to be ongoing in the partnership from experience to experience, reflective and communicative mechanisms should be put into place as early in the experience as possible so both ‘server’ and ‘served’ have means to provide input to the partnership and ways to draw back, reflect on, and share their impressions of the experience. These reflective and communicative mechanisms would further be enhanced by opportunities to share in meals and play together, as this study showed the potential camaraderie that can emerge as a result of playing soccer, sharing meals as a team, and breaking-breadfruit with our Jamaican partners.

Resulting differences that are sure to emerge from these communications and reflections should be embraced by all partners toward an understanding of the more critical possibilities for the partnership. In addition both ‘server’ and ‘served’ should be given opportunities to discuss and reveal how they have both ‘served’ and ‘been served’ in the experience. If the partnership and opportunities to communicate are promoted as ongoing, these evolving discussions and revelations provide some critical possibilities for a caring solidarity as a preparedness to care and an understanding of how injustice can be ameliorated are continually heightened.

As a result of this course and trip to Jamaica, I believe aiming for a caring solidarity is preferred to attempting to achieve social justice or care within service learning experiences, since social justice will seldom be brought about as a result of one experience and care is too particular in terms of its relationality. That is, (1) social justice

is a journey and not an easily realized condition, (2) there may not be enough time within an experience to secure a caring relation, and (3) the nurturance of the caring relation may be complicated by distance (as this experience in Jamaica exemplifies). Caring solidarity represents a more efficacious and more practically realizable possibility because it works in between the general and structural (read: social justice) and the concrete and local (read: caring) to promote crossing boundaries, relationship building, and becoming. Critical service learning serves as a chrysalis stage toward more just and caring conditions and encourages partners to act in the space between the general and concrete, using the structural to inform the local and allowing both knowledge of the structural and experience with the local to inform potential experiences with future concrete others.

Therefore, I advocate a critical service learning theory that strives toward a caring solidarity, which articulates and enhances the concepts of social justice and caring toward both an understanding and a new sensitivity that is realizable within one or several service learning experiences. Through the stages of the critical service learning framework, instructors can and should continually focus their agenda on the establishment of a caring solidarity since its realization is not contingent on any one particular issue and it is an agenda that must be worked on in partnership. Since a caring solidarity works within a frame of “generalized and concrete other,” it continually agonizes over, wrestles with, and problematizes the relationship of the ‘server’ and ‘served’, and considers how ameliorative change can be activated together. The goal, then, of critical service learning is communication and relationship-building. From here caring relations and more just conditions can emerge.

Although partnerships may be ongoing, the reality is that critical service learning experiences themselves are finite and involvement in them will end. Additionally, while achieving social justice is a worthy goal for service learning, it is also a reality that one service learning experience (or several consecutive service learning experiences, even) will seldom usher it in. With social justice as a goal, our ends are more often than not defeated before we even get to the means. Caring solidarity provides a much more feasible goal and creates an understanding that the battle for justice and the nurturance of care is ongoing and long-term. Establishing caring relationships and evolving partnerships signals for both ‘server’ and ‘served’ that the work will not be finished after this experience.

The experience, then, should be cast as a reflective process of becoming, targeted at figuring out what the issue is, what a better condition would look like, and how we might get there together. Building a caring solidarity encourages this outlook and provides a theory that can be activated for any stage of the critical service learning framework. A caring solidarity shifts service learning from a sole focus on what will be accomplished to also considering how relationships can be nurtured. With this focus, more emphasis is placed on the knowledge and input of the ‘served’, and may go a long way to ultimately democratizing the relationship of ‘server’ and ‘served’ within service learning. Only in this democratization, I argue, can more ameliorative ends be sought.

The value of this newly evolved framework and theory of critical service learning, of course, is largely indeterminable without future activation. While I suggest some of the considerations I will make for the activation of the newly evolved critical service

learning for our ongoing partnership in the conclusion of the dissertation, I turn my attention in the next section to the more immediate contributions this study makes.

Contributions of this Study

A practical way to activate cultural studies

In general, this study illustrates how service learning can be a practical way to activate cultural studies. From the theorizing, creation, and launching of critical service learning heavily steeped in cultural studies theory; to an experience that continually kept power at the fore and worked counter-hegemonically to ameliorate injustice; to finally analyzing the “shared story” through constant problematization, deconstruction and consideration of limitations, this study shows how cultural studies can work in practice. Hopefully, through this example, Hall’s lament is somewhat assuaged and the possibilities for service learning will be further considered within the field of cultural studies.

The promise of discursive articulations

Related to cultural studies and theorizing, this study also shows the potential of articulating Freirean, critical, and engaged pedagogies in the framework of critical service learning and social justice and care theories in the discourse of caring solidarity. Additionally, within this discourse of caring solidarity the juxtapositioning of general/theoretical knowledge with local/concrete knowledge demonstrates an innovative praxis cast within the frame of Benhabib’s “generalized and concrete other.” Finally, the articulation of critical and interpretive research paradigms elucidates how theories can be discursively blended to create new paradigms and more ameliorative possibilities for counter-hegemonic agents.

Cast as a cultural studies project, then, I was able to pull what I needed from each of these theories to create something new and hybrid. Although I had to be careful to justify my formations and had to take extra pre-cautions by problematizing these moves, this study shows the promise of working outside the discursive boxes we often place on theory. By taking a more global view of theory, I could see where these boxes intersected in valuable ways toward a more democratized framework, a more caring and solidaristic theory, and a more critical and interpretive analytical frame.

Praxis as the key to democratization

While there is still plenty more to consider in terms of the democratization of the relationship of ‘server’ and ‘served’, this study goes to some length to contribute an understanding of what a more democratized relationship might look like. For example, by valuing the knowledge of Mr. James in terms of what he thought would be best for his children’s home and how a more just and caring situation might emerge for his community, we pooled our knowledges and resources to seek more ameliorative ends, in partnership. I argue this realization could not have occurred without a praxis approach to this experience, in particular, and our partnership, in general. By constantly evolving my understanding of our experiences through reflection, theorizing, and problematization, and by testing these developing theories through further experiences with our partners, more critical and constructive possibilities have emerged for critical service learning—particularly for the democratization of this relationship between ‘server’ and ‘served’.

Critical service learning as a contribution to the conversation on service learning

Overall, the framework and theory of critical service learning contributes to the literature on service learning and goes to some length to help politicize the language and

target the agendas of service learning, which many researchers have found lacking. This framework and theory help to extend the conversation beyond social justice and provide compelling evidence for why social difference ought to be a focus within service learning. Aside from this more general contribution, however, specific aspects of critical service learning, which emerged in this study, contribute to an overall understanding of what service learning can do.

Focusing on social difference and inequality: “boundaries.” The emergence of the issue of boundaries confirms the importance of focusing a critical service learning agenda on social difference and resultant social inequalities. By centralizing difference in all stages of the framework—reflecting on it, reading theory about it, and acting within it—partners can come to understand their boundaries and how they may (and must) move beyond them if we are to jointly seek more just and caring conditions in the world. The findings in this study also contribute an understanding that boundaries exist on both sides of the ‘server’/‘served’ relationship. In order to ameliorate this tension and work towards a more caring solidarity, communicative steps will need to be undertaken to uncover these boundaries on both sides.

Embracing differing perspectives, privileging knowledge on both sides, and making use of the tension between theory and action: A further enhancement of the theory stage. Following this line of communication, this study, through the particular emergence of the symbol of the butterfly, contributes an understanding of the importance of embracing the differing perspectives of all participants toward both a more democratized planning process and an overall understanding of what happened in the experience. Achieving a caring solidarity requires the articulation of many perspectives

and urges us to continue to work within the tension of structural and local knowledge toward an understanding of: (1) how we promote and activate enduring ameliorative change in the partnership at hand by valuing knowledge on both sides, and (2) how we connect our current action to future actions with other communities subjected to oppression by making use of both theory and our experience.

Enhancing reflection as a process of becoming: “butterflies.” In terms of reflective processes, this study’s findings contribute an understanding that the reflective stages of critical service learning should focus attention on boundaries and should provide space to share new understandings and sensitivities with our service partners within a process of becoming. Through the early reflective stages, emphasis should be placed on the importance of two-way, shared communication toward the planning and activation of the project. Likewise, through the later reflective stages, opportunities should be provided to share what has been learned with the entire ‘server’/‘served’ community. This sharing and focus on communication/community encourages a more democratized planning process and goes to some length to reveal the potential agency in both ‘server’ and ‘served’. Additionally, with this focus on becoming, the lines of communication should not be closed off at the end of an experience. Rather, the metaphor of butterfly offers an understanding that instructors should keep the lines of communication open as long as possible beyond any one experience as new understandings and sensitivities may emerge.

Food as sustenance for the life of the partnership: the action of ‘breaking-breadfruit’. This study’s findings also contribute food for thought for what else should be included in the “action” stage of the critical service learning framework. Through the

process of ‘breaking breadfruit’, this team came to realize the power of taking time to share in meals, stories, celebrations, and play with one another. In terms of this experience in Jamaica, our time playing and celebrating allowed our partners to not only demonstrate one particular expertise (on the soccer field), but also to play the role of host (for the birthday/thank you party at New Oxford). For a caring solidarity to develop, time away from the ‘service’ will be necessary in order to draw the deep connections between our lives, which will help us to blur the line of ‘server’ and ‘served’ and will help us to envision and activate a more just and caring future.

Caring solidarity. Finally, in terms of critical service learning, a theory of caring solidarity offers advice for how social justice theories and the feminist ethic of care may be discursively articulated to form a more ameliorative possibility for service learning partnerships. Cast within the frame of Benhabib’s “generalized and concrete other,” caring solidarity bridges the chasm between social justice’s focus on the universal/structural and care’s focus on the particular/local. This articulation within a caring solidarity offers a remedy to the impracticability of much of the social justice literature and urges us to move outside of our “inner circles,” which the ethic of care cautions us against. Only as the goal of social justice becomes practically realizable and only as we move outside of the circles of those we already know will a more ameliorative condition for our world be possible. (A photographic symbol of caring solidarity can be found in Appendix 20.)

The contribution of teachers to critical service learning

Throughout this discussion, it has become more than apparent that the teacher in a service learning experience will play a formative role toward the possible emergence of

a caring solidarity. While the study does not provide any concrete advice for how teachers become more critical and constructive purveyors of critical service learning, the evidence overwhelmingly exists that teachers-in-training should be exposed to critical service learning in their education courses if they are to become the organic intellectual that this framework and theory require. The literature already provides compelling evidence for how teachers, exposed to service learning in their teacher training, develop new sensitivities to social injustice and social difference. It is my contention that the three education majors who did take part in this experience are well on their way to becoming this type of organic intellectual as they have been afforded the theoretical and practical tools to seek more ameliorative conditions in their future classrooms and in their future communities with their students. Although this course ultimately materialized at St. James based on who was willing to teach it, it was still actively promoted in education courses. Offered as an education course in the future (assuming this is feasible at St. James or the new university where I teach), I believe more education majors would be inclined to sign up for this service learning experience in Jamaica. In the next section, I indicate the importance of a future research study to focus its attention on launching critical service learning in a teacher education program, generally.

Future Considerations

To finish this dissertation, I turn my attention toward outlining some future considerations for research related to this study. First, I discuss how this study should inform future critical service learning experiences within the ongoing relationships with our Jamaican partners. Next, I present further research possibilities based on the limitations that emerged in this study and based on the silences in the literature that this

study did not or was not intended to treat. Finally, I conclude with a few personal remarks regarding this study, my partnership in Jamaica, and the ongoing praxis with which I have tried to live my life.

Implications for our partnership in Jamaica

Just as the symbols helped interpret the findings of this study and informed the evolution of critical service learning, they also provide compelling advice for future experiences in Jamaica. For the future of this particular partnership, the symbol of the butterfly and its process of becoming offer us useful advice. If we take the example of Mr. James and the soccer team in the local community, again, we see the importance of listening to one another and settling our differing perspectives in mutual dialog. In addition, we understand that this partnership itself is a process of “becoming” and ameliorative change will not happen overnight. Therefore, we must continue to commit ourselves to this partnership in Jamaica.

One focus of our ongoing partnership must be an uncovering and crossing of our boundaries. As these boundaries surfaced during this intervention among our US team I was able to direct attention to and reflection on them in order to help the team member uncover and partially move beyond them. Additionally, though, as boundaries surfaced in my interviews with the Jamaican informants, I came to understand that they may have just as many fears about us as our team may have about them. As a result of this experience, then, I am much more aware of this issue and its potential deleterious effect on lasting ameliorative change and will, therefore direct attention toward uncovering and crossing them in future interventions.

In addition to this more general focus on crossing boundaries in the future, Rachel and Linda offered some practical considerations that we should take up in future classes that may help students cross these boundaries earlier and be more prepared for our intervention in Jamaica. Both Rachel and Linda suggested in their final papers and evaluation of PHI 220 that some time should be spent working toward the development of local service partnerships that may be similar to what we are doing in Jamaica. For example, some of our preparation time in the spring could be spent working in local children's homes or after-school tutoring programs. These early service experiences serve a few purposes. One, they will help bring the US participants in early contact with concrete others suffering from the general issues of injustice that we have been studying in the theory stage. Two, they may help the US team face their boundaries at a much earlier stage in the service learning experience and help them become even more prepared to establish caring relations once we get to Jamaica. And, three, these sites may serve as local sites for the development of caring solidarities for the US team once they terminate their involvement with the project in Jamaica (either temporarily throughout the year or permanently as they graduate or decide not to return).

The long term plans for this project will also offer more opportunities for 'breaking breadfruit' within our team and between our team and our Jamaican partners. As we gathered as a US team in a community-building effort to grill out and share a meal with our family and loved ones both before we left and at our last meeting, we recognized the importance of spending time outside of academic pursuits as a class. Also, the times that our team has spent sharing meals and playing with our Jamaican partners have been some of our more rich and salient memories. Particularly in our times of sharing with our

Jamaican partners, we have seen our inner-circles of caring augmented to include residents of a far-away place.

Finally, I will continue to struggle to keep the conversations going as one experience ends and planning for the next begins. This includes conversations among the US team members and between the US team and our Jamaican partners. Diverse and accessible communicative mechanisms will continue to be developed as we seek to continue to reflect on experiences, share what we learned and how we were served by each other, and what we envision for the future.

Research considerations

In addition to this work I plan to continue personally with our partnership in Jamaica, I also have suggestions for future studies that researchers, interested in extending the possibilities for service learning, in general, and critical service learning, in particular, may want to take up. I mention them with the possibility that I may personally take them up in the future, but with the realization that it may be impossible to treat them all.

Longitudinal study to gauge effects of critical service learning on ‘servers’ and ‘served’. Although I have spent the last five years in this partnership, this study only comprises a seven-month period. At times, I have used my knowledge of our past together to bring further understanding to a situation, but was relatively limited to the information I could bring to bear, since, outside of this experience, I have only completed one other research study in my past work in Jamaica. A longitudinal study of critical service learning would serve a couple of purposes. One, it would show how the partnership evolves over time, how and to what degree the caring solidarity emerges, and

what ameliorative ends are reached. Two, a longitudinal study that includes past partners who are no longer affiliated with the partnership may provide some evidence to how past critical service learning experiences inform one's future beliefs or role in society. In particular, I'm considering catching up with the student five years down the road, who took part in a critical service learning experience, and finding out how that past critical service learning experience changed, did not change, or continues to change their life and decisions.

In addition to either of these thoughts for a future longitudinal study, it is instructive to note that an ethnographic study is still a viable research strategy for studying what develops between 'servers' and 'served'. Instead of focusing on a developing "culture," however, it may be more accurate to interpret, analyze, and theorize in terms of community. Although this study claims to seek an understanding of the emerging culture among the US team and between the US team and our Jamaican partners, this claim may be somewhat inflated given the temporality of interaction between all partners involved. To seek an understanding of what develops in terms of community—that is, examining partners' emerging relational identities—offers a much more realistic approach and potentially more useful results.

A study involving teachers only. As I mentioned in the last section, an appropriate next step for studying the efficacy of critical service learning would be launching the framework and theory in a teacher education program. For example, many education programs identify a course or set of courses that should focus on diversity. Implementing a critical service learning component into one or all of these courses would be an appropriate infusion and may provide some potentially provocative results for a

further evolution of the critical service learning framework and theory. Aside from the kind of analysis and further evolution that would result, an additional longitudinal study that gauges how teachers use these experiences in their future curriculums is worthwhile.

Evaluation in critical service learning and the potential to cast service learning, in general, as something other than a “class.” As the analysis in chapter 6 clearly pointed out, there are limitations associated with the aspect of service learning experience that deals with the class. Issues of how to team-teach, what should count as reflection, and how to evaluate jumped out as problematics in this study and in this experience. Future research should be directed specifically at issues of evaluation in critical service learning. What evaluative methods are appropriate? What kind of reflective strategies are appropriate (and measurable) as service learning fights for its academic life? Although service learning, with its focus on the learning and reflective component, has been a worthwhile enhancement over traditional community service projects, what problematics have arisen that limit its possibilities by ‘disciplining’ it as a class?

More development of the context of critical service learning experiences. While this dissertation dedicates an entire chapter to the development of the context of this experience and attempts to provide a model for future teachers of critical service learning, more could be done that would provide an even richer picture. As I stated in chapter 3, the way I cast this context related directly to the introductory topics Professor Mark and I covered in PHI 220. Given that “Jamaica” is an incredibly broad topic, it seemed most feasible to present the context of our service learning experience the way we presented it to our students. Although this strategy offered a finite frame with which to present the material, it also may have limited potentially thicker examinations of the cultural

landscapes. Therefore, since context-building is so vital to the critical service learning experience and an ongoing praxis for the activation and re-activation of the critical service learning framework and theory in the evolving partnership is demonstrated throughout, it is both instructive and imperative to say more about the future coverage of these cultural landscapes before I conclude.

In the proceeding paragraphs I explore just three of several possibilities for future enhancement of the context. This exploration, on the one hand, signals my evolving understanding of the place where I have worked over the last five summers and offers evidence that the sixth trip will be even more critical. On the other hand, it also cautions researchers as to the near impossibility of cohesively constructing the entire context. In fact, if not careful, this context-building can become “imperialistic” (Bolles, 1996). That is, if the context is not critically constructed and persistently problematized, readers may reach conclusions about the service partners that were unintended. Thus, with one eye on my evolving understanding and the other eye on these potentially unintentional conclusions, I suggest the following enhancements of the religious, political, and social landscapes.⁶¹

In terms of the religious landscape, I acknowledged in chapter 3 that more could be researched on Rastafarianism and the Afro-Jamaican religious legacies in order to more fully develop this context. Through the interpretation and analysis of my data, it became clear that this enhanced development of the religious landscape is more than warranted given many of our team’s experience outside of Westminster Holy Church/School with local Rasta residents like Callen, Barrett, and Saul. Nicholas

⁶¹ I cannot overstate the assistance Dr. Faye Harrison, Professor of Anthropology at the University of Tennessee, provided for the continual problematization and development of these cultural landscapes.

particularly emphasized this need when talking about his experience at The Columbus Project and theorizing that Rastafarianism seems to have more “practical applications” and is more the “people’s religion of Jamaica.” Had Professor Mark and I expanded our discussion of religion in Jamaica beyond Pentecostalism, perhaps Nicholas would have had more “words” (Freire, 1987) with which to name his experience.

A better developed context of multiple religious beliefs and religious legacies, then, may provide an even richer backdrop for understanding the role religion plays in Jamaica and clearer insight into the “ideology of lived experience” (Comaroff, 1985)—the extent to which Jamaicans have ‘changed through use’ and “indigenized” (Appadurai, 1999) certain religious practices. In addition, for my own research interest, this better developed context may also provide a sturdier foundation for comparing or contrasting what I consider to be our more secular intervention to other more mission-like interventions. These comparisons or contrasts could be investigated from several perspectives: our team, our Jamaican partners, mission teams that we meet, outside observers, etc. Although our team has gone to some length to distance ourselves from a mission approach, we are still often perceived in this role. A study of this type may help shed some light on how teams might go about achieving a less mission-like partnership/experience.

In terms of the political landscape, two possible enhancements are noteworthy. First, the political and economic landscapes could be combined into one in order to examine the political economy of Jamaica. Although I noted in chapter 3 that there is quite a bit of overlap, I chose to keep them separate in order to focus some attention on the political figures that led Jamaica in the 1970s and 80s. These decades were of interest

to both Professor Mark and me, as this was the period within which Jamaica made the turn from democratic socialism and a relationship with Cuba to loan-making with the IMF and a policy of exceptionalism (“Follow the West”). Providing a focus on Michael Manley in the 1970s and Edward Seaga in the 1980s gave us the platform we wanted. However, considering even this brief review, it was impossible to talk about the political and economic landscapes, discreetly. Therefore, given the clear overlap, one worthwhile consideration for the future involves merging the political and economic landscapes into a politico-economic landscape.

Second, if the two landscapes continue to be covered separately with an acknowledgment of their overlap, an important addition to the political landscape would include a more nuanced discussion of reproduction. In chapter 3 I claimed that reproduction works as an arm of hegemony. Recalling my discussion with the Jamaican professor regarding the condition of injustice that exists and, more currently, considering Jamaica’s recent election, a discussion and examination of state violence as a coercive force and reproductive agent is warranted.⁶²

To review, hegemony works as a non-violent, reproductive agent; is negotiated between oppressed and oppressor; and is never a zero-sum game. State coercion, on the other hand, is frequently violent, incorporates little negotiation, and often produces irreversible or irreparable conditions of fear and hopelessness. To solely cast Jamaicans as players in the game of hegemony is to provide only a portion of the picture. For the future, a discussion of the political landscape, whether discreet or combined with the

⁶² Articles related to the issue of political and state violence (e.g., “Sec. and political leaders locked in meeting to discuss violence,” October 8, 2002; “Three injured in political fracas in Black River,” October 9, 2002; and “PNP calls off tour of East and Central Kingston,” October 9, 2002) can be found on the *RJR News* website at www.radiojamaica.com.

economic, should include an articulation of hegemony and state/political violence/coercion vis-à-vis reproduction.

Finally, in terms of the social landscape, more needs to be considered regarding kinship. Although I point to the Euro-western lens I bring to my view of this landscape in chapter 3, there is quite a bit more that could be said. By revealing three cases of family I encountered in Jamaica the last five years (the pastor as faithful husband, the woman whose husband works in the US, and the woman who has children by multiple fathers), I tried to present a multiperspectival, if still a little naïve, view of Jamaican family life. In reviewing this description and recalling our coverage of information in PHI 220, some of the unintended conclusions that I feared above are possible without some further enhancement in this discussion.

In the future the social landscape demands a more detailed discussion of the “complex networks of obligation and support” that Beverly Greene (1995, pg. 29) refers to as “kinship relations.” This discussion of kinship relations could begin with a closer examination of gender roles in order to “reassess and render more complex those generalizations” (Fox, 1999, pg. 75) that tend to emerge regarding Jamaican men and women.

For example, my worry over the fidelity of the husband who travels to the US for work might be supplemented with a discussion of women who migrate for work. In addition, it may also be informative to investigate the new sensitivities that migrating men bring to their marriages or relationships when they return to Jamaica, regarding the flexibility of gender roles (Fox, 1999). A closer look at these gender roles—how they are constructed and what the recent sociological and anthropological research reveals—may

go to some length to shatter the stereotypes created by Euro-Western (and even Jamaican) middle-class cultural ‘norms, which may also, unfortunately and unintentionally, exist in the three cases I provided earlier in chapter 3.

The discussion of kinship relations could continue with a discussion of conjugality (and/or marriage) and consanguinity. According to Tony Whitehead (1976), conjugality acts to extend the kinship system. With more children, the support system extends. Taken out of context, however, numerous conjugal relations may be equated with promiscuity. Sudhanshu Handa refutes, “While some early writers labeled Caribbean families as deviant because they did not fit the typical Western ideal of a nuclear unit, others have suggested that these residential, kinship, and mating patterns are an adaptive response to local economic conditions” (pg. 794).

In terms of consanguineal or blood relationships vs. conjugal or marriage relationships, it would be instructive to augment the discussion of gender roles and kin groups with a more particularized understanding of women’s roles within kin groups. As Niara Sudarkasa (1996) points out, “The focus of conjugal roles of women to the near exclusion of analyses of their functioning in consanguineal roles derives . . . from the obsession of Western scholars with analyses of the nuclear family and the operation of the principle of conjugality in determining kin relations” (pg. 78). Sudarkasa goes on to conclude:

The African emphasis on consanguinity, as opposed to conjugality, helps to explain much of black African kinship, including, for example, the formation of households around two-or three-generational clusters of “blood relations”; the transcendental extended family networks that

characterized black family organization . . . ; the special obligations for mutual assistance and support that characterized relationships between sisters, regardless of their marital statuses; and the tendency, until recently, for unmarried black women with children to reside with their “blood” relatives, rather than in households of their own (pg. 85).

Coverage of this issue of conjugality vs. consanguinity vis-à-vis kinship relations would be helpful in unraveling and evolving a future team’s understanding of the three cases I provided in chapter 3 as the woman with the husband working in the US and the woman with children by multiple fathers both reside within extended, consanguineal residential networks.

Although these suggestions for future development of the cultural landscapes in the context-building for future experiences only scratch the surface of what is possible or necessary, they do signal an instructive evolution in the praxis of this partnership. This concluding discussion shows both the promise and problematic of developing the context of a critical service learning experience. While instructors of critical service learning may not be able to always construct such a thick depiction, the larger point remains that a careful and constantly troubled development should be attempted in order to prepare partners to sensitively act in the experience.

Studies on the context of place. Finally, in addition to the contextual issue of the cultural landscapes of Jamaica, more could be investigated in the future regarding contexts of place. For example, a future study could focus on the development of new partnerships either inside or outside Jamaica, since some of the partnerships in this study are going into their sixth year. This exploration of new partnerships could reveal an even

broader picture of the possibilities or problematics of the critical service learning framework and theory. As another example, a future study could investigate the effect accommodations have on a critical service learning experience (in light of our experience at the hotel).

A few closing remarks

Although I have probably said enough already, I conclude by providing just a few final comments that help bring closure to this entire dissertation. As I mentioned in the preface, I hoped to reach out through the noise and bring the reader something real—to give you, the reader, the same resurrected feeling I have felt as I continue to turn corners and travel down new streets like a boy on a bike in unfamiliar neighborhoods. I hope it has been both real and resurrecting for you.

The shared story that has emerged from my latest ‘trip’ signals for me both an end and a beginning. On the one hand, I have reached the fruition of one of my life’s goals as I complete this dissertation and achieve my doctorate. This experience, made up of both extreme joys and sadness, has, at the very least, been one of ultimate fulfillment. On the other hand, I have also come upon the precipice of my future, looking out over a vast field of possibilities toward the ultimate goal of human liberation.

To say thanks to all who have led me to the realization of this dream and precipice is not to say enough. The dreams, hopes, tragedies, insight, advice, and love that have been shared and offered by friends, informants, teachers, advisors, and my partner, have sustained and propelled me. Instead of my thanks, I offer my future actions in the struggle toward justice as my tribute to your sacrifices and love. Know that you have

played no small part in this action. You have nurtured and fostered a hope and a dream. I now work to make these hopes and dreams a reality. Peace.

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LIST OF REFERENCES

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

SYLLABUS

Philosophy 220: The Philosophy of Education

Dr. Mark Lucas; Adam Renner

Spring 2002

Prerequisites: Must attend Service learning Project in Montego Bay, Jamaica

*This course fulfills the Values and Ethics component of the Core Curriculum

General Purpose of the Course:

This course will be conducted as a seminar by Dr. Lucas and Mr. Renner, and our service project will be coordinated by Paul Johnson of the Accounting Department; a few other St. James faculty are expected to accompany the class to Jamaica. We intend to integrate several areas of thought into our preparation for the service experience in Jamaica. We will focus some of our attention on particular feature of Jamaican culture, while we will also consider various components of educational theory as a form of liberating praxis - that is, active learning which is at once thoughtful, reflective, and socially applicable.

Course Requirements:

Each participant is expected to attend each class meeting and actively engage in thought and dialogue. Each participant should be prepared to discuss reading material assigned for each class, to engage in all facets of our service project, and to bring a reflective journal, assigned reading material, and any other items specified by the instructors, to each class.

Specific assignments and grades:

1. Journal - will be collected each month. More details concerning format and specific topics to address will be given in class. (15 points, Pass/fail)
2. Papers - two smaller (4-5 page) and one larger (8-10 page) essays will be required. Details will be given in class. (60 points)
3. Service Component (10 points, Pass/fail)
4. Class attendance and participation (15 points)

Note on attendance: students will have one letter grade deducted from their final grade for each class missed beyond the second; students who miss more than four classes (for any reason) will be dropped from the course.

Course Schedule:

Introduction - Jan 11

History - January 25

Chapters 1-3 of Lake, O. (1998). *Rastafari Women*. Durham: Carolina Academic Press.

“The black worker” in Dubois, W. (1992). *Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1880*. NY: Macmillan Books.

Religion - February 8

“Introduction” in Austin-Broos, D. (1997). *Jamaica Genesis: Religion and the Politics of Moral Orders*. Chicago: University of Chicago.

Renner, A. (2001). Despite all my rage [am I] still just a rat in a cage: An exploration of reproduction and resistance. *Working Papers*, 1 (1).
web.utk.edu/~mmasucci.

Chapter 3 of Boff, L. & Boff, C. (1987). *Introducing Liberation Theology*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis.

Politics-February 22

Harrison, F. (1997). The gendered politics and violence of structural adjustment: A view from Jamaica. In *Situated Lives: Gender and Culture in Everyday Life*. L. Lamphere et al, (eds.), Pp. 451-468. NY: Routledge.

Farmer, P. (1997). On social suffering and structural violence: A view from below. In *Social Suffering*, A. Kleinman et al (eds.), Pp. 261-283. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Crawford, J. (2001). The rights of peoples: "Peoples" or "Governments"? In P. Hayden (ed.) *The Philosophy of Human Rights*, Pp. 427-444., St. Paul, MN: Paragon House.

PAPER #1 Due

Economics-March 8

Robotham, D. (1996). Transnationalism in the Caribbean: Formal and informal. *American Ethnologist*, 25 (2), Pp. 307-321.

Khor, M. (1996). Global economy and the third world. In J. Mander & E. Goldsmith (eds.) *The Case Against the Global Economy: And a return toward the local*, Pp. 47-59, San Francisco: Sierra Club Books.

Morris, D. (1996). Free trade: The great destroyer. In J. Mander & E. Goldsmith (eds.) *The Case Against the Global Economy: And a return toward the local*, Pp. 218-228, San Francisco: Sierra Club Books.

Social/familial/cultural - March 22

Ch. 4 from Douglas, L. (1992). *The Power of Sentiment: Love, Hierarchy, and the Jamaican Family Elite*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Barnet, R. & Cavanagh, J. (1996). Homogenization of global culture. In J. Mander & E. Goldsmith (eds.) *The Case Against the Global Economy: And a return toward the local*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books.

Plato, *The Republic*, selections from Book III, V

Service learning-April 12

Keith, N. (1997). Doing service projects in urban settings. In A. Watterman (ed.) *Service Learning: Applications from the research*, Pp. 127-150. London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Carver, R. L. (1997). Theoretical underpinnings of service learning. *Theory into Practice*, 36 (3), Pp. 143-149.

Chapters 1 & 2 Dewey, J. (1956). *Experience and Education*. New York: MacMillan.

PAPER #2 Due

Education-April 26

Hepburn, M. (1997). Service learning in civic education: A concept with long, sturdy roots. *Theory into Practice*, 36 (3), Pp. 136-142.

Wade, R. (2000). From a Distance: Service learning and social justice. In C. O'Grady (ed) *Integrating Service Learning and Multicultural Education in Colleges and Education*, Pp. 93-112, NJ: LEA

Bourdieu, P. (1977). Cultural reproduction and social reproduction. In J. Karabel & A.H. Hansley (eds.) *Power and Ideology in Education*. New York: Oxford University Press.

McDermott, R. P. (1982). Social relations as contexts for learning in school. In E. Bredo & W. Feinberg (eds.) *Knowledge and Values in Social and Educational Research*, Pp. 252-271, Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Multiculturalism -May 3

Lesourd, S. (1997). Community service in a multicultural nation. *Theory into Practice*, 36 (3), Pp. 157-163.

Churchill, W. (1998). White Studies: The intellectual imperialism of US Higher Education. In C. Willett (ed.) *Theorizing Multiculturalism: A guide to the current debate*, Pp. 334-349, Malden, MA: Blackwell Press.

Green, J. (1998). Educational multiculturalism, critical pluralism, and deep democracy. In C. Willett (ed.) *Theorizing Multiculturalism: A guide to the current debate*, Pp. 422-443, Malden, MA: Blackwell Press.

Praxis and Liberation-May 8

Ch. 4 from Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. NY: Continuum.

Social Justice and Care – May 11

Fisher, S. (June 5, 1997). Opening Remarks to The Service Learning for Social Justice Conference in Appalachia.

Masucci, M. & Renner, A. (2002). The evolution of critical service learning for education: Four problematics. *Resources in Education: ERIC Clearinghouse*, ED456962.

Reading on Care, TBA.

June 5--TBA

June 7

Final Reflections

FINAL PAPER DUE

APPENDIX 2

SAMPLE MEETING AGENDA

3.8.02

“Free trade is the religion of our age. . . .It assumes that the highest good is to shop” (David Morris)

Opening Reflection: ****

Reflective exercise: An important part of this overall service experience is coming to know yourself better—to reach a more critical consciousness. In an effort toward this heightened state of awareness, I want you to begin thinking about who you are. If asked, how would you describe yourself to others: What are your defining characteristics and what are some of your core beliefs about the world? When you look to the future, where do you see yourself in five years and what will you be doing there? What in life are you most passionate about? What is one hope you have for the world? How does your involvement with this trip address any or all of these previous questions?

Class: Discuss Economics—Robotham, Khor, and Morris

Collect journals and paper

Assign Secretary for week

Email and phone list

Updates on fundraisers: letters, car wash, T-shirts, trees, churches

Updates on \$, accommodations, and transportation
April 1--\$300, May 1--\$300

Itinerary updates

Small group: work on themes, schedule time to get together outside of meetings, start brainstorming for lesson plans for Westminster and Matthews (she wants computer games)

Large group discussion about small group work
And plan for pre-trip cookout/party

Sign up for open and closing reflections next week

Joys and concerns

Closing reflection: ****.

APPENDIX 3

INFORMED CONSENT (FOR UNITED STATES PARTICIPANTS)

Title: *An ethnography of a service learning experience in Jamaica*

You are invited to take part in a research study. I want to conduct this research in an effort to improve relationships between service groups from the United States and Jamaican social service agencies, using a particular form of service learning. I believe this form of service learning that I call “critical service learning” has the potential to develop solidaristic cross-cultural communities that can work for more just and caring conditions in our world.

As part of my research, I will be conducting a series of observations during our meetings here at the college and in the schools and orphanages while we are in Jamaica. I will be observing, particularly, the developing relationship between you and our Jamaican partners. My final report will reveal some of these interactions, but your name will be made anonymous and identity will be kept confidential. You will have an opportunity to read portions of my analysis that pertain to these interactions so that you may provide additional feedback if you would like. You may, of course, choose to not participate at all or end your participation in this study at any time.

I do not foresee any risk of your involvement in this study. Please understand that your decision to take part in this study in no way will affect your final grade in the course, PHI 220. Know also that I will be seeking interviews from a few of you that will help me gain a more in-depth understanding of your impressions of this service experience. These informants will not receive any extra credit in the course for their involvement in this portion of the study. Three or four informants will be selected that may provide as diverse a range of experience as possible.

This consent form will be stored in a locked file at the University of Tennessee in HPER, Room 335 for a period of three years. If you have any concerns about your participation in this study at any time, please feel free to contact the Office of Research at the University of Tennessee, (865) 974-3466 or myself, Adam Renner, at (865) 974-8848 or arenner1@utk.edu.

I have read the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study.

Name_____ Signature_____

Organization_____ Date_____

Investigator_____ Date_____

APPENDIX 4

ITINERARY

Tues	May 14	Arrive		
Wed	May 15	Cambridge	New Oxford	***
Thurs	May 16	Cambridge	New Oxford (football match with community)	Large group meeting
Fri	May 17	Cambridge	New Oxford	
Sat	May 18	Visit local communities (optional)		
Sun	May 19	Church		Large group meeting
Mon	May 20	Westminster		
Tues	May 21	Westminster		Service at Westminster
Wed	May 22	Westminster		
Thurs	May 23	Westminster (construction)		Large group meeting
Fri	May 24	Matthews' School		
Sat	May 25	Trip to south coast		
Sun	May 26	Church	Visit Matthews Community (optional)	Large group meeting
Mon	May 27	Matthews' School		
Tues	May 28	Depart		

*** On nights when no large group meeting is held, small groups should meet for one half hour to discuss and reflect on the day's events

APPENDIX 5

INFORMED CONSENT (FOR UNITED STATES INFORMANTS)

Title: *An ethnography of a service learning experience in Jamaica*

In addition to my observations of your interactions with our team and our Jamaican partners, I would like to conduct a series of three interviews with you that will last approximately one hour each. These interviews will be conducted at the three stages of our service learning experience: before we go to Jamaica, while we are there, and when we get home. These interviews will seek your experience in taking part in this service learning intervention.

I plan to tape record our conversations so that I may more easily recall what we talked about at a later date. You will have an opportunity to review the transcripts from these interviews that I will personally transcribe in order for you to make any additions or deletions from the record in the future.

Again, your decision to participate in this research study at this level has no bearing on your final grade in PHI 220; thus, you may feel free to end any or all of your involvement at any time. The transcribed tapes will be erased when I am finished and your name will be made anonymous in the final dissertation.

This consent form will be stored in a locked file at the University of Tennessee in HPER, Room 335 for a period of three years. If you have any concerns about your participation in this study at any time, please feel free to contact the Office of Research at the University of Tennessee, (865) 974-3466 or myself, Adam Renner, at (865) 974-8848 or arenner1@utk.edu.

I have read the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study.

Name _____ Signature _____

Organization _____ Date _____

Investigator _____ Date _____

APPENDIX 6

INFORMED CONSENT (FOR JAMAICAN INFORMANTS)

Title: *Building Bridges: An ethnography of a service learning experience in Jamaica*

You are invited to take part in a research study. I want to conduct this research in an effort to improve relationships between service groups from the United States and Jamaican social service agencies, using a particular form of service learning. I believe this form of service learning that I term “critical service learning” has the potential to develop solidaristic cross-cultural communities that can work for a more just and caring condition in our world.

During my visit here I would like to observe the setting of your facility and pay particular attention to the interactions of the students from Thomas More College with you and your children. If you are also agreeable, I would like to interview you twice during our time at your facility: once when we get here on the first day and once on the last day of our visit—each interview lasting about one hour. I want to tape record this interview as I have done in the past so that I can better recall what we talked about later. In my interview and observation of your organization, I will portray as accurately as possible the important work you do for the children here. You will also, of course, receive a copy of the interview transcript should you want to make any additions or deletions from our taped conversation in the future. In addition, I will also make a copy of the analysis section of my report available to you should you want to make any further contributions.

Please understand that you may choose to end your participation at any time. Our taped conversations will be transcribed by me and erased when I am finished. Due to the important and sensitive information that we may talk about in the course of our interviews your name and organization will remain anonymous and your identity will be kept confidential in the final report.

This consent form will be stored in a locked file at the University of Tennessee in HPER, Room 335 for a period of three years. If you have any concerns about your participation in the study at any time, please feel free to contact the Office of Research at the University of Tennessee, (865) 974-3466 or myself, Adam Renner, at (865) 974-8848.

I have read the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study.

Name_____ Signature_____

Organization_____ Date_____

Investigator_____ Date_____

APPENDIX 7

FIRST INTERVIEW PROTOCOL WITH US INFORMANTS

Opening statement: This is Adam Renner conducting an interview of _____ as an informant in my dissertation research project, which is investigating how the critical service learning framework plays out in this service trip to Jamaica. _____, I want to ensure you that I will keep your identity confidential in this study as I will be the only person with access to this tape recording and your name will be changed in the actual dissertation. I want to thank you, _____, for taking part in this study as I believe you have valuable information regarding *your* experience as a part of this service project. _____, do I have permission to tape-record this conversation?

From your initial journal writing experiences in this course regarding “who are you?” what has stood out for you in this process?

Tell me about your experience with service.

What compelled you to take up this service learning project? Has anything changed about your reasons since we began preparing for the project?

Tell me what you know about Jamaica or its people?

What do you see as your role in this service learning project as a student from the United States going to a Third World Country like Jamaica?

What do you look forward to in this service learning project? (regarding Jamaica?) (regarding the Jamaican people?) (regarding the work?)

What are you concerned about in this service learning project? (regarding Jamaica?) (regarding the Jamaican people?) (regarding the work?)

What do you anticipate we will accomplish while we are in Jamaica? What are the long-term possibilities you see for this service learning project?

What is one hope you have for the world?

APPENDIX 8

SECOND INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR US INFORMANTS

Opening statement: This is Adam Renner conducting an interview of _____ as an informant in my dissertation research project, which is investigating how the critical service learning framework plays out in this service trip to Jamaica. _____, I want to ensure you that I will keep your identity confidential in this study as I will be the only person with access to this tape recording and your name will be changed in the actual dissertation. I want to thank you, _____, for taking part in this study as I believe you have valuable information regarding *your* experience as a part of this service project. _____, do I have permission to tape-record this conversation?

What has stood out for you most so far in this experience?

What part of our preparation has helped you the most in our intervention here so far?

What have you felt unprepared for?

Thinking back to what you were looking forward to or feeling concerned about, how have these played out in Jamaica so far?

Tell me what you know about Jamaica or its people?

Now that we are here, what do you see as your role in this service learning project as a student from the United States going to a Third World Country like Jamaica?

Now that we have done some of the work we were preparing for, what do you anticipate we will accomplish while we are in Jamaica? What are the long-term possibilities you see for this service learning project?

APPENDIX 9

THIRD INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR US INFORMANTS

Opening statement: This is Adam Renner conducting an interview of _____ as an informant in my dissertation research project, which is investigating how the critical service learning framework plays out in this service trip to Jamaica. _____, I want to ensure you that I will keep your identity confidential in this study as I will be the only person with access to this tape recording and your name will be changed in the actual dissertation. I want to thank you, _____, for taking part in this study as I believe you have valuable information regarding *your* experience as a part of this service project. _____, do I have permission to tape-record this conversation?

Tell me about who you are now. (What have you realized as a result of this experience? Or, what has changed for you?)

Thinking back to what you thought your role would be in this project at the outset, did anything change? What was your role?

Now that we have been home for a little bit, tell me about how you might use this experience in Jamaica in your everyday life?

What do you know about Jamaica now? What do you know about the people?

How do you feel you (or we) can maintain a connection to the Jamaicans we have worked with?

What do you feel like we accomplished there?

What do you know about service learning as a result of this experience? (What about the process helped you prepare for and deal with this experience in Jamaica?) (What else would have helped?)

If you were writing a one-line promotional ad for service learning, how would it read?

Name three things you think service learning can do.

Has your hope for the world changed as a result of this experience? (How so?)

APPENDIX 10

FIRST INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR JAMAICAN INFORMANTS

Opening statement: This is Adam Renner conducting an interview of _____ as an informant in my dissertation research project, which is investigating how the critical service learning framework plays out in this service trip to Jamaica. _____, I want to ensure you that I will keep your identity confidential in this study as I will be the only person with access to this tape recording and your name will be changed in the actual dissertation. I want to thank you, _____, for taking part in this study as I believe you have valuable information regarding *your* experience as a part of this service project. _____, do I have permission to tape-record this conversation?

Tell me about your experience working with American mission/service groups here at your orphanage/school.

Tell me about your experience working with our group in the past.

What do you consider to be your role when groups visit from the United States?

What do you anticipate we will accomplish during our time together?

What do you envision as the long term possibilities of this project?

What do you think is one of the biggest issues facing Jamaica today?

Does (or how does) this project have any bearing on this issues?

What is your one hope for the world?

APPENDIX 11

SECOND INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR JAMAICAN PARTICIPANTS

Tell me about your experience working with our group this year.

What do you feel like we accomplished together?

Based on our work together this year, have your thoughts about the long term possibilities of this project changed?

If you had to characterize the relationship between service groups in the United States and your organization, how would you describe it?

APPENDIX 12

ITEM, PATTERN, AND STRUCTURAL CODES

Descriptors

01	who are you	01	leader	(M1,S1)
		02	optimistic	(M1)
		03	passionate	(C1)
02	prev. serv. exp.	01	NJORTC	(M1)
		02	tutoring	(M1, P1, C1)
		03	young families project	(P1)
		04	boy/girl scouts	(P1, S1)
		05	working with disabled kids	(C1)
03	result of past service	01	“gratification”	(M1)
		02	“confirming of self-worth”	(M1)
		03	“eye-opening”	(P1)
04	why this trip	01	“something I’ve never done before”	(M1, P1)
		02	Moving out of “comfort zone”	(M1)
		03	“settle my soul”	(P1)
		04	pushing self in direction to help others	(P1)
		05	deal with “open contradiction” in life	(P1)
		06	moving beyond ignorance	(P1)
		07	searching for practice within phil.	(P1)
		08	“interesting”	(S1)
		09	if not now, when?	(S1)
		10	find out more about myself	(S1)
		11	exp. 3 rd wld. Poor first hand	(S1)
		12	have exp. others have had	(S1)
		13	“something totally different”	(C1)
10	hope	01	understanding	(M1, P1)
		02	acceptance	(M1)
		03	localization of community	(P1)
		04	access to good information	(P1)
		05	taking care of what is right front of us	(S1)
		06	respect	(C1)

Others

26	prepared/unprepared	01	readings	(C2)
		02	prior service work	(C2)
27	Hypocrites			(C2)
07	sense of accomplishment	01	“If I come away feeling good”	(M1)
		02	if people are learning	(C1)
		03	If we see gratitude	(C1)
11	metaphor	01	butterfly	(M1)
		02	becoming	(P2, P3)
12	title of story	01	“splendor: god can explain”	(M2)
13	community (see 24: relationships)			

20	connection to prev. exp.	01	home	(M2)
21	conversations with JA	01	free time	(M2)

“Butterflies” and “Becoming” (enduring effects)

05	Jamaica (as contradiction)	01	Butterfly	(M1)
		02	rough	(M1, M3)
		03	Happy	(M2, M3)
		04	warm place	(P1)
		05	“you just chill”	(P2)
		06	“These are God’s people”	(P2)
		07	life is a struggle	(S1)
		08	“typical poor life”	(C1)
		09	people ignored	(M3)
		10	people in need	(M3)
		11	not all tourism	(M3)
		12	“life is a lot simpler”	(M3)
		13	more genuine	(P3)
		14	true to themselves	(P3)
		15	Content	(P3)
		16	not resentful	(P3)
		17	trash	(S3)
		18	“it is completely different”	(S3)
		19	“Hide the truth”	(S3)
		20	Hollywood version	(P1)
		21	corrupt politicians	(L)
		22	poor education system	(L)
		23	poverty	(L)
		24	“we can do better”	(L)
06	role	01	“to learn whatever they teach”	(M1, C2)
		02	“to broaden my perception”	(M1)
		03	student	(M2)
		04	observer	(M2)
		05	“do what I’m told”	(P1)
		06	an “instrument in the flow”	(P2)
		07	to understand	(S1, S2, C1)
		08	to be part of the group	(S2)
		09	to help for a little bit	(C1, M3)
		10	to teach	(C1)
		11	life experience	(C2)
		12	change “boundaries”	(C2)
		13	to “show up”	(M3)
22	Long term personal	01	appreciation for what you have	(M2)
		02	exploring self-worth	(M2)
		04	willing to work at justice	(P2)
		08	going back	(M3, C2, S3, P3)
		09	be more responsible	(P3)
		10	uphold ideals	(P3)
		11	do more work here	(P3, C2)
16	Existence	13	leadership	(S3)
		01	confirmation—see also 11-02	(M2)
34	Explaining kids like this	01	God is there	J
18	Service Learning	04	lots of work	(M2)
		05	settling soul	(P2)
		13	impact	(M3, P3)
		18	grew as person	(P3, S3)
		22	learning about how life works	(P3)

		23	you have to see it to believe it	(P3)
		30	“Made me more of an individual”	(S3)
		31	“Made me more aware of my surroundings”	(S3)
09	long term imp. of project	01	getting project to St. James	(M1, P1, S3)
		02	continuing the project	(M1, P2)
		06	getting people educated	(C1)
		07	internships for teaching in JA schools	(C2)
		09	process of becoming—agent in flux	(P2)

Breadfruit (server/served)

14/15	(anti-) attachment	01	emotional	(M2)
24	relationships	01	with kids	(C2)
		02	with group	(C2)
		03	race	(C2)
		04	gender	(C2)
		05	with service partner	(M3)
		06	with nurses	
		07	with teachers	
		08	adult men	
		09	group vs. individual	(S2)
		10	understanding	(S1)
		11	Thanks on part of served	(L)
36	maintaining relationships	01	understanding	(M3)
		02	working together	(M3)
		03	communication	(M3)
		04	being there	(M3, S3)
		05	follow up	(P3)
		06	writing	(P3)
		07	cont. of experience	(S3)
		08	fulfilling promises	(S3)
25	community	01	entertaining each other	(C2)
		02	“varies in radical degrees”	(C2)
		03	middle ground	(C2)
		04	imp. of involvement in JA communities	(SG, L)
		05	“they are going to be OK	(M2)
		06	Roles in...	(M2)
29	Server/served	01	imp. of working through supervisor	(L)
		02	imp. of moving beyond b/w	(L)
		03	the children are most important	(L)
		04	imp. of planning ahead	(L)
		05	acknowledging dependence	(L)
		06	Imp. or 2-way relationship	(L)
		07	server didn’t overstep boundary	(P3)
		08	server not too passive either	(P3)
		09	built relationships on this trip	(S3)
		10	need to go more than once	(S3)
30	Experience with US	01	learning experience	(L)
		02	tolerant (based on dependent position	(L)
		03	not going to discard pride	(L)
33	Comp. US and JA	01	too much tech	
		02	JA as garden of Eden	
		03	children in these conditions back home	
32	indigenous knowledge	01	the land	
18	Service learning	01	understanding/learning vs. making change	(M2, P2)

		02	making a difference	(M2)
		03	as contradiction	(M2, M3, P3)
		11	imp. of other's experiences	(S2, M3)
		12	small vs. large group	(S2, P3)
		19	builds hope	(P3)
		20	sharing commitment	(P3)
		21	imp. of continuity	(P3, S3)
		25	building trust	(S3)
09	long term imp. for project	03	building understanding	(S1)
		04	building trust	(S2, S3)
		05	relieving the stress	(C1)
		08	building hope	(P3)
		09	grow together: be a part of us"	(L)
		11	make NO "ongoing institution"	(L)
		12	continue donations	(L)
23	short term imp. of project	01	making people feel better	(P2)
		02	roof	(P2)
		03	trust	(S2)
		04	new identity for group	(S2)
		05	temporary love	(C2)
		06	entertainment	(C2)
		07	finish school	(C1)

Breaching "Boundaries" (possibility of working toward ameliorative change)

08	fears	01	stepping on people's toes	(M1)
		02	don't want to offend based on inexp.	(M1)
		03	seen as hypocrites	(C1, P1)
		04	safety	(S1)
		05	disease from kids	(C1)
19	surprise/epiphany	01	racism	(M2)
		02	kids giving of themselves	(M2)
		03	How happy Jamaicans were	(M2, S2, S3)
		04	How much work SL is	(M2, P2)
		05	poverty	(P2)
		06	"how well-received we were"	(P2)
		07	pace of life	(P2)
		08	how "unworldly" I am	(P2)
		09	relationships	(S2)
		10	lack of color in houses/cars	(S2)
		11	New Oxford	(C2)
		12	issue of race	(C2)
		13	not what I expected	(C2)
		14	how much our presence meant	(P3)
		15	the issue of work	(P3)
		16	Sense of community	(P3)
		17	Trash	(S3)
		18	recognition of kids	
		19	classroom situation	
		20	what it takes to do these jobs everyday	
		21	how much it hurts	
		22	deer in headlights	
		23	heartbroken	
		24	makes you think about yourself and small things you complain about	
22	Long term personal	03	openmindedness and love	(P2)
		05	new sensitivity to race	(S2, C1)
		06	new sensitivity to gender	(S2)

		07	moving beyond “boundary” of AIDS	(C1)
		12	new sensitivity to ability	(S3)
		14	agency	(P1)
35	Coming home	01	not what you expect	(M3)
		02	hard to explain	(P3)
		03	Relief	(P3)
		04	changed the way I look at things	(P3)
		05	see things different	(S3)
		06	“we live in luxury”	(S3)
28	Diff between W and BH	01	learning	(C2)
		02	focus on church	(C2)
37	religion	01	TCP	(P3, S3)
		02	West.	(P3)
		03	Rastas	(P3)
		04	imp. part of Jamaica	(S3)
18	Service Learning	06	no prep for culture shock	(P2)
		07	long term vs. short term planning	(P2)
		08	practical vs. theoretical	(P2)
		10	readings no help	(S2)
		14	readings necessary	(M3, C2, P3, S3)
		15	prep “relieves tension”	(M3)
		16	prep provides sturdier rock	(M3)
		17	reflection gives time to “examine”	(M3)
		24	overcoming issue of race	(S3)
		26	different than other classes	(S3)
		27	reflections good	(S3)
		28	pre-action reflection good	(S3)
		29	class important	(S3)
		32	formal reflections unnecessary	(P3)
		33	need to do work ahead of time in US	(C2)
09	long term imp. for project	10	be visible in local community	(L)
		13	revolution in thought	(M2)

APPENDIX 13

CONTRIBUTION LETTER

Dear Contribution Committee,

As part of St. James College's efforts to encourage and support student and employee participation in volunteer service to others, 13 students and 6 faculty members will participate in a service learning trip to Montego Bay, Jamaica this May. The trip will serve as a culminating experience for a semester long course studying philosophical, historical, and sociological issues of injustice and social difference. During the trip, students will gain firsthand knowledge of the social context of Jamaica, which will complement what they learn in the course work. Part of this service work entails assisting in two orphanages and teaching in two schools. In addition to teaching in one of the schools, participants will also assist with some much-needed construction on both the classroom and the building itself.

We request your assistance for this worthwhile project with your donation. Monetary donations are of greatest aid (particularly for the construction materials), but anything you can give would be greatly appreciated. We are collecting supplies for the orphanages, such as cloth diapers, ointments and creams (Vaseline, aloe, etc.), over the counter medications for cough and cold, bed sheets, etc. We are also collecting school supplies, such as boxes of crayons, scissors, glue, paper, etc. Gift certificates will also be gratefully accepted. Your support of our students' efforts to provide much-needed supplies would be greatly appreciated.

Thanks for your consideration of this request. Should you have any questions or concerns regarding the above information, please contact me at...

APPENDIX 14

PACKING SUPPLIES AT ST. JAMES



APPENDIX 15

THE CARIBBEAN MANOR



APPENDIX 16

CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S HOME



APPENIDIX 17

NEW OXFORD CHILDREN'S HOME



APPENDIX 18

WESTMINSTER HOLY CHURCH/SCHOOL



APPENDIX 19

BENSON BASIC SCHOOL



APPENDIX 20

TOWARDS A CARING SOLIDARITY



VITA

Adam Renner was born in Cincinnati, OH on August 18, 1970. He was raised on the west side of Cincinnati and went to grade school at Our Lady of Lourdes. He graduated from Elder High School in 1988. From there, he went to Thomas More College in Crestview Hills, KY and received a B.A. in Mathematics. He completed both an alternative certification for teaching in 1997 and his M.A. in Education in 1999 at Northern Kentucky University in Highland Heights, KY. From there, he completed his Ph.D. in Education at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, TN.

Adam is currently Assistant Professor of Middle and Secondary Education at Bellarmine University in Louisville, KY.