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## Inside/Outside/In-between: Understanding how Jewish Identity Impacts the Lives and Narratives of Ashkenazi Female Public School Educators

Mindi Ellen Benditson

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Inside/Outside/In-between:

Understanding how Jewish Identity Impacts the Lives  
and Narratives of Ashkenazi Female Public School Educators

A Dissertation by

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Chapman University

Orange, CA

College of Educational Studies

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in Education

April 2016

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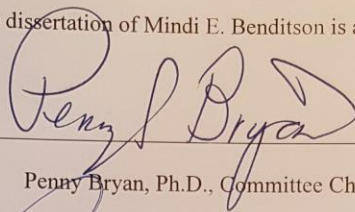
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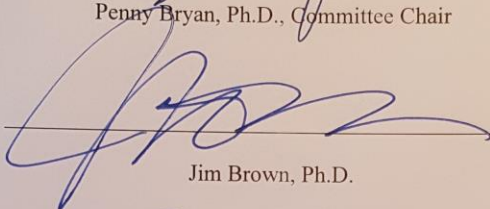
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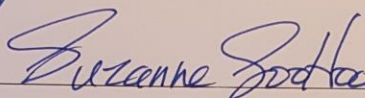
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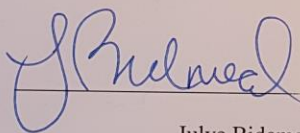
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Though I would like to say there is a specific order in which people will be thanked, it is only based on what I can remember at this point (I started writing this section at 5:20am one morning-after crafting it in my head for hours-nearly three weeks before my dissertation defense. However, I actually did not type this up until right before I needed to print out my dissertation. So if I forgot to include you, just know it was completely by accident and to be blamed on sleep deprivation caused by Nathan):

My first “shout out” goes to Chris Staple. He probably will never see this and probably doesn’t remember sending me to the wrong Starbucks location in Downey in 2010, but it is wasn’t for meeting with you, I would have never been on this journey. It was you who got the ball rolling-so thank you for the love/hate memory I have associated with you. Just kidding, but I really wouldn’t be able to say this dissertation was years in the making if you hadn’t asked me such an important question.

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HA moment for my master's thesis in 2009 to being part of my dissertation journey, you have really seen my evolution throughout this decade-long teacher-researcher adventure!

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Lastly, I would like to thank the women that participated in this study. Without you, there would be no study and I would be stuck trying to figure out the positionality of Jewish women in public schools on my own. Thank you for your patience while I figured out how to do the dissertation-even when I had no clue what I was doing! I cannot say how blessed I am to have met you and heard your stories. You have forever changed my life.



## ABSTRACT

Inside/Outside/In-between:

Understanding how Jewish Identity Impacts the Lives  
and Narratives of Ashkenazi Female Public School Educators

by Mindi E Benditson

Since Ashkenazi Jews in the United States are not a visible minority, it often becomes difficult to distinguish what/who is a Jew. As many Jewish females may appear to be of the dominant culture, they often get overlooked in discussions and courses on teacher education and multiculturalism/multicultural education. However, their identity as both Jewish and White and the absence of conversation regarding their multiple positions in education and in society can contest, as well as support, their connection to multiculturalism.

The purpose of this research was to identify how four middle class Ashkenazi females in the greater Los Angeles area understand their identities and experiences as Jews and as public school educators, how these multiple identities impact their perceptions of their pedagogy, and how these women navigate the structures of public schooling. Narrative Inquiry and Listening Guide method of analysis were utilized to present multilayered portraits of these women in order to challenge the status quo of the White female teacher identity and the positioning of Jewish females in regards to the perseverance of Christianity in public education.

Story threads emerged from the narratives which indicated that while Jewish identity is fluid and exists on a continuum over time, it was not a primary reason why these women became teachers. Although each woman made individual decisions

regarding the degree to which her Jewishness was presented in the classroom and on campus, they did not actively design their curriculum due to them being Jewish; rather they unconsciously incorporated aspects of Judaism in their pedagogy.

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## Chapter 1

### Researcher positionality

*“Why are you so fascinated with the topic of Jews and whether we know we are White? Are you trying to become the expert on Jews being White?”*

My husband asked me this not long after we were engaged, after we had recently traveled to Israel for his brother’s wedding, and I was in the midst of writing a paper for a class at the end of my first year of the PhD program. Though I would not say I was trying to become an expert on this topic, my desire to know more stemmed from a place of not knowing, which I hoped to one day be able to share with my future children, as well as other Ashkenazi Jews, so that they can understand why their “people” in the United States do not always “fit in” and how picking and choosing who Jews in America want to be can unintentionally deprive our people of a link between the past and the future.

Over the course of that past year, my sense of self had shifted dramatically. I do not know if that was the intent of Chapman’s PhD in Education program, or if it was by accident, but I remember looking back on those last 10 months of my life and realizing I had questioned more about who I was and how I knew this than I had in the last 26 years. Even if it was by mistake, I was now currently (if unexpectedly) in a new phase of life, which featured these overwhelming and ever-present questions constantly looming over me. This new phase of life made me recognize that in understanding how Jews became members of the dominant White culture in the United States, I needed to understand how I self-identify as a Jew in the United States.

## **How I became White**

My determination to understand Jewish identity in relation to White identity stems from my own experiences of unconsciously transitioning from only seeing myself as Jewish to naming my identity as White, but Jewish. However, if someone was to tell my 13 year old self that when I was older I would be researching the phenomenology of Ashkenazi Jewish Americans, including my own Jewish identity as a teacher in a public school, I would have thought that person was from another planet. At that age, I was preparing for my bat-mitzvah and was mainly focused on getting through the required Saturday morning service portion so I could enjoy the reception I thought I earned.

During my middle school years, religious school was not top priority for me; some of the teachers seemed to put as little effort into teaching as we did into learning. Since no one seemed to get kicked out of the program, I usually ditched class to meet up with my classmates who were also bored, even though we knew we would be caught every time we lied to the teacher about why we “took so long in the bathroom”. Even though my mother wanted me to have access to the religious education she never did, she also knew I did not want to be at religious school three days a week (two weekdays after public school for two hours and on Saturdays for three hours if I did not have a soccer game). This religious school experience was not like the temple I had previously attended where religious school meant practicing a language that is read from right to left, written either in print or script, with or without vowels; learning about holidays (the joyous and the serious) and the prayers associated with them; and hearing about a country that I was expected to be emotionally and spiritually connected to but was not at the time.

Looking back on my religious, cultural, and ethnic upbringing, my ditching religious school was just one of the many ways I chose to separate my Jewish identity from my secular identity. Although I cannot remember the specific moment I transitioned from seeing myself as only Jewish to being a member of the dominant White group, I know that I gradually started to put less emphasis on my Jewish identity while in public school as the years went on. Being Jewish was not something I grew to be ashamed of; rather, I grew to accept that I could be Jewish when I needed to be (on holidays, during religious ceremonies, and while eating certain foods), or when it would not cause me to encounter too much stigma or questioning from non-Jews.

Unlike my parents who grew up in Brooklyn, New York with large populations of Jews around them, I was raised in a suburb of Orange County, California that had only one temple: a Chabad, which is a mostly Orthodox place of worship (it follows the traditional and literal interpretation of the Torah). Since my parents did not want to raise us under the Orthodox branch of Judaism, we had to search elsewhere for a temple. Though we were able to find families within our city that went with us to a Conservative temple (one that believes Jewish law should change and adapt but stay true to the values of Judaism), the temple was not within our city limits. The temple we went to, Adat Ari Synagogue, looked nothing like the small, but beautiful Chabad in my city; Adat Ari was in an industrial park with very little signs indicating our presence in the neighboring city.

Even though that temple was nothing more than generic offices converted into classrooms and the sanctuary was a large empty room without pews, I learned the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, how to write my Hebrew name with the vowels, and the history of the Jews. Our family even joined a chavurah (a small group of like-minded Jews),



formed from four other Jewish families residing in our city. Our chavurah met at least once a month for dinners or parties; celebrated major Jewish holidays such as Hanukkah and Passover, and secular holidays such as New Year's Eve, Thanksgiving, and Fourth of July; and went on vacations together throughout the year. My parents felt the need to create a small, close-knit community like the ones found in Brooklyn where they had lived for over 30 years prior to coming to California. The chavurah even provided me a sense of "family" since all of my extended family lives on the east coast and all of my grandparents had passed away by the time I was eight.

Though we continued to spend holidays and some vacations with the families of the chavurah until the middle of my high school years, my Jewish identity became less emphasized when I began attending a new temple at the beginning of the fifth grade. This temple had its own sanctuary with pews and a beautifully decorated bimah, a gift shop, an early childhood learning center, and classrooms that were not in office buildings. Since this temple was Reform, my classmates did not welcome me at first because I knew more about the language and religion than they did. I knew I had to downplay my willingness to learn, to understand my Jewish identity, if I wanted to fit in; what I did not know then, was that this "downplaying" would serve as a foundation for how I navigated my Jewish identity in the secular and religious world for many years afterward.

Although I attended a secular public school and had been one of few Jewish students there and in my neighborhood, it was not until that fifth grade class religious school class that I learned to hide part of who I was. Growing up, it had never bothered me that my family had always been the only ones in the neighborhood without Christmas lights or a tree, or even extended family over for Easter egg hunts. We may not have had

the same holidays to celebrate, but we had our Hanukkah menorah and decorations in the front window, our own language and food, and a consistent invitation to our non-Jewish peers and neighbors so that they could understand what was important in our lives. I never felt the need to hide who I was in my neighborhood; however, I learned quickly in my fifth grade religious school class that Jews have to display their identity carefully (or not at all) in order not to damage their positioning within the larger group membership.

### **Flash-forward to 19 years later**

*I used to think that understanding Whiteness would be like trying to build a complete puzzle from pieces that come from different boxes. Just when a piece started to connect with others, a new box with distinctive pieces was introduced and the cycle of answering the question of Whiteness with new questions began again. However, as I progressed through the doctoral program and started to deeply question who I am and how I come to know my identity, I realized the metaphor I once gave to Whiteness only directly applied to the cycle of coming to know oneself as a whole.*

Although I mark the bubble on questionnaires that indicate I am White (only when there is not the *decline to answer* option), I do not see myself as represented solely by this bubble. Yet, surveys and standardized tests do not have a bubble for Jewish female public school educators who teach students of color and feel disgruntled with any previous understanding of their membership within the dominant White group. The more I had read about Whiteness, the more I felt I walked this fine line of insider/outsider privilege. I am able to move within communities sheltered by the privilege of lighter skin, but doing so overlooks part of my full identity and the history of oppression Jews have

faced by the dominant group and others, as well as Ashkenazi Jews' current "racial" positioning as White group members.

I used to think, as a *non-minority*-a White, non-bilingual, middle-class, then under 30 years old female from Orange County, CA-I would find it hard to identify fully with my students and their families, since many of them are people of color or are marginalized due to their economic, linguistic, or racial status. Coming out of a credential program which promoted multiculturalism and social justice (but only required me to take one class on diversity, voice, and equity), I thought that many of my future students would face hardships I never had to, or will never have to. My family has not had to worry about what it is like to face blatant economic and racial discrimination, but my awareness of cultural and religious difference stemmed from growing up in a city that once boasted the most churches per capita. Due to my *otherness*, I knew what it was like to be marginalized, yet I did not feel able to fully claim being *an other* because I could pass as a member of the larger White culture and therefore could escape othering in some circumstances.

In trying to deconstruct Whiteness in the United States, I kept coming back to this idea of why I did not see my own Whiteness. Similar to other fellow Jews, *White* people are labeled WASPs: White, Anglo-Saxon, Protestants. As I kept researching Whiteness and the privilege of being White, I became angry at two concepts: Why had I not known earlier about my involuntary inclusion into the dominant group and why did the idea of Whiteness not get discussed in any educational or religious institution prior to my own research?

Like many other people who are part of the dominant group in the United States, I did not have to come to terms with my true racial identity due to the privilege of being White, which affords me the opportunity to not constantly examine my racial status as compared to the dominant group, like people of color are forced to do. However, unlike many other White people, I felt the marginalization of being Jewish excluded me from being *White*. I did not always associate myself with the dominant group in society and I had never thought of myself as a person of color before my research in the doctoral program.

Yet, towards the end of the first semester in the doctoral program, I stumbled upon the topic of how Jews became White and why I did not identify as White when a colleague in a senior cohort of the program served as a teacher's assistant for a class I was struggling to write a final paper for. During a discussion at a Starbucks on rainy Saturday in November, two weeks before the assignment was due, we chatted about my literature review for the other class I was enrolled in at the time, an overview of White pre-service teachers and the impact of the "color-blind mentality" on them teaching students of color. I expressed frustrations with the credential program courses that did not prepare me for the reality of teaching in a school with a predominantly minority student population; furthermore, I shared with him some of my findings from my Master's thesis on how a White teacher talked about race with students of color, completed in my first year at my work site almost two years prior when I applied for the Ph.D. program. Even though I had researched Whiteness and the effect of not addressing a teacher's racial positionality when working with students of color, I stated I did not see myself as fully connected to the issues surrounding Whiteness due to my identity as a Jew. Upon hearing

this, he directly questioned me, saying, “Why don’t you see yourself as White”, which stunned me, as I had never been asked that before. Noticing I did not have an answer, he simply said, “Explore that”, which served as the first step in the journey to this dissertation.

### **Going back to the beginning**

Up until a family history project in the fourth grade, I only identified as Jewish and said that my family came from Brooklyn, New York because that was where my parents were born and raised. My teacher said that my family could not have come from there, meaning my family’s origin was from outside of the United States. Upon learning of my confusion, my parents had to explain to me that I had relatives who emigrated from Russia and Poland in the late 1800s and early 1900s and that I was also an Ashkenazi<sup>1</sup> Jew due to my family’s nationality. My parents never discussed being White and I grew up only associating myself as a Russian and Polish Jew; however, my mom always forced me to put *decline to answer* for my race if it was available on standardized questionnaires, since she felt it was no one’s business to categorize me based on a bubble. For so long I did not understand her reasoning for not having me mark the *White* bubble; it was just something I did when there was the bubble to opt out of identifying myself (if I could not opt out, I marked White, since I did not physically or culturally identify with any of the other options). Only when I began researching the progression of Jews as members of the White culture and what that meant for their group and individual identity did I start to comprehend her resistance to being categorized based on race (though, to this day, I still have not asked her directly about her reasons for declining to answer).

---

<sup>1</sup> Ashkenazi are Jews who have their roots in Western, Central, or Eastern Europe (Levine-Rasky, 2008; MacDonald-Dennis, 2006; Schoenberg, 2013).

During my first year in the doctoral program I started to gain insight as to why my parents taught me not to differentiate people based on skin color, nationality, or religious orientation. When my dad and I were looking through items in his attic that I had only heard about but never seen, I stumbled upon a postcard that my mom had sent to her father when she was traveling in Hawaii during the late 1960s-early 1970s. At first glance, the postcard featured my mom's distinct handwriting; as I read it out loud, I was shocked by what I saw. My mom wrote that my grandpa (who had passed away by the time I was eight years old) should not be prejudiced against her because she was so dark from being in the sun. I did not understand why my mom had to beg her father not to be prejudiced against her tanned skin, since she has the darker features that display her Russian heritage.

My dad explained that my grandparents and great-grandparents faced so much discrimination before they left Europe and when they arrived in the United States that they did not see themselves as part of the White culture or as people of color. Their anger at the oppression they faced caused them to be leery of situations where they or their children could be further identified as inferior. My grandparents' fear of being marginalized made them distrustful of certain social associations or of certain people, which translated at times into blatant intolerance. My father was afraid of perpetuating this fear and prejudice and vowed to raise his children with an accepting perspective of differences among people, though he did not clearly identify this viewpoint as *color-blind*. His actions in raising my brother and me as people who were not supposed judge others based on skin tone were similar to the approach that those in the dominant group take when they want to disengage with the reality of White racism and ignore the truth

about their position in society (Bell, 2002; Case & Hemmings, 2005; Gay, 2009; Marx & Pennington, 2003; McIntyre, 2002). Growing up, the idea of looking at the world through a color-blind lens was not something that was talked about by my family. Instead, my parents used our marginalization by being Jewish in a predominately Christian city to help me understand the importance of not marginalizing others.

**One is the loneliest number.**

In public school, I was taught to work with peers of different backgrounds and that whether people were *good* or *bad* was based on their character, not the shade of their skin. Only once, in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade, did I feel the hurt of someone being racist to me due to my skin color. As part of the curriculum for those enrolled in the technical program at our school, we were supposed to take a computer course every semester, with an internship during senior year culminating our experience in the program. My first year I signed up for ICT (Integrated Computer Technology), a class I had no interest in whatsoever, but only agreed to because my brother said he would give me all his notes/exams from two years prior and my father was an experienced computer technician, working for the Xerox Corporation for 29 years and EDS (Electronic Data Systems) for five years at the time. Due to my absence on the day students picked their partners, no one I knew picked me, and I was stuck being partners with a girl who had no interest whatsoever in working with me. When I asked my classmate Wally, who communicated with my partner in their home language representing the Asian culture both of them highly valued, if he knew why my she pretended I did not exist, he stated matter-of-factly, “It’s cuz you’re White...She doesn’t want to work with you because you’re White. She will not even talk to me if I am talking to you because you are White. Look, I do not know what else to tell

you. Maybe you should talk to Mr. Allen about getting your own board since she doesn't want to work with you at all."

I was shocked; how did this happen to me? I was raised to always treat people of all ethnic heritages with respect and kindness, especially since I knew what it was like to be an outsider, a minority in schools around the holiday time, what the Holocaust was and the effects of discrimination on specific groups of people. I knew what it felt like to always have people questioning my cultural practices; the practices that were normal to me and my family but were unfamiliar and "weird" to my neighbors and peers. My parents taught me to befriend all types of people, that "black, white, purple, or green; we are all pink on the inside". I knew how hurtful it was to have people not recognize or celebrate my culture, but I never had someone hate me for my skin color. I did not understand at the time why this Asian girl in my computer technology class wanted to discriminate against me based on my skin color. I did not even see myself as White; I only saw myself as a Jew who was not fully part of the dominant group like her.

### **Existing in the margins.**

Though I had heard the term color-blind in collegiate education classes, I never had to investigate the history and impact of this approach. Similar to many White pre-service teachers, I was not required to critically examine my own position in society or the harm created by looking at students of color through the color-blind lens, as discussions on racial identity, privilege, and perpetuating the status quo were not present in any form of socialization I encountered. Through a solitary course on multiculturalism in the teacher preparation program, which encompassed diversity, race, and equity, I learned not to discriminate against students whose skin tones or backgrounds do not



match mine. Only after a discussion on the Brown v. Board of Education decision, did we then look at our own experiences of privilege and oppression; however, not once did Whiteness and the pervading White culture come up for discussion, nor were we expected to critically analyze ourselves as racialized beings.

Though the dual identity of insider and outsider may continually burden Jews, especially the Ashkenazi in the United States, part of my anger has been slightly resolved due to my own investigation of the history of how Jews became White; however, I am still very upset at how the issue of Whiteness and White privilege was never brought up in any institution I attended. Never once did I hear about how Jews became White in religious school; throughout my public schooling years I would often have to be the *expert* on Judaism and the Jewish community, especially when the holidays came around or when Judaism was addressed in the curriculum. Additionally, the issue of how Whites remain privileged through social and federal programs was never addressed in any class I took. Though I understand now why my teacher preparation program, with its foundation of social justice, did not bring to light one of the biggest, yet unexamined, issues in the United States, I feel that I was less prepared for working with students of color due to the absence of these discussions/topics and am only now, through my own research, making up for lost time.

### **Who are your people?**

Though I never set out to ignore my position in society, I am deeply invested in how teachers self-identify and how they navigate the conversations about race and otherness because I did not feel very prepared for teaching students of color. As the graduation requirement for a Master's degree in Teaching, I completed an action research

project which centered on this topic and produced the following research question due to the nature of the curriculum I faced during that year (I was teaching 11<sup>th</sup> grade American Literature with all students of color): How does a White teacher talk about race with students of color?

Like many White teachers, I went into teaching not seeing myself as racist and did not even know about White racism before researching it for that project. The little I knew about what racism looks like in education was from the teacher pre-service classes I had taken which addressed diversity, oppression, and privilege in the school system and surrounding communities. Although the classes had begun to lay a foundation for approaching diversity with sensitivity and awareness, especially when teaching, it did not fully address White racism and the often-recognized, rarely discussed “White teacher/student of color” relationship-the same relationship I faced during that project.

#### **Blending into the status quo.**

The National Center for Education Information [NCEI] (2011) found that there were approximately 3.2 million teachers at the kindergarten, elementary, middle, and secondary school levels, with almost 60% of these teachers working in cities and suburbs. Additionally, the NCEI (2011) found that 85% of the public teacher population in the United States was female, with approximately 84% of these females identifying as Caucasian/White. The NCEI (2011) also found that almost two-thirds of the teaching population entered the profession through undergraduate teacher education programs on traditional college campuses. Furthermore, Lawrence (1997) and Wideen, Mayer-Smith, and Moon (1998) reported that the majority of female teachers speak English only, hope

to teach in a community much like the one in which they were raised, and have attended a university close to their hometowns.

Similar to the majority of the White female pre-service teachers who hope to teach in communities closely resembling the ones they knew from childhood, the reality is many of them, like me, take jobs in lower income neighborhoods because these are the only jobs currently available (Johnson, 2002; Ross & Smith, 1992; Valli, 1995). As a young, Jewish female from Orange County, I did not know what it was like to grow up in an area highly populated by minorities, where families were barely living paycheck to paycheck, or where gang-violence was ever-present. At that time (and to this day), my life was very different from my students and that was made clear when the class I completed the action research project with diagrammed the scope of who is “allowed” to use the “N-word” as mentioned in the curriculum’s section on slavery and slave narratives. My students jokingly told me “my people” were the last group that could use the word, that my people were the same “people” that had used it not too long ago to discriminate against my students’ “people”.

Even though I did not see myself as part of the Caucasian community, or at least the stereotypical one, my students turned on the light bulb for my project. How does someone of my “people” talk about what their “people” went through? It was only then that I began to understand the impact of Whiteness and color-blindness. It did not occur to me then that Jews were considered White; I had gotten so used to seeing those pieces of my identity as distinct, with very little connection between the two. Even though their openness in sharing what it feels like to be an “other” helped remind me of what it was like when I felt like an *other* in my sophomore year of high school, my research question

and findings stuck with me long after I finished writing the project, along with the nagging question of why White people do not see their own Whiteness, including myself.

I am still living this identity formation process and am trying to understand my own position as an Ashkenazi Jewish female public high school teacher working with students of color. Even though I do not see myself as 100% White, being Jewish in public (and particularly at my school) is not really accepted or considered minority enough by people of color. Many of my students are Latino/a and Catholic or Middle-Eastern and Muslim; I sometimes worry that sharing my Jewish identity with them would change how they perceive me as a teacher. When there are conversations surrounding race, religion, and power struggles in the United States, I do not tell them I am Jewish; only when a student brings up a comment or question about Jews do I address the topic, but I still do not say I am Jewish. Several of my coworkers know that I am Jewish and have no problems with who I am; however, the former principal who hired me would bring up my identity in disparaging ways by making fun of the religious holidays and calling me a J.A.P. (Jewish American Princess) when he heard that I bought a new car. Similar to the silence used by many Jews in the groups that are not Jewish, I too remain mostly silent at work about my Jewish identity since there are no other Jews at my work site. Breaking the silence might mean a repeat of the past where I had to become the “expert” of Jewish identity for my non-Jewish classmates and friends throughout the years who did not know about the holidays, prayers, food, and religion.

After my Master’s thesis and a literature review on Whiteness and its role within multicultural education, as well as recognizing the lack of discussion on White privilege in teacher education programs, I am pushed to the topic of how Ashkenazi Jewish

teachers self-identify and they understand their relationship to being White within public schooling, as well as the Christian privilege that structures education in the United States, how they construct their multiple identities as Jewish female educators. In addition, through my research on the history of how the Ashkenazi became White in the United States and the phenomenology of how Ashkenazi Jews balance their White identity with their Jewish identity in American society, I have found an absence in the literature on Ashkenazi male or female teachers working with students of color, or any students outside of a religious school or in Israel for that matter, as well as limited literature on Jews and their placement in multiculturalism discussions.

### **Problem statement**

Ashkenazi Jewish female teachers are able to “pass” as White and simultaneously be marginalized, though this dual identity is often not recognized nor discussed in teacher education programs. This study attempts to understand the Ashkenazi female public school teacher experience and the identity negotiation process that takes place as they are able to “pass” as White and enjoy the benefits of Whiteness and, at the same time, be marginalized due to their Jewish identity. Though this identity is often not recognized as one that is oppressed in teacher education and society due to the acceptance of Jews as White, this study presents multilayered narratives that offer an alternative perspective of the White female teacher identity in the United States. Additionally, since these narratives challenge the status quo they can help non-Jews understand the positioning of Jewish females in regards to the perseverance of Christianity in public education.

## **Purpose of the Study**

This study is designed to identify how Ashkenazi females understand their identities as Jews and as public school educators, how these multiple identities impact their pedagogy, and how these educators navigate the structures of public schooling since there is an absence in the literature about these teachers and their process of multiple identity negotiation. It is important to note that Jewish females often get overlooked in discussions and courses on teacher education and multiculturalism/multicultural education. Their identity as both Jewish and White, insider and outsider to the dominant culture, and the lack of discussion regarding their multiple positions in society and in the classrooms can both challenge and strengthen their connection to multiculturalism and the research on White teachers working with students of color.

Although there has been much research on Jewish identity in the United States, Whiteness, and White teachers working with students of color, there is little to no work completed about how Jewish female public school teachers understand their multiple identities in and outside the classroom and how this impacts their pedagogy or their experiences in schools. Additionally, since the literature on Jewish women is minimal, but growing, and studies about Jewish female teachers in American public schools rarely undertaken (if ever), it is essential to note that most of the “important” work regarding Jewish female identity is “predominately anecdotal or theoretical in nature” (Ginsberg & Sinacore, 2013, p. 132).

Prior to the 1990s, Jewish females did not have strong representation in various fields, such as religious studies, psychology, and politics, due to the lack of “an audience who cared to listen or even a way to connect with each other to begin the sometimes

joyous, sometimes painful, process of uncovering [their] realities” (Weiner & Moon, 1995, p. xi). Much of the literature on Jewish identity in the United States either takes a wide look at demographics or concentrates on Jewish ethnicity/immigrant status, using the shtetl<sup>2</sup> culture from the 19<sup>th</sup> century Eastern European Jewish immigrant communities as the baseline to measure contemporary Jewish American identity; this not only limits the emergence of new perspectives on Jewish identity, it also inhibits Jews from being able to gain “insight into the different and changing ways individuals understand their identities as Jews” (Cohen, 1998; as cited in Engelen-Eigles, 1995, p. 30).

### **Goals and Significance of the Study**

This goal of the study is to challenge the notion of all “White” teachers having the same experiences when working in public schools since Jews are both insider and outsider to the White community. The counterstories (stories of challenging the status quo) collected and presented in this study may lead to a better understanding of how marginalized populations’ stories are told and received. Without this study attempting to fill the void in the literature on the lives of religious minority teachers, Jewish female teachers will continue to be marginalized in an education system dominated by Christian privilege.

### **Main Research question**

What is the role of Jewish identity for five Ashkenazi females and how does this impact their self-perception of themselves as public school teachers?

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<sup>2</sup> Shtetls are small, insulated religious communities commonly inhabited by European Jews prior to their arrival in the United States (Sarna, 2004).

### **Sub research questions**

1. What does it mean to be an Ashkenazi Jewish female and work in a US Public education system at the secondary level, where policies, procedures, structures, rules, norms and relationships reflect the dominant Christian/Protestant institutional culture?
2. What is the spectrum or variety of Jewish Identity revealed in the five narrative portraits?

### **Limitations**

Due to the small sample size (five participants with the researcher being one of them) that was purposely selected, it is difficult to generalize the findings presented in this study. Further complicating the issue of generalizability (though most qualitative work such as this study is not focused on generalizability) is the lack of data on Jewish teachers (female or male) in the United States public schooling system. Likewise, the study is limited to an area that is located in southern California; Jewish female teachers in metropolitan cities where there are more Jews in the teaching profession may have radically different experiences. Another limitation is the teaching assignment of the participants, as elementary teachers may view Jewishness in public education contrary due to the amount and types of content they are responsible for teaching (single subject teachers, those found in middle and high schools, generally teach the subject area their credential is in). Finally, the positioning of the researcher as an insider, as well as being a participant in this study, may infer bias as the researcher may appear “too close” to the participants to truly capture the nuances of their stories. However, I was able to build



genuine relationships with these women, which helped me learn much more than I anticipated.

### **Glossary of terminology**

**Annals:** timelines used primarily to locate the specific dates of memories, stories, and events (Clandinin, 2013; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990).

**Ashkenazi Jews:** refers to Jews who have their roots in Western, Central, or Eastern Europe. The presence of these Jews in Europe “began perhaps during the Roman period” with “Jews [living] in Germany before the Germans did” and even the word “Ashkenaz [comes from] the Hebrew designation for Germany” (Goodstein, 2013; Institute for Curriculum Services [ICS], 2012; Kaye/Kantrowitz, 1996; Langman, 1999, p. 34; Levine-Rasky, 2008; MacDonald-Dennis, 2006; Sarna, 2004; Stein, 2002). All references to Jews/American Jews in this study are to those of Ashkenazi background.

**Ashkenazim:** plural form of Ashkenazi.

**Chronicles:** the sequence used to highlight the significant link between a series of connected events (Clandinin, 2013; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990).

**Communication Theory of Identity (CTI):** a psychological, sociological, and anthropological approach to understanding how identity is communicated, which consists of four layers of group and individual identity transaction and formation: the personal (one’s self-awareness and/or spiritual sense of well-being); the enacted (how messages express identity); the relational (how one’s identity is formed through relationships, including relationships with one’s multiple identities and other people); and the communal (how a group of people or a particular community shares an identity)

(Faulkner & Hecht, 2011; Hecht, 1993; Hecht & Faulkner, 2000; Hecht, Faulkner, Meyer, Niles, Golden, & Cutler, 2002; Jung & Hecht; 2004).

**Conservative:** As a result, Conservative Judaism, expounded by Zahariah Frankel, emerged during the nineteenth century as a response to Reform Judaism and its promotion of constant evaluation and evolution in secular society (Langman, 1999; Markowitz, 1982). Conservative Judaism does affirm that some changes to the religion are inevitable, although it holds on to traditional Judaic belief of *halakha* (foundation of Jewish law) and moderate adherence to the dietary laws (“Conservative Judaism”, 2013; Kertzer, 1953; Langman, 1999). Conservative Jews welcomed Western beliefs in regards to manner, culture, and education and believed these changes could be done due to the succession of changes in Jewish history (“Conservative Judaism”, 1974; as cited in Langman, 1999; “Conservative Judaism”, 2013).

**Counterstories:** anecdotal and autobiographical stories of resistance usually shared by people of color that provide alternative ways of knowing about marginalized populations’ negotiations of the world (Chapman, 2007; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002)

**Critical Theory:** a theoretical framework developed by Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, and Herbert Marcuse that challenges the status quo of objective, positivist research; in addition, they set out to examine the structures of injustice that shape society (Agger, 1991; Allan, 2010; Applerouth & Edles, 2011; Darder et al., 2009; Giroux, 2009; Gordon, 1995; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2003; Macbeth, 2001; as cited in Heilman, 2003; Morrow & Brown, 1994; Outlaw, 2013; Rasmussen, 1996).

**Culturally Responsive Methodologies (CRM):** a methodological approach that rejects positivism (where the researcher is the neutral ultimate authority and the participant is the

subject under examination) and embraces plural ways of knowing; in addition, this type of an ethical approach to research focuses on authenticity, mutual respect, trustworthiness, and reciprocity (Berryman, SooHoo, & Nevin, 2013; Smith, 2012).

**Culture:** refers to the shared values, traditions, foods, and attitudes of a particular group (often intertwined with ethnicity) (Friedman et al., 2005; Hilliard III, 2009; Macionis, 2007; Schoenberg, 2013).

**Ethnicity:** implies a shared ancestors, language, religion, history, culture, and location, though it is socially constructed like race (Glazer & Moynihan, 1975).

**Field notes:** notes made by the researcher during observation of a participant

**Field text:** the term used for data in Narrative Inquiry that is collected while “living” alongside participants (being in their daily space) or during conversations with the participants; field texts can include field notes, researcher and participant journals, photographs, poems, drawings, and stories, etc. (Clandinin, 2013; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin & Huber, 2010; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006).

**Final research text:** composed from the various field texts and stories analyzed using a method of analysis that honors the integrity of the participants stories, the final representation of the narrative may be portrayed in various ways depending on the balance of the dimensions in the three-dimensional Narrative Inquiry space, the researcher’s style, the intended audience, and the participants multiple voices that are captured throughout the study (Chase, 2005; Clandinin, 2013; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Josselson, 2007).

**Identity politics:** a political movement first used in the 1980s that refers to how one bases his/her sense of identity on conditions of structural and systematic stigmatization

and disadvantage (Moon, 2012) in which gender, race, and class are the primary deviations from the standard of middle/upper-class White men of European descent (Bernstein, 2005; Borren, 2013; Greenebaum, 1999; hooks, 1994; Jackson, 1993; as cited in Greenebaum, 1999; Lorber, 1999; Nelson-Barber & Harrison, 1996; Nicholson, 2008; Scott, 1992).

**Interim research text:** text created by the researcher used to make sense of the various field texts; may be written while field texts are still being composed in order to negotiate meanings with participants before writing the final research text (Clandinin, 2013; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin & Huber, 2010).

**Intersectionality:** a theoretical framework developed by Critical Race theorist Kimberlé Crenshaw who described how race, class, and gender are not essentialized identities that compete for marginalization recognition, but rather “intersecting” roads that show the spaces of connections between and among these oppressed identities (Collins, 1998; Davis, 2008; Dhamoon, 2011; Grande, 2009; Lorde, as cited in Brettschneider, 1996; Phoenix & Pattynama, 2006; as cited in Mehrotra, 2010; Silberstein, 2000).

**Jewishness:** the customs, lifestyles, ethnicity, and culture of the Jews (Langman, 1999)

**Judaism:** the Jewish religion

**Listening Guide:** method of interview analysis comprised of four sequential listenings designed to bring the researcher into a deeper relationship with the participants’ distinct perspective (Brown & Gilligan, 1991; Gilligan, Spencer, Weinberg, & Bertsch, 2003; Doucet & Mauthner, 2008).

**Narrative Inquiry:** a 20<sup>th</sup> century development to research that views narrative as both phenomenon under study and method of inquiry and focuses primarily on the lived

experience of a person; this approach to research emphasizes the intimate relationship between the participant(s) and the researcher (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990).

**Narrative:** story collected from a participant as data (also refers to the unit of analysis). Story and narrative are often used synonymously. This study will use the word “story” to refer to what is captured and re-presented in Narrative Inquiry through data collection, analysis, and presentation of the final research text (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007; Riessman & Speedy, 2007).

**Ontology:** way of being that shapes how the researcher approaches the study, as well as interacts with the participants (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Dewey, 1938).

**Orthodox:** denomination of Judaism that observes strict interpretations of the Torah and exists in closed communities comprised of shared languages and heritages (“Orthodoxy”, 1974, p. 1487; as cited in Langman, 1999, p. 35; “Orthodox Judaism”, 2013).

**Place:** as the most tangible aspect of the three dimensional Narrative Inquiry space, it refers to the concrete and physical boundaries of a location or a series of locations where events take place; it also influences a participant’s lived and relived experience (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007; Clandinin & Huber, 2010; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006; Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2012).

**Race:** a social construct used to homogenize people as either “peoples of color” or “white” (Darder & Torres, 2009; Macionis, 2007)

**Reconstructionist:** a 20<sup>th</sup> century religious movement (and the only branch of Judaism developed wholly in the United States) that advocates for a reconstruction of Jewish rituals and prayers in order for different generations of Jews to see the religion as

modern. This denomination embraces diversity, Zionism, and community above interpretation of the Torah (Diner, 2003; Kertzer, 1953; Markowitz, 1982; Sarna, 2004).

**Reform:** branch of Judaism, which began in central and Western Europe in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, stands as the polar opposite from Orthodox Judaism with its focus on the use of the vernacular for prayers and the adjustments made to the religion in order to survive (Cherry, 2011; Diner, 2003; Kertzer, 1953; Langman, 1999; Markowitz, 1982; “Reform Judaism”, 2013; Sarna, 2004).

**Research puzzle:** metaphor used in Narrative Inquiry to portray how the research question is not framed with the expectation of a precise answer; rather it captures the sense of continual researching in regards to the phenomena under study (Clandinin, 2013; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

**Sephardic Jews:** Jews of color, otherwise known as Sephardic Jews, trace their origin to the Iberian Peninsula and, before, that, Babylonia (ICS, 2012; Jewish Outreach Institute, 2008; Sarna, 2004). These Jews “flourished, unghettoized...until the Spanish Inquisition...forced conversion or expulsion from Spain” (Kaye/Kantrowitz, 1996, p. 122). Jews from Sephardic backgrounds (middle-Eastern, Spanish, African, etc.) are often included in the African, Middle-Eastern, or Asian categories and are seen as “exotic”. Even though there are different types of Jewish peoples, Sephardic Jews are not always able to “pass” in United States society due to darker skin tones, accents, or the ability to speak fluent Hebrew. Even if they have lighter skin (as some Sephardic Jews have), their knowledge and use of the Hebrew language, as well as different religious, cultural, and ethnic customs set them apart from Ashkenazi Jews.

**Shtetl**-small, insulated religious communities commonly inhabited by European Jews prior to their arrival in the United States (Sarna, 2004).

**Sociality:** facet of the three-dimensional Narrative Inquiry space that concentrates on the personal, social cultural and institutional structures that shape an individual's experience (Bach, 2007; Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006; Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2012).

**Story-sharing:** a reciprocal approach to storytelling in which both the research and participant exchange stories; due to the trust in their relationship with one another, this technique can only be utilized by a researcher who is an insider to the phenomenon under study (Blythe, Wilkes, Jackson, & Halcomb, 2013; East, Jackson, O'Brien, & Peters, 2010; Hayman, Wilkes, Jackson, & Halcomb, 2011).

**Talmud**-The Talmud "consists of 63 books of legal, ethical, and historical writings of ancient rabbis. It was edited in the year 499 B.C.E...and has been for centuries the major textbook of Jewish schools [with] Orthodox Jewish law...based largely on the decisions found in the *Talmud*" (Kertzer, 1953, p. 113, italics in original).

**Temporality:** aspect of the three-dimensional Narrative Inquiry space that focuses on experiences happening over the course of time, with every event having a past, a present, and a future (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, 2006; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, 2006).

**Three-dimensional Narrative Inquiry space:** the conceptual framework for Narrative Inquiry that expands on Dewey's ideas of interaction and continuity through three dimension: temporality, sociality, and place (Clandinin, 2006, Clandinin & Huber, 2010; Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, 2006).

**Yiddish:** A language system that uses Hebrew characters and is blend of Jewish-French dialect mixed with German speech (ICS, 2012)

**Zionism:** movement that began in the last third of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a way to establish a unified Jewish state in Palestine (term used for the land of ancient Israel) (Sarna, 2004).

### **Organization of study**

**Chapter 1:** This chapter provides a discussion of the researcher's positionality and entrance into this topic, background to the study, the problem statement, the purpose and goals of the study, as well as a glossary of terms used throughout the study.

**Chapter 2:** Due to its length, the literature review is its own chapter. This chapter (coming after the introduction to the study-Chapter 1) is designed as an overview of significant events that have impacted Jewish identity and assimilation in the United States.

**Chapter 3:** The theoretical framework is presented in this chapter. In order to understand Jewish females and their marginalized identities in education, the study is bounded by critical theory, identity politics, intersectionality, and Communication Theory of Identity. This chapter also attends to the placement of Jews in, around, and outside of these topics.

**Chapter 4:** This chapter provides a description of the methodologies approaches and methods used in this study, the rationale for framing a study using Culturally Responsive Methodologies (CRM), and an overview of Narrative Inquiry and story-sharing, as well as the role of counterstories. It also includes the protocol for data collection analysis (the Listening Guide) and presents the role ethics plays in this study, including the selection of participants, possible risks and benefits, confidentiality and anonymity concerns, and data handling procedures.



**Chapter 5:** This chapter includes the data collection and Listening Guide and Narrative Inquiry method of analysis process with examples (in order to portray the story meanings that have emerged), as well as the presentation of final research narratives co-constructed with the participants.

**Chapter 6:** Due the length of each, the final narratives of the participants are their own chapter. Additionally, this chapter functions as the findings of the research.

**Chapter 7:** This final chapter offers conclusions and implications for future research. It will also summarize the story threads in and throughout the stories presented in the study and how these story threads contribute to suggestions for education, teacher educators, Jewish females, and non-Jewish community members.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature Review**

The literature review provides background for understanding what events impacted Ashkenazi Jews becoming assimilated into the dominant culture and race in the United States. The overarching questions of this study seek to understand how Ashkenazi Jewish female public school teachers negotiate their multiple identities and the impact these identities have on their pedagogy, as well as what public education structures impact their expression of Jewish identity and how they navigate through/around these structures.

In understanding the lived experience of modern Ashkenazi Jewish Americans as members of the dominant group in the United States and a minority group, as well as their struggle to balance their Jewish and White identities, it is important to note their combined identity is a direct result of their history as constantly persecuted, but adapting, multi-cultural minorities in Europe (Lemish, 1981; Fuchs, 1995; Shapiro, 1997; Sherman, 1960; Spencer, 1994; Steinberg, 1965). Additionally, the basis of their bi-cultural identity is founded on their immigrant relatives' loyalty to the American tradition of individualism and assimilation, in which they were able to pick and choose which aspects of their Jewish identity they wanted to maintain and which ones they wanted to discard (Lemish, 1981; Fuchs, 1995; Shapiro, 1997; Sherman, 1960; Spencer, 1994; Steinberg, 1965). Although Jews of first- and second-generations wanted to give their children a better life by assimilating to the dominant culture, the act of picking and choosing of what to keep hidden and what to let go of created a long-standing conflict for many contemporary Jewish Americans and those trying to understand what it means to be

Jewish. To be a Jew in America means being a Jew of any kind or not being Jewish at all (Goodstein, 2013; ICS, 2012; Langman, 1999; Roth, 2013; Sarna, 2004).

In order to address the research questions from a historical standpoint, this chapter begins with a working definition of what it means to be a Jew. Next, the history of integration into early American society, as well as the beginnings of cultural and religious fragmentation that separated American Jews' public and private selves, is reviewed. This is followed by an overview of Ashkenazi Jews' entrance into secular society at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the quotas placed on Jewish immigrants in the first half of the 1900s, and the impact the Holocaust had on public Jewish representation. In order to understand the White, middle class, suburban demographics of the United States' teaching population, the subsequent section will look at the suburbanization process after World War II that fractured Jewish cultural and religious identity as a result of economic, racial, and social mobility. The last section will focus on the second half of the century, with attention paid to the emergence of Holocaust narratives, the relationship of Jews and social justice in the Civil Rights Movement, and the exclusion of Jews from multiculturalism.

### **What does it mean to be a Jew in America?**

*“There are, I think, few chores more bewildering than that of determining positively the character of the Jewish group...No wonder many Jews are uncertain what it means to belong to the Jewish group” (Lewin, 1940/1948, p. 180; as cited in Finlay, 2005, p. 205).*

American Jews currently make up only 2.2% of the nation's population—a percentage that has not changed much in the past 20 years; about 80% of all Jews in North America identify themselves as Ashkenazi Jews (Goodstein, 2013; Institute for

Curriculum Services [ICS], 2012; Kaye/Kantrowitz, 1996; Langman, 1999; Levine-Rasky, 2008; MacDonald-Dennis, 2006; Sarna, 2004; Schoenberg, 2013; Stein, 2002; Weinrach, 2002).

Since more than one-third of Jewish Americans live in large urban areas in the Northeast and the East Coast, along with California, and in Chicago, there is often a misunderstanding about the actual number of Jews living in the United States which may be especially evident in Miami, New York, and Los Angeles (these are the three cities with the largest Jewish populations) (Schlosser & Rosen, 2008). Even though they are a numerical minority based on their small population size, they are not typically viewed as a visible minority in the United States, “relegated to a status of somehow ‘not counting’ as a minority” (Langman, 2000, p. 170). Furthermore, Jews have been a minority everywhere else they had lived and were the only racial or ethnic group to arrive in America having past minority status experience (Kaye/Kantrowitz, 1996; Sherman, 1960).

As a result, it often becomes difficult to distinguish what/who is a Jew; being Jewish can be thought of as a marker of race, ethnicity, culture, religion, none of these aspects, or a combination of characteristics<sup>3</sup> (Adams, 2000; Altman, Inman, Fine, Ritter, & Howard, 2010; Bliss, 1999; Blumenfeld & Klein, 2009; Clark, 1954; Friedlander, Friedman, Miller, Ellis, Friedlander, & Mikhaylov, 2010; Friedman, Friedlander, & Blustein, 2005; Hartman & Kaufman, 2006; Hecht, Faulkner, Meyer, Niles, Golden, & Cutler, 2002; Kaye/Kantrowitz, 1996; Langman, 1999; Pew Research Center, 2013;

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<sup>3</sup> Although Himmelfarb (1982; as cited in Arnow, 1994) stated that was a distinct difference between Jewish identification (the process of thinking and acting in a way that demonstrates one’s attachment to a Jewish lifestyle) and Jewish identity (a person’s sense of self with respect to being Jewish), there is no defined way to separate these phenomena, which has led researchers to define Jewishness using a more multifaceted approach.

Schlosser, 2009; Steinberg, 1965). Being Jewish is not a uni-dimensional phenomenon (ICS, 2012; Steinberg, 1965): “Jewishness disrupts the very categories of identity because it is not national, not genealogical, not religious, but all of these in dialectical tension with one another” (Boyarin & Boyarin, 1993, p. 721; as cited in Hartman & Kaufman, 2006, p. 381).

In the United States, people are typically differentiated by race, ethnicity, or both, with people homogenized as either “peoples of color” or “white” whether they want to be or not (Biale et al., 1998; Brodtkin, 1998; Goldstein, 2006; Langman, 2000; Levine-Rasky, 2008; Macionis, 2007). Race, “a product of Europe’s colonization of Africa and other parts of the world”, is seen by many researchers as a problematic social construct due to the lack of biological markers (Hilliard III, 2009, p. 24; Lee, Mountain & Koenig, 2001; as cited in Darder & Torres, 2009; Macionis, 2007); it is “linked to either social or genetic constructions of inferiority or superiority[,] assigned to particular populations...depending on the term’s historical usage and reference” (Darder & Torres, 2009, p. 153). Though physical differences were noticed, “[p]rior to the 1700s, identity was fundamentally an ethnic identity based upon cultural traditions, historical traditions, and so forth”, with phenotype being treated “as if it were ‘race’” only after the “Europeans [attempted] to shift the basis of group designation from a traditional cultural and ethnic base to an exclusively physiological one” (Hilliard, 2009, p. 27; Lee, Mountain, & , Koenig, 2001; as cited in Darder & Torres, 2009).

Though its first usage was recorded in 1953 (Glazer & Moynihan, 1975), “[p]eople define themselves-or others-as members of an *ethnic category*...that give them a distinctive social identity [...and] it becomes important only when a society defines it that

way” (Macionis, 2007, p. 302, italics in original). “Ethnic identity...is the result of a dialectic process involving internal and external opinions and processes, as well as the individual’s self-identification and outsiders’ ethnic designation-i.e. what *you* think your ethnicity is, versus what *they* think your ethnicity is” (Nagel, 1994, p. 154; as cited in Greenebaum, 1999, p. 50). The concept of culture, shaping what people do and how they feel, refers to the shared values, traditions, foods, and attitudes of a particular group (Friedman et al., 2005; Hilliard III, 2009; Macionis, 2007; Schoenberg, 2013).

Some people, including some Jews, may think of themselves as a race-based group because they have inherited traits that are shared among Jews, even though Jews can be members of every “race” (common biological ancestry is not necessary to be Jewish) (Aveling, 2006; Blumenfeld & Klein, 2009; Chubbuck, 2004; Hyland, 2005; Kertzer, 1953; Kincheloe, 1999; Levine-Rasky, 2008; Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 1995; Solomon, Portelli, Daniel, & Campbell, 2005; Steinberg, 1965). It is important to note that Jews were identified throughout history as a race, particularly in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, when Spain enacted Purity of Blood Statutes in order to restrict Jewish converts to Christians from “experiencing a true conversion” (Adams, 2000; Frederickson, 2002, p. 31; as cited in Darder & Torres, 2009, p. 153) and “holding certain privileges” (Yerushalmi, 1982; as cited in Goldstein, 2006, p. 16).

Ashkenazi Jews are often able to *pass* as White-especially those who do not have the well-known Semitic “marks” of being Jewish like big noses and Jewish-sounding last names-and not be marginalized like they were in Europe (Biale et al., 1998; Blumefield, 2006; Forman, 2000; Levine-Rasky, 2008), Despite being able to shift between the dominant and minority groups, Ashkenazi Jews in the United States may never see

themselves, or be seen, as fully assimilated into the dominant White group due to their past as a historically persecuted people and their ability to interrupt the fundamental categories used to privilege or oppress people (Clark, 1954; Goldstein, 2006; Kaye/Kantrowitz, 1996; MacDonald-Dennis, 2006).

Since many Ashkenazi Jews have similar origins, they often associate themselves as an ethnic group, even though Jewish identity in the United States is self-chosen as opposed to a nationally imposed ethnicity seen in some countries such as the former Soviet Union (Persky & Birman, 2005); however, not all Jews share the same ethnic background such as traditions, ancestry, and history (Friedman et al., 2005; ICS, 2012; Nagel, 1994; as cited in Greenebaum, 1999; Phinney 1996). Many of the Jewish customs and foods found in the United States, such as bagels and lox and matzoh ball soup, are from the Ashkenazi Jewish culture; this also includes the appropriation of Yiddish words and phrases, such as “kitch/kitchy”, “Oy Vey”, “schmooze”, which has become more present in society recently (Mack, 1998; Shyovitz, 2011).

American Jews may identify their Jewish identity as an ethnicity, but have few ties to the Jewish culture (Friedman et al., 2005); likewise, a Jew may accept the basic tenets of the Jewish religion (Judaism) without living by all of the Jewish laws or identifying with any other aspect of Jewish life (i.e. eating “Jewish” foods, celebrating the religious holidays, etc.) (Beliak, 1999; Goodstein, 2013; ICS, 2012; Kaye/Kantrowitz, 1996; Kertzer, 1953; Langman, 1999; Lemish, 1981; Pew Research Center, 2013; Steinberg, 1965): “Jews who practice Judaism always belong to an ethnic group, the Jews...[only] part of which also practices the religion, Judaism” (Neusner, 2003, p. 86). This ethnic/religious/racial/cultural identity confusion is different from “Christians-

religiously observant or not-[who] usually operate from the common self-definition of Christianity, a religion any individual can embrace through belief, detached from race, peoplehood, or culture” (Kaye/Kantrowitz, 1996, p. 122).

Furthermore, the Pew Research Center’s Religion & Public Life Report released October 1, 2013, the first major study of American Jews in more than ten years, found that just over 60% of Jewish Americans say being Jewish is primarily an issue of ancestry and culture, “while just 15% say it is mainly a matter of religion. Even among Jews by religion...55% say being Jewish is mainly a matter of ancestry and culture, and two-thirds say it is not necessary to believe in God to be Jewish” (Pew Research Center, 2013, p. 8). As a result, Jews in the United States today may have a strong Jewish identity, but not be affiliated with any branch of religious Judaism (Beliak, 1999; Friedlander et al., 2010; Friedman et al., 2005; Goodstein, 2013; ICS, 2012; Kaye/Kantrowitz, 1996; Pew Research Center, 2013; Singer, 2008; Steinberg, 1965). This multiplicity of dimensions of Jewish identity (accompanied by the shifting persecution or welcoming by non-Jews throughout the past, as well as the roles and backgrounds of people who convert to Judaism) further adds to the confusion when trying to understand the history and lived experience of Jews in the United States (Neusner, 2003).

### **Assimilating: blending in by letting go**

Jewish assimilation into the dominant group has its roots in the early foundations of the United States. Jewish integration into American society started “[i]n late August or early September of 1654” with a group of 22 Sephardic Jews and one Ashkenazi, all from Brazil, who were in need of refuge and did not want a separate colony of their own; they wanted to live among the Dutch (and English who, nine years later, won control of New



York) and conduct trade with them (Diner, 2003, p. 1; ICS, 2012; Markowitz, 1982; Stein, 2002; Sarna, 2004). They agreed to practice their religion quietly “within their houses”, and, even after restrictions stating that only Christian worship centers were allowed, continued to see their private religious practice as necessary for Jewish group survival in the late 1680s (Diner, 2003; ICS, 2012; Sarna, 2004): “[This] promise of an end to persecution propelled Jews into taking over the task of making themselves [as Jews] invisible, thus unconsciously colluding in their collective cultural suicide” (Cantor, 1995, p. 7; as cited in Langman, 1999, p. 280).

When Jews began constructing temples in North America in the 1700s, they distinguished their buildings as simple, domestic structures that reassured the majority faith (Christianity) the Jews kept to themselves by not publicly drawing attention to their religion; practicing great discretion allowed Jews to be tolerated by the non-Jewish community members (Diner, 2003; ICS, 2012; Sarna, 2004). Furthermore, many of the first American Jews had been merchants, rather than scholars or rabbis; they traded and peddled necessary supplies with frontiersmen at new points of settlement and built upon established commercial relations that were formed in their home countries (Sherman, 1960). Due to their professional backgrounds, initial Jewish communities in America typically did not reflect strict Jewish religious laws (Sherman, 1960). These early Jewish settlers faced the dilemma of either adhering to a more traditional Jewish way of life (not working on the Sabbath, observing holidays that were not observed on the same days as their Christian neighbors’ holidays, eating Kosher foods-even outside the home, etc.) or changing their practices to meet the needs of their non-Jewish friends and patrons (Diner, 2003; ICS, 2012; Sarna, 2004).

Due to the boundary extensions in the realm of American religion set forth by official government decrees such as Virginia's 1785 Act for Religious Freedom (drafted originally by Thomas Jefferson), the ratification of the Constitution in 1788, and George Washington's 1790 address to the Hebrew Congregation in Newport, Rhode Island, Jews were afforded privileges that were previously only available to select Protestant religions (Diner, 2003; ICS, 2012; Markowitz, 1982; Sarna, 2004). These privileges helped Jews, then and now, individually place themselves anywhere on the religious spectrum, from "[completely] devoted to completely [defected or secular]" (Sarna, 2004, p. 46), with no religious or political high-ranking officials defining who is or is not a Jew or what it means to be Jewish (Kertzer, 1953; Sarna, 2004; Shapiro, 1997; Singer, 2008). Since they were lacking a defined religious authority and were demonstrating increasing religious fragmentation (and still are), Jews made "a wide range of critical religious decisions on their own [that may have posed] formidable challenges to the Jewish [religions]... [and] the preservation of Jewish communal life" (Sarna, 2004, p. 370).

Likewise, exposure to the secular movement as a result of the Enlightenment in Europe helped Jews assimilate into the secular lifestyle they found in the United States and further obscured the definition of being Jewish (Ben-Atar, 1999; Heschel, 1991; Hyman, 2002; Langman, 1999; Sklare, 1971). Before the Enlightenment movement in Europe in the 1770s, there were no denominations of Judaism; all Jewish identity was based on religion, Judaism, as a way of living, a "privilege", with the religion and culture being indistinguishable (Langman, 1999, p. 278; Neusner, 2003; Steinberg, 1965). Furthermore, there was only one type of Judaism-Orthodox-which meant Jews went to religious schools, observed strict interpretations of the Torah, and existed in closed

communities comprised of shared languages and heritages (Medding, 1987; “Orthodoxy”, 1974, p. 1487; as cited in Langman, 1999, p. 35; “Orthodox Judaism”, 2013; Singer, 2008). In addition, Orthodox Jews view their faith “as the mainstream of a tradition that has been steadfast and unaltered for the past three thousand years” (Kertzer, 1953, p. 118). It was not until 1795 that the label of “Orthodox” was given to refer to this type of Judaism and the term became especially well-known in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a way to distinguish itself from Reform Judaism, a branch of Judaism that established itself as the polar opposite from Orthodox Judaism starting in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century (Diner, 2003; Langman, 1999; Sarna, 2004).

As a reaction to the literal interpretation of the Torah as practiced in Orthodox Judaism, Reform Judaism began in central and western Europe with a focus on rationalism during the Enlightenment (Langman, 1999; “Reform Judaism”, 2013). Developed by Abraham Geiger, Reform Judaism introduced prayers in the vernacular and adapted to modern thinking under the assumption that Judaism had survived oppression throughout history due to its ability to adjust sacred heritage to meet the demands of modern times (Cherry, 2011; Diner, 2003; Kertzer, 1953; Markowitz, 1982; “Reform Judaism”, 2013; Sarna, 2004). In support of the Reform movement, it was argued that Judaism needed to be continually evaluated in order to evolve: “Judaism is progressive and not static...it is the result of a slow development, an evolution, and not something transmitted in one miraculous moment” (Issacson and Wigoder. 1973, p. 255; as cited in Langman, 1999, p. 39). The foundation of breaking-away from religiously insular communities in Europe began as the Enlightenment movement and Reform movement gained momentum; Jews were able to study in secular schools, gain access to politics

(though they still faced opposition within the political world), and have female Jews be more formally educated (Brodkin, 1998; Diner, 2003; ICS, 2012; Sarna, 2004; Singer, 2008), all of which helped lay the groundwork for Jews becoming involved with “the great social problems plaguing American life”, as well as supporting the formation of Israel (Sarna, 2004, p. 151; Sherman, 1960).

However, there was a catch in both the early American colonies and 18<sup>th</sup> century Europe: Jews would be accepted into their host societies as long as they left their Jewishness behind (Langman, 1999). As more Jews shifted away from Orthodox communities and “into modernity at the end of the eighteenth century, the number of Jews and Jewish movements claiming a religious or an ethnic identity without the other are too numerous to be designated as exceptions to the pattern of religious-ethnic fusion” (Sharot, 1997, p. 90; as cited in Hartman & Kaufman, 2006, p. 367): “Many, probably the majority [of early American Jews], maintained a double-standard-one for the home and one for outside-that effectively mirrored the bifurcated world in which they inhabited” (Sarna, 2004, p. 25). As many immigrant and first-generation Jews began to assimilate to the dominant culture in the United States, their adherence to traditional Judaism waned. This caused a decline in the sharp distinctions between Jews and non-Jews through dietary laws, ways of interacting with community members, observation of the Sabbath, and appearance (Shapiro, 1997).

As a result, Conservative Judaism, expounded by Zahariah Frankel, emerged during the nineteenth century as a response to Reform Judaism and its promotion of constant evaluation and evolution in secular society (Langman, 1999; Markowitz, 1982). Conservative Judaism does affirm that some changes to the religion are inevitable,

although it holds on to traditional Judaic belief of *halakha* (foundation of Jewish law) and moderate adherence to the dietary laws (“Conservative Judaism”, 2013; Kertzer, 1953; Langman, 1999). Conservative Jews welcomed Western beliefs in regards to manner, culture, and education and believed these changes could be done due to the succession of changes in Jewish history (“Conservative Judaism”, 1974; as cited in Langman, 1999; “Conservative Judaism”, 2013).

On the other end of the spectrum, Reconstructionism, the 20<sup>th</sup> century movement originated by Rabbi Mordecai M. Kaplan and the only denomination of Judaism developed wholly in the United States, advocates for a reconstruction of Jewish rituals and prayers “as the only way to ‘conserve’...[and] harmoniz[e] Judaism and modernity [so that] young people would find it more compelling” (Diner, 2003; Kertzer, 1953; Markowitz, 1982; Sarna, 2004, p. 243). In addition, Reconstructionism, attempting to “revitalize Judaism in America by marking it function as a civilization in the everyday life of its adherents” (Sarna, 2004, p. 245), embraces “unity in diversity” (Kertzer, 1953, p. 121), community and Zionism, as Kaplan called upon Jews to “strengthen Jewish life in the land of Israel...and cooperate with non-Jews in advancing freedom, justice, and peace” (Kaplan, 1994, 513, 522; as cited in Sarna, 2004, p. 245).

The decline in a more distinctive Jewish identity in order to assimilate into the dominant group and the accompanying need to balance both Jewish and White identities is also directly linked to the eugenics movement of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries in Europe and the United States. Unlike others who are labeled as White and claim to not be part of a racial group by giving a religious or national origin, such as Christian, German, or British, Jews today may not see themselves as part of the dominant group due to a

European history where they were not seen as racially superior (Grant, 1916; as cited in Brodtkin, 1998; Katz & Ivey, 1977; Levine-Rasky, 2008). Grant (1916; as cited in Brodtkin, 1998) stated that the Nordics of north-western Europe were seen as superior due in part to their wealth and ability to breed higher-class races. Those who were seen as White in northwestern Europe established themselves as the authority on thought and control, in addition to language, religion, and ideology; anything that was not White (religiously or ethnically “pure”) was seen as chaotic, violent, and irrational (Cohen, 1998; Goldstein, 2006; Hyland, 2005; Kincheloe, 1999; Levine-Rasky, 2008; Schlosser, 2009). Jews were seen as inferior, both racially and economically, and any cross-breeding between another race and a Jew would automatically qualify the off-spring as a Jew (Grant, 1916; as cited in Brodtkin, 1998; Greenberg, 1998; Pellegrini, 1997; Schlosser, 2009).

The eugenics movement in 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe-which grew out of the study of written records and linguistics, saw the first use of the word “anti-Semitism”<sup>4</sup>, and paved the way for Jewish genocide in the Holocaust-deemed Jews as a lower social, economic, political, and racial group who were “biologically...unclean; also, dirty, smelly, etc.” due to their outward features such as dark hair and skin tone, as well as their hand gestures and speech patterns (Adams, 2000; Blumefield, 2006; Geller, 1997; Goldstein, 2006; Greenberg, 1998; Langman, 1999, p. 95; Levine-Rasky, 2008; Moon, 2012; Schlosser, 2009; Stoskopf, 2009). The subsequent scientific racism from the eugenics movement

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<sup>4</sup> The word “anti-Semitism” was first coined in the 1870s by Austrian anti-Jewish journalist Wilhelm Marr; it appropriates the term *Semitic*, which itself comes “Shem” (the biblical word for one of Noah’s three sons), and was used to describe and distinguish the group of similar languages (Hebrew, Arabic, and Aramaic) from Aryan or Indo-European languages (Wistrich, 1991; as cited in Adams, 2000; Schlosser, 2008, 2009). Since Jews were those that spoke “Semitic” languages and were persecuted due to their race throughout history, *anti-Semitism* refers explicitly to the oppression faced by the Jewish people based on their religion, culture, heritage, or language (Adams, 2000).

that “fed off of the fears of White middle- and upper-class Americans” and promoted the overall superiority of White Protestants as the dominant group can be seen when the Ellis Island *intelligence* test found that 80% of immigrants, including Jews and eastern European immigrants, were *feble-minded* (Brodkin, 1998; Hyland, 2005; Sarna 2004; Stoskopf, 2009).

### **Inside, outside, and in-between**

While Jews did not become White automatically once they came to the United States, the process and numbers of “Americanized” Jews increased rapidly as European Jews began to assimilate into the American education system and ways of living (Ben-Atar, 1999; Singer, 2008). Though some Jews were among the first European founders of the United States and had “been seen as an honored part of the ‘Great Caucasian family’” (Goldstein, 2006, p. 31), the majority of Jews immigrated here in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries after their exposure to the secular world in Europe and political and religious persecution in Eastern Europe during the 1880s (Brodkin, 1998; Diner, 2003; Lemish, 1981; Sarna, 2004).

However, the mass immigration of Eastern European Jews to the United States between 1880 and 1924 (approximately two million people) brought about immigration restrictions like the National Origins Act of 1924 (also known as The Johnson-Reed Act or the Origins Quota Act) that sought to restore the nation to its 19<sup>th</sup> century Northwestern European White Protestant makeup (Blumenfied, 2006; Diner, 2003; Fuchs, 1995; Goldstein, 2006; Gosset, 1970; as cited in Spencer, 1994; ICS, 2012). Even established affluent German American Jews, who had already carved out their place in secular society, saw this wave of immigration as a threat to their ability to pass as White

and feared the creation of a “Jewish problem” with these new, unmodern Jews (Kaye/Kantrowitz, 1996; Mack, 1998; Sherman, 1960). This new quota system, with a total of 154,000 immigrants admitted annually, only welcomed two percent of the total population of each nationality found in the 1890 U.S. National Census, with Asians completely excluded, only 100 Greeks, 4,000 Italians, and 6,000 Poles accepted, and those with British lineage overwhelmingly embraced-84,000 British immigrants were allowed in each year under this law (Fuchs, 1995; Office of the Historian; Sarna, 2004; Wyman, 2000). Those deemed *White* saw these Jewish immigrants as those not “‘looking’ exactly like Americans” (Draschler, 1920; as cited in Fuchs, 1995, p. 299; Mack, 1998); they were viewed as “‘undesirable’, ‘of low physical and mental standards,’ ‘filthy,’ ‘un-American,’ and ‘often dangerous in their habits’”, with an average of only 8,270 Jews admitted annually from 1925 to 1934 (Beliak, 1999; Brodtkin, 1998; Langman, 1999; Sarna, 2004, p. 215).

Yet in spite of the quota system, immigrant Jews embraced their New World identities and shed Old World loyalties by learning how to speak English, taking on “American” names, sending their children to public schools and higher education as a way to make it in America, and having the children could tutor their parents in English and citizenship laws, as well as find occupations outside of factories and neighborhood shops (Ben-Atar, 1999; Brodtkin, 1998; Diner, 2003; Lemish, 1981; Markowitz, 1993; Rubin, 2001; Sherman, 1960; Singer, 2008; Sklare, 1971; Stein, 2002). Due to this willingness to forgo traditional religious schooling, many Ashkenazi Jews faced conflicts regarding their traditional culture and their new environment, the values and teachings of their religion, and the process of attaining and the type of knowledge featured in secular



education in the United States (Brodkin, 1998; Diner, 2003; ICS, 2012; Lemish, 1981; Sarna, 2004; Steinberg, 1965): “In the case of early 20<sup>th</sup> century Jews, for example, the texts of ‘Western civilization’ replaced the Talmud; teachers, to some extent, replaced parents and rabbis; and the general community replaced the Jewish community as sources of authority” (Brumberg, 1986; Cowan & Cowan, 1989; both cited in Fuchs, 1995, p. 319).

In public schools, Jewish students quickly learned that the traditional teaching and learning style used in the European shtetls (small, insulated religious communities) was not accepted nor promoted by their non-Jewish teachers and peers in Christian-influenced schools (Sarna, 2004). Jewish students (primarily males, though some females began to engage with this style of learning if they went to religious school in the afternoons following public school in the United States) were used to the non-linear, multi-truth, active debate between teacher and students over the Talmud<sup>5</sup> (Brettschneider, 1996; Clark, 1954; Hayman, 1997; Lehman & Kress, 2004). However, this style of education was seen as aggressive, loud, and a threat to the teacher’s authority (Kaye/Kantrowitz, 1991; Pogrebin, 1991). If these Jews truly wanted to be assimilated, they had to realize that demarcating themselves as Jewish in American society meant “the only legitimate voice that can speak the truth” is “a Christian voice” (Block, 1999, p. 167).

During the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Jewish males entered colleges in the United States in large numbers; they were attending college at a rate more than double non-Jews generally as they saw post-secondary education as an extension of Jewish attitude of having a deep love of learning (Brodkin, 1998; Clark, 1954; Diner, 2003;

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<sup>5</sup> The Talmud is made up of the Mishnah and the Gemurah, which are large collections of Jewish law blending the Torah, law, ethics, philosophy, and history with commentary officially closed in the sixth century (Brettschneider, 1996; Clark, 1954; Hayman, 1997; Lehman & Kress, 2004).

Sarna, 2004; Sherman, 1960; Sklare, 1971). In addition to the overwhelming number of Jews in colleges, their participation in the academic activities that their Protestant counterparts looked down upon (i.e. enthusiastically raising their hands to answer questions and questioning what they were taught as they had done through Talmudic learning in the shtetls) only furthered the idea that Jews were trying to push the Protestant elite out of power (Brodkin, 1998; Langman, 1999; Levine-Rasky, 2008; Markowitz, 1993).

Quotas were not only used in immigration, but in education as well, as children of Eastern European Jewish immigrants were deemed a challenge to the social status quo (Diner, 2003; Greenberg, 1998; ICS, 2012; Rubin, 2001; Stein, 2002). During the 1920s, universities such as Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Duke, Johns Hopkins, and Cornell argued that quotas limiting Jews to ten percent of the total study body enrollment were designed not to ostracize Jews, but to help them assimilate effectively, since smaller numbers of Jews “insure[d] a proper outcome” (Diner, 2003; Goldstein, 2006, p. 132). Ironically, universities like Harvard and Yale, in their early years, saw Hebrew as “essential to a gentleman’s education” (Stiles, 1969, p. 16; as cited in Langman, 1999, p. 61).

Universities with large Jewish enrollments were under pressure to return to being “a white man’s college” and implemented personal interviews as part of the admissions process to gauge an applicant’s social standing, whereas others screened out “ethnic” applicants, including Jews, based on a psychological test (Brodkin, 1998; Clark, 1954; Goldstein, 2006 p. 128; Sarna, 2004; Stein, 2002).

## **World War II and the Holocaust**

American Jews during the interwar years were segregated “by secular factors-economic, demographic, [geographic], social, and cultural” that remained largely “invisible to its members”, but pushed a “new sort of Jewish identity” to the forefront (Sarna, 2004, p. 222). This new identity was dramatically altered as Hitler and the Nazis drew on scientific racism (“Eugenic Science”) and used racial features to physically differentiate between Jews and the “superior” Aryan race (Blumefield, 2006; Darder & Torres, 2009; Goldstein, 2006; Langman, 1999; Levine-Rasky, 2008; Higham, 1955; as cited in Spencer, 1994). Jews came to be seen as a distinct racial group with undeniable biological indicators, even though Jews can be members of every *race* (Blumefield, 2006; Goldstein, 2006; Langman, 1999). The growing anti-Semitism in the United States prior to WWII, exacerbated by the blaming of Jews for the Great Depression and the National Origins Act of 1924 which limited Jewish immigrant entry, increased America’s reluctance to support additional Jewish immigration as more anti-Semitism (e.g. Kristallnacht) was evident in Germany (Diner, 2003; ICS, 2012): “For the anti-Semite, the Jew is a living Rorschach inkblot...the anti-Semite sees whatever he needs to see in the Jew” (Ackerman & Jahoda, 1950, p. 58; as cited in Langman, 1999, p. 133).

As a result of the Holocaust and the United States’ lack of immediate involvement in the war, some Jews severed all ties to their Jewish identity in order to protect themselves and their children in the case another anti-Semitic-driven event should occur again; many more Jews began to question how safe they felt publicly displaying their Jewishness (Langman, 1999). Others saw this as “only one recent chapter in a long history of malice, or worse, toward Jews” (Weinrach, 2002, p. 302), which reinforced

their insider/outside positioning in society, and “resolve[d] to maintain Judaism in the face of opposition and danger[; they] realiz[ed] that they ha[d] been spared for a sacred task-to preserve Judaism and its cultural, social, and moral values” (Sarna, 2004, p. 271). It is important to note that the Holocaust is not synonymous with the Jewish experience although the Holocaust has “in varying degrees and in different ways...marked the psyche of every Jew the world over” (Beck, 1991, p. 32; as cited in Weinrach, 2002, p. 302): “[T]he symbolic importance of anti-Semitism is so widespread that is one of the few measures that cuts equally across religious denomination or level of affiliation” (Arnow, 1994).

### **“Movin’ on up/out”**

Although Ashkenazi Jews began assimilating to the dominant group prior to World War II, their assimilation was aided greatly by the emergence of programs such as the G.I. Bill of Rights, which created post-secondary educational and housing prospects for male G.I.’s of European origins, and the 1940 Census no longer distinguishing native Whites (those from northwestern European ancestry) from other European immigrants (Bleich, 1999; Brodtkin, 1998; Loveman, 1999; as cited in Macionis, 2007; Sarna, 2004). As children of immigrants assimilated successfully into mainstream White culture, they were granted institutional privileges, and their families began to obtain middle-class status (Brodtkin, 1998; Forman, 2000). Furthermore, urban renewal projects and construction of Levittown in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, which promoted suburban neighborhoods as safer places to live, helped transition Jews in the United States from being seen as inferior immigrants to members of the dominant group (Brodtkin, 1998; Diner, 2003; Sarna, 2004; Sherman, 1960).

Prior to moving to the suburbs, much of the Eastern European Jewish immigrant population quickly settled in urban communities along the East Coast due to their experiences living in segregated urban communities and took jobs that were low in pay but drew on their skills in the garment industry (Ben-Atar, 1999; Brodtkin, 1998; Lemish, 1981). In these urban communities, the Jewish immigrants' main concern was survival (food and shelter) and making a permanent place for themselves, rather than working hard so that they could one day return to their native countries (Ben-Atar, 1999; Brodtkin, 1998). Although there are no conclusive statistics available, Jews moved at a faster pace and had a greater concentration in these new areas as compared to their non-Jewish suburbanites; one study claimed Jews moved to the suburbs at a rate almost four times that of their non-Jewish peers, whereas another study found that almost a third of all American Jews left urban areas for the suburbs (Diner, 2003; Sarna, 2004; Sherman, 1960). Nevertheless, Jewish transplantation to the suburbs became a marker of privilege, success, wealth, power, and security—"a sign of 'acceptance in the culture of the United States'", even if that meant leaving the protected shelter of the Jewish urban culture (Brodtkin, 1998; Sarna, 2004, p. 283; Wirth-Nesher, 1998).

As Jews were moving away from the small, close-knit communities they once found comforting when they first arrived, they found that "[the] lines between Jew and non-Jew in social contact are, if anything, even more sharply drawn in suburbia than in urban centers" (Diner, 2003; Sherman, 1960, p. 151). With Jews residing farther apart from each other, the cultural cohesion and religious adherence that was part of urban living was becoming increasingly fractured by the suburban life emphasizing the importance of "fitting in" (Diner, 2003), whereas Jews who wanted to remain unchanged

“as a Jew from cradle to grave” stayed in segregated Jewish urban communities (Sherman, 1960, p. 155). The process of Jewish identity fragmentation increases as newer generations continue the process of putting the suburban community’s interest above the urbanized religious group’s needs, as their immigrant relatives had done when they “achieve[d] a measure of economic stabilization, [became]...citizen[s], and move[d] into a more pleasant home[; they] slowly [began] to gravitate toward [their] neighbors and co-workers of other national origins” (Sherman, 1960, p. 35).

Due to this social and economic mobility, Jews found themselves as “doubly marginal”: their economic success allowed them partial entrance into the majority culture yet it only allowed them partial exit from their extensive history as a minority (Biale, 1998). Since Jews were able to adapt and assimilate into the dominant culture, as well as be willing to be seen as White, the dominant group and peoples of color viewed (and continue to view) Jews as no different than other immigrant groups who have “[merged] into the white European culture to which they always belonged” (Biale et al., 1998; Greenberg, 1998; Horowitz, 1998, p. 124). Some Jews “have remained safe by ‘passing’, by ‘fitting in,’ by not appearing or acting ‘too Jewish’” (Sapon-Shevin, 1999, p. 276), that “[b]ecoming White...is another way to triangulate the ravages of assimilation and loss of identity...a way of losing one’s identity by folding into the larger American identity a solidarity with the process of racialization and a consequent annihilation of the last vestiges of being Jewish” (Beliak, 1999, p. 91).

### **The birth of a Jewish nation.**

The collective anti-Semitic attitude in the United States waned as Jews and non-Jews served as soldiers and physicians in World War II together and horrifying images

and stories of death, destruction, and torture from the Holocaust were shared with the public. It was in this context that Israel was formed as a Jewish state in 1948, although the roots of this formation stems back to the late 1800's when young Jews in eastern Europe began to question whether Jews could really live peacefully in Christian-ruled countries (Brodkin, 1998; Diner, 2003; ICS, 2012; Mack, 1998; Sarna, 2004; Sherman, 1960; Stein, 2002). As a result of trying to find solutions for the problems Jews faced in modern society and wanting to create a unified Jewish settlement/homeland in Palestine (the term given to the ancient land of Israel in the late 1800's/early 1900's), Zionists (identifying themselves after an alternative name for Israel) created organizations, political groups, and public literature to garner support for a liberated Jewish country (Diner, 2003; Cohen, 1998; Mack, 1998; Sarna, 2004).

However, it is important to note that not all Jews wanted to be identified as Zionists because they were concerned it would bring their ability to pass as White into question (Goldstein, 2006). Although the events of the Holocaust did push many Jews to eventually support the Zionist movement, with many seeing a unified Jewish country as a safe haven for Jews, the "actual Zionist movement", purposely living in Israel or visiting Israel, "has been very small in the United States" (Brettschneider, 1996, p. 22). Likewise, many American Jews may support Israel's independence and feel a connection to it through religious teachings, but may also feel conflicted because they not support Israeli politics and the treatment of its neighboring countries (Brettschneider, 1996; Pogrebin, 1991; Sarna, 2004).

## **Guilty by Association**

Though the two decades following World War II can partially be seen as a “golden age” for American Jews, as discrimination against them in housing, education, and employment decreased markedly, with Jews “[achieving] a greater degree of economic and political security, and a broader social acceptance than had ever been known by any Jewish community since the [ancient] Dispersion”, they were not allowed to be fully secure with their new position in 1950s society due to the Communist witch hunts headed by Senator Joseph McCarthy (American Jewish Yearbook, 1950, p. 110; Brodtkin, 1998; Diner, 2003; Sarna, 2004, p. 276-277; Sherman, 1960). Jews in the United States associated with any radical causes or organizations (or believed to be) were persecuted for being supportive of Communism; this crusade saw the firings and social shunning of those in the government, public school education, and in film and television (actors, producers, reporters, etc.) (Diner, 2003; Mack, 1998; Pogrebin, 1991).

Anti-Semitism increased again when a Jewish couple named Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were convicted of stealing United States documents regarding atomic secrets and delivering them to the Soviet Union; they were executed 1953 at New York’s Sing-Sing prison as a result of their crime (Diner, 2003; Sarna, 2004). Although many American Jews viewed their trial as manipulation (since they were condemned without proof) and anti-Semitic, their execution (less than a decade after the end of World War II) contributed to a growing sense of fear of retaliation in Jews and ultimately led to the collapse of many Yiddish and secular Jewish institutions during the following decade (Beliak, 1999; Sarna, 2004).



## **Jewish involvement in the Civil Rights Movement**

Although they benefitted socially and economically from their new racial positioning, even with the hostile effects of the Rosenberg trial, it is important to note that Jewish involvement in civil rights issues and empathy for those who were “othered”, particularly African Americans, did not occur solely in the 1960s. Jews had participated in anti-slavery societies during the American Revolution and “treated the recently freed slaves as human beings” (Langman, 1999, p. 239), lived and worked in African American neighborhoods, allowed African Americans into Jewish unions during the labor movement, and helped form and serve as important financial, legal, political, and administrative roles in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People [NAACP] (Diner, 2003; Goldstein, 2006; Greenberg, 1998; Sarna, 2004). In addition, the relationship shared by African Americans and Jews (even if it does not exist in the same way today) is unlike any other relationship shared with either African Americans or Jews; no other racial, ethnic, or religious group has formed the same kind of relationship with Jews that has existed between African Americans and Jews (Langman, 1999).

Even though many immigrant and first- and second-generation Jews saw assimilation as a key to survival in the United States, especially after World War II, they did not forget the commitment to social justice emphasized in Jewish teachings (which is described by the Hebrew phrase “Tikkun Olam”, meaning “heal the world”) and what it was like to be recently persecuted in Europe (Schlosser, 2009). Jews who took a stand against the injustices faced by African Americans, as Freedom Riders, participants in marches, or as local community activists, drew on the Holocaust as a reference point and

rationale for getting involved with the Civil Rights movement (Greenberg, 1998; Langman, 1999; Sarna, 2004; Schlosser, 2009):

The most important thing that I learned under those tragic circumstances was the bigotry and hatred are not the most urgent problem. The most urgent, the most disgraceful, the most shameful and the most tragic problem is silence... America must not become a nation of onlookers. America must not remain silent. (Prinz, 1963; as cited in Sarna, 2004, p. 310)

This embracing of equality is also due to Judaism concerning itself with the well-being of the Jewish community, as well as those who do not belong to the Jewish community, regardless of race, class or religion, since all are seen as part of humanity (Goldstein, 2006; Greenberg, 1998; Langman, 1999): “Let us Jews understand enough of the needs and proprieties of our own position to see that an ill grace clothes the Jews who joins the ranks of the prejudiced Americans who find it to the interest to paint the negro as a born criminal” (Yidishes tageblat [Yiddish/Jewish daily news], 1906, p. 8; as cited in Goldstein, 2006, p. 81). Similarly, in the early part of the 1900s, Rabbi Max Heller from New Orleans critiqued Southern racism by drawing similarities between the Jews and the African Americans: “[T]he Jew, like the negro, is slandered and abused as a ‘race’...[and] is made to suffer, the mass for the sins of the individual...man who have been steeled in the furnace of persecution...ought to lend an uplifting hand to the weak fellow-man” (Heller, 1911, p. 4; as cited in Goldstein, 2006, p. 61).

However, it is important to note that not all Jews saw the Civil Rights movement as advancing their cause since the movement focused on mainly race and racism for people of color, whereas they had been an assimilated and economically successful

group, with social and federal institutions accepting Jews as members of the dominant White group (Horowitz, 1998; Langman, 1999). Additionally, Jews were left out of discussions about multiculturalism, as well as multicultural education, both of which stemmed from the Civil Rights movement and called for including diverse racial, cultural, and ethnic content into society and transforming schools in terms of awareness to diversity and how power is exercised (Biale, Galchinsky, & Heschel, 1998; Blum, 1997; McCarthy, 1993; as cited in Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 1995; Wiedeman, 2002). Most versions of multicultural politics downplayed (and continue to do so) religion, region, class, ethnicity, and similar dividing factors, and instead focused on race due to multiculturalism's historical roots, which can be traced back to various peoples of color who have been historically oppressed (Banks, 1989; as cited in Gorski, 1999; Greenberg, 1998).

Though multiculturalism seeks to challenge “the priority of [a] monolithic identity in American history” (Biale et al., 1998, p. 3), it has become a catchphrase in various fields, though primarily in education (like the concept of *diversity*), and encompasses various topics such as privilege, oppression, gender differences, and social, economic, and educational inequalities among racial groups (Blum, 1997). While multiculturalism was supposed to be “inclusive of all persons and groups” (Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992, p. 81; as cited in Langman, 1999, p. 2), it fails to include Jews, especially the Ashkenazim, and their insider/outsider positioning into many of the discussions surrounding people of color (Biale et al. 1998). When Jews were excluded from discussions surrounding race, identity, or oppression, they were left to question with whom they identify, which brought about feelings of exclusion; in addition, Jews may

continue to feel left out of discussions on civil rights, multiculturalism, and racism when they are lumped together with those they have been fighting to distance themselves from (Greenberg, 1998).

### **A Turning Point**

Despite being left out of multiculturalism and related discussions on “otherness”, the impact of the Holocaust on the world’s Jewish population, the formation of Israel, and the presence of Jews in the Civil Rights movement laid the foundation for contemporary Jewish identity in the United States, one that followed the theme “From Holocaust to Rebirth” (Sarna, 2004, p. 337). The early 1960s saw not only a Holocaust survivor immigrant population of about 100,000 in the United States, the publication of *The Diary of Anne Frank*, but also the trial of Adolf Eichmann, a top-ranking Nazi official, in Jerusalem in 1961, where he was convicted and executed for arranging for millions of Jews to be sent to their deaths in concentration camps and gas chambers (Diner, 2003; Sarna, 2004).

However, it was not until the late 1960s that the image of the Holocaust became so powerful and gave American Jews an opportunity to talk about their fears and experiences (Arnow, 1994; Diner, 2003; Sarna, 2004). The Six-Day War in 1967 filled Jews, including those in America, with anxiety of a second Holocaust; even though they were settling into their new role as members of the dominant group, American Jews worried about their minority identity when the existence of Israel was threatened to be wiped out (Diner, 2003; Goldstein, 2006; Sarna, 2004). Prior to war breaking out in the Middle East on June 5, 1967, an Egyptian radio announced, “The existence of Israel has continued too long...The great hour has come. The battle has come in which we shall

destroy Israel”, which led to Egypt blockading Israel from using Strait of Tiran for shipping, amassing a large army in the Sinai (which Israel had previously captured in the 1950s), and forcing UN troops protecting Israel to leave (Diner, 2003; Mack, 1998; Sarna, 2004, p. 315). The danger of another attempt at obliterating the Jews not more than 25 years after the end of the Holocaust caused Jewish communities to take notice of their positioning in their societies and around the world (Diner, 2003; Sarna, 2004).

Though defeat seemed inevitable due to Israel’s hostile neighbors never accepting the state as a Jewish homeland in the Middle East, Israel retaliated with heavy land and air strikes and destroyed numerous Arab armies backed by the Soviet Union (including those from Jordan, Syria, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, and Algeria), which allowed Israel to seize control of the West Bank, the Golan Heights, and Jerusalem, as well as the Western Wall, the most sacred place in Israel for Jews (Diner, 2003; Mack, 1998; Pogrebin, 1991; Sarna, 2004). As a result of Israel’s unexpected victory, large numbers of Jews in the United States congregated at synagogues to express their thanks and relief over this “miracle” they saw as G-d’s<sup>6</sup> doing; in addition, American Jews donated hundreds of millions of dollars<sup>7</sup> and helped change public opinion about Israel as the solitary democratic state in the Middle East (Diner, 2003; Horowitz, 2003; Sarna, 2004): “Americans [merged] Israelis and American Jews, rooted for David to triumph over the contemporary Philistines, and cheered when David became the new Goliath of the Middle East because they knew that he stood like Superman for truth, justice, and the American way” (Moore, 2000, p. 79-80; as cited in Sarna, 2004, p. 316).

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<sup>6</sup> In the Jewish religion, G-d is used to avoid defacing the name of the creator.

<sup>7</sup> Though the exact amount is unknown, the donations, plus the value of Israeli bonds purchased, puts the total anywhere from \$300 million to \$430 million (Diner, 2003; Sarna, 2004).

Furthermore, not only did the Six-Day War mark “the climax of a generation, the sealing of an era, and the culmination of a 1900-year cycle”, it also changed the consciousness of American Jews of all ages by making them “deeply aware of the shared fate of all Jews, and of the way that fate is not bound with the political entity that is the State of Israel” (Elazar, 1969; as cited in Sarna, 2004, p. 316; Diner, 2003). This critical consciousness about an undiscussed subject opened the floodgates for Holocaust awareness in American memory, with books, articles, conferences, museums, memorials, educational courses, and annual commemorations showing society that it was not completely blameless for what happened to the Jews (Arnow, 1994; Diner, 2003; Sarna, 2004).

As a result of this “watershed in contemporary Jewish public affairs” (Elazar, 1969; as cited in Sarna, 2004, p. 316), which saw the production of the NBC television miniseries *Holocaust* in 1978 and Steven Spielberg’s 1993 film *Schindler’s List*, the Holocaust has come to be known better by most Americans than any other event in Jewish history; in addition, the motto “never again” still stands as a central principle of the Jewish philosophy (Arnow, 1994; Diner, 2003; Glazer, 2003; Sarna, 2004).

Assimilating into the dominant group and surviving the Holocaust reinforced the Jewish belief that they were “the toughest of all the white elements that have been poured into the American crucible...by [their] unique experience of several thousand years of exposure to alien majorities...this asbestoid fibre [sic] is made even more fireproof by the anti-Semitism of American uncivilisation [sic]” (Zangwill, 1926, p. 204; as cited in Biale, 1998, p. 22).

## **Conclusion**

Many Ashkenazi Jews currently living in the United States do not ever have to worry about their social standing life as their relatives did when they first arrived from Europe; this lack of struggling to adopt the values, language, and lifestyle is a direct result of Jews being integrated (even involuntarily) into the dominant White culture and the governmental assistance opportunities which helped ease this transition. Though they see their foods adored and Yiddish words being utilized by non-Jews, there are still challenges Ashkenazi Jews in the United States face, such as balancing their Jewish identity (usually, if at all, developed through religious school and family structures) with their White identity (and the lack of discussion surrounding what it means to be White, how Jews became White, and what it means to be both) and learning how Judaism and being Jewish works for them (now that many Ashkenazi Jews have moved away from the traditional cultural, ethnic, and religious values). Even though Jewishness and American Jewish culture may soon end by no longer being considered a distinct element of American life, it is important for American Jews to understand why their “people” in the United States did not always “fit in” and how picking and choosing who Jews in America want to be can ultimately deprive their people of a link between the past and the future.

## Chapter 3

### Theoretical Frameworks

Jewish history is filled with potential understandings of what is meant was to be multilingual and multicultural. Rather than lamenting these multiple identities, Ashkenazi Jews in the United States, as well as those in the majority and minority groups who ignore these identities, can learn to embrace them by reconceiving the meaning of Jewish identity through critical theory (and its subsequent educational approach, critical pedagogy) and identity politics frameworks (Biale, 1998; Biale et al., 1998). Likewise, for a study designed to understand the nuances of Jewish female identity negotiation in public school teaching, these frameworks, including intersectionality and the Communication Theory of Identity, can help non-Jews see how Jews may not fit neatly into already established oppressed groups categorized by race, class, and gender, allowing them grasp how anti-Semitism, classism, and racism combine with sexism to create a distinct experience for Jewish women (Faulkner & Hecht, 2011; Greenebaum, 1999; McCall, 2005).

### Critical Theory

*“A defining moment for any critical theorist is the [sic] personal understanding of the oppressive structures they formerly or presently live in, be they related to race, class, gender, religion or any form of stereotypes or discrimination, etc.” (Kanpol, 1997; as cited in Heilman, 2003, p. 254)*

Critical Theory, although difficult to define, as it is always evolving and attempts to avoid producing set sociological, political, or epistemological belief systems, is seen “both a ‘school of thought’ and a process of critique” (Giroux, 2009, p. 27) that are



inherently emancipatory and, as the same time, able to “disrupt and challenge the status quo” (Allan, 2010; Applerouth & Edles, 2011; Critical Theory, 2010; Gordon, 1995; Heilman, 2003; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2003, p. 433; Merriam, 2002; Morrow & Brown, 1994 Outlaw, 2013; Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 1995; Rasmussen, 1996; Rush, 2004):

[Critical theory] was not just an extension of proletarian thought, but a means of thinking about the social totality that would aid in the movement from the empirical proletariat’s necessarily still partial view of society from its own class position to the achievement of a classless society, one not structured on injustice. (Calhoun, 1995, p. 21; as cited in Applerouth & Edles, 2011, p. 83)

This theoretical framework, which rejects orthodox Marxism, capitalism, and positivism, began with the formation of the Frankfurt School (later renamed the Institute of Social Research in 1953) on February 3, 1923 at the University of Frankfurt in Germany by wealthy grain merchant Felix Weil, who “sought to advance the ideals of socialism” (Agger, 1991; Allan, 2010; Applerouth & Edles, 2011, p. 78; Critical Theory, 2010; Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2009; Giroux, 2009; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2003; Merriam, 2002; Morrow & Brown, 1994; Pinar et al., 1995; Rasmussen, 1996).

Prior to becoming director in 1930, Max Horkheimer, along with Theodor Adorno and Herbert Marcuse, changed the direction of the school from an empirically-based research program to one that reevaluated Marxist theory after communist revolutionary defeat in Central and Eastern Europe and the totalitarian regimes that followed (Applerouth & Edles, 2011; Darder et al., 2009; Giroux, 2009; Gordon, 1995; Horkheimer, Max, 2010; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2003; Morrow & Brown, 1994;

Rasmussen, 1996; Rush, 2004). The Institute's "intent was to help establish a critical social consciousness able to penetrate existing ideology, support independent judgment and be capable, as Adorno put it, of maintaining the freedom to envision alternatives" (Held, 1980; as cited in Pinar et al., 1995, p. 248).

Horkheimer's directorship replaced history and economics emphasized through objective, positivist scientific studies with a "philosophically informed, interdisciplinary social science" (Rush, 2004, p. 9), influenced by Marx, Kant, Hegel, and Weber, that examines everyday life and the structures of domination, injustice, and subjugation that shape society (Agger, 1991; Allan, 2010; Applerouth & Edles, 2011; Darder et al., 2009; Giroux, 2009; Gordon, 1995; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2003; Macbeth, 2001; as cited in Heilman, 2003; Morrow & Brown, 1994; Outlaw, 2013; Rasmussen, 1996): "If it can be said that in the early years of its history the Institute concerned itself primarily with an analysis of bourgeois society's socio-economic substructure, in the years after 1930 its prime interests lay in its cultural substructure" (Jay, 1973; as cited in Giroux, 2009, p. 29).

However, shortly after the school changed its theoretical focus, it was also forced to change its location due to the development of fascist Germany through Hitler and Nazi control and rampant anti-Semitism which was feared by most if the school's Jewish members, including the founders (Applerouth & Edles, 2011; Darder et al., 2009; Giroux, 2009; Gordon, 1995; Horkheimer, Max, 2010; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2003; Morrow & Brown, 1994 Outlaw, 2013). Although the school's central concentration was not on the "Jewish question" (only later did Horkheimer and Adorno look at anti-Semitism through psychological, sociological, historical and psychoanalytical perspectives), the Gestapo in

the spring of 1933 shut down the school and seized its property, charging it with “[encouraging] activities hostile to the state” due to its association with Marxism (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2003; Outlaw, 2013; Wiggerhaus, 1986/1994, p. 128; as cited in Giroux, 2009, p. 79).

As a result of emigration to the United States and their examination of the exploitation found in capitalism, Horkheimer, Adorno, and Marcuse saw bureaucracy become an “‘iron cage’ that has stifled individual freedom” (Adorno, Theodor, 2010; Applerouth & Edles, 2011, p. 84; Rasmussen, 1996). In addition, they felt that modern technological advances and scientific results from the Enlightenment did not create a more just world, and that society was continuing to be plagued by inequality, oppression, and poverty (Allan, 2010; Applerouth & Edles, 2011; Giroux, 2009; Rasmussen, 1996). Even though a free and just society may not be ultimately attainable, Horkheimer, Adorno, and Marcuse believed that in order to create a more socially just society, critical inquiry must “[keep] the spotlight on power relationships within society so as to expose the forces of hegemony and injustice” by undertaking research concerned with issues related to dominance and oppression (Crotty, 1998, p. 157; as cited in Merriam, 2002, p. 204).

Similar to the critical theorists’ approach in looking at dehumanization, destruction, and domination in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, philosopher and Marxist theorist Antonio Gramsci attacks Marx’s notion of revolutionary action by the working class by arguing that this type of revolution does not (and most likely will not) happen due to ideological hegemony and the ruling ideas (Allan, 2010; Applerouth & Edles, 2011; Crotty, 1998; as cited in Merriam, 2002; Gordon, 1995). Hegemony, derived from the Greek word

hegemon meaning leader, commander, guide, or ruler, is a system of domination where the working class are unknowingly consenting to be socialized (primarily through educational systems) to adopt and accept the daily implementation of values, beliefs, norms, expectations, behaviors, and attitudes of the ruling class (Allan, 2010; Applerouth & Edles, 2011; Darder et al., 2009; Gordon, 1995; Hegemony, 2010; Merriam, 2002). In order to truly examine a whole social system, one must stand outside it and look in; however, those that are privileged in the hierarchy are not able (and often unwilling) to be outside of their position, which makes it difficult for them to see the problems with capitalism and society, since “the system is created by and works for the benefit of the capitalist ruling class” (Allan, 2010, p. 62; Hegemony, 2010).

Drawing influence from Marx’s writings, Horkeimer, Adorno, and Marcuse’s approach to understanding what very few people were willing to consider in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century provided the foundation for a set of heterogeneous ideas which came to be known as critical pedagogy (Darder et al., 2009). It is important to note that similar to critical theory, critical pedagogy is critical in nature, but it is not based on a formula or universal approach or implementation: “Critical pedagogy is the term used to describe what emerges when critical theory encounters education” (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997, p. 24; as cited in Grande, 2009, p. 185). Critical pedagogy primarily serves to expose hegemonic processes by demystifying the uneven power relations and social arrangements that promote the ruling class and exploit the working class; through critical pedagogy, teachers and students are challenged to recognize their roles within the hegemonic practices and critique and transform the knowledge and power dynamics within the classroom, at the school level, and within society which perpetuate the

exploitation of marginalized subordinated groups (Brettschneider, 1996; Cho, 2006; as cited in Cho 2010; Darder et al., 2009; Gordon, 1995; Grande, 2009).

Though Henry Giroux's Theory and Resistance in Education (1983) was the first textbook to use the term critical pedagogy, he was not the first to give shape and understanding to radical beliefs, values, and principles which helped revitalize emancipatory ideals and educational debates on democratic schooling during the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the United States (Darder et al., 2009). Critical pedagogy emerged in opposition to "the structural determinism of the Neo-Marxist theories of education in the 1970s and 80s" (Cho, 2010, p. 317) and stands on the shoulders of critical theorists such as Horkheimer, Adorno, and Marcuse by drawing on their theoretical tradition which looked beyond the surface, attacked empirical sciences, and brought to light the domination, dehumanization, and destruction in modern society (Appelrouth & Edles, 2011; Darder et al., 2009). Though they are only small aspects of critical pedagogy, analyzing hegemonic structures and enacting counter-hegemonic alternatives to learning and teaching serve to incorporate resistance to a complex educational system which routinely denies opportunities for discussion and empowerment by and for those who have historically existed in the margins of society (Darder et al., 2009).

Along with counter-hegemony, critical pedagogy is built on the notion of praxis where theory and action, as well as reflection, are intertwined in our understanding of individuals daily lives and the world around them (Darder et al., 2009; Freire, 1970). Praxis, like John Dewey's notion of experience as action and reflection, is dependent on both theory and action; without practice, theory is simply words and without theory, action becomes "blind activism" (Darder et al., 2009, p. 13). Similar to praxis and

counter-hegemony, Paulo Freire's concept of "conscientizacao" (conscientization), or critical consciousness, happens when critical dialogue and analysis of the historical, social, economic, educational, global, and racial structures of one's surroundings and the world at large empower people to achieve a deeper understanding and awareness of their reality and allows them to recreate these realities through constant reflection and action (Brettschneider, 1996; Darder et al., 2009).

Though critical pedagogy shares many ideals with the vision of social justice, it is not without reproach. Although students who engaged with critical pedagogy would be empowered based on their social identities which provide the foundation for deliberation and social action, Ellsworth (1989) contends that many of the debates surrounding critical pedagogy fail to consider the classroom practices which support a political agenda. This political agenda was raised by curriculum theorists Bellack and Huebner (1960) and Counts (1969) prior to the critical pedagogy evolution when they argued that teachers perpetuated the status quo through their role in transmitting social, political, cultural, and moral values, especially those pertaining to the white, middle-class culture. Freedman (2007) echoes Ellsworth's sentiment of a teacher political agenda by stating that critical pedagogues have preconceived ideas of what formulates critical pedagogy and methodology:

Critical educators typically enter the classroom with preformulated political objectives. Their goal is not to bring out students' independent thoughts, as it were, like a genie out of a lamp, but to alter students' ways of thinking to conform with a preconceived notion of what constitutes critical thought. (p. 444)

Though her research was done when critical pedagogy was just starting to evolve, Ellsworth (1989) argues that “while the literature states... implicitly or explicitly that critical pedagogy is political, there have been no sustained research attempts to explore whether or how the practices it prescribes actually alter specific power relations outside or inside the classroom” (p. 301). In addition, Freedman warns that critical pedagogy, though aimed toward democracy and addressing various forms of social injustice, becomes indoctrination if the “classroom instruction... encourages students to adopt political ideologies that they did not freely choose” (2007, p. 445). However, Roberts (2000) states that not only do teachers come in with preconceived ideas, but so do students: “[E]ducators have a right—indeed a responsibility—to determine their educational objectives before entering into dialogue with students just as students have a right to determine in advance what they hope to gain from a particular educational experience” (as cited in Freedman, 2007, p. 450).

Yet Freire (1970) claims that when engaging in critical pedagogy, teachers “must be partners of the students in their relations with them...[where] [t]he teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach” (p. 75-80). McLaren (2009) states that empowerment, as one of the major concepts of critical pedagogy, “means not only helping students to understand and engage the world around them but also enabling them to exercise the kind of courage needed to change the social order where necessary” (p. 74). This “form of cultural politics that is fundamentally concerned with student experience” (McLaren, 1995, p. 42; as cited in Cho, 2010) relies on these experiences to challenge hegemonic ideology, knowledge, culture, and discourse, as well as the hidden

curriculum in schools (McLaren, 2009): “The pedagogy of experience aims at ‘freeing students from oppressive cultural frames of knowing [and] providing them with new ways of claiming authority for their own experience’” (Zavarzedah & Morton, 1994, p. 22; as cited in Cho, 2010, p. 313).

Furthermore, Critical Race Theory (CRT) provides a framework for prospective teachers and teacher educators to create a space in the curriculum to examine and challenge deeply engrained ideologies about race and racism (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005; Wiedeman, 2002). This theoretical framework stemmed from the 1970s legal movement called Critical Legal Studies (CLS) which addressed oppression and hegemony in American society (Ladson-Billings, 1999; Wiedeman, 2002). Though CLS allowed legal scholars to challenge legal ideology that had supported the United States class structure in the 1970s, it failed to incorporate racism in its critique (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 1999).

CRT quickly grew out of the dissatisfaction from people of color within the legal field; these scholars wanted to be able to evaluate different aspects of the United States using the lens of racism as an enduring fixture in society (Ladson-Billings, 1999; Milner, 2008; Vaught & Castagno, 2008). Critical Legal Studies showed legal scholars that social equality is a slow and often painstakingly complicated process; critical race theorists were able to learn from their struggles and advocate the use of CRT in teacher education programs to support the need for constant analysis and disruption of racist politics in society (Ladson-Billings, 1999; Milner, 2008; Wiedeman, 2002).

Vaught and Castagno (2008) stated that central to CRT is the concept that racism is systematic and vast, it frames the nation’s institutions and individual relationships, and



it never goes away. Kincheloe (1999) and Wiedeman (2002) added to this theme by stating that another key component of CRT was the overlapping of race with gender and class, much like intersectionality attempts to explore. Whiteness as property, which is a reflection of the fusion of Whiteness and freedom, certain privileges, and the ability to draw on these advantages in society, is examined through Critical Race Theory, as well as the collective White privilege that is constantly perpetuated in the different structures of the nation (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005; Milner, 2008; Treviño et al., 2008; Vaught & Castagno, 2008). It is important to note that “Whiteness is a complex, hegemonic, and dynamic set of mainstream socio-economic processes, and ways of thinking, feeling, believing, and acting (cultural scripts) that function to obscure the power, privilege, and practices of the dominant social elite” (Lea & Sims, 2008, pp. 1-2; as cited in Rubin, 2013, p. 215).

Furthermore, Vaught and Castagno (2008) asserted in their research on Whiteness and White privilege that many White Christians interchange ethnicity, race, and culture when defining their own racial positions; for Jews, Jewish identity may be all three of these labels at the same time, a combination of them, or none at all. Critical Race Theory offers White educators and pre-service teachers to examine the concept of power and control which surround the status quo as a neutral foundation and help maintain White dominance (Harris, 1993). Though race continues to be significant in society, analyzing the nation’s foundation of property rights instead of human rights and the overlapping of race and property serves as a powerful tool for explaining inequalities found in society and education (Ladson-Billings, 1999; Wiedeman, 2002).

However, in her research on preparing teachers for diverse learners, Ladson-Billings (1999) found that, leading up to her findings, CRT had barely been discussed in much of the educational literature (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005). CRT empowers White teachers to examine their own life experiences so that they can understand the privilege that characterizes White racial identity (McIntyre, 2002; Titone, Schalk, & Gibson, 2006). Although CRT is no longer new to education, it has slowly begun to move away from being strictly a Black-White model and currently encompasses other oppressed minority groups (Treviño, Harris, & Wallace, 2008); however, it still fails to incorporate Jews.

**“The political is personal and the personal is political”**

In order to understand the impact of critical pedagogy and CRT on Jewish identity, it is important to examine how identity politics shape overall Jewish identity in the United States. Identity, as defined in the Oxford English Dictionary (1971), derives from the Latin word *idem*, meaning the same; however, identity in social, legal, academic, economic, and political arenas implies difference (Fellows & Razack, 1998). Identity politics, first used in 1979 to refer to the activism and social conceptions of people with disabilities (though it did not emerge solely in the 1960s-1970s), stems back to the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when W.E.B. Du Bois contended that African Americans, due to their oppressed positioning in a racist society, experience a “double-consciousness”, “a uniquely ‘clairvoyant’ vantage point” in which they are conditioned to view the world from not just their perspective, but also from the perspective of the dominant group as that was entrenched in institutions and social practices (Allan, 2010; Applerouth & Edles, 2011; Bell & Entin, 2000; Bernstein, 2005; Du Bois, 1993; as cited

in Greenebaum, 1999; Ladson-Billings, 2003; Smith, 2005, p. 11; as cited in Applerouth & Edles, 2011, p. 321; Young, 2000):

The Negro...is...gifted with second-sight in this American world...which...only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world...One ever feels his twoness,--an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. Du Bois, 1903, p. 102)

Du Bois, around the same time the Frankfurt School was forming (though rarely recognized as a critical theory scholar), noted that bifurcation of consciousness created in the social “actor” “establishes two modes of knowing, experiencing, and acting—one located in the body and in the space that it occupies and moves into, the other passing beyond it” (Ladson-Billings, 2003; Smith, 1987, p. 82; as cited in Applerouth & Edles, 2011, p. 321): “Double consciousness rises when the oppressed subject refuses to coincide with...devalued, objectified, stereotyped visions of herself or himself” (Young, 2000). Furthermore, those who experience a split consciousness must adapt to the rules of society, regardless if these rules do not reflect their interests and desires, in order to gain acceptance, even if that means becoming alienated from their “true” selves (Applerouth & Edles, 2011; Ladson-Billings, 2003; Greenebaum, 1999): “[The stranger is] a cultural hybrid on the verge of two different patterns of group life, not knowing to which of them he [or she] belongs” (Schutz, 1943, 1944, p. 507; as cited in Greenebaum, 1999, p. 45).

Drawing from this notion of “twoness”, identity politics is the tendency to base one’s politics on a sense of personal identity that “arises out of conditions of systematic stigmatization and structural disadvantage” (Moon, 2012, p. 1336) in which gender, race,

and class, “the primary differences that ‘deviate from the standards’” (Jackson, 1993, p. 146; as cited in Greenebaum, 1999, p. 43) make up a complex hierarchy (with middle/upper-class White men of European descent at the top) (Bernstein, 2005; Borren, 2013; Greenebaum, 1999; hooks, 1994; Lorber, 1999; Nelson-Barber & Harrison, 1996; Nicholson, 2008; Scott, 1992):

The most radical activist politics develop when one comes to understand the dynamics of how one is oppressed and how one oppresses others in her daily life. It is from this place that connections with other oppressed people are possible; when one comes to understand the basis of one’s own pain and how it is connected to the pain of others, the possibility of forming coalitions with others emerges. (Torres, 1991, p. 275; as cited in Nelson-Barber & Harrison, 1996, p. 257)

Although it was not discussed beyond three scholarly journal articles through the 1980s, the early writing about identity politics drew on the social justice focus of the different movements during 1960s and 1970s, such as the Civil Rights movement, the Women’s movement, and the resulting development of multiculturalism and multicultural education, in which identity, and the request for recognition itself, was seen as the primary focus of political work (Armstrong, 2002; as cited in Moon, 2012; Bell & Entin, 2000; Bernstein, 2005; Borren, 2013; Brettschneider, 1996, 1999; Harvey, 1990; Sanbonmatsu, 2004; Tilly, 2004; as cited in Cho, 2010; McCall, 2005; Nicholson, 2008; Scott, 1992).

Large numbers of Jewish women, women of color, and lesbians criticized the blurring of differences along the lines of class, sexuality, and culture in the feminist

movement, in addition to the assumption of a common “women’s experience” detached from racial, ethnic, or class background (Ackelsberg, 1996; Brettschneider, 1996); however, it is important to note that Jewish women were not part of the movement representing Jews—they were they simply as females who happened to be Jewish (Bourne, 1987; Brettschneider, 1996). Furthermore, rather than be included simply into a universal human role on the basis of shared attributes, identity politics significantly departs from earlier forms of politics of recognition in which differences were based solely on the individual and people were respected “in spite of” difference; rather, in identity politics, “what is demanded is respect for oneself *as* different” (Moon, 2012; Murks, 2001, p. 85; as cited in Heyes, 2012; Nicholson, 2008; Talburt, 2001):

[Identity politics was used to describe] ethnicity as a contemporary form of politics (Ross, 1982); a form of critical pedagogy that links social structure with the insights of poststructuralism regarding nature of subjectivity, which incorporating a Marxist commitment to politics (Bromley, 1989); and general efforts by status-based movements to foster and explore the cultural identity of members (Connolly, 1990). (see Bernstein, 2005, p. 47-48)

Drawing on critical pedagogy’s emphasis of understanding power relationships, identity politics also places great importance on how identity signifiers constitute power dynamics in current politics and society, how they affect human relations, and how they are “part of a continual process of transformation and change” (Ackelsberg, 1996; Brettschneider, 1999; Giroux, 1992, p. 72; as cited in Nelson-Barber & Harrison, 1996, p. 257; Huddy, 2001; Moon, 2012; Scott, 1992; Silberstein, 2000). Identity is one of the core concepts of critical pedagogy and is not merely socially produced through a random

grouping of identity signifiers such as race, gender, class, ethnicity, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, socioeconomic position, and intellectual perspective; it is highly dependent on each identity signifiers' salience in society and on an individual's belief that he/she should be treated according to his/her merit, not communal status (Ackelsberg, 1996; Brettschneider, 1999; Grande, 2009; Huddy, 2001; Morantz-Sanchez, 2000; Scott, 1992; Silberstein, 2000).

However, it is important to remember that identity politics does not embrace a singular narrative of collective identity since choosing or ranking one identity over the other is extremely limiting; likewise, a "politics of difference undermines cross-identity coalitions by emphasizing difference" (Bell & Entin, 2000; Brown, 1995; Gitlin, 1996; Wolin, 1993; as cited in Snyder, 2012; Moon, 2012; Nelson-Barber & Harrison, 1996): "The primary goal... must be to allow people the flexibility to develop and experience the richness of their *identities*<sup>8</sup>, which will almost of necessity, change over the course of their lifetimes" due to relationships formed with others similar and different to themselves (Acklesberg, 1996, p. 97-98; Allan, 2010; Morantz-Sanchez, 2000; Silberstein, 2000).

Identity politics redefines how politics "actors" express their situations in political terms, rather than having the dominant ideology defining "the oppressed as individuals who somehow deserve their hardships" (McAdam, 1982; Morris, 1990; Taylor & Whittier, 1992, 1995; as cited in Moon, 2012, p. 1341). In addition, identity politics, like Gramsci's analysis of hegemonic practices in society, entails the actors to step outside of their individual and collective identities and ask themselves tough questions regarding their investments in their own social, cultural, and political positionings (Allan, 2010;

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<sup>8</sup> Word italicized for emphasis

Brettschneider, 1999; Silberstein, 2000). Critical scholars argue that treating racial and social groups as if they were stable and homogenous categories leads identities to become essentialized, which can “result in a gross misreading of the nature of difference” (Bell & Entin, 2000; Butler, 1992; as cited in Silberstein, 2000; Grande, 2009, p. 186).

In addition, critics of identity politics warn of essentialism and exclusion when focusing on singular identities that qualify as oppressed, ““exclusions that stipulate, for instance, only women can understand feminine experience, only Jews can understand Jewish suffering, only formerly colonial subjects can understand colonial experience”” (Appiah, 2007; Brown, 1995; Butler, 1999; Gitlin, 1996; Markell, 2003; Phelan, 1989; Phillips, 2007; Shelby, 2005; Wolin, 1993; as cited in Snyder, 2012, p. 250; Bell & Entin, 2000; Butler, 1992; as cited in Silberstein, 2000; Said, 1986; as cited in Fuss, 1989, p. 115; as cited in hooks, 1994, p. 82):

Many...movements...foundered [due to] the assumption that there was one ‘true’ analysis of oppression, with its source in one ‘basic’ factor (be it gender, sexuality, or class), and the belief that effective resistance to oppression required everyone to accept that single analysis as true and be willing to subordinate his or her other ‘personal issues’ to a supposedly more comprehensive analysis and the politics that arose from it. (Ackelsberg, 1996, p. 90)

Likewise, when engaging with identity politics, it is important to note that building community across differences does not mean a shedding of these differences, ignoring these differences, or creating a community in which identities (primarily race, gender, and class) are competing for most oppression or marginality (i.e. females are more marginalized than males, but females of color more marginalized than white

females due to historical and institutional racism) (Fellows & Razack, 1998; Lorde, 1984; as cited in Ackelsberg, 1996). Although identity politics is not solely focused on racialized females, this “race to innocence” (“racing” to secure identity in places along the margins) occurs mostly in feminist identity politics, as females, including women of color, work to establish a “right [that] require sameness, [and] difference must be either trivialized or contained in the Other across a firm and visible border” (Alcoff, 1996, p. 75; as cited in Fellows & Razack, 1998, p. 5; Magnet, 2006).

### **Intersecting identities**

Rather than focusing on distinct singular identities (race, class, or gender) that compete for oppression recognition, critical scholars have focused on the spaces of intersection between and among these marginalized identity signifiers, questioning how race is gendered and how gender is racialized, since females “do not lead single-issue lives” (Collins, 1998; Davis, 2008; Dhamoon, 2011; Grande, 2009; Lorde, as cited in Brettschneider, 1996; Phoenix & Pattynama, 2006; as cited in Mehrotra, 2010; Silberstein, 2000). The term *intersectionality* was first used and developed by Critical Race theorist Kimberlé Crenshaw, who metaphorically described race and gender as intersecting “roads” to explain how discrimination is compounded for African American females (Collins, 1998; Dhamoon, 2011):

The road metaphor specifically served to describe the way in which a minority group navigates a main crossing, whereby the racism road crosses with the streets of colonialism, and patriarchy, and “crashes” occur at the intersections. Where the roads intersect, there is a double, triple, multiple, and many-layered blanket of oppression. (Dhamoon, 2011, p. 231)



Although intersectionality was popularized since the 1980s, it arose out of the tension between race-based and gender-based research and social movements that failed to taking into consideration the lived experience at overlooked points of intersection-intersections (sometimes called crossroads, axes, or dynamic processes) that reflected multiple subordinate positions as compared to autonomous dominant or mixed locations (Collins, 1998; Davis, 2008; Dhamoon, 2011; McCall, 2005; Mehrotra, 2010): “[It is] the complex, irreducible, varied and various effects which ensue when multiple axes of differentiation-economic, political, cultural, psychic, subjective and experiential-intersect in historically specific contexts” (Brah & Phoenix, 2004, p. 76; as cited in Dhamoon, 2011, p. 231).

It is important to note that since race, class, and gender are seen as the fundamental and most obvious forms of oppression, religion, ethnicity, sexuality, and disability, as well as other ‘categories’ are often excluded (Greenebaum, 1999; Silberstein, 2000). However, the way females experience gender oppression differs based on their other identities, including ethnicity, sexuality, and religion; in addition, their experience with racial or ethnic oppression varies based on class, gender, sexuality, and religion and segregating Jews into fixed racial and economic groups allows the conversations regarding oppression and intersectionality to further ignore their individual lived experiences (Greenebaum, 1999; Krell, 2000; Morantz-Sanchez, 2000).

When looking through the lens of intersectionality to understand Ashkenazi Jewish female identity in the United States, it is clear that they are conceptually (not economically, socially, or politically) marginalized even more so than females of color due to the confusion over the classification of a Jew in America and the lack of attention

paid to their position in the discussion of intersectionality, as they are neither than standard White European upper-class male that identity politics and intersectionality reacts against, nor are they considered people of color<sup>9</sup> (Beck, 1995; Greenebaum, 1999; Krell, 2000; Moon, 2012; Sochen, 1994). All whites are seen as those with power and privilege, who have stressed monoculturalism and assimilation to this norm (Biale et al., 1998; Goldberg, 1994; as cited in Greenberg, 1998).

Jewish females, like Ashkenazi Jewish males in the United States, experience a bifurcation of consciousness due to their positioning as both privileged and an Other and may never see themselves as fully assimilated into the dominant White group because they are “racially ambiguous”; they are able to disrupt the stability of who is a White American due to their religious otherness in hegemonic Christian society, at the same time enjoy “‘relative’ success” economically (Biale et al., 1998; Brettschneider, 1996; Horowitz, 1998; Krell, 2000; Langman, 1999; Levine-Rasky, 2008; MacDonald-Dennis, 2006; Nicholson, 2008; Steinberg, 1989; as cited in Greenebaum, 1999):

This denial is especially schizophrenic if you are member of the group that is actively being made invisible at the very moment that ‘difference’ is becoming increasingly central to feminist discourse and is now considered essential to the appropriate further development of feminist theories. (Beck, 1988, p. 101; as cited in Greenebaum, 1999, p. 44)

In addition, Ashkenazi Jewish females are left out of the “relational nature of difference” hierarchy, which positions people based on the intersection of class, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, and sexuality, due to their ability to occupy both the oppressor

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<sup>9</sup> It is important to note that Sephardic Jews and non-white Jews are often not entirely welcomed into the “people of color” community, since Judaism/being Jewish is considered by many to be solely a religion (Greenebaum, 1999).

and oppressed locations (Beck, 1995; Brown, 1995; Mohanty, 1991; Smith, 1987; as cited in Greenebaum, 1999; Krell, 2000), even though feminist and sociological theorists recognize that there are “individual[s] [who] may be an oppressor, a member of an oppressed group, or simultaneously oppressor or oppressed” (Collins, 1991, p. 225; as cited in Greenebaum, 1999, p. 44). It is important to note that for many Jews, *White* people are labeled WASPs: White, Anglo-Saxon, Protestants. The WASP’s history is traced back to German and British rule and the dominant religious history in Europe (Levine-Rasky, 2008; Schoenberg, 2013).

Jewish history, on the other hand, is punctuated by being relegated to ghettos, repeatedly expelled from different nations, and killed in mass murders, in addition to being discriminated against for succeeding in the face of large-scale prejudice (Brodkin, 1998; Langman, 1999; Levine-Rasky, 2008; Schoenberg, 2013). Being thought of as both White, non-White, and in-between means that Jewish females, like all Ashkenazi Jewish males, “cannot have full access to ‘insider’ knowledge” (Krell, 2000; Merton, 1972, p. 15-16; as cited in Greenebaum, 1999, p. 45), since “only ‘insiders’ can understand the ‘social and cultural truths’ of the group”, even if they are able to understand certain perspectives of knowledge and culture that the insiders are not able to (or do not want to) see (Greenebaum, 1999, p. 45).

Due to this shifting between the dominant and subordinate groups, as well as being associated with the “collective white complicity with racism against people of color” (Horowitz, 1998, p. 124), Jews continue to insist on minority status because they see themselves as vulnerable compared to the dominant group who has discriminated against them (Blumenfeld & Raymond, 2000; Greenberg, 1998; hooks, 1995; as cited in

Greenebaum, 1999; Krell, 2000). Furthermore, Jews are often excluded from discussions on race and racism due to the way these notions of oppression, as well as anti-Semitism, are socially constructed. Even though racial oppression and anti-Semitism both stem from “the same white-male rule class” (Bourne, 1987, p. 14) and feature negative attitudes and beliefs, as well as verbal and physical assaults, anti-Semitism is not discussed in feminist issues and multiculturalism because it is not only seen as *yet* another issue that further divides feminists and multiculturalists, but it is also equated with racism in regards to type of oppression (Beck, 1991, 1995; Greenebaum, 1999): “The politics of equal oppressions, in sum, is ahistorical in that it equates oppressions across the board without relating each to its specific history” (Bourne, 1987, p. 16).

Furthermore, because Jewish women occupy an extreme border position, anti-Semitism is not viewed as a legitimate *-ism* because Jews are stereotyped as being part of the privileged upper class, with their “economic wealth cancel[ing] out the existence of anti-Semitism and anti-Jewish sentiments” (Beck, 1995; Bourne, 1987; Greenebaum, 1999, p. 53; Silberstein, 2000). Assuming all Jews are “rich” overlooks the oppression that Jews faced (the persecution throughout history for economies failing and the exacerbation of non-Jews’ fears of civilization being destroyed) and continue to face as working or poor Jews (particularly the women and the elderly) are ignored in favor of the Jew as *the* symbol of upward economic and social mobility (Beck, 1991; Greenebaum, 1999; Schwartz, 1995). The stereotype of the successful Jew, promoted through the “myth of meritocracy”, suggests that Jewish ethnic values of hard work and honoring education leads to their upper-class status, with “poverty [being] equated with cultural inadequacy, and the focus of blame...shifted away from the societal source of inequality

and placed on the ethnic groups themselves” (Chubbuck, 2004; Steinberg, 1989, p. 88; as cited in Greenebaum, 1999, p. 54).

Yet, this myth neglects how Jewish immigrants were transformed into members of the dominant racial group not through natural ability or chance; rather, social, racial, and economic mobility required social conditions that were not granted to all members of society, only those seen as “model minorities” (Brodkin, 1998; Greenebaum, 1999). The result of this buy-in to *the American Dream* and subsequent denial of privilege status is addressed by Chubbuck (2004), McIntyre (2002), and Milner (2010) who explain that this ideology is combined with the concept that the United States was founded on egalitarianism and meritocracy. As a social construct that serves the needs of a dominant White, Christian culture by promoting individualism and the myth of meritocracy, where minorities can succeed if they work hard enough, the Jewish success story and its ability to nullify anti-Semitism in the eyes of non-Jews portrays the confusion felt by Jews as they occupy both White and minority spaces; they are not allowed to look at themselves at people of color/minorities even though they have been minorities as Jews longer than they have been White (Beck, 1995a; Brodkin, 1998; Chubbuck, 2004; Greenebaum, 1999; Schlosser, 1994).

In addition, Jews seen only as wealthy disregards the class, race, and gender antagonism found in the Jewish American Princess (J.A.P.) stereotype that permeated American society post-World War II, when Ashkenazi Jews were assimilating into the dominant group, through the mid-1990s (Beck, 1991, 1995a). Due to JAP initially used as a derogatory term to identify the Japanese during WWII, it was easy for the media and society as a whole to replace Jewish men with Jewish women as the victims of

persecution when they entered the professions in large numbers and began “making it” (Beck, 1991, 1995a; Greenebaum, 1999). Ashkenazi Jewish women were given little to no sympathy when they were not able to truly fit in with the middle- to upper-classes’ lifestyle and manners due to being seen as pushy, loud, materialistic, narcissistic, manipulative, and aggressive, even if they were able to purchase commodities (cars, clothes, homes, etc.) earned from their own professional work (Beck, 1991, 1995b; Burstow, 1992; as cited in Greenebaum, 1999; Langman, 1999; Weinrach, 2002): The J.A.P. “designate[d] all that [was] despicable in American culture, framed in anti-Semitic terms and projected into the body of the Jewish woman” (Beck, 1988, p. 97; as cited in Greenebaum, 1999, p. 53).

Though not as prevalent as it once was (wide attention was paid to the effects of the J.A.P. stereotype in the late 1980s through mid-1990s when physical and emotional attacks, including vandalism, threatened Jewish synagogues and college campuses and students), the J.A.P. label fractures the Ashkenazi Jewish female identity as she does not feel welcomed as a professional, a member of the dominant group, a Jew, or as a female in society further isolating her in discussions on identity politics and intersectionality (Beck, 1991, 1995a; Greenebaum, 1999; Langman, 1999; Weinrach, 2002): “The fear of being judged by a stereotype...is enough to keep Jewish women from identifying in ways that might have seemed natural before the popularization of the stereotype” (Booker, 1991, p. 41; as cited in Langman, 1999, p. 309).

### **Layers of identity management**

Being pushed to the extreme margins in both identity politics and intersectionality can bring about feelings of identity invisibility, as portrayed in Ellison’s 1952 novel

Invisible Man in which the Invisible Man, an African American male, is told to suppress his interior life and his humanity (Edgerton, 1993; as cited in Pinar et al., 1995): “And remember you don't have to be a complete fool in order to succeed...Play the game, but play it your own...Learn how it operates, learn how you operate...You're hidden right out in the open” (Ellison, 1952, p. 119-120).

Similar to “learning to play the game” of invisibility, Jewish identity in the United States is often not asserted publicly and may be set aside mostly when Ashkenazi Jews experience the privileges of Whiteness; they may also choose to “closet” their Jewish identity due to the risk of stigma surrounding being Jewish in a nation founded on Protestant ideals (Hecht & Faulkner, 2000; Lewin, 1940, 1948; as cited in Finlay, 2005). Similar to identity management in the gay and lesbian communities, Ashkenazi Jews in the United States keep their Jewishness “closeted” in order to pass as White, since Jewish identity is not immediately noticeable (Faulkner & Hecht, 2011; Gross, 1993; as cited in Hecht & Faulkner, 2000). The stigma is viewed in relation to those who do not have to experience it (i.e. non-Jews) and the disclosure of information present Jews with the need for privacy in order not to harm their self-concept or relationships with non-Jews (Hecht & Faulkner, 2000; Hecht et al., 2002; Lewin, 1940, 1948; as cited in Finlay, 2005).

The management of Jewish identity can be looked at through the Communication Theory of Identity (CTI) which was developed using psychological, sociological, and anthropological perspectives to understand how identity is communicated (Hecht, 1993). CTI consists of four layers or frames of group and individual identity transaction and formation: personal, which looks at one's self-awareness and/or spiritual sense of well-being; enacted, which focuses on how messages express identity; relational, which refers

to how one's identity is formed through relationships, including relationships with others, and exists in relation to one's other identities; and communal, which focuses on how a group of people or a particular community shares an identity (Faulkner & Hecht, 2011; Hecht & Faulkner, 2000; Hecht et al., 2002; Jung & Hecht; 2004).

CTI allows the Jewish American identity to be viewed as layers of identity working independently, in pairs, or in a combination; in addition, these layers can be cooperatively interpenetrated or infused into each other, or they can be dialectically opposed to one another (Faulkner & Hecht, 2011; Hecht & Faulkner, 2000; Hecht et al., 2002; Jung & Hecht, 2004). The extent to which one manages these layers of identity is dependent on "the degree to which the person is physically and culturally different from others in their communities, as well as a host of individual differences in family background, upbringing, religious belief, and politics" (Huddy, 2001; Lewin, 1940, 1948; as cited in Finlay, 2005, p. 204).

Decisions about privacy surrounding Jewish American identity are regulated through the personal layer of the Communication Theory of Identity (Hecht & Faulkner, 2000). How individuals see themselves and the choices they make to closet or reveal their identity are moderated in the personal layer; Ashkenazi Jews in the United States make a conscious choice to reveal their Jewish identity to others (especially non-Jews who may stigmatize Jews) based on their own self-cognition or preferred identity label (Faulkner & Hecht, 2011; Hecht & Faulkner, 2000). Based on the continuum from explicitly open (not closeted) to closed (closeted) (Hecht & Faulkner, 2000), many Jews might say that they are right in the middle, that they reveal their Jewish identity when necessary due to an unwillingness to embarrass themselves or others they have just met or do not know very



well. Though one's decision to remain "closeted" at certain times is a personal decision, it is representative of the enacted and relational layers in the Communication Theory of Identity (Hecht & Faulkner, 2000; Jung & Hecht, 2004).

The enacted layer of identity for Jews in the United States often includes the use of direct and indirect messages for expressing and exchanging identities in social interactions in order to determine if the other person is Jewish or is comfortable with Jews (Faulkner & Hecht, 2011; Hecht & Faulkner, 2000; Jung & Hecht, 2004). Language cues, discussion about Jewish holidays, rituals, and foods, and names help Jews decide if they are comfortable revealing their Jewish identity; likewise, timing and the context of the revelation influence a Jew's decision to disclose his or her Jewish identity (Hecht & Faulkner, 2000). In addition to these social cues, the relational layer includes Jews in the United States revealing their Jewish identity based on the type of relationship (social or personal) they have with another person (Faulkner & Hecht, 2011; Hecht & Faulkner, 2000; Jung & Hecht, 2004). In this layer of identity, Jews who know someone else is Jewish often disclose their Jewish identity to form a relational bond through shared identity (Hecht & Faulkner, 2000).

The final layer of the Communication Theory of Identity (communicative identity) references how a group of people constructs an identity which transcends the individuals within the group and possesses a shared vision of personhood for the group (Faulkner & Hecht, 2011; Hecht & Faulkner, 2000; Hecht et al., 2002; Jung & Hecht, 2004). Even though Ashkenazi Jews in the United States are considered part of the dominant White group (due to assimilation and governmental assistance programs), many of them still feel like an "other" due to a lack of connection with the religious and ethnic

ideals promoted in the Protestant and White culture (Brodkin, 1998; Hecht & Faulkner, 2000). Silence about his or her Jewish identity can become a typical reaction for a Jew in the United States when he or she is part of a non-Jewish group (i.e. residential, educational, social, occupational, etc.) (Hecht & Faulkner, 2000).

### **Conclusion**

Since the discussions surrounding critical theory (and by extension, critical pedagogy) and identity politics often revolve around America's two narratives (America as both a site for realizing freedom and a site for oppression, persecution, and genocide), with the two narratives are mostly divided along racial lines (those deemed "white" emphasizing the freedom narrative and those "colored" focusing on a narrative of oppression), Jews can feel as if they or their experiences are of no importance to non-Jews (Brettschneider, 1996; MacDonald-Dennis, 2006). It is important to remember that it is almost impossible, if not impossible, to completely alter how those in the United States think of race; even if people know that race is socially constructed, they continue to be divided along racial lines with real consequences (Biale, 1998). However, when Jews are excluded from discussions surrounding race, identity, or oppression, Jews are left to question with whom they identify, which can bring about feelings of exclusion and invisibility; in addition, Jews feel left out of critical discussions when they are lumped together with those they have been fighting to distance themselves from (Greenberg, 1998; Finlay, 2005; Silberstein, 2000).

Due to the gap in literature on Jewish female teachers' multi-dimensional identities, it is the purpose of this study to examine how they position themselves within the public education system in the United States, as well as challenge the hegemony of

Whiteness and Christianity in public schools. By making their lived experiences part of the larger conversation about identity, this study attempts to further critical consciousness through analysis of the historical, social, economic, political, and cultural power structures that shape Jewish identity in the United States. Moreover, using the Communication Theory of Identity (CTI), this study endeavors to understand how and when these Jewish female teachers closet or reveal their Jewish identity in public schools, as well as any microaggressions they face due to their Jewishness.

Additionally, in order to work together to strengthen critical theory, as well as critical pedagogy and CRT, and highlight the complex nature of identity, it is crucial for both Jews and non-Jews to recognize the insider and outsider status of Ashkenazi Jews in the United States (Greenberg, 1998). Because Jews constitute an extreme border case, being both insider and outsider (and, at the same time, neither), their positioning in society has the capacity to help people better understand the status of the socially marginal (Biale et al., 1998; Heschel, 1998):

[There are] many women and men who dare to create theory from the location of pain and struggle, who courageously expose wounds to give us their experience to teach and guide, as a means to chart new theoretical journeys. Their work is liberatory. It not only enables us to remember and recover ourselves, it charges and challenges us to renew our commitment to an active, inclusive feminist struggle. (hooks, 1994, p. 74)

## **Chapter 4**

### **Methodologies**

In order to truly understand the multiple identities constructed by Ashkenazi female teachers in the United States, as well as the marginality they experience as Jews within a system dominated by Christian privilege, it is important to frame this type of study not only through the use of Culturally Responsive Methodologies (CRM), and also through Arts Based Research (ABR) methods, such as Narrative Inquiry and counterstories, since it “is concerned with issues of power and oppression” (Hébert & Beardsley, 2002, p. 204). Critical inquiry research framed by CRM is designed to examine social institutions and the historical problems of oppression and social struggles (Morrow & Brown, 1994). Likewise, critical research methods attempt to understand “how culture can sustain social injustice, revealing the degree to which certain ways of life within a culture are strategically organized to preserve the interests of some members of society at the expense of others” (Merriam & Simpson, 1995, p. 132; as cited in Hébert & Beardsley, 2002, p. 204).

A Jewish female teacher-researcher using Narrative Inquiry as a form of ABR framed by CRM, with an understanding of where Jewish females are placed in discussions about identity politics and intersectionality, as well as teacher identity within culturally responsive pedagogy, is committed to bringing forth “the perspective of the gendered, historically situated, interacting individual” (Lincoln & Denzin, 2003, p. 612). Narrative Inquiry helps participants retell and relive particular life experiences where there had been a breach between “ideal and real, self and society” (Riessman, 1993, p. 3). Since stories are self-representations (reflecting how one wants to be seen and how one

sees him/herself), Narrative Inquiry and the Listening Guide method of analysis are appropriate when understanding identities, specifically the negotiation of multiple and stigmatized identities (Riessman, 2004; as cited in Faulkner & Hecht, 2011).

Furthermore, employing CRM and Narrative Inquiry as alternative ways of knowing how female Ashkenazim occupy multiple identities while teaching confronts the notion that the voices of those who “speak in and about the classrooms...must not speak as Jews if they wish to be heard” (Block, 1999, p. 177).

### **Study Population**

In addition to making myself a participant in this study to further my own questioning on this topic, my participants are four female Ashkenazi teachers (two are retired) living in southern California. I am choosing to focus on female Jewish participants because I understand their talk style in conversation, the Jewish religion is passed through the mother of the child, and females make up the majority of the teaching workforce. These participants are of Conservative, Reform, Reconstructionist, or non-practicing religious affiliation; I limited my participants to non-converts to the Jewish religion, since any person can convert to Judaism, regardless of ability to “pass” as White or not. I purposely chose to not include Orthodox Jews, ones who believe in the strict and unchanging law of the Torah, as they do not see any non-Orthodox movement as authentic Judaism and likely would not engage in discussion with me about Jewish identity issues.

Although I intended to find participants with an age range similar to mine (24-37) who also teach in secondary education, since they would be able to relate to experiences of recent teacher education completion (within the last 15 years) and trying to get a job

during the recession, it proved much harder to find this exact participant population (though participants older than 37 were highly encouraged to partake in the study). Two of the participants, including myself, are of third or fourth generations of families; these are Jews who have grown up well after the GI Bill era that helped allow Jews to move to the suburbs and Jewish men to go to college in mass numbers (which aided greatly in Jews being included in the “White” group). Although two of the participants are retired teachers, all the participants are Jews who grew up in the United States in families after the Holocaust and their families have adapted the religion/traditions to fit their lives (rather than having the religion strongly dictate how to live). I limited my study to myself and four other Ashkenazi female teachers who are in their third year of teaching, or have more than three years of teaching experience; my ideal participant population was going to be teachers who work with students of color (to see how they navigated being perceived as White based on their skin color and, if they addressed their Jewishness, how it was received by their students), but I was aware that it may be too limited. Even though I had not originally intended to include retired teachers, as I was looking to see how being Jewish impacted their current pedagogy, two of the participants are retired and met all the other criteria for this study.

I chose to limit their age range to anyone over 24 because they would be teachers who have completed an undergraduate degree and a credential program and have already established themselves in teaching. Though it does not matter in what state they received their undergraduate degree, I wanted to limit the credential program they attended to schools of education in California to see if the lack of discussions on Whiteness and racial identity in relation to teacher identity in these programs is consistent and what

effects this has on these teachers. However, one of the participants went to college in a state where undergraduate students could earn a degree in Education and a credential at the same time, allowing her to teach immediately after graduation. Those who are younger than 24 years old would most likely still be in college, have not yet completed the credential program (due to the 4+1 credential requirements in California), may not have a full-time teaching job, or may not have completed three full years of teaching.

In addition, I chose to limit my participants to middle or high school female teachers in their third or later year preferably, as teachers in their first two years may not have the same time or energy to commit to social justice teaching or self-reflection (though they may want to) due to the different requirements placed on new teachers (i.e. BTSA-Beginning Teachers Support Association, after school duties/expectations, lesson planning, grading, etc.). Third year or later teachers may be more established at their site and do not have to worry as much about surviving the first years or wondering if they will be hired back.

Although I completed my action research study while I was a first-year teacher, teachers in their third year or later closely mimic where I was in my teaching career when I began my own study on discussing race with students of color (though this was done in my first year of teaching), began to understand the ramifications of Whiteness and the absence of race talks in schools of education, and began to understand the history of Jews in the United States. I also chose participants who teach in the public high school setting due to the curriculum that is encountered: slave narratives, the Holocaust, and present oppression in American literature; world and United States history (and the lack of multiple voices/perspectives); and the movement from a rigid curriculum that was often

focused on “the test” (the CSTs) rather than developing democratic citizenry to an inquiry-based teaching approach (Common Core).

Due to the status quo of teacher demographics, I focused on middle class and above women living in and around the Los Angeles and Orange County areas outside of their work sites; likewise, I understand what it is like to grow up as a member of the middle class and I currently live about 10 miles outside of my work site. In addition, I also looked for middle class and above participants to try to understand the status quo of the current teaching population (White, female, middle class) in relationship to schools of color. Students of color and low socio-economic status are the majority in the community in which I work, yet my students view the people of Caucasian heritage as privileged. I find that being perceived as a Caucasian makes me stand out, not only in the school (though it is not as obvious as the school year goes on), but the surrounding neighborhood as well. There are not many middle-class, white females living around or near the school and many of my students and their families have mainly dealt with Caucasians as teachers and administrators and as people with authority.

Although I knew what type of participants I wanted to work with for this particular study, I do not have convenient access to them, as I am the only Jewish teacher (male or female) at my work site and many of the other Jewish females in my immediate network do not teach any level below college (if they teach at all), are not Ashkenazi, or do not fit the age limits for this study. In order for this study to be completed, I asked former professors at the school of education I attended, a campus liaison that develops Holocaust education workshops for numerous schools, and non-Jewish colleagues at my work and at other sites for names of those they think fit the participant profile. Likewise,



I emailed local religious organizations, such as Hillels (Jewish organizations on college campuses), temples, and support groups in the San Diego, Riverside, San Bernardino, Los Angeles, Orange County, and Santa Barbara counties for help with finding access to my intended participants. By attempting to reach out to as many potential participants as I can through various avenues, I was hoping to tap into the voices of those who are consistently overlooked. Since this is a study that directly affects the Jewish community, I employed Culturally Responsive Methodologies (CRM) to bring forth an alternative way of understanding the Ashkenazi American experience, how Ashkenazim occupy multiple identities (their Jewish identity and their White identity), and how these feminine identities impact their pedagogy and participation in public schooling.

### **Challenging Traditional Approaches to Research**

Though similar in some respects to a decolonizing methodological approach where the researcher addresses colonial practices of domination over and subordination of participants, as well as unequal structures that privilege the researcher and disadvantage the researched, and works to dismantle and eradicate them during the course of study, CRM recognize that not all “oppressor/oppressed relationships are...rooted in colonial histories” (Berryman et al., 2013, p. 15; Biermann, 2011). In addition, a decolonizing methodology looks at dominant and subordinate groups and how they are defined along ethnic and/or racial lines; these “racialised [sic] hierarchies of power/knowledge that legitimate, serve, and naturalize”, as well as maintain, only the interests of all or part of the dominant group (Barrerra, 1979; as cited in Tejada, Espinoza, & Gutierrez, 2003; Biermann, 2011, p. 388; Smith, 2012): “[I]t is critical that researchers, [whether working across cultures or within a minority culture], recognize the

power dynamic that is embedded in the relationship with their subjects” (Smith, 2012, p. 178).

Those engaging with CRM may look to decolonizing methodology as a beginning place for research, but researchers who frame their work using culturally responsive methodologies, such as a Jewish female teacher-researcher, need to realize that “participants may not necessarily understand themselves to be positioned within colonizing discourses” (Berryman et al., 2013, p. 6). In addition, since a decolonizing methodology focuses mainly on the racial/ethnic dynamics in society, CRM is more appropriate for a study about Jewish female teachers in the United States because the culturally responsive methodologies allow a researcher to explore the intersections of identity that Jewish female teachers experience (i.e. Jewish, female, teacher, White, Othered) (Boyarin & Boyarin, 1993; as cited in Hartman & Kaufman, 2006) and the identity management they constantly engage in (seen through layers outlined in the Communication Theory of Identity), as well as allow the researcher and the readers to see Jews “beyond white skin and be aware of potential differences that lie beneath the surface” (Ginsberg & Sinacore, 2013, p. 131):

[Jews] never know when their identity as perceived by others will change and when they will be forced to reassess their self-identity; when they will literally use the wrong password or behaviour [sic] and be othered-outed not so much as possessors of a different capital and culture but simply as possessing that which prevails. (Haynes, 2003, p. 54)

Unlike traditional research where the participants, or *Others*, are objectified and dehumanized through a positivist approach which only benefits the researcher, Culturally

Responsive Methodologies reject these entrenched practices that empower only privileged groups by embracing pluralism, multiple and alternative ways of knowing and understanding the shared space and relationship between the researcher and the participants (Berryman et al., 2013; Smith, 2012). Whereas conventional research is focused more on the one-sided relationship in which the researcher as *expert* takes from the participants and gives little, if anything, in return, researchers using the culturally responsive methodologies approach establish their intentions of a mutually beneficial relationship that is sensitive to the process of listening and learning from each other (Berryman et al., 2013; Biermann, 2011; Smith, 2012; Solberg, 2006; as cited in Hayman, Wilkes, Jackson, & Halcomb, 2012; Tillman, 2002).

A Jewish female teacher-researcher employing CRM demonstrates to the potential participants that “the experiences of the researcher and participant can and must be intertwined so that the two are intimately linked” (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994; as cited in Berryman et al., 2013, p. 16). Furthermore, in conventional research, the researcher is viewed as highly skilled, with advanced qualifications, and the object being researched as devoid of spirit, active contribution, and voice; conversely, CRM work to value and build upon genuine relationships with participants and those in the community from the moment of encounter (Chapman, 2005; Smith, 2012).

Although it is common for qualitative researchers to be “insiders” to the group they consider co-constructors (Moore, 2012), it is important to note that “when [the researcher] venture[s] into new spaces, rather than imposing [oneself] upon the hosts [he or she] must call upon traditional rituals of encounter; act as visitors by respecting and adhering to the cultural protocols and language of the hosts” (Allen, 2004; as cited in

Bulpitt & Martin, 2010; Berryman et al., 2013, p. 20; Hayman et al., 2012). Even “[i]nsider research has to be as ethical and respectful, as reflexive and critical...as outsider research...It needs to be humble because the researcher belongs to the community as a member with a different set of roles and relationships, status and position” (Smith, 2012, p. 140; Sprague, 2005; as cited in Blythe, Wilkes, Jackson, & Halcomb, 2013).

It is essential to note that a researcher’s status (insider, outsider, or somewhere in between) “changes at various points in a research project, and with different groups and individuals” (Allen, 2004; as cited in Moore, 2012, p. 11); in addition, “there is an implicit contradiction in attempting to separate being an outsider observer and being an insider with intimate knowledge of the population being studied” (Kanuha, 2000; as cited in Moore, 2012, p. 12). CRM “is an intensely introspective process that requires researchers to challenge what they have previously learned and to invent or reconstitute new liberating and humanizing alternatives” (Berryman et al., 2013, p. 22).

Even if a researcher is an insider and may have easier access to the participants (i.e. a Jewish female teacher engaging in a study about Jewish female teachers), it is important that he or she realizes that consent goes beyond the project itself and is given for a person’s credibility; likewise, consent assumes that trust is “reciprocated and constantly negotiated-a dynamic relationship rather than a static decision” (Bulpitt & Martin, 2010; Josselson, 2007; Smith, 2012, p. 137) and that participants “tend to be persuaded not by the technical design...but by the open and ‘good’ intentions of the researchers” (p. 141): “The greater the degree of rapport and trust, the greater the degree

of self-revealing and...the greater the degree of trust that the researcher will treat the material...obtained with respect and compassion” (Josselson, 2007, p. 539).

Once consent is granted, co-construction not only takes place through dialogue, but through the reciprocal nature of conjoined work between researcher and participants; this means that research is “more than discrete time segments of contact hours” conducted solely by the researcher (Berryman et al., 2013, p. 24). CRM research emphasizes co-exploration of the topic between the research and participants, with the researcher bringing in “some questions that [he or she had, hypotheses that had come to [him or her] while the participant was talking and so forth”, which is done only after the participant was encouraged to share his or her subjective experience and feeling, as well as perspective on the topic (Witz, 2006, p. 247-248):

If the participant is to become an ally in the research, the investigator needs to feel that the research topic is important in the larger scheme of things and to share with the participant from the very beginning the thrust of the research and the larger societal, disciplinary, or human concerns that motivate it. (Witz, 2006, p. 248)

CRM “[begin] with human curiosity and a desire to solve problems” (Smith, 2012, p. 203) with the participants in order to maintain the integrity of the participants, the researcher, and their respective cultures, while at the same time co-constructing something new through mutual respect and freedom from domination (Berryman et al., 2013): “[R]esearch in which researchers and participants are able to establish rapport through reciprocation is especially empowering to the members of marginalised [sic] groups” (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005; as cited in Hayman et al., 2012, p. 8). Researchers,

including non-Jewish researchers, engaging with CRM to understand the multiple identities of Jewish female teachers in United States public schools need to realize the impact of reciprocity in regards to marginalized groups: the “invisibility [of marginalized groups] is a reflection of how they [choose] to conduct themselves within the field of education in order to protect themselves” (Haynes, 2003, p. 56).

In addition, the researcher and participants work together and to determine what research questions to ask, how to go about collecting data and what type of data to collect beyond what may occur in conversations, and how to analyze the data, as well as the value and worth of the research (Berryman et al., 2013). Furthermore, researchers using culturally responsive approaches focus their intentions on building long-term relationships that go beyond the end of the study, so that they do not think the researcher is “using” them simply for their own personal gain; it is important to note that the learning process is not over when a study regarding Jewish identity concludes because “Jewishness is a process of learning, always unfinished and incomplete” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Shapiro, 1998, p. 21).

The role of the researcher and participant in studies framed by CRM must occur from a place of equality, rather than dominance, and that the researcher’s life is considered just as essential to the research design as the participants (Berryman et al., 2013; Biermann, 2011; Jankie, 2004). In addition, the researcher brings to the field his or her own experiences that shape the researcher-participant relationship and “participants are encouraged to share their perceptions about the nature of the ongoing research relationship...and their comfort level in continuing the relationship” (Berryman et al., 2013, p. 31; Hyman, 1954; Judd et al., 1991; as cited in Bulpitt & Martin, 2010).

Likewise, research analyzing social and historical power relationships, such as a study about Jewish females teaching in the United States, will perpetuate injustice if there is not a shared understanding of humanity and a building of critical solidarity between the researcher and participants (Moon, 2012). This ethical approach is important to Jewish females since their identity is strongly tied to social justice (Biale, 1995; as cited in Ginsberg & Sinacore, 2013); the CRM approach “carries with it a knowledge of power that seems to transform injustice, to remember as a way of creating a future beyond injustice, to confess in order to acknowledge wrong relations...and to provide solidarity with the victims of injustice” (Ellis, 1990, p. 183; as cited in Moon, 2012, p. 1359).

### **We before Me**

In total, over 70 emails were sent in March 2015 with an introduction about my background in relation to the topics for this study, the gap in literature related to this dissertation, and what the proposed goals are from the data that emerges; I received responses from 24 rabbis and Hillel leaders that they knew of possible participants or would be willing to forward my recruitment email on to others who might be able to help. Although potential participants emailed me directly expressing interest in the study after receiving the recruitment letter from their religious organizations, many of them were elementary school teachers or were converts to Judaism, and therefore not able to participate. In addition, even though I received suggested names and contact information from colleagues, previous professors, and religious organizations, many of these women do not teach in the middle or high school sectors, and therefore were not included in the participant population.

Two of the participants who contacted me directly met all the criteria and wanted to join the study; a third participant expressed interest in being involved, but had been retired for five years. I discussed with this my chair and we agreed to include retired teachers as their stories would provide points of comparison and deeper texture to the overall study. This participant helped me gain access to another retired participant in June 2015, as they had partaken in local advocacy events together. After these participants had each contacted me, I sent an email to each with the possible forms of data collection (i.e. audio-taping conversations and incorporating personal artifacts) and my desire to collaborate with them as co-constructors of knowledge (rather than researching *on* them like colonizing, conventional research) from the inception of the research design to deciding how, when, where, and to whom the research will be disseminated. In addition to being open in my email about my background and intentions as a researcher and co-creator of knowledge, it was important for me to remain honest and true to my intentions throughout the research process once consent was granted (even if that meant waiting while trust was being earned between the researcher and participants and vice versa). I only moved forward in the research process once I felt consent was granted (if not already given by the participants after the introductory email) and I felt I had established enough of a relationship with each participant to deepen credibility and trust; initial conversations (in person, over Skype or the phone, or by email) and non-verbal cues helped me understand if I had established the necessary relationship and could continue on in the research process.

Starting in May 2015, the participants and I worked together to determine what was of most value to them in subsequent conversations (i.e. what research questions or



topics were most important to focus on, which questions made them uncomfortable and needing to be negotiated, how we should go about collecting data, and what type of data to collect beyond what may occur in conversations, as well as the value and worth of the research). Email was used to ensure that all participants have equal access to communicating the research design, times and places to meet, and data that had been collected and analyzed. Though I had some ideas as to who I would have liked to talk to besides the other participants and vice versa, as well as some sources of data collection and analysis that could work with this study, ultimately it was up to us individually and collectively to come to a mutual decision about how to proceed.

At first, the conversations (or story-sharing meetings) in this study were semi-structured in order for participants to feel more comfortable with the topic, with them doing most of the talking, though as a participant I was talking too. Participants were given the list of questions prior to the first meeting for review and had full authority to strike questions out before we met; in addition, they were encouraged to bring forth any topics that they felt they wanted to address. The subsequent conversations were co-constructed, with everyone bringing to the conversations topics that were emerging for them, along with concerns they are or were facing when working with students of color and in public schools that are often influenced subtly or overtly by Christian privilege, addressing (or not addressing) their own identities, and the impact these identities have or had on their pedagogy.

In addition, prior to the third conversation, participants were asked to create a critical incidents timeline, identifying five critical incidents that shaped their identity as Jews, even if these events were not directly linked to their becoming teachers. This

allowed for them to prepare how and what they wanted to share of their stories, rather than being put on the spot to think of something during the conversation. The third conversation with each participant focused primarily on these critical incidents, with other topics and questions emerging as the participant shared her stories; each critical incident served as a mini story shared by the participant.

Although I am also a participant, I was not asking any questions without the input of the other participants and I sent them topics and questions I encountered prior to conversations so that we were able to collaborate on which questions to discuss and in what ways the questions would be answered (i.e. through discussion, artifacts, etc.). Some topics to help guide the conversations at first if needed surrounded such story ideas as growing up Jewish, awareness of being a minority (and/or not being recognized as a minority), feelings of preparation for working with students of color and in public schools, the role of their school of education in understanding their dual identity (Jewish and White teacher) and whether discussions on Whiteness occurred (if so, to what extent? Reactions?), discussing race with students of color (if they do at all), and their revealing or “closeting” of Jewish identity to students (as well as the allowing themselves to be perceived as White) which were some of the lingering topics I had from various forms of personal and academic inquiry.

The aim of these conversations were to allow us to understand our identities, both religious and racial, so we were better able to understand the female Ashkenazi teaching experience when working with diverse groups of students. Through these conversations, I had hoped we learned whether racial identity was something that was addressed in our teacher education program and if it was not addressed, what challenges were we facing, if

any, when working with students of color or in public education. Did we see our own racial identity as something that needed to be considered when forming a teacher identity? I also hoped that in these conversations we were better able to understand the female Ashkenazi American experience, whether our religious identity was our primary identity or just a small aspect of who we are (did we see ourselves as White and consider being Jewish as something that does not determine identity?), and what impact this identity designation had on our teaching.

Just as I introduced myself to my participants in the email, I asked for permission of them to enter their homes before arriving and made sure to explain more about my personal background at our first meeting so that I was able to show respect and continue to earn their trust. I waited and continued to be trustworthy, respectful, and humble in order to gain access to personal artifacts (if they were willing) to get a larger perspective on developing a Jewish American identity and the role discussions on race (and being thought of as White and part of the dominant culture) play(ed) in developing this identity. Some of us participants may not have even realized we had developed a racial identity because this identity had never been discussed in our families; I myself did not fully understand how I was considered White until I researched the history of the Jews in the United States for a doctoral class. In this case, I wanted us to explore how we and our families saw our Jewish identity in relationship to our White “American” teaching identity in public schools.

In addition, conversations were recorded only with permission after gaining access and consent and were transcribed to ensure accuracy; immediately after these conversations (or as soon as I could afterwards), I wrote down my reactions, questions,

ideas, concerns, etc. in a researcher's journal. It is important to note that before the conversations occurred, I dialogued with my participants about my researcher's journal and allowed them to have access to it at any point. In addition, it was completely up to the participants whether they wanted to engage in research journaling, though doing would have provided multiple perspectives on what occurred during conversations and a richer understanding of the topics, as well as added to the depth of field texts in preparation for the final research text. However, due to time commitments of many other obligations, a surgery that severely immobilized one participant for several weeks, and the strong feelings associated with reliving certain memories for another participant, research journaling for them did not occur. After transcribing these conversations, I sent the transcribed conversations to clarify parts of the conversation, fill in the gaps, or explain more if needed; this was done only if the participants agreed (they had the option to not want to review the transcript and doing so would not be used against them in any way).

Due to the natural relational aspect of Narrative Inquiry, it was difficult to specify the number of conversations and meetings that were going to take place between the participant(s) and researcher prior to the commencement of the study. At a minimum, each participant and the researcher met virtually or in person three times, with meetings being used to clarify, verify or explore topics that we co-constructed, each meeting lasting approximately 45 minutes to two hours (though some of the conversations lasted much longer depending on what was discussed and with whom). Email and Skype were used to follow up on questions/concerns if the participant(s) and the researcher are not able to physically meet. One participant called me and left several voicemail messages

with topics and questions she pondered on after our meetings; in addition, she and I would speak regularly outside of formal meetings about how the dissertation process was going, which would initiate her sharing memories that we followed up on in future meetings. Meetings took place at times and locations that were agreed upon by the participants and the researcher; all initial meetings except one occurred at the participants' homes in order for the participants to feel more comfortable with the study.

### **Seeing the World through Multiple Perspectives**

Forms of Arts Based Research (ABR) are often referred to as qualitative methodological tools; however, due to their increasing popularity one might define arts based research as its own unique paradigm. Arts Based Research is a relatively new methodological paradigm, making its official debut in educational research in the 1980s with the introduction of postmodernism, which represented a theoretical framework that abandoned objectivity and focused on an “epistemology of ambiguity...originating from multiple vantage points” (Barone, 2001; as cited in Cahnmann-Taylor, 2008, p.

5). Postmodernism encouraged researchers to develop new arts-based methodologies (e.g. educational criticism and narrative storytelling) and ABR was defined as “blurred genres,” “arts based inquiry,” “scholARTistry,” and “a/r/tography”, since these new approaches allowed arts based researchers to move into aesthetic spaces of inquiry (Cahnmann-Taylor, 2008). Unlike traditional research that has an end goal of improving certainty and often follows an experimental research design which promotes systematic and controlled outcomes, Arts Based Research provides an alternative research design to interpret phenomena, while highlighting aesthetic utility which promotes research that

can be explored non-linearly (Barone & Eisner, 2012; Cahnmann-Taylor, 2008; Leavy, 2015).

While ABR aims to explain a phenomenon, in order to successfully gain readership, the arts based text must be believable, credible, and authentic; for these criteria to be achieved, researchers must understand the different types of knowledge that are required to prepare for and complete ABR, comprised of the practical, theoretical, and productive, which stem from Aristotle's perception of the knowledge (Barone & Eisner, 2012). Though Aristotle identified theoretical knowledge as that which promotes a quest for answers and warranted assertions (Barone & Eisner, 2012; Eisner, 2008), due to the nature of ABR, theoretical knowledge should be thought of in terms of thematic coherence, as themes "provide a kind of qualitative control that allows for all parts of the work to cohere into a 'whole'" with a goal of providing multiple accounts of experience (Barone & Eisner, 2012, p. 59). The identification and exploration of themes and subthemes provokes critical discussion of the significance and relevancy within the final interpretation and is often represented implicitly in the reflections, conversations and narratives presented in the final text (Barone & Eisner, 2012).

The second type of knowledge posited by Aristotle was practical knowledge or practical wisdom, a knowledge that encourages the researcher to "negotiate differences in values, courses of actions, and commitments in order to resolve a particular situation that needs attention" (Barone & Eisner, 2012, p. 58). Additionally, researchers are expected to make numerous decisions throughout the research process and read situations appropriately, in order to avoid the misinterpretation of findings (Barone & Eisner, 2012). Lastly, Aristotle's final form of knowledge is the productive, a knowledge that

“lives in the universe of action” (Barone & Eisner, 2012, p. 58) and emphasizes practical implementation, the process of accomplishing a conscious tangible goal. Since ABR is constructive in nature, this type of research encourages the creation of useful and meaningful representations of experience.

### **Evaluation Criteria**

ABR offers unique and aesthetic interpretations of the social world, allowing the audience to vicariously experience particular phenomena (Barone & Eisner, 2012; Leavy, 2015): “The term *aesthetic[s]*...implies the provocative experience(s) a work of art can promote in a human being” (de Mello, 2007, p. 206). Additionally, “aesthetics is an adjective used to describe or single out the mode of experience brought into being by encounters with works of art” (Greene, 2001, p. 5; as cited in de Mello, 2007, p. 206). In order for a work of art to be more aesthetic, it needs many different “perspectives it can be viewed and understood from” (Greene, 2001; as cited in de Mello, 2007, p. 206):

There is, in the arts, more than one interpretation to a musical score, more than one way to describe a painting or a sculpture, more than one appropriate form for a dance performance, more than one meaning for a poetic rendering of a person or a situation. In the arts diversity and variability are made central. (Eisner, 2002, p. 197; as cited in de Mello, 2007, p. 218)

Though arts based researchers recognize that in order for art to be useful, both the research method and the art itself must succeed and great importance is placed on the research experience, due to the nature of art, many have argued the notion of evaluation and success, fearful that standardization hinders artistic expression. Furthermore, since there are a variety of methods and principles of ABR, many researchers refuse to adhere

to the “gold standards” of positivism (Barone & Eisner, 2012; Leavy, 2015). According to Dewey (1934), a standard measures “a particular physical thing existing under specified physical conditions [and] defines things with respect to quantity” (p. 307).

While standards can often be applied universally, the arts are not concerned with seeking universal judgment (Barone & Eisner, 2012); they are “concerned with something individual, not comparative-as is all measurement. [The] subject matter is qualitative, not quantitative” (Dewey, 1934, p. 307). Dewey (1934) maintained that in order for something to be of value to society it must be distinctive, of high quality, and evoke meaning. Art not only serves as “a new kind of instrument...for modifying consciousness and organizing new modes of sensibility” (Sontag, 1966, p. 297; as cited in de Mello, p. 207), it can also enable people “to see more in [their] experience, to hear more on normally unheard frequencies, to become conscious of what daily routine have obscured, what habit and convention have suppressed” (Greene, 2000, p. 123; as cited in de Mello, 2007, p. 207).

While ABR does not employ standards to evaluate works of art, it does require assessment through a defined set of *criteria*, which are “the result of an endeavor to find out what a work of art is as an experience; the kind of experience which constitutes it” (Dewey, 1934, p. 309). Criteria are used to judge value and significance and are not to be used as a set of directives (Barone & Eisner, 1997, 2012; Leavy, 2015). Due to the diversity of ABR, many researchers have created assessment guidelines for their respective genres, understanding that assessment may be distinctive (Barone & Eisner, 1997, 2012; Leavy, 2015). While specific criteria exist for each arts based genre, there are general criteria that are used to evaluate the quality of most Arts Based Research.



### **Aesthetic power.**

In order for Arts Based Research to achieve success, the research accomplishes aesthetic power through the three distinctive criteria: incisiveness, concision and coherence. Identifying a theme, or distinct vision, enables the audience to view the social phenomena through an original well-defined standpoint (Barone & Eisner, 2012), and “gets to the heart of the issue” (Leavy, 2015, p. 278). Additionally, clearly defined themes help researchers avoid a “data dump,” and encourage concise and effective communication of the research findings (Barone & Eisner, 2012).

[Acquiring research clarity] serves as a guide for the artist or researcher in making judgments about which material to include and which to exclude...[requiring] a kind of intelligent discrimination based on a sense of what sorts of questions the researcher would raise in the minds of the audience. (Barone & Eisner, 2012, p. 150)

Leavy (2015) suggests that while evaluating the research objectives and defined themes, the thoroughness should also be assessed, concluding with an evaluation of the research’s architectural form. Moreover, ABR is “the result of a creation of expressive form that reveals qualities of life that might otherwise have not been experienced” (Barone & Eisner, 2012, p. 151) and the coherence of the research is judged by the congruency and the internal consistency of the research process, essentially evaluating the individual features and the strength of the final shape (Leavy, 2015). Furthermore, Arts Based Researchers are cognizant of the significance of the research process and its relevance to the final research puzzle, and therefore consider transparency and

explicitness as essential evaluative criterion that concentrate on the explanation and documentation of the research process (Leavy, 2015).

### **Generativity.**

While not to be confused with generalizability found in traditional scientific research where random populations are sampled in order to draw generalized conclusions, Arts Based Research's ultimate goal is to not produce work that "can be measured and made statistical" (Barone & Eisner, 2012, p. 152). Additionally, since generalizations take place all the time without random selection of "units" that represent a particular population, researchers using ABR can "generalize' not only from an  $n = x$  but from a sample that is represented by  $n = 1$ " (Barone & Eisner, 1997, 2012, p. 152; Leavy, 2015). Due to ABR's ability to enable a person to "see or act upon phenomena even though [the work] represents a kind of case study with an  $n$  of only 1" (Barone & Eisner, 2012, p. 152), this particular type of research, when done well, also encourages the audience to further the conversation by creating new questions and revealing connections (Barone & Eisner, 1997). Furthermore, ABR allows the reader/viewer to experience someplace new and reshapes a person's conception of the world, as well as reveals aspects of society that were not seen before (Barone & Eisner, 1997, 2012):

[ABR] does not simply reside in its own backyard forever but rather possesses the capacity to invite you into an experience that reminds you of people and places that bear familial resemblances to the settings, events, and characters within the work. (Barone & Eisner, 2012, p. 152)

### **Social Significance and Illumination.**

In Arts Based Research, social significance refers to meaning, character and the importance of the work's fundamental themes (Barone & Eisner, 2012): "Determining what is significant requires a frame of reference that gives significance or secures significance from the phenomena being studied...[W]e want to know not only what happened but why it is important" (Barone & Eisner, 2012, p. 153). Arts Based Research aims "to make a difference in the world", interpreting human experience by shedding light on issues that matter, raising important questions, and advancing discussion of topics that may otherwise be overlooked (Barone & Eisner, 1997, 2012, p. 153; Leavy, 2015). The criterion of illumination when applied to Arts Based Research refers to the way the work "defamiliariz[es] an object or a process so that it can be seen in a way that is entirely different than a way in which customary modes of perception operate" (Barone & Eisner, 2012, p. 154):

It calls attention to itself and when generative, to the processes or events that the creator of the work is trying to reveal...the ability to discover new angles from which to see is no trivial accomplishment. In fact, it is often through such observation that we learn to problematize the customary and to see something as general rather than as an individual event or object, (Barone & Eisner, 2012, p. 154)

Furthermore, since ABR acknowledges multiple truths, this type of research furthers the acceptance of multiple meanings, encouraging the audience to think critically and engage in meaningful reflection (Leavy, 2015). When illumination is combined with the evocative nature of a vivid experience, the experience's totality "may serve to

motivate the viewer or reader to reflect more deeply about the issues that are embodied so vividly within the particulars of the work and even to act differently in the nearby world outside of the work” (Barone & Eisner, 2012, p. 154).

### **Capturing the Essence of One’s Multiple Identities**

What matters is that lives do not serve as models; only stories do that. And it is a hard thing to make up stories to live by. We can only retell and live by the stories we have read or heard. We live our lives through texts. They may be read, or chanted, or experienced electronically, or come to us, like the murmurings of our mothers, telling us what conventions demand. Whatever their form or medium, these stories have formed us all; they are what we must use to make new fictions, new narratives. (Heilbrun, 1988, p. 37; as cited in Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 2)

Drawing on CRM’s holistic approach to comprehending the complexities of Jewish female teacher experience in depth by building on authentic collaboration between the researcher and participants, Arts Based Research, and in particular, Narrative Inquiry, can enhance the search for meaning by focusing on richly describing a single phenomenon (the Jewish female teacher in public schools) and help create space for a voice of those who are marginalized (Chase, 2005; Chapman, 2005; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2005; Merriam, 1998; as cited in Merriam, 2002; Patton, 2002; Stake, 1995; Yin, 1994; as cited in Merriam, 2002; Yin, 2009). Like other qualitative methods that “make a point quite dramatically or are, for some reason, particularly important in the scheme of things” (Patton, 2002, p. 234), Narrative Inquiry draws on multifaceted stories “as a way of honoring lived experience as a source of important knowledge and understanding” (Clandinin, 2006, 2013; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin & Huber, 2010; Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, 2006): “It is because...we understanding our own lives in terms of narratives that narrative is appropriate for understanding...others” (MacIntyre, 1984, p. 211-212; as cited in Lyons, 2007, p. 614).

Although the living and telling of stories in order to create meaning and build communities is an old practice, where stories “[in] most, if not all cultures, have enormous potential for connectivity” (Thompson, 1998; as cited in Hill, 2005, p. 96), the recent emergence of narrative methodologies in social science research has helped Narrative Inquiry seem new (Chase, 2005; Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin & Huber, 2010; Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). As a 20<sup>th</sup> century development, Narrative Inquiry materialized from the liberation movement that began in the late 1960s and helped revive the life history method, leading to a “narrative revolution” where social science researchers turned away from objective researcher/researched relationships, behaviorism, and “an exclusively positivist paradigm for...research” and turned to capturing previously silenced voices (Chase, 2005; Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007; Lieblich, Tuval-Mashciach, & Zibler, 1998, p. 1; as cited in Clandinin, 2006, p. 44; Lyons, 2007; Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007). First used in publication by Michael Connelly and Jean Clandinin in a 1990 *Educational Researcher* article, the term *Narrative Inquiry* draws from the humanities and narratology (the study of narratives found in various fields) and has roots stemming from realism, modernism, postmodernism, and constructionism in order to understand the “lived experience-that is, in lives and how they are lived” (Caine, Estefan, & Clandinin, 2013; Chase, 2005; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. xxii; Clandinin, Pushor, & Murray Orr, 2007; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, 2006; Riessman & Speedy, 2006; as cited in Clandinin, 2006; Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007; Pushor & Clandinin, 2009).

Though narrative study is not limited to a solitary research field, Narrative Inquiry is used increasingly in educational research because “humans are storytelling organisms

who, individually and socially, lead storied lives. The study of narrative, therefore, is the study of the ways humans experience the world” (Bach, 2007; Chase, 2005; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 2; Elbaz-Luwisch, 2007), with “teachers’ knowledge itself [having] a storied form” (Riessman & Speedy, 2007, p. 359). While Narrative Inquiry often appeals to educators due to “the comfort that comes from thinking about telling and listening to stories” (Clandinin et al., 2007, p. 21), it is not an “easy” method of research due to the compelling, yet confusing, quality that emerges when overall life experiences are blended with research, especially when these two domains of experience are often kept apart in studies (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 115; Clandinin et al., 2007; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006).

Due to its intimate approach to understanding an individual’s experience over time and different contexts (Bach, 2007; Caine et al., 2013; Chase, 2005; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006; Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007), Narrative Inquiry has been defined as a “form of living, a way of life” that goes beyond storytelling and recording (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, pp. 77-78; Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2012)-it is “an experience of the experience. It is people in relation studying with people in relation” (p. 189). Furthermore, the boundaries separating a narrative inquirer’s personal, private, and professional life from the participants’ lives are malleable as a result of the intimate relationships found in Narrative Inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007; Dixson, Chapman, & Hill, 2005; Nelson, 2003; as cited in Pushor & Clandinin, 2009; Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007; Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2012), making the goal of Narrative Inquiry as a research method “to provide ways of understanding experience from the perspective of those who live it” (Atkinson, 2002; as cited in East,

Jackson, O'Brien, & Peters, 2010; Bach, 2007; Jack, 2010; Schwandt, 1994; as cited in Bailey & Tilley, 2002, p. 575).

A Jewish female teacher-researcher, like myself, using this method with Jewish female teacher participants is looking to “[forge] strong bonds between participants and [provide] validation of their experience...[and] the opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate their strength, and to devise ways to resist further oppression together” (Banks-Wallace, 1999; as cited in East et al., 2010, p. 22; Jack, 2010). Stories about oppression (and, in particular, about people inhabiting the borders of privileged and oppressed) allow those previously silenced to be heard and realize they are not alone, as “shared words can banish...and reduce the felt terror of otherness”, not only strengthens their own communities, but also helps “avoid intellectual apartheid” (Delgado, 1989, p. 2439; as cited in Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, p. 62).

Seeing there was a need to research and define the human experience through the use of narrative that was “multilayered and many stranded” (Chase, 2005; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. xvii), Clandinin and Connelly (1990, 2006; as cited in Clandinin et al., 2007) argued that experiences occur narratively and developed a methodology that both captured the narrative as the phenomenon and the interpretation of the phenomenon. Since people lead storied lives and tell of their lived experiences, Narrative Inquiry “names the structured quality of experience to be studied, and it names the pattern of inquiry for its study” (Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 2; Lyons, 2007; Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007; Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2012), which separates it from other forms of narrative research that simply have the “narrative researchers describe such lives, collect and tell stories of them, and write

narratives of experience” (Chase, 2005; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 2; Polkinghorne; as cited in Clandinin & Murphy, 2007). It is important to note that there is no singular definition of narrative that can cover all its uses (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006; Mischler, 1995; as cited in Lyons, 2007; Riessman & Speedy, 2007), and simply telling one’s story does not stand as interpretation or meaning (Bruner, 1991; as cited in Lyons, 2007; Chase, 2005): “Story, in the current idiom, is a portal through which a person enters the world and by which their experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful” (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 477).

Stories allow participants to construct their identity since they are able to understand the personal, social, historical and cultural context of their experiences (Bach, 2007; Schiffrin, 1996; Smith & Sparkes, 2006; as cited in Blythe et al., 2013). Storytelling allows the participant to experience critical consciousness since telling stories is “the act of knowing oneself as the product of a historical process that had deposited its traces in one” (Gramsci cited in Lentricchia, 1985, p. 11; as cited in Toyosaki, 2007, p. 50; Schiffrin, 1996). Although many Ashkenazi Jews in the United States today are not first or second generation immigrants, storytelling still remains a vital characteristic of the Jewish culture and religion; it was, and still is used, to create *midrash* (interpretation/meaning), through which Jews bear witness to the insider/outsider positionality they have faced as immigrants in a variety of host countries (van Suntum, 2001):

[S]torytelling served Jewish communities as a means of bearing witness to the events of the past and of defining the fluid specifics of Jewish identity—that is, the individual’s cultural distinctiveness as a Jew, as a member of a unique



community, its complexion determined by history and interpreted in response to history. (Aarons, 1996, p. 1; as cited in van Suntu, 2001, p. 379)

However, it is important to note while stories do make up the foundation of Narrative Inquiry, some researchers have “co-opted” the uses of stories and narratives under the label of Narrative Inquiry, with stories viewed as waiting to be told (usually in a traditional Western fashion with a beginning, middle, and end) and narratives used only as the data or unit of analysis (Caine et al., 2013; Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007; Riessman & Speedy, 2007). Often used interchangeably with narrative research without distinguishing the various “ontological and epistemological traditions underlying narrative research approaches” (Caine et al., 2013, p. 574), Connelly and Clandinin’s (1990) conception of Narrative Inquiry arises from Dewey’s notion of life experience as education in order to bring “theoretical ideas about the nature of human life as lived to bear on educational experience as lived” (p. 3; Caine et al., 2013; Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007; Pushor & Clandinin, 2009; Rice & Coulter, 2012): “For Dewey, education, experience, and life are inextricably intertwined... We learn about education from thinking about life, and we learn about life from thinking about education” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, pp. xxiii-xxiv).

One way to transform a Narrative Inquiry comprising of Jewish female teachers “[into] an opportunity for empowerment for both [the] practitioners and the researcher involved with the [study]” (Chapman, 2005, p. 32) is to move from focusing primarily on capturing participant narratives to engaging in genuine story-sharing (a more reciprocal form of storytelling), which is better able to create rich counterstories. Counterstories, anecdotal and autobiographical “forms of resistance” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; as

cited in Chapman, 2005, p. 32), are expressed through story-sharing, in which the participant is allowed a “release point” (McClelland & Fine, 2008; as cited in Gallagher, 2011, p. 51) to reveal the unsaid, the hidden, and the contradictory (Gallagher, 2011; McAdams, 1993; Atkinson, 1998; as cited in Blythe et al., 2013). Counterstories draw on the relational aspect of Narrative Inquiry, as well as the use of narrative as both a method and a phenomenon, in order to “provide alternate ways of viewing [marginalized people] and how they successfully negotiate the world” (Chapman, 2007, p. 160):

Counterstory is...both a method of telling the story of those experiences that are often not told (i.e. those on the margins of society) and a tool for analyzing and challenging the stories of those in power...whose story is an ordinary part of the dominant discourse-the majoritarian story. (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 32)

### **Story-sharing**

Further drawing from a Deweyan theory of experience and reframing it through a narrative lens in order to challenge the status quo, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) define Narrative Inquiry as “[a] way of understanding experience” (p. 20), with collaboration between researcher and participants and the necessity of mutual “storytelling and restorying” distinguishing it from other forms of research methodologies that utilize narratives as forms of data (e.g. phenomenology, ethnography, and case study) (Caine et al., 2013; Clandinin et al., 2007; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 4). In order to strengthen the necessity of mutual storytelling, this study will focus on story-sharing, as “[s]tory-sharing is the reciprocal exchange of relevant stories between the participant and researcher...for the purpose of engaging the participant in a genuinely mutual experience that yields

superior data<sup>10</sup> because of that relationship” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Corbin Dwyer & Buckle, 2009; as cited in Blythe et al., 2013; Elbaz-Luwisch, 2007; Hayman et al., 2011, p. 285). Furthermore, the reciprocity found in story-sharing deepens the relational aspect of Narrative Inquiry by allowing the researcher and the participant to be able to “‘feel the experience’ as well as feel the pain or joy of the other person” (Schram, 2003, p. 21).

Even though Narrative Inquiry does ask the researcher and participants to establish a mutual understanding of obligation to authenticity, openness, trust, cooperation, and respect of multiple voices, it does not require the researcher to be a complete insider to the phenomenon being researched. However, story-sharing “can only be used effectively and realistically by an insider” (Blythe et al., 2013; Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Hayman et al., 2011, p. 286, 2012), as the insider researcher is better able to establish empowering rapport and reciprocation with participants who are marginalized in social institutions (Blythe et al., 2013; Hayman et al., 2011; Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005; as cited in Hayman et al., 2012): “Marginalised [sic], stigmatised [sic] and fundamentally invisible groups in the community...require approaches that attain authentic and rich data without further disempowering the participants” (Hayman et al., 2011, p. 285). Though story-sharing, like Narrative Inquiry completed by those with limited insider knowledge, “permits participants [and researchers] to share their account [to] legitimi[ze] their experiences, allowing them to reclaim power and (re)shape their identity” (Holloway & Freshwater, 2007; as cited in Hayman et al., 2011, p. 285), as a

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<sup>10</sup> It is important to note that while story-sharing does yield exceptional data, there is little documented in the literature regarding this approach (Hayman et al., 2011). Likewise, story-sharing, as a methodological approach, is primarily found in the field of nursing as a way to enhance nurse-patient relationships in long-term care (see Bailey & Tilley, 2002; Blythe et al., 2013; Bulpitt & Martin, 2010; East et al., 2010; Hayman et al., 2011, 2012; Jack, 2010; Moore, 2012)

Jewish female teacher-researcher, I am better able to reciprocate stories of “passing” as White and “closeting” my Jewish identity with other Jewish female teachers because I “have the authentic stories to share that convey genuine understanding and promote the development of collaborative researcher/participant relationships” (Hayman et al., 2011) which can strengthen the counterstory being told.

### **Three-dimensional Narrative Inquiry space**

In addition to drawing from Dewey’s criterion of interaction and continuity (Clandinin, 2006), Clandinin and Connelly (2000) argued that in order to understand the interaction of experience one must understand the relationship between the social and the personal; in addition, they acknowledged that while people are individuals, they are always seen in relation to a social context and that all experiences are interrelated: “[W]herever one positions oneself in that continuum—the imagined now, some imagined past, or some imagined future—each point has a past experiential base and leads to an experiential future” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 2). Expanding on these ideas, Clandinin and Connelly generated a three-dimensional conceptual framework for Narrative Inquiry, with the three dimensions—temporality, sociality, and place—explored concurrently, inquiring into the individual experiences of the participants and the researcher, as well as the co-constructed experience (Bach, 2007; Caine et al., 2013; Clandinin, 2006, Clandinin & Huber, 2010; Clandinin et al., 2007; Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, 2006; Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2012): “[Narrative Inquiry] studies have temporal dimensions and address temporal matters: they focus on the personal and the social in a balance appropriate to the inquiry: and they occur in specific places or sequences of places” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 54).

**Place.**

It is important to note that while it is no less important than its counterparts, *place* is the most tangible aspect of the three dimensional Narrative Inquiry space as it refers to “the specific concrete, physical, and topological boundaries of place or a sequence of places where the inquiry and events take place” (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, p. 70; Clandinin & Huber, 2010; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 480; Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2012). Place not only influences the participant’s lived and told experience, but the conditions of a place can also shape the comfort level of a participant when reliving and retelling his/her experiences (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007; Clandinin & Huber, 2010; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006; Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2012).

**Temporality.**

Researching the human experience requires an understanding that, as people, we have a past, a present, and a future (Bach, 2007; Clandinin et al., 2007; Clandinin & Huber, 2010; Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006; Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2012; Tsai, 2007). Stemming from Dewey’s notion of continuity, narratives include the experiences of people, places, things, and events and have an aspect of “temporal transition” (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 479; Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2012; Riessman & Speedy, 2007). Understanding the temporality of narrative requires the awareness that experiences are temporal and that life is not only experienced in the present but exists along a chronological continuum (Bach, 2007; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, 2006; Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2012).

It is crucial for narrative inquirers to understand that “life is also a matter of growth toward an imagined future” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 4), with people (researcher included) living and telling stories of who they are, with both types of experiences “offer[ing] possible plotlines for the futures as [they] tell and retell stories” (Bach, 2007, p. 283; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2012; Pushor & Clandinin, 2009). In addition, Narrative Inquiry views an event not as a static moment in time but as “an expression of something happening over time. Any event, or thing, has a past, a present as it appears to us, and an implied future” (Bach, 2007; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 29; Clandinin & Huber, 2010; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006; Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007; Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2012; Tsai, 2007).

### **Sociality.**

Furthering Dewey’s (1938) notion of experience and interaction, sociality concentrates on the personal, “social, cultural, and institutional narratives in which the individual’s experiences are constituted, shaped, expressed, and enacted” (1958, p. 29; as cited in Clandinin et al., 2007; Bach, 2007; Caine et al., 2013; Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006; Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2012). When exploring narratives, both the participant and the researcher consider the role of personal feelings, aesthetic reactions, moral dispositions, hopes, and desires (Bruner, 2002; as cited in Tsai, 2007; Chase, 2005; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin & Huber, 2010; Clandinin et al., 2007; Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006; Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2012). Correspondingly, the inquirer and participants consider the influence of social situations, such as surrounding environment, existential conditions, people, and

additional factors (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin et al., 2007; Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006; Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2012).

Connelly and Clandinin (2006) and Clandinin and Rosiek (2007) also introduce another element of sociality, the relationship between the researcher and the participant, putting emphasis on the importance of reciprocity in Narrative Inquiry as a methodology. Furthermore, unlike other qualitative inquiries, the relational dimension of Narrative Inquiry highlights the criticality for narrative inquirers not to “subtract [themselves] from the relationship” (Clandinin & Huber, 2010; Clandinin et al., 2007, p. 23), “but rather...find ways to inquire into...their own experiences as well as the co-constructed experiences developed through the...inquiry process” (Chase, 2005; Clandinin & Connelly, 1998; as cited in Clandinin, 2006, p. 47; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006; Hollingsworth & Dybdahl, 2007; Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007; Pushor & Clandinin, 2009; Rogers, 2007), as “[t]hey too are having an experience, the experience of the inquiry that entails the experience they set out to explore” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 81).

Though they may start with an individual telling his/her story or the living alongside the participant while experiences unfold (Bach, 2007; Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin & Huber, 2010; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006), narrative inquirers must understand that they enter the three-dimensional Narrative Inquiry space in the midst of participants’ stories, as well their own inquirers’ stories (Caine et al., 2013; Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007; Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2012): “[Participants’] lives do not begin the day [narrative inquirers] arrive nor do they end as we leave. Their lives continue. Furthermore, the place in which they lived and

work...and their communities are also in the midst when we researchers arrive”  
(Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 63-64).

### **Where to Begin?**

However, before entering the lives and places of the participants, narrative inquirers begin by writing an “autobiographically oriented narrative [which is] associated with the *research puzzle* (called by some the research problem or research question)” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 41; Clandinin & Huber, 2010; Clandinin et al., 2007). It is important to note that since Narrative Inquiry develops from the researcher’s own autobiography and interest in experience (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin & Huber, 2010; Clandinin et al., 2007), research puzzles cannot emerge without the narrative inquirer understanding his/her narrative ontology (way of being) and the obligations and commitments associated with it (Caine et al., 2013): “[A] Narrative Inquiry, therefore, proceeds from an ontological position, a curiosity about how people are living and the constituents of their experience...This ontological stance underpins a central epistemological commitment of narrative inquirers, that experience is knowledge for living” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Dewey, 1938).

In order for a narrative inquirer to engage deeply with experience, he/she must remain aware of ontological commitments serving as relational commitments, which “form [a] togetherness in research that seeks to explore how we are living in the midst of our stories” (Caine et al., 2013, p. 576; Clandinin, 2006; Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2012), with the conclusion of “the inquiry still in the midst of [the] living and telling, reliving and retelling...the stories of the experiences that made up people’s lives, both individual and social” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 20). A strong ontological foundation helps



the inquirer understand that “experiences are continuously interactive, resulting in changes in both [the researcher and participants] and the contexts in which they interact” (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007; Dewey, 1938; Caine et al., 2013, p. 576; Pushor & Clandinin, 2009)

### **Justifying the inquiry.**

Once the narrative inquirer is committed ontologically and the phenomenon becomes being studied becomes even partly clear, he/she needs to justify why the study is important using three kinds of justification: personal, practical, and social (Clandinin, 2013; Clandinin et al., 2007). Narrative Inquiry may be viewed as simply listening to and writing down stories, which often causes it “to be dismissed as merely anecdotal or personal” (Clandinin, 2013, p. 35); however, a personal justification will demonstrate why “the inquiry matters to the [researcher] as [an] individual” (Clandinin, 2013, p. 35; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin & Huber, 2010). Although the narrative inquirer begins with an autobiographical narrative and a research puzzle that justifies the inquiry in the context of his/her own life experiences, a narrative ontological commitment helps the inquirer question “who [he/she] see[s] [him/herself] as being, and becoming, within the inquiry” (Clandinin, 2013, p. 36; Clandinin & Huber, 2010).

Without knowing who they are and what they may become through and beyond this inquiry in terms of the research puzzle, the researcher potentially enters into a relationship “without a sense of what stories [he/she is] living and telling in the research relationships...[which decreases] the ways [he/she] attend[s] to the experiences of the research participants” (Clandinin, 2013, p. 36; Clandinin & Huber, 2010). However, personal justifications are not enough as the research must also concentrate on the

consideration of a possible shift or change in current practice (Clandinin, 2013; Clandinin & Huber, 2010). Furthermore, a practical justification shows the possibility of a shift in practice, whereas a social (or theoretical) justification addresses the questions “So what?” and “Who cares?” by changing theory (through new methodology or disciplinary knowledge), policy, or society (Clandinin, 2013; Clandinin & Huber, 2010).

**Role of theory.**

Though theory does play a role in the narrative inquirer’s justifications, it does not drive the inquiry like other forms of qualitative research methods (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Due to the positioning of the researcher and the “uniqueness of each study” (Clandinin et al., 2007, p. 30), prescribed theory cannot be utilized since “the purposes, and what one is exploring and finds puzzling, change as the research progresses. This happens from day to day and week to week, and it happens over the long haul as narratives are retold, puzzles shift[ed], and purposes change[d]” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 73). Rather than beginning with a theoretical framework and contributing to its development or attempting to “replicate and apply a theory to the problem at hand” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 41) like many formalists do, narrative inquirers understand that the reviewed literature acts as a structuring framework to be weaved throughout the inquiry only after they “begin with experience as expressed in lived and told stories” (p. 40). Furthermore, a narrative inquirer’s main contribution to the existing literature is a new sense of meaning and understanding of the research topic rather than “a set of knowledge claims that might incrementally add to knowledge in the field” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 42; Clandinin & Huber, 2010).

## **Change is Inevitable**

As they are part of the research *parade*, it is impossible, if not dishonest, for narrative inquirers to “stay silent or to present a kind of perfect, idealized, inquiring, [or] moralizing self...[since they] need to remake [themselves] as well as offer [their] research understandings that could lead to a better world” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 61; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Additionally, the relational aspect of Narrative Inquiry not only adds to the possibility of inquirers and participants profoundly changing, but also both “discover[ing] news ways of knowing and understanding” (Caine et al., 2013, p. 580; Pushor & Clandinin, 2009). Furthermore, according to Dewey (1981; as cited in Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007), the participants and the researcher are both altered based on continuous experiences with the world around them; as Narrative Inquiry describes and intervenes into human experience, with the descriptions from Narrative Inquiry adding meaning to the experience, the content and quality of the experience is changed as well (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007): “We learn through experience, through continuously reorganizing and restructuring our understanding of reality” (Garrison, 2003, p. 528). Given that teaching informs one’s stories, reflection throughout the Narrative Inquiry study is acted upon and action is reflected upon; this reflection and action approach (otherwise known as praxis) helps the Jewish female teacher-participants and researcher to “develop their power to perceive critically the way they exist in the world with which and in which they find themselves” (Dixson et al., 2005; Freire, 1990, p. 71; as cited in Tejada et al., 2003, p. 20; McNiff, 2007; Pushor & Clandinin, 2009).

However, it is important to note that “these [relational] in-between spaces are filled with uncertainty and indeterminacy” (Caine et al., 2013, p. 580) because

“[e]motion, value, felt experience with the world, memory, and narrative explanations of one’s past do not stand still in a way that allows for certainty” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 27). Furthermore, events are always recognized with a sense of incompleteness, with the researcher doing his/her best “knowing all the while that other possibilities, other interpretations, other ways of explaining things are possible” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 31). Although it may be found in other forms of qualitative research, uncertainty and tentativeness add depth to Narrative Inquiry since the researcher and participants “are...still telling in [their] practices [their] ongoing life stories as they are lived, told, relived, and retold...[and allows the participants] and researchers [to] ‘give back’ to each other ways of seeing [their stories]” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 9). It is through the telling and retelling of stories and living and reliving of experiences that both the inquirer and the participants are able to enhance personal and social transformation, which is one of Narrative Inquiry’s purposes (Chase, 2005; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Dewey, 1938; Pushor & Clandinin, 2009).

### **Role of Relationships/Collaboration**

Much like CRM that focuses on dialogical and relational consciousness through reciprocity, Narrative Inquiry views the relationship between the inquirer and the participant as crucial, with the experience of the inquirer as twofold: undergo the experience as researcher and play a role in the experience itself (Caine et al., 2013; Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin et al., 2007; Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007; Hollingsworth & Dybdahl, 2007). The researcher’s constant involvement confirms that they are not merely there as “disembodied recorders of someone else’s experience” (Caine et al., 2013; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 81; Pinnegar & Daynes,

2007), but are an essential component of the narrative and the overall inquiry experience (Hollingsworth & Dybdahl, 2007; Silko, 2007; as cited in Clandinin, 2006). Their connection and contribution to the experience requires narrative inquirers to be sensitive and perceptive with the intention of “grasp[ing] the huge number of events and stories, the many twisting and turning narrative threads that pulse through every moment and show up in what appears to the new and inexperienced eyes of the researcher as mysterious code” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 77; Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007).

### **Being in the Field**

It is evident that stories remain a central component of Narrative Inquiry and therefore, as researchers enter the field of inquiry, it is essential to understand that the participant’s stories are constant; the researcher is entering “lives in motion” (Clandinin & Huber, 2010; Kirby, 1991, as cited in Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 64). Upon entering the inquiry field, researchers are aware of the numerous dimensions within the observed stories and are prepared to use varying methods to collect and compose field texts, the term used for data in Narrative Inquiry (Clandinin & Huber, 2010; Clandinin et al., 2007). Field texts are an integral part of Narrative Inquiry; they allow researchers to record the ongoing details of the participant’s lives, the “nothingness that fill our days” (Clandinin, 2013; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 104; Clandinin & Huber, 2010; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). While these moments of nothingness may appear insignificant at the time, as field texts are compiled, patterns and congruent stories may emerge (Clandinin, 2013; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin & Huber, 2010).

The ongoing collection of field texts highlights and preserves the details of the inquired lives, allowing the researcher to compose a story. The role of the inquirer is to

work alongside participants and experience both the seen and unseen details of their lives (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin & Huber, 2010). These recorded details “help fill in the richness, nuance, and complexity of the landscape, returning the reflecting researcher to a richer, more complex, and puzzling landscape than memory alone is likely to construct” (Chase, 2005; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 84; Clandinin & Huber, 2010). Living alongside participants and in the midst of their experiences requires the researcher to construct multi-dimensional stories. The reflexive relationship between researcher and participant is represented through this unique method of composition. Field texts capture the exploration of the lived, told, retold, and relived life stories (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin & Huber, 2010). Within this multi-dimensional life story, the researcher is required to be continually present and aware of the story in its entirety (Clandinin et al, 2007).

### **Field texts.**

Living alongside participants can be defined as ongoing conversations where stories are shared or observations are made during the participants’ daily lives (Clandinin, 2013; Clandinin & Huber, 2010). This allows the researcher to position oneself within the “temporal unfolding of lives” (Clandinin, 2013, p. 45; Clandinin & Huber, 2010; Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2012). The notion of relational space concludes that stories are constantly evolving; therefore, they remain non-linear and do not follow chronological sequence (hooks, 1998; Sarris, 1993; as cited in Clandinin, 2013). During the initial stages of living alongside participants, researchers are living within the lived story and gaining access to the important aspects of the participants’ lives (i.e. meeting family and friends and frequenting important places).

While consciously participating within the life story, field texts are always interpretive as they are composed at a specific moment in time and record what is being experienced existentially, therefore the researcher has a responsibility to address and question the positioning of their field texts (Clandinin, 2013; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2012). Clandinin and Connelly (2000) propose that without this cautious positioning, “the research texts ultimately constructed from them are endlessly open to unanswerable questions and criticism about knowledge claims being made and meaning generated” (p. 75). Field texts record the immediate observed occurrence as well as the inner feelings of both the researcher and participant. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) suggest that this duality enhances the “intimate relationships over the long haul study situations [and makes the researcher] come face-to-face with themselves” (p. 88). Adhering to the three dimensional Narrative Inquiry space and unique collaborative relationship, inquirers understand that the life stories being simultaneously told and lived will mold the construction of the field texts (Clandinin, 2013; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006; Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2012).

### **Composing field texts.**

In Narrative Inquiry, field texts are intended to be continually updated and referenced as new stories are told. Inquirers are required to navigate between the intimate relationships with the participants as well as the reflective responsibility of composing field texts (Clandinin, 2013; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). Narrative inquirers are encouraged to be creative when composing field texts and use multiple approaches such as field notes, researcher and participant journals, photographs,

poems, drawings, and stories (Bach, 2007; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin & Huber, 2010; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006).

Annals and chronicles are other forms of field texts that are distinctive and fundamental to Narrative Inquiry as they are used to guide the formation of personal histories (Clandinin, 2013; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Annals and chronicles help participants recollect memories and experiences that will outline their personal narratives (Clandinin, 2013). Clandinin and Connelly (1990) recommend that researchers have participants begin by exploring their personal narratives through the use of annals and chronicles rather than having them write a complete autobiographical narrative. While both of these field texts are used to record events, annals are used primarily to locate the specific dates of memories, stories, and events, and chronicles are used to highlight the significant link between a sequence of connected events (Clandinin, 2013; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). In order to complete the personal narrative, participants expand on the annals and chronicles by giving meaning to the isolated experiences.

In this particular study, participants were encouraged to create timelines highlighting five critical incidents that have shaped their identities. Identifying the five critical incidents prompted mini-stories which helped the participant relive and retell the initial experience. The timelines were presented in differing forms, such as traditional chronological diagrams in email, written down on sticky notes, and artifacts. Due to the researcher's positionality in this study, annals and chronicles were created by the researcher, as the researcher was also a participant and is actively engaging in story-sharing.



## **Making Sense of Everything**

Though it is considered “one of the hardest transitions...[to] make” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 119), the shift from being in the field and writing field texts to composing research texts (a shift that occurs, not at the end of the inquiry process like other forms of inquiry, but in the midst of the ongoing inquiry) does not mean that relationships with participants end, but rather stories move from being lived to being retold. Likewise, while concepts such as justification, phenomena, method, analysis and interpretation, the role of theory and previous literature, researcher positioning, and the composition of the final research text may not have been focused on when the inquirer was in close contact with participants in the field, narrative inquirers know that the reemergence of these topics is just as important during the midst and at the end of an inquiry as they are at the beginning (Clandinin, 2013; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2012). Similar to the topics not having a “final exit” after their initial consideration, it is important to remember that exiting the research field is never final, as researchers entered the field in the midst of ongoing experiences, and inquirers still need to carry out long-term relational responsibilities for participants, themselves as researchers, and for the work done together (Caine et al., 2013; Clandinin, 2013; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2012).

Moving from field texts to interim research texts helps the inquirer think narratively as he/she “attend[s] closely to the field texts within the three-dimensional space” (Clandinin, 2013, p. 47; Clandinin & Huber, 2010). Interim research texts, even those that are unfinished, allow the participants and inquirers “to further co-compose storied interpretations and to negotiate the multiplicity of possible meanings” (Clandinin,

2013, p. 47; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin & Huber, 2010). Researchers employing Narrative Inquiry need to be aware that it is the *meaning* not *truth* that will be conveyed and negotiated with the participants in and through the stories (Bailey & Tilley, 2002; de Mello, 2007; Ely, 2007; Freeman, 2007; Minichiello et al., 1999; as cited in Blythe et al., 2013): “It is the truth of [the participants’] experience, not an objective, decontextualized truth” (Bailey & Tilley, 2002, p. 581). Though there is no singular method of bringing together field texts and creating final research texts, as there is a variety of ways to create interim research texts (even if they may never appear in the final research text), the interim research text composition process may occur as soon as field texts begin to be composed with “interim texts...written at different times in the inquiry process and for different purposes, and they also take different forms” (Clandinin, 2013; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 134; Clandinin & Huber, 2010).

It is also during this time that either the researcher or the researcher with the participants may write “narrative[s] of the experience as [they] relate to the initial research puzzle” done in order “to make sense of multiple and diverse field texts” (Clandinin, 2013, p. 49; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin & Huber, 2010). Similar to other CRM methods that value authenticity, openness, flexibility, and trustworthiness, researchers know that although it would be easier to see Narrative Inquiry as a series of steps designed to move seamlessly from the drafting to composing stages, Narrative Inquiry requires continual revision through negotiation and engagement with participants regarding the “unfolding threads of experience” (Clandinin, 2013; Clandinin & Huber, 2010, p. 439). Though it may be equally tempting to “even out” texts and “suggest that lives are smooth and narratives coherent in the living and telling” (Clandinin, 2013, p. 48;

Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990), Downey and Clandinin (2010) see the movement from field texts to interim research texts as a shattered mirror, where it is not the intention of the researcher put the pieces back together:

[The inquirer] enter[s] the strewn bits of a person's life in the midst and in relational ways, attending to what is possible in understanding the temporal, social, and place dimensions within an ongoing life...[T]he narrative inquirer attends to the particularities of each...shard in order to compose multiple possible story retellings or ways to move forward in imaginative and narratively coherent ways. (Downey & Clandinin, 2010, p. 391)

Like the movement from field texts to interim research texts, shifting from interim research texts to final research texts is filled with uncertainty, repetitions, and complications. Adding to this is the quantity and variety of field texts “all composed with attention to temporality, sociality, and place” (Clandinin, 2013, p. 47; Clandinin, & Huber, 2010). In addition, like the rest of the Narrative Inquiry process, “there is no linear unfolding of...data analysis to publishing research findings” (Clandinin, 2013, p. 49).

Though the process may be filled with uncertainty and surprises, the narrative inquirer does not disconnect himself/herself from engaging in relationships with participants, as all texts, including the final research text, are co-composed or negotiated with participants, with interim research texts serving as a way to further engage in retellings and relivings of research relationship (Clandinin, 2013; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Although it may be tempting to dissect participants' lived experience upon leaving the field, and beginning analysis and interpretation away from participants, it is crucial

for narrative inquirers to continuously engage with the relational aspect of Narrative Inquiry, even as the move from composing field texts to interim research texts is filled with tension and uncertainty (Bateson, 1989; as cited in Clandinin & Huber, 2010; Clandinin, 2013; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2012).

### **Your story/My story/Our story**

Furthermore, when it comes to analysis and interpretation, “there is no clear path to follow that works in each inquiry”, as the narrative inquirer needs to look at “the circumstances surrounding each inquiry, the relationships established, [his/her]...inquiry life, and the appropriateness of different kinds of interim and final research texts” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 134). Unlike other forms of qualitative research analysis methods, such as grounded theory, that analyze narratives using themes and keep stories compartmentalized in coded sections, Gergen (2003) “cautions [that] ‘an analytical method of deconstructing stories into coded piles’ could undermine ‘the aims of the research’ by directing attention away from thinking narratively about the experience” (p. 372; as cited in Clandinin, 2013, p. 50; Clandinin & Huber, 2010, p. 439; Hardin, 2003; as cited in Hollingsworth & Dybdahl, 2007; Riessman & Speedy, 2007).

Rather, narrative inquirers engage in a variety of methods to listen to and interpret the complex and multiple narrator voices (Chase, 2005; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Pushor & Clandinin, 2009). In order to attend to the voices within each narrative, rather than analyzing distinct themes across narratives, inquirers may utilize the Listening Guide developed by Carol Gilligan, which is comprised of four

sequential “listenings”<sup>11</sup> of transcriptions that bring the researcher further “in[to] a relationship with a [participant’s] distinct and multilayered voice” (Chase, 2005; Edwards & Weller, 2012; Gilligan et al., 2003; Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007; Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2012; Taylor, Gilligan, & Sullivan, 1995; as cited in Chase, 2005).

Originally employed as a response to the coding process commonly used throughout the 1980s to analyze qualitative data in psychology that reduced the complexity of the human psyche to single static categories, Gilligan (1982) created the Listening Guide method of analysis to “allow for multiple codings of the same text” (Gilligan et al., 2003, p. 157-158; Doucet & Mauthner, 2008) and to acknowledge culturally responsive methodologists’, as well as feminist researchers’, concerns “about the ways in which a person’s voice can be overridden by the researcher and their cautions about voicing over the truth of another” (Berryman et al., 2013; Gilligan et al., 2003, p. 158; Smith, 2012). In addition, the need for multiple listenings and codings stems from the idea that a person’s multiple voices may be contrapunctual, with voices possibly being “in tension with one another, with the self, with the voices of others with whom the person is in relationship, and the culture or context within which the person lives” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Gilligan et al., 2003, p. 159; Rogers, 2007).

It is important to note that the Listening Guide also places emphasis on what is *not* said, allowing for researchers to approach the process of listening to, taking in, interpreting, and speaking about stories as a relational practice, rather than a practice in which the listener is neutral or objective (Brown & Gilligan, 1991; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Doucet & Mauthner, 2008; Gilligan et al., 2003; Pinnegar & Hamilton,

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<sup>11</sup> Though “reading(s)” is the term most commonly used in the literature on the Listening Guide method, this study will use “listenings” in reference to the steps in order to maintain the authenticity of experience and relationships found in Narrative Inquiry.

2012; Pushor & Clandinin, 2009; Rogers, 2007). Though it has been mainly used to position voices in singular interviews<sup>12</sup>, the Listening Guide is “a systematic series of steps to follow, rather like a recipe” (Edwards & Weller, 2012, p. 206), structured to track changes and continuities in participants’ subjectivities throughout conversations over time. Likewise, when Listening Guide is used in conjunction with Narrative Inquiry, each step is considered a separate “listening”, rather than a “reading”, as active participation is required to truly tune in to a person’s story and “hear its complex orchestration...[and] its psychological and political structure”, just as conversation found in Narrative Inquiry consists of mutual participation (Brown & Gilligan, 1991, p. 45); however, no listening is meant to stand alone, as there is no singular representation of a person’s experience to embody him/her (Gilligan et al., 2003):

The implication that analysts can understand someone separate from their own theoretical orientation and personal experience [is] an extremely debatable stance, especially for researchers...who [are committed] to understanding how people’s lives [differ] from their own perspective with regarding [conversations] as co-constructions between [storyteller] and [listener]. (Edwards & Teller, 2012, p. 207)

Furthermore, each listening is intended to draw upon the researcher’s own reflexivity, with the researcher attending to his/her own reactions to the narrative, including where connections have/have not been made with the participant, how the participant and his/her story made the researcher feel, why the researcher thinks he/she is responding in this particular way, and how these responses may affect the understanding

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<sup>12</sup> Due to unequal power dynamics found in research, narrative inquirers often find that their intimate relationships with participants shift the intention of an interview into a conversation; for this reason, this study features the Listening Guide being used to analyze conversations (Chase, 2005).

of the participant and his/her stories (Brown & Gilligan, 1991; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Doucet & Mauthner, 2008; Gilligan et al., 2003; Pushor & Clandinin, 2009; Tsai, 2007):

Through each of these steps we actively bring ourselves and our research question into relationship with the person's spoken experience to direct the analytical process, creating an opening for that person to shift our way of listening, the questions we ask, and the ways in which we ask them. (Gilligan et al., 2003, p. 157)

In order for the researcher to attend to his/her own positionality in relation to the participant and his/her stories, it is important to remember that "each listening is not a simple analysis of the text" (Gilligan et al., 2003, p. 159); rather, the text is underlined in a separate colored pencil during each listening, with notes and "interpretative summaries" (Gilligan et al., 2003, p. 159) being documented. This "trail of evidence" (Brown, Tappan, Gilligan, Miller, & Argyris, 1989; as cited in Gilligan et al., 2003, p. 159) helps the researcher stay in close relation to the text and the participant, further adding to existing field notes and field texts composed with the participant.

### **Listening for the "I".**

Similar to other methods of qualitative analysis, the first listening of a narrative involves the researcher paying particular attention to the plot itself, along with its context and drama, much like a literary critic does when trying to understand a story; the listener identifies repeated words or images, key themes, shift in narration style, crucial metaphors, contradictions and inconsistencies, as well as revisions of a story (Brown & Gilligan, 1991; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Edwards & Teller, 2012; Gilligan et al.,

2003). After answering the questions “Who is telling the story” and “What is happening in the story”, the first step then has the researcher reflect on the question “Who is listening”; this reflexivity is documented through his/her own initial emotions and thoughts in relation to the story being analyzed, with the participant’s words in one column on a page and the interpretations in the adjacent column (Brown & Gilligan, 1992; as cited in Doucet & Mauthner, 2008; Gilligan et al., 2003; Pushor & Clandinin, 2009). Attending to one’s own subjectivity (the personal, political, and theoretical) in relation to the narrative helps the listener understand that he/she “is in the privileged position of interpreting the life events of another, and...[has him/her] consider the implications of this act. An awareness of the power to name and control the meaning is critical” (Brown & Gilligan, 1991, p. 46; Doucet & Mauthner, 2008).

This awareness of privilege in controlling how aspects of a story are named and what meaning is associated with each is addressed in the second listening of the same narrative. In the second listening, the researcher is listening to the different subjectivities expressed by the participant; first, the listener focused on how the participant represents him/herself-the voice of the “I” telling the story-then, he/she attends to the “I” that appears as the main actor in the story (Brown & Gilligan, 1991; Edwards & Weller, 2012; Doucet & Mauthner, 2008; Gilligan et al., 2003). These multiple voices are traced through the construction of “I-poems”, which are “concerned with accessing meaning in relation to self” (Chase, 2005; Edwards & Weller, 2012, p. 205; Doucet & Mauthner, 2008), and help maintain the integrity and authenticity of the participant’s story.

Rather than dissect the narrative into compartmentalized codes determined solely by the researcher, “the I-poem picks up on an associative stream of consciousness carried



by a first-person voice...[and] moves this aspect of subjectivity to the foreground” (Gilligan et al., 2003, p. 163). The I-poem is constructed in two steps: the first requires the listener to underline or highlight every first-person “I” along with the associated verb, as well as any accompanying text deemed important (Edwards & Weller, 2012; Gilligan, et al., 2003). Once these segments have been identified, the researcher cuts and pastes these phrases in the exact sequence they are found in the narrative, with “each phrase on a separate line, like lines of a poem” (Edwards & Weller, 2012; Gilligan et al., 2003, p. 162).

The Listening Guide, and in particular the second listening, furthers the relational aspect of Narrative Inquiry during full engagement with the participant “self” voices, when the researcher likely experiences coming into a deeper relationship with the participant as “she begins to know her on her own terms” through responding to what the participant is saying, both emotionally and intellectually (Brown & Gilligan, 1991, p. 46; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Doucet & Mauthner, 2008; Gilligan et al., 2003). By helping the researcher create a space between his/her perceptions of the narrator and the narrator’s own sense of self, the I-poem pushes the researcher to understand “how she [the participant] speaks of herself before [one] speaks[s] of her” (Brown & Gilligan, 1992, p. 27-28; as cited in Edwards & Weller, 2012, p. 206). Though the I-poem allows for the researcher to be reflexive, it “can lead researchers to...put theoretical orientation and personal experience aside...[and] separate...their interpretations from [a participant’s] ‘authentic’ self-perception and inner world as contained in the transcript” (Edwards & Weller, 2012, p. 215-216).

In addition, it is important to note that the typical usage of the Listening Guide would position the researcher as the analyst judging what is crucial in understanding the participant's sense of self (Edwards & Weller, 2012). However, I-poems created from stories gathered in the Narrative Inquiry process using CRM would either be brought back to the participants upon completion (and before the researcher moves on to the third listening) to see if meaning was accurately captured (and negotiated if it was not) or they will be co-constructed with the participants. Additionally, when used with stories gathered in this particular methodological approach, I-poems may be sections of the story chosen by the researcher and then approved by the participant, or chosen by the participant for the researcher to focus on. Due to the amount of time to complete an I-poem (even when not used in conjunction with Narrative Inquiry), the Listening Guide is better suited for a small participant population such as those found in case studies like this study and should not be "regarded as the answer to either single snapshot or longitudinal data in qualitative research...[as] not all such research is wholly or partially concerned with participants' sense of self in this way" (Chase, 2005; Edwards & Weller, 2012, p. 216).

### **Recurring "I"s.**

Rather than being prescribed like the first two steps, the third and fourth listenings "are shaped by the particular question [or research puzzle] the [inquirer] brings to the [conversation]" (Gilligan et al., 2003, p. 159). The third step focuses the analysis on the research questions and concentrates on the participant's discussion of his/her relationships with others, the concern and importance of these relationships, and the various subjectivities connected to these relationships (Edwards & Weller, 2012). In

addition, this particular listening helps the researcher attend to the contrapunctual voices found in the multiple layers of a participant's expressed experience, as participants are not univocal or unidimensional (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Pushor & Clandinin, 2009; Rogers, 2007): "It is in this third step that [the researcher] begin[s] to identify, specify, and sort out the different strands in the [conversation] that may speak to [the] research question" (Gilligan et al., 2003, p. 165).

The contrapunctual voices within a participant's story "may be conflicting or complementary, resisting or capitulating, confident or distressed, firm or struggling to make themselves heard" (Edwards & Weller, 2012, p. 205). The listener (either the researcher or the researcher working together with the participant) attends to each voice, underlining each in a different color to provide a visual examination of how these voices act in relation to one another and knowing that one statement may be underline more than once, containing multiple meanings (Gilligan et al., 2003). The listener is also focusing on whether one voice moves in unity with a particular I-poem or whether it moves separately from the other Is (Brown & Gilligan, 1991; Doucet & Mauthner, 2008; Gilligan et al., 2003).

Unlike typical usage of the Listening Guide, where this step is completed solely by the researcher, transcribed stories from Narrative Inquiry would have the researcher, or the researcher with the participant, beginning with an idea about a voice, creating a preliminary definition of it, listening for it, and then assessing whether the definition makes sense and whether meaning was accurately captured, with the researcher presenting his/her findings to the participant for clarity and negotiation (Gilligan et al., 2003). By not relying on a preset number of stories to be collected, Narrative Inquiry

helps illuminate contrapuntual voices which lead to story threads that emerge over the course of several stories (Rogers, 2007): “[T]he contrapuntual voices may evolve out of the analyses of many different [stories] through a process of going back and revisiting this step, this time reading for voices that have been redefined or newly defined through the analysis of other [stories]” (Gilligan et al., 2003, p. 168). It is important to remember that a narrative inquirer who is also a participant in the research needs to also attend to his/her own multiplicity of voices during the analysis of conversations, as he/she and the participants “live and tell many stories. [They] are all characters with multiple plotlines who speak from within these multiple plotlines...[and they] need to consider the voices heard and the voices not heard” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 147; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Pushor & Clandinin, 2009).

The final listening attends to the specific cultural, political, social, and economic structures framing the participant’s story and his/her sense of self (Chase, 2005; Edwards & Weller, 2012; Doucet & Mauthner, 2008). After having listened to and marked up the same transcript a minimum of four times (plot, the I-poem, contrapuntual voices, and power structures and ideologies), the researcher then synthesizes, through notes and summaries from each step, what he/she has learned about the participant in relation to the research question and decides on what evidence he/she [or what the researcher with the participant] is basing his/her interpretations on (Chase, 2005; Gilligan et al., 2003). The use of the Listening Guide, in which the narrative inquirer is able to maintain the integrity of a participant’s story and of the three dimensional space through attention given to context, multiple (and possible conflicting) voices, and the relationship between the narrator and the researcher, demonstrates that the movement from an interim research

text to a final research text is filled with complexity in which “[t]here is no smooth transition, no one gathering of the field texts, sorting them through, and analyzing them” (Chase, 2005; Clandinin, 2013; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 132; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990).

### **Presenting the Final Narrative**

Similar to the uncertainty felt by the researcher when transitioning from field texts to interim texts and then analyzing and interpreting them, composing final research texts, as well as the form the final research text should take is filled with apprehension, as the researcher, still in the midst of the research experience and relationship with the participant, “does not want the final research document to be hurtful to the participant” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 135; Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2012). The final research text in this study, composed from the various field texts and conversations analyzed using the Listening Guide, reflects the inquirer going beyond the research motto of “do no harm” and subsequent member-checking found in many other forms of research, by having the researcher not just ask the participants whether what was said was accurate or not, but rather whether or not the essence of who the participant is was truly captured (Clandinin, 2013; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin & Huber, 2010; Clandinin et al., 2007; Josselson, 2007): “[I]t is something much more global and human: [It asks the participant,] Is this you? Do you see yourself here? Is this the character you want to be when this is read by others?” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 148). In addition to paying attention to the personal and social aspects of the participants’ and researcher’s lives, the inquirer also needs to narratively craft the final research text so that it reflects the places that shaped the inquiry, as well as the “temporal unfolding of people, places, and things

within the inquiry” (Clandinin et al., 2007; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 485), with the form of final research text depending on the differing proportions of these three dimensional spaces (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007).

Negotiation and co-construction with the participants help not only balance the researcher’s signature writing style, the imagined audience, and the participants’ multiple voices in the final narrative, even though the participants must have “the most influential voice in the move to the final research text” (Chase, 2005; Clandinin, 2013, p. 205; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Josselson, 2007). Though “the first audience is almost always [the] participants” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 149), the form of final narrative representation also needs to “fit the lives of the participants and the narrative inquirers who are being represented” (p. 207). Furthermore, the final research text (whether it a course paper, article, book, or dissertation like this study), loosely shaped through backwards planning in which the inquirer imagines the form of the final research text, does not represent ultimate finality or Truth, since the story being told, much like life itself is not “neat, tidy, or formulaic” (Caine et al., 2013, p. 583; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Josselson, 2007). Furthermore, although other forms of research allow for experimentation with form, Narrative Inquiry cannot be applied at the end of an inquiry, “as if [the researcher] can convert any kind of study into a Narrative Inquiry” due the question of form-however loose it is-that is addressed at the beginning of an inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 165; Clandinin et al., 2007).<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> In addition, Narrative Inquiry typically follows a different composition pattern than a dissertation that requires the student to move linearly, writing chapter after chapter, getting them approved, and then defending them: the narrative inquirer composes one chapter, shares it with the response/feedback group, revises until the text reaches the depth necessary to capture the essence of the story, follows the same process for the next chapter, and then reads the two chapters together to determine the sense the narrative whole and aesthetic completeness before moving on (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin & Huber, 2010; Hollingsworth & Dybdahl, 2007).

Final research texts may incorporate metaphors, collages, poems, or photographs to demonstrate the complexity and multidimensional aspect of experience, as well the narrative inquirer's ontological and epistemological positions (Caine et al., 2013; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin & Huber, 2010); it is through the resistance of telling the "good story", one with a defined beginning and an end with a resolution, that the reader is able to re-imagine him/herself, as well as the reliving and retelling of experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin & Raymond, 2006; as cited in Caine et al., 2013; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; McNiff, 2007; Pushor & Clandinin, 2009). Given that Narrative Inquiry is a new method and there is no defined judgment criteria for Narrative Inquiry, inquirers must be aware that, depending on the purpose, form, and time of publication of the final research text, they must not exclude one group (self, participants, or audience) in favor of another (Chase, 2005; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin & Huber, 2010; Clandinin et al., 2007; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, 2006; Elbaz-Luwisch, 2007; Morgan-Fleming, Riegle, & Fryer, 2007):

Inquirers who forget their participants and their readers and write only or themselves, become narcissistic; inquirers who write for imagine audiences and neglect their participants could be unethical; and inquirers who write only for self and/or participants may be unable to answer the questions "Who cares?" and "So what?". (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 485)

### **Open to Interpretation**

*"[D]ata do not talk: people do"* (Carter, 2003, p. 36; as cited in Chapman, 2005, p. 46).

It should be noted that the analysis of data and reporting of findings using CRM, the Listening Guide, and Narrative Inquiry vary tremendously from traditional research.

Whereas conventional research is focused on ensuring data is valid and reliable to “prove” the rigor and generalizability of the study, CRM and Narrative Inquiry (including the use of story-sharing) concentrate on data saturation through recurring story threads seen in different types of data sources. Moreover, the rigor of a Narrative Inquiry study framed by CRM is demonstrated through truthfulness and consistency, which are dependent on the relationships built between researcher, participants, and community to “prove” authenticity, trustworthiness, and credibility of the study (Berryman et al., 2013; Chase, 2005; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Dixson et al., 2005; Geertz, 1973; as cited in Anderson, 2011; McNiff, 2007; Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007).

In addition, trustworthiness goes “beyond establishing accuracy through member checks” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; as cited in Moss, 2004, p. 364) by having the researcher engage in “acts of integrity...to ensure they seek truth by contextualizing their studies...include all points of view as contrasted to the common points of view that emerge, [and protect] participants’ well-being while putting their voices in the forefront as a model of authentic participation” (Moss, 2004, p. 371): “Trustworthiness must move beyond the context in which the study is conducted and include the situating of the resultant knowledge or voices of critique in the academy for a participatory democracy to become more intersubjective between the researcher, researched, and literature” (Moss, 2004, p. 369). Narrative Inquiry “involves a ‘science/art conjunction’” (Blumenfeld-Jones, 1995, p. 26; as cited in Moss, 2004, p. 364), where trustworthiness is the “act of faithfulness and integrity on the part of the researcher to preserve ‘the worth and dignity of the [story]teller’” (Blumenfeld-Jones, 1995, p. 27; as cited in Moss, 2004, p. 364).



Furthermore, researchers employing ABR methods, such as Narrative Inquiry, understand “validity” as “[lying] in the reader being convinced that the phenomenon being described is being called by its correct name” (Clandinin et al., 2007; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; McNiff, 2007; Peräkylä, 1997, p. 207; as cited in Haynes, 2003, p. 57). Similar to culturally responsive methodologies, Narrative Inquiry “is an immensely challenging task...[and] is not about developing a neat linear progression, but an open-ended, messy, and unpredictable process determined by the crucial principle of respectful, equal dialogue” (Biermann, 2011, p. 396; Chapman, 2007; Clandinin, 2013; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Due to the nature of Narrative Inquiry, the “findings” in the stories cannot be generalized, since the participant, along with the narrative researcher, is “hoping the audience will see themselves reflected in [story]... [and that] the reader will discover resonant universal [threads]” (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2005, p. 13; Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007): “The storyteller [and the narrative inquirer] takes what he tells from experience-his own or that reported by others, and he in turn makes it the experience of those who are listening to [or reading] his tale” (Benjamin, 1968, p. 87; as cited in Schram, 2003, p. 15).

For Culturally Responsive Methodologies and Arts Based Research methods like Narrative Inquiry, “[validity] also lies in the researcher’s ability to enable the reader to view reality ‘through the participants’ perspective [and to] represent reality not reproduce it” (Hammersley, 1992, p. 71; as cited in Haynes, 2003, p. 57): “Even if it is impossible to subject the [reader] to the actual experience, to the real pain of [an] insult, the [reader] can, through the story [being told], *feel the experience*” (Schram, 1995, p. xvi-xvii; as cited in Schram, 2003, p. 21, italics in original). Furthermore, in Narrative Inquiry

“[w]hat gets left out is often as important as what gets included-the blank spaces, the silences...shape the form of the story” (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2005, p. 10):

[A] reader will see the insight into the participant and the phenomenon under study, make his or her own judgment regarding the validity against the data provided, and understand what larger message it has regarding the phenomenon under study....Like a holograph that shows new things when looked at from different angles, a carefully constructed [story] reveals many things besides those pertaining to the phenomenon under study. (Witz, 2006, p. 258-259)

### **Ethical Considerations**

How participants are represented in the final research texts further demonstrates the permeation of ethics in Narrative Inquiry and CRM, with relational responsibilities understood as long term and negotiated at every phase of the inquiry, rather than only at the beginning when required forms must be approved by the university/institution and its research review board (Caine et al., 2013; Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin & Huber, 2010; Clandinin et al., 2007; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006; Josselson, 2007; Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2012). The university/institution mandate that studies obtain approval before commencement of negotiating the inquiry with participants actually contradicts the emergent and relational aspects of Narrative Inquiry and CRM and puts the researcher in a challenging position, since a fully explicated study-prior to the start of the study-severely limits the collaboration, creativity, and flexibility that formulates Narrative Inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Josselson, 2007; Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2012):

The participant's role in the research may change during the study to include being a data collector, a data interpreter, and even a co-writer of the research reports. Such roles may not have been anticipated at the time the researcher initially approached the participant to participate in the study. (Schroeder & Webb, 1997, p. 239-240; as cited in Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 170-171)

In addition to the ethical concern of the participant's role in the research, anonymity and confidentiality present further challenges for the narrative inquirer in the field, as being active in the participant's environment means coming in contact with many outside the study population (and possibly having others vocalize the researcher's position and intent) (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin & Huber, 2010; Josselson, 2007). Due to the relational aspect of Narrative Inquiry and CRM, as well as their contributions to the research, participants may change their stance on anonymity; from first using pseudonyms of their choice to deciding that they want to be fully recognized by their full names for what they helped coauthor and vice versa (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). It is important for the researcher and the participants to recognize the possible risks associated with breaking from anonymity; making visible the complexity of one's life can open the participants up to unexpected backlash from co-workers, family, friends, and community members if anonymity is broken.

Although consent forms require the researcher to state potential harm from interviews or conversations, it must be noted that the relational aspect of Narrative Inquiry-where narrative inquirers research *with* participants, rather than *on* them, along with the trustworthiness, rapport, and comfort promoted by CRM-conflicts with consent form statements regarding possible participant discomfort while talking about

experiences, as participants are able to control what they share in conversations (Josselson, 2007; Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2012). In addition, experiencing and expressing painful or anxious feelings is sign of comfort between researcher and participant(s), in that the participant feels able to relax, which may actually lead to growth for the study, the participant, and the researcher (Josselson, 2007; Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2012).

If risks must be named in this study, there are minimal risks, including possible discomfort from revealing personal life stories or through self-reflection. In addition, there may be possible discomfort from discussing multiple identity formation and White privilege/guilt, and from discussing the status of Jews in education and at one's work site. This minimal risk is worth the benefit and any potential embarrassment of others discovering data will be minimized by maintaining confidentiality through data being stored in a password linked file in a locked facility. There are no physical risks (other than sitting for about an hour or so for each conversation session, though the session can last longer depending on what is being discussed and with whom).

Though the results will not be shared with others, possible future research topics may develop from this study. This may allow the researcher to explore ideas related to the development of teacher education and Jewish female teacher identity. This study will not only allow the participants to explore their understanding of their own identities, but allow for future teacher education programs and pre-service teachers to become more aware of their cultural and racial positioning when working with students of color and in public schools. This study may allow help create professional development seminars or ongoing discussions in teacher education programs on how to help develop awareness of the cultural mismatch and help challenge the status quo of limited race and identity talks.

All notes will be kept confidential and stored in a locked filing cabinet at an undisclosed location with two separate entrances; the location is double locked and requires two separate keys to enter, with another key for entry to the building. All electronic documents will be encrypted and in a password-protected folder on a secure, password-protected computer. I will also keep a separate codebook for all places and names that participants do not want revealed, such as family members, friends, co-workers, school locations, etc.; this codebook will be organized so that only I will be able to reconstruct the original data should the participant(s) choose to remain anonymous. Although I will be the one with the most access to the field notes, interim research texts, and final research text, the issue of “ownership” is a concern, as it will be my name on the dissertation. In order to mediate this, participants will be given copies of texts throughout the entire Narrative Inquiry and Listening Guide process, so that the integrity of the relational responsibilities is maintained.

### **Conclusion**

Since CRM-framed Arts Based Research methods, such as Narrative Inquiry and story-sharing, are “one[s] in which the researcher and the research community are agentially and interdependently engaged in mutually defining, problem solving, and co-creating future solutions” (Berryman et al., 2013, p. 4), they may “allow a more abstract [understanding] of...identity across populations...[because] [w]hen individuals are free to pick and choose their [identities], their practices may not reflect any consistency or pattern” (Hartman & Kaufman, 2006, p. 372). These creative research design and analysis methods are seen as “the people’s scholarship” (Featherstone, 1985, p. 375; as cited in Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2005, p. 12; Hartman & Kaufman, 2006) because they help

not only the researcher, the participants, the Jewish and non-Jewish community at large, and teachers at all stages in education understand the Jewish American female teaching identity since identities are rarely linear, neat, or predictable. Those seeking social justice for marginalized groups know that research is often laborious, tense and never fully completed, but it is worthwhile because “[t]here is never a single story; many can be told” (English, 2000; Hackmann, 2002; as cited in Chapman, 2007; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2005, p. 10; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997; Hill, 2005; Smith, 2012).

Arts Based Research methods such as Narrative Inquiry and story-sharing will be able to present an alternative history of Jewish female teacher identity in the United States that “goes against the grain”; it would allow people “to discover the hidden voices of Jewish traditions, beliefs, and practices in education...to hear the Jewish voice in traditional pedagogical discourse and to reveal the suppression and translation of that voice...[and] would...perhaps...expose to American education an alternative pedagogy that might be truly transformational” (Block, 1999, p. 169).

## **Chapter 5**

### **Findings**

The purpose of this study is to understand the textured experience of Jewish identity in public schooling, one that goes beyond the daily pedagogical approach. Though I had originally set out to look at how Ashkenazi females understand their identity as educators and how this impacts their pedagogy, what I found was that their stories told of a more complex interaction between Jewish identity and their roles as educators in the public school system. Thus, the clarity of research questions emerged after the data was analyzed: 1) what is the role of Jewish identity in public school teaching for Ashkenazi females and what impact does being Jewish have on their pedagogy?, 2) what public education structures impact their expression of Jewish identity and how do they navigate through/around these structures?, 3) what can be learned about the spectrum of Jewish identity from five Ashkenazi females educators in the United States?

In honoring the Culturally Responsive Methodological approach and the Narrative Inquiry process, I went into this study with some or part of these questions to guide the conversations that took place between May 2015 and November 2015. I met and conversed with four middle class female Jewish teachers in the Los Angeles and Orange County areas. Two of the participants are currently teaching and the other two are retired: one as of June 2015, the other left teaching five years ago due to what she defined as a stressful work environment. In my email explaining more about the study, as well as at our initial meeting, participants were informed pseudonyms would be best to use for their names, teaching sites, city of residence, and other identifying information and were

encouraged to pick their own pseudonym; two of the women chose to use their given first names, while the other two chose a new first name. Consequently, the participants in this study are Marilyn, Olivia, Pamela, and Rose.

As previously noted in Chapter 4, meeting locations were agreed upon by participant and researcher and all but one of the initial meetings took place at the participants' homes to help them feel comfortable with the research process. Subsequent meetings that did not take place in their homes were completed through virtual mediums (Skype or Facetime) or at a restaurant of the participant's choosing. Virtual meetings occurred on weekends or during the weekday evenings, since the researcher and participants were teaching during the week. Each meeting lasted approximately from one to five hours and were recorded using a digital recorder. I met with each participant three times, and with Rose and Marilyn a fourth time as each expressed needing more time to share their stories. Though quite a bit of our meetings involved talking informally outside of what I recorded, I taped almost 10 hours of conversation with Marilyn and almost five and half hours of conversation with Rose. In addition, Rose would call me to follow up on conversation topics in our meetings, or would leave voicemail messages with questions or memories she wanted to share; there were 10 of these informal phone "meetings". Due to their having family and work obligations, it was difficult to have extended conversations with Olivia and Pamela; both participants had significantly less hours of taped conversation: almost four hours total of recorded audio for each.

### **Data Collection**

As mentioned in Chapter 4, there are three types of texts written in the Narrative Inquiry process: field texts, interim texts, and the final research text. The field texts were



created through field notes, my researcher journal, photographs, questions and summaries from phone calls with participants, etc. Though there is no singular way to compose an interim text, I started with the summary written after Step 1 of the Listening Guide and constructed the narrative from there. As I encountered new story threads that emerged in the subsequent analysis of the conversations, I added those to the interim text and made ongoing adjustments so that the final narrative captured the essence of the participant's Jewish identity from childhood to present. In addition to the temporal nature of Narrative Inquiry, the final research text presents a multi-faceted approach to understanding the social, personal, and location aspects that shape the participants' reliving and retelling of particular experiences.

### **Field texts**

These pieces of de-identified data included notes during phone calls with Rose (or questions and memories she shared in voicemails); immediate reactions noted in my researcher's journal made after our meetings; the participant's critical incident timeline (as described in Chapter 4), if they had emailed it to me prior to our third conversation (along with the chronicles and annals I constructed and added to after each completing the steps for Listening Guide and Narrative Inquiry); emails from participants with updates about their lives and links to websites, books, and articles to read for this study; and the transcriptions of the conversations. It is important to note that before I began the data collection process, I created a Critical Incident Timeline for myself to better understand what events shaped my perception of being Jewish (even if it did not impact me becoming a teacher)-much of which forms the basis of Chapter 1. This gave me time to think about how I see my own Jewish identity, so that I was better able to engage with

the participants in an authentic and trustworthy relationship. Some of the critical incidents I noted for myself prior to data collection came up in conversations with participants; other critical incidents that I had not thought about in a long time emerged organically in our conversation. In addition, during data analysis, I noted my own critical incidents that were similar or different to their critical incidents (i.e. going to religious school and how we felt about being there), which formed a foundation for subsequent conversations.

For each participant, I fully transcribed the first two conversations using DragonSpeak voice recognition software. This allowed me to not only hear the participants' voices before I began the Listening Guide analysis process, but also let me dive back into their stories after our meetings, which helped fill in some of the details of our conversations that I may have missed in my researcher's journal. The formal meetings led to 14 transcriptions, with each transcript ranging from 19 pages to over 80 pages depending on the length of the conversation.

For the eight transcriptions I completed, each one took anywhere from two to seven hours to finish depending on the length of the conversation. Personally transcribing a 60 minute conversation took around three hours to complete; I spent around 35 hours transcribing the eight conversations. Words were captured verbatim and some concepts needed to be translated online since Hebrew and Yiddish were used by one participant. I also asked my family members familiar with these languages to help me translate, as online sources did not spell or say the phrases exactly as the participant said them. After downloading the digital recording to my password protected computer, I used headphones to make sure I was the only one listening to the conversation and to make

sure I was listening closely for tone and the different voices that emerged without distractions.

As the school year went on and I approached my pregnancy due date, I realized I needed help in transcribing the conversations, especially since some of these lasted four to five hours I sent the remaining six audio files from these meetings to an online transcription service; in order to ensure privacy, I did not include the participants' names in the file name and had the company simply list the speakers in the conversation as speaker #1 and speaker #2. After I received the transcript in my email, I downloaded them to a password protected folder on my computer and then changed the speakers' names to the participant and my names.

Before any analysis was initiated on the transcriptions that the online company completed, I listened to the audio file and followed along on the document, making corrections as needed. In order for me to stay true to CRM and the member-checking process, copies of the field texts (the transcripts) were emailed to the participants for review. Some chose to remove sections of the conversation due to the sensitivity of information, revise names and locations if spelling was not correct, and update years associated with events; Rose expressed her desire to not to look through the transcript, as it made her relive uncomfortable memories she had already expressed in our meetings. As mentioned in Chapter 4, participants who did not review their transcripts were not removed from the study, as I left the choice with them regarding how involved with the research process they wanted to be.

## **Interim Texts**

After completing the Listening Guide and Narrative Inquiry analysis for each conversation, I drafted an interim text for each participant. These interim texts were the collective summary of each participant's individual stories—a portrait of each participant that captures the essence of who they are in terms of this research topic. I took the three to four transcripts per participant and put together a draft of the final narrative that will be featured toward the end of this chapter. Each interim text was sent to the participant electronically for review as part of the member-checking process; participants were encouraged to make adjustments (i.e. strike stories from the record, clarify sections of stories, fill in gaps of a memory, etc.). If we were able to meet physically, the participant and I sat together to discuss who they were portrayed as in the interim text; virtual meetings were conducted with those who had more limited availability. In addition, participants could choose not to review the interim text and, in doing so, knew that what was being presented was solely based on what I collected from our meetings and the analysis process. Below is a section of the interim text I sent to Marilyn for review<sup>14</sup>:

### **“Finding your Jerusalem”**

Though she was a lackadaisical student who did quite well in school, she was a devoted reader who felt “the classwork was so low-level that [she] would just sit in the [class]room and read novels...a habit [that] came from [her mother who read voluminously all of her life” (Marilyn, personal communication, August 24, 2015): “My mother knew as much about the Holocaust as many college professors because she just read voluminously” (Marilyn, personal communication, August 24, 2015). Like her

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<sup>14</sup>In order not to impact the overall flow of this chapter, all examples in this chapter will be from Marilyn's first transcript.

mother who had left high school early in order to work, as there was no money for her to attend college, Marilyn left in the middle of her senior year of high school to attend Chandler College. It was during her time at Scripps College, a four year college which Marilyn says she “was totally unqualified” for, but that she “felt really good about that interview because [she’s] always had the gift of gab” (Marilyn, personal communication, August 24, 2015), that she began ask herself “If it was so horrible, why would anybody stay cool with [being Jewish] for the last thousand years?” (Marilyn, personal communication, October 31, 2015).

Though Marilyn had grown up with the understanding that “you should...be Jewish because we owed it to the six million to be Jews, [that] [a]ll of Jewish history is a veil of tears and we have survived and we owe it to the past to be Jews because of all that suffering” (Marilyn, personal communication, October 31, 2015), it was the realization in her first year of college of study abroad opportunities that Marilyn was able to define her own Jewish identity, one which still makes her feel “blessed to live in such a time...where there is a state of Israel and a...reunified Jerusalem, when so many Jews who were so much more worthy of that were not blessed to see...the Jewish people have a Jewish homeland” (Marilyn, personal communication, June 30, 2015):

When I was 18

I realized I could go abroad for a semester,

there was only one place that I would ever think of going.

I remember at 19

I was there for five to six months

I left I guess at Yom Kippur.

I remember

I just made up my mind

I'm going to go to Jerusalem.

I have no tour book, no guide book, no nothing.

I didn't have plans where I would stay.

I don't even know it,

there's barely a division

between the men's and the women's section.

I remember standing next to the Wall and thinking,

"I've done something none of my grandfathers

or great grandparents could ever have imagined doing.

I've been to the Wall.”

I've been to Israel seven times now

and to Jerusalem many, many times,

the last time this past December I was again there

but nothing ever can, in my memory,

be the equivalent of the moment of standing there and thinking,

“They could not do this

and I am.

I am doing this”.

Although Marilyn feels that “קשה להיות יהודי” (it’s hard to be a Jew)” (Marilyn, personal communication, June 30, 2015), “Jerusalem is wherever there are Jews who are striving to live a Jewish life...there is a physical Jerusalem, but there is also this metaphorical

Jerusalem and for the survival of the Jewish people, it may be the metaphorical Jerusalem is more important” (Marilyn, personal communication, June 30, 2015).

### **Data Analysis**

As stated earlier, Listening Guide and Narrative Inquiry were used to analyze the transcripts in order to honor the whole story, rather than dissecting the conversations into codes. There are seven total steps of the Listening Guide and Narrative Inquiry analysis process (four steps for Listening Guide, three steps for Narrative Inquiry) that require the researcher to actively engage with the conversation and attend to his/her own positionality while listening and these seven steps were used on each of the 14 conversation transcripts. Using these steps, it took approximately five and a half hours to fully analyze a 60 minute conversation; all examples in this chapter will be from the first conversation with Marilyn (a 60 minute conversation) to show the steps in order and how they lead to the final narrative presented in this chapter. In total, it took over 120 hours to analyze all the interviews.

### **Listening Guide**

As outlined in Chapter 4, the Listening Guide method of analysis was used to analyze all of the conversations. The analytical method is built around a minimum of four listenings, with each listening focusing on a different feature of the participant’s story. In the first step, the researcher listens for the plot and aspects similar to literary analysis and constructs a summary after the step is completed; in the second step, the researcher is attending to the different “I’s” that emerge, which results in the creation of an Ipoem; step three has the researcher listen and note in a chart the intimate and social relationships

the participant has, as well as contrapunctual voices; and in the fourth step, the researcher listens for the power structures that shape the participant's story and creates a chart with the corresponding stories inserted that apply to the structures (Gilligan et al., 2003). Each step is completed on the same transcript (if there is room), with notes, questions, reactions, and personal connections being made during each listening using four separate colors to distinguish each step. At the end of the first listening, I completed a brief summary of what I learned and what pieces of the conversation stood out the most (this was completed on the last or back page of the transcript).

Although participants were encouraged to participate in all aspects of the data analysis process, they all expressed their desire to have me complete each step. Even though I would be the one completing a literary analysis of the transcript, writing a summary of the person's experience, constructing the Ipoem, and naming the different voices that emerged, it was important to me that I honored the member-checking process after each step was completed so that participants were able to alter or remove sections that did not capture their authentic selves.

### **Explanation of each step.**

**Step 1:** I carefully listened and, in the left margin of the transcript, noted recurring words and phrases, key themes (and how many times for each), shifts in narration style, major events that shape overall story, a chronology of events, narrator and other "characters", inconsistencies, revisions, and contradictions. In addition, I made note of any connections or references (intentional or accidental) to Chapters 2 and 3 (history and theoretical framework, respectively) of this dissertation, questions for further conversations, and, in the right margin, my own personal reactions and experiences that were related to their



stories. Below is an example of Step 1 completed from the first conversation with Marilyn:

<p><b>Marilyn-Conversation #1</b>  <b>Date: June 30, 2015</b>  <b>Length of Conversation: 1:01:24</b></p>	
<p><b>Recurring Words/Phrases</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Religious school as unstructured: there was “no control” in the “chaotic” “madhouse” and “there was no...academic draw to Judaism”</li> <li>2. References her age three times: “I’m 63....See I’m 63....I’m 63”</li> <li>3. Dislike for fourth grade teacher after anti-Semitic incident: “Mrs. Scott was the first teacher I actively disliked....I always loved my teachers and I...did not like...Mrs. Scott”</li> <li>4. Aware of Mr. Kennison, her 10<sup>th</sup> grade English teacher, not expressing regret over his anti-Semitic remarks: “he never apologized....he wasn’t a big enough man to apologize for what he had done....but...I was cognizant of the fact,...I was cognizant of the fact that he did not apologize.”</li> <li>5. De facto segregation in the 1960s: “there were no minorities, people of color, because if someone of color would go to a real estate agent to buy home, the banks would blackball them. They couldn’t get a loan to buy...a house...And around 1960...’63 about six doors down from us live the Hillstrom family...they put their house on the market. And they...I don’t know intentionally or unintentionally found a black buyer...they were ultimately blackballed; they couldn’t get a loan to buy the house.”</li> </ol>
<p><b>Key Themes</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Jewish life in suburban Southern California requires a love for Judaism:</b> “If you live here, as I have for most of my life...outside of the greater Los Angeles Jewish community, you have to make, an effort if you want to have a Jewish life and many people here...do. You have- if you don’t love Judaism and you come to a place like this, it will be very difficult for you to transmit your Jewish identity to anyone else. But if you love Judaism, and it’s really central to who you are, then you create a Jewish life wherever you are”</li> <li>2. <b>Assimilating has repercussions not only for the children of immigrants, but also for their children:</b> “They were all young and lively and living in the Yenevelt<sup>15</sup>; they were amongst that</li> </ol>

<sup>15</sup> Yenevelt means “the middle of nowhere”, “a far away place”

	<p>people you know “Nit ahin; nit aher”<sup>16</sup> in Yiddish “neither here nor there”. It’s almost the same thing in...we were, as Jews, “Nit ahin; nit aher”, they had, their parents were all immigrants, this is the story of American Judaism in so many ways, who lived in the cities, who would say they were Orthodox because they bought kosher meat, who didn’t know how to make their...children into Jews. And now those children find themselves away from any context of Judaism, trying to create it. They’re...inventing suburban Jewish America.”</p> <p>3. <b>Jewish identity is tied into one’s relationship to Jerusalem:</b> “I believe that Jerusalem is wherever there are Jews who are striving to live a Jewish life. That there is this physical Jerusalem, but there is also this metaphorical Jerusalem and for the survival of the Jewish people it may be that the metaphorical Jerusalem is more important... But the fact of the matter is, is wherever we are, wherever we strive to build a Jewish community, that’s Jerusalem and that has sustained us for 2000 years and it will...continue to sustain us...if you live in the Diaspora, in the dispersion, you have to, you too are essential the...continuation of the Jewish people...That even in a time without terrible calamities, you have to work to create your Jerusalem, you know.”</p> <p>4. <b>It is important to remain conscious of being a Jew in modern times:</b> “I often think an astonishing thing that I am blessed to live in such time. I often wonder why should I be blessed to live in a time where there is a state of Israel and a...reunified Jerusalem, when so many Jews who were so much more worthy of that were not blessed to see...the Jewish people have a Jewish homeland”</p> <p>5. <b>Be your own advocate (do not rely on others to fight your battles):</b> “I remember our parents, my father and [Gary’s dad], talking about what it happened in the fourth grade classroom but never doing anything about it”</p> <p>“I went home and told my mother...I was 15, so that was 1967, and...nobody did anything. I had a take it up with the teacher myself. And the next day, with two of my...non-Jewish girlfriends sort of trailing me, they said they wanted to hear what [Laughs] I told him, ‘What...I, what you said was very anti-Semitic.’”</p>
<p><b>Shifts in Narration Style</b></p>	<p><b>Uses the collective (“we”) perspective when describing Jews throughout history:</b> “Even as a teenager, when I started to read, one of the first things I read as a...teenager...Jews,...Max Dimont’s great <u>Jews, God, and History</u>, the Jews got in history. Even then,</p>

<sup>16</sup> There are variations on the spelling/pronunciation of this Yiddish phrase, possibly attributed to original regional dialects

	that seemed to me to be an uncritical assessment of how we Jews have always lived”
<b>Major Events</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>First exposure to anti-Semitism in public school:</b> “there was a class play about America that was being done for the PTA or something. And that the only children, our parents figured it out, that the three children who didn’t have a role in the play were the three Jewish children.”</li> <li>2. <b>Her mother confronted a neighbor over derogatory language:</b> “I heard neighbors across the street, Mrs. Landolfo refer to black people as Jigaboos....she was talking to my mother...And I remember my mother yelling at...her that, she could not use that language, that language was despicable and ignorant...‘IF RALPH BUNCHE WAS STANDING HERE, IS THAT THE LANGUAGE YOU WOULD USE?’”</li> <li>3. <b>Experiences overt anti-Semitism by her public school teacher:</b> “And one day in class he was criticizing a piece of...a watch or something. He was talking about he had gone antiq-uh, and he had said, ‘It was just so ugly, you know, Jewish Renaissance.’ And the whole class laughed...and I was just stunned.”</li> <li>4. <b>Confronted the assistant principal at her work site over the change in date for graduation:</b> “I confronted in a...room full of the whole faculty, of vice principal about the moving of graduation from Thursday to Friday...I didn’t call her and anti-Semite, but I said, ‘I...am so tired of this’...had they always done on a Friday night, I...think I would’ve never challenged it; it was moving that offended me and their lack of...lack of consideration.”</li> </ol>
<b>Chronology of Events</b>	<p>Birth-2 (1952-1954): lived on UCLA campus</p> <p>Age 2-4 (1954-1956): Lived in Santa Monica</p> <p>Age 4 (1956): moved to West Covina</p> <p>Age 5 (1957): began attending religious school at Citrus Valley Jewish Temple Center</p> <p>Age 8 (1960): 3<sup>rd</sup> grade; JFK running for president</p> <p>Age 9 (1961): 4<sup>th</sup> grade; 1<sup>st</sup> exposure to anti-Semitism in Mrs. Scott’s class</p> <p>Age 11 (1963): Mother confronts Mrs. Landolfo about using derogatory language in reference to African Americans; 1<sup>st</sup> Black family wanted to move in her neighborhood</p> <p>Age 11-12 (1964): moved to Upland</p> <p>Age 12 (1964): sister was called a “dirty Jew”</p> <p>Age 15 (1967): Mr. Kennison’s overt anti-Semitic statement and her confrontation of what he said</p> <p>Age 15-16 (1968): Boy at school confronts her about Jews being</p>

	<p>responsible for Bobby Kennedy’s assassination  Age 19 (1973): worked/studied on Kibbutz Kafar Hanassi  Age 22 (1974): Father died @ 54 years old  Age 26 (1978): moved to Claremont with mother  Age 35 (1987): began teaching at Upland High School  Age 61 (2013): confronted Vice Principal about graduation being moved from a Thurs night to a Friday night  Age 63 (June 2015): Retired from Upland High School after 27 years</p>
<p><b>Narrator and other “characters”</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Marilyn (narrator): <i>recently retired from teaching history at the same high school for 27 years; taught in the same city that she grew up in</i></li> <li>2. Mom, <i>social justice advocate for all</i>: “My mother’s vision was that if you were a racist, you would’ve been a Nazi”</li> <li>3. Mrs. Landolfo, <i>racist neighbor</i>: “And...I heard neighbors across the street, Mrs. Landolfo, refer to black people as Jigaboos.”</li> <li>4. Gary, <i>Jewish friend since Kindergarten</i>: “He lived up the street...from the school and his parents, his father and my dad were friends...we have known each other 59...years now.”</li> <li>5. Mrs. Scott, <i>fourth grade teacher who excluded the three Jewish children from having roles in the class play</i></li> <li>6. Mr. Kennison, <i>10<sup>th</sup> grade teacher who uses anti-Semitic language in Marilyn’s class and does not apologize to her when she confronts him</i></li> <li>7. Assistant principal, <i>whom Marilyn confronted her during a faculty meeting regarding the change in graduation from Thursday to Friday</i></li> </ol>
<p><b>Inconsistencies, revisions, and contradictions</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Trying to remember when her neighborhood did not want an African American family moving in</b>: “And around 1960...we moved in ’64, so I think these things, I was 11 years old and that’s when you really start to have a crisper memory, and ’63 about six doors down from us live the Hillstrom family”</li> <li>2. <b>Learning how to temper her bias against non-Jews with the anti-Semitism she experienced growing up</b>: “[A]ctually I’ve got more tolerant of non-Jews I would say over the years; that it is actually a...two-way street in...many ways...We were aware that we were Jews and we were aware that...it was an anti-Semitic world around us</li> </ol>

	<p>3. <b>Trying to recall when her classmates contributed to the mood of discrimination during JFK’s presidential campaign:</b> “But I remember when I was in the sixth, or it must’ve been 1960 when I was in the third grade, and Kennedy was running for president. I remember kids talking at lunch and kid saying, ‘Well, we can’t have Catholic president.’”</p>
<p><b>Connections to Chapters 2 (history) and 3 (theoretical framework)</b></p>	<p>1. <b>Role of Civil Rights Movement and Six-Day War in defining an American Jewish identity:</b> “Well I think that...you know you have to say sort of before...1967, 1968, and after ’67-’68, the two crucial things that have so changed Jewish, American Jewish life in terms of our visions of ourselves, in terms of our levels of confidence within the culture, have been the Six-Day War and the presentation to the world and to the Jewish community of a new kind of Jewish people and the civil rights movement led by Dr. Martin Luther King...I think that every minority group in this country are huge beneficiaries of the civil rights movement with so profoundly changed our culture.... It’s the civil rights movement led by Dr. King which makes it possible for people, for everybody, to make waves. Nobody made waves about how disabled children are treated, children of color...religious minorities, nobody made waves about those things until that civil rights movement explodes in the late 1960s.”</p> <p>2. <b>On the Jews’ past (physically) assimilating in different nations:</b> “You notice that when Jews live anywhere, within three generations, we look like the surrounding...population...we’re much more like the Spaniards when they, the Conquistadores, they did not allow women to come to the Western Hemisphere with the Conquistadores and the Conquistadores were compensated with local land so they were, they intermarried with the indigenous population. And as a consequence, of that we have this huge now...essentially genetically new people, the people, much of the population of Mexico which are a mixture of European and indigenous genetics. When Jewish men went out, you know there are...Jewish populations, Jewish settlement on the shores of the Black Sea since the earlier years of the Roman empire. They didn’t travel out there with their families...Everywhere Jewish men have gone, they have intermarried with the indigenous population and within three generations, that’s who we look like.”</p> <p>3. <b>Noticing the social and institutional restrictions for Jews in the United States:</b> “I know that in the 1960s, it was still very difficult for Jews to get degrees in engineering. There were no Jews in the banking industry in the 19...’50s or ’60s, unless it was a Jewish owned, family, and there were very few of those. There</p>

	<p>were no Jews in...architecture...that...we moved here, the big country club, when I was a child Red Hill Country Club was restricted...that originally the two hospitals here in the '30s and '40s were restricted from the practice of Jewish...doctors”</p> <p>4. <b>Migrating out of Los Angeles as a result of the G.I. Bill:</b>  “But...West Covina in 1956, like so much of this area of Southern California...had been very rural and now tract housing was going up, you know? The suburbs had been created by the G.I. Bill. So now we were in a brand-new home in a brand-new subdivision but our back fence backed up, on the other side of the fence was a horse ranch...So in '56 it was suburban but there were big chunks of agricultural...land. Everything was new, every, most people are buying on FHA loans and...everybody was a G.I., everybody- although this was now 11 years after the end...of the war....It's all suburban homes and gosh it must've been of few hundred homes in that the whole area.”</p>
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To conclude the first step of analysis, I composed a summary that captured the essence of the story I heard. My summaries included excerpts from their conversations so that I was able to portray their authentic selves. Due to the relational nature of Narrative Inquiry, as well as CRM, I shared the summaries with the participants, so that we were able to dialogue about what I noticed and they were able to alter any piece of the summary as needed. Only one participant, Rose, did not want to read the summaries, as she expressed discomfort with having to see traumatic experiences on paper (for her, printed text made severe memories that much more concrete and inescapable). The remaining participants felt the summaries depicted their stories accurately, and expressed that it was interesting to see themselves through an outsider's lens.

Below is the summary from the first conversation with Marilyn:

<p>Marilyn's Jewish identity has not only been shaped by her religious orientation, but also by her experiences with and reactions to subtle and overt anti-Semitism when she was growing up and working in public schools in the greater Los Angeles area. Marilyn's</p>
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alignment with modern Reform Judaism is central to her life, and she sees the mitzvot involving ethics as dictated by God and the ritualistic ones as individually driven and practiced. Though she sees Judaism as occurring wherever there are Jews who want to create a Jewish community and live as Jews, she believes it is harder to transmit this lifestyle to one's family and children when living outside of urban areas with denser populations of Jews.

Growing up, Marilyn witnessed her parents work hard to navigate social boundaries in the suburbs in order to maintain a Jewish community; although they were overtly Jewish and Marilyn came to know every Jewish family in her G.I. Bill-created tract-housing development, her parents had to use different cultural cues like Yiddish to find and build a connection with their Jewish neighbors. Although he did not make much money as a community college professor, Marilyn's father's PhD in microbiology from UCLA, which, along with his lively personality, helped him have high status in their Jewish temple. Marilyn believes that much like the actions of her parents and neighbors, the ability to "create [one's] Jerusalem" (despite explicit tragedies in Jewish history, including the lesser known ones like the Cossack Revolt of 1648 by the Ruthenian Christians in Poland and the perceived ones like the high rate of intermarriage in the Jewish population) has allowed Jews to sustain an identity and continue to survive even when it has been "hard to be a Jew" in the middle of nowhere.

Even though her parents did not have any guides on how to be Jewish in suburban America, her father's participation in Jewish social and religious affairs, in addition to her mother's outspokenness against intolerance of any kind, served as a foundation for Marilyn's critical awareness of and activism against discrimination in public schools.

This fortitude in opposition to bigotry was tested when Marilyn experienced anti-Semitism for the first time when she was in fourth grade. She recalled that the only children not participating in the PTA-sponsored class play about America were the three Jewish kids: her family friend Gary, a student named Nancy whose family was not affiliated with any temple, and her; however, her parents, as well as Nancy and Gary's parents did not confront the teacher about their children's lack of involvement in the play. Not long after this, as rampant racism against African Americans spread throughout the country in the early 1960s, a neighbor used the label "Jigaboos" to refer to black people and Marilyn's mother took a public stance against discrimination, yelling at her and using newly appointed U.N. Representative Ralph Bunche to demonstrate to their community that anyone who used derogatory language in front of her family would be actively challenged.

Marilyn drew upon her mother's vocal commitment to social justice when her sophomore English teacher in high school, a dynamic man with whom she had once regarded greatly, compared an antique piece of jewelry to something that was "ugly...Jewish Renaissance". As a 15 year old who had seen her parents strive to live an openly Jewish life, Marilyn confronted her teacher the next day, telling him that his language was anti-Semitic. Though she did not receive an apology from him, she never let that dissuade her from standing firm in her belief that maintaining the status quo through silence is not an option when living as a Jew in suburban America.

**Step 2:** During this listening, I attended to the different subjectivities presented by the participant: the voice of the "I" narrator, as well as that of the "I" main actor in the story.



For each first person “I” that was spoken by the participant, I highlighted in green on the transcript the “I plus verb” statement and any necessary information in that statement that helped express the participant’s subjectivity. Then I constructed the “Ipoem” on a new Word document by copying and pasting all the statements I had highlighted from the original transcript in the exact order they were stated by the participant (one statement per line). Then I went through the entire list of statements and removed pieces that were either out of context without the rest of the story or did not ensure coherence. For Ipoems where different voices emerged, I separated certain statements to either side of the page to show the contrasting perspectives. In addition, select statements were bolded or italicized for emphasis. Below is the I-poem from the first conversation with Marilyn:

<p>I would say that for me Judaism is a central factor I am, what you would call, a modern Reform Jew.</p> <p>I believe     I have for most of my life I believe that Jerusalem is wherever there are Jews who are striving to live a Jewish life</p> <p>I often think I am blessed to live in such time. I often wonder,     why should I be blessed to live in a time where there is a state of Israel.</p> <p>I believe that “קשה להיות יהודי” (it’s hard to be a Jew)”</p> <p>I think that my first exposure to anti-Semitism occurred in the fourth grade. I had a teacher, Mrs. Scott, I actively disliked. I wonder what that was     I wonder what that was in...reaction to.</p> <p>I think now     why is it that I always loved my teachers     and I...did not like...Mrs. Scott.</p> <p>I was just stunned.</p>
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I went home and told my mother what had happened.  
I was 15, so that was 1967  
I had a take it up with the teacher myself.

I told him,  
    ‘What...what you said was very anti-Semitic.’  
I know that  
I never had any contact with him again after that class.

                                Actually I’ve gotten more tolerant of non-  
                                Jews  
                                I would say over the years.

I earned A’s in the class.  
I was cognizant of the fact  
    I was cognizant of the fact that he did not apologize.  
I’m sure he was surprised to be confronted.

I know that two years ago  
I confronted  
I didn’t call her an anti-Semite  
I said,  
    ‘I-I am so tired of this’  
    I don’t care.

I will say to my students,  
    ‘You hear...lots and lots of racist and anti-Semitic language  
    as you walk the halls of this high school’

I would say to some of my parents,  
    ‘You know you don’t really know what your child experiences  
    because your child is on the front lines.  
    You think your child is experiencing the world  
    as you experience it in the workplace.’

**I would say that we don’t really know.**

After completion of the I-poems, I sent them to the participants for review.

Everyone but Rose really liked seeing their stories in the form of the I-poem and did not change any aspects of the poems; Rose felt the I-poems were too confusing and did not

make sense to her. I-poems for each participant’s conversation can be found in the Appendix.

**Step 3:** This step, as well as the final one, is not as prescribed as the first two listenings; rather Step 3 and Step 4 are shaped by the research question (or topic, as my research questions emerged as I was analyzing the data). In the third listening, I noted the relationships the participant has with others, either socially or intimately. Social relationships included those with students, faculty, district personnel, neighbors, temple members, teachers they had growing up, classmates of theirs, and others who were not in their immediate circle of relationships but still impacted their stories. Intimate connections are those the participant has with her family members (including children), neighbors with whom she is particularly close, long-term friends, particular colleagues at work, and any others who the participant expressed an attachment to.

Social Network:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Her family was one of less than 10 Jewish families in her neighborhood of a few hundred homes growing up</li> <li>2. Her family enrolled her in Sunday school at Citrus Valley Jewish Temple Center starting in 1957</li> <li>3. Marilyn was always one of two to four Jewish children in public schools growing up</li> <li>4. Neighbors saw her family, along with other Jewish families, as an “oddity”: “I remember neighbor two doors down from my father, um, explaining that ‘Well, it was too bad the Jews killed Jesus’ and my dad, you know, calmly discussing things...with him...some of our neighbors were, they just didn’t quite know-...because they too had come out of urban areas that Italians lived in one area, Catholics lived in another area.”</li> <li>5. Her fourth grade teacher was her “first exposure to anti-Semitism”: “I had a teacher, Mrs. Scott, and I have this odd recollection that there was a class play about America that was being done for the PTA or something. And that the only children, our parents figured it out, that the three children who didn’t have a role in the play were the three</li> </ol>
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	<p>Jewish children. And Mrs. Scott was the first teacher I actively disliked...and I wonder what that was, today I wonder what that was in...reaction to.”</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. During her tenure as a teacher, she challenged students’ perceptions of progress in America: “When some of my students would sometimes say to me, ‘Oh America, nothings ever changed here. You know nothing will ever change’. You know they don’t say that after the next two weeks in class”</li> <li>7. A fellow teacher at a professional development event asked her if “Jews had it easier than they had had it in Europe because America’s obsession has been with race”</li> <li>8. In 1967, her sophomore English teacher, Mr. Kennison, used overt anti-Semitism in class; she confronted him the next day and he did not apologize</li> <li>9. A classmate yelled at her that ‘You Jews killed Kennedy. You Jews killed Kennedy’ the morning that Bobby Kennedy was assassinated.</li> <li>10. When graduation was moved to a Friday night at her school in 2013, she confronted the Vice Principal in front of the whole faculty.</li> <li>11. Students learned quickly in her classes that derogatory language would not be tolerated: “Students are very careful about things that the things that they used to say...and especially since I don’t know if it’s in my classroom, the first person to say something was gay got so verbally confronted that it never would, it happened once and then it would never happen in any of my classes again.”</li> <li>12. When she was the principal at a Jewish temple for 10 years, she challenged parents who held strong to old world beliefs, thinking that their children were experiencing what they had when they were living in urban areas.</li> </ol>
Intimate Connections:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Still friends with Gary, a classmate since Kindergarten, who was also one of the three children (along with Marilyn) excluded from the class play in fourth grade.</li> <li>2. Mr. Matheson, a beloved neighbor, was revealed to be a bigot.</li> <li>3. Marilyn’s mother verbally confronted Mrs. Landolfo, a neighbor who “refer[red] to black people as Jigaboos”: “I remember my mother yelling at.. her that, she could not use that language, that language was despicable and ignorant. And Ralph Bunche was...a prominent in the 60, it’s ’63, so it’s after the Kennedy assassination, and I believe</li> </ol>

	<p>Johnson, President Johnson had appointed Ralph Bunche who was a very fair skinned African-American...as our representative to the UN. And my mother yelling at her, ‘IF RALPH BUNCHE WAS STANDING HERE, IS THAT THE LANGUAGE YOU WOULD USE?’”</p> <p>4. Her sister also experienced anti-Semitism at a young age when “a neighbor boy had spit on her...and called her ‘a dirty Jew’.”</p>
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In addition, during this listening, I concentrated on the contrapunctal voices that emerged in the stories. Some of the voices were obvious and conflicting, whereas others were harder to capture, but also complimentary. I underlined in red the voices that were presented and noted how they connected not only to the participant and how she saw herself, but to the overall stories told in that conversation. Much like the I-poem, I copied and pasted on a new Word document the stories that portrayed a particular voice (or the overlap of two voices, though not necessarily conflicting voices); the document was then emailed to the participants for review. It is important to note that there were multiple voices that came appeared in each conversation, as participants were not speaking only through dueling voices. Below are the different voices that emerged from the first conversation with Marilyn:

<p><b>Voice of otherness</b></p>	<p>There wasn't overt anti-Semitism... what there was... from 1960...there was overt racism against African-Americans.... I'm sure that they must've made the connection between my mother's Judaism and her vision of these things and the issue it was arising was that the first black family would soon buy into neighborhood. And around 1960...we moved in '64, so I think these things, I was 11 years old and... '63 about six doors down from us live the Hillstrom family... And they put their house on the market. And they... I don't know intentionally or unintentionally found a black buyer... And so my-my parents knew all about this and... they [the Black family trying to move in] were, he worked for, he was a government employee. He had a good job and their daughter was a college student.... This is a very high...status family if</p>
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	<p>they were white. Nobody in the neighborhood had a child going to college. Only a few people in the neighborhood had been to college. It was... you would-should have been honored to have such a family in 1963 as your next door neighbors. And... they were ultimately blackballed; they couldn't get a loan to buy the house...when our house went on the market, there was panic...all over this neighborhood. So that I had a friend...who asked me if we had sold the house to a Caucasian when the house sold...And I didn't know what that word meant; I had never heard that word. And so I said, 'I don't think so.' [Laughs]...I don't know what the upshot of that was...what was happening was that America was beginning to change. African-Americans, families with middle-class incomes were beginning to eye the suburbs and things were changing.</p> <p>So of course it's sort of, it had had to have gotten out in the neighborhood very quickly that it Jewish family had...moved in because we were, we were always overtly Jewish...actually I've got more tolerant of non-Jews I would say over the years; that it is actually a... two-way street in... many ways. It never occurred to me how did they, the neighborhood, whole surrounding neighborhood had to have... had to have quickly learned that there was a Jewish family in the neighborhood...</p>
<p><b>Voice of challenging the master narrative about Jews</b></p>	<p>I don't think that that [intermarriage] is the huge calamity it is often...addressed in the American, general American press, and specifically in the Jewish press, as 'woe is, woe are we'...You notice that when Jews live anywhere, within three generations, we look like the surrounding...population. That, now, what one segment of the population, Jewish population will tell us, or as I was told as a child, was that there was endless wholesale rape of Jewish women and that that's what accounts for it and that's why Judaism is matrilineal because you always know who the mother is. Even as a teenager...[e]ven then, that seemed to me to be an uncritical assessment of how we Jews have always lived...[W]e're much more like the Spaniards when they, the Conquistadores, they did not allow women to come to the Western Hemisphere with the Conquistadores and the Conquistadores were compensated with local land so they were, they intermarried with the indigenous population. And as a consequence, of that we have this huge... essentially genetically new people, the people, much of the population of Mexico which are a mixture of European and indigenous genetics...and to say that we are not intermarried</p>

	<p>is obviously untrue, to say that this is the endless consequence of the rape of Jewish women is, in fact, ludicrous... Everywhere Jewish men have gone, they have intermarried with the indigenous population and within three generations, that's who we look like... That I would suggest that intermarriage is one of the factors which have allowed for the survival of such a tiny population, who wherever they have traveled, have generally to certain income producing activities and have often been isolated in where they could or would, uh, live. It's of unique historical experience that the Jewish people have and I-I believe that "יהודי להיות קשה" (it's hard to be a Jew)" and that often people who intermarry are very much drawn to Judaism... The Jewish, recent studies show that the Jewish community recovered within a decade was in a full scale recovery and also, we-we get tales of Jews being sold into slavery and areas of horrific mass murder, you don't get lots and lots of accounts of rape... You don't have stories of all these children appearing, who had to be absorbed into... into the community. You just, you have a mythology about it, and... assuredly whenever people are oppressed those sorts of acts take place, but to say that that is what accounts for who we, why we no longer look like people from the Middle East is absolutely absurd. And indeed more recently, demographic studies of Jewish men during the Middle Ages indicate that they intermarried at a much higher rate than had previously been thought.</p>
<p><b>Overlap of voice of otherness with voice of challenging the status quo</b></p>	<p>I know that two years ago, when I confronted in... in a room full of the whole faculty, of vice principal about the moving of graduation from Friday to Thursday... I didn't call her and anti-Semite, but I said, 'I-I am so tired of this'... that nobody, although I think this is typical of public schools, teachers in the public schools tend to be very passive, you know, so nobody caught up in support and said, 'That's right', you know... some teachers were appalled and applauded when they said it was going to be on Friday. The reason it was not out of any anti-Semitism, it was that they could not have the graduation where they'd always had it, on our football field, because a lot of our bleachers are no longer stable and can't be used. And when they went to the arena in Ontario it was only available on a Friday... night. I-I don't care... Have it on a Sunday morning; I'm sure it's available on Sunday morning. It never occurred to them... that this might be... unacceptable... and had they always done on a Thursday night, I-I think I would've never challenged it; it was moving that offended me and their lack of... lack of consideration. And-and that's... quite consistent.</p>

I was particularly interested in hearing what voices came forward for the participants; even though I did not predetermine what arose, as it was important to let voices materialize organically, many of the voices that surfaced were similar to what I had experienced or researched for this study. Many of the participants had voices that overlapped in a single conversation, adding to the texture of their experiences. At the beginning of the second conversation with each participant, I brought up the emergence of voices that were particular to their first conversation; this led many of them to expand on stories they had previously, but briefly, discussed or caused them to share new stories that helped the conversation move forward organically. Though the voices were unique to each participant and what was discussed, after listening to all of the conversations, I began to notice the recurrence of certain voices across the participants' stories, regardless of age.

**Step 4:** Similar to the previous step, this listening attends to the research question or topic that guides the study, as well as the cultural, social, political, and economic power structures that frame both the participant's stories and subjectivity. Serving as the content for this step, the participants' religion, teaching career, and ideology contextualize the portraits, and it became evident after completing this step for all the transcripts there was a new understanding needed about the hegemony of Christianity in public education that was larger than classroom pedagogy. Without listening for the social, political, economic, and cultural structures, it may not have been as easy to pick up on the pervasiveness of the dominant religion or determine the best way to bring this in, even to the point of changing my original question.



Before I began this step, I created a table on a Word document with quadrants for each participant’s conversation, with the headings “Social”, “Political”, “Economic”, and “Cultural”. As I listened to the conversation and followed along on the transcript, I noted in purple which structure or structures the stories corresponded to (some stories or segments of stories aligned with multiple structures), as well as highlighted in purple the entire story. After I finished listening to the entire conversation, I opened up the digital copy of the transcript and copied and pasted the excerpts to the appropriate quadrants in the table; what I noticed was that some story segments applied to multiple quadrants (i.e. a story was both socially and politically influenced, socially and economically structured, culturally and socially influenced, etc.). Below is the power structures table for the first conversation with Marilyn:

<p><b>Social</b>  Um, there wasn’t overt anti-Semitism...what there was...from 1960...there was overt racism against African-Americans...What we had here was de facto segregation that you could- there were no minorities, people of color, because if someone of color would go to a real estate agent to buy home, the banks would blackball them. They couldn’t get a loan to buy...a house. And things were starting to change...by 1963. Remember Brown v. Board of Education is ‘54 so that’s now a decade later... And I think it wa-it will be ‘68 when we get the Rumford Fair Housing Act in California, but the waters of change are broiling, uh, uh, now and that’s when real ugliness-...ugly language exploded, so that, um, and my mother would-wouldn’t, my mother’s vision was bad if you were racist, you would’ve been a Nazi.  <b>*excerpt was also marked as politically structured</b></p>	<p><b>Political</b>  You know you have to say sort of before the ra-before 1967, 1968, and after ’67-’68, the two crucial things that have so changed Jewish, American Jewish life in terms of our visions of ourselves, in terms of our levels of confidence within the culture, have been the Six-Day War and the presentation to the world and to the Jewish community of a new kind of Jewish people and the civil rights movement led by Dr. Martin Luther King. Um, uh, and I think that every minority group in this country are huge beneficiaries of the civil rights movement with so profoundly changed our culture.  <b>*excerpt was also marked as socially structured</b>  But I remember when I was in the sixth, or it must’ve been 1960 when I was in the third grade, and Kennedy was running for president. I remember kids talking at lunch</p>
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<p>That in this country...it, uh, the whole obsession in this nation has been with...color. I know that in the 1960s, it was still very difficult for Jews to get degrees in engineering. There were no Jews in the banking industry in the 19, uh, uh '50s or '60s, unless it was a Jewish owned, family, and there were very few of those. There were no Jews in...architecture...we moved here, the big country club, when I was a child Red Hill Country Club was restricted. Um, that originally the two hospitals here in the '30s and '40s were restricted from the practice of Jewish, uh, doctors...But we're a people who have known virulent anti-Semitism.</p> <p><b>*excerpt was also marked as politically structured</b></p>	<p>and kid saying, 'Well, we can't have Catholic president.'...Um, that America is in many ways a very different place, yet it has so much further to go. Um, we've had one black...president, one Catholic, uh, president. We haven't had a woman president; we have...I think our first Muslim members of Congress. We have, as far as we have, as a culture we have that much further...um, to go. I wa-I think in my, in the '50s and '60s, suburban Jews...just...took, um, anti-Semitism for granted and that that's how the world was. It wasn't Nazi Germany...but it didn't occur to them that that it wasn't yet the founders'...uh, dream of what we now impute to the founders whether or not it was their dream...it was just sort of taken for granted that it was anti-Semitic world and pretty much that nobody was going to make any waves. It's the civil rights movement led by Dr. King which makes it possible for people, for everybody, to make waves. Nobody made waves about how disabled children are treated, children of color...religious minorities, nobody made waves about those things until that civil rights movement explodes in the late 1960s.</p> <p><b>*excerpt was also marked as socially structured</b></p> <p>I always wondered, you know somebody wrote once about the veneer of civilization, that in a place like the United States there is this veneer of not really tolerance, but of what society will tolerate in public. And if that veneer was to disappear, what is in a deep freeze here in the United States is very hard, hard to say.</p>
<p><b>Economic</b></p> <p>So I knew all of the Jewish, most of the children I went to Sunday school with, I also went to public school with. Some were, uh, had, families had, uh, had it open</p>	<p><b>Cultural</b></p> <p>Judaism is central, uh, central to my...uh, my life. I am, what you would call, a modern Reform Jew. I believe that the, uh, mitzvot, that involve ethical behavior are</p>

businesses and were always better off than we were. My father was a college professor; his first contract he made \$5,000 a year before taxes. And my mother was a stay-at-home mother and we-we didn't have a dime to our, uh, name. But my father had Yichus<sup>17</sup> because he was highly educated.

**\*excerpt was also marked as socially structured**

commanded by God and that the mitzvot that are ritualistic are not Commandments and they are left to the individual to choose amongst them those things that enrich their life. If you live here, as I have for most of my life, um, outside of the greater Los Angeles Jewish community, you have to make, an effort if you want to have a Jewish life and many people here, here do. You have- if you don't love Judaism and you come to a place like this, it will be very difficult for you to transmit your Jewish identity to anyone else. But if you love Judaism, and it's really central to who you are, then you create a Jewish life wherever you are. I, I believe that Jerusalem is wherever there are Jews who are striving to live a Jewish life. That there is this physical Jerusalem, but there is also this metaphorical Jerusalem and for the survival of the Jewish people it may be that the metaphorical Jerusalem is more important, that we've only now been in possession of Jerusalem again since 1967... I often think an astonishing thing that I am blessed to live in such time. I often wonder why should I be blessed to live in a time where there is a state of Israel and a, um, reunified Jerusalem, when so many Jews who were so much more worthy of that were not blessed to see, um, uh, the Jewish people have a Jewish homeland. But the fact of the matter is, is wherever we are, wherever we strive to build a Jewish community, that's Jerusalem and that has sustained us for 2000 years and it will contin-continue to sustain us.

**\*excerpt was also marked as socially structured**

We were, as Jews, "Nit ahin; nit aher" (neither here nor there), they had, their parents were all immigrants, this is the story of American Judaism in so many

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<sup>17</sup> Yiddish word for status

	<p>ways, who lived in the cities, who would say they were Orthodox because they bought kosher meat, who didn't know how to make their choos-children into Jews. And now those children find themselves away from any context of Judaism, trying to create it. They're, they're inventing suburban Jewish America.</p> <p>So of course it's sort of, it had had to have gotten out in the neighborhood very quickly that it Jewish family had, uh, moved in because we were, we were always overtly Jewish. You know a mezuzah went up on the door...actually I've got more tolerant of non-Jews I would say over the years; that it is actually a, uh, two-way street in, uh, many ways. It never occurred to me how did they, the neighborhood, whole surrounding neighborhood had to have, uh, uh, had to have quickly learned that there was a Jewish family in the neighborhood... We were aware that we were Jews and we were aware that...it was an anti-Semitic world around us.</p> <p><b>*excerpt was also marked as socially structured</b></p>
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**Narrative Inquiry Analysis: Temporality, Sociality, Place**

In addition to analyzing each transcript a minimum of four times using the Listening Guide, I also analyzed each field text using the three-dimensional Narrative Inquiry space (Space, Temporality, and Sociality), as studies using Narrative Inquiry not only have temporal elements, but a participant's experience is contextualized by the social and personal aspects of their world, as well as the places in which these experiences occur. It is important to note that excerpts from stories presented in the field

texts may be featured in more than one step, as no one facet of the inquiry space stands completely independent of the others.

**Step 1 (Place):** For this analytical process, I concentrated on the specific locations that shaped their stories, including the physical space in which we met, as this impacted the comfort level of the participant when reliving and retelling her stories. I created a chart with a brief recap of the places that were evident in the field text (the transcript), as well as a short reflection about where we met for that conversation and any pertinent information about the meeting location that impacted how the participant’s stories were told. Below is chart for the first step of the narrative analytical process for Marilyn’s first conversation:

<p>Reflection: Much like her home in which we met, where Marilyn grew up greatly impacted how she expresses her current Jewish identity. Being one of few Jewish families in the neighborhood and in public school, having to go outside the community for religious school, and seeing local industries use restrictions to segregate members helped her develop a strong voice that has been used to address anti-Semitism.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The “greater Los Angeles community” (suburbs created by the GI Bill); acknowledges that if you live in an area like that, more effort has to be put into making a Jewish life</li> <li>• Kibbutz in Israel, 1973 (celebrated the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Israel being a state); feels like she is blessed to live in an era where there is a Jewish homeland</li> <li>• Her childhood residential neighborhood of 150 homes; knew every Jewish family there and witnessed her mother build a Jewish community using subtle tactics: “everybody was putting in their front lawn and nobody had a gardener...my mother saw an older man watering his lawn, seeded lawn, while reading a Yiddish newspaper. And my mother, who always said she didn’t really speak Yiddish, spoke Yiddish, and so we found each other”</li> <li>• Religious center where she attended Sunday school starting in 1957 with</li> </ul>
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	<p>some of the Jewish children from her public school (one of two to four Jewish children); felt the lack of control in the classroom led to them not having a strong Jewish educational foundation: “It was a madhouse, just simply a madhouse. How anybody remained Jewish who grew up in that environment is to me in its way shocking because there was n-no academic draw to Judaism”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fourth grade classroom; experienced subtle anti-Semitism as one of the few Jewish children without a role in the class play</li> <li>• Her childhood home; saw her mother yell at a neighbor in front of her house after the neighbor used racist language</li> <li>• A state sponsored summer institute; was directly questioned about her thoughts on Jewish life in the United States versus in Europe due to the nation’s obsession with race.</li> <li>• Local country club near where her family moved practiced institutional anti-Semitism; saw Jews being restricted from participating in certain industries while she was growing up like practicing medicine in particular hospitals, or getting an engineering degree</li> <li>• Sophomore English class; confronted her teacher after he used anti-Semitic language in her class because her family did nothing to help her</li> <li>• New home her family moved to when she was 12; her sister was called “a dirty Jew”, which reinforced her awareness of their positioning as outsiders in a Christian dominated</li> </ul>
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	<p>society</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faculty meeting at her work site two years before her retirement; aggressively confronted the vice principal in front of her colleagues about graduation being moved to a Friday night</li> <li>• Her own classroom; created a learning environment that did not tolerate disrespectful language or attitudes</li> <li>• Temple where she served as a principal for 10 years; felt Jewish parents, who were originally from urban areas and are raising their children in the suburbs, must not presume how their child experiences Jewish life</li> </ul>
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**Step 2 (Temporality):** In this step, I paid particular attention to the participants’ stories that referenced time (past, present, and future). This included attending to experiences that related to family history which shaped their current identities (both teaching and being Jewish), classroom or school events that addressed their placement in a Christian influenced system, moments of “otherness”, and their feelings about what they are engaged in currently at work and Jewish lives, as well as any future goals or memories they are looking to make in the future. I created a chart with a brief recap of the temporal moments that were evident in the field text (the transcript). As I completed this step for each conversation, I added to the personal timeline of events I had created for each participant, which helped me keep track of the past and present events that have shaped their multiple identities. Below is chart for the second step of the narrative analytical process for Marilyn’s first conversation:

<b>Past</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Future</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moved several times away from Los Angeles before arriving in a suburban neighborhood that did not have many Jews</li> <li>• Heard classmates in her elementary school disapproving of JFK running for president due to his religion</li> <li>• Witnessed potential African American families be “blackballed” from buying homes in her neighborhood before her family moved closer to her father’s job</li> <li>• Exposed to anti-Semitism in every school she attended and every community she lived in</li> <li>• Felt the American Jewish identity was impacted by the Civil Rights Movement; allowed for different types of groups “to make waves”</li> <li>• Studied on a Kibbutz in Israel in college</li> <li>• Served as a principal of a Jewish school for 10 years</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Judaism is central to her life (always has been)</li> <li>• Sees anti-Semitism as still existing the United States, only in more of a subtle way</li> <li>• Two years prior to retiring in 2015, she confronted her vice principal in front of her peers during a meeting about the change of graduation to a Friday night; felt it was not fair unless they were willing to move it to a Sunday morning</li> <li>• Sees public school teachers as “non-confrontational...much less proactive” against hate speech</li> <li>• Acknowledges with students that they hear racist and anti-Semitic language</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feels that America is a different place than in the past, but “it has much farther to go”</li> <li>• Wonders what will be under the “vener...of what society will tolerate in public” once it disappears</li> </ul>

**Step 3 (Sociality):** For the last step, I focused on the personal and social contexts that shaped their narratives. The personal contexts I noted include their feelings, desires, hopes, and dispositions surrounding particular events or identities. The social contexts



include their family, gender, religion, working environment at school site, relationships with colleagues, community and district influenced by Christian privilege, and their insider/outsider positionality. I also included a brief reflection summarizing how the personal and social contexts shaped the participant’s position in public schools. Below is chart for the third and final step of the narrative analytical process for Marilyn’s first conversation:

<p><b>Reflection:</b> Retired two weeks prior to us meeting after 27 years of working at the same school; saw the Jewish population at her site decline dramatically over the years; served as a voice against unintentional and overt discrimination</p>	
<p><b>Personal Contexts:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Judaism is central to her life as a Modern Reform Jew; sees the Jewish religious behaviors as “left to the individual to choose...those things that enrich their life”</li> <li>• Believes in the necessity of a metaphorical Jerusalem for the survival of the Jewish people, but thinks it “is hard to be a Jew”</li> <li>• Wonders why she is “blessed to live in a time where there is a state of Israel and a...reunified Jerusalem, when so many Jews who were so much more worthy of that were not blessed to see” Israel be formed</li> <li>• Challenges the master narrative about the Jewish population diminishing through intermarriage</li> <li>• Attributes thoroughly knowing the book of Genesis to Mrs. Kessler, even though there was a lack of control in the Shul; sensed one of the Hebrew school teachers “was lost in America” as a European refugee who got out before the Holocaust</li> <li>• Saw it as her responsibility to challenge students’ thinking about social progress in the nation</li> <li>• Shocked that a beloved neighbor</li> </ul>	<p><b>Social Contexts:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worked and studied on a Kibbutz in Israel during the nation’s 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of statehood</li> <li>• Parents moved the family to a very rural suburban section of Los Angeles that was created by the GI Bill; knew every Jewish family in the community</li> <li>• Attended the Shul for religious education with other Jewish children from her public school (about two to four Jewish children in her public school classes)</li> <li>• Her mother stayed at home while her father was a community college professor; family had little money but had status in the Jewish community due to his education</li> <li>• Has maintained a friendship with Gary, a Jewish classmate since Kindergarten</li> <li>• Saw her parents and their friends’ as “Nit ahin, nit aher” (neither here nor there) due to their parents being immigrants and not “know[ing] how to make their...children into Jews”</li> <li>• During exposure to anti-Semitism in the fourth grade, heard adults in her community “complaining about</li> </ul>

<p>was a bigot</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thinks the United States has been obsessed with race and color; wonders what happens when the façade of what society tolerates disappears</li> <li>• Cognizant of the lack of remorse on behalf of her Sophomore English teacher who used anti-Semitic language in front of her</li> <li>• Is becoming “more tolerant of non-Jews...over the years”</li> <li>• Sees suburban Jews in the post-Holocaust era taking anti-Semitism for granted: “It wasn’t Nazi Germany...and pretty much nobody was going to make any waves...until that Civil Rights Movement explodes in the late 1960s”</li> <li>• Felt no shame in confronting her vice principal about graduation moving to a Friday night; acknowledged that if it had always been this way she would not have said anything</li> <li>• Not afraid to shame students for using discriminatory language in her classroom: “the first person to say something was gay got so verbally confronted that it never would, it happened once and then it would never happen in any of my classes again”</li> </ul>	<p>[one of the Jewish student’s family] being unaffiliated with the Jewish community”; no Jewish family addressed the situation with the school or teacher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Her mother equated racism with Nazism and spoke out against discrimination of all groups, not just Jews</li> <li>• Before her family moved in her early teens, she found out an African American family was blackballed from buying a home in her childhood neighborhood</li> <li>• After her family moved, her sister was spit on and called “a dirty Jew”: “you knew you were Jewish and you were different....We were aware that we were Jews and we were aware that it was an anti-Semitic world around us”</li> </ul>
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**Final Research Texts: Explanation**

As the final step of the Narrative Inquiry process, the final research texts are written and are considered the findings of the study. Rather than segmenting the participants’ stories into coded sections, a portrait (or narrative profile) of each participant is presented, with the transcripts from each conversation with the participant coming together to build one larger story utilizing her own words as much as possible,

including parts of the Ipoems that emerged in the analysis process. For many of the participants, fragments of stories were told in one conversation and then discussed in depth in subsequent conversations; in order to capture the participant's story regarding a particular memory or event, I collated the information from all the conversations where that story thread was mentioned.

After receiving a copy of the interim text and having the option to make edits (either online or in person if we were able to meet), participants were emailed copies of their final research texts (their narrative profiles) in order to make sure their overall story captured them accurately, with the option of making changes. Some of the participants did not make any alterations to their stories, whereas others felt certain aspects of our conversations were not discussed as much as they had hoped (when this was the case, we worked together to find a solution that still fit with the overall portrait being presented). Due to the rigor in organizing the overall narrative (weaving in words verbatim and strategically inserting Ipoems to not disrupt the flow of the story), as well as making sure the participant was accurately represented, a single final narrative took between 20-25 hours to write.

The following section features the study's findings, as presented in the form of a portrait/narrative profile of each participant. Each final narrative begins with a brief description of the participant and her connection to a Jewish identity, as well as an overview of the story being presented. The portrait then begins with her childhood and what role Judaism played in her formative years. Afterwards, the story moves into her college years and what led her into teaching, as well as what she faces as a Jewish teacher in a public school (or what her reflections are regarding being a Jewish teacher if she is

retired). The presentation of the final narratives begins with Marilyn's story, and then Pamela's, followed by Olivia's, and ends with Rose's story.

## Chapter 6

### Final Narrative Portraits

*“I think that you learn because of, or in spite of, your teacher....I think parents and students have to understand, I will learn because of or in spite of. It's my job to learn.*

*There is no one from whom I cannot learn something.”*

#### Marilyn

Marilyn is a retired high school history teacher in her early 60s. Three weeks prior to our first meeting, she left teaching after 27 years at the same school in the city in which she and her family lived during her teenage years; however, her teaching profession “goes back to the 10 years [she] spent in Jewish education, it, so it’s 38 years in an educational setting” (Marilyn, personal communication, August 24, 2015). She studied and practiced law for 10 years before transitioning to education, after realizing that she hated every day of being a lawyer.

Though teaching was not an initial calling for her, Marilyn felt very happy with what she had accomplished in her tenure as an educator: “I had a splendid career. I have done everything you could possibly do, I think, as a teacher” (Marilyn, personal communication, October 31, 2015). She recalled that she “was obsessed with [her] job” (Marilyn, personal communication, August 24, 2015), and was always finding different opportunities to keep learning about her “two academic interests...Islam and the Holocaust and they're not mutually exclusive in any way” (Marilyn, personal communication, October 31, 2015). She acknowledged she does not “know where [she] would have been without teaching” (Marilyn, personal communication, October 31, 2015), but she is “sure [she] would have ended up teaching somewhere”.

Like many other Ashkenazi Jews in the United States, the outside of her home in a suburban neighborhood in the greater Los Angeles community only presents a small connection to Judaism: a mezuzah on the front door frame. The dining room in which we spent the majority of our time talking depicts not only how age and declining health has caught up with her, as it morphed into a temporary bedroom, complete with a hospital bed while she recovered from shoulder surgery during the later summer and early autumn, but also the markers of assimilation: “Tomorrow, it will take me two days, I have these boxes and I’ll put all the Halloween things away and then I take out my boxes of Thanksgiving” (Marilyn, personal communication, October 31, 2015).

In addition to the decorations that set the mood, her love of reading, even in retirement, is apparent with the stacks of books that she “was going to look at while [she] was ill, and of course [she] looked at nothing” (Marilyn, personal communication, October 31, 2015). Even though she promised herself she would read many of the books she has “been buying for twenty-eight years and not having read, just stacking them up and say[ing], ‘When I retire, I’ll read this’” (Marilyn, personal communication, November 21, 2015), illness impacted how quickly she was able to start reading again. Yet, she realizes that many of the books she has saved over the course of the four decades since college, in addition to not being able to say no to a free book, meant it was time to “the clean-up...[her] library in [her] den [because] there have just been so many books and they were covering the floor” (Marilyn, personal communication, November 21, 2015).

Upon coming into the dining room, it is visible that “Judaism is a central factor in [her] life” (Marilyn, personal communication, June 30, 2015), as she was quick to joke

that “you can’t be in this room unless you are a Jewish artist or a Jewish collector” (Marilyn, personal communication, October 31, 2015), with portraits on the walls showcasing aspects of Israel and charcoal drawings of solemn men engaging in traditional prayer. Although Marilyn is single and has no children, save for a King Charles Cavalier dog named Bagel, she sees herself as her family’s historian, proudly displaying various artifacts such as one of the two copper pots that “came to America in 1903 with [her] great grandmother from Russia” (Marilyn, personal communication, October 31, 2015) (the other pot she reluctantly gave to her brother at his last visit) and the German China purchased by her paternal grandfather before the Great Depression. Above the lone copper pot, there stands a family photograph with her mother in the center; Marilyn explained that it was taken at her brother and sister-in-law’s rabbinical ordination in Cincinnati, even though it was difficult to get everyone on board with doing so: “Everybody kicking and screaming. I always admired families that have family photographs and we didn’t have any. Kicking and screaming I got that picture taken...It’s so difficult to get family together... don’t you know how much my mother had treasured that picture” (Marilyn, personal communication, October 31, 2015).

Underneath the picture and the pot, tucked away in the corner closest to the sliding door that leads out to the backyard, is a curio exhibiting the German China, a Havdalah<sup>18</sup> Set, a menorah and candelabra, an Elijah’s Cup, and her collection of Kiddush Cups from travels all around the world. On a side table to the left of the curio is an Etrog<sup>19</sup> box for Sukkot<sup>20</sup> made of sandalwood that her sister-in-law purchased for her

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<sup>18</sup> Havdalah marks the end of Shabbat and occurs no later than sundown on Saturday nights. The Havdalah set includes a Kiddush cup for wine, a spice box, and a candle set that intertwines the flames (either through the candle holder or the candles)

<sup>19</sup> Citrus fruit grown in Israel

in Israel; though “it will do in a pinch” (Marilyn, personal communication, October 31, 2015), she really “want[s] to have a very fancy sterling silver Etrog box” (Marilyn, personal communication, October 31, 2015). Marilyn is hoping that on her next trip to Israel she will be able to “take that chunk of cash [from retirement gifts] with [her] and buy [the] Etrog box” (Marilyn, personal communication, October 31, 2015) she had been eyeing on her last trip there this past December, the one she “found [in] a shop that would have made [her] the most glorious Etrog box in sterling silver for about \$750” (Marilyn, personal communication, October 31, 2015).

Like the story of her grandparent who brought the copper pot while escaping the massacres in Russia, Marilyn’s narrative begins as a child realizing that Jews, even at a young age, needed to stand up for themselves in times of discrimination. It then shifts to her learning to take advantage of opportunities when they are presented, that “every door opens another” (Marilyn, personal communication, October 31, 2015). In addition, she describes what it meant for her to be a college student in Israel during the Yom Kippur War. Afterwards, Marilyn tells about her leaving the law field for education, a decision that ended up being the catalyst for her to be the vocal advocate she did not have when facing anti-Semitism in public schools growing up. She ends her story with where she sees teaching today, including her fears of younger people becoming teachers and the importance of educating with a purpose.

### **Laying the foundation**

For Marilyn, the concept adaptability was central in maintaining a Jewish identity and was instilled from an early age. As a modern Reform Jew who “believe[s] that the...

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<sup>20</sup> The harvest festival that occurs on the fifth day after Yom Kippur.



mitzvot<sup>21</sup> that involve ethical behavior are commanded by God and...the mitzvot that are ritualistic are not Commandments...they are left to the individual to choose amongst them those things that enrich their life” (Marilyn, personal communication, June 30, 2015), she understood that the Jewish people need to “create a Jewish life wherever [they] are” (Marilyn, personal communication, June 30, 2015):

If you live here, as I have for most of my life...outside of the greater Los Angeles Jewish community, you have to make an effort if you want to have a Jewish life and many people here... do...If you don't love Judaism and you come to a place like this, it will be very difficult for you to transmit your Jewish identity to anyone else. (Marilyn, personal communication, June 30, 2015)

Due to her father's involvement in the Army, as well as his teaching job at Chandler College in Clarington, Marilyn grew up in the “tract housing...suburbs [that] had been created by the G.I. Bill” (Marilyn, personal communication, June 30, 2015), which had previously been rural agricultural fields, with “most people...buying on FHA loans and...everybody [was] a G.I...although this was now 11 years after the end of...the war” (Marilyn, personal communication, June 30, 2015). In their sprawling suburban community of a “few hundred homes in that the whole area[, m]aybe 150 homes... [Marilyn] knew every Jewish family” (Marilyn, personal communication, June 30, 2015). With the small number of Jewish families in this new mixed community, “Jews...were sort of an oddity” (Marilyn, personal communication, June 30, 2015). Marilyn even remembered that one “neighbor two doors down...explaining that ‘Well, it was too bad the Jews killed Jesus’ and [her] dad...calmly discussing things” (Marilyn, personal communication, June 30, 2015), that the neighbors were still adjusting to life in the

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<sup>21</sup> Mitzvot is plural for mitzvah.

suburbs “because they too had come out of urban areas that Italians lived in one area, Catholics lived in another area” (Marilyn, personal communication, June 30, 2015).

Though they had to navigate their community carefully, her mother, a stay-at-home mom until Marilyn was 18, was able to build a network of Jews using a talent Marilyn did not know she had:

[With] the Sandbergs [*laughs*],...my mother met [them] because everybody was putting in their front lawn and nobody had a gardener. Everybody was doing this themselves and my mother saw an older man watering his lawn, seeded lawn, while reading a Yiddish newspaper. And my mother, who always said she didn't really speak Yiddish, spoke Yiddish. (Marilyn, personal communication, June 30, 2015)

In order for her parents to pass on a Jewish identity to Marilyn, her sister, and her brother in a residential area that was not in proximity to Los Angeles like the UCLA campus (due to her father being a G.I. getting a Master's degree and a PhD, they lived in a Quonset hut in Veteran's Village for the first two years of her life) and in Santa Monica (where she lived until she was four), her parents, along with the other Jewish families in the neighborhood, founded “the Shul, which was called...the Citrus Valley Temple Center because some people want a synagogue and others just wanted a Jewish center, so they gave it the name of both” (Marilyn, personal communication, June 30, 2015). Though the Shul itself “was a tiny house called the Ringer House...[with] a tiny miniature arc with the Torah in [the living room]...[a]nd...classes in the bedrooms, [with her sister's prekindergarten] classroom...in the garage” (Marilyn, personal communication, June 30, 2015), for Marilyn, when asked to describe five critical incidents that shaped her Jewish

identity, going to religious school there starting when she was five years old was “the source of [her] family’s engagement in the Jewish community” (Marilyn, personal communication, October 31, 2015).

Despite not having “a dime to [their]...name....[her] father had Yichus<sup>22</sup> because he was highly educated” (Marilyn, personal communication, June 30, 2015); he even “taught in the religious school...[and] became president of the synagogue” (Marilyn, personal communication, October 31, 2015). Furthermore, her “family's social life revolved around the synagogue [and her] mother was active in the sisterhood. [They] went to services really frequently and on a regular basis” (Marilyn, personal communication, October 31, 2015). Marilyn recalled the “the one room synagogue” (Marilyn, personal communication, June 30, 2015) as central to her identity: “[I]t was my Jewish education, our friends and our communities” (Marilyn, personal communication, October 31, 2015).

Even though her mother prided herself on their home being “a Jewish home. Shabbat candles were lit...[t]he holidays were observed in [their] home not necessarily in a positive way”(Marilyn, personal communication, October 31, 2015), Marilyn stated that being Jewish meant developing an othered consciousness at an early age: “We were aware that we were Jews and we were aware that...it was an anti-Semitic world around us” (Marilyn, personal communication, June 30, 2015). During her youth “in the 1960s, it was still very difficult for Jews...There were no Jews in the banking industry in the 19...50s or ‘60s, unless it was a Jewish owned, family, and there were very few of those” (Marilyn, personal communication, June 30, 2015). Likewise during that era, Marilyn noticed that her public school classmates had already formed opinions on those that did

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<sup>22</sup> Yiddish for status

not fit the “typical” American profile: “[W]hen I was in the third grade, and Kennedy was running for president, I remember kids talking at lunch and kid saying, ‘Well, we can’t have Catholic president’” (Marilyn, personal communication, June 30, 2015). Though she grew up knowing the Jews are “a people who have known virulent anti-Semitism” (Marilyn, personal communication, June 30, 2015), Marilyn’s “first exposure to anti-Semitism occurred in the fourth grade” (Marilyn, personal communication, June 30, 2015) when the PTA sponsored a class play about America and Marilyn and the two other Jewish students did not receive a role (she was frequently one of less than five Jewish students in the grade level). This rejection left an impression on Marilyn who valued a connection with her previous teachers:

I had a teacher, Mrs. Scott,

The first teacher I actively disliked.

I wonder what that was

I wonder what that was in...reaction to.

I think now

why is it that I always loved my teachers

and I...did not like...Mrs. Scott.

Although there may not have been overt anti-Semitism, Marilyn shared that there was “overt racism against African Americans...things were starting to change by 1963...the waters of change [were] broiling...and that’s when real ugliness-ugly language exploded...and [her] mother’s vision was that if you were a racist, you would’ve been a Nazi” (Marilyn, personal communication, June 30, 2015). In her community, Marilyn remembered her mother screaming at a neighbor, who was once loved like a grandpa,

after he revealed himself to racist, even though Marilyn is not sure “at the time the word racist was used, but he was a bigot” (Marilyn, personal communication, June 30, 2015). Additionally, Marilyn’s parents “were both people of enormous social conscience, enormous sense of right and wrong” (Marilyn, personal communication, October 31, 2015), with her mother, “who most people would see as a quiet and passive person[,]...[be] in the face of prejudice...an articulate and...outspoken person” (Marilyn, personal communication, October 31, 2015), as evidenced with she witnessed her mother verbally assault another neighbor who used racist language:

I heard neighbors across the street, Mrs. Landolfo refer to black people as Jigaboos. And I remembered that she was talking to my mother who was taking...something out of the trunk of my father’s car, we only had one car. And I remember my mother yelling at...her that, she could not use that language, that language was despicable and ignorant. And Ralph Bunche was...a prominent in the 60s, it’s ’63, so it’s after the Kennedy assassination, and I believe Johnson, President Johnson had appointed Ralph Bunche who was a very fair skinned African-American...as our representative to the UN. And my mother yelling at her, ‘IF RALPH BUNCHE WAS STANDING HERE, IS THAT THE LANGUAGE YOU WOULD USE?’. (Marilyn, personal communication, June 30, 2015)

Afterwards, “it was understood fairly quickly in the neighborhood...not to discuss...those issues with the Lumanskys...[T]hey must’ve made the connection between [her] mother’s Judaism and her vision of these things” (Marilyn, personal communication, June 30, 2015). In addition to making the connection between her

mother's Jewish identity and social justice, was "the issue...that the first black family would soon buy into [their] neighborhood" (Marilyn, personal communication, June 30, 2015): "[W]hat was happening was that America was beginning to change. African-Americans, families with middle-class incomes were beginning to eye the suburbs and things were changing" (Marilyn, personal communication, June 30, 2015). Not long after her mother confronted Mrs. Landolfo, Marilyn's family decided to move to Newland "because [her] parents thought it was too far for her father to drive every day from West Covina to Alta Loma" (Marilyn, personal communication, June 30, 2015), where Chandler College had just bought land to build a new campus, a decision which sent fear of change throughout the neighbors, including a friend of Marilyn's who "asked [her] if [her family] had sold the house to a Caucasian when the house sold" (Marilyn, personal communication, June 30, 2015): "And I didn't know what that word meant; I had never heard that word. And so I said, 'I don't think so'" (Marilyn, personal communication, June 30, 2015). Right before Marilyn's family put their house on the market, an African American family tried to move in when a neighbor tried to sell their house, but was ultimately banned due to de facto segregation:

[T]here were no minorities, people of color, because if someone of color would go to a real estate agent to buy a home, the banks would blackball them. They couldn't get a loan to buy...a house...Remember *Brown v. Board of Education* is '54, so that's now a decade later....[The father] was a government employee...and their daughter was a college student. This is a very high...status family if they were white...you should have been honored to have such a family in 1963 as your

next door neighbors...were ultimately blackballed; they couldn't get a loan to buy the house. (Marilyn, personal communication, June 30, 2015)

### **Help is not coming**

Even though anti-Semitism was not as blatant as the discrimination against people of color, Marilyn noticed that “in the 50s and 60s, suburban Jews...just...took...anti-Semitism for granted and that that's how the world was. It wasn't Nazi Germany...it was just sort of taken for granted that it was an anti-Semitic world and pretty much nobody was going to make any waves” (Marilyn, personal communication, June 30, 2015): “It's the Civil Rights movement...which makes it possible for people, for everybody, to make waves. Nobody made waves about how disabled children are treated, children of color...religious minorities, nobody made waves about those things until the Civil Rights Movement explodes in the late 1960s” (Marilyn, personal communication, June 30, 2015). Though her mother had no problem openly challenging Mrs. Landolfo, her parents separated where and when they wanted to jeopardize their position in society. Like the time in which her father and her classmate's father “talk[ed] about what happened in the fourth grade classroom but never [did] anything about it” (Marilyn, personal communication, June 30, 2015), so too did her family do nothing when her sophomore English teacher used overt anti-Semitic language in class:

[O]ne day...he was criticizing a piece...of...a watch or something. He was talking about he had gone antiq...and he had said, ‘It was just so ugly, you know, Jewish Renaissance.’ And the whole class laughed...And I was just stunned. And I went home and told my mother what had happened...I was 15, so that was 1967, and...nobody did anything. (Marilyn, personal communication, June 30, 2015)

As a result of her parents not getting involved, as well as seeing her mother assert her position against discriminatory language, Marilyn “had to take it up with the teacher [her]self. And the next day, with two of [her] non-Jewish girlfriends sort of trailing [her], they said they wanted to hear what [*Laughs*] [she] told him, ‘What...what you said was very anti-Semitic’” (Marilyn, personal communication, June 30, 2015). Although Marilyn went on to earn “A’s in the class...he didn’t treat [her]...differently...but [she] was cognizant of the fact...that he did not apologize” (Marilyn, personal communication, June 30, 2015).

### **Now is the time**

It was during that same year that Marilyn stated “in the United States attitudes about Jews really began to change with the Six-Day War. It was the invention of the new kind of, a new public vision. It’s not that the Jews were any different, it’s that the circumstances were different” (Marilyn, personal communication, October 31, 2015). She also noted in the discussion of the five critical incidents that shaped her identity was that her family was “Zionist without knowing it and then [they] were Zionist who knew that [they] were Zionist” (Marilyn, personal communication, October 31, 2015). Though remembering the memory of being in temple for a community meeting on the night the war broke out made Marilyn cry, she recalled the sight of so many Jews coming together as “unbelievable...[and] amazing: “It happened all over the country, that we had to raise money...people you had no idea are Jews. Somehow word got out. It was like the High Holidays. Standing room only. Little shuls like mine raised hundreds of thousands of dollars” (Marilyn, personal communication, October 31, 2015).



Though “there had always been a Jewish sense of heroes, people who have stood up, people who have fought[,]...usually the only kind of fighting [Jews] have been able to do has been spiritual resistance” (Marilyn, personal communication, October 31, 2015). Yet Marilyn does not discount spiritual resistance, as “[Jews] have survived unbelievable horrors in history and yet we have survived and flourished” (Marilyn, personal communication, October 31, 2015); for her and so many other Jews of that generation, “[they] will be the last generation that really remembers what that meant to see” (Marilyn, personal communication, October 31, 2015) the Six-Day War as “the presentation to the world and to the Jewish community of a new kind of Jewish people” (Marilyn, personal communication, June 30, 2015): “[T]he two crucial things that have so changed Jewish, American Jewish life in terms of our visions of ourselves, in terms of our levels of confidence within the culture, have been the Six-Day War and...the Civil Rights movement led by Dr. Martin Luther King” (Marilyn, personal communication, June 30, 2015).

### **Finding your Jerusalem**

Though she was a lackadaisical student who did quite well in school, she was a devoted reader who felt “the classwork was so low-level that [she] would just sit in the [class]room and read novels...a habit [that] came from [her mother who read voluminously all of her life” (Marilyn, personal communication, August 24, 2015): “My mother knew as much about the Holocaust as many college professors because she just read voluminously” (Marilyn, personal communication, August 24, 2015). Like her mother who had left high school early in order to work, as there was no money for her to attend college, Marilyn left in the middle of her senior year of high school to attend

Chandler College. It was during her time at Scripps College, a four year college which Marilyn says she “was totally unqualified” for, but that she “felt really good about that interview because [she’s] always had the gift of gab” (Marilyn, personal communication, August 24, 2015), that she began ask herself “If it was so horrible, why would anybody stay cool with [being Jewish] for the last thousand years?” (Marilyn, personal communication, October 31, 2015).

Though Marilyn had grown up with the understanding that “you should...be Jewish because we owed it to the six million to be Jews, [that] [a]ll of Jewish history is a veil of tears and we have survived and we owe it to the past to be Jews because of all that suffering” (Marilyn, personal communication, October 31, 2015), it was the realization in her first year of college of study abroad opportunities that Marilyn was able to define her own Jewish identity, one which still makes her feel “blessed to live in such a time...where there is a state of Israel and a...reunified Jerusalem, when so many Jews who were so much more worthy of that were not blessed to see...the Jewish people have a Jewish homeland” (Marilyn, personal communication, June 30, 2015):

When I was 18

I realized I could go abroad for a semester,

there was only one place that I would ever think of going.

I remember at 19

I was there for five to six months

I left I guess at Yom Kippur.

I remember

I just made up my mind

I'm going to go to Jerusalem.

I have no tour book, no guide book, no nothing.

I didn't have plans where I would stay.

I don't even know it,

there's barely a division

between the men's and the women's section.

I remember standing next to the Wall and thinking,

"I've done something none of my grandfathers

or great grandparents could ever have imagined doing.

I've been to the Wall."

I've been to Israel seven times now

and to Jerusalem many, many times,

the last time this past December I was again there

but nothing ever can, in my memory,

be the equivalent of the moment of standing there and thinking,

"They could not do this

and I am.

I am doing this".

Even though her parents had strived to build "a new kind of Judaism here and under the influence of Israel...a much more celebratory Judaism" (Marilyn, personal communication, October 31, 2015), Marilyn says they were "living in the Yenevelt"<sup>23</sup>;

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<sup>23</sup> Yenevelt means "the middle of nowhere", "a faraway place"

they were amongst that people you know ‘Nit ahin; nit aher’<sup>24</sup> in Yiddish ‘neither here nor there’” (Marilyn, personal communication, June 30, 2015):

[T]hey had, their parents were all immigrants, this is the story of American Judaism in so many ways, who lived in the cities, who would say they were Orthodox because they bought kosher meat, who didn’t know how to make their...children into Jews. And now those children find themselves away from any context of Judaism, trying to create it. They’re...inventing suburban Jewish America. (Marilyn, personal communication, June 30, 2015)

Much like her grandparents and parents who had to make choices in what to keep and discard from their Jewish identity, Marilyn realized that although she is “an in your face Jew” (Marilyn, personal communication, October 31, 2015), “there are just so many ways of being Jewish in America and people are always, over generations, floating in and out of the community” (Marilyn, personal communication, October 31, 2015). Additionally, Marilyn noticed that in order for her to navigate Christian influenced institutions successfully, some pieces of her identity would need to be “conveniently” forgotten:

I had a second Fulbright in Poland

and two NEH programs one at Fordham.

I applied to an NEH at Fordham, National Endowment of the Humanities.

I had no background in Islam whatsoever.

I finessed the application though.

I’d leave things out,

I’d left out

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<sup>24</sup> There are variations on the spelling/pronunciation of this Yiddish phrase, possibly attributed to original regional dialects

I had lived in Israel,  
or that my foreign language was Hebrew.

I just didn't fill things in.

When I get there, the first day we're going around the table.

I said

I lived on Kibbutz Kafar Hanassi in 1973.

I see the two directors of the program

I said

I know exactly what you were thinking.

Although Marilyn feels that “קשה להיות יהודי (it’s hard to be a Jew)” (Marilyn, personal communication, June 30, 2015), “Jerusalem is wherever there are Jews who are striving to live a Jewish life...there is a physical Jerusalem, but there is also this metaphorical Jerusalem and for the survival of the Jewish people, it may be the metaphorical Jerusalem is more important” (Marilyn, personal communication, June 30, 2015).

### **When one door opens**

Much like her questioning of Jewish identity that led her to stand before the Western Wall, so too did her probing of her professional life lead to her being able to marry her past and her future. Before she applied for graduate school, which she says happened within one day of the deadline, “[o]therwise everything would have been off by a year and [her] career would have been very different” (Marilyn, personal communication, October 31, 2015), Marilyn worked as a lawyer, even though it was not her passion:

I practiced law for a decade.

I wasn't good at it

I hated it.

I didn't have the courage to walk away from it,

which I should have done after my first semester in law school.

I just hated it from the very first day.

Then I thought

well, I'll like it better when I'm practicing

and then I hated it.

Then I thought

well, I'll like it better if I'm making money

and I was making money

and I hated it.

I wasn't good at it.

One day when I was 34

I said, you know

I hate every day of my life.

If I keep doing this,

I'll do it for another 30 years

and a day will come when I retire...

Then I'll say,

what did I do with my life?

For Marilyn, teaching became the perfect profession for her to discuss what was of interest to her, even when a night manager on campus felt she knew “so much about everything” (Marilyn, personal communication, October 31, 2015):

I said to him, “You do understand that I get to choose what we talk about, so I only choose the things I know about. What I don't know about is a vast and enormous, unfathomable ocean but we won't be talking about those things.”...How we are perceived, it never occurred to [him] we only talked about things I actually knew something about. (Marilyn, personal communication, November 21, 2015)

Additionally, even as she edged closer to retirement and health problems started impacting her ability to perform basic tasks, Marilyn says being in the classroom revitalized her spirit and body:

I'm a compulsive talker.

I told my students,

I became a teacher

there's nothing I love more

than the sound of my own voice.

I've such rich experiences

I really don't know how I got through the last year.

Some days I was

These problems I've had for a while now.

I was so tired

I could barely walk from my car to my classroom.

Of course once I started talking

I always feel better

I had so many grand experiences.

That's why I said, teaching can be a job or it can be a profession.

In addition to her mother's storytelling during her childhood being "an important part of the kind of teacher [she] became", Marilyn also taught her students the importance of fighting for justice, that being an effective human like her mother, "means that you are going to offend people and they are not going to like you. I told them, 'You're never going to be a free person until you can liberate yourself of a need to be loved by others'" (Marilyn, personal communication, November 21, 2015):

But I think also just like in in anything you have a passion for, you've got to be ready to stand up and fight. And...I always say to my students, "You have to liberate yourself of wanting to be liked by everybody."...I think I said it before; there's a statement in the Talmud, and it is on the walls of...Beit Hatfursot, the Museum of the Diaspora in...Tel Aviv...it's a quote from the Talmud that "A Rabbi...who is loved by everyone is not a good Rabbi."...I don't know the exact quote, but I'm always reminded of that. To be a great Rabbi, you have got to make waves. And if you make waves someone is not going to like you. (Marilyn, personal communication, August 24, 2015)

Furthermore, Marilyn warned about burning bridges with people, but that sometimes speaking the truth means burning the bridges "with grenades" (Marilyn, personal communication, October 31, 2015):

I was the only Jew there,



I have found in my experience

I had been at a program

I'd applied to it

and been accepted to it, American University on Islam

it was a three week program, I only stayed one week

I felt the program was profoundly anti-Semitic.

I told them so in a screaming event one afternoon.

I had not said at that point

I was Jewish.

Marilyn would also never “make any pretense of neutrality” (Marilyn, personal communication, November 21, 2015), that she “love[s] to talk about...the things you’re not supposed to talk about: religion and politics” (Marilyn, personal communication, November 21, 2015). Whenever “colleagues and students would inevitably say, ‘What about Hitler?’, because [she’s] always integrating the Holocaust into whatever [she] was teaching” (Marilyn, personal communication, August 24, 2015), Marilyn stated that “If Hitler walked into this room, [she] would not seek his execution. What would it solve?” (Marilyn, personal communication, August 24, 2015).

Though she is “radically, one hundred percent opposed to the death penalty” (Marilyn, personal communication, November 21, 2015) and “could have great sorrow and weep with the families of his victims and his victims...[she doesn’t] believe we are redeemed as a society” (Marilyn, personal communication, August 24, 2015) when someone is sentenced to death. Marilyn expressed that her brother, mother, and her all “are adamantly opposed to capital punishment” (Marilyn, personal communication,

November 21, 2015), with her mother being “a great political liberal, and in the face of working in the prison system, where everybody becomes arch conservatives...remained a political liberal” (Marilyn, personal communication, August 24, 2015), a memory that Marilyn choked up over.

In addition, Marilyn recalled the close relationship her family had to Holocaust survivors while she was growing up, where “every visit always involved long detailed Holocaust discussions” (Marilyn, personal communication, October 31, 2015): “I think I might have mentioned there was no boundaries in those days. I remember as a six year old...the movie ‘The Pawnbroker’...It’s just horrific. I’m not even going to say what one scene involves. I’m six years old. I remember that” (Marilyn, personal communication, October 31, 2015). The wife of the couple she grew up knowing gave her testimony to a historian at Queen’s College because “by the time Spielberg came along [they] could not possibly have been filmed. They were too old and too traumatized...by the time Spielberg came along, then of thousands of older survivors who had been in their 40s or so were already deceased” (Marilyn, personal communication, October 31, 2015). It is from having a different reality of the Holocaust, as well as her mother’s influence of social justice that causes Marilyn to question the satisfaction of Hitler’s own death if he were sentenced through the courts: “Would the world be a better place? Would anyone who died...at the hands of that injustice...would they awaken to life again? What in the execution of the person affirms life?” (Marilyn, personal communication, August 24, 2015).

Furthermore, she acknowledged that “a person who’s done great evil...certainly...need[s] to be punished...[since] the issue is our humanness, not others”

(Marilyn, personal communication, August 24, 2015), suggesting that someone like Hitler should be given a lifetime of incarceration “in a comfortable cell...[with] a comfortable bed, wonderful meals every day and a library full of books to read, and attempt to restore the humanity” (Marilyn, personal communication, November 21, 2015): “I think he should have to read great books: read the Torah and the New testament, the Ketuvim, the holy text, the Koran, the Bhagad Vita, the Buddhist text. Immerse yourself in...life-giving” (Marilyn, personal communication, August 24, 2015).

Though she stated “in our classes, teachers are supposed to be dispassionate” (Marilyn, personal communication, August 24, 2015), Marilyn believes in social justice for all people, much like her mother always promoted, even if that meant standing up to authority and the status quo:

I just got called up to serve for first time in years

and I had been called almost every year.

I attribute my not being called for the last 15 years

to the fact that I had words with two judges in the courtroom

I was about to be in panel on the jury

I both times answered “No.”

I said,

“Your honor, if I believe this is a three-strikes case,

I will not vote guilty.”

I said,

Yes, I’m aware that’s what the law says.

And now your honor I’m telling you, again,

that if I believe this is three-strikes case,  
I will NOT follow your instructions.

I said,

If I believe this is the third strike,  
I will not follow your instructions.

I said to him,

No, if I believe this is a three-strikes case,  
I will not vote guilty.

I said,

I will not follow your instructions.

I'm not sending someone to jail for 20 years because they stole a piece of pizza.

I am not sending them to jail

I was dismissed.

I haven't been called for about 15 years,  
but they say it's always random,

I don't know.

Additionally, she would “tell...parents on back to school night...that you cannot teach passion for American government through a teacher who's neutral” (Marilyn, personal communication, August 24, 2015):

If you cannot stand up to me, how in the world will you stand up to the police?...  
How are you stand up to a police officer if you cannot stand up to your mid-high

school government teacher, where the stakes are so low. If you cannot stand up when the stakes are low, how can you stand up when the stakes are... high?

(Marilyn, personal communication, August 24, 2015)

Teaching her students how to stand up for themselves and what is fair regardless of expectation also pushed her “to speak up when it was an issue of right...and wrong” (Marilyn, personal communication, August 24, 2015), like when she confronted her vice principal two years before her retirement regarding graduation being moved from Thursday to a Friday night. Though not done out of any overt anti-Semitism, since the decision to move the ceremony was due to the school’s football field’s seating areas no longer being stable, and the new location only being available on a Friday night, Marilyn felt it was her obligation to speak up “because people don’t know until you say...because the country’s so overwhelmingly Christian” (Marilyn, personal communication, October 31, 2015):

I didn’t call her an anti-Semite, but I said, ‘I am so tired of this’...nobody got up in support and said, ‘That’s right’, you know...some teachers were appalled and applauded when they said it was going to be on Friday...I don’t care...Have it on a Sunday morning; I’m sure it’s available on Sunday morning. It never occurred to them...that this might be...unacceptable...and had they always done on a Friday night, I think I would’ve never challenged it; it was moving that offended me and their lack of...consideration. (Marilyn, personal communication, June 30, 2015)

**“May you live in interesting times”**

Though Marilyn is “hard-pressed to urge anyone to seek a career in public education right now” (Marilyn, personal communication, November 21, 2015), even

though there are “so few Jews are choosing public education as a career” (Marilyn, personal communication, November 21, 2015), she feels “[i]t’s a new Jewish world that we’re privileged to live in...who knows how many Jewish women are choosing public school education as a career? [O]ur presence has been very important there...to carry on that tradition of education and education for conscience” (Marilyn, personal communication, October 31, 2015):

So now, I’m always torn now, because I think teachers are so badly treated in our culture the last five or six years, that I really don’t want young people to...subject themselves, you know, to that sort of treatment. On the other hand, there are rewards that are so beyond anything one could have imagined...that are so much richer than other things in life, but you know...everybody must find their own path (Marilyn, personal communication, August 24, 2015)

Although she has since retired from teaching, Marilyn feels it is crucial to keep teaching and learning through various professional and local endeavors, as educating others and oneself is “this constant process of growing as a human being” (Marilyn, personal communication, August 24, 2015), that “study for its own sake...needs no justification. Knowledge for its own sake is prized in Judaism” (Marilyn, personal communication, November 21, 2015). For Marilyn, being a Jewish teacher in the public school system means using your platform to “make change without thinking what will that change” (Marilyn, personal communication, November 21, 2015):

[A]s Jews, what do you do with that knowledge? How does it change us?...One, knowledge needs no justification, and so whatever we teach, we don’t have to

justify that. The other is that what do you do with that knowledge? Do you make the world a better place? (Marilyn, personal communication, November 21, 2015)

*“So it’s nice to say, ‘Well, I’m just...Jewish the way I’m Jewish.’ And that felt right to me, you know?”*

### **Pamela**

Pamela is in her mid-40s, currently teaching middle school English and residing in the same coastal city in which she grew up. Though the city’s population is diverse, the Jewish population “[is] here, [but] it’s not huge...[However,] it’s very much accepted and there’s several temples here” (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015).

Furthermore, though the Reform temple she attended in elementary school “[is] still there. It’s our local temple here in Mystic Beach. [And] it’s not that far [away]” (Pamela, personal communication, October 11, 2015) from where she lives, her and her husband are “not actively members of [any] temple right now” (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015). Even though a “part of [her] feels like [she] should be at a local place” (Pamela, personal communication, October 11, 2015), she finds herself drawn to the Reconstructionist temple she was bat-mitzvahed at as an adult, that she “enjoy[s] the holidays...[and] the...feeling, the community of participating like that” (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015).

Much like the small Star of David necklace she was wearing the first time we met, the mezuzah on the front doorpost of Pamela’s townhome portrays the minimal visibility of Jewishness favored by many Ashkenazi Jews in mixed neighborhoods. Inside Pamela’s home where our first meeting took place (subsequent meetings took place over Skype since our schedules were filled with summer vacations and teaching and family obligations in the fall, which made it difficult to meet face to face), the reserved display



of Judaism continued, as there was only one piece of Jewish identity discernable: a small silver menorah on a shelf.

To the outsider, it would seem as if Pamela has little to no connection to Judaism; however, her lack of prominent Jewish exhibition stems from having not being born into a Jewish family with a mother and father actively taking a role in her Jewish upbringing. Her current enjoyment of a Jewish lifestyle and identity was more of an evolution, not founded by her parents during her childhood, but rather her own quest to transition from a child being labeled as a “half and half” to an adult choosing to live a proud Kosher-style life with her Jewish husband.

Pamela’s narrative begins as a child realizing that she would need to create her own identity, even if it meant temporary movements through Christianity and Catholicism. It then shifts to a her college life, when she was most unaware of her Jewishness; she also describes what it meant for her to be a college student in Vienna, a place not favored by her father due to its legacy of anti-Semitism. Afterwards, Pamela tells about her first years as a teacher and the role Judaism played in being an educator in public schools, a profession that allows her to be the advocate she did not have growing up. Next, she shares how her journey to Judaism was solely driven by her own self-interest, including traveling to various locations in search of Jewish history and the impact this had on her decision to choose a lifestyle fully committed to Judaism. She ends her story with where she sees herself as a teacher in the public schools and how solidifying her place within the Jewish faith helps her give all her students exposure to the presence and voice of the minority identity in a public school.

### **Neither one nor the other**

For Pamela, growing up in Mystic Beach meant being caught between two worlds, attending Hebrew school outside of public school until it proved too difficult for her, while at the same time having several Christmas trees in the house during the holidays. Her “mother’s father was Jewish...he left them very early on so she doesn’t have any recollection of that” (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015); additionally, though her mother converted to Judaism from Catholicism, she could not really help Pamela understand what it meant to live a Jewish life: “I mean my mom grew up Catholic; she was gonna be a nun. You know, she went to Catholic school her whole life and then she converted...she’s not very religious either way” (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015).

In addition, Pamela’s father “didn’t really grow up very Jewish although he was” in Philadelphia and his parents died when she was young, further limiting a deep connection to Judaism (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015): “[T]hey went to temple, but not really. It...really was just a...cultural thing. It’s just, you know, your grandparents were Jewish and your parents are Jewish and then you are” (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015). Furthermore, Pamela recalled that “there was not a lot of activity going on at home, or going on with other...kids, other than being there at the Temple” (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015), since Pamela’s mother “didn’t know what she was doing because she...just didn’t...[S]he was trying to make the best of it and she was trying to get us to go [to temple]” (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015). Pamela remembered going to “temple here in Mystic

Beach and temple was fun for a while. [She] liked running around in there and...learning about it” (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015).

It was not until she saw the tattoo on her fourth grade Hebrew school teacher’s arm that she first learned about the Holocaust, which “definitely spurred something in [her]” (Pamela, personal communication, October 11, 2015) and helped her develop a deeper connection to Jewish identity: “I think that even though I didn’t want to be at Hebrew school, I didn’t really get it or understand its importance, I was pretty moved by that woman and what she went through” (Pamela, personal communication, October 11, 2015). Though “they explained to it [them] in whatever fashion they could for a fourth grader” (Pamela, personal communication, October 11, 2015), seeing the tattoo on her teacher’s arm left a lasting image on Pamela: “I was pretty shocked by the...The tattoo freaked me out, and I think that’s why I just can’t handle tattoos...I don’t know why people would do that to themselves. I don’t get it” (Pamela, personal communication, October 11, 2015). Additionally, Pamela stated that her teacher’s tough but honest approach to storytelling “goes along with the historical thread of this part of Judaism for [her]” (Pamela, personal communication, October 11, 2015):

I remember she was really tough...she was serious. I felt like she had a story to tell, like she wanted us to know. Because that was important to her, because that was her experience...I think she really wanted us to know. She wanted us to understand. (Pamela, personal communication, October 11, 2015)

However, as much as her mother “knew [attending temple] was important to [her] dad...it was not important enough for him to do it himself” (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015), which allowed Pamela to not feel any real pressure to

stick with her Jewish studies. Even though Pamela enjoyed learning about the history of Judaism, learning the language in fifth grade proved to be too much of an obstacle to overcome and since her mom “had converted to marry [her] dad...she really couldn’t support [her] in it so [they] just quit” (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015):

I was not interested

I couldn’t

I just couldn’t do it

And so I said,

“I don’t want to do it”

I knew that it felt too difficult for me

it felt like I wasn't going to be able to learn it

It wasn't going to be something that I could really do well

that was all the Judaism that I had

until I was out of college

Until I started traveling with my dad and my step mom.

Furthermore, her mother’s insider/outsider positionality, along with her father’s lack of commitment to Judaism caused them to “[do] both [Hanukkah and Christmas] and...as much as it was nice to get presents, [Pamela] didn’t like the both thing...and [she] didn’t understand why...[they] had a tree” (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015). Due to her mother’s Catholic background, “[they] had trees...multiple trees in the house...[They] had an upstairs tree in [their] room; [they] had a downstairs tree, both fake, both ornately decorated” (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015). In

addition, Christmas trees played an important role in Pamela's search to figure out her religious identity, when one year in her youth, she looked around at all the dead trees lining her street, and realized that she did not know what she was or what religion she identified with:

I remember...standing out in front of my house after Christmas

I remember looking to both sides

I can see all the dead trees out on the street, thinking,

“I don't know what I am.

I don't know,

I really don't know what I am.

I really don't.”

Pamela also felt her childhood included “a gap where [she] didn't know [she] was Jewish and it probably would've benefitted [her] to know, to have identified with that” (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015). Even as a child attending “camp in...Malibu...it wasn't a Jewish camp, but there were a lot of Jews there” (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015), Pamela felt lost in understanding what it meant to have a Jewish identity and a connection with other Jews: “I didn't know what that was, how to identify somebody as Jewish by their name or by what they look like or...where they went for vacation...I didn't really know how to do that...I didn't know I was Jewish then” (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015). In addition, Pamela moved further away from her childhood connection to Jewishness after her family moved to Newport Beach (and soon afterwards her parents divorced):

[I]f we hadn't moved to Newport Beach, I don't...know if I would've been any more or less Jewish. Like the people I was friends with in eighth grade, they weren't Jewish, you know? They really, none of them...maybe one that I can even think of that I was friend with at that time. And then when we moved to Newport Beach there were...Jewish kids at my high school and I was friends with a couple of them. But it wasn't like this strong identification like growing up in a Jewish school. (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015)

Though her search to find an identity included attending church with a neighborhood friend when Pamela "must been nine, eight or nine" (Pamela, personal communication, August 18, 2015), Pamela attended church regularly with friends in high school during the late 1980s because she "thought it would be a lot easier if [she] were Christian. Because that was when...it was...fun, more fun to be Christian" (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015):

Churches were popping up everywhere and, you know, they'd have events for kids, and they'd have parties for kids. And so I would go...I'd go with this guy that I liked...[I]t was...hip and it was the thing to do...that's how they would gather people and get people to be part of that. (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015)

She quickly realized that being a member of the dominant religion was not for her, as she recalled she "always knew that...[she] was just checking that out...it never felt permanent...[she] was just doing it to hang out with people and to go do something and it...just never really felt permanent" (Pamela, personal communication, August 18, 2015), even though this did not make her immediately head to Judaism. In addition, as much as

she was spending time with her peers at their places of worship, they “never felt like where [she] was supposed to be” (Pamela, personal communication, August 18, 2015), particularly because she never felt connected to their entire premises:

I never bought into it...I didn't get it, it didn't make sense to me....and maybe if it had made sense to me, it wouldn't have been [so] temporary, but it just felt a little, it never felt quite right...I just didn't get it...I guess miracles happen but I...just couldn't, I couldn't buy the whole thing...once I realized what it...was, it didn't make sense. (Pamela, personal communication, August 18, 2015)

Although her journey to Judaism included temporary moments spent in Christian and Catholic churches in her teenage years, these faiths never filled a permanent need within her as “there was [not] a lot of religion in these...parties in the parking lot of the church” (Pamela, personal communication, August 18, 2015):

I don't know why I discontinued going...someone probably said something fundamentalist to me that I didn't appreciate...and that's probably why that whole thing is just, when you think about how Christianity and the proselytizing Christianity operates with, that kind of...turned me off big time and...I know that I...wouldn't wanna have anything to do with anything that gathered people up with that kind of motivation. (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015)

### **Ignorance is bliss?**

Likewise, her collegiate years did not bring her any closer to a Jewish life, since “[t]here was nothing in college [that] really spoke to [her] religion-wise” (Pamela, personal communication, August 18, 2015): “In college, I didn't know I was Jewish really. I mean I really didn't identify with it at all” (Pamela, personal communication,

June, 23, 2015). Even though there were Jews when Pamela attended the University of Denver, she faced more of the unknown, as she did not identify with being Jewish and she “was just oblivious at the time” (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015): “I didn’t even realize...who was Jewish and who wasn’t Jewish; I didn’t get any of that” (Pamela, personal communication, August 18, 2015).

Her best friend at the time “was very Jewish...she...had done the BBYO<sup>25</sup> thing and all these different Jewish activities growing up” (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015) and actively sought out and participated in Jewish organizations, such as Hillel, and different events that reinforced her Jewish identity:

Because our school was so small, you couldn’t really see that there was Jewish sorority or Jewish fraternity, like you can in other colleges...so things were very mixed and so...we just went to...wherever we were comfortable and...she said that was one of the factors that she was really drawn to. Because she was aware of it, because that’s how she...grew up, very Jewish in Ohio. (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015)

Though they joined the same sorority, this particular friend also rushed based on the Hebrew lettering on the organization’s pin: “[S]he really identified as being Jewish...she joined...because...on the pin...there’s Jewish letters. On the pin, it says ‘Arba’...for four because there were four founding women in this sorority” (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015). Although her friend “was attracted to that...[Pamela] didn’t...really have any idea about that...[she] didn’t even notice or think about that. [She] had no Jewish radar at all-it was just off from no identification” (Pamela, personal

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<sup>25</sup> B’nai B’rith Youth Organization was designed for post-Bar/Bat-mitzvah Jews to form bonds with local Jewish teenagers and create long-lasting connections to the larger Jewish community



communication, June, 23, 2015): “I didn’t realize...I was oblivious. I just thought it was somewhere fun to be...I didn’t realize till later that it had some...letters and some background-not a lot of Judaism...not any real Judaism” (Pamela, personal communication, August 18, 2015). However, even after acknowledging there were Hebrew letters on the pin, Pamela still had no connection to a Jewish identity, regardless of her friend joining the local Hillel: “I didn’t participate with my girlfriend...I don’t even know if she knew I was Jewish...I just think I was...not affiliated...so nobody knew. I didn’t really affiliate with that” (Pamela, personal communication, August 18, 2015).

During her junior year of college, Pamela went to Vienna on a study-abroad opportunity, choosing not to go there to study the history and impact of Holocaust and the destruction of the Jewish communities, but rather for the convenience of a program that would teach her the language one she got there:

I went there because I didn’t need to know the language to go...because they taught us German when we got there...there were a list of cities and you can choose where you wanted to go and I just went ‘cause I didn’t have to learn the language. That was really purely why I went there. (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015)

Though her “parents didn’t say no, don’t go...[as] they wanted [her] to go to Europe” (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015), her “dad was a little bit hesitant to send [her] there...he would asked [her], ‘Do you have to-why do you have to go to Austria?’” (Pamela, personal communication, August 18, 2015), even though “he’s not really religious at all” (Pamela, personal communication, August 18, 2015). It was not until after she returned that her dad and stepmother expressed their fears of anti-

Semitism: “[L]ater on, they would say, ‘You know, we were really hoping you didn’t.’ My dad said that he was hoping I didn’t go to Vienna because he thought there would be anti-Semitism, but he never voiced that before I went” (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015).

During her five month stay, she “realized what anti-Semitism was” (Pamela, personal communication, August 18, 2015) and the Holocaust’s impact on Vienna after seeing guards in front of the temple and visiting Terezin and the concentration camp: “[T]hat was only the thing that I thought, ‘Oh yeah. There was, the Holocaust was here.’ You know...that because evident to me and that’s probably what my dad was thinking about” (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015). However, her lack of a Jewish consciousness allowed her to not have any fear of being a Jew in such a historical place:

I felt like

I’d missed out

I feel like that’s the part...the awareness of it

maybe I could’ve appreciated it in a different way

if I was more aware

but I wasn’t aware.

I just wasn’t aware

I mean maybe that ignorance...was fine during the time

maybe the ignorance made it easier for me growing up.

I just wasn’t aware, you know?

## **Finding a place to call home**

Although both her biological parents did not have any strong ties to Jewish life when she was growing up, Pamela's father remarried someone who identified with and practiced a more active Jewish life than his first wife: "[S]he was very Jewish on the spectrum of Judaism. And so she brought more Judaism into our lives" (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015). As a result, his views on Judaism and participating in Jewish affairs began to shift, which caused Pamela to assess the impact of her upbringing without a strong religious identity:

[M]y dad was a big supporter of the YMCA, but not because it was a Christian organization, just because it provided what it provided for people. And then my stepmom [kind of] got her influence in different things both...very positive and very negative...she said, "David, you should really support Jewish organizations. You know that's a Christian organization." And I thought, "Oh. I didn't really get that. I didn't learn all that growing up", but then I [kind of], I felt like I started learning it more as an adult and it...because you know [kind of] "Root for the team". (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015)

When she was nearing the end of her 20s and entering her early 30s in the mid-1990s, several opportunities were available for Pamela to travel with her father and stepmother, along with their temple, to different locations "looking for Jews and Jewish history":

[W]e were in Spain...at the Alhambra. And you're learning about the expulsion documents...and how there were Jews on Columbus' ships and...Jews created, it's not modern Spain, but Jews created the wealth in Spain at the time. And they

were forced to leave because of their...success and...that's pretty interesting.

(Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015)

To be able to experience another side of Judaism outside of the temple drew her in since she says she is “more interested in the history than...in the everyday of it....It was purely the history... learning about those things...makes you...want to be supportive of that”

(Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015):

I knew it was going to be a really good trip

so when they offered I just took advantage of it.

I went on three trips with them.

I went to Turkey and Israel and Jordan.

I went to Spain and Morocco.

I was just going along with it.

I didn't really know what it was but it felt right.

While she traveled with her father and stepmother and their temple, Pamela became more aware of her desire to explore Judaism: “[I]t was really being there and getting a sense of life there and what they have to struggle with to exist there and kind of...rooting for that” (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015). She also felt that these trips abroad helped solidify that Judaism was the right religion for her: “Christianity doesn't make sense to me...I don't know...Judaism just makes more sense to me...and if Christianity made more sense to me then that's the way I would go, but historically Judaism makes more sense to me” (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015). Yet even as she was moving closer to a Jewish identity, she questioned whether she could possibly raise children without a defined religious background:

When I was on the Israel trip and Jordan trip

I brought a boyfriend with me.

I really liked him

I thought, you know maybe this would work,

maybe I don't want to have kids,

maybe they could be Christian,

maybe they could be

I was half and half, maybe they could be the other half.

However, on the last day of the trip he broke up with her, even though they had been dating for two years; this spurred her to reconsider the role religion would play in a future romantic relationship: “At that point...I’m like, ‘Well I need to look for somebody who’s Jewish. Because I felt like I didn’t want that to happen again” (Pamela, personal communication, October 11, 2015). In addition to looking to marry a Jewish man, Pamela felt establishing a Jewish family life “would make things easier because [she] knew that...[she] was confused as a child and [she]...didn’t want that” (Pamela, personal communication, October 11, 2015):

It just seemed simpler to me:

I wanted to marry someone who was Jewish

I didn’t know why

when I grew up

I had my mom converted and...it never really worked

at the time I wanted kids.

I thought

I really need to have a cohesive unit

if I'm gonna have kids

I didn't want to have

I didn't want the result to be my result.

Not long after Pamela was questioning her own future, “a friend of [hers] told [her] that [she] needed to figure out what it meant to be Jewish” (Pamela, personal communication, October 11, 2015), that “[i]f you want to date a Jewish guy, you should go figure out what it means to be Jewish because you really don't know” (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015). Pamela states that “like attracts like...you gotta figure out...who you are if you want to find somebody who you want to be with” (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015) and that a person who is “nothing...[with] no identification [cannot] expect to find somebody who's Jewish” (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015). Realizing that she needed to “figure it out” in order to meet a Jewish mate, Pamela began studying for her bat-mitzvah, as she “figured it was a way to learn to be Jewish...learn what it was” (Pamela, personal communication, October 11, 2015). It was when she was 32, during her time training to become a bat-mitzvah, that she met her husband Marcos, a fellow Jew who was not that religious even though he worked in the local JCC<sup>26</sup>.

Although she had looked at the bat-mitzvah process as a project, she does not “know where [she] got the impetus to do it because nobody...cared whether [she] did it or didn't do it...[but she] thought, ‘I could take that class’” (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015): “I had no real direction...I was just doing my own... exploration” (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015). However, she did not

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<sup>26</sup> Jewish Community Center

take the classes solely for the religious fulfillment; rather, the bat-mitzvah “was more of an education thing for [her], and it’s always been more of an education thing than a religious thing” (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015). For Pamela, finding a fit in the spectrum of Jewish identity meant being bat-mitzvahed at a temple that was inclusive of people who did not grow up Jewish:

[O]ur temple's re-constructionist so that's kind of somewhere between reform...[i]t's around reform...Some people see it as a little more conservative than reform, but some people see it as a little less because there's music and there's a choir and...But...GOD isn't referred to as he...it's more inclusive and humanitarian...It's more like...GOD is within all of us kind of thing. It's not like you're looking up at a more superior being. It's more egalitarian and inclusive that way. (Pamela, personal communication, October 11, 2015)

Initially, Pamela faced some backlash from her mother and sister regarding her decision to align herself with her father’s religion: “My sister doesn’t identify as Jewish either so...they would tease me, or say, ‘Oh you’re on dad’s team or...why are you doing that?’” (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015). In addition, Pamela noted that her sister does not seem to have any problems with Pamela being Jewish, that maybe “she doesn’t understand the benefit of it. Or maybe she understands the benefit of it for [Pamela], but she doesn’t really understand why it would be a benefit for her” (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015). Likewise, Pamela explained that her sister sees attending temple as “condoning [their] stepmother and her wishes and she doesn’t want to do that...‘cause they don’t get along” (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015). Furthermore, she shared that her mother and sister felt Pamela’s decision to live a

Jewish lifestyle and complete the bat-mitzvah classes meant “it was just [her] kissing up to [her] dad, but it really wasn’t. For [her] it didn’t feel like that. [She] enjoyed being there with him because [she] didn’t have that growing up, so why not get it as an adult?”

(Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015):

I didn’t really have,

I mean

I had some parental guidance,

I mean...my mom was a little like

‘oh wow. Oh I thought,

I thought we dealt with that before.

I thought that was,

that we really weren’t going down that route, that road.’

I don’t think she feels connected to it

she thought I was siding with my father

I don’t-those are her words, not mine.

However, Pamela did not let that dissuade her as she continued her quest to learn about the Jewish beliefs and identity especially when others did not know what to make of her new lifestyle: “I think it took my friends and family a little bit like, ‘Okay, now I’m going to call myself Jewish’...they kinda had to figure out what that was for me... because I wasn’t, I didn’t really affiliate with anything before” (Pamela, personal communication, August 18, 2015). She shared that this confusion over how to approach her defined religious identity was seen particularly during the winter time when people around her would greet her using the dominant religion’s holiday greeting: “[O]nce I



decided that that was what I was going to do...people would say ‘Oh Christmas. Oh no, you know Hanukkah’ ...as if I’m not going to be able to understand what that...parallel holiday is for myself” (Pamela, personal communication, August 18, 2015). Additionally, before her bat-mitzvah training, Pamela transitioned to a kosher style way of dining after a childhood of “eating all kinds of things” (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015):

[W]hen I first decided I wasn’t gonna eat pork...it’s just something that sounded right...It was just about learning what it was and maybe it was when I went to Israel and learned about why. Because that made sense to me...But I don’t have two sets of dishes or two dishwashers” (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015)

However, this new way of eating was, and sometimes still is, not necessarily easy for her friends and family to understand since she did not grow up eating that way:

I will eat a really good cheeseburger if I feel like I’m gonna eat it. But...I don’t eat port, I don’t eat shellfish...People will say, “I ordered this and you can just pick it off...you can just eat that...it doesn’t really matter”...I remember going to a pizza place with somebody and getting there late. And she knew that...I don’t eat pork or anything and it was just covered...in sausage. And I was like, “I don’t eat that.” And she’s like, “You can just pick it off”. (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015)

Pamela has found that even though she is “kosher style in that [she doesn’t] eat certain things...[and] that’s kind of [her] ode to Judaism...people know that about [her] so [she] think[s] they can relate to [her] as being Jewish because of what [she] eat[s]” (Pamela,

personal communication, June, 23, 2015). As a result of having to deal with friends and family members' insensitive remarks regarding what she is and is not allowed to eat per Jewish dietary laws, Pamela became more understanding to the needs of others: "[I]t's made me a lot more conscious about what are...people's preferences...everyone's got their thing...you gotta be more aware of everybody's considerations, whether it's religious or diet or...health...I think it's more of an awareness of individuality than it was before" (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015).

Even though she was able to generate a connection to Judaism as an adult, which counterbalanced the uncertainty of what religion she identified with growing up, Pamela hopes her religiously-unaffiliated 11-year old niece does not face the same struggle with identity placement as she did: "I think they need to have something to say; they need to say something, I'm something. I'm some religion, whether it's one way or the other. But I don't know what my niece says when people ask her that" (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015). Additionally, Pamela strongly believes in the benefit of children identifying with some religion, even if it is not what they continue with as adults: "I would love for my niece to understand it because I see there's so much benefit of understanding and learning about it whether or not you continue it as an adult, but having that foundation as a kid, I think, is beneficial" (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015).

It was also around the time of her bat-mitzvah that she began her work with Jewish organizations that aligned to the Judaic principle of "Heal the World": "I started to learn about how other Jews were being treated in the world and about how other people were being mistreated and then how Jews find it their mission to help other people

not be discriminated against” (Pamela, personal communication, October 11, 2015). After attending High Holiday services with her father and stepmother, as well as traveling with them and their temple, Pamela became involved with the Anti-Defamation League in the Orange County area, since her stepmother knew the director of the organization. Pamela participated with the Leigh Steinberg<sup>27</sup> Leadership Group, where “they provide you leadership and you meet monthly and you hear different speakers and then they expect you to take on a role at some Jewish...level in the ADL or with some other Jewish organization” (Pamela, personal communication, August 18, 2015). She eventually transitioned to volunteering her time with the Jewish Family and Children Services organization through the JCC near her home, which “wasn’t directly with the ADL, but it was in the Jewish world of service” (Pamela, personal communication, August 18, 2015) before deciding to step away from both organizations:

I supported the ADL.

I went to some meetings;

I appreciate what the ADL does.

I ended up doing something,

I ended up also doing things for JFCS

I haven’t been involved since we got back  
from Mexico

I haven’t really done

I haven’t done anything except send a check

I left

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<sup>27</sup> Leigh Steinberg is a famous sports agent and is the inspiration for Tom Cruise’s character in the movie “Jerry Maguire”.

I haven't  
I haven't really figured out  
where I want to put my time  
I'm not sure.

Although she was not raised with a strong Jewish family that actively modeled the Tikkun Olam philosophy, she enjoyed her time with these charitable groups because they served whoever needed them in the community, regardless of religion, race, or ethnicity. In particular, Pamela stated that the ADL's mission "is to help people that...are not able to help themselves or who are not getting...results...in any other way" (Pamela, personal communication, August 18, 2015):

[I]t wasn't always about being Jewish, but it could be about being Black or being Mexican...because the ADL will work for whoever calls them...you know, if you're being mistreated...and your human rights are being violated, then the ADL is gonna come to you...they serve all kinds of people. (Pamela, personal communication, August 18, 2015)

Even though her level of participation has decreased over the years, she feels that her work with the ADL in particular has helped her feel able to call on them regarding questions about the influence of Christian symbolism in public spaces like schools:

I think what was interesting about learning about the ADL was learning about the holidays and what's appropriate...it's okay to have a Christmas tree but...it's not okay to have crosses or its's not okay to have a nativity in a public place...learning about...what was really okay, what you can do and get away with that's okay. But then some things that are not okay that people think are okay because we're in a

public school [*laughs*], you need to abide by certain rules...I feel like there was... something I had called the ADL for that I asked about...it might've been the Christmas tree clarification...or some other decoration, maybe it was a nativity. I don't know what it was. It was...something that had to do with the holidays, some sort of décor that people think is appropriate to just fall over. (Pamela, personal communication, August 18, 2015)

In addition to questioning the appropriateness of displaying religious decorations during the holiday time, Pamela criticized the impact of Christianity on public education, recalling that when she was working in a first grade classroom for her student teaching assignment, she “wanted to do some kind of Hanukkah thing, because [she] just needed to...put a little something in there because there's too much Christmas” (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015): “And I did...this art project that...was from little triangles...and it ended up...as a Jewish star, a big Jewish star...I dipped it in glitter, but it was still something that wasn't... more... everyday Christian holiday” (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015).

Since that time, whenever the Jewish holidays are approaching, Pamela feels the strain of having to balance her desire to resist the status quo with the pressures of the daily schedule: “[T]here's a little part of me that wants to fight back with that or...read them a Hanukkah story, but there's not a lot of time in middle school. I don't really feel compelled in middle school; it's not the same” (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015). Additionally, Pamela shared that she is “always kind of on the lookout... [because] it's not Christmas break, don't call it Christmas break; it's winter break” (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015); however, she does not have to look to

far to see the hegemony of Christianity in her district, as it makes money by renting out the schools to churches:

[T]here's a church at...my school on Sunday. And I only like it because...I can get on campus on Sunday if I need to...And part of me is like, "Okay, that's nice" because my Temple started in a church because we didn't have anywhere to be at first and...you...can't just...buy a building right away...I would say almost every Mystic Beach elementary or middle school on Sundays, you'll find a church, some church. And it's pretty permanent. Like they must sign a pretty good deal with the district because this is...where their church is. (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015)

### **Challenging the status quo**

However, her transformation from "be[ing a] nothing" to being proud to claim her Jewishness publicly is seen through her confrontation of Christianity's influence in education, particularly regarding the placement of school activities around Jewish holidays. One important memory stands out in her mind: about five years ago, after looking over the final draft of the school calendar for the following year, Pamela noticed Open House was scheduled to be on Passover. She quickly acted as the Jewish spokesperson to her superintendent, and then to the woman in charge of the calendar for the district, explaining the unfairness of the situation for herself and other Jewish teachers and students and the dilemma in making them have to choose with event to attend:

I'm sitting there at lunch

I'm reading it and thinking,

"The high holidays are, they have..."

I'm looking at next year's calendar

                  this was the final draft of the calendar I had received.

I hadn't really looked

                  I don't know how I missed it.

But I was like,

                  "You can't have Open House on Passover.

                  So you gotta figure it out."

I start calling

                  I know my superintendent

                  so I called his office

I said,

                  "You can't,

                  you have to change that.

                  That's not fair for Jewish teachers and Jewish students to have to choose

                  I'm not going to be there

                  I'm sure there's other Jewish teachers perhaps that aren't going to be  
                  there.

                  Why do you have to make kids choose where they want to go?"

I think people look to me

                  I'm like the Jewish calendar person.

                  Though the calendar was eventually changed, Pamela stated that she felt the need to address the marginalization of Jews, that "[she] felt like [she] did a good... thing... calling [her] district and making them aware of that...[She] hadn't seen that happen

before” (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015). Even though the person in charge of the calendar said, “I don’t know how I that happened” (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015), Pamela acknowledged that “you can buy a calendar at CVS that’s got the Jewish holidays on it. It’s not some secret, top secret information that you can’t go and find out. They’re just...not thinking about it” (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015). Since that time, people at her school expect her to speak on behalf of all Jewish holidays whenever there are potential calendar concerns:

I’m on the PTA...I wasn’t able to go to the planning...so they said just type up your concerns and...we’ll put them in the calendar. And so I typed them up and the first thing I did was I told them what the days of...you know the big three that shouldn’t be...any evening activities or shouldn’t be anything really going on to have the kids have to choose. (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015)

However, this has not dissuaded Pamela from constantly advocating for herself and her fellow Jews. She challenges her students’ beliefs regarding what it means to be Jewish by talking to them about her taking personal days off for Rosh Hashanah or Yom Kippur, since many of them have little to no knowledge of Jewish life due to never before meeting anyone who was Jewish: “They have no idea that’s what a Jewish person looks like or what they would do, or why would they leave, or why is it the New Year?” (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015). Furthermore, talking openly about her upcoming absences is “how [she] outs [her]self the beginning of the year” (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015):

I take

I usually take off either, whatever falls during the week



I'm taking one of them off

I use it to talk to them about being Jewish and what that means.

I always put the Jewish holidays on the board

I put it up there

I'll put up whatever it is.

But...I can't say that I talk about it much more than that.

During our second conversation, Pamela debated whether she would take off work for both Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur this year, since both holidays fell in the middle of the week. Ultimately, she celebrated both holidays, but she said she “would have liked to have [her] two days back...since they're...part of [her] personal days” (Pamela, personal communication, October 11, 2015). As much as Pamela grappled with the conflict between Christian privilege and other religions in the public school system, she became especially frustrated when considering how schools value test scores and rankings (and faulting students for being out for religious purposes) over an appreciation of their identity. In particular, she shared about teaching a student of hers the importance of not being apologetic for his Jewishness, as Christians are not apologizing for the hegemony of their religion in public education:

I know that

I had one of my students wrote an email

“I wanted to let you know

but I'm sorry,

I have to be out for the religious holidays”

I wrote him back

I said,

“Don't say you're sorry.

You don't need to be sorry.

That's your religion.

Nobody says I'm sorry school's not open for Christmas and Easter

so you don't be sorry,

you know you just stated,

it's a fact and you're going

and you'll take care of your work

but you don't have to say sorry.”

I wanted him to get that he didn't need to be sorry.

### **Pay it forward**

Though she has been able to successfully navigate her Jewish identity within the public school setting (even without any Jewish teachers in her own public schools growing up), Pamela understands the plight of the few Jewish students in her middle school classes: “I probably have at this school and my previous school...I would say...I don't know, out of 175 kids, there's probably like 10, you know, 8 or 10 kids that I know are Jewish...I'm sure that's hard for them” (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015). Much like the ADL mission, “[the] Jewish philosophy: helping other people, helping underserved, helping people that need help” (Pamela, personal communication, August 18, 2015), that guided her during her tenure in the leadership programs, Pamela does not let her Jewish students face the same marginalization in school that she felt in her formative years; instead she acts as a representative for them by explaining Jewish

life so they do not have to, since “there’s probably almost one or two in every class” (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015). For Pamela, being a Jewish teacher in a public school means evolving into the Jewish role model she did not have growing up:

If there’s an opportunity for me to share that I’m Jewish,

I feel

I’m helping out the kids that are.

I like to kind of stick up for them and be the spokesperson

I’m sure they get some sort of...they get marginalized in some way

If I could explain it, they don’t have to explain it

I think it gives those kids some comfort

You just become known as...the Jewish teacher

That’s fine...it doesn’t bother me.

I think it’s hard,

So I like to be a champion for them if I can.

*“I’m laughing because I have this emoji and one of the little icons says, ‘The struggle is real’...[It] is a real struggle but I am not equipped [to fight]”*

### **Olivia**

Olivia is just entering her 40s and is currently a “Teacher on Special Assignment” for the school district next to the religiously and ethnically diverse city in which she and her family of four reside. It was in early 2012, after 12 years of teaching middle school history that Olivia decided to leave the classroom in order to take on her dream job: an Academic Coach focusing on technology and its effects on learning. However, even though she is interacting with a wide network of educators, Olivia still finds herself on the outside looking in, as “there’s maybe one or two other Jewish teachers in the district or administrators in the district” (Olivia, personal communication, May 23, 2015).

Upon first glance, Olivia portrays the minimal visibility of Jewishness favored by many Ashkenazi Jews in Christian-dominated communities like the one in which we met: “I think I’m definitely not as upfront about ‘Hey I am [Jewish]!’ I used to wear a lot Jewish jewelry and stuff like that, which I don’t anymore. And I think that’s partially where I am geographically” (Olivia, personal communication, May 23, 2015). The journey away from a marked Jewish identity to her current one may seem linear in nature, especially as she jokes she is “on a Western progression” (Olivia, personal communication, May 23, 2015) since not long after college, she and her husband moved away from the insular Midwestern community in which she grew up to secular Southern California.

Even though she was raised in a community where Jewish families reinforced the “shtetl” mentality by making the temple the center of their social world, Olivia

understands that her two young children (her son is 11 and her daughter is 10) have to work harder to balance their Jewish identities with their secular ones. Yet, they are not bothered being the “only Jewish kids at school...they kinda like it. They like being able to...teach people things...[since] they don’t really have anything to compare it to” (Olivia, personal communication, May 23, 2015): “I think they don’t really know any different, so it’s...not weird for them...[T]hey’ve got their friend friends. And then they have their Sunday school friends...they kind of weave them in...[and] they work it out...[I]t doesn’t become a thing” (Olivia, personal communication, May 23, 2015).

Furthermore, even without the connections to a Jewish life and tight-knit community that served as the bedrock for how she defines her Jewishness, Olivia has realized more effort is required to provide these same connections for her kids, due in part to her husband not being Jewish, the acceptance of assimilation in the Jewish community, and the strong influence of Christian privilege that is more present here than where she was raised. However, she is constantly cycling back to her family’s roots in Judaism that were central to her formative years; Olivia finds comfort and strength in maintaining and passing down the Jewish traditions, inviting all who are willing to learn, and seeing them dismantle the perceived differences between their religion and hers.

Olivia’s narrative begins as a child constantly traveling between polar opposites of the Jewish religious spectrum, as she was raised in a Reform household, yet her grandparents adhered to the Orthodox division of Judaism. It then shifts to two identity forming firsts: her first summer at Jewish camp and her first trip to Israel, both of which she wants for her own children. Afterwards, the narrative moves to her collegiate study abroad trip to Israel during a time of violence, where she describes her staunch desire to

remain there in order to strengthen her bond to the Jewish homeland. Next, she tells about her first years of public school teaching, including moving to California which forced her to confront the impact of assimilation on her ties to the past. She ends her story with where she sees herself as a Jewish mother and the effort it takes to bridge the past, present and future generations of her family, as well as her role and responsibility in challenging the status quo towards non-Christians.

### **One foot in, one foot out**

For Olivia, maintaining strong religious ties to the Jewish population stems from her great-grandfather (her dad's mom's father), who as an Orthodox rabbi originally from Lithuania, helped found the largest Conservative congregation in St. Louis where she grew up. Originally, her paternal grandparents "lived across the street from the first shul which [her] great-grandfather has been the rabbi of...[Once] they started allowing women on the pulpit" (Olivia, personal communication, November 21, 2015), her grandparents "switched synagogues. They didn't like that women were allowed on the bimah<sup>28</sup>, so they went from the conservative [temple] to the Orthodox [one]" (Olivia, personal communication, May 23, 2015): "[W]hen they switched temples, they moved to be closer to the new temple cause they walked...[they] had to move in order to be able to walk there...they wouldn't drive on Shabbat...They were hard core" (Olivia, personal communication, November 21, 2015).

Although Olivia's paternal grandfather was originally "more of a Reform Jew growing [up]...once his mother died, he became religious" (Olivia, personal communication, May 23, 2015). Additionally, even though her great-grandmother died when Olivia was nine, "[she] kind of knew [her grandparents]... [as always] being very,

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<sup>28</sup> Jewish word for pulpit

very, very traditional” (Olivia, personal communication, May 23, 2015). Even though Olivia’s father “doesn’t say anything bad” about being Jewish, at an early age he rejected the strict nature of living an Orthodox life, including the harsh treatment of women, and, though he trained as a rabbi for one year before deciding to quit, “he hated being Jewish. [Olivia doesn’t] think he *hated* being Jewish, he hated it being forced on him [since] he had grown up in an Orthodox household...[and] he went to...a day school” (Olivia, personal communication, November 21, 2015). Though “he’ll call himself a cultural Jew. He says he’s agnostic. Whatever that means”, Olivia also asserted that “he didn’t like being forced into believing something...he [did not] like the indoctrination of it...[and] he will tell you he’s been reformed since he was a child” (Olivia, personal communication, November 21, 2015).

Even though she “can’t recall a Shabbat dinner past childhood”, Olivia recalled that “every Friday night...we were there for a very long time. Then [they] stopped doing the older [they] got [as they] had things going on...[and] her parents stopped making [them] go” (Olivia, personal communication, November 21, 2015). However, for Olivia, “Friday nights were about all of [the family members]” (Olivia, personal communication, November 21, 2015):

My one uncle lived in town. His family and...[his] three kids... Then my dad’s younger brother just lived...45 minutes to an hour away. There would be time when he would come down with his family...I have...a big extended family that’s there [in St. Louis]...[and] there was a lot of togetherness in the family. (Olivia, personal communication, November 21, 2015)

Furthermore, Olivia stated that this inseparability continued “sometimes on Saturday[s when her immediate family] would go and just hang out with [her grandparents] and their friends, and, you know, keep them company” (Olivia, personal communication, May 23, 2015). Olivia also shared that celebrating holidays meant blending the traditional with the progressive, as “different family members were in charge of different holidays [but her] grandma had most of them” (Olivia, personal communication, November 21, 2015):

On High Holidays, we would have our service and then we’d go sit in their shul for a while just to visit with them, not for anything other than that. But my mom... having not grown up kosher, and my house not being kosher,...we would have “Break the fast”...we were allowed to do break the fast because it was...all dairy. And we did a brunch basically to break the fast...Now my mom has...60 people over...it’s huge. It’s all her friends, it’s all the family, but it started...[with] just the family. (Olivia, personal communication, May 23, 2015)

Olivia felt “growing up, it was fun to do all that together” (Olivia, personal communication, November 21, 2015) and vividly remembered going up to her grandmother’s house to make challah<sup>29</sup> and help her cook: “I thought it was awesome. I thought it was cool...I feel odd I love it so much” (Olivia, personal communication, November 21, 2015). During our last conversation, when she recalled the time spent with her grandparents as one of the critical incidents that shaped her Jewish identity, Olivia cried at the pride she has in her connection with them and the profound impact they have had in her life:

Look what’s happening here.

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<sup>29</sup> Special Jewish braided bread eaten on Shabbat and other holidays



I'm shocked, like why?

I don't know

I don't think I've ever really thought about it

Maybe that's what's happening here.

I don't know.

Wow, that was unexpected.

As much as she was saddened at the memory of them, Olivia remembered that it was not until she began attending Jewish summer camp that she was able to realize the impact of celebrating the weekly tradition:

When I was old enough to pay attention

I was actually kind of grateful that I've been a part of that

I've been to their house every Friday night

and...learned the songs

because the songs that were in the prayers that I learned at their house,

we did at camp every Friday night...

And that was very exciting for me

I've known this my whole life

I came back

I was saying,

"I know the songs"

I got to...help bench<sup>30</sup> with them

Though there were two camps in her home state, "one kind of up north and one down south. One was affiliated with the Hebrew Union Institute, and one was just

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<sup>30</sup> A bencher is the book of songs and prayers used on Shabbat

through the Jewish Community Centers. [She] was at the JCC camp” (Olivia, personal communication, November 21, 2015); however, she did not only love the “small, little regional Jewish camp...because it [was] so Jewish. [She] think[s] it was just the whole concept of it...being away for the whole summer, just with kids [her] own age, learning tradition, having services” (Olivia, personal communication, November 21, 2015). Camp offered her a chance to build lifelong friendships with Jewish people from different states: “A lot of them were from one of the youth groups...[and] were out of town... Columbus, Dayton, and then some cities in Indiana. That was where the bulk of the people came from. Then a couple people from West Virginia would come up” (Olivia, personal communication, November 21, 2015).

Though Olivia only knew one person when she first entered camp, she stated that getting “thrown into a cabin with all these people...[meant] ‘I guess we’re making friends’” (Olivia, personal communication, November 21, 2015): “When you lived together for a month, I mean, come on, you’re going to forge some pretty good friendships” (Olivia, personal communication, November 21, 2015). Furthermore, Olivia believed that “not having a super strong group of friends at school and in [her] community made that group of people so much more important”, especially since “[she] went [her] first summer before sixth grade and [she] turned 11 that summer” (Olivia, personal communication, November 21, 2015). She even keeps “in touch with the people that [she] went to camp with. When [she] go[es] home, they are who [she] call[s]...Some of [them] still get together...28 years later” (Olivia, personal communication, November 21, 2015).

However, the same passion for camp is not found in her children, as they “don’t want to go. [Her] son went just for Chavah for two nights and was homesick. [She] think[s] he’s afraid of it...[but] he’s about to turn 11 so [she’s] thinking maybe he can try again” (Olivia, personal communication, November 21, 2015): “I think two days or one week, I don’t think that’s enough time. I think you have to be gone for a significant amount of time before you really start to settle in and get how important it is” (Olivia, personal communication, November 21, 2015). Much like her own mother, who “had gone to camp...[and possibly her] dad did too[,]...kind of pushed [her] into camp”, Olivia does not “see any need to send [her son] to anything but a Jewish camp [that] if [she’s] going to do it, it’s going to be for that reason, both [her] kids” (Olivia, personal communication, November 21, 2015): “[S]o far they’re not super interested. I kind of want to force them, but it’s also really expensive. It’s a really expensive way to spend the summer if they hate it” (Olivia, personal communication, November 21, 2015). Though where she is from “all the kids are going to camp [and] every summer [she] see[s her friends] stuff on Facebook [and] [she] think[s], ‘I want my kids to go to camp’” (Olivia, personal communication, November 21, 2015), Olivia stated that if she was going to allow her children to attend camp in a different state, she would only “send them to [the] camp that [she] went to for a couple of weeks” (Olivia, personal communication, November 21, 2015).

Likewise, Olivia also shared that she wants her children to experience going to Israel around the same age she first went, so that they are able to understand how traveling there for over two weeks became one of the critical incidents that shaped her Jewish identity: “I was 12. My grandparents took my entire family to Israel...It was my

dad, the four of us, my dad's older brother and his family, all my first cousins...I think there was 19 of us" (Olivia, personal communication, November 21, 2015). Since it was such a large group, "[they] had a tour guide and [they] got to learn all kinds of stuff. [Additionally, Olivia's] uncle is an Orthodox rabbi so he was able to give [them] lots of information" (Olivia, personal communication, November 21, 2015): Furthermore, due to her son "turning 11...his Bar-mitzvah will be in two years...[and her] daughter [being] just a year and half younger" (Olivia, personal communication, November 21, 2015), Olivia currently feels a sense of urgency mixed with fear in trying to get her family to Israel in the next few years:

I really want to take them. We've talked about it...We've talked about maybe not next summer, but the summer after, taking them. Maybe waiting another year and doing a Bar-mitzvah kind of thing...which would just be ceremonial, not anything other than that...I really, really want to take them. [But] it's so expensive [and] it's so scary right now...for me, I would be like "Sure, let's go!" but my husband, who's never been, is like, "Hm. Let's wait a little." I'm like, "If we wait, we'll never go!" (Olivia, personal communication, November 21, 2015)

In addition, Olivia was able to remain friends with her campmates in different states during the year through "a service called door to door...[that] would pick [them] up and bring [them] back home" (Olivia, personal communication, November 21, 2015): They would pick up my friend and I at my house or her house. They would drive us two hours to Columbus. Drop us off at our friend's house and we'd stay for the weekend" (Olivia, personal communication, November 21, 2015). Much like Olivia felt spending the weekends together with her Jewish camp friends "was a big part of growing up"

(Olivia, personal communication, November 21, 2015), she also recalled the meeting her camp friends influenced her decision to join the local BBYO and NFTY<sup>31</sup> youth groups when she was “in the eighth grade. They wanted to pull people in. It’s supposed to be for freshmen, but [she] think[s they] need[ed] more people” (Olivia, personal communication, November 21, 2015): “We got to meet people from all around the city [and] lots of different schools...I think...everybody was just doing it. I went along with my friends and it was great” (Olivia, personal communication, November 21, 2015).

Along with being a counselor when she was 16 at the camp she had attended for four years prior, being in the youth organizations “gave [her] kind of an understanding of how to be a leader, especially in BBYO” (Olivia, personal communication, November 21, 2015): “We had meetings. We hung out. We went to conferences and conventions...I was the president of my chapter and vice president of my chapter...[On] Monday nights...[w]e would have our meetings at the JCC” (Olivia, personal communication, November 21, 2015). In addition, spending time with fellow teenage Jews helped combat feelings of marginalization in high school, even though “[Olivia] never personally had any encounters with people who had a problem with [her being Jewish]” (Olivia, personal communication, May 23, 2015):

[T]here was a Young Life<sup>32</sup> Group that was happening at school and...felt like I was an outsider-I was very left out of things because I didn’t go and participate in those things...my high school experience was, I don’t want to say jaded, cause I don’t think it was jaded, but...definitely I wanted to be one of the cool popular

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<sup>31</sup> North American Federation of Temple Youth was designed to provide meaningful experiences for Jewish Reform teenagers.

<sup>32</sup> A ministry group that helps children beginning in middle school in building friendships with caring teenagers and adults

kids and I felt like that was the reason why I wasn't. And whether or not it was...it could've been just I didn't click with those people, but to me it was always that part. And even now...there's kinda a feeling of that still. (Olivia, personal communication, May 23, 2015)

Furthermore, going to Israel (her second trip out of three) during “the summer before junior year [of high school]...on a NFTY teen tour...[for] six weeks” (Olivia, personal communication, November 21, 2015) shaped Olivia's Jewish identity:

It was the same friends that I was in youth group with, a lot of them from my high school. It was just awesome. It was totally, 100% scheduled...I mean we went all over the country. We did a week in Negev [desert] and had a guy with an Uzi that was...our tour guide. Not a tour guide, but he was like our guardian the whole time. I mean we really walked the land. (Olivia, personal communication, November 21, 2015)

Several years later, Olivia discovered a study abroad opportunity to Tel Aviv, Israel during college where she was able to live there for six months. It was during this trip when “there were some bombings in Jerusalem...[and] in Tel Aviv...at some cafes that [they] went to [which] scared the crap out of [her]” (Olivia, personal communication, November 21, 2015) that she found herself torn between the safety net of home and the possibility of self-exploration:

I didn't feel like I was ready to leave yet.

I called my parents

I'm like, “Okay I'm ready to come home”.

Then I called them right back,

“You know, I'm not done”.

I haven't done everything

I came here to do.

I haven't seen

what I came here to see.

I don't feel

I know enough.

I'm not coming home.

Even though some of her sorority sisters “had gone as well and their parents made them come home” (Olivia, personal communication, September 16, 2015), Olivia’s parents recognized her passion for the country as well as the need to support her developing her own connection to the Jewish homeland. As a result, her grandparents came for a visit and stayed for a few weeks, as well as some of her other friends. What also helped Olivia feel more comfortable and “[what] felt like the most important part” was having “[her] aunt and uncle [who] lived there and [her] cousin[, as she] got to see a lot of family while [she] was there as well...[her] dad’s first cousins live there [and she] got to spend Shabbat with them one night” (Olivia, personal communication, November 21, 2015). For Olivia, choosing Israel over another location for the trip was an easy decision, even she is not definite on why it drew her in:

I really don't know.

I could not pinpoint why.

I think just because it was comfortable.

I knew it

and I knew if I went there

I could,

I'll always feel like

I'll be able to go to Europe.

I'll always be able to go backpack and do something like that.

I felt that really living there for six months was just like the place to be.

I'd go live there for a little while.

I just love it there.

### **Letting go of familiarity**

Though she stated that “there’s an interesting spectrum of where [she’s] lived. Almost like...there was never any in-between; it was a big community [of Jews] and now it’s a small community” (Olivia, personal communication, September 16, 2015), Olivia’s upbringing in close-knit Jewish community was not the sole reason why she chose to attend Indiana University, even though “in college [she] had a very large Jewish community as well...[and] a very large number of people in [her] dorm freshmen year were also Jewish. Pretty much all [her] friends were Jewish in college” (Olivia, personal communication, September 16, 2015):

I was in a Jewish sorority

I picked it because it was beautiful and because it was relatively close

I didn’t want to stay in Missouri

I wanted to go to a big school

I did want to go to a school that had a large Jewish community,

but it wasn’t what put me there.



I mean

I also applied at

I applied to Wisconsin to go to the University of Wisconsin

and I did apply to Ohio State just because my parents made me

And so, any of the schools I would have gone to

would have had a very large Jewish community.

Likewise, deciding to major in elementary education was stemmed from Olivia's childhood. Even though "teaching was [her] fall back career" since she "wanted to be an actress", Olivia shared that "[she] knew [she] wanted to be a teacher from the time [she] was eight years old" (Olivia, personal communication, September 16, 2015):

"[W]henver we would play school with friends, I was always the teacher role. I was the bossy one. That's what it was then. Being a teacher was being the bossy one. I can tell you what to do" (Olivia, personal communication, September 16, 2015). Furthermore, Olivia remembered her grandmother being a preschool teacher working in a hospital with children with Cerebral Palsy and making friends with the kids. Additionally, Olivia's mother was "a non-practicing teacher. She had her degree...[but Olivia does not] think she got her teaching certificate, but she had a degree in education" (Olivia, personal communication, September 16, 2015); it was only after Olivia "went to college and [her] brother was in high school [that] she...subbed. She was a sub in [their] district; she went back to work as a teacher's assistant. She was an aide...in a high school" (Olivia, personal communication, September 16, 2015).

Olivia's own start in teaching began when she was in high school, right around when she was becoming busy with BBYO and NFTY: "Once I got into high school and

we were allowed to be *madrachim*<sup>33</sup> at our temple, we could be teacher's aides. My whole high school career, I was a teacher's aide at temple at Sunday school" (Olivia, personal communication, September 16, 2015). Whatever little impact she feels her upbringing had on her teaching (even though it may have had more when she first started), "the role of educator has changed so much [for her]...[but] it had nothing to do with being Jewish" (Olivia, personal communication, September 16, 2015):

I don't think so.

I don't think

I consciously said,

"I'm Jewish and I want to be a teacher."

I just think that being Jewish

is just more like the essence of who I am

I think it guides my decisions,

but I don't think it guided that decision.

Unlike those who get a teaching credential in California, where "you get a degree in something else and then you get your teaching credential on top of that", Olivia "went into college as an education major...[and she] declared going in...after four years it was done [because she] took all [her] methods classes during [her] undergrad...there wasn't anything additional" (Olivia, personal communication, September 16, 2015).

Furthermore, Olivia recalled that she had only one course on multiculturalism in the classroom, but when it came to discussions about minorities, the focus was on cultural norms from communities with visible differences: "I think it was maybe Asian

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<sup>33</sup> Plural form of Hebrew word for teacher's assistant/leader in the temple's education program; also serve as role models for the younger students.

communities...when they're being reprimanded, they're face down...ashamed...that's one of the things I took away from that [course]" (Olivia, personal communication, May 23, 2015). Olivia also shared that "multiculturalism only exists with what you can see...[You] can't see...this [Jewish identity]...[so] we don't have to honor it...[and being Jewish] was never a conversation, not that [she] remember[s]" (Olivia, personal communication, May 23, 2015).

Though she does not "think they did [the students like her] a disservice in any way [because]...a lot of it is common sense" (Olivia, personal communication, September 16, 2015), for Olivia, "[teachers] are in the business of education and whoever is in [their] classroom, those are the children [they] serve and the people that [they] teacher" (Olivia, personal communication, September 16, 2015). Furthermore, she stated that navigating the conversation about Jews as minorities within education was "kind of left up to [them]...to figure...out" (Olivia, personal communication, September 16, 2015) because "it's [not] recognized by most people. They're like, 'It doesn't matter' because we don't wear it on the outside...[but] you know, I don't need to bring that on myself" (Olivia, personal communication, May 23, 2015):

[B]ecause in terms of what conversations need to be had and what you need to talk about, it's easier for us not to talk about our diversity because we don't wear it on our skin. You can't see-honestly I think you kind of can-but you can't necessarily 100%...identify a person that's Jewish based on what they look like..[I]f you're somebody who is Asian, somebody who is black, somebody who is Hispanic, you can tell that they're not White. They're not "mainstream". Although, really we are the minority now or we're getting there. We have an

interesting ability to hide if we want to, so why talk about us? (Olivia, personal communication, September 16, 2015)

### **Navigating the ocean without making waves**

Though she began her teaching career in Chicago where she “taught English as a second language...[and] had a class of 20 kids...[where] there were probably 10 different languages spoken in that room” (Olivia, personal communication, September 16, 2015), it was not until she first started teaching in California after two years in Chicago that she realized how pervasive the hegemony of Christianity was in the local public schools:

I...was in the conversations in...our lab...in our teacher’s lounge...[and] for a lot of people [their religion] came up fast...[I]t would be-you know, even when you walk in their classrooms in their ‘All about me’ board or whatever they had up-something religious on the board...Maybe it...was a verse or quote...And that was really uncomfortable. Not just uncomfortable, just...shocking to me...[H]ow could you put Bible verses up on the wall?...[T]his is a public school, but...it’s protected; it’s freedom of speech. It’s just as long as you’re not teaching kids that they’re wrong because they’re not doing this. (Olivia, personal communication, May 23, 2015)

Even though Olivia had grown up in a community “where...you could be who you were, but you didn’t [need to] put it up on your walls...where...if you’re going to decorate for Christmas, then [you] had a menorah up or something...you did both” (Olivia, personal communication, May 23, 2015), it took time to adjust to the presence of Christmas decorations during the holidays in Southern Californian public schools and

understand “it’s not in a personal affront to [her. That] no one is purposely trying to offend [her]” (Olivia, personal communication, May 23, 2015):

I don’t even know  
that I’m okay with it  
I...didn't think it was allowed.

I’m at the point  
where I don’t care  
I just don’t care.

I’m like,

“Am I desensitized  
now?”

“Should I be more angry  
about it?”

Then I think,  
“What good is it going to do me?  
Nothing.”

I can educate people as much as I want to  
but it’s not going to change what they do.

Furthermore, Olivia stated that she is also hesitant to address the precedence Christianity has over other religions and cultures in educational situations, especially when “there’s [only] one other Jewish teacher at one of [their] middle schools” (Olivia, personal communication, November 21, 2015). Additionally, while she does see the

Good News Club<sup>34</sup> as a way to help middle school students “[get] something that they’re not getting at home...[and] not [be] on the streets for an hour after school once a week...in the community where [she] work[s]...[because it] is a rough area” (Olivia, personal communication, November 21, 2015), as well as find purpose and religion, Olivia was first taken aback by the convergence of church and state (which she found out later was legal, as long as a space is provided for other groups that want to meet):

Technically the Good News Club has to be run by parents or but students, it’s not supposed to be run by teachers...because it’s a club that meets on school grounds. Right after school, most of the time a teacher has to be there as a “sponsor” of this club. Basically, it’s a bible club. It’s free to meet, they’re allowed to be there as long as we provide an open place for any group that wants to meet...I was really surprised, I didn’t know that . As long as you provide space for anyone who wants to meet...[even] at a break or at lunch, [t]hey can meet during the school day.

(Olivia, personal communication, September 16, 2015)

Moreover, Olivia was shocked when she realized her Christian colleagues had no qualms about promoting the club through their wardrobe: “When they started to advertise... teachers are promoting it where teachers aren’t supposed to promote it. The teachers aren’t supposed to wear the shirts to school that say ‘Good News Club’ and have a big cross on the side” (Olivia, personal communication, September 16, 2015). Though she shared that her peers wearing the club shirts “seems like [it] should be wrong...[she] guess[es] that’s freedom of speech...It’s not offending anybody” (Olivia, personal communication, November 21, 2015): “If I walked around with a Jewish star on my shirt,

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<sup>34</sup> A Christian Evangelical group that meets on school campuses

no one can tell me I have to take it off. I guess it's the same thing as wearing a cross necklace or whatever" (Olivia, personal communication, November 21, 2015).

However, even more disorienting was these teachers assuming they would not be punished for using school resources in order to "run and plan the meetings where they're not supposed to" (Olivia, personal communication, September 16, 2015): "Parents are supposed to bring it in. The teachers aren't supposed to be doing the curriculum for it...and making photocopies at school for it. It's supposed to be completely separate; all it's supposed to be is a facility" (Olivia, personal communication, November 21, 2015). Furthermore, these same teachers disregard the division of religion and education and will ask to leave Olivia's technology workshops early in order "to get back to [their] school [because they] run the Good News Club. [Even though] technically that's not allowed" (Olivia, personal communication, November 21, 2015). Though she knows it is not legal to do so, Olivia admitted that she does not feel comfortable "say[ing] no...[and] say[ing they] have to stay. [She does not] have that authority. [So she] tell[s her] friend who knows things. Then she lets the superintendent know. [And] the superintendent is not okay with things [like that] being on campus" (Olivia, personal communication, November 21, 2015). Additionally, knowing she is outnumbered since "most of the staff is Christian", Olivia is not sure "if anyone's ever said anything. [She does not] know that they would. [Ad she does not] want to be the one to make waves" (Olivia, personal communication, November 21, 2015):

I would be the only one to say something

why do I want to stand out like a sore thumb like that?

Why do I want to alienate myself from people who are my friends?

I looked up all the ADL stuff

I wanted to see

because I really believed that was not ok to do

I avoid the conversation.

I don't need to be the one squeaky wheel.

I'm already in a tricky enough position anyway

as the coach in a district where I'm working with all nine schools

and almost all nine of the schools have this club.

I need to build trust and build rapport with the teachers

versus break it down.

At some point, the older I get,

the more I feel like I don't care.

Not I don't care about that,

but I don't care what you think of me.

I'll say what I want to say

I'll conduct my business

the way I want to conduct my business

eventually I may get to the point

where I'm like,

“Look, this is not okay what's happening right here”

but at this point, I'm just not there.



Furthermore, Olivia shared she is bothered by the school district's policy of aligning the calendar to the Christian calendar, including having Spring break right around Easter, which led to people calling it "Easter vacation" (Olivia, personal communication, May 23, 2015). Though that week off has since been moved to the last week of March since the school year starts earlier, Olivia noted that what upsets her more is that no matter when the Jewish High Holidays fall, she "[has] to take a personal necessity day, which means [she] will never have perfect attendance...at school, yet we know...a few teachers...get Good Friday off" (Olivia, personal communication, May 23, 2015). However much she was perturbed by being punished for attending to religious practices, it was "not to the point of doing anything about it, because what are you gonna do?...[I]t was decided on" (Olivia, personal communication, May 23, 2015).

She shared that what she finds more fascinating is "when people don't take the day off...[T]here's maybe one or two Jewish teachers in [her] district or administrators in the district...one of them retired...[and] wouldn't...always take the day off...and [Olivia was] thinking, 'How do you not?!'...you got to" (Olivia, personal communication, May 23, 2015):

[Though] it wasn't like this when I was growing, but for the High Holidays, they closed the schools because there's so many people...and so many teachers that are absent that day...they can't have all their subs. So they close the school. And where I taught at my first couple of years, we were also off for the High Holidays, which was really nice. (Olivia, personal communication, May 23, 2015)

Moreover, this struggle to maintain a close relationship to her past after first moving away from the religiously diverse, but accepting community "was super hard...

[because Olivia did not] know anybody but [her] husband...he was [her] boyfriend at the time...so [her] work friends were [her] friends...[and she] was all in” (Olivia, personal communication, May 23, 2015): “You are the people I hang out with, you are my friends. And so they [came] to my house because we all...got really close” (Olivia, personal communication, May 23, 2015). In order for her to feel the sense of comfort within the Jewish community she was used to back home, “probably after a year or two of living here [she] was a religious school and Hebrew school teacher at a congregation a couple of towns away” (Olivia, personal communication, September 16, 2015): “I think I just wanted to get back into Jewish life and find some Jews when I first moved here...so that’s how I did it” (Olivia, personal communication, September 16, 2015). Furthermore, Olivia noted that the longing for familiarity and relationships built on shared cultural and religious customs was one of the hardest parts about living away from family:

Just they don’t understand the holidays and all of those things. I feel like I do a lot of explaining, which is okay. I feel like I have connections with people, but I don’t feel like I have the same type of connections with people, if that makes sense. (Olivia, personal communication, September 16, 2015)

One way Olivia battled her peers’ blind-acceptance of Christianity’s infiltration in the community was to emulate her grandmother who would “adopt” families that had no place to go for Passover, as well “every Friday night [she] would have somebody that was visiting the congregation or somebody that didn’t have someplace to go for dinner” (Olivia, personal communication, May 23, 2015). Olivia invited her non-Jewish coworkers over for a “Goy<sup>35</sup> Seder” to teach them about the holiday (which she still does) since “[she did not] have anybody else, so if [she] want[ed] to shared [her] tradition with

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<sup>35</sup> Yiddish for non-Jew

somebody, those the people [she] shared them with...[which] brought [them] closer... [since] they were all...sixth grade teachers [and they] taught ancient civilizations...[and] the ancient Hebrews” (Olivia, personal communication, May 23, 2015):

Everybody wants to participate; they are all like, ‘What is this? We want to come. We want to learn’ ...they start[ed] to see the connection between what we do [as Jews] and what they do...[T]hat was cool that they could...see what they were teaching and then they could see how the tradition happens today. (Olivia, personal communication, May 23, 2015)

In order to not overwhelm her guests with a traditional Passover ceremony that lasts well into the night, like the Seders her family had that started a seven in the evening when it was light out because “it’s April in Missouri, so it’s light, light” (Olivia, personal communication, May 23, 2015) and ended at midnight, Olivia stated that she keeps it lighthearted so that her friends do not think, “‘Okay, I’m going to my friend’s house for this religious experience’ ...it’s going to be stuffy and boring” (Olivia, personal communication, November 21, 2015):

I try to make it fun. I have these little stuffed animals placed on my table that I wind up and zzz, they like buzz. Like the locusts buzz. It’s dumb, but I try to keep it a little bit entertaining because it was so sterile for me. It also feels awkward when you come over and they think it’s like where we have to be so serious. I’m like, ‘Have some wine. We’re going to have four glasses of this tonight, so let’s start now. We’ll start a little early. We’ll have a good time. Just need to loosen up a little bit, you know? (Olivia, personal communication, November 21, 2015)

### **What is my legacy?**

Though Olivia does not “know that [she] would’ve changed as much had [she] stayed where [she] was in such an insular community”, she acknowledged that “there’s something about this...connection” (Olivia, personal communication, May 23, 2015): “When our parents were younger, when our grandparents were growing up, that was their connection to everything and it was very insular and nobody married outside the family, nobody did any of that” (Olivia, personal communication, May 23, 2015). Although she is not physical close to the community that helped shaped her Jewish identity, Olivia stated that she shares pictures of St. Louis with her children and allows them to “ask questions so they kind of have an idea” of how she grew up, even though “they think it’s crazy...it’s old school...like the old country” (Olivia, personal communication, November 21, 2015): “I think they picture me in a babushka in Russia hungering for food. They love the stories...love hearing them. They love to read family history too....I should have them draw an image of what they see when they think about it” (Olivia, personal communication, November 21, 2015).

Olivia also noted a distinct difference between her “old” life and her current one; at the temple her family attends, “the parents will drop their kids off at Sunday school and then they’ll go and at 12 [noon] they come back and pick them up and there’s not a whole lot of sticking around” (Olivia, personal communication, May 23, 2015). Compared to having “40 kids in [her] age [group at temple]” growing up (Olivia, personal communication, May 23, 2015), Olivia’s own children each have less than 10 peers in their respective grade levels in Hebrew school: “I don’t know maybe when there’s more kids it just feels different, more people hang out. There’s only, you know, so

few of us” (Olivia, personal communication, May 23, 2015). Yet, Olivia shared while currently serving as the co-chair of the educational committee at her children’s religious school, seeing them build their own connections with “the curriculum...about prophets and understanding [by] making sense of the Torah...[and] trying to find a meaning for [themselves] (Olivia, personal communication, November 21, 2015):

They get together, they work. They study and then they present. It’s really cool... It’s not what they get in their public school. It’s really been fun to watch that class especially... grow in their thinking [and] listen to my own kids think about things. (Olivia, personal communication, November 21, 2015).

Moreover, she has realized being married to a non-Jew that she has “definitely had to work hard to...do something the same every year, so that [her] kids...feel a tradition” (Olivia, personal communication, May 23, 2015). Although her husband has “mentioned wanting to convert every once in a while...[they] raise [their] kids Jewish” (Olivia, personal communication, May 23, 2015). Yet, their children will sometimes make him an outsider in the family by asserting he is not Jewish, to which he replies that he is, that he is “choosing to live a Jewish life without having converted” (Olivia, personal communication, May 23, 2015). Yet, Olivia has realized in “this society... [intermarriage is] completely normal” (Olivia, personal communication, May 23, 2015), even it is difficult to be the primary ambassador of preserving Jewish traditions:

[W]hen we got married, my rabbi said to us, “You know, you grew up... surrounded by Judaism and you’re gonna have to work really hard to give your kids something similar.” And he was so right...I didn’t really think about it like that, but...I do. I really have to work hard. (Olivia, personal communication, May 23, 2015)

*“I never...would have thought part of me was...waiting for my turn... They didn't check to see if they were a horrible person or a nice person. They just checked to see if they were Jewish.”*

### **Rose**

Rose is a retired middle school social studies teacher in her mid-60s. Though she is able to see the potential for compassion and humanity in society, Rose was forced into early retirement six years ago due to the severe strain her body was under from dealing with almost 20 years of anti-Semitic activity that was mainly directed toward her on her school's campus: “I still have a lot of physical manifestation of all the terror and the stress” (Rose, personal communication, June 22, 2015). Even though she is single and has no children who might have served as a support system throughout the overt aggressions she faced, she informed me that she was “trying to be really skillful, really responsible, really mindful about thinking about [her] relationship to the...experiences [she's] had[, her] memories of them and how [she] hold[s] it and what it's done to [her] body” (Rose, personal communication, June 22, 2015). However, the ruthless attacks caused her naturally thin body frame to shed 15 pounds as she approached retirement due to the pressure and fear she felt daily (she has never been officially diagnosed with PTSD, but she stated that she does still suffer from the traumatic memories).

Although Rose had many years of Reform Jewish education growing up in Chicago, her expression of Jewish identity was built on deeply held values regarding social justice and compassion for others that were passed down through her family. It is clear that Rose's family's emphasis on fighting discrimination and preserving a concern for others remained a central tenant in her adult consciousness; at our first meeting, Rose

took an urgent call regarding a friend who was struggling with sobriety and is dividing their group of friends because of her addiction, prompting us to discuss whether people had an obligation to help those in need:

[E]very single day in our lives, we have times that we can either speak up or not. I mean, just like that conversation I had to have when you first got here; do I speak up...what's the way...to show up on behalf my friend, you know? Is it skillful...helpful...do I talk to the doctor, do I not...And I don't see the other people, you know, even grappling with that...anyway. (Rose, personal communication, June 22, 2015)

Although Rose's parents did not call this socially aware mindset "Tikkun Olam" when she was young, their commitment to celebrating Passover (they did little else that was religiously tied to Judaism) helped instill in her a critical consciousness about her placement in the world around her-an awareness that she continued to develop as she moved away from Judaism and into Buddhism. In our first conversation (which occurred over the phone almost two months prior to us meeting in person), Rose expressed her trepidation in retelling her experiences, as these memories had been buried deep in order to not relive the pain. As she felt more comfortable discussing her experiences, she acknowledged that although "we talked about it before that this is very hard for [her]...god, let's put it to some good use. You know what? [She] can take it now; [she's] in [her] nice safe house" (Rose, personal communication, September 26, 2015). However, during our last meeting, she stated that "all this anti-Semitic stuff made [her] into a good Buddhist, which [she] think[s]...cracks [her] up" (Rose, personal communication, November 14, 2015).



While she does feel she will always see herself as a Jew, she is not surprised as to why many Jews like her transition to Buddhist practices, as “[i]t’s very comforting...[and] maybe that’s part of the draw as a Jew” (Rose, personal communication, June 22, 2015): “I think...a lot of Jews are drawn to Buddhism because, first of all, it’s not Christian...it’s a non-proselytizing religion. I think another religion isn’t where the Jews would go from Judaism...Buddhism is so much about being on an ethical path” (Rose, personal communication, June 22, 2015).

Her living room, where we spent the majority of time during our formal meetings (followed closely by her kitchen), reflects the Buddhist “value system...[where you] find what works for you, [as] it’s all about...being a really honorable person and being awake and aware and clear about not getting caught up in stories about things” (Rose, personal communication, June 22, 2015). The room is full of sunlight streaming in from the backyard and prayer flags hang from her sliding glass door that leads out the patio; very little in the room exhibits Jewishness, save for a small artifact on a shelf overlooking her dining room table. A few of the walls feature positive sayings, some handwritten on small scraps of paper; others display handmade art and thank you notes from people close to her. Between the hearth and the doorframe leading from the dining room to the kitchen is her dog’s kennel; on top of and inside the structure are art pieces of and cards for the dog, Dewey, which she rescued off the streets. She expressed to me that she feels he helped rescue her after she retired and was facing numerous health issues from the constant stress of going to work in fear of the next incident.

She saw our meetings and phone calls as an opportunity for her to “somehow... deconstruct what was [her] experience and who [she] was there and who they were there”

(Rose, personal communication, November 14, 2015): “[M]y Buddhist practices...really remind me...there is no distinction. You know, there’s...no separate self, that we’re all...of one. We’re not separate from each other” (Rose, personal communication, June 22, 2015). While some may think it would be easier to remain bitter about oppressive acts directed at them, Rose “think[s about] all the people who have survived all kinds of stuff and they’re even more humane” (Rose, personal communication, November 14, 2015):

I need to be compassionate to everybody else too...I remember that the root emotion is fear and that people are deluded and most people don't mean any harm and even the people who do mean the harm, they're deluded....[T]his sense of otherness...[that] didn't just come from the anti-Semitic stuff because I had it other places too and I think and I do in the world as a Jew, I do. I also feel all sorts of belonging and...feeling that I have this Jew...thing. (Rose, personal communication, November 14, 2015)

This sense of humanity and concern for others, including animals, is particularly evident in her decision to live vegan lifestyle. Each meeting we had at her house was centered around a homemade vegan meal Rose prepared and began with a Buddhist prayer that honored the lifeforms that nourish the mind, body, and soul. Even though she grew up eating non-Kosher meat because bacon’s “not that hard to figure out” (Rose, personal communication, October 24, 2015), her decision to give up animal byproducts stems from the lessons of suffering present in the Passover story. In addition to taking great care of Dewey, she feels an obligation to not participate in the misery faced by animals in factory farms:

[A]nimals...are, in my opinion,...oppressed beyond measure...People eat meat around me all the time. They say, "Does it bother you?" I say, "Eat what you want to eat." [But] not at Passover, not when you're having a ceremony to commemorate how important it is to speak up for the suffering of others. (Rose, personal communication, November 14, 2015)

Rose's narrative begins as a young child understanding how to see the world through a Jewish lens, even if that meant not adhering to a formal religious identity. It then shifts to her learning how to navigate the landscape of being both privileged and othered during the Women's Rights and Multicultural Education movements. Next, Rose shares how the "outside looking in" feeling continued when she dealt with her first instance of anti-Semitism as a teacher. Afterwards, she describes the near-daily traumas she endured as a Jewish teacher, terrors that she felt caused her to physically feel the historical persecution of Jews as she was left without appropriate emotional or legal support. She ends her narrative with her call to action for all people to embody the belief of Tikkun Olam and the need to attend to others with compassion and humanity.

### **How do you Jew?**

For Rose, "having been born five years after the Holocaust ended...and...[with] that thing of not just you have to speak up or things are going to get worse, but this is how it starts" (Rose, personal communication, November 14, 2015), meant critical consciousness of injustices was always present. Even growing up in a Chicago suburb that she remembers being told had 30% of its population identifying as Jewish, it was not until the fair housing legislation in the decade prior that allowed for Jews to buy homes; however, by the time Rose was born in 1951, "[it] wasn't a big deal to be Jewish" (Rose,

personal communication, June 22, 2015): “I’m not only part of the diaspora, but part of that whole assimilation where I didn’t live...I didn’t grow up in a Jewish neighborhood. There were lots of Jews around there. It was a high Jewish population where I grew up” (Rose, personal communication, September 26, 2015). In addition, even though the neighborhood in which she was raised is similar to “Clarrington where there’s tons of Jews...the culture is not Jewish at all” (Rose, personal communication, October 24, 2015).

Like many other assimilated Jews in her community, Rose’s mother’s “parent’s parents were doing the whole bit...they were Orthodox and everything...both sides of [her] family have been here since the late 1800s...mid to late 1800s”, it was her “dad’s family [that] followed the Alaskan gold rush around...and [became] very, very assimilated West Coast...multigenerational” (Rose, personal communication, June 22, 2015). The next generation continued the movement away from the strict commitment to Judaism and instead focused on embodying the Jewish ideals through politics: “My [maternal] grandparent’s generation was much more political, very much like Jewish socialists...not so...Socialist Worker’s party or anything explicit, but just that’s where their hearts were and [they] were very assimilated” (Rose, personal communication, June 22, 2015).

When it came to her own parent’s generation, “they could be completely assimilated, [they] really acted WASPy in a lot of ways out in the world, but all their friends were Jewish” (Rose, personal communication, November 14, 2015). Likewise, they “[were] very, very assimilated in terms of cultural expression...[and Rose] think[s]

[her] parents...were a lot like [her], very strongly identified but they expressed it in their values” (Rose, personal communication, June 22, 2015):

I feel very strongly identified...as a Jew, but it’s expressed through values, deeply held values about Tikkun Olam...my parent’s didn’t call it Tikkun Olam; that was term I learned later. But just this sense of great...obligation to speak up for justice and to...be really responsible not just for myself, but for others and to have a lot of compassion. (Rose, personal communication, June 22, 2015)

Furthermore, Rose’s parents aligned with the Reform branch of Judaism where her family “didn’t do Shabbos...didn’t have a Sukkah...didn’t do any of that stuff...[She] on [her] own would do things like Purim festivals as part of Sunday school, but...other than getting Chinese food on Sunday, no other Jewish rituals” (Rose, personal communication, October 24, 2015): “And when we were little, little, we would celebrate Christmas, kind of...my dad was completely opposed. My mom didn’t really care. But...they would hide presents around the house and on Christmas morning we got to find some presents” (Rose, personal communication, October 24, 2015). Though her family briefly celebrated both Hanukkah and Christmas, Rose questioned how Jewish parents go about informing their children that the Christianity’s influence during the holidays pushes them to the margins: “I think, just how do you explain to a kid, ‘Oh honey, all that stuff you’re watching on TV, everything in the whole world that’s all about Christmas, you don’t get any...I don’t get how parents negotiate that” (Rose, personal communication, October 24, 2015).

Yet, when it came time for the High Holidays, Rose’s family was split on how to participate: “My dad would do the High Holidays and I would go with him. [*Laughs*] My

mom told us she was allergic to the dust in the chandelier and so she couldn't go to temple" (Rose, personal communication, June 22, 2015). Her mother was not religious, yet she never directly stated she was "an atheist", that she thought "this is a bunch of hooley" (Rose, personal communication, October 24, 2015). However, Rose remembered her mother as being strict when it came to the importance of the High Holidays: "[S]he said, 'You are not going to school. Out of respect, you do not go to school on the High Holidays and you know, she was completely secular'" (Rose, personal communication, October 24, 2015). Additionally, even though the students at her public elementary school had recess all day on the High Holidays since "so many kids were going [to temple]" (Rose, personal communication, September 26, 2015), Rose's mother would not let her diminish the seriousness of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur by being outside of the house playing, "'cause there'd be kids that would stay home and would go play, or be out in the community...she was like, 'This is *not* a day to be out. She was really clear about that and she was not religious'" (Rose, personal communication, June 22, 2015).

Although her father did attend services, Rose recalled that she "[didn't] think either of [her] parents believed in God...there was no God talk at [her] house" (Rose, personal communication, June 22, 2015). Rather than believing in God, Rose's mother subscribed to the philosophy that "your heaven or your hell is your memory as it lives on in the hearts of others" (Rose, personal communication, June 22, 2015); Rose stated that "coming out of that philosophy...[she] believe[s] in godliness...and...it's, especially in the absence of God, all the more reason to behave...[that] the idea of God as the ultimate...caring, positive, loving presence, that that's our job...there is nobody to do it for us" (Rose, personal communication, June 22, 2015): "If people are going to be good to each

other...or if people are going to be living in a place that feels heavenly, it's this lifetime, not another one, and it's up to us to create that with each other" (Rose, personal communication, June 22, 2015).

Furthermore, Rose "was also raised that the temple isn't the only place to be Jewish" (Rose, personal communication, June 22, 2015) and when asked what are the five critical incidents that shaped her Jewishness, she shared that "delis were a big part of [her] Jewish identity" (Rose, personal communication, October 24, 2015). While reminiscing about some of her favorite Jewish foods that she "grew up eating [like] liver...[and] schmaltz on the rye bread, on real rye bread" (Rose, personal communication, October 24, 2015), Rose stated that she did not "know how to explain, but...it was what [she] did instead of temple...to be in a room full of Jews" (Rose, personal communication, October 24, 2015):

[T]o be honest...the fact that we had them in Chicago and then when I would visit my family in the Bronx, they had them there, and just the whole way that my family in the Bronx went to the deli. My uncle would go get the food for the family when we were visiting and they would be like "Oh, Dr. Fibrick!" They'd give him a hotdog while he was ordering the food and sit back...I mean it was just...exactly the stereotype, you know, eat, eat and how shmoozey it always was when we went to the deli where I grew up. (Rose, personal communication, October 24, 2015)

Although she grew up in the suburbs of Chicago had "maybe three or four restaurants and two of them were delis...[and] it was part of the culture, so it wasn't a big deal being

Jewish at all growing up” (Rose, personal communication, June 22, 2015), Rose was shocked to hear about modern day Jews who equate Jewishness only with the cuisine:

I like

the whole idea of holding onto being Jewish

as a way to hold onto

not being part of

all that privileged White male Christian aggression,

dominance, destruction

If the only thing I thought about myself as Jewish

was that I liked Jewish food,

I sure as hell wouldn't brag about it.

For her, this “feeling like [she] belonged”, where “you walk through the door of the deli and all of a sudden you're Jewish” (Rose, personal communication, October 24, 2015), regardless of how one identifies outside of that space, was also present when Rose discussed how connected she felt to the larger Jewish community when she learned in second grade that one of her favorite celebrities was Jewish. While her parents would watch TV “and they'd go, ‘He's Jewish. She's Jewish” (Rose, personal communication, June 22, 2015), “they're pointing out that Kirk Douglas is Jewish and Dinah Shore is Jewish...[her parents] weren't expressly Jewish out in the world at all, but they still had the ‘he's Jewish, she's Jewish” (Rose, personal communication, October 24, 2015).

Finding out one of her favorite performers was Jewish defined for her what it meant to be Jew in the United States, as “part of it [is] that you don't necessarily know, but...they took such pride in it...if not pride...at the very least [it was] really meaningful



enough that they're, you know, pointing it out as they're watching TV" (Rose, personal communication, June 22, 2015). Though Rose would often think "Why does that even matter...[even though] TV being what [it] was, you had to say it a lot", it was not "until Danny Kaye went on and they said, 'He's Jewish'...that [she] was so excited...and kinda got it that it's a personal connection" (Rose, personal communication, June 22, 2015):

I'm thinking yeah, yeah.

I didn't get the thing—

you know, the he's Jewish, she's Jewish.

I loved Danny Kaye so much

to think that he and I had this link.

I don't know

from then on,

I got it, this sense of pride and connection

Furthermore, what defined Jewish identity for Rose was "[her] family [doing] so little that was religious that it made Passover seem even more important" (Rose, personal communication, June 22, 2015). They did not rely on family to continue the legacy of "every Friday night...[having] dinner with [a] grandmother...[even they] wouldn't have done it anyway...[since] everybody had been kosher until [her] parents' generation...[and her family] ate shell fish...[Rose] didn't even know about being kosher until [she] was older" (Rose, personal communication, October 24, 2015): "The fact that they...still did [Passover]...I mean it really impressed me that this story was so important to tell that they hadn't let it go and they had let go of everything else" (Rose, personal communication, June 22, 2015). Though "there wasn't any extended family around to do any of these

[religious] things with” (Rose, personal communication, June 22, 2015), for Rose, “all these people who otherwise were just regular and then they were Jewish for Passover... friends of the family...who showed up to be Jewish, whereas otherwise they were just there to be friends or neighbors...that was so important” (Rose, personal communication, June 22, 2015).

As much as she grew up knowing “who was Jewish and who wasn’t pretty early on; [she] had that distinction...[she doesn’t] remember anything other than that [she] knew who was Jewish and who wasn’t” (Rose, personal communication, June 22, 2015), Passover became “an incredible, incredible holiday...for [her]...[They] gathered together, [and] those people emerged then as Jews, that meant a lot...[t]he fact that these people who were friends became our Jewish friends on that night” (Rose, personal communication, October 24, 2015). Celebrating the holiday with friends of the family such as “the guy who owned the toy store...the guy who was the real estate agent...the person who was my mom’s friend from I don’t know” (Rose, personal communication, October 24, 2015) helped Rose understand how fluid the Jewish identity can be “any other time of the year, but...on Passover, [they] were all there as Jews and that...meant something” (Rose, personal communication, October 24, 2015):

We didn’t have family around, except this one family that was on the south side of Chicago [and they] were...[in the] northern suburbs...and back then it was a schlep...it was like a really big deal [as t]here was no freeway yet in the earliest years. The fact that they were so precious to my parents, those relatives, and the fact that these people that I just knew as family friends the rest of the year, that the Jewish ones came for Passover...[and t]he fact that the Marcuses, our cousins

on the South side, were so precious to my family meant the world. (Rose, personal communication, October 24, 2015)

In addition, though she was once told “that the last thing to go in families is Passover” (Rose, personal communication, October 24, 2015), it was not just preserving the tradition of the holiday that Rose saw as a defining moment of her Jewish upbringing, it was the “message...about speaking up for justice and...the transformative capacity we have in life and the need to take action and to do whatever is necessary to create justice... The need to speak up for the well-being of others” (Rose, personal communication, October 24, 2015):

I think about Passover

and about how it's every year you get together

and it's reminding that you too,

even if it's not your own suffering that you relive,

that there was this suffering and so that makes it real.

I think that helped a lot as a kid.

I'd get this story told to me about how we had suffered

and therefore, we need to speak up for everybody.

I feel like I'm supposed to speak up, especially at Passover.

Furthermore, though Rose “was brought up Reform and [she] was confirmed” (Rose, personal communication, June 22, 2015), she believes her responsibility to uphold justice and fairness is “from being Jewish...[and that] it’s innate to the culture” (Rose, personal communication, June 22, 2015):

Even as secular as [her mom] was and assimilated as she was...she absolutely identified as a Jew...and taught me a very secular version of being a devoted Jew which was...it is our birth right to speak up...That we need to speak up for what's right and...to make things better. (Rose, personal communication, October 24, 2015)

However little her parents did with the religion beyond Passover, they did met while serving in the Navy during World War II, as both felt obligated to fulfill their duty out of Jewishness and “wanted to be part of the fight” (Rose, personal communication, June 22, 2015): “[T]hey served as Jews. I mean not just as Jews, as Americans, but they...went out of their Jewishness to make sure they participated” (Rose, personal communication, June 22, 2015). Her father even “had surgery to repair his back so he could join the Navy” (Rose, personal communication, October 24, 2015); while Rose “had never been taught all Jews were victims or anything like that...[her parents] were like, ‘Okay. Let’s do something about it’ ...[and] were naval officers...as an activist response themselves” (Rose, personal communication, September 26, 2015).

In addition, while the Civil Rights movement was reaching its climax, “[her] parents were very sympathetic; they weren’t activists, but [they were] completely sympathetic with every good cause...[she] had friends who parents who...[would] be marching...but...my mom had more direct like language about it...you...have an open heart and to see people as equal” (Rose, personal communication, June 22, 2015).

However, Rose saw her parents’ activism against prejudice emerge when it came time to vote, as her dad “who [was] a very, very frightened, conservative person in lifestyle...was

a Democrat [and] not voting like a frightened person” (Rose, personal communication, October 24, 2015):

My dad was a very, very, very uptight person...my mom was wild, but my dad was really uptight, very conservative...very worried, very frightened, very ‘control everything’...And he’s a Democrat...everything else about his nature would say be conservative, conservative-conservative politically and he wasn’t. He was all for the things that were about progressive causes that change the world...even as a frightened person who was not inclined towards change or...instability. (Rose, personal communication, June 22, 2015)

In addition, Rose remembered that one of her parents informed her that “Jews are the one privileged group of people who vote against their own self-interest...their narrow self-interest” (Rose, personal communication, October 24, 2015). Her parents were very proud of “wealthier middle-class, upper-middle-class Jews [who] would vote for the well-being of the poor people...they won’t vote for all the tax breaks for the rich people. They were supporting having things be more fair” (Rose, personal communication, June 22, 2015): “They were the one political group that consistently, in a narrow sense, voted against their self-interest, although in a broader sense, it is in our self-interest to vote for things that are good for everybody” (Rose, personal communication, October 24, 2015).

However much her parents instilled a sense of Jewish pride in her, embodied through actions that served the needs of others, Rose’s own enlightenment about being Jewish in an anti-Semitic world came in the fourth grade when her family’s black maid told her about the Holocaust, using “the refrigerator as...a metaphor for society” (Rose, personal communication, June 22, 2015), where each part of the appliance symbolized a

specific part of the culture they were living in. Though the maid was drunk and had a gun at the time (she was subsequently fired), Rose recalled that this was the first time anyone, Jewish or not, had directly explained to her about anti-Semitism and the Holocaust: “[S]he’s explaining about society...[and] all about the Holocaust and anti-Semitism. And I was like ‘you’re kidding me...how could I not [know]?!’” (Rose, personal communication, June 22, 2015).

Furthermore, she had friends whose parents were Holocaust survivors with numbers tattooed on their arms, yet Rose had never had anyone before the maid help her understand why someone like her neighbor, Dr. Lipman, a Holocaust survivor, suffered from what she now considers PTSD: “They were German Jewish refugees...When you go over to Dr. Lipman’s house...no loud noises...but nobody explained the why of it” (Rose, personal communication, June 22, 2015). Even though “[they] didn’t call it that back then[, i]t wasn’t called [the] Holocaust” (Rose, personal communication, November 14, 2015), Rose explained that learning about it deeply affected her “sense of self as a Jew” (Rose, personal communication, November 14, 2015).

Additionally, this new understanding, though not specifically tied to being Jewish, helped her see the social and economic inequalities in her community during the Civil Rights Movement, particularly when she would question the fairness of the groupings of minority housekeepers at public transit stations waiting to go to White lower middle-class to upper-middle class neighborhoods like hers to clean:

There weren’t any really poor people where I grew up...I remember thinking I don’t get it that people had maids; they were almost always black. They would take the train or the bus up from the south side of Chicago, or from...as far away

as Evanston. They didn't live here...and there'd be the bus stop with all the black ladies in their little uniforms...I just thought, WHAT?!...I would...think, 'Why are they poor? We're not. They're cleaning for us; we're not cleaning for them.' I mean, but I had that as a little kid thinking, 'why is it this way?' (Rose, personal communication, June 22, 2015)

The reality of a social hierarchy was also made real to Rose when a close elementary school friend, Patty, who “was from a long-time, old-school, blue-blood family...got the inside scoop because she was Episcopalian” (Rose, personal communication, November 14, 2015) and revealed to her that neighbors on their street did not like Jews:

[S]he said, 'They say bad things about Jews.' I didn't know. They were my neighbors and everything was fine...she would say, 'You don't know this, but they say things.'...I hadn't known that there was any narrative at all...but I remember her telling me that and that has stayed with me since then. (Rose, personal communication, November 14, 2015)

For Rose, being privy to the dominant culture's behaviors “was such an eye-opener [due to the] realization that whatever it seems to be isn't, that there's another story to all this that you don't know, that you don't know who knows, who cares” (Rose, personal communication, November 14, 2015): “[T]here were like three other Jewish families on our block, but we were in an area that had previously not been Jewish at all...so the fair housing act...at the end of the 1940s...opened things up” (Rose, personal communication, October 24, 2015). Though the legalized institutional restrictions on

minorities in housing had allowed for Rose to grow up in a mixed community, not all aspects of life in the suburbs were welcoming to those deemed as “othered”.

When she tried to get a job at the local “country club a few blocks away where [her] best friend worked as a waitress...[her] dad said, ‘Over my dead body.’ He said... ‘it’s a restricted country club. Jews couldn’t go there and you’re not going to be their waitress...you’re not going’” (Rose, personal communication, October 24, 2015). Though she was not sure “that they would have hired [her] as a Jew. [She] know[s] they hired black people without black people being able to go there” (Rose, personal communication, October 24, 2015), Rose’s father’s reaction was unsurprising as he was offered a law position after the war, but only if he would deny his Jewish namesake:

My dad had to work at a Jewish firm. He was offered a job at a non-Jewish firm, but they said, ‘You’ll have to change your name’ [and] he wasn’t willing to that. Things were so much more isolated back then and...they still lived in a world of Jews and they came out of completely Jewish neighborhoods, [a] completely Jewish experience. Even if they were rejecting that, that was in them. (Rose, personal communication, November 14, 2015)

Additionally, even though she found out “the Dietrichs across the street didn’t like that there were all these Jew on the street” (Rose, personal communication, November 14, 2015), the stigma surrounding a black family trying to move into the neighborhood was even worse than Jews being allowed to move into the suburbs. Rose recalled the pride her mother had in telling her the story of when a neighbor questioned her about what she would do if the family was successful in buying the house: “[A]s a Jew, and as a liberal...she said, ‘Oh I’d bake them a cake and go welcome them’...I’ve



thought back on that a hundred times, at least...it comes wafting up about how shaping it was that she told me...with such pleasure” (Rose, personal communication, October 24, 2015).

Though she had never experienced any direct anti-Semitism in her school or community growing up, her mother adamantly pushed Rose not to add Greenberg, her mother’s maiden name as a middle name, during the Women’s Rights Movement of the 1970s. Rose’s mother “never gave [her] a middle name, so [Rose was] going to be Rose Greenberg Jaffe, instead of Rose Jaffe” (Rose, personal communication, June 22, 2015); however, her mother’s own freshman year of college experience at Agnes Scott College in the south caused her to not accept Rose’s name addition and her desire to publically claim her full Jewish heritage: “[S]he said, ‘don’t do it...It sounds really Jewish. Why bring that on yourself?’” (Rose, personal communication, June 22, 2015) While her mother “was never for hiding being Jewish, never, never, never...she...also was for...‘why cause problems if you don’t need to’” (Rose, personal communication, June 22, 2015). Additionally, Rose stated that although she did not “remember explicitly a conversation about what it means to be a Jew...[they] had to talk about it” (Rose, personal communication, June 22, 2015).

It was around this same time that she noticed there was a lack of discussion about Jews in the multiculturalism movement: “I remember there’s a lot going on in multicultural education in the late ‘70s...The social studies books got more inclusive...but it was never about religion. It was about country of origin” (Rose, personal communication, September 26, 2015). Likewise, she shared that multicultural education “was cultural artifacts really. It didn’t go very deep...it wasn’t about values...[and it]

didn't address the true variables of what a people is" (Rose, personal communication, September 26, 2015). Furthermore, she recalled the multicultural trainings she participated in did allow for the discussion of "rape, incest...any of those things[. T]here was more of an ethos of those things...that aren't part of the public discourse" (Rose, personal communication, September 26, 2015):

If we're going to look at what they were doing about Jewishness, it's really important to see it in context...anti-Semitism was not in the same category as those things...we just think everything that everybody goes through should be out there and we should be talking about it, but it just was not like that back then.

(Rose, personal communication, September 26, 2015)

### **It starts with something small**

For Rose, entering the teaching profession was unplanned as "[she] really didn't know what [she] wanted to do...[she] fell into it...[but she] loved kids...[and] had wanted to be an art therapist" (Rose, personal communication, September 26, 2015). She "loved the community building of a classroom...that you can create the world as you wish it were, where you're creating a community ethos" (Rose, personal communication, September 26, 2015): "I wanted it to be far more than that and...[I] just [wanted] to have it all be about their humanity and our compassion and our being given a lifetime and what are we going to do with it" (Rose, personal communication, November 14, 2015).

However, she recollected her Jewish identity was personal and had no place in the classroom:

I didn't bring my Jewishness into my teaching.

I don't see it as part of the forum.

I'm completely Jewish

and my worldview is completely Jewish

I walked on campus,

it was to walk the walk,

not to talk the talk.

I was there out of my Jewishness,

in my Jewishness,

from my Jewishness,

but I wasn't there to be doing it,

to being a Jew

Furthermore, being taught as a child to speak out against injustices, as well as the severe consequences of not addressing small aggressions before they flourish into something catastrophic, caused her to address the presence of a swastika spray-painted on a school wall while in her first years of teaching during the 1980s:

I'm just coming in 1 day a week...I...just did a pull-out program for the gifted kids. I'd see this swastika, and it would still be there when I'd come back a week later. It was there for a very long time, and I went to the principal and...voiced my concern, and he was like, 'Well, it's not really a priority kind of thing.' He didn't get it at all, and this is an elementary school. (Rose, personal communication, September 26, 2015)

Rose also emphasized that even though it was not it was not directed toward her, it was the first instance of anti-Semitic encounters she would face over the course of her near three decade long teaching career. In 1992 (after an absence in teaching due to budget

cuts), when she began working at the middle school which she retired from in West Hayvenhurst (located in a suburb that is 20 miles east of downtown Los Angeles), Rose first noticed that the culture of the school promoted “this mythology that [the United States] was founded as a Christian country... and it’s by some sort of generosity that they’re extending a place to [Jews]... [and that she] should just shut up and put up and be grateful” (Rose, personal communication, November 14, 2015).

Although she does not know the specifics of how her Jewish identity was “outed” one year, other than conjecture, Rose questioned how anybody knew she was Jewish since she “never went to a school going, ‘I’m here. I am a Jew and I’m here and I’m here as a Jew.’ [She] never...had any religious agenda or identity” (Rose, personal communication, November 14, 2015). Though she had Jewish female colleagues who wore jewelry with a Star of David visible and had no issues with students because of their identity, the visible marker of Jewishness was not something Rose felt comfortable with, nor did she see it as appropriate in public education: “I would no sooner wear a Jewish star. I just wouldn’t do it to myself. First of all, I don’t think anybody should be wearing religious symbols, period. That’s not what we’re there for” (Rose, personal communication, November 14, 2015). Additionally, when it came to her Christian colleagues, Rose noted that “people wore the most enormous crosses around their necks and they didn’t have to be afraid at all...[they did] not have it be anything to be afraid of announcing...it’s their world” (Rose, personal communication, November 14, 2015).

Even though she felt “who [she was] as a person and what [her] life story is outside of the school shouldn’t even come into play...What happened is [she] was out for the High Holy Days and [her] sub told them [she] was out for that, is all [she] can figure”

(Rose, personal communication, November 14, 2015). However, she does acknowledge that her “personal experience does come out of [her] as a Jew who’s strongly identified Jewish...[but] that shouldn’t even be an issue, just how well-prepared [she is] to face... assaults” (Rose, personal communication, November 14, 2015). Rose remembered that she was questioned by the administration why she herself was the one who told the students about her Jewish identity, even though “[she] hadn’t and [she] wouldn’t” (Rose, personal communication, November 14, 2015): “To be honest, in some matter, why make problems for myself, plus, it’s none of their business...But what is this, don’t ask, don’t tell? Isn’t that a little hard on the black kids?” (Rose, personal communication, November 14, 2015).

Yet, Rose knew that “things start out small and if you don’t do something, they could get bigger...so that’s not just thinking of it in the moment. It’s like what might come of this” (Rose, personal communication, September 26, 2015). Once students discovered her Jewish identity, she would have “swastikas all over [her] school supplies. The books would come in...with swastikas and ‘F Miss Jaffe’ and ‘F the Jews’ and ‘die Jew bitch’” (Rose, personal communication, November 14, 2015). Although there were students who tried to inform her of the hate crimes before she encountered them on her own, “[she] would drive up to work and check [her] door to see...[she] couldn’t help it. [She] would check [her] door every day to see if there was anything new on it” (Rose, personal communication, September 26, 2015).

The cruelty of these encounters was amplified when she realized the school tried to cover up the first time her door was marked with a swastika, the words “Die Jew bitch” (Rose, personal communication, June 22, 2015), and had been egged: “I was told what

had been on my door because they washed it off. They weren't even going to tell me, but I slipped on some of the egg that they hadn't cleaned up well enough...the whole school would've known about it, but me" (Rose, personal communication, September 26, 2015). For Rose, this particular attack brought forth a shameful recognition that she was not all too surprised by being the target: "I realized there was a part of me that had just been waiting for my turn...not waiting my turn, but not surprised" (Rose, personal communication, June 22, 2015). In addition to accepting it was "her turn", as well as the "shock....[of] even know[ing] that that sensibility abided inside of [her]" (Rose, personal communication, September 26, 2015), Rose felt shame when she questioned why she was singled out since she cared so much for the students:

I felt bad

I even had the thought,

"Why me?"

because why not me?

"Well, I'm very nice,

and therefore, it shouldn't happen to me,"

which is as if to say other people that had happened to

that they earned it.

"Well, but I'm nice. Why me?"

I was really appalled to realize

that there was a part of me

that could even accommodate having that train of thought

The third reaction Rose had to experiencing this particular hate crime was more

“cellular...[as she] remember[s] describing it to people at the time as [her] bone marrow was vibrating...it was deeper than deeper than deep” (Rose, personal communication, June 22, 2015):

I was carrying something from my ancestors...there was something collective in my experience...this profound physical experience. Not just, ‘Gee, I had a really bad upset stomach’...There was just this cellular terror that got activated that I did not think was just present tense that seemed of the ages, of my ancestors, of all our ancestors. (Rose, personal communication, September 26, 2015)

To Rose, being “swastika'd and death threatened...absolutely did not feel personal, it didn't not feel personal, but it didn't feel only personal...[She] felt it was in [her] DNA and [she] felt it through the other Jews who had gone through this” (Rose, personal communication, October 24, 2015):

I'm not a woo-woo person. I'm not closed off completely to things being woo-woo, but that is not my first instinct. I'm scientific, but to have this body experience that was so profound and it felt like this was not just mine. I really felt like it was...in me, in my DNA, this fear of the previous generations or the previous experience. I don't know if it was all psychological or whether it really is physiological. (Rose, personal communication, November 14, 2015)

Though the evidence had mainly been removed by the time Rose had seen her door, she “imagin[ed] what this looked like, not having seen it...and of course they didn't photograph it first...[She] was imagining it in black and white, like photographs of Kristallnacht...black and white photographs from the ‘30s” (Rose, personal communication, June 22, 2015). Rose recalled that her experience differed from her non-

Jewish colleagues due to the negative imagery associated with the historical persecution of the Jews. While her colleagues did not understand why she was so upset since “just a swastika on her door...To [her], it's not just a swastika...[she] was like, ‘This is how it starts.’ All they did was say fuck you for being a Jew...They just saw it as what it was” (Rose, personal communication, November 14, 2015).

In addition, Rose was further isolated from her non-Jewish colleagues during her second trip to the Museum of Tolerance, when she experienced another profound connection to the Holocaust and the only person who comforted her was a total stranger:

I'm going to be partnering up with somebody to do the Holocaust.

I'm thinking

how do I know which machine to go to and when?

How am I going to intuit which person to go through?

I thought, ‘no, I'll just know.’

I'll know when to go

I thought okay

I went to one of the machines and pulled a card

and it was a girl with my last name.

I was very, very sensitive.

I turned to one of my colleagues from my school district

I said, "I just pulled my own name."

This gal from my district goes,

"Ooh, freaky," and starts laughing.

I was just in the throes of all this stuff that was happening at my job



I reeled back to the back wall where there's this black woman

I said, "I just pulled my own name."

I didn't even know her.

"I am so sorry. Do you want to trade cards?"

I thought there's something she gets

I thought this is what it comes down to.

I just took that as

I'm going to do everything I possibly can

to be as wise and as sensitive and as present as I can possibly be

"I'm so sorry.

Let me trade cards with you"

which I didn't do.

I kept the card.

I figured she's the one that I picked

Over the course of almost 20 years, her administration continued to downplay the severity of the crimes and refused to properly document and report the incidents, which forced Rose to seek help outside of the school. After seeing “letters that were like three inches tall, ‘Fuck the Jews. Fuck Ms. Jaffe. Die Jew’ with the swastika” (Rose, personal communication, September 26, 2015) at an end of the year assembly, Rose found an ally after she went to the police department once she realized that her principal was refusing to comply with the hate crime reporting laws

What I was going through

I just didn't want it to be a secret, you know?

I went to the police

one of the detectives there said,

“Let me give you my card.

Do not report this to your school district anymore.

Just call us”

once I reported it to school district, then it became an issue.

I got to go to the police

my principal is mad at me

because I went over her head

I had that card in my wallet for...

I don't know.

At least 3 years after I retired.

I just was so comforted to see that because this guy just said,

“Just call me.

I'll show up.

I'll make sure there's a report.

Don't bother with your district.”

### **Rising from the ashes**

Yet, even with the lingering damage of the anti-Semitic experiences, Rose is able to maintain a sense of consciousness and compassion for those who were unaware of what it meant to be Jewish in a post-Holocaust world and what it meant for her to experience these hate crimes in a public school: “[P]eople didn't mean any harm. They were doing the best they could; they had no frame, no awareness that they couldn't even

get [how] being Jewish meant what it did to me or meant what it did for me...in this un-Jewish place” (Rose, personal communication, June 22, 2015). For Rose, it is not only important that people not deny others differences especially in times of discrimination, but it is crucial they maintain humanity and understanding when dealing with the aftermath of a vicious attack:

[W]hat do we have to offer other people[?]...to the extent that we feel that we absorb any hatred or oppression, how do we still have a strong valuing in ourselves? How do we stay strong with that? How do we have belief in ourselves and then how to see this as all the more reason to be more loving, more active, more wise, more unconditional....We need to see who are we really in the world and what does it mean that we have the history that we have. (Rose personal communication, November 14, 2015)

Furthermore, Rose’s commitment to social justice, as strengthened by her ties to Judaism and Buddhism, is seen through her belief that all people, regardless of background or experience, have a daily obligation to speak up for and help others in need, rather than allowing society to keep everyone isolated:

I would hope that having a sense of justice is not rooted in having a sense of suffering, but that it's rooted in having a sense of compassion. I would hope that there is something as humans that is at its core about being an agent of justice out of compassion...every single one of us is choosing or not, every moment, to be either a rescuer or not, all of us. We don't have a choice whether to be the Jew or...whatever other oppressed group, but we have the choice to be the rescuer. (Rose, personal communication, November 14, 2015)

## **Chapter 7**

### **Discussion and Interpretation of the Findings**

This study attempted to understand how four female, middle class, Ashkenazi public school teachers in the greater Los Angeles area navigated Jewishness as part of multifaceted identities, professionally in classroom pedagogy and around the structures that support Christian privilege. Chapter 1 provided a discussion of my positionality as a researcher, including how I came to this topic, the background of the study, the problem statement, why this type of study is needed, as well as a glossary of terms used throughout the study. Chapter 2, the historical literature review, was designed to present an overview of significant events that have impacted Jewish identity and assimilation in the United States.

In order to understand Jewish females and their marginalized identities in education, Chapter 3 attended to the placement of Jews in, around, and outside of critical theory, identity politics, intersectionality, and Communication Theory of Identity. Chapter 4 served to describe the methodologies approaches and methods used in this study, the rationale for framing a study using Culturally Responsive Methodologies (CRM), and an overview of Arts Based Research (ABR), such as Narrative Inquiry. It also provided the role of counter stories and the protocol for data collection analysis (the Listening Guide), as well as the ethical concerns such as selection of participants, confidentiality and anonymity, and data handling procedures. Chapter 5 included the data collection and methods of analysis actually utilized during implementation of the research process with examples.

Though the final research narratives presented in Chapter 6 serve as the Findings (as each portrait is unique to the participant and her life experiences), Chapter 7, the last chapter focuses on the Interpretation of the Findings that connect to answering the initial questions and Conclusions of this research study. While the final research texts in Narrative Inquiry aim to have the readers “feel the experience” of the participants, even if it is impossible to expose them to the actual experiences the participants faced, there are also several emergent story threads that answered the initial questions and led to new ones. It is important to note that these threads are not the same as themes found when using traditional coding methods; story threads may only apply to one participant, several, or all (the number of participants the thread applies to is not as significant as each individual’s experience is unique to the time, place, and social factors within it). It is from the portraits and the story threads that implications for the field and recommendations for future research will be made for K-12 education, higher education, and teacher education, and the Jewish community as well. The chapter ends with my reflections as a researcher, highlighting what I have learned from being in the PhD program and as an insider researcher in this study.

### **Review of Research Questions**

Originally I had set out to look at how Ashkenazi females understand their identity as educators and how this impacts their pedagogy, due to what I had faced (and still do) when working with students of color and discussing topics such as the Holocaust, slavery in the United States, and present-day discrimination and oppression. As mentioned in Chapter 5, what I found was that the participants’ stories told of a more textured relationship between their Jewish identity and their roles as educators in the

public school system, as compared to the original aim of the research which set out to explore how their Jewish identity impacts their pedagogy. As a result of our meetings, emails, and phone calls, and the constant listenings of each transcript during the data analysis process, clarified research questions emerged to align with the data.

In order to honor the relational aspect of CRM and Narrative Inquiry, as well as the trustworthiness and authenticity needed to accurately capture the essence of the participants and their experiences, the research questions were adjusted to reflect the experiences of the participants. The main research question is “What is the role of Jewish identity for five Ashkenazi females and how does this impact their self-perception of themselves as public school teachers?” Rather than focusing solely on how they understand their identity in relationship to pedagogy (as I originally set out to explore), I decided to shift the focus to include how these Jewish teachers are placed within a system outside of their classrooms.

Additionally, the first sub-question “What does it mean to be an Ashkenazi Jewish female and work in a U.S. public education system at the secondary level, where policies, procedures, structures, rules, norms and relationships reflect the dominant Christian/Protestant institutional culture?” emerged as I listened to the women talk; some of them did not see Jewish identity as an identity they needed to claim in the classroom and school, whereas others had no qualms about being identified as a Jew. The second sub-question “What is the spectrum or variety of Jewish identity revealed in the five narrative portraits?” materialized as a the story thread, as a result of the interpretation of the final narrative portraits that serve as the Findings (found in Chapter 6).

## **Interpretation of Findings/Answering the Questions**

As was mentioned in Chapter 4, non-traditional research methods and tools of analysis such as CRM, the Listening Guide, and Narrative Inquiry, concentrate on the salience of trustworthiness, credibility, and authenticity, rather than generalizability. Due to the nature of Narrative Inquiry, the validity of the “findings” (the final narratives) is found in the researcher’s ability to help the reader view reality through the eyes of the participants, even if it is not replicable. As noted above, the story threads attend to the voices within each narrative, rather than analyzing distinct themes across narratives as seen when using traditional coding. Since coding segments transcriptions into small units, with sections of the overall story separated from one another, the aim of the Listening Guide and Narrative Inquiry methods of analysis is to keep the stories intact in order to make sure the researcher captures the complexity, resonance and illumination of the narrator and her multiple voices. Story threads may come from only one participant, several, or all, as each participant’s portrait is specific in its temporality, sociality, and place. The following are five story threads that emerged and served as frames to answer to the research questions:

### ***Story Thread #1: There is no difference between “doing Jewish” and “being Jewish”.***

“Doing Jewish” implies the thought processes and actions associated with Jewish life, whereas “being Jewish” denotes one’s sense of orientation in terms of Jewish identity (Arnou, 1994). Empirical research on the relationship of American Jews to perceived group attributes typically separates Jewish identity into three levels: cognitive (one’s perceptions of Jewish characteristics and the importance of these in their life);

affective (one's feelings about said characteristics); and behavioral (the consistency of one's actions in relationship to the concept of being Jewish) (Schlosser & Rosen, 2008).

However, all the participants, like many modern day Jews, engaged in Jewish traditions in some way, yet they did not see a division between how they behave as teachers and what it means to identify as Jewish: "The distinction between Jewish identification and Jewish identity begins to break down as soon as one recognizes the natural reciprocal interaction between behavior and affect" (Arnow, 1994, p. 29). Furthermore, it is impossible to separate how one *acts* Jewish and how one *is* Jewish since they "rarely come in separate experiential packages, [and] they cannot be studied as discrete phenomena nor even as two independent sides of a single coin" (Arnow, 1994, p. 30): "[H]aving a Jewish identity is not merely about religious pride. It is about deciding each and every day what Jewishness *means* and how [a Jew] will actualize it in [their] life" (Pogrebin, 1991, p. 162).

What I found was that the women did not directly frame their pedagogy through their Jewishness (they were not designing the curriculum due to them being Jewish, though they incorporated aspects of Judaism in their pedagogy without consciously tying it to their Jewish belief system). Though the participants did not actively set out to teach Jewish ideals like social justice and compassion, their pedagogy and lessons of activism and fairness were informed by their Jewish identity: "Throughout the history of the Jewish people, the notion of fighting for social justice has been a deeply ingrained principle" (Schlosser, 2006; as cited in Rubin, 2013, p. 218). For example, when discussing the issue of the death penalty with colleagues and students, Marilyn did not name her approach to remaining non-neutral on whether Hitler should be executed if he



was sentenced to death as critical pedagogy. However, she drew her strong convictions to rebel against the status quo from growing up with Holocaust survivors as close family friends (and their detailed discussions of the Holocaust she heard from an early age) and the social justice lessons from her mother who stood out as a liberal while working in a conservative jail. Furthermore, Marilyn would incorporate lessons from the Talmud and her trips to Israel's Museum of the Diaspora when teaching her students about being freed from the "need to be loved by others" (personal communication, November 21, 2015):

I always say to my students, "You have to liberate yourself of wanting to be liked by everybody."...there's a statement in the Talmud, and it is on the walls of...Beit Hatfursot...in...Tel Aviv..."A Rabbi...who is loved by everyone is not a good Rabbi."...I don't know the exact quote, but I'm always reminded of that. To be a great Rabbi, you have got to make waves. And if you make waves someone is not going to like you. (Marilyn, personal communication, August 24, 2015)

In addition, though she was always incorporating the Holocaust into whatever she was teaching, Marilyn did not purposely center the curriculum on Jewish principles; yet she was constantly helping her students empower themselves through exercising the necessary courage needed to make change in society. Marilyn would engage the students in Freire's concept of critical dialogue and consciousness (conscientization) by using real world examples to teach her students how "to speak up when it was an issue of right...and wrong" (personal communication, August 24, 2015):

If you cannot stand up to me, how in the world will you stand up to the police?...  
How are you stand up to a police officer if you cannot stand up to your mid-high

school government teacher, where the stakes are so low. If you cannot stand up when the stakes are low, how can you stand up when the stakes are... high?

(Marilyn, personal communication, August 24, 2015)

***Story Thread #2: Current Jewish identity in relation to teaching identity stems from family influence in early childhood.***

Though none of the participants' families discussed how to be Jewish in the world, their current Jewish identification needs to be "understood [with] ongoing reference to the family matrix in which the lives of Jewish children unfold" (Arnow, 1994, p. 32): "[A] critical mass of affirming memories, messages, and experiences sustains the core of positive Jewish identity and sets the stage for openness later in life to an array of encounters around which it will further develop" (Arnow, 1994, p. 32). It is important to note that unlike quantitative studies that measure individualized aspects of Jewish identity (religious denomination and adherence to customs, cultural practices, family and group behaviors, etc.), a Narrative Inquiry study like this one "integrat[es] one's past, present, and future into a cohesive, unified sense of self...that begins in adolescence and continues for a lifetime... [because] [t]he salience of particular aspects of our identity varies at different moments in our lives" (Tatum, 2000, p. 10).

Even though she felt Judaism was a central part of her upbringing, and often saw her mother speak out against injustices for those who were visibly marked as othered, Marilyn quickly realized that her parents would not fight on her behalf when she faced anti-Semitism in her public schools. For example, Marilyn drew upon her mother's vocal commitment to social justice when her sophomore English teacher in high school, a dynamic man with whom she had once regarded greatly, compared an antique piece of

jewelry to something that was “ugly...Jewish Renaissance” (personal communication, June 30, 2015). As a 15 year old who had seen her parents strive to live an openly Jewish life, Marilyn’s decision to confront her teacher the next day, telling him that his language was anti-Semitic, can be viewed through the personal layer of the Communication Theory of Identity (CTI), which looks at how a person makes decisions regarding privacy surrounding Jewish identity (Faulkner & Hecht, 2011; Hecht & Faulkner, 2000). Furthermore, though she did not receive an apology from him, she never let that dissuade her from standing firm in her belief that maintaining the status quo through silence is not an option when living as a Jew in suburban America; the embodiment of this is seen in her challenging the students to speak out against injustices in society.

Likewise, for Olivia, growing up in the temple meant being able to frequently “see oneself shine in a Jewish context and to see that gleam reflected in one’s parents’ eyes...adds dramatically to the core of positive Jewish memories” (Arnow, 1994, p. 32); this is demonstrative of the relational layer of CTI, which seeks to understand how a Jewish person’s identity is formed through relationships with others. Furthermore, due to her strong Jewish identity in childhood, she felt the draw to study abroad in Israel while in college. However, despite having a positive association with her Jewish upbringing, Olivia makes conscious choices when to reveal and closet her Jewish identity in the public school system, a judgement that is regulated through the personal layer of CTI. Moreover, her preference to keep her Jewish identity hidden from her public school colleagues at times is also an example of the relational layer of CTI, as her Jewish identity exists in relation to her teacher identity within a predominately Christian society: “[S]ometimes I would tell them...sometimes I wouldn’t. Sometimes I just wouldn’t be

there...[but] when it's...September 2<sup>nd</sup> and...September 7<sup>th</sup> is Rosh Hashanah, I'd be like, 'Okay so it's day five of school and I have to be away and here's why'" (Olivia, personal communication, May 23, 2015).

Yet, for Pamela "mixed parental messages make for painful memories" (Arnow, 1994, p. 32); she quit religious school in the fifth grade because it was too hard and she felt like there was no support at home. In addition, Pamela's mother being a convert to Judaism and her father not actively participating in the traditions during her childhood forced her to eventually find a connection to Jewishness on her own: "Jewish identity can become a battleground for struggles that in reality are rooted in other concerns...Jewish identity can also be an arena through which to heal some of these old wounds" (Arnow, 1994, p. 32). Even though Pamela's early Jewish experiences "sheds a great deal of light on the process of identity formation, these experiences (and how they are remembered) are also shaped by other dimensions of the parent-child relationship independent of those specifically involving Jewish content" (Arnow, 1994, p. 32).

Since she did not have a strong Jewish influence in her childhood, Pamela sees herself as the champion for her Jewish students, which is an example of the relational layer of CTI. Pamela knows what it is like to face marginalization during the formative years of schooling; in order not to have the Jewish students experience the same result, she serves as the Jewish representative in her class, explaining Jewish life, customs, and holidays so they do not have to. Furthermore, the personal layer of CTI is seen in Pamela's ease in "outing" herself at the beginning of the year by talking about her decision to be absent from work on the Jewish High Holidays, even though many of her

students have little to no knowledge of Jewish life since they have never met anyone before who was Jewish.

Likewise, though Rose's parents felt it was their out of their Jewishness to participate in the war, they did not maintain a strong religious identity: "[M]y family didn't...go be joyfully Jewish anywhere...we didn't have...this time that's just sacrosanct where you're just gonna be human beings together and...really practice[e] the Sabbath fully and [do] it with family. I mean that's beautiful; that's not what I experienced at all" (Rose, personal communication, June 22, 2015). Furthermore, an example of the enacted layer of CTI (which examines how the timing and context of revealing Jewish identity influence the decision to disclose one's Jewishness) is seen through Rose's family friends who choose to "be regular and then...were Jewish for Passover...whereas otherwise they were just there to be friends or neighbors" (Rose, personal communication, June 22, 2015).

Moreover, the relational layer of CTI is expressed through Rose's statement that the anti-Semitism she faced was experienced "with negative influence from family" (Rose, personal communication, November 14, 2015); not having strong ties to the temple growing up (measured through the communal layer of CTI), as well as throughout the years of anti-Semitism in her classroom and on campus, led Rose to "'feel Jewish', but those feelings...[did] not...[lead] to a life of meaningful Jewish engagement" (Arnov, 1994, p. 33).

*Story Thread #3: Jewish identity is not a primary reason for entering into the profession of teaching.*

Though Rose and Olivia were the only two participants who actively sought out a teaching career in college (Olivia majored in education and Rose originally wanted to be an art therapist before deciding to get a teaching credential), all of the women shared that their Jewish identity was not the catalyst for them becoming teachers. Olivia and Rose stated that it was not because of their Jewishness that they were teachers; they both felt being Jewish is who they are, regardless of their teaching identity:

I'm completely Jewish

and my worldview is completely Jewish

I walked on campus,

it was to walk the walk,

not to talk the talk.

I was there out of my Jewishness,

in my Jewishness,

from my Jewishness,

but I wasn't there to be doing it,

to being a Jew.

(Rose, personal communication, November 14, 2015)

Likewise, though her Jewish identity may have had an impact on her teaching when she first started, Olivia believes her entrance into teaching was not determined by her Jewish upbringing:

I don't think

I consciously said,

“I’m Jewish and I want to be a teacher.”

I just think that being Jewish

is just more like the essence of who I am

I think it guides my decisions,

but I don’t think it guided that decision

(Olivia, personal communication, September 16, 2015)

For Marilyn, teaching was a second career after practicing and despising being a lawyer for 10 years; like Rose and Olivia, she did not seek out a teaching credential because of her Jewish identity. Unlike the three other participants who had a defined Jewish upbringing (regardless if they adhered to it as they moved away from their childhood community), Pamela sought out a teaching credential before she began identifying as Jewish. It was not until a few years into her teaching that she decided to actively seek out a connection to Judaism and a Jewish lifestyle.

***Story Thread #4: The hegemony of Christianity in public education affects every participant; their responses directly depend on their comfort level identifying as Jews at the time and in the space with existing relationships.***

Since Jews experience micro-aggressions that remind them of their marginalization in society, it is up to the individual to decide the degree to which their Jewishness is present in the classroom and on campus: “My gender identity is apparent on my person. But if I want my Jewish identity to be known, I must *enact* it” (Pogrebin, 1991, p. 162). For example, Rose felt her Jewish identity did not need to be brought into the classroom; however, it was not until someone else “outed” her that she was forced to

address her Jewishness. When she became the target of aggressive anti-Semitism, her principal put the blame on Rose by saying, “Well, why did you tell them you're a Jew?” (Rose, personal communication, November 14, 2015). Though Rose never set out to diminish her Jewish background, she, like many other Ashkenazi teachers and students in public education learn to walk the fine line between openness and closeted identification: “When you’re invisible, you lose your voice...But becoming visible opens you to attack” (Beck, 1982; as cited in Pogrebin, 1991, p. 215). Since “many Jews are accepted in American society until they are discovered to be Jews”, they may “live with their Jewishness hidden beneath the surface for fear of what’s to come” (Altman et al., 2010; as cited in Rubin, 2013, p. 218).

Furthermore, Olivia and Rose both mentioned that though they noticed the influence of Christianity in their schools during the holidays, they did not feel comfortable or welcome in addressing the presence of the decorations; this decision to not address the offending instances is an example of both the personal and communal layers of CTI. For Olivia coming from a community where being Jewish was normal, seeing Bible verses on her colleagues’ walls when she first started teaching in California was shocking; in addition, she also noticed how the school did not question the visibility of the dominant religion: “[T]eachers will put Christmas lights up in their classrooms; there’ll be trees...in the office there will be a tree or there might be something. [And] it’s never ‘Happy holidays’, it’s always ‘Merry Christmas’” (Olivia, personal communication, May 23, 2015). However, when it came time to addressing the overwhelming acceptance of the Good News Club and the partial illegal teacher involvement, Olivia decision to not be marked as the “squeaky wheel” is seen through the



personal and communal layers of CTI; instead of identifying her discomfort, she asked a Christian colleague to confront the superintendent about the issue.

Likewise, the personal and communal layers of CTI are seen in Rose's recruitment of a colleague to help her challenge the use of "a light-up electric creche in the entryway to the administration building at Christmastime with a light-up baby Jesus...and [t]hey put a lot of effort into it" (Rose, personal communication, November 14, 2015) because, even though she was already experiencing anti-Semitic attacks in her class and around campus, she did not want to bring any more attention to herself as the "Jewish" teacher:

[S]o I said, "Carol, are you willing to be the person who notices the crèche on the counter in the administration building?" She said, "Okay," so she went in and she told them, "You shouldn't have a crèche. This is a religious symbol."...Nothing happened, so I thought "Okay. Oh, no. The Jew has to notice the crèche"...[so] I went in and said they shouldn't have it and they took it down and then I was "Rose ruined Christmas". (Rose, personal communication, November 14, 2015)

In addition, many of the participants faced microaggressions in the form of the school calendar being tied to Christian holidays, such as spring break being placed around Good Friday and Easter Sunday, as well as having the winter break scheduled around Christmas time; yet, unlike Rose and Olivia who did not feel comfortable bringing their Jewishness into the public school setting, Pamela actively challenged her school district when it came to the placement of Open House on Passover. She called the superintendent and spoke to the commissioner in charge of the calendar to let her know that several students and teachers were burdened with the unfair choice of attending Open

House and not celebrating Passover with family and friends, or attending Passover and not partaking in a school-sponsored event.

Likewise, though she was one of very few Jewish teachers at her school, Marilyn aggressively confronted her vice principal at a staff meeting when graduation was moved from a Thursday night to a Friday night one year: “I didn’t call her an anti-Semite, but I said, ‘I am so tired of this’” (Marilyn, personal communication, June 30, 2015). Though the decision to move graduation was not made out of any overt anti-Semitism, Marilyn felt it was her obligation to speak up “because people don’t know until you say...because the country’s so overwhelmingly Christian” (personal communication, October 31, 2015). Her solution was to burden her colleagues who are part of the dominant religion in the United States by having graduation be moved to their holy day of the week. Though the degree to which each participant experienced the discrimination in their school varied from subtle (not checking to see if school events conflicted with Jewish holidays like Passover or Shabbat) to overt (vandalism and death threats), it is important to remember that “[m]any American Jews will have personal experience with anti-Semitism at some point in their lives...[and] nearly all Jews are impacted by acts of anti-Semitism vicariously” (Schlosser, 2006, p. 433).

All of the perspectives were intriguing to me as I do not identify as Jewish at work; at times I will avoid answering a student’s question about me being Jewish so that I do not have to feel uncomfortable or singled out. Similar to Rose and Olivia, I do not feel it is necessary to lead with that identity; however, I was fascinated with the lack of fear Pamela and Marilyn had when self-identifying as Jews and standing up against their

superiors regarding school events being placed on important Jewish holidays (Passover and Shabbat, respectively).

***Story Thread #5: Jewish identity exists on a continuum and is fluid over time, contextualized in space and related to sociality throughout one's life.***

It is important to note that there is a spectrum of Jewish identity and that it “may best be viewed as a dynamic construct in which Jews continually engage in a process of discovery and self-definition” (Schlosser & Rosen, 2008). An example of this is seen when Rose talked about how she identifies as a Buddhist Jew. Out of all the participants, Rose was the least tied to any temple or ritualized Jewish lifestyle, even though she grew up identifying as a Reform Jew and went to religious school for over 10 years. However, she explained to me that although she is “so watered down in terms of really knowing the teachings” (Rose, personal communication, October 24, 2015), how she chooses to live out the Jewish teachings is seen through her Buddhist practices:

[T]he fact that...there is a word for being a really honorable person, there's a word for it...not every culture has a word for being a really good, evolved, caring person. We do; that means something to me, you know? And...I joke around... when I feel I can say it, I'll tell people that my Buddhist practice is my...mensch practice, because...the...way for me to manifest the values I hold as a Jew is to do the practice I do, the Buddhist practice that I do, [which] allows me to create the clarity and presence to bring to the good that I want to...embody in my lifetime so it's my mensch practice. (Rose, personal communication, June 22, 2015)

Furthermore, Rose mentioned that even without strong ties to the Jewish religion, she associates her Jewish identity with the Talmudic practice of analysis:

You know, this is the analytical mind.

To me that's out of my Jewishness

that I have analytical mind, critical thinking.

whatever amount of analytical thought I come up with

whether it's analytical in the sense

of coming up with a joke about something,

or connecting things up,

whether it's clever

or more traditionally

like logical conclusions to what we're talking about,

the fact that it's presumed that this active intellect is welcome...

is very relaxing.

Unlike the Marilyn and Olivia whose current Jewish identities are strongly tied to memories of going to temple in their formative years, Pamela had to seek out her own religious identity due to not having a strong one in her childhood (she was labeled a “half and half”). It was after one Christmas in particular, as she looked out onto the trees lying in the street, that she realized that not having ties to Christianity or Judaism left her searching to find the answer to “what” she was:

I remember...standing out in front of my house after Christmas

I remember looking to both sides

I can see all the dead trees out on the street, thinking,

“I don't know what I am.

I don't know,

I really don't know what I am.

I really don't."

Furthermore, it was not until the trips abroad during her late 20s/early 30s with her father, her stepmother, and their temple that she felt Judaism was the religion for her: Although she is not considered a convert since she grew up in the Jewish religion and attended Hebrew school until fifth grade (until it became too hard for her and her parents allowed her to quit), as well as her father identified as a Jew (albeit a non-religious one), Pamela chose to attend bat-mitzvah classes to symbolically mark her entry into the Jewish religion as an adult.

For Pamela, finding a temple that was inclusive of people who did not grow up Jewish was important: "[O]ur temple's re-constructionist... GOD isn't referred to as he...it's more inclusive and humanitarian...It's more like...GOD is within all of us kind of thing. It's not like you're looking up at a more superior being. It's more egalitarian and inclusive that way" (Pamela, personal communication, October 11, 2015). Moreover, Pamela saw the importance of understanding her own Jewishness in order for her to be married to a Jew. According to Pamela, "like attracts like...you gotta figure out...who you are if you want to find somebody who you want to be with" (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015) and a person who is "nothing...[with] no identification [cannot] expect to find somebody who's Jewish" (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015).

Even though her mother still has a hard time accepting her ties to Judaism, Pamela stated that the Jewish religion and kosher lifestyle make the most sense to her: "Christianity doesn't make sense to me...I don't know...Judaism just makes more sense to

me...and if Christianity made more sense to me then that's the way I would go, but historically Judaism makes more sense to me" (Pamela, personal communication, June, 23, 2015). It is important to remember that for someone like Pamela who did not have a strong Jewish influence in childhood, "from the perspective of Jewish identity, the question is how much the Jewish ethnoreligious and cultural system contributes to meeting one's basic needs. The more these needs are satisfied by distinctively Jewish sources, the more one's Jewish identity is strengthened" (Arnow, 1994, p. 33).

Furthermore, surveys, like those used in different studies about Jewish identity in the United States, do not demonstrate the integration process of different components of self-definition that is part of one's lifelong journey (Tatum, 2000):

[A]lthough it would be much simpler to understand Jewish identity as a static or fixed construct, many individuals experience significant changes related to their Jewish identity over time. As one develops personally and professionally, the importance of being Jewish may fluctuate. Moreover, the way that one expresses his or her Jewish identity may also fluctuate throughout one's life. (Schlosser & Rosen, 2008, p. 979)

### **Review of Methodologies**

Unlike traditional objectivist research that requires the researcher to be detached when "documenting the word of the Other...[r]esearchers, in the academy and elsewhere, are increasingly answerable to their communities of origin and to their communities of interest" (hooks, 1984; as cited in Harrison, MacGibbon, & Morton, 2001, p. 324):

"Trustworthiness... is inherent in the politics of what we do at any and every stage of the research process...[and] mean[s] the ways we work to meet the criteria of validity,

credibility, and believability...as assessed by the academy, our communities, and our participants” (Harrison et al., 2001, p. 324). Though not measured by the same meaning as used in traditional research, validity in this study is seen through the degree to which this entire research process was open to learning from the data that emerged, as well as my faithfulness to the Narrative Inquiry research method. Even when it seemed like the questions or topics I had in mind were not being addressed, I remained faithful to the research. I always maintained a high level of open-mindedness towards this study, especially since the process of Culturally Responsive Methodological (CRM), as well as the final narratives, needed to reflect what was of most importance to them.

For their voices to be heard and presented in an authentic and respectful manner, the CRM approach was used to frame the study, and allowed me to explore the intersections of their identities within their public school experiences: “In a methodology where knowledge and meaning are constructed through social interaction and understanding, the relationships that occur between researchers and participants are critical” (Ferguson & Ferguson, 2000, p. 183). In order to disrupt the researcher/participant relationship found in traditional research, where the participants have little to no voice in the construction of and presentation of the research, CRM was chosen as the ethical stance for this study in order for participants to not feel they were objects being studied, but rather co-owners of the research design, data collection and analysis, and presentation of the final narratives:

The comfort Jews have with dialogue can lead to some serious problems between ourselves and...other groups we wish to engage. First, we sometimes have a need to control the agenda and are often fearful of giving up this control to the will of

the group. Perhaps this comes from our fear of being used, which we have in common with other oppressed groups. Our history makes us mistrustful of those who have not already shown their allegiances to us. To many Jews sitting and talking until agreements are hammered out is a natural part of the dialogue process. (Bernards, 2000, p. 194)

I was able to build trustworthiness and rapport with them due to my insider status and intimate knowledge of holidays, cultural practices, and Jewish community locations. As a Jewish female teacher in a public school, I know what it is like to have my Jewish identity be overlooked until I bring it forth; in addition, I understand the frustration of school events be scheduled without regard for non-Christians and the consequences of taking personal days off to attend religious holidays. This helped build an authentic and organic relationship with each participant that went beyond traditional research relationships where the researcher is the “expert” and can take all that he/she wants from the participants and give little in return. In addition, part of CRM requires the researcher to be honest with the participants about his/her intentions and positionality, so that the participants are aware of any biases from the beginning:

I've been thinking about

what is my relationship to my story about being a Jew?

What's my relationship to that story?

Am I clinging to something?

Am I getting a benefit from the victim part of it?

Benefit even if it just means

a feeling of connection



or a feeling of comfort?

(Rose, personal communication, October 24, 2015)

Though ABR is still relatively new, there are general judging criteria (aesthetic power, social significance, and illumination) for final narratives; the “success” of the study stems from the reader being able to make his/her own judgment about the participant and the phenomena being studied. The aesthetic power of the art created identifies a distinct vision, which enables the reader or viewer to understand aspects of the social phenomena being researched which might not have otherwise been experienced (Barone & Eisner, 2012). Moreover, ABR’s criteria of social significance focuses on the art’s ability to shed light on issues that matter, raise important questions, and advance discussion of topics that may otherwise be overlooked (Barone & Eisner, 1997, 2012; Leavy, 2015). Lastly, the criterion of illumination refers to the way the work defamiliarizes the phenomena under study so that it can be seen in an entirely different way than what is customary (Barone & Eisner, 2012).

In addition, the qualitative methodological paradigm Arts Based Research (ABR) allows the reader to vicariously experience the phenomena of being an Ashkenazi Jewish female teacher in a greater Los Angeles public school. In one of our conversations, Marilyn even remarked “how fascinating [my dissertation topic] is and that [as a researcher, I’m] creating...a piece of Southern California history” (Marilyn, personal communication, October 31, 2015). Though there are general criteria for judging the “art” presented (the final narratives) based on the cohesion of the research, the ability to draw people into a connection with the participant’s experiences, and the

acknowledgment of multiple truths, each piece of art is uniquely individual and not to be compared.

Narrative Inquiry, a form of Arts Based Research (ABR), was utilized to accurately capture the essence of the participants' multiple identities through their living, telling, reliving, and retelling of experiences. Though Narrative Inquiry is often associated with storytelling, it goes beyond simply having the participants tell their stories of what is being studied; this type of research promotes a multi-faceted and multi-layered approach to portray narratives as both the phenomenon occurring and the interpretation of the phenomenon: "Dialogue comes naturally to the Jews...We [are] at home in that process: this is the water we swim in. Dialogue fits Jewish notions of how you make change in the world: you talk, you study, you discuss, you argue" (Bernards, 2000, p. 193). Furthermore, the story-sharing that occurred was a natural fit for Jews, as "Jewish parents strongly encourage verbal and intellectual achievement. The expression of pain and anger is particularly valued in Jewish families" (Herz & Rosen, 1982; as cited in Arnow, 1994, p. 30).

Like CRM, the relational aspect of Narrative Inquiry is critical in forging a strong bond with the participants in order to validate their experiences. Being of the same "othered" identity as the participants, I engaged in story-sharing with the participants, since I was able to share in their frustrations when discussing their experiences in the public school system and understand their pain when they explored deceased family members who helped define their Jewish identity: "We are not afraid to talk to our adversaries and venture into areas that others fear, believing in the healing power of building relationships" (Bernards, 2000, p. 194).

Furthermore, the Listening Guide method, along the three-dimensional space of Narrative Inquiry, was used as the analytical tool due to the depth of intimacy needed to honor the experiences of the women and present counter-stories that challenge the status quo of White middle class female teachers. The final portraits reflect the personal, social, historical, temporal, and cultural contexts that shaped their experiences and reveal what is hidden about their Jewish identity beneath the surface of White skin, providing a different way of understanding how they navigate the hegemony of Christianity in schools and society: “We [Jews] believe our very survival depends on being understood. Our yardstick of success is often whether we think learning is taking place on both sides” (Bernards, 2000, p. 194). Furthermore, it is important to note that “Jewish identity is not an ‘achievement’, accomplished at a fixed point in time and then simply carried along unchanged from one period of life to the next. Neither is it a layer of armor that, once worn, will ever protect against ‘foreign entanglements’” (Arnow, 1994, p. 36).

### **Implications**

Even though they are a statistical minority in terms of the nation’s population, it is important to note that Jewish issues of oppression and anti-Semitism are often not recognized in multicultural discussions or race talks because Jews are not viewed as people of color: “[W]hen the word ‘multicultural’ is used, it is often to mean ‘people of color’” (Galchinsky, 1994, p. 363). Since those who are people of color perceive Ashkenazi Jews as white, “part of the monolithic unity, the ‘white West,’ against which the multiculturalist struggle takes place” (Galchinsky, 1994, p. 363), “they are not allowed membership in the exclusive multicultural club” (Rubin, 2013, p. 214).

Furthermore, Jews are othered due to their inability to neatly fit into the essentialized category of race, since the Jewish identity is complex and changes over time:

The developmental perspective analyzes the changing nature of Jewish identity over the life cycle. The psychodynamic, functional, and structural issues shift in response to specific challenges and tasks at different stages of life. The developmental perspective reminds us that Jewish identity can and should continue to grow throughout life. (Arnow, 1994, p. 35)

Due to the variability of Jewish identity over time, it is hard to pinpoint exactly “what” a Jew is because Jewish identity can be seen as solely a racial, ethnic, cultural, or religious label, some combination of these categories, or none of them. In addition, Ashkenazi Jews are able to disrupt the White group due to their able to occupy both a marginalized *and* a privileged identity simultaneously.

Although White middle class females like the participants in this study make up the majority of the teaching industry and will most likely teach students who are different from themselves, these educators do not set out to engage in racist practices (Buehler et al., 2009; Chubbuck, 2004). Likewise, there is little incentive to change the status quo of teacher demographics (Galman et al., 2010); yet, in order for the White teacher, including those who are Ashkenazi, to become an ally to diverse student populations, these teachers must possess knowledge about themselves, their racial positions in society, and the privileges they have been historically afforded or denied (Buehler et al., 2009; Ortiz & Rhoads, 2000; Titone et al., 2006).

Teachers, including those who are Jewish, who deny their own racial backgrounds (voluntary or not) can become easily frustrated with the cultural mismatch in these

schools, in addition to the teacher's racial positioning within the classroom furthering the progression of White privilege (conscious or not) in education and society (Bell, 2002). Even when there are race talks, marginalized students, including Jews, are involuntarily selected to become the experts on their racial, religious, or cultural background; they are to become the all-knowing liaison between their world and the "naïve" dominant White group (Ladson-Billings, 2005; Talbert-Johnson & Tillman, 1999).

Though Critical Race Theory serves as a tool for examining Whiteness and the systems of society which foster oppression and privilege based on skin color, many White pre-service teachers and teacher educators do not use it due to the discomfort associated with the reflection process (Kincheloe, 1999; McIntyre, 2002; Vaught & Castagno, 2008):

In order for teachers, students and others to come to terms with "whiteness" existentially and intellectually, we need to take up the challenge in our classrooms and across wide variety of public sites of confronting racism in all its complexity and ideological and material formations. (Giroux, 1997, p. 385; as cited in Rubin, 2013, p. 218)

However much research has shown that "psychologically individuals resist having to consider information that challenges their own thinking and, most especially their self-image" (Rios, Trent, & Castaneda, 2003, p. 12; as cited in Rubin, 2013, p. 217), teacher education students need to realize that change comes as a result of the discomfort they feel when "com[ing] to terms with their own true beliefs...[since] [t]here can be no shift in one's thinking if there is no discussion and/or (re)education" (Rubin, 2013, p. 217).

Yet in order to achieve cultural competency, teachers are told that they must not only understand these topics, but also be conscious of them when developing knowledge of the individual families and ethnic groups that make up their student populations and the communities in which their students reside (Buehler, Gere, Dallavis, & Haviland, 2009). If White teachers are supposed to learn about the backgrounds of their students of color and be able to utilize these backgrounds to better serve their students, then White teachers and teachers of color need to understand the impact of fusing Jews with Whites. Being allowed to discuss the history of Jews in the United States or the effects of remaining blind to differences in skin color and privilege may help Ashkenazi Jewish teachers become more aware of what attitudes and actions they engage in that continues the cycle of discrimination, rather than disrupts it: “[Pre-service teachers] need experiential opportunities to recognize and evaluate the ideological influences that shape their thinking about schooling, society, themselves, and diverse others” (King, 1991, p. 143; as cited in Rubin, 2013, p. 217).

In addition, teachers who substitute culture for race not only suppress large racial disparities within the classroom, but also promote the idealized notion of historical cultural assimilation in the United States, a notion which functions on the basis of merit rather than historical structures of racial and power discrepancies (Vaught & Castagno, 2008). Ashkenazi Jews may find understanding the harmful effects of color-blindness and meritocracy in education particularly challenging since they promote the idea of meritocracy because that is what seemed to work for their relatives when their status became upwardly mobile. Moreover, Jews have been marked as othered longer than they

have been White, yet they are not taught to look at themselves at people of color even though they are not fully White.

Although “Whites will often think of their Scottishness, Irishness, or Jewishness, and so on, before they think of their Whiteness” (McLaren, 1995, p. 52; as cited in Rubin, 2013, p. 215), Jews have a long history of oppression and victimization by Whites, even though they are now categorized the same as their tormentors (Rubin, 2013). Jews who do not deconstruct their own religious, racial, and ethnic identities may not be aware of the complexities surrounding their membership into the White group:

[All] future educators need the time and support to be able to dig deep within themselves and uncover all of their subjectivities and hidden biases; it is only after this process that they can then assist their students to reflect upon their own subjectivities and racial/ethnic assumptions of Jewish people. (Rubin, 2013, p. 216).

Likewise, Jewish teachers who are not taught to examine Whiteness in their teacher education may never fully understand the confusion of being both an outsider and an insider unless they research it on their own. Even if Jewish teachers are given the opportunity to unravel the history of Whiteness in the United States and Europe, many of them may be angry at being accused of promoting White privilege through the color-blind mentality.

If White privilege is to be disrupted, teacher education programs need to create the space in which these discussions and the feelings that develop as a result can occur; relying on a diverse student population does not guarantee that Whites, including Jews, will transform into racially aware members of the dominant group (Chubbuck, 2004;

Reason and Evans, 2007). An anti-racist education would allow participants labeled as White to distinguish how Whiteness and the actions connected to it, silently affects those within the White racial group and those who are marginalized by White dominance (Castro-Atwater, 2008; Marx, 2004; Milner, 2010; Scheurich, 1993): “Beginning to speak about race can open up avenues of possibility for speaking about other forms of marginalization and oppression” (Ladson-Billings, 1996, p. 251; as cited in Rubin, 2013, p. 217). In order for change to happen, the priorities of teacher education programs need to be reexamined, with White privilege interrogated, in a way that will not continue to marginalize non-White groups and those who are Jewish or solely through discussions and readings about Whiteness by White scholars (Solomon et al., 2005).

In addition, at many teacher preparation programs, non-Jewish White pre-service teachers and teacher educators see the *diversity requirement* as little more than a necessary evil dictated by the state; yet a solitary course on multiculturalism or racial content is not enough to guarantee success for teachers labeled as White working with students of diverse backgrounds or with those that are White and othered at the same time (Ladson-Billings, 1999; Lawrence, 1997; Milner, 2010). It is important to note that multicultural education and social justice often fails to include Jews and their insider/outsider positioning into many of the discussions on people of color:

Multicultural literature, as currently identified in anthologies and college courses is not, as the name suggests, open to varied cultures. Instead it is a restricted venue clearly posting “not wanted” signs for ethnic Euro-American literatures and Jewish American literature. If the literature is not African-, Asian-, Hispanic-, or Native-American or another literature designated as produced by “people of



color,” that has been marginalized, it is excluded or excised from the anthologies, and therefore absent from the multicultural classroom. (Kremer, 2001, p. 318; as cited in Rubin, 2013, p. 216)

Moreover, “when the word ‘multicultural’ is used, it is often used to mean ‘people of color’”, yet Jews are not allowed admittance into the restricted multicultural group because they are seen as White (Altman et al., 2010; Galchinsky, 1994, p. 363; Rubin, 2013): “Jews must be included under the multicultural umbrella because however few in number and whether by choice or assignment by others, we remain a distinct ethnic and religious group in American life” (Cummins, 2001, p. 6; as cited in Rubin, 2013, p. 218). Even though Ashkenazi Jews in the United States are seen being racial ambiguous and able to disrupt the stability of who is a White American, Jews are not discussed in multiculturalism due to non-Jews’ lack of knowledge surrounding Jewish oppression and the Jews being seen as an assimilated and economically successful group (Langman, 1999; as cited in MacDonald-Dennis, 2006; Levine-Rasky, 2008).

Furthermore, due to Jews being seen as a “model minority” who have been accepted into the dominant culture, anti-Semitism, though itself a form of discrimination, is often left out of multicultural education in favor of issues dealing with race, sex, class, and gender (Freedman, 2005; MacDonald-Dennis, 2005; Rubin, 2013). Even though current reports indicate anti-Semitic acts are at their highest levels since World War II, along with a resurgence of anti-Semitism on college and university campuses in the United States, “it is likely that Jewish issues have been previously ignored because being Jewish is largely an invisible minority status” (Schlosser, 2006, p. 425): “[The] fact that Jews are a minority is not widely acknowledged. Or if they are acknowledged as a

numerical minority, they are relegated to a status of somehow ‘not counting’ as a minority” (Langman, 1995, p. 2). Although Ashkenazi Jews have the ability to both accept the privileges and benefits associated with being White and not identify with their Jewish identity, something that other people of color are not able to achieve due to skin color, many Jews live with the idea that anti-Semitism could resurface if they get too comfortable with their White identity and membership in the dominant group (Blumefield, 2006; Levine-Rasky, 2008).

In addition, though the history of how Jews became White in the United States is not often (if at all) addressed in public schools or colleges of education, to discuss multicultural education and not explore the truth about Jews (as well as other historically marginalized members of the White group like the Irish—even though they do not have a religion that makes them othered within the dominant group) is dehumanizing. Though Critical Race Theory and Critical White Studies are not widely used (they are still in the developing stages in terms of education), they can serve to help students and teachers within teacher preparation programs understand the degree of preparation for diversity that is necessary for working with students of color beyond a superficial level (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 1999; Vaught & Castagno, 2008).

Ashkenazi Jews in the United States are expected to continue to assimilate into the dominant culture like they have been doing since they arrived here; however, just because they assimilate does not mean they will have the cultural capital to truly change the system. This lack of cultural capital is also seen in public schools where the diverse voices of parents, families, and other religious and ethnic groups are not always welcomed or valued: “Jews are not considered a part of American multiculturalism,

partially because they are perceived as having ‘made it’ in American society and are no longer struggling economically and/or politically in this country” (Furman, 2000; as cited in Rubin, 2013, p. 216). However, this disconnect in what a Jewish student or teacher values (transmitted through family, religion, ethnicity, or culture) and what he or she is expected to conform to in public education often creates a cultural disconnect due to their two conflicting identities (Freedman, 2005): “It is important to remember that because American Jews are bicultural, they may experience value conflicts between individualistic American culture and the more collectivistic nature of Jewish culture” (Schlosser & Rosen, 2008, p. 982).

When Jews are automatically mixed into the dominant racial group they have not historically been part of until the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the United States, they may question who they can identify with and be left without support when dealing with feelings of exclusion and invisibility. Furthermore, when Jewish issues are not addressed in multicultural courses (since the discussions surrounding concepts like critical race theory and identity politics often revolve around class and gender with these two narratives are mostly divided along racial lines, those are deemed “white” have privileges and freedom and those identifying as “other” focusing stories of oppression), Jews can feel as if they or their experiences are of no importance to non-Jews (Brettschneider, 1996; MacDonald-Dennis, 2006): “Because non-Jews do not include Jewish issues in multiculturalism... this...exacerbates Jewish students’ invalidation of Jewish identity and anti-Semitism” (MacDonald-Dennis, 2006, p. 276). However, it is important to remember that fighting against anti-Semitism is not a Jew’s responsibility, but rather all Americans because “today’s anti-Semitism becomes tomorrow’s anti-someone else” (Lasson 2010;

Lightman, 2010, p. 375; both cited in Rubin, 2013, p. 218): “[T]he world is witnessing a new, virulent, globalizing, and even lethal anti-Jewishness reminiscent of the atmosphere of Europe in the 1930s” (MacDonald-Dennis, 2006, p. 272). Even though “Jews are still discriminated against in this country and are victim to the highest percentage of anti-religion hate crime...the time to properly educate this country’s citizens is now” (Rubin, 2013, pp. 215-218).

Though it is near impossible to completely change how people think of race in the United States (even when people know that it is socially constructed) because society continues to be divided along racial categories. In order to work together to strengthen critical theory, as well as critical pedagogy and CRT, and highlight the complex nature of identity, it is crucial for both Jews and non-Jews to recognize the insider and outsider status of Ashkenazi Jews in the United States (Greenberg, 1998). Yet, even though Jews are often excluded from discussions about race, marginalized identities, and oppression due to their ability to be both an insider and an outsider to the White group, their ambiguous positioning in society can help people better understand the status of those who are socially marginalized.

Preparing all White teachers, including those who are Ashkenazi, to be critical agents of change takes effort beyond one course on multicultural education and diversity; it requires a collective effort from communities of color, White teacher educators, and colleges of education to define and develop teacher who embody social justice:

“[S]tudying Jewish oppression and anti-Semitism should be more fully incorporated into social justice and anti-racist education programs” (MacDonald-Dennis, 2006, p. 275), and it is essential that it is “discussed...alongside prejudice, discrimination, and the history of

violence against all peoples of color and sexual orientation” (Rubin, 2013, p. 216). It is important to note that it is not only schools of education needed to make a space for Jews in the discussions on minorities and marginalized identities; the Jewish community (rabbis, Jewish scholars, Jewish educators, etc.) are responsible for helping Jewish “individuals with a weak Jewish identity...to perceive the Jewish world as an important resource” (Arnow, 1994, p. 33):

Providers or gatekeepers to the Jewish world of resources-lay people and professionals-clearly have a vital role to play in these potentially identity-enhancing encounters...The fearful desperation of the Jewish community’s current rhetoric about continuity may not change, but those working as providers and gatekeepers to the Jewish world cannot afford to let it frighten away the very people we seek to reach...Gatekeepers to the world of Jewish resources must understand the importance of flexibility, warmth, and acceptance. Especially for those who intentionally stayed away, coming back home may not be easy.

(Arnow, 1994, p. 33-34)

Though this process can be long and slow, with more questions raised than answered, it is important for society as a whole to work together so that true democracy can be achieved and the racial divide not perpetuated: “If it’s democracy, then particularly in our educational institutions, everybody needs to be represented on every level...If we’re going to maintain our democracy...we have to do a better job of integrating all Americans in our culture” (Marilyn, personal communication, November 21, 2015).

## Limitations

The small sample size (five participants with the researcher being one of them) that was purposely selected may be seen as a limitation because of the inability to generalize the findings. However, a small  $n$  population allowed me to focus on each participant's stories in an authentic and respectful manner; having a large participant population would not for the smaller details of their stories to speak to the larger narrative of not only being a Jewish female teacher, but also the identity management process (when to "pass" vs. when to be visible) of Ashkenazi in the United States. This would not have been achieved if the  $n$  population was larger. ABR methods like Narrative Inquiry do not focus on generalizability, but rather researchers can draw conclusions from a population represented by  $n = 1$  since a single person can reveal aspects of society that were not seen before (Barone & Eisner, 1997, 2012). In addition, being able to build deep relationships with these women, some of whom still call to check in and discuss aspects of the research, helped me not only validate their experiences, but also become a witness to their testimonies and memories in contrast to the status quo. My positioning as an insider researcher, as well as being a participant in this study, may imply bias as I may appear "too close" to the participants to truly capture the nuances of their stories.

In addition to being relatively new, the use of Ipoems in the final narratives may not seem rigorous enough to show deep analysis. However, I spent over 120 hours analyzing all of the transcripts (i.e. completing the multiple steps per transcript that is required to intimately understand the essence of the participants), and almost 100 more hours constructing the final narratives. Furthermore, due to being pregnant for most of the data collection and analysis limited how long I was able to sit when transcribing the

conversations. As my due date approached, I realized that I would need to outsource the transcribing to a service; thus, not transcribing the data all myself meant losing out on another listening and hearing the participants' voices again before analysis began.

Another limitation was the location of the study; all of the participants lived and taught in Southern California. Thus, the study did not capture the perspective of a Jewish female living in a metropolitan city, where there are either more Jews live in the neighborhood or more Jews are teachers; these women may have extremely experiences than the participants in this study. Another limitation is the teaching assignment of the participants, since elementary teachers may view Jewish identity in public education very differently due to the amount and types of content they are responsible for teaching (single subject teachers, those found in middle and high schools, generally teach the subject area their credential is in). Likewise, Jewish female teachers in the elementary schools, like Pamela was as a student teacher, may find that there is too much religion infiltrating the curriculum and, like Olivia, school events, such as the "winter concert" that features a solitary Jewish song.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Due to the lack of discussion on Jews in multiculturalism, pre-service teacher education programs, public schools, and studies about Jewish educators in general (and particularly those outside of densely populated areas like New York where students have off from school for the Jewish High Holidays due to the amount of Jewish teachers and students in the school), more research is needed to understand the distinct challenges faced by Jews who decide to enter the teaching profession. Though middle-class females make up the majority of the teaching population, the Jewish male perspective would

provide a contrast to the teacher demographic status quo, in addition to allowing a comparison of experiences (especially if the study focused on a Jewish male and female at the same school, how do they address being Jewish in their classroom? Do they experience discrimination similarly? What structures in the educational system do they individually and collectively feel silenced by?).

Moreover, in-depth study is needed to understand the experience of Jewish pre-service teachers while they are in teacher education programs to see when and how, if at all, Jews are discussed as being a minority, along with how these Jews feel about Whiteness (if it does get addressed). Furthermore, a longitudinal study could follow Jewish pre-service teachers from their time in teacher education to them getting a job, as well as what it is like teaching (if they are the only Jewish person at their work site, how soon does their Jewish identity get addressed and by whom? How do their student and fellow coworkers feel about the participant's Jewishness?).

Long-term studies could even look at this process from the lens of Jewish teachers in urban areas working with students of color. This would help challenge the master narrative of White teachers who work in communities that are racially different from them, as many of these studies assume White teachers all have the same experiences. How do Ashkenazi teachers in urban areas engage in race talks (if they do at all)? Are these teachers addressing their Jewishness with the students, and if so, how is that received by the students; do the students accept being Jewish as a minority status or do they just see lighter skin and place a Jewish teacher in the privileged group?

In addition, research needs to also focus on Sephardic Jews as students in public schools, in pre-service teacher education, and as teachers and look at where they place



themselves racially and culturally: Are they left out of the marginalized, oppressed, people of color conversation more than Ashkenazi Jews are? How do they feel about their specific placement in terms of the intersection of race (and not being able to identify as full White), class and gender? How do they address their “otherness”?

Likewise, more research is necessary to understand the different experiences of Jews working in post-secondary education (either as a professor or as an administrator) or as administrators in K-12 education, including those from retired educators or administrators. These perspectives would add a different texture to the master narrative about Jews in education since researchers could explore whether the same challenges faced by elementary and secondary Jewish public school educators persist. Furthermore, understanding the experience of Jews in post-secondary education would present a different perspective of Jewish educators depending on the location of the college or university and faculty and department status of these individuals: How do teacher educators deal with issues of diversity and multiculturalism in pre-service education classes? Have their colleagues in other fields of study faced any anti-Semitism in their classes or around campus? What structures are in place on campus that welcomes or discourages Jews from speaking up/out?

Furthermore, more in depth studies using holistic research methods such as portraiture would allow the researcher to be able to see the Jewish teachers in public schools inside his/her classroom and around campus. This would make the transition from observing a fellow participant teaching to conversation more related to what was observed (or what was thought of during the observation, living and telling found in Narrative Inquiry), which would help the researcher better understand the structures of

the school and district that either silence or encourage challenging the status quo. Likewise, future studies could incorporate different generations of the family (like Olivia's children or Pamela's father whose second marriage to a Jewish woman made him change his behaviors and identification as a Jew) to see what identity shifts (if any) they went through as Jews in the United States, and incorporate different media (pictures, videos, letters, etc.).

In addition, further qualitative research needs to be done to understand the experience of Ashkenazi Jews as both privileged and marginalized since there is a lack of literature on these identities existing at the same time. Though this dissertation is a start in filling the absence of research, studies about Ashkenazi men, different generations of Ashkenazim in the United States, and Ashkenazim in different professions are needed to understand how and when an Ashkenazi Jew's perspective of the oppressed and privileged statuses are shaped. Since there is very little literature about religious minority teachers in public schools, this dissertation can serve as a model for those looking to address this void; future research could also focus on religious minorities such as Mormons, Seventh-Day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, who are not able to enjoy the same privileges of the dominant Christian religion, as well as those of Muslim, Buddhist, and Hindu faith who are not only religiously minorities, but also physically marked as "othered".

### **Researcher Reflections**

*The end of this process is bittersweet for me. On one hand, I am glad to be done with this year, all the research, crying from stress, and commuting to school. On the other hand, I do not want this part of my life to end. I have been a student for so long that*

*it is tough to imagine my life without school. Although the thought of having a PhD in Education is overwhelming, I know that there is a large part of me that will always be a student and a good one at that.*

In May 2009, I wrote that paragraph as the opening to my final reflection section of my Master's thesis and seven years later, many of those words are exactly how I feel right now. As much as I am glad to be done with all the years at Chapman, the research (to a certain degree), the crying from bewilderment and feelings of inadequacy, as well as the commuting to school (which takes much longer than it did in 2009), I am not exactly ready to let go of being a student and researcher. I know that being an educator in some capacity will always be my calling, and so will research, but I never expected to what degree the Narrative Inquiry and Listening Guide process would change me as a person. Although transformation on the part of the researcher is expected in CRM and Narrative Inquiry, building relationships with the participants, being privy to deep-rooted memories and experiences, and studying a topic that is absent in the literature not only changed how I thought of myself as a Jewish person in the classroom and society, but also opened my eyes to different forms of microaggressions that I often overlooked or assumed were not worth challenging.

As much as I would not fully recommend being pregnant and giving birth during the dissertation process, I think being pregnant helped me tune to the different emotions voiced and silenced by the participants during our conversations. Although my research topic and the data analysis methods may not be revolutionary enough for some journals, I believe Narrative Inquiry and the Listening Guide were the only ways for me to keep true to my intentions as a mindful researcher. Though these methods of analysis are time-

consuming due to the multiple listenings and different items that are constructed (summaries, Ipoems, charts, interim texts, final research narratives), they sustained my passion for the topic and helped me honor the participants' experiences in an authentic and meaningful practice. (I often heard people joke about it, but the dissertation itself is very similar to pregnancy and delivery: the dissertation "grows" throughout the "trimesters"-major developmental milestones in the research are associated with a mixture of wonder, fear, and happiness and the last few weeks are uncomfortable and tied to feelings of just wanting to be done already-and the fully grown dissertation is "birthed" at the defense.)

Though my life did change this past year with the birth of my son and working on the dissertation, I only took one year off from being a student and that was the year before I entered the PhD program to see if I was making the right decision going back to school (at the time, I remember telling everyone how bored I was not being in school). Back then, I had no idea where life would take me or the topic I would eventually write about for my dissertation (this is also seen in Chapter 1 where I present the Jewish identity contrast between my 13 year old self and now); however, much like at my wedding when the rabbi talked about the concept of *Bashert* (the Yiddish word meaning destiny or perfect pairing, often in reference to a couple that are considered soulmates), I feel this topic was my bashert and that every paper I wrote related to that question ("Why don't you see yourself as White?") leading up this dissertation was an indirect result of my grandparent's assimilation in the United States.

For as long as I could remember, my maternal grandmother's name was Sally; only in 2011 did I find out that her birth name was Sarah and that she changed it in order

to get a job, go to high school, and “fit in” in New York when she arrived from Russia. My mom’s family has saved her high school diploma to show the grandchildren the importance of an education and making something of oneself in America; even though my cousins and I are not immigrants or first generation Americans, our family still places great emphasis on college and professional careers like many other Jewish families do. Additionally, my father grew up working in his father’s appetizer store and speaking Yiddish, Hebrew, and English to the local patrons and neighbors in the community; yet his father demanded he get a job outside of the store because of the time-consuming nature of running a small business. My grandfather, who emigrated from Austria (which I just found out at Passover in 2011), worked almost 14 hours a day, seven days a week and only closed on several Jewish holidays, such as the first night of Passover and the high holidays of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

Furthermore, though I had grown up knowing my father was raised in a kosher home and had attended a private Hebrew school from grades K-8, it was not until that same Passover in 2011 that I heard my father talk about how my grandfather wanted him to have an easier life by working in a field outside of the neighborhood store. However, I only have my father’s stories and one picture of my grandfather’s store because my grandfather died when my dad was 23 and the store closed up shortly after his passing. Due to my grandfather’s devotion to the store and his desire for my father to gain employment outside of the neighborhood, my father made sure to enroll my brother and me in some of the best public schools near where we lived as a way to help us succeed in this country.

## **Conclusion**

Ashkenazi Jews who do not learn about how they embody both a privileged White person and a religious/ethnic/cultural other are not able to break the cycle of the oppressor dehumanizing the oppressed. Due to their inclusion into the dominant culture, they are often not seen as an oppressed group. However, Ashkenazi Jews who attend or work in public schools in the United States know that they often face a cultural disconnect between what is expected of them in class and at home. As a Jew finishing up her dissertation, I realize I am able to alter the oppressed/oppressor cycle in many ways; however, I wonder how this can truly be done when a person embodies both the oppressed and oppressor identities. On one hand, I can shape my classroom instruction with this dilemma in mind, so that my students (many of who are low-income or students of color) do not one day become the oppressors once they are “liberated”. On the other hand, I worry about focusing too much on the visibly marked oppressed people and not enough on the people like me, those caught somewhere in the middle or those who are able to closet their oppression and are often overlooked due to their ability to assimilate. Even though Jews and their dual identity are not discussed as often in multicultural education trainings or classes as often as other minorities are, in order to truly change the world, we must liberate not only the oppressed, but also the oppressors (Freire, 1970).

To many people engaging in work like mine, it can feel isolating and maybe easier to give up than conduct research on a topic that challenges the status quo. However, for many of us who feel compelled to study something personal but rarely discussed, there is a sense of personal obligation to explore the life experiences of those whose voices are not being heard or valued:

What story do I or we tell ourselves? What relationship do we choose to have to all of it in the past and in the present? What's my ultimate responsibility for how to attend to whatever ghosts or authentic DNA memory or whatever it is, fear, a sense of otherness, whatever the mixture is? It's still up to me. Who am I going to be with all of that? Inadvertently am I holding onto a story? (Rose, personal communication, November 14, 2015)

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