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The Repatriation Experiences of American Third Culture Kids

A Dissertation by

Nicole Mazzo Bennett

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

Committee in Charge

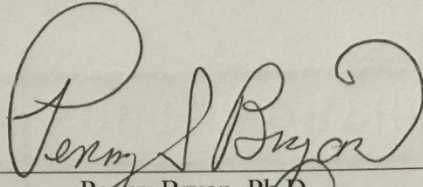
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Michael Hass, Ph.D.

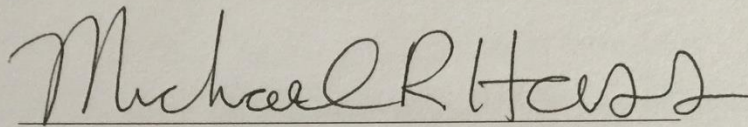
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REPATRIATION EXPERIENCES, AMERICAN THIRD CULTURE KIDS

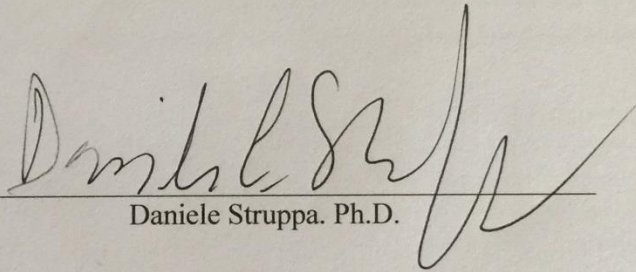
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Daniele Struppa, Ph.D.

April, 2016

REPATRIATION EXPERIENCES, AMERICAN THIRD CULTURE KIDS

The Repatriation Experiences of American Third Culture Kids

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my wonderful family. I wouldn't have been able to complete my doctoral degree without your continued love and support. Thank you for being the encouraging pieces in my life puzzle; "It is the small pieces that make the big picture!"

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My doctoral journey and the completion of this dissertation would not have been possible without the support from many people in my life.

I would first like thank my parents, Jim and Kelly. Thank you for your continued love and support, not only during this dissertation journey, but throughout my life. Researching and writing about the Third Culture, and exploring my own personal Third Culture experiences, afforded a deeper appreciation for the decisions and sacrifices you made for our family, and I am forever grateful. Looking back on our Third Culture adventure reminded me of all the amazing experiences and memories we share. I love you both so much.

To my brother Chris, whose life I learned so much more about while investigating the repatriation process of Third Culture Kids. I know that experiencing the Third Culture together is the reason we are so close. My hope is that after experiencing this journey with me, listening to me talk about third culture literature, and reading my dissertation, you too will have a better understanding of your repatriation transition process and the unique culture of which we are a part. Thank you for your support and for sharing many of your personal stories to help motivate me to complete my dissertation.

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your support I know that my time in the program would not have been as productive. You are a wonderful husband, daddy, and best friend, and I love you.

To my beautiful daughter, Gracie. You are my inspiration and my guiding light. You are such a positive, compassionate, and intelligent little girl. I hope that your love for life and learning continues to grow. I want you to grow up knowing that you can do whatever you put your mind to. You constantly amaze me. You have taught me so much about life and the importance of balance. Thank you, Gracie, for being you, and for always giving me a reason to smile. To quote Christopher Robin from Winnie the Pooh, always remember that “you are braver than you believe, stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think,” but most important you are loved more than you will ever know. I love you.

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interest in arts based research was important as it gave us an official reason to hang out together, often a reason to grab dinner together. I am proud of our co-written chapter and I look forward to writing together in the future as Frick and Frack PhD's.

And finally, I would like to thank my committee members, Dr. Penny Bryan, Dr. Michael Hass, and Dr. Daniele Struppa, for their guidance and encouragement. Penny, my committee chair and advisor, thank you for introducing me to narrative inquiry and the beauty that is arts based research. Without your guidance and enthusiasm, this dissertation would not have been complete. Thank you for your willingness to explore the Third Culture and exchange stories, and for joining me on this adventure. Ultimately, thank you for your emotional support during the dissertation process. Dr. Hass and Dr. Struppa, your experience and expertise encouraged me to investigate different aspects of the Third Culture and I am grateful for your determination to see me succeed.



# REPATRIATION EXPERIENCES, AMERICAN THIRD CULTURE KIDS

## ABSTRACT

### The Repatriation Experiences of American Third Culture Kids

by Nicole Mazzo Bennett

American families moving abroad are often informed of the initial difficulties they will encounter as residents in a new culture; however, they may not recognize the possible subsequent effects on their children, when returning home to their native cultures during the repatriation process. The children who experience the effect of living in a new culture and eventually repatriating are known as Third Culture Kids (TCK). As globalization and expatriate populations increase, it is important that society becomes aware of the Third Culture community. This qualitative research study focused on analyzing the repatriation transition process of four Adult Third Culture Kids (ATCK) and explored the relationship between their emotional intelligence and their third culture and repatriating experiences. This dissertation provides a profile for what type of citizen a TCK may become upon repatriation. Framed within a narrative inquiry approach this study utilized the Listening Guide method of analysis in order to capture the participants' final narrative portraits. Storied themes emerged from the final narratives providing evidence for this research study's five main conclusions: (a) home is not defined by one physical location, (b) assimilation and repatriation do not equate, (c) emotional intelligence may be a factor in repatriation success, (d) Third Culture experiences influence civic engagement, and (e) there is one incident that is perceived as signifying the completion of repatriation. These findings offer a new perspective of the repatriating experience and provide insight for families entering the expatriate culture and returning home.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

### **Third Culture Kids**

Third Culture Kids (TCKs)—expatriate children who spend a substantial amount of time living in a foreign culture—are a growing demographic in today’s increasingly global world (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009; Quick, 2010; Useem & Downie, 2011, McCaig, 2012; Cottrell, 2012). According to the United States Bureau of Consular Affairs (2013), there is an estimated 6.8 million Americans living overseas; with an increase in international business, more Americans will have the opportunity to live a Third Culture lifestyle. Regardless of this globally increasing culture, Quick (2010) reports that TCKs are one of the most under-researched populations.

The Third Culture community is primarily comprised of military families, corporate business families, diplomat families, and missionary families (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009; Cottrell, 2012; Quick, 2010). In order to identify TCKs socially, one of the first questions a TCK is asked upon arrival to their host country is in regard to what their father<sup>1</sup> does for work (Useem & Downie, 2012). TCKs are inevitably attached to and identified by their parents’ sponsoring organization and representational roles (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009; Cottrell, 2012; Useem & Downie, 2012).

While the cultural background and length of time spent abroad varies, to be identified as a TCK one must have spent a significant amount of time abroad during their developmental years (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009; McCaig, 2012; Cottrell, 2012). The opportunity to live abroad creates countless possibilities for a TCK. Living outside their

---

<sup>1</sup> I understand that this is the traditional view of family. Today this could be a parent of any gender or sexual identity.

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native country, TCKs are given the chance to view the world through a larger lens, a lens that embraces diversity and culture (McCaig, 1996). They possess multi-dimensional identities and often acquire rich narratives due to their unique experiences (Pollock & Van Reken; Gilbert & Gilbert, 2012; Useem & Cottrell, 1996; McCaig, 1996; Pollock, 1996), such as: a) being educated in an international environment with students from varying cultural backgrounds, b) helping doctors offer free health services as a school project seeing firsthand the poverty that third world countries face, and c) competing in sports tournaments around the world where women's rights are minimal. These examples of Third Culture experiences illustrate the importance of experience-based knowledge and its effect on both identity development and global citizenship.

Since the Third Culture is composed of individuals from differing backgrounds, the culture does not rely on a common physical attribute; therefore, it is multicultural, multiracial, and multiethnic (Pollock, 1996; Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). Additionally, the culture is bound by individuals who share similar values and possess comparable attributes based on their experiences of living abroad as expatriates. TCKs are accepting of others; as they themselves have been "othered," they embrace cultural difference and are genuinely interested in sharing their narratives with one another (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). These attributes are attributed to their understanding of the world and their formation of knowledge. TCKs value knowledge and education and understand the importance of experience-based learning (Useem & Cottrell, 1996). They have a love for travel and experiencing the unfamiliar and unknown, ultimately learning to adapt to new and foreign norms and cultural expectations (Pollock, 1996; Useem & Cottrell, 1996; Pollock & Van Reken, 2009).

**Researcher Positionality: Personal Narrative**

In order to understand my interest in expatriate culture, specifically the Third Culture Kid (TCK), it is important to recognize my past and the experiences that have shaped my understanding and epistemology. I am a member of the expatriate community and I am the face of a TCK. I lived and was educated in an international environment and, although I am an American, I view the world through a multicultural lens, a lens that appreciates and celebrates cultural difference. My experiences—specifically my family, travels, education, and religion—have all shaped my identity as a TCK and a member of the Third Culture community.

I consider myself to be privileged. My father had a very successful career and has given my family the opportunity to experience new places and meet people of different cultures. As a member of the expatriate community and Third Culture, I have lived in four different countries, twelve cities, and twelve houses. I have attended three elementary schools (United States, Canada, Italy), two middle schools (England, United States), and one high school (England). When people ask where I am from or to describe my upbringing, I don't know where to begin. Do I start with where I was born or where I have lived? To save people's time and interest, I often skip my life history and define myself as a member of the Third Culture community. And while that seems to create more questions, it identifies my continued struggle with cultural identity.

Due to my experiences within the expatriate and Third Culture, I am a self-proclaimed global citizen. Similarly stated in Franklin D. Roosevelt's inaugural address, I have learned how to be a citizen of the world, and I consider myself a member of the human community (Roosevelt, 1945). Aside from the formality of claiming residency in



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four countries and having dual citizenship, I have been to five continents, traveled to over thirty countries, and visited hundreds of cities. In summary, this amazing gift of living and travelling abroad has exposed my family to many different cultures. I have learned to embrace different races, ethnicities, languages, religions, and political opinions. My experiences with moving and travelling have afforded me an open-minded outlook on world affairs, and I believe that these opportunities have taught me to adapt to any situation that is put in my path. Through my experiences as a TCK I have learned to address multiple ways of knowing and I celebrate the beauty of experience through the power of authentic narrative. When we are given voice, the chance to tell our story, others are able to see the world through a new lens. As a member of the Third Culture I was not only hearing and reading different narratives, I was gifted the chance to live within them.

I owe my experiences to the hard work and dedication of my family, and the sacrifices they made in order to afford the life we lived. I am grateful every day for my experiences and I realize that along with hard work we were also in the perfect place at the perfect time. I treasure the opportunities I have been given as a member of the Third Culture and I continue to embrace this world with an open mind. I look forward to meeting new people from different backgrounds and listen to their unique stories. I combine my past experiences and life lessons to create my own personal philosophy. What I know and how I know influences everything I do. While this is my personal reflection, my experiences and research have proven that this is also the mentality of the expatriate, specifically TCKs.

Although I've lived what is typically defined by society as a privileged life—a

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socioeconomically privileged white American female living a comfortable lifestyle—from an early age I learned that you pay a price for everything, and I understand the notion that nothing in life is free. As a Third Culture Kid I made and lost hundreds of friends, left family pets behind, and grew up thousands of miles away from my “home” and extended family. While each move brought amazing experiences, it in turn brought heartbreak. For some, standing on the concrete on the last day of school meant summer. To me, at different points in my life, it meant saying goodbye to friends and the life I had gotten used to, and moving on to the next. While I understood the reason behind my constant mobility, leaving relationships, homes, and treasured places behind was difficult. This is common for the TCK. While most are aware of the challenges associated with moving (new home, new school, new friends), the emotional challenges that TCKs experience are often misunderstood.

I began my repatriating experience to the United States upon completion of my senior year of high school in London, England. I was confident in my adaptive abilities to fit in at a university; however, I was unaware of some of the reentry challenges I would face. I was returning “home,” to Southern California, a transition that I had looked forward to throughout my childhood; what problems could I possibly encounter? It wasn’t until I arrived on American soil and unpacked my belongings—the symbolic mementos that seemed to sum up my third culture life—that I realized I was not in fact “home.” Although on the surface I was perceived as an American native, internally I felt as though I had simply moved to another new foreign culture and I had again left behind an important part of who I was.

During the first few weeks at the university, like all of the new freshmen, I was

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trying to make new friends and see where I fit in. I remember struggling to identify myself, especially when asked the ever so daunting question, “Where are you from?” While I loved telling my Third Culture story, I did not want to come across as arrogant and therefore I chose to tell my new peers simply that I was from London, thinking that was the shortest and easiest answer. However, I quickly learned that my answer and conflicting accent caused confusion. In order to make sense of having an American accent, I would have to further describe my childhood, often giving a brief chronological timeline like I had gotten used to doing while living abroad. I considered making a pin that read, “I am from London. I don’t have an accent because I am originally from America,” however I knew that would still initiate more questions. While some were intrigued and interested in learning more about my experiences, others simply didn’t care, so it was important for me to read each encounter before divulging my past.

Other than having difficulty answering what others may perceive as a simple question, I was able to assimilate quickly, a characteristic I attribute to my Third Culture experience. However, I have come to understand that assimilating does not equate with repatriating; there were times I felt culturally confused and misunderstood, and those feelings lingered until I completed my transition process. It wasn’t until I travelled back to London nine years later for the 2012 Olympics that I felt I had successfully repatriated. During the Olympic Games, although I acknowledged my love for England and wished the best for the British competitors, I was ultimately cheering for Team USA. During that trip I was also able to visit the town I grew up in and experience the city I once called “home.” While I still felt a deep connection to London, and I missed the culture, I knew in my heart that I identified with the United States; it was then that I realized if given the

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chance to move back to Europe, I would most likely decline. This was the final critical incident in my repatriating timeline as it signified my choice to belong here in the United States.

However, it wasn't until I began my TCK research that I was able to reflect on my past and identify the emotions that I was dealing with during my repatriating transition. The methodology in this study required the researcher to reflect on past experiences before continuing with research; the purpose was to understand one's own story and be able to separate it from the participants' stories during the research process. This research process has been insightful and cathartic; it has given meaning to my TCK life and encouraged me to name critical incidents from my past and reflect on the experienced emotions. While I experienced the Third Culture world, I learned so much from the participants and their Third Culture and repatriating stories. Although parallel themes exist throughout the participants' stories, each story was individually unique. Third Culture research emphasizes the importance of viewing TCKs as individual people, understanding that,

“while their experiences may be different from other people's, TCKs were created with

the same need that non-TCKs have for building relationships in which they love and are

loved, ones in which they know others and are known by them. They need a sense of

purpose and meaning in their lives and have the same capacities to think, learn, create

and make choices as others do” (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009, p. 21).

I am an insider into a culture that is only known by those who have lived as a TCK, and I understand the benefits and challenges of the Third Culture lifestyle. I believe I have an obligation to give insight into the Third Culture experience, an obligation to those who have experienced life as a member of the Third Culture community as well as those who have not. While recent literature surrounding the Third Culture offers a new perspective of the community, it is my goal to expand and offer deeper understanding through new research regarding the repatriating experiences of TCKs.

### **Statement of the Problem**

As globalization and expatriate populations increase, it is important that society becomes aware of the Third Culture world. With an increase in international business, Americans are continually entering the expatriate culture, assimilating into the Third Culture community. American families who are moving abroad are often aware of the initial difficulties they will encounter as cultural outsiders (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009; Quick, 2010). However, they take comfort knowing there is an expatriate community awaiting their arrival and that their sacrifices will in turn create opportunities for them and their families.

While the minimal current literature aims to define the challenges and benefits of being a TCK and the Third Culture experience, this research study further examines the repatriation process of TCKs and its impact on emotional and social development and cultural identification. Once TCKs move back to their native cultures, they are expected to assimilate with ease and successfully adapt to what is referred to as their first and native culture (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009; Quick, 2010; La Brack; McCaig, 2012).

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Because TCKs “frequently build relationships to all of the cultures, while not having full ownership of any” (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009), there is concern regarding the return to their native culture. The TCK often feels that they belong “everywhere and nowhere” (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009, p. 23) simultaneously. This cultural confusion can cause unidentified, therefore unresolved, emotional stress and may have an effect on repatriating success.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this research study is to examine the experiences of American TCKs who chose to leave their host culture and repatriate to the United States to attend a university back in their native culture, the United States. Since TCKs have been defined as adaptable to most situations due to their experiences of travelling and constant mobility, the research focused on analyzing the repatriation transition process and exploring the relationship between the emotional intelligence of TCKs and their repatriating experiences. Similarly, there is little research on the implications of the repatriating experience on democratic responsibility.

### **Research Questions**

The research questions that guided the research study are:

- What can we learn from the experiences of TCKs repatriating for post-secondary education?
- What repatriating transition experiences do TCKs identify as significant?
- What is the relationship between emotional intelligence and successful reacculturation?
- What is the relationship between the Third Culture experience and democratic

responsibility?

As this research design is rooted in narrative inquiry, the narratives encouraged reflective responses. The narratives were guided but not limiting as their purpose was to start an inner dialogue and help the participants recall experiences from their past.

### **Orienting Theoretical and Conceptual Framework**

The theoretical framework provides support for the guiding research concept. Just as a foundation supports a building, the theoretical framework provides the rationale behind the research design and the lenses through which the study is viewed. This study is shaped by many contributing perspectives on the Third Culture experience, including Pollock and Van Reken's (2009) exploration of the Third Culture profile and global lifestyle and Pollock's (2009) examination of the TCK transition experience. The theoretical foundation of this study is examined through Daniel Goleman's (2005) influential perspective of emotional intelligence theory and John Dewey's theories of experiential education and aesthetics, and civic engagement.

### **Procedures and Methods**

The research design for this study was influenced by the qualitative research paradigm, particularly the Arts Based Research method. Arts Based Research continues to fight for its place within the academic community. Eisner (2008) suggests that it is expected for a young research methodology exhibiting new assumptions and methods to be questioned and critiqued. He also states that for arts based researchers, these critiques and tensions can be motivating. Barone and Eisner (2012) suggest many academics have little knowledge of aesthetic research methods, including arts based research, and therefore often discredit and "reject them as representations of knowledge" (Barone &

Eisner, 2012, p. 39). They argue that it is essential to accept and understand varying forms of research in order to explore the many forms in which knowledge is acquired, promoting what they refer to as epistemological diversity:

There are, we believe, a variety of forms of representation available to enrich what one can come to question or to know by virtue of the ways in which the subject matter is addressed. This diversity is, for us, a fundamental consideration in the promotion of arts based research (Barone & Eisner, 2012, p. 47).

Research can be defined as the process of analyzing and re-experiencing the world by means of continuous examination of named phenomena (Barone & Eisner, 2012). Social scientists began to ask questions that focused on understanding the human condition and thus sought new methods of inquiry that were not confined to one particular linear set of steps. Instead, arts based research encourages fluidity and can result in informal encounters with phenomena (Barone & Eisner, 2012). The objective of arts based research is to create research that “has elegance and subtlety, which promotes meaning not only through its literal or discursive features but because of its metaphorical and qualitative features as well” (Barone & Eisner, 2012, p. 48).

Narrative Inquiry is a form of arts based research that includes the authentic element of storytelling. Research that employs narrative inquiry recognizes that participants are “experts of their own local knowledge” (Berryman, SooHoo, & Nevin, 2012, p. 6). Without the use of narrative inquiry, the Third Culture narrative would be inadequately represented and the research participants’ experiences would be unheard and misrepresented, as narratives capture the shadows and nuances that often escape the more traditional research process.



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The developing narratives will be analyzed using both narrative analysis and the Listening Guide, developed by Carol Gilligan (1982). With multiple and sequential listenings and codings of each transcription, the Listening Guide helps the researcher and participant identify the TCK'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).

### **Significance of the Study**

While literature exists regarding the move abroad (e.g. Pollock & Van Reken, 2009; Simens, 2011; Bell-Villada & Sichel, 2012; Van Reken, 2012; McCaig, 2012; Cottrell, 2012; Gilbert & Gilbert, 2012; Bell, 1997), it is important that those entering the Third Culture become aware of the possible subsequent effects on the Third Culture Kids when returning home to their native cultures during the repatriation process. Several American TCKs that repatriate "home" to the United States have difficulty establishing their cultural identity and lack a sense of belonging (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009; Quick, 2010; Bell, 1997). While this may not be the experience of all TCKs, it is apparent that for many there is difficulty identifying with a culture. Therefore, it was necessary to further define the identity of a TCK and highlight the impact of the repatriation experience on emotional intelligence and social and cultural identity. The final narratives offer portraits of the type of democratic citizens that can result in part from Third Culture and repatriating experiences.

It is hoped that this study will provide insight into the Third Culture phenomenon and offer a new perspective of the repatriating experience. Families interested in becoming members of the Third Culture could benefit from being aware of other TCKs'

experiences before making the decision to enter the expatriate culture. Likewise, TCKs and their families could benefit from this study by being aware of the potential emotional stresses that result from the dimensions of the Third Culture lifestyle. Moreover, ATCKs could benefit from reflecting on the benefits and challenges of their childhood and the subsequent effects on their adult lives.

### **Summary**

The Third Culture lifestyle is a growing trend (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). As most TCKs leave their international lifestyle and return home, it was not only important to offer insight into the repatriating transition process they engage in but to provide a profile for what type of citizen they may be upon repatriation. Despite spending developmental years internationally, and having various cultural experiences, the research study suggests that ATCKs choose to give up the Third Culture lifestyle and become actively engaged in their new communities. John Dewey's theories of experience provide the framework for exploration of the Third Culture phenomenon. With narrative inquiry as the guiding epistemology and methodology, the research texts provide a comprehensive examination of both Third Culture and repatriation experiences, resulting in final narrative portraits.

The following chapter explores the existing literature pertaining to TCKs, Third Culture factors that effect development, the repatriating transition process TCKs inevitably experience, and the guiding theoretical frameworks: emotional intelligence theory and John Dewey's democratic theory. The research methodology is examined in chapter three, followed by the data analysis and presentation of the final narratives in chapter four. The final chapter examines the parallel themes found in the final narratives,

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provides discussion of the results and conclusions, and concludes by offering areas for further research.

## Chapter Two: A Review of the Literature

The review of the literature will identify the theoretical framework and lens through which the Third Culture and repatriating experiences are viewed. The literature review is divided into three areas of focus: a) the definition of Third Culture Kids, b) the Third Culture experience, and c) the repatriating transition process. The remaining topic categories introduce the guiding frameworks, Emotional Intelligence theory and John Dewey's Democratic and Aesthetic Theories.

### **Definition of Third Culture Kids**

#### **Expatriates**

The United States of America has a rich history of migration. The notion of globalization exists today in part due to the continual migration and increase in travel, giving rise to culturally complex societies (Van Reken, 2012; Pollock & Van Reken, 2009; Cottrell, 2012; McCaig, 2012; Useem & Cottrell, 1996). Similar to the past, migration today—whether due to military obligation, business, missionary, or diplomacy—is driven by opportunity.<sup>2</sup> With an increase in globalization, the expatriate culture is thus becoming a growing trend as “growing up among cultural differences is

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<sup>2</sup> This study investigates one particular group of people whose chose to leave their native countries, seeking opportunity and cultural experience. There are immigrants and refugees who are displaced while seeking asylum. This study is not intended to minimize the severity of refugee displacement and the struggles associated with their transition into a new foreign culture. The goal of this study is to offer a new perspective on a specific group of highly mobile American expatriates.

already, or soon will be, the rule rather than the exception” (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009, p. 5).

The phenomenon of the expatriate is not new. Throughout our history, groups of individuals have been moving among cultures, and creating hybrid cultures. Expatriates are routinely defined as individuals who reside outside of their native country, by choice, with the expectation of at some point returning permanently to their home culture (Cottrell, 2012; Pollock & Van Reken, 2009; Useem & Cottrell, 1996). Not to be confused with immigrants, those who migrate to new countries with the intent of assimilating and becoming permanent members, expatriates move to a country understanding their perception as outsiders with the intent of returning to their native country (Cottrell, 2012). While not all expatriates return home, for most “that is the general presumption when they first leave their home countries, and this expectation shapes countless decisions along the way that affect their children, such as education choices or making efforts to learn or not learn the local language” (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009, p. 17).

Within the expatriate community exist subgroups, defined by the reasons for becoming a member and the duration of time spent as an expatriate (Cottrell, 2012; Pollock & Van Reken, 2009; Useem & Cottrell, 1996). Expatriates are often expected to preserve their native culture while simultaneously adapting to their host culture (Cottrell, 2012; Pollock & Van Reken, 2009), an expectation that can cause cultural confusion. The cultural confusion occurs most often for expatriate children as the parent’s experience “cultural overlay on a solid, often mono-cultural, nationally based cultural core solidified in childhood” (McCaig, 2012, p. 49). Third Culture Kids (TCKs) are a

particular subgroup of expatriates who live “in a world textured with threads of changing cultural contexts, they live in a place in-between... [having] the opportunity to achieve identities informed by all, constricted by none, balanced on the threshold of each; to live in a both/and world rather than an either/or world” (Schaetti & Ramsey, 1999; as cited in McCaig, 2012).

### **Third Culture Kid Profile**

A Third Culture Kid (TCK), a term coined by sociologists John and Ruth Hill Useem, was originally defined as a person who has spent a considerable amount of their developmental years (birth to eighteen years) outside of their birth culture, customarily accompanying their parents for career purposes (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009; Van Reken, 2012; Bell-Villada & Sichel, 2012). Reasons for becoming a TCK are distinguished by their parents’ sponsoring organization and their representational role, such as working for the military, government, religious or missionary services, business corporations, education, international organizations, or the media (Cottrell, 2012; Pollock & Van Reken, 2009; Useem & Downie, 2012). While TCKs share a common culture due to their migration, their experiences vary based on time spent outside their native culture, number of countries lived in, and types of schools attended (e.g. International school, American school, home school, public school) and who they primarily interacted with (e.g. expatriates, military, host nationals) (Cottrell, 2012; McCaig, 2012; Pollock & Van Reken, 2012). It is important to understand that despite these differences, TCKs from varied native countries share immediate bonds based on their socialization and experiences within the Third Culture (Cottrell, 2012); they represent a unique privileged culture, a community of individuals who share the commonality of living among a new

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and foreign culture with different values, morals, principles, and beliefs (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009).

The notion of the third culture was formed based on the recognition that the expatriate communities had created a lifestyle that differed from their native culture and host culture, a lifestyle that was solely shared by expatriates in that particular setting (Useem, 1973; Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). Therefore, the combination of a person's native culture (first culture) and new host culture (second culture) resulted in what is subsequently defined as the Third Culture. Although culture is learned and influenced by environment, it is a system of beliefs, values, and principles, shared by a group of people. Pollock and Van Reken (2009) believe that the definition of culture should also include what is shared experientially.

David Pollock and Ruth Van Reken (2009) further identified TCKs as a subgroup of cross-cultural kids, those that lived in and interacted with two or more cultural environments, for a significant period of time during their developmental years. As the world is ever changing, the definition of the TCK has in turn evolved to represent those that have been raised in both a cross-cultural world and a mobile world (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). Travelling and mobility are expectations of the Third Culture experience; TCKs are either coming or going and their cultural surroundings and relationships are consistently changing (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). While there are countless benefits to becoming a member of the Third Culture, there are in turn challenges that often hinder development and cause cultural confusion.

### **Benefits and Challenges**

Pollock and Van Reken (2009) artistically compare the TCK profile to “contrasting colored strands of thread woven together into a tapestry. As each strand crosses with a contrasting or complementary color, a picture begins to emerge, but no one strand alone tells the full story” (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009, p. 87). Each dimension of the Third Culture—benefits and challenges—are thus woven together to form a unique representation of the TCK.

In their book, *Third Culture Kids: Growing up Among Worlds*, Pollock and Van Reken (2009) compiled a list of benefits and challenges that identify the characteristics of TCKs. By naming the benefits and challenges, Pollock and Van Reken hoped this information would help TCKs effectively deal with their challenges while simultaneously building on their strengths and ultimately offer insight to “maximize the great gifts that can come from their lives and live out with joy the richness of their heritage” (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009, p. 88). The TCK profile is often referred to as paradoxical. For example, TCKs are often characterized as adaptable, while at the same time they lack a sense of cultural identity; TCKs are able to blend in, while at the same time affirm their differences; and while TCKs are defined as having rich cultural knowledge, they remain ignorant of their native culture (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009; McCaig, 1996; Bell, 1997). Table 1 highlights the Third Culture paradox, using the characteristics presented by Pollock and Van Reken (2009).



Table 1: <i>Model of Benefits and Challenges for Third Culture Kids</i>	
<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Challenges</b>
Expanded worldview	Confused loyalties
Three-dimensional view of the world	Painful awareness of reality
Cross cultural enrichment	Ignorance of home culture
Adaptability	Lack of true cultural balance
Blending in	Defining the differences
Less prejudice	More prejudice
The importance of now	The delusion of choice
Appreciative of authority	Mistrustful of authority

These distinctive TCK characteristics are shaped by rich experiences within the Third Culture (Bell, 1997; Gilbert & Gilbert, 2012; McCaig, 2012; Pollock & Van Reken, 2009; Smith, 1996). Consequently, the TCK narrative is frequently met with criticism as TCKs have been portrayed as arrogant. Most often when TCKs are recounting experiences and sharing their normal life stories, people assume they are bragging when they speak of the places they have been; however, non-TCKs fail to recognize that those stories are all they have, and those stories represent their everyday lives (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009; Quick, 2010). TCK researchers define possible reasons for perceived arrogance. First, TCKs are not always aware of how much their cross-cultural lifestyle has influenced their view of the world (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). When conversing with others, TCKs believe they are smarter and more globally

aware, forgetting that they have been afforded a multicultural lens due to their uniquely different experiences (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). Second, TCKs may become impatient when others refuse to acknowledge multiple perspectives (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). It is important to note that the TCK profile is just that, a generalized profile of a particular community of individuals. To avoid oversimplification of the TCK experience it is crucial to understand that individuals experience the world differently, offering different perspectives and meaning.

### **The Third Culture Experience**

Life experience is comprised of multiple elements and “in the end, each [TCK’s] story of life aboard—the sharpest memories, cultural images, and most significant events—may read like pages from a separate book” (McCaig, 1996, p. 108). It is important to understand that when generalizing about a group of people, the individual voices may not be heard (Quick, 2010); each individual of a group is different, exhibits various characteristics, and can have polarizing experiences. The TCK experience has been defined by some as extremely enriching and by others as incredibly difficult (Quick, 2010). The following categories explore the features of Third Culture experience.

#### **High Mobility**

Pollock and Van Reken (2009) believe that high mobility, a characteristic that affects all TCKs (Bell, 1997; Pollock & Van Reken, 2009), affects not only the travelling TCK, but also all those involved in the transition experience. While this study focuses on the transition experiences of the TCK, Pollock and Van Reken (2009) remind us that people left behind are also affected by the TCK’s move. Aside from moving to different countries, most TCKs also participate in home leave, which is time spent in their passport

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country primarily to visit relatives and friends. Each home leave can be an emotional rollercoaster for the TCK; the TCK says goodbye to host culture friends, hello to “home” culture friends and family, says goodbye to those friends and family a short time later, and finally hello again to their host culture friends, assuming those friends have not moved (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009).

Many Third Culture Kids today live in multiple host countries during their formative years, moving among cultures before having the ability to form a sense of personal or cultural identity (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). Being influenced by multiple cultures can result in cultural layering, which can consequently cause culture confusion (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). Research shows that this constant migration to new host cultures can interrupt the developmental task of personal and cultural identity formation and cause cultural imbalance (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009; Quick, 2010). Pollock and Van Reken stress that “it is an interplay of these factors—living in both a culturally changing and highly mobile world during the formative years—rather than any single factor alone—that leads to the evolution of both the benefits and challenges... as well as the personal characteristics” (2009, p. 40). Each move requires the TCK to not only learn the new host culture but also recognize who they are within that culture, which can hinder the TCK’s identity development (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009).

During their identity discovery, Pollock and Van Reken (2009) believe that TCKs respond as *Chameleons*, *Screamers* or *Wallflower*; chameleons are those TCKs who hope to conform superficially to their new environment while screamers refuse to conform at all. Wallflowers are those TCKs who prefer to find a “nonidentity,” and prefer to observe rather than participate (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009).

TCKs feel comforted knowing that there is a term that normalizes their identity (Cottrell, 2012; Quick, 2010) and may feel as though they have the opportunity to belong to a tribe; and “[while] the tribe is not named in the traditional way of defining groups by nationality, ethnicity, or race, it is a model of a new way to describe culture as that of a shared experience” (Van Reken, 2012, p. 29).

**Importance of documenting mobility.** TCKs have become accustomed to living a mobile lifestyle (Bell, 1997; Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). They understand the importance of “packing” their memories as they leave; they can never return to their previous “homes” the same way again (Bell, 1997). Throughout their moves, there is a need for consistent representation of their cultural experiences (Burns, 2012). TCKs hold on to valuable objects and rituals that represent their family heritage and Third Culture experience (McCaig, 1996). The constant need for cultural documentation is attributed to their sense of loss and being “perpetually deracinated—displaced from any context that validates one’s belonging and sense of self” (Burns, 2012, p. 364).

For the TCK, documentation is represented in different forms, such as objects that hold universal meaning and objects that are recognized contextually (Burns, 2012). These objects evoke memories and are preserved to represent the TCK’s identity and personal history (Burns, 2012). Giving objects personal meaning helps TCKs “re-articulate the shifting boundaries of their socio-cultural identity. This simple act of imbedding objects with intense personal meaning and identification has significant implications, and the inability to do so has equally devastating effects” (Burns, 2012, p. 365). Preserving meaningful representations of personal experiences further helps a TCK discover their sense of self as they symbolically retell their life story (Burns, 2012).

### **Practical Skills**

During their time abroad, TCKs develop personal skills and characteristics that promote awareness of cultural diversity (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009; Gilbert & Gilbert, 2012; Quick, 2010). Their travels afford them the opportunity to interact with multiple cultures, teaching them to be sensitive to deeper, hidden cultural differences (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). They are able to act as bridges between groups of individuals, “speak with a more human voice in the local community and be more sensitive to the dynamics of potentially stressful situations” (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009, p. 112). In a globally aware society, these innate skills are highly desirable in the workforce, from corporate—to education—to mentorship roles (Quick, 2010).

While cross-cultural skills are extremely important in our increasingly global world, observational and social skills remain central to external and internal success (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009; Quick, 2010). High mobility has forced TCKs to learn how to effectively deal with repetitive change, furthering their self-confidence and self-reliance (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009; Quick, 2010). They are able to see the “big picture” and although change is not always desired, their past experiences act as guides for them to handle new situations (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). While this confidence exudes in most areas of their lives, there are times that TCKs appear insecure and socially reserved as they observe new situations (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009).

### **Rootlessness**

While there are many questions that TCKs have difficulty answering, the two most commonly dreaded questions remain “Where are you from?” and “Where is home?” (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009; Cottrell, 2012; Bell, 1997). Along with countless

opportunities, the TCK experience fosters a deep sense of rootlessness (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009; Bell, 1997). While both questions appear similar, for the TCK, they are quite different; the question “Where are you from?” requires an explanation of the TCK’s childhood, and for the TCK, the answer is based on their moves. The question “Where is home?” assumes that the TCK’s emotional and physical sense of home are one (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009).

The concept of “home” can be a sensitive subject for TCKs; some view their passport culture as home, while others believe they are “at home” in their host cultures, their “heart home” (Cottrell, 2012; Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). Due to high mobility being a key factor of the TCK experience, most often, the term “home” is not associated to a geographical location, but is instead identified in terms of relationships (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). After a series of interviews, Linda Bell (1997) found that the most important ties Adult Third Culture Kids (ATCKs) have to their TCK experience are to people. And while they realize that they may not be able to keep close connections to everyone they have met, they do maintain a few old friendships:

For it is those old friendships that validate their childhood, reaffirm those places for them and tell them something about who they were at the time. People are real—better than pictures, better than memories. Even if they only connect with these people once a year, or see them very occasionally at school reunions, or write or call them infrequently, these connections are in the bedrock of their past. While a taproot won’t penetrate bedrock, equal multiple roots can spread over great distances seeking footholds to anchor the life it protects. Some come to

sense this very early in their changing lives, others come to it later in life when they find they have need for more roots (Bell, 1997, p. 64).

While TCKs and ATCKs hold on to these important relationships to validate their past, they are aware that they can never truly return “home” (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009).

Therefore, when TCKs are asked to answer the loaded questions, “Where are you from?” and “Where is home?” most respond with, “everywhere and nowhere” (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009), feeling “a part-of and apart-from all cultures” (McCaig, 2012, p. 51).

Some TCKs begin by retelling their autobiographical life stories. By sharing their life histories, they are not only navigating their identity but also are describing how they would like to be perceived by others (Meneses, 2012).

It is important to note rootlessness can lead to restlessness. For some ATCKs, an unrealistic attachment to their past or perceived future can cause the desire to keep moving (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009; Bell, 1997). They become accustomed to a life of high mobility, always looking towards the future, yearning for the ideal experience (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). This restlessness can have detrimental effects on their personal lives, academic choices, and future careers (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009; Bell, 1997). There are those, however, that have the opposite response to their highly mobile childhood; some TCKs and ATCKs are anxious to plant their roots and look for a life that may guarantee permanence (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). For an ATCK, each new phase in their life—academic, career, marriage, parenthood—could remind them of their past transitional experiences and encourage them to never transition again (McCaig, 2012).

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Bell (1997) observed that while ATCKs may appear restless in some aspects of their lives, most do not seem restless in their marriages or career choices; this sense of stability is credited to their strong and stable family life throughout their childhood. Expatriate families report less divorce as the expat experience “quickly break[s] a bad marriage and cements a good one” (Bell, 1997, p. 76). With regard to ATCKs’ career stability, they often desire autonomous careers, often choosing service occupations (Bell, 1997). Although their lives were influenced by their parents’ careers, ATCKs usually do not follow in similar career paths; their career choices mirror their appreciation for learning and their desire for independence, for example, careers in education, medicine, law, and self-employment (Useem & Cottrell, 1996).

### **Relationships**

While TCKs are individuals from around the globe with varying backgrounds and belief systems, they share unique bonds and experience since they understand how it feels to move among cultures and say countless goodbyes (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009; Van Reken, 2012). The expatriate community unites TCKs based on one common bond: they are all outsiders, being raised in a neither/nor world. Essentially, the TCK culture is a community composed of outsiders (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). According to Useem (1973), while there are subcultures within the expatriate community, each having their “own peculiarities, slightly different origins, distinctive styles, and stratification systems, [they] all [are] closely interlocked” (Useem, 1973, p. 122). Essentially, looking past their varying nationalities, ethnicities, and other differences, each subgroup shares the fundamental characteristic of living within the Third Culture lifestyle (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). When TCKs and ATCKs are in the presence of others who share their



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Third Culture experiences, they often feel a sense of kinship, expressed as a “reunion of strangers” (McCaig, 2012; Van Reken, 2012; Pollock & Van Reken, 2009; Gilbert & Gilbert, 2012; McCaig, 1996; Van Reken, 2012, p. 29).

Due to their constant mobility, TCKs develop and lose relationships. Their uncommon lifestyle encourages TCKs to build deep emotional relationships quickly, resulting in long-term friendships (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). Pollock and Van Reken (2009) suggest three reasons for accelerated relationships: practice, content, and sense of urgency. TCKs have had practice developing friendships by “observ[ing] the dynamics of a situation, ask[ing] questions that can help open a door, hopefully be sensitive to cultural cues...and respond appropriately when others approach them” (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009, p. 135). TCKs also believe that the knowledge they have gained from their experiences offers relevant topics of conversations and they feel comfortable expressing their opinions (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). Finally, TCKs establish quick communication simply because they have to, as time is an important factor. TCKs are generally interested in learning from people with differing backgrounds; skipping the “small talk” is common and instant friendships emerge (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009).

Since TCKs and ATCKs refer to their relationships when defining their roots, it is understandable why they put more effort into preserving deep friendships and family ties (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). TCKs feel instant connections when meeting other TCKs from around the world (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). Since most expatriates live far from relatives, relationships built with other expatriates provide “surrogate” families and the bonds that are formed can last a lifetime (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009).

TCKs also report closer relationships with their family members due to the family unit being their only constant amid their consistent change (Gilbert & Gilbert, 2012; McCaig, 1994). Moving among cultures solidifies for the TCK that their family remains their “home,” acting as a moving anchor (Gilbert & Gilbert, 2012). Family support is particularly imperative during the stages of transition: involvement, leaving, transition, entering, re-involvement (Simens, 2011).

### **Development**

All children, from varying cultures and backgrounds, move through similar sequential developmental stages, beginning as a dependent infant and ending as a mature independent adult (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). Emotional and psychological stages include: a) establishing a self-identity, b) establishing strong and relationships, c) developing decision making capabilities, d) achieving independence, and finally e) entering adulthood (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). While most people are able to move through the developmental stages while living in a single place or culture, TCKs are not; instead, development is often interrupted or accelerated, resulting in early maturity or delayed adolescence (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009; Gilbert & Gilbert, 2012; Useem & Cottrell, 1996).

Compared to peers in their native countries, TCKs appear to have increased self-confidence and maturity (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009; Bell, 1997; Eakin, 1996). This may be due to their knowledge of global issues, practical skills such as travelling, their relationships with adults, or their expectation to act as mini-diplomats (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009; Eakin, 1996). In the Third Culture, it is common for different generations to interact regularly; TCKs are comfortable with holding conversations with adults and

are often defined as socially mature due to their exposure to culturally diverse people of all ages (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009; Quick, 2010).

Conversely, while TCKs appear advanced for their age, in some ways they are behind (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). Delayed adolescence—delayed emotional and psychological development—appears as TCKs reach adulthood, often in their early twenties (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). Due to high mobility and cultural transition, traditional identity development is interrupted (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). One specific developmental stage that is postponed due to the high mobility of TCK families is separation (McCaig, 1996). Their Third Culture lifestyle increases their family bond and their reliance on one another, a reliance that geographically stable families may never experience (McCaig, 1996). Their hesitance to leave their only known form of consistent support results in prolonged adolescence (McCaig, 1996).

### **Repatriation**

Reentry is a difficult experience for all involved, yet it is perceived as the hardest transition experience for TCKs, and significantly more difficult for those who adapted with little difficulty while overseas (Eakin, 1996; Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). The re-adjustment period for TCKs is reported to be longer than the initial move abroad (Eakin, 1996; McCaig, 1996). Even though adult expatriates leave their country having a strong cultural identify and although the move back “home” may be inconvenient, they are able to assimilate back into the culture quickly and with greater ease (Eakin, 1996; McCaig, 1996) believes that during reentry, parents are coming “home,” while TCKs are leaving “home.”

While abroad, TCKs become members of an “exclusive bubble” (Bell, 1997, p. 63). Upon repatriating, this bubble bursts, as the social structure they have become accustomed to is lost (Bell, 1997). During her research, Linda Bell (1997) found that reentry causes TCKs to appreciate and understand the beauty of living within the Third Culture bubble. When TCKs repatriate, they “find themselves in a balancing act. They have to learn enough to fit in, make friends, and get on with their own lives, while at the same time revalidating their childhood and that legacy” (Bell, 1997, p. 25).

### **The Transition Experience**

David Pollock created a model that defines the typical stages of transition with the intent to normalize transition and help those transitioning “gain from new experiences [they] encounter while dealing productively with the inevitable losses of any transition experience” (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009, p. 73). For TCKs the transition experience varies; some TCKs move quickly through these stages, while others struggle in the midst of the mobility (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009; Bell, 1997).

### **Involvement**

The initial stage of transition is often overlooked, as the TCK remains a participating member of the Third Culture and feels at “home” (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). During this stage of involvement, TCKs identify themselves as valued members of their community. They are living in the present, focusing on their responsibilities to their community and close relationships, rather than reminiscing about the past or contemplating their potential future (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). The community recognizes the TCK and is aware of their reputation, history, interests, and social status (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009).

### **Leaving**

Once the TCK becomes aware of, or officially recognizes the approaching move, their life and behavior begins to change as they begin to loosen ties and minimize community responsibilities (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). While the onset of this stage varies, it often begins when the TCK is notified of their specific departure date (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). The literature suggests that the impending move causes the TCK to enter a state of unconscious denial resulting in conflicting emotions, specifically sadness and grief (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). TCKs attempt to disguise their sadness by focusing on the excitement of the anticipated change and deny feelings of grief (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). Simultaneously, the Third Culture community is loosening ties with the TCK and they may begin to feel disconnected as their opinions no longer hold value regarding future events, and their responsibilities have been given to new or existing members (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009).

### **Transition**

The transition stage remains the epicenter of the transition process. While transition begins the exact moment the TCK exits their host culture, it does not end upon destination arrival (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). In order to complete the transition stage, the TCK must decide if they are able and willing to settle in and establish themselves within the community (Pollock & Vane Reken, 2009). This stage is particularly difficult for the TCK as the world they knew has been left behind and their support systems are no longer available (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). Often described as chaotic, this stage may cause an increase in self-centeredness, a lowered self-esteem, and problems appear to be exaggerated (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009).

While the community welcomes the TCK, this stage further highlights that the TCK is again a newcomer and “status-less” (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). TCKs had become accustomed to sharing experiences with their peers, who were genuinely interested in their stories. Their new community may seem indifferent to their unique cultural knowledge, histories, abilities, talents, accomplishments, and areas of expertise and when a TCK talks about personal experiences they may be perceived as boring or arrogant (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009; Quick, 2010). The transition stage is often disappointing for TCKs; the sense of loss combined with having high expectations can trigger panic (Pollock & Van Reken, 2016). However, due to the adaptive nature of the TCK, they remain hopeful for the future (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009; Gilbert & Gilbert, 2012).

### **Entering**

During the entering stage, the chaos of the transition has diminished (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). The TCK has accepted the move and has decided to make an effort in becoming an active member of the new community (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). Although feelings of excitement conflict with feelings of homesickness and emotions continue to fluctuate, hope remains.

While entering into a new community it is crucial that TCKs find a mentor to help guide them through the nuances of life and encourage them to function effectively in their communities (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). It is important that TCKs understand that the changes occurring in their lives are also occurring in their peers’ lives; everybody involved is socially adjusting and helping the TCK find their place within their

community. Eventually TCKs will be recognized as participating members of society and will be invited to participate in community events (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009)

### **Re-involvement**

The final transition stage, re-involvement, signifies that the TCK has willingly adapted and become a permanent member of the community (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). Not only do they recognize their new role and responsibilities within the community, but also “have a sense of intimacy, a feeling that [their] presence matters to this group” (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009, p. 73). When a TCK is re-involved, a sense of security inspires a present life, and they are no longer focusing on the past and hoping for a better future; they have reached that light at the end of the tunnel (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009).

During the re-involvement stage, TCKs often possess a need for self-actualization. In reference to Abraham Maslow’s (1943) hierarchy of needs, the TCK desires a sense of belonging and is looking for closure during their process of repatriation. This stage suggests that the TCK’s basic human needs (physiological, safety, love and belonging, and esteem) have been met and there is a desire to reach their full potential as a citizen. Similarly, the TCK also looks to “participate in community actualization,” a need that Dr. Penny Bryan believes tops the hierarchy (Bryan, Personal communication, April 2016).

### **Intensified Transition Experience**

TCKs navigate through the stages of transition as others would; however, Pollock and Van Reken (2009) found that unique dimensions of the Third World Culture increase the intensity of the stages. International living requires frequent mobility and therefore

multiple transition experiences among various cultures (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009).

While some TCKs move among two or three cultures, there are some families who move every couple of years, oftentimes interrupting the TCK's involvement with the stages of transition.

**Hidden loss.** Research has shown that due to high mobility, TCKs experience repeated loss throughout their childhood (Cottrell, 2012; Gilbert & Gilbert, 2012; Pollock & Van Reken, 2009; Bell, 1997; Eakin, 1996; La Brack, 2012; Quick, 2010). Even when TCKs are excited about future moves, both tangible and intangible valuables are left behind. TCKs identify tangible losses such as people, places, and pets, while also defining symbolic and existential losses, such as loss of identity and a place to call “home” (Gilbert & Gilbert, 2012; Quick, 2010). Pollock and Van Reken (2009) created a list of losses for reference: a) possessions, b) status, c) lifestyle, d) relationships, e) role models, f) system identity, and g) their past. Cottrell (2012) believes that the most important loss for TCKs is the loss of their Third Culture. Loss results in grief, routinely defined as “a deep and poignant stress” (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2015). It is important that TCKs understand that acknowledging grief, the pain from their past, does not negate their experience:

It is actually an affirmation of where they have been, geographically or relationally, because we do not grieve for things or people we don't love. The more we have loved, the deeper the sense of loss. Grief doesn't mean that we shouldn't move ahead to the new or that the next stage won't be great. It simply means that leaving things we have enjoyed—the people and places we have



loved, the stages of life that have been good—is hard (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009, p. 74).

Once a TCK is able to recognize their experience in terms of a unique paradox, they no longer deny their pain, and acknowledge that their opposite realities should be embraced (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). Although TCKs experience loss, the majority acknowledge that the “gains balance the losses, they treasure their understanding of a larger world, and they feel resilient and able to adapt to most anything” (Bell, 1997, p. 110).

**Grief .** Research centered on TCK loss investigates the correlation between high mobility and the grief transition process outlined by psychiatrist Dr. Elizabeth Kubler-Ross (1969). Dr. Kubler-Ross identified the key emotions expressed during each stage of grief: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance (Kubler-Ross, 1969). The research suggests that while Kubler-Ross’ grief process correlates to the TCK transition experience, for TCKs, it does not always occur in a linear progressive fashion; instead, grieving for the TCK occurs in a circular motion (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009).

Due to the uncommon nature of TCK loss, associated grief is often unacknowledged or minimized by outsiders as it is not recognized as a traditional form of loss (Gilbert & Gilbert, 2012; Pollock & Van Reken, 2009; Van Reken, 2012). The loss experienced by TCKs during each transition “remains invisible to others and often unnamed by themselves. Such losses create a special challenge” (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). Hidden losses remain unrecognized and result in unresolved grief that can linger into adulthood (Gilbert & Gilbert, 2012). Unresolved grief can be the result of a lack of permission to grieve, lack of time to process, or lack of comfort (Pollock & Van Reken,

2009; Gilbert & Gilbert, 2012). TCKs feel that they are obligated to validate their grief by justifying the loss, believing their expression of grief would be perceived as unappreciative for their privileged lifestyle (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009; Van Reken, 2012). To avoid anger, depression and confusion, it is imperative that TCKs give meaning to their losses in order to reclaim their sense of purpose, and regain order and control (Gilbert & Gilbert, 2012; Bell, 1997).

### **Challenges of Repatriation**

After years of living in host cultures enjoying the beauty of living among multiple cultures, there comes a time when TCKs make the expected transitional journey back “home” (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009; Bell, 1997). This journey is defined as the repatriation process or reentry (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). Ironically, after years of learning how to transition and adapt to new and foreign situations, the move “home” proves to be the most difficult for TCKs (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009; Bell, 1997). TCKs experience repatriating stress, stresses that resemble previous moves to new cultures. However, aside from experiencing familiar emotions surrounding loss, cultural imbalance, and identity recognition, upon reentry TCKs are subjected to reverse culture shock and unrealistic expectations (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009).

**Reverse culture shock.** Culture shock represents the disorientation that individuals feel entering into a new foreign culture (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). While TCKs have experienced culture shock with each move in their past, TCKs are ill prepared for the culture shock they will encounter upon repatriating—reverse culture shock. Culture shock does not appear to affect TCKs while living abroad; however, after years of moving back and forth between their native culture and host cultures, the TCK’s

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confidence in their assimilation declines as they face unexpected difficulties with even commonplace practices such as driving a car and grocery shopping (Cottrell, 2012; Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). Living in the host cultures forces TCKs to identify as foreigners, and when they are finally able to identify as natives, they assume that their internal and external selves are one (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). They forget that although their physical appearance—racial, ethnic, and national background—is no longer perceived as different, their experiences have changed them forever (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009).

**Unrealistic expectations.** TCKs hold on to romanticized memories of their native culture, which results in idealized expectations upon their return. TCKs assure themselves and others that they know what it will be like when they return to their passport country, and because of their assurance,

they forget that going for a vacation is different from living somewhere longer term. When TCKs return for a limited time, relatives plan special events and parents may indulge their children (and themselves) in various “goodies” they have missed overseas... It’s easy for TCKs to begin to think of all this attending and these kinds of privileges as normal life in this country. When it turns out they have to settle in and no one is treating them any more special than anyone else, it can be a shock (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009, p. 226).

For the TCK, the realization that “home is just another somewhere” (McCaig, 1996, p. 110) is disheartening. In her study of TCKs Ann Baker Cottrell (2012) found that 87% of her repatriated respondents felt different from their American peers who did not have any international exposure. She found that while most of the TCKs and ATCKs achieved a

degree of comfort, they never truly felt a part of their native culture (Cottrell, 2012; Eakin, 1996).

**Fitting in.** On the surface, TCKs are successful at fitting in as they are able to conform to their native culture (Useem & Cottrell, 1996); however, some TCKs and ATCKs feel “their camouflaged exteriors and understated ways of presenting themselves hide rich inner lives, remarkable talents, and, often, strongly held contradictory opinions on the world at large and the world at hand” (Useem & Cottrell, 1996, p. 27). However, some repatriating TCKs desire to be seen as unique individuals and to maintain their Third Culture identity (Bell, 1997). For the majority of their childhood, they were comfortable being identified as outsiders, therefore as they transition into their native culture, no longer being perceived as foreigners, they continue to assert their difference, “a status gained through years of experience and practice” (Bell, 1997, p.43). TCKs begin exploration of their native culture with a fresh perspective, as they know more about other cultures than they do their own (Useem & Cottrell, 1996; Quick, 2010; Pollock & Van Reken, 2009, Bell, 1997; Quick, 2010).

**Repatriating for post-secondary education.** A notable characteristic for most TCKs and ATCKs is their commitment to pursuing higher education (Useem & Cottrell, 1996) and a common reason for repatriation is to attend college or university (Quick, 2010). The transition from high school to college or university is considered one of the most difficult transitions in a young adult’s life (Quick, 2010). TCKs are not only transitioning to college, but are simultaneously repatriating. Quick (2010) found that due to their international background, some TCKs adjust more quickly than their native country peers and often identify with the international students (Quick, 2010). Their

adjustment is attributed to their knowledge of relocating and the stages of transition (Quick, 2010).

The Third Culture life is composed of multiple events, and the evaluation of those experiences is dependent upon understanding of personal emotions (Bell, 1997). The emotions associated with an experience create long-term meaning that transcend cultural boundaries; research suggests that children can build on their emotional skills wherever they are geographically located (Simens, 2011). There are many factors attributed to success upon repatriation, one in particular in the level of emotional intelligence exhibited by the TCK.

### **Emotional Intelligence Theory**

Intelligence is defined as the process of acting purposefully, thinking rationally, and dealing effectively within an environment (Wechsler, as cited in Salovey & Mayer, 2005). Intelligence research investigates the verbal (abstract), visual and spatial (mechanical), and social intelligences, including emotional intelligence, a subcategory of social intelligence. (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Stemming from social intelligence, emotional intelligence refers to the “ability to monitor one’s own and others’ feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one’s thinking and actions” (Salovey & Mayer, 1990, p. 89).

Founded by psychologists Peter Salovey and John Mayer, emotional intelligence gained recognition following the publication of their 1990 influential article *Emotional Intelligence* (Goleman, 2005). Salovey and Mayer (1990) believe that emotions—our deepest feelings, passions, and longings—act as guides when facing quandaries that may be too important to rely solely on intellect (Goleman, 2005; Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

They argue that the human experience, our decisions and actions, are often driven primarily by feelings, concluding that “the organized response of emotions [is] adaptive and [is] something that can potentially lead to a transformation of personal and social interaction into an enriching experience” (Salovey & Mayer, 1990, p. 186).

While not all intelligence scholars acknowledge emotional intelligence as an acceptable measure of ability, emotional intelligence theorists understand that our mental life is comprised of two minds, the emotional mind (feels) and the rational mind (thinks), both differing knowledge systems, serving different purposes (Goleman, 2005; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Although scientific study of the brain had revealed the complexity of the limbic structures and their various roles (Goleman, 2005), it was only recently, within the late twentieth century, that neuroscientist Joseph LeDoux discovered that the amygdala remains the most crucial of the limbic system, acting as the hub for emotional memory (Goleman, 2005). Emotional memories are referred to as the *cognitive unconscious*, and have “views quite independently of our rational minds” (Goleman, 2005, p. 20). Research proved that a lack of an amygdala results in “affective blindness,” an inability to engage in emotional matters (Goleman, 2005).

### **Emotional Intelligence vs. Academic Intelligence**

While academic intelligence is an important factor in success, it is irrelevant in our emotional lives (Goleman, 2005; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Our academic intelligence (IQ) does not account for the vast majority of other determining factors of success, including self-motivation, working through frustration, controlling impulse and gratification, regulating moods and their effect on clear thinking, and hope and empathy (Goleman, 2005). Emotional intelligence is responsible for dealing with life’s chaos, and

those who are emotionally adept are at an advantage in any domain of life, whether in romance and intimate relationships or for picking up the unspoken rules that govern success in organizational politics. People with well-developed emotional skills are also more likely to be content and effective in their lives, mastering the habits of mind that foster their own productivity; people who cannot marshal some control over their emotional life fight inner battles that sabotage their ability for focused work and clear thought (Goleman, 2005, p.36).

Emotional intelligence research focuses on these abilities, and investigates their relationship to success. Psychologists Salovey and Mayer (1990) believe that emotions are intelligent and can be defined in five domains: 1) knowing one's emotions, 2) managing emotions, 3) motivating oneself, 4) recognizing emotions in others, and 5) handling relationships. While the level of ability within each of these domains may vary person to person, research suggests that due to the elasticity of the brain, emotional skills can be learned and/or improved (Goleman, 2005; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). The following list of emotional abilities defines the characteristics necessary to achieve emotional intelligence, and offers a systematic view of how each dimension enhances an individual's emotional intelligence (Salovey & Mayer, 1990, Goleman, 2005):

1. Knowing One's Emotions—the observing ego: The notion of self-awareness requires an individual to investigate an experience as well as acknowledge the correlated emotions, promoting insight and self-reflexive thought (Goleman, 2005).

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2. Managing emotions: building on self-awareness, the ability to value the significance of emotions while navigating through them to persevere (Goleman, 2005).
3. Motivating oneself: Emotional self-control is necessary for setting and completing personal goals. Enthusiasm, confidence, and persistence influence achievement (Goleman, 2005).
4. Recognizing Emotions in Others: Recognizing emotion refers to the fundamental innate skill of empathy. Being open increases one's ability to read feelings, both verbal and nonverbal cues (Goleman, 2005).
5. Handling Relationships—the social art: Managing emotions in others fosters successful relationships—being able to notice, interpret and respond to others' emotional cues (Goleman, 2005).

### **Importance of Emotional Intelligence**

Emotional intelligence is valued as it encourages harmonization among people (Goleman, 2005). When similar events are repeated throughout a child's developmental years, "they impart some of the most fundamental emotional messages of a lifetime—lessons that can determine a life course" (Goleman, 2005, p. 189). Being able to not only recognize and reflect on personal emotions but also understand and respond to others' emotions is important for a child when experiencing the world (Simens, 2011; Goleman, 2005).

As parents remain the biggest influence in a child's life, functioning as the primary authority figure during developmental years, it is extremely beneficial for a child to have emotionally intelligent parents (Goleman, 2005; Bell, 1997; Simens, 2011).



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Parents are given an opportunity to help develop their children's emotional intelligence through family imitation and social interactions (Simens, 2011; Goleman, 2005). A strong emotional connection to family, and parents in particular, decreases the likelihood of future emotional stress (Simens, 2011; Goleman, 2005). Socialization allows children to "learn emotional vocabulary that enables them to name internal sensations associated with objects, events, relations that they encounter" (Simens, 2011, p. 22).

Emotionally competent TCKs are often active participants in their communities (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009; Quick, 2010; Bell, 1997). Due to their Third Culture experience and internationally developed knowledge, "attitudes born of a globally peripatetic childhood, global nomads [TCKs] come to maturity well equipped with a foundation for effecting change—locally and nationally, certainly, globally" (McCaig, 1996, p. 101). The Third Culture offers a unique educational opportunity for TCKs as the world is their classroom and their experiences create their social platform. John Dewey's democratic and Aesthetic theories endorse experience-based learning, and introduce the importance of understanding life experiences as forms of education.

### **Democratic Theory: Experience as Education**

John Dewey, philosopher, psychologist, and educator, was the twentieth century's first American philosopher, and is best known as the founder of the progressive movement in education. Dewey's appreciation for philosophy and the human sciences began with his undergraduate degree in philosophy from the University of Vermont, and continued to grow during his time at Johns Hopkins University under the mentorship of philosophers George Sylvester Morris and G. Stanley Hall. Throughout his schooling, Dewey's interest in philosophy highlights the role experience of the active participant and

democratic education, the notion that the mind processes recognized information by identification of patterns previously experienced.

Dewey opposed the oppressive nature of rote education. His devotion to democratic education is apparent through his texts *Democracy and Education* (1916) and *Experience and Education* (1938), which have transcended time and continue to benefit society today. Dewey's progressive ideals challenged the philosophy of "traditional education," advocating for a reexamination of the role of education within a democratic society.

### **Criteria for A Democratic Society**

A fundamental aspect of democratic education is the concept of experience and its importance within education and society. Dewey understood that experience, practical hands-on learning, is more effective than repetition and memorization, and that experience without reflection is valueless (Kridel, 2000). He questioned the purpose of education and the role of freedom in education within a democratic society, believing "the principle that development of experience comes through interaction means that education is essentially a social process" (Dewey, 1938, 40).

Dewey's philosophy of experience has caused many scholars to evaluate the importance of experience as education. Dewey provides us with a technical definition of education: "It is that reconstruction or reorganization of experience which adds to the meaning of experience and which increases the ability to direct the course of subsequent experience'" (Dewey, 1916). From this understanding, Dewey's concepts of continuity and interaction arose.

### **Continuity and Interaction**

It is evident that the progression of society relies heavily on knowledge gained by experience. Our decisions and our future experiences are often influenced by previous knowledge of lived events. Garrison (2003) believes that learning from experience requires “continuously reorganizing and restructuring our understanding of reality” (p. 528). Dewey (1938) argued that this reorganization and restructuring of reality is comparable to the transmission of habits, thoughts, ideals, standards, and opinions between generations. Without the recurrent communication of experiences, societies will not survive. Dewey (1938) recognized the importance of communicating these experiences through education and suggested that in order for societies to thrive, interaction between societal members is imperative. Dewey (1938,1916) believed that a democratic society is not only achieved through the continuity of life experiences but through interaction.

Viewing the exchange of ideas (education) as a social process it is essential that society learns, develops, and evolves (Garrison, 2003). As society evolves, new experiences and perspectives arise, requiring a reconstruction of meaning. Garrison (2003) suggests that “constructing meaning or structuring reality is necessarily a self-directed process contingent upon individual choice and action” where “learning is fundamentally contingent upon individual freedom and liberty” (Garrison, 2003, p. 527); therefore, in order to make choices, formulate meaning, and take action, we must first test our understanding in experience, resulting in a “ever-maturing ability to direct future experiences” (Garrison, 2003, p. 527).

The concept of freedom and liberty in a democratic society promotes experiential learning, learning that requires collaboration, creativity, and interaction, establishing active participants (Dewey, 1916, Garrison, 2003). Garrison (2003) maintains that active participation in the meaning-making process initiates self-directed learning and allows individuals to locate and pursue useful and meaningful experiences. Garrison (2003) argues that,

When education is understood as the construction of meaning, rather than merely the transmission of knowledge, the primacy of a student's engagement in the process becomes self-evident. Obtaining this engagement pedagogically requires the student's continual discovery and renewal of self-direction; this is possible only in a democratic environment (p. 526).

### **Creating Meaning from Experience**

In order to construct meaning, education must recognize the whole individual and acknowledge the concept of "life histories." An individual with a "blank slate" does not exist because our experiences are contextually situated (Ackerman, 2003; Dewey, 1916) and it is important to understand the physical, environmental, historical, and economic conditions that position our experiences (Dewey, 1938).

Dewey's (1938) discussion of continuity and interaction suggests that life is experienced, and is meant to be actively participated in. Dewey placed importance on the notion of life, which "should be used to denote the range of experience" (Dewey, 1938, p. ch1) as societies interact with the world. Dewey (1938) suggest that when reading biographical narratives, we look for the experiences that shape the subject's life:

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“we look for an account of social antecedents; a description of early surroundings, of the conditions and occupation of the family; of the chief episodes in the development of character; of signal struggles and achievements; of the individuals hopes, tastes, joys and suffering” (Dewey, 1938, Ch. 1).

When observing these elements of life, and exploring the different experiences, we are able to give meaning to customs, institutions, and beliefs (Dewey, 1938). Dewey argues that through the renewal of experience, meaning is created; therefore, the social continuity of life relies on the “recreation of beliefs, ideals, hopes, happiness, misery, and practices” (Dewey, 1938, Ch. 1). It is “through continuously reorganizing and reconstructing our understanding of reality,” that we are able “to understand and grow from our experiences... [and] continuously [use] and [test] our understanding of reality in our everyday choices and actions” (Garrison, 2003, p.4)

### **Civic Engagement As A Result of Experience**

According to Dewey (1918, 1938) the purpose of democratic education is to promote freedom and independence resulting in civic engagement. Education through experience encourages growth and gives individuals the courage to discover freedoms to “make choices and take actions that directly affect their lives, work, community, environment, and relationships” (Dewey, 1918, p. 48). Garrison (2003) suggests that education should be regarded as a natural process of empowerment; individuals who are empowered as a result of experience are able to reflect on their actions and engage in their societies effectively.

Dewey (1938) believed that intellectual nourishment promotes continued growth and maturity. In a democratic society, where individuals are afforded the opportunity “to

make choices and take actions” the “necessary experiences for growth and education become increasingly self-directed” (Garrison, 2003, p.4); self-directed experiences promote active participation in democratic societies. Individuals who are civically engaged in their societies understand that it is with “increasing self-direction in finding and pursuing those experiences” that we engage in a life that is “useful and meaningful” (Garrison, 2003, p.4)

### **Justification for the Study**

This chapter outlined the existing TCK literature and the theoretical frameworks that guide this study. While the TCK repatriating experiences have been defined in previous research, there exists a gap in the literature; there is little research that explores the relationship between the emotional intelligence of TCKs and their repatriating experiences. Similarly, there is little research on the implications of the repatriating experience on democratic responsibility. The next chapter explores the methodology utilized in this study.

## Chapter Three: Methodology

*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).*

This chapter outlines the guiding research paradigm, theories and methods that support the composition of the research puzzle - the guiding questions - for this study.

Narrative Inquiry emerged as a part of Arts Based Research, which is in turn defined as a contemporary qualitative research method (Cahnmann-Taylor, 2008; Connelly, 2006; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006; Leavy, 2015). In order to understand the repatriation experiences of American Third Culture Kids, I found it most useful to frame this study through narrative inquiry, as it is an approach to research that encourages participants to relive and retell their TCK and repatriating stories. Stories act as representation of both an experience and of the participant's perception of self during and after that experience. Narrative inquiry and Carol Gilligan's (1982) Listening Guide method offer a unique analysis of the data and offer a comprehensive understanding of the experiences.

This chapter outlines the narrative inquiry research procedures including the study population, data collection, data analysis, and ethical considerations. The chapter concludes with a summary.

### **Study Population**

This research study focused on the experiences of American Third Culture Kids (TCKs) and their repatriation process. While it is important for literature to address all sub groups of TCKs, this study focused on a subset of this larger group, a group of

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American TCKs who attended high school at an American Community School, near London, England. The participants consisted of four Adult Third Culture Kids (ATCKs)—two females and two males—who graduated from the American Community School in 2003 and repatriated to the United States to attend a university.

It is important to note that the participants were from middle to upper class families, a common attribute of the American expatriate community (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). Traditionally, expatriates live a privileged lifestyle and belong to an elite community due to special privileges granted by either the host culture or sponsoring organizations (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). The level of privilege, however, ultimately depends upon the reason for becoming an expatriate. In this particular study, the participants were TCKs with parents whose careers were in international business and missionary work.

While there are many American ATCKs that would have been suitable participants, the research participants were chosen using purposive sampling. Purposive sampling, commonly used in qualitative research studies, is defined as deliberate selection of a sample based on their specific contribution to the research (Teddlie & Yu, 2007). The use of purposive sampling suggests the researcher will concentrate on depth of information rather than breadth (Teddlie & Yu, 2007). The best-suited ATCK population for this study met the following criteria: a) they were American citizens and resided in the United States, b) they lived outside of the United States for a significant amount of time - five years - during their developmental years, and c) they repatriated to the United States to attend a university.



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As a member of their graduating class, I had the opportunity to directly contact the participants. While it is common for qualitative researchers to be “insiders” of the group of co-constructing participants (Moore, 2012), “[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). Insider research understands “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 the ATCKs had been identified as meeting the study population criteria, they were contacted through the social networking site Facebook. Each potential participant was provided with a brief explanation of the study and was asked to provide desired contact information. Those interested in acting as participants were provided with a detailed explanation of the study and research specifications, including descriptions of the various forms of data collection (i.e. recorded telephone conversations, photographs, written reflections, and timelines).

Before the research began, participants were notified of their rights as well as their responsibility to the study. The IRB requirements were met in full; the study was IRB approved, informed consent was obtained, and the participants understood that they are able to withdraw from the study at any time.

### **Research Design**

The ongoing conversation regarding what constitutes legitimate research has concluded that studies have previously fallen under two specific methodological paradigms, Quantitative and Qualitative; a paradigm is defined by Merriam Webster as “a philosophical and theoretical framework of a scientific school or discipline within which theories, laws, and generalizations and the experiments performed in support of them are formulated” (Merriam-Webster online dictionary, 2015). Quantitative and Qualitative methodological paradigms help make sense of observations made in both the physical and social world (Appelrouth & Edles, 2011; Barone & Eisner, 2012; Cahnmann-Taylor, 2008).

#### **Quantitative Inquiry**

In order to recognize the importance of qualitative research methods in studying human experience, it is helpful to understand the origin and the evolution of the quantitative and qualitative paradigms. Since the European Rationalist movement in the late 1800s, positivist science has relied on the notion that the social world should be studied and measured objectively, resulting in an understanding that external universal truths exist in the objects studied and that subjectivity is controlled for the research process (Leavy, 2015). This way of knowing, guided by the scientific method, has become the conventional model for all scientific research today declaring that, “like the natural world, the social world is governed by rules that result in patterns, and thus causal relationships between variables can be identified, hypotheses tested and proven, and causal relationships explained” (Leavy, 2015, p. 7). Positivism asserts that as long as both the researcher and the research method remain objective, social realities could be

predicted and controlled (Barone & Eisner, 2012; Leavy, 2015). This standardized, fact-based view of ontological and epistemological realities led to the use of quantitative methodologies.

While quantitative inquiry remains the principal method used in the physical sciences, when applied to social sciences it can be limiting as human experiences are unique, complex, and most important, subjective (Leavy, 2015), and while “such research methods have given us a great deal, ... the facts, deconceptualized as they often are, are hardly ever adequate for telling the whole story” (Barone & Eisner, 2012, pp. 2-3). Such scientific research tools omit the element of experience.

### **Qualitative Inquiry**

Understanding the limits of relying solely on the quantitative approach to study human experience, social scientists around the world began to ask different questions that required the development of new approaches and research protocols to answer their questions, where the goal was to seek understanding of a complex phenomenon rather than prove or disprove a hypothesis (Bryan, private communication, April, 2016); this resulted in the promotion of a progressive approach to knowledge building in the 1920s (Leavy, 2015). Globalization and economic advancements beginning in the 1950s guided new and unconventional theoretical perspectives (e.g. postmodernism, poststructuralism, and postcolonialism), causing a “significant renegotiation and elaboration of the qualitative paradigm” (Leavy, 2015, p. 10). Qualitative researchers understand that meaning-making occurs in a non-linear process; it recognizes that while we may never capture the story in its entirety, meaning arises from the fragments.

Qualitative research methods continue to gain acceptance as valid and reliable. Not only do qualitative research studies continue to complement a traditional scientific approach, but the tools used to collect and present data have expanded to incorporate artistic and aesthetic research methods (Cahnmann-Taylor, 2008). As global societies are in constant evolution due to internal and external forces, the advancement of new ideas and ways of thinking inevitably encourage the use innovative methodological tools to answer the question that arises out of this evolution (Appelrouth & Edles, 2011). The social world is multifaceted:

It is more difficult to fasten universal laws to explain societal dynamics...Humans, unlike most other animals or naturally occurring elements in the physical world, are motivated to act by a complex array of social and psychological forces. Our behaviors are not the product of any one principle; instead, they can be driven by self-interest, altruism, loyalty, passion, tradition, or habit (Appelrouth & Edles, 2011, p.3).

### **Arts Based Research**

Forms of Arts Based Research 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 (Barone & Eisner, 2012; Cahnmann-Taylor, 2008; Leavy, 2015). Arts Based Research is a relatively new methodological paradigm, making its official debut in educational research in the 1980s with the introduction of postmodernism (Cahnmann-Taylor, 2008). Postmodernism 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 Arts Based Research was being defined as “blurred genres,” “arts based inquiry,” “scholARTistry,” and “a/r/tography” (Cahnmann-Taylor, 2008). According to Cahnmann-Taylor, these new approaches allowed arts based researchers to move into the aesthetic spaces of inquiry.

**Types of knowledge.** Barone and Eisner (2012) suggest that while Arts Based Research 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 Arts Based Research. Barone and Eisner (2012) reference Aristotle’s perception of the three types of knowledge, practical, theoretical, and productive.

The first type of knowledge identified by Aristotle was theoretical knowledge—knowledge that promotes a quest for answers and warranted assertions (Eisner, 2008; Barone & Eisner, 2012). Due to the nature of Arts Based Research, however, Barone & Eisner (2012) suggest that 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 (Barone & Eisner, 2012).

The second type of knowledge posited by Aristotle was practical knowledge, 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). Aristotle referred to this type of knowledge as practical wisdom. Researchers are expected to make numerous decisions throughout the research process and read situations appropriately, to avoid the misinterpretation of findings (Barone & Eisner, 2012).

Aristotle’s final form of knowledge is productive, a knowledge that “lives in the universe of action” (Barone & Eisner, 2012). Productive knowledge emphasizes practical implementation, the process of accomplishing a conscious tangible goal. Arts Based Research is productive and constructive in nature; it is a method that encourages the creation of useful and meaningful representations of experience.

**Human experience.** John Dewey (1934) believed that art is a representation of human experience. Arts Based Research is a creative and expressive method designed to shape human understanding and encourage individuals “to secure an empathic participation in the lives of others and in the situations studied” (Barone & Eisner, 2012, p. 9). Compared to a travel card/passport, Arts Based Research can elicit conversations about social phenomena, encouraging readers to “vicariously re-experience the world” (Barone & Eisner, 2012, p. 20). The human experience cannot be defined through one lens as the social and emotional world is experienced subjectively. While universal truths exist, “truth is not owned simply by propositional discourse; it is also owned by those activities that yield meanings that may be ineffable ultimately but that nevertheless ring true in the competent percipient” (Barone & Eisner, 2012, p. 6).

Over time, humans have created a variety of tools to represent the world. The available forms of representation are responsible for constructing and shaping our knowledge (Barone & Eisner, 2012; Leavy, 2015). While each tool possesses distinctive strengths and limitations, they offer unique ways to experience the world (Barone & Eisner, 2012). Arts Based Research acknowledges that perspectives are often partial and incomplete, believing that “the virtue of partiality is to enter a universe of deliberation so that ideas can be challenged, elaborated, and crafted” (Barone & Eisner, 2012, p. 167).

Conventional forms of research often use the term *format* when referring to the structure and method of research studies; however, Leavy (2015) prefers to use the term *shape* when defining Arts Based Research, as it not only defines the form of the research study but it highlights the notion that a research form is inevitably shaped by both the content and portal by which the content is communicated. Leavy (2015) believes that in order to successfully address and communicate multiple ways of knowing, it is necessary that researchers are able to see and create knowledge in different shapes, creating new tools to answer social science research questions.

It is important to note that Arts Based Research is not concerned with defining the research method in opposition to the traditional and scientific approaches to inquiry (Cahnmann-Taylor, 2008; Barone & Eisner, 2012; Leavy, 2015). Instead, Arts Based researchers view the arts as complimentary to the sciences; while science offers one side of a story, the arts offer a unique extension of that story (Barone & Eisner, 2012). Contesting the idea of polarized research worlds promotes what researchers identify as epistemological diversity (Leavy, 2015; Barone & Eisner, 2012). Arts Based Research is a research methodology that affords a new way of seeing the world and these “literary,

visual, and performing arts offer ways to stretch a researcher's capacities for creativity and knowing, creating a healthy synthesis of approaches to collect, analyze, and represent data in ways that paint a full picture" (Cahnmann-Taylor, 2008, p.251). Barone and Eisner (2012) believe that the artistic features exist along the research continuum, stating:

Anything well crafted, anything made with sensibility and imagination, anything that requires skill and the use of technique in order to create something that has an emotional effect is an artistic affair. The arts themselves are not limited to the so-called fine arts but lead their lives among all that we do to make things aesthetic. This is true in the field of mathematics as it is in printmaking. It is relevant to those who work in theoretic physics as it is for those who focus on the creation of visual imagery (Barone & Eisner, 2012, p. 46).

Dewey (1934) furthers this notion by suggesting that the artist and the scientist—the aesthetic and the intellectual—experience the world similarly. He argues that the difference simply lies in the operating object; the scientist operates with symbols, words, and mathematical signs, while the artist operates with the specific media being produced. Moreover, the artist works with her objects, remaining an active participant rather than a removed spectator (Dewey, 1934).

Those social science researchers who accept that aesthetic approaches to inquiry exist in both the sciences and the arts conclude that all researchers are artists and thus all research studies remain works of art (Barone & Eisner, 2012); art exists "whenever humans have intercourse with life" (Barone & Eisner, 2012, p. 46). Scientific research is an approach used to explain reality and Arts Based Research is a method used to interpret that reality. Dewey (1934) concluded that both the sciences and the arts serve important



functions for research within the social world and for human studies; science explains human reality, while the arts interpret it (Dewey, 1934; Leavy, 2015; Barone & Eisner, 2012; Cahnmann-Taylor, 2008).

Arts Based Research continues to mature and gain legitimacy within the academic community. Eisner (2008) suggests that it is expected for a young research methodology exhibiting new assumptions and methods to be questioned and critiqued; however, for Arts Based researchers, these critiques and tensions can be motivating. Barone and Eisner (2012) suggest many academics have little knowledge of aesthetic research methods, including Arts Based Research, and therefore often discredit and “reject them as representations of knowledge” (Barone & Eisner, 2012, p. 39). They argue that it is essential to accept and understand varying forms of research in order to explore the many forms in which knowledge is acquired, promoting what they refer to as epistemological diversity:

There are, we believe, a variety of forms of representation available to enrich what one can come to question or to know by virtue of the ways in which the subject matter is addressed. This diversity is, for us, a fundamental consideration in the promotion of Arts Based Research (Barone & Eisner, 2012, p. 47).

Epistemological humility represents openness to new and unexplored notions (Barone & Eisner, 2012). Research can be defined as the process of analyzing and re-experiencing the world by means of continuous examination of named phenomena (Barone & Eisner, 2012). Unlike scientific studies, Arts Based Research is not confined to a formula that requires a linear set of steps. Instead, Arts Based Research encourages fluidity and can result in informal encounters with phenomena (Barone & Eisner, 2012). The objective of

Arts Based Research is to create research that “has elegance and subtlety, which promotes meaning not only through its literal or discursive features but because of its metaphorical and qualitative features as well” (Barone & Eisner, 2012, p. 48).

**The arts based research process.** Traditional research with an end goal of improving certainty often follows an experimental research design, promoting systematic and controlled outcomes (Barone & Eisner, 2012). Arts Based Research, however, provides an alternative research design to interpret phenomena, highlighting aesthetic utility; aesthetic utility promotes research that can be explored non-linearly (Barone & Eisner, 2012; Cahnmann-Taylor, 2008; Leavy, 2015).

**Evaluation criteria.** Arts Based Research offers unique and aesthetic interpretations of the social world, allowing the audience to vicariously experience particular phenomena (Barone & Eisner, 2012; Leavy, 2015). Arts Based researchers recognize that in order for art to be useful, both the research method and the art itself must succeed, highlighting the importance of the research experience. However, due to the nature of art, many have argued the notion of evaluation and success, fearful that standardization hinders artistic expression. Due to the variety of methods and principles of Arts Based Research, 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” (Dewey, 1934, 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.

While Arts Based Research does not employ standards to evaluate works of art, it does require assessment through a defined set of *criteria*. Criteria are used to judge value and significance (Barone & Eisner, 1997; Barone & Eisner, 2012; Leavy, 2015) and are not to be used as a set of directives. Dewey defined criteria as “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). Due to the diversity of Arts Based Research, many researchers have created assessment guidelines for their respective genres, understanding that assessment may be distinctive (Barone & Eisner, 1997; Barone & Eisner, 2012; Leavy, 2015). While specific criteria exist for each art 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—by identifying a theme, or distinct vision, that 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). 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). Clearly defined themes help researchers avoid a “data dump,” and encourage concise and effective communication of the research findings (Barone & Eisner, 2012).

Levy (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. The coherence of the research judges the congruence and the internal consistency of the research, essentially evaluating the individual features and the strength of the final shape (Leavy, 2015). 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 traditional scientific research commands random population sampling in order to draw generalized conclusions, in Arts Based Research the ultimate goal is to incite intellectual and emotional growth while recounting experiences, therefore accepting a generativity sample of  $n=1$  (Barone & Eisner, 1997; Barone & Eisner 2012; Leavy, 2015). Similar to scientific research, Arts Based Research can transcend cultural boundaries:

It 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).

Arts Based Research extends branches to phenomena outside of the research texts, encouraging the audience to further the conversation by creating new questions and revealing connections (Barone & Eisner, 1997; Barone & Eisner, 2012).

*Illumination and social significance.* In Arts Based Research social significance refers to meaning, and the importance of the work's fundamental themes (Barone &

Eisner, 2012). Arts Based Research aims to interpret 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; Barone & Eisner, 2012; Leavy, 2015). By acknowledging multiple truths, Arts Based Research furthers the acceptance of multiple meanings, encouraging the audience to think critically and engage in meaningful reflection (Leavy, 2015).

Table X, adapted from Leavy (2015) was created to incorporate the narrative inquiry paradigm. The table presents the distinctive characteristics of each paradigm to represent the evolution of inquiry. This table offers an introduction of the narrative inquiry method.

Table 2: <i>Characteristics of Various Modes of Inquiry</i>			
<b>Quantitative</b>	<b>Qualitative</b>	<b>Arts-Based</b>	<b>Narrative Inquiry</b>
Numbers	Words	Stories, images, sounds, scenes, sensory	Re-storying
Data discovery	Data collection	Data or content generation	Storied interpretation
Measurement	Meaning	Evocation	Multilayered aesthetic analysis
Tabulating	Writing	Re (presenting)	Living, telling, reliving, retelling
Value neutral	Value laden	Political, consciousness-raising, emancipation	Personal and social transformation
Reliability	Process	Authenticity	Partially nuanced
Validity	Interpretation	Truthfulness	Specificity, detailed
Prove /convince	Persuade	Compel, move, aesthetic power	Understand
Generalizability	Transferability	Resonance	Usefulness, social and emotional connectivity,
Disciplinary	Interdisciplinary	Transdisciplinary	Reflexivity

### **Narrative Inquiry: An Arts Based Research Method**

As a member of the expatriate and Third Culture community, and a proponent of democratic theory, I understand the value and the authentic element that storytelling brings. The expatriate culture, acting as a rich resource for narrative, embraces and encourages the sharing of knowledge gained from narrating lived experiences. As an Adult Third Culture Kid, I have experienced the power of voice and have also heard other TCKs stress the importance of sharing and being heard. Those researchers using narrative understand that the researcher and participants are “experts of their own local knowledge” (Berryman, SooHoo, & Nevin, 2012, p. 6). Without the use of narrative inquiry, the Third Culture narrative would be inadequately represented and the research participants’ experiences would be unheard and misrepresented; narratives capture the shadows and nuances that often escape the more traditional research process.

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 Connelly and 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 lived experiences (Caine, Estefan, & Clandinin, 2013; Chase, 2005; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin, Pushor, & Murray Orr, 2007; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, 2006; Riessman & Speedy, 2006, as cited in Clandinin, 2006; Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007; Pushor & Clandinin, 2009).

Narrative study is transdisciplinary and 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). 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).

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). Simply telling one’s story does not stand as interpretation or meaning (Bruner, 1991, as cited in Lyons, 2007; Chase, 2005). A 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; Schifffrin, 1996; Smith & Sparkes, 2006, as cited in Blythe et al., 2013).

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 meaning added to 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” (Caine et al., 2013, p. 3; Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007; Pushor & Clandinin, 2009; Rice & Coulter, 2012): “[f]or 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).

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 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).

### **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 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).

### **The Research Puzzle**

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). The researcher’s autobiographical narrative is the opening narrative, giving authority and validity to the researcher’s story (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990); 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 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, s/he 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 choice of narrative inquiry.** Once the narrative inquirer is committed ontologically and the phenomenon 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).

**The 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 time 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” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, 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).



**The role of transformation.** 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] new 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).

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**

With the element of 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).

### **Narrative Inquiry Methods**

Narrative inquiry encourages the use of multiple data collection methods while participants and researcher work together to collaboratively create a final narrative (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The data include, but are not limited to: a) journals, b) interviews, c) observations, d) storytelling, e) autobiographical writing, f) chronicled timelines, g) poems, and h) pictures (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin et al., 2007). The use of varied data collection methods ensures the final narratives are “built from a rich data source with a focus on the concrete particularities of life” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 5).

**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 participants’ 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 (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin & Huber, 2010; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). They allow researchers to record the ongoing details of the participants’ 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 an ongoing conversation where stories are shared or observations 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.

**Composing interim research texts.** 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 a) justification, b) phenomena, c) method, d) analysis and interpretation, e) the role of theory and previous literature, f)

researcher positioning, and g) 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, for 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).

Narrative inquiry values authenticity, openness, flexibility, and trustworthiness, and 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).

**Presentation of the final research texts.** 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 texts, composed from the various field texts and conversations, 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 helps 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).

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 are 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 for 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).

### **Data Analysis**

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).

**Listening guide overview.** 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 “listening’s” of transcriptions, allowing the researcher to distinguish the participant’s 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) 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” (Gilligan et al., 2003, p. 158). In addition, the need for multiple listenings and codings stems from the idea that a person’s multiple voices may be contrapuntal, 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, 2012; Pushor & Clandinin, 2009; Rogers, 2007).

Though it has been mainly used to position voices in singular interviews, 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 the 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 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 our research question and ourselves 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.

**The four stages of listening: analysis** . 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 person, 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).

*Construction of “I” poems.* 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 focuses on how the participant represents him/herself—the voice of the “I” telling the story; then b) 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 will 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 these particular stories, 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 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).

***Final steps of listening guide.*** 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 contrapuntal 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 contrapuntal 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 underlined 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, a) begin with an idea about a voice, b) create a preliminary definition of it, c) listen for it, and then d) 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 contrapuntal voices which lead to story threads that emerge over the course of several stories (Rogers, 2007). “[T]he contrapuntal 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, contrapuntal 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 (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 a) context; b) multiple—and possible conflicting—voices; and c) 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).

### **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 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, narrative inquiry—including the use of story-sharing—concentrates on data saturation through recurring story threads seen in different types of data sources and truthfulness and consistency which are dependent on the relationships built between researcher, participants, and community to validate 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, researchers employing 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). 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 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, 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).

### **IRB Approval**

The university/institution mandate that studies obtain IRB approval before commencement of negotiating the inquiry with participants actually contradicts the emergent and relational aspects of narrative inquiry 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).

### **Consent Forms**

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 consent form statements regarding possible participant discomfort while talking about experiences, 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).

### **Confidentiality**

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 as well as their contributions to the research, participants were instructed that they could 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.

This research study ensured that confidentiality would be maintained. Participants were given pseudonyms of their choice, as excerpts of narratives were used in the final piece. All of the data was collected electronically and stored on the researcher's personal password protected laptop computer in password-protected folders to further guarantee confidentiality. All of the hard copy data, consent forms and critical incident timelines, were stored at Chapman University in a locked filing cabinet located in a locked office.



### **Summary**

Since 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). Narrative inquiry’s creative research design and analysis methods can be viewed as “the people’s scholarship” (Featherstone, 1985, p. 375, as cited in Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2005, p. 12; Hartman & Kaufman, 2006) because it helps both the researcher and the participants explore identity, as identities are rarely linear, neat, or predictable.

Clandinin and Huber (2010) indicate that narrative inquiry allows for the emergence of new theoretical considerations. Generative in nature, narrative inquiry gives the researcher the ability to not only uncover meaning but create new forms of expressing experience. The primary goal of narrative inquiry is to resonate with the intended audience and evoke emotional meaning.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis

**Review of the Inquiry**

The purpose of this study was to examine the repatriation experiences of American TCKs in order to understand more deeply their process of personal development, belonging, and participation in their first culture. The research focused on analyzing the participants' repatriation transition process by exploring their stories and recalling critical incidents. The research examined the relationships among the emotional intelligence of TCKs as well as their repatriating experiences and the implications of the repatriating experiences on their democratic responsibilities as U.S. citizens. The study's guiding inquiry questions were: a) What can we learn from the experiences of TCKs repatriating for post-secondary education? b) What repatriating transition experiences do TCKs identify as significant? c) In what ways might emotional intelligence be a factor in successful re-acculturation? d) What is the relationship between the Third Culture experience and democratic responsibility as a citizen.

**Data Collection Methods**

As mentioned in the methodology chapter, narrative inquiry includes three forms of texts, field texts, interim texts, and the final research texts. The collection of the various field texts, and the composition of the interim texts, preserves the integrity of the participants' lives, and thus provides an authentic retelling of their Third Culture and repatriating experiences in the final narrative portraits.

**Field Texts**

**Interviews.** Due to the nature of narrative inquiry, the research design utilized these research questions during the interview process to begin an inner dialog and encourage

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reflective responses from the participants. The twelve interviews were conducted in ten weeks, beginning November 21, 2015 and ending January 31, 2016. I interviewed four TCKs currently living in the United States. All of the interviews lasted between one and two hours. Three of the participants were individually interviewed three times; however, due to a childbirth labor the fourth participant was individually interviewed twice.

The initial interview was semi-structured in order to guide the conversation; every participant was asked the following questions: a) tell me about yourself; b) tell me about your TCK experience; c) how has your TCK experience impacted you personally? d) how has your TCK experience impacted you today? and e) how has your TCK experience impacted your future plans and goals? The follow-up interviews—interviews two and three—while structured by a specific topic of repatriating experiences and democratic responsibilities, were guided by the participants' individual responses to these questions.

Upon completion of the individual interviews, a final fourth group conversation was conducted with the four participants and the researcher using Skype. This conversation was prompted entirely by photographs that were shared in a group text message. Participants were encouraged to send photographs that represented: 1) our time together as TCKs, 2) their individual TCK experiences, 3) their repatriation experiences, 4) their critical incidents from the timelines, and 5) their experiences with democratic responsibility/civic engagement. Each participant presented their photographs with accompanying stories.

As the participants live in different states across the country, the interviews took place during scheduled Skype and FaceTime appointments. All of the interviews were recorded using a voice recording application on my cell phone. Upon completion of each

interview, the conversation was saved to a password-protected folder on my password-protected computer. The recordings were saved by participant number, rather than by name to increase confidentiality.

The participants' entire field texts were saved digitally as noted above, and will remain there for five years. It is important to understand that within narrative inquiry, research is defined as ongoing conversations, sharing stories and observations from the participant's past, present, and future (Clandinin, 2013; Clandinin & Huber, 2010). As mentioned previously, the researcher and participant are engaged in a non-linear "temporal unfolding of lives" (Clandinin, 2013, p. 45). While field texts are composed and then transcribed at one particular time, it is integral to the research process that inquirers recognize that they are stepping into the participant's lived story and the gathered conversations are providing them with insight into their unique experiences. As explained in the previous chapter, the fields texts in this study consisted of the eleven individual interview transcriptions, one individual reflection, one group conversation transcription, the participants' shared photographs, and the four individually constructed critical incident timelines.

**Interview transcriptions.** The individual transcriptions were between 20 and 30 pages in length. Each transcription was sent out to a transcription service (rev.com), was completed within 24 hours, and emailed directly to me. Some qualitative researchers feel that sending out transcripts limits the researcher's connectivity to the material, however I argue that due to the research design and method of analysis, I was extremely close to the material as each transcript was listened to and analyzed multiple times. Names were not used on the transcripts to protect the anonymity of the participants.

**Photographs.** Arts Based Research encourages creative data collection that generates knowledge that would be lost or not included in other forms of research. Because this research study utilized a methodology that explored stories, I felt it was important to include visual representation of those stories to enhance opportunities for visual as well as traditional forms of literacy. Photographs, or photo voice as this method is called, capture a specific point in time; they capture experience. We are all familiar with the saying, “A picture is worth a thousand words.” In this research study, photographs were used to prompt expanded, meaningful discussion of the participant’s individual TCK experience, repatriation process, commitment and actions concerning civic engagement. They were used during the group conversation to not only reconnect old friends, but elicit nostalgic memories, and to prompt discussion of shared experiences beyond their TCK memories.

**Critical incident timelines.** At the beginning of the research study I completed a critical incident timeline of my own. It is important that the researcher experiences and generates a personal plotline before delving into data collection. Sitting down to write my autobiographical timeline was cathartic; not only did it elicit memories from my past, it brought up a lot of forgotten emotion, forcing me to relive many happy memories, but also memories associated with emotional stress, grief and loss. Not only was the timeline meaningful, it helped me separate my story and experiences from the participants while empathizing with the complicated emotional retelling of a significant process in their lives.

The critical incident timelines were collected to provide information about the participants’ experiences and personal histories. It is one way to begin to formulate the

arc or plotline of each person's story. I asked the participants to think of five critical incidents that represented their repatriation process. The timelines helped guide the composition of the individual narratives and were helpful in positioning specific memories of recalled experiences for both the participants during the interviews and for me, the researcher, during the analysis.

### **Interim Texts**

After collecting the participants' stories, I began to interpret the transcripts of each participant separately and look for meaning. During the composition of interim texts, I revisited the literature and theories associated with the TCK phenomenon as narrative inquiry encourages the researcher to acknowledge the relationship between the stories and the overall research puzzle (Clandinin, 2013; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2012). The interim texts consisted of plotline summaries, I-poems constructed from the interview transcripts, and personal reflections that discussed recurring themes and threads, and my reactions and reflections. As a form of member checking I sent the I-poems and summaries to the participants to check for consistency and to ensure that I accurately captured the participants' stories. Participants were given the opportunity to respond with potential edits and additions.

### **Data Analysis Process**

The narrative inquiry methods used to analyze the data in this research study were listening guide and narrative analysis, both requiring multiple listenings and readings of the interview transcripts. The listening guide process requires four listenings of each transcript and narrative analysis requires three readings of each transcript, resulting in seven reviews of each transcript. Table 3 represents a breakdown of the approximate

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amount of time spent on analysis for each participant.

Table 3: <i>Amount of Time Spent on Analysis for Each Participant</i>					
Type of Analysis	Andrea- 3 Interviews	Jeff- 3 Interviews	Jennifer – 2 interviews	Jiggy-3 Interviews	Group Conversation
Listening 1	4.5 hours	6 hours	3 hours	4.5 hours	3 hours
Listening 2	3.5 hours	4.5 hours	2.5hours	4 hours	NA
Listening 3	3.5 hours	4 hours	2.5 hours	3.5 hours	NA
Listening 4	3.5 hours	4 hours	2.5 hours	3.5 hours	NA
Narrative 1	3.5 hours	4 hours	2.5 hours	3.5 hours	NA
Narrative 2	3.5 hours	4 hours	2.5 hours	3.5 hours	NA
Narrative 3	3.5 hours	4 hours	2.5 hours	3.5 hours	NA
Final Portrait	20 hours	25 hours	18 hours	20 hours	NA
Total	45.5 hours	55.5 hours	33.5 hours	46 hours	3 hours
183.5 hours					
TOTAL:					

Narrative analysis that uses the Listening Guide is a rigorous seven-step analytical method. Upon completion of the analysis I had a great understanding and appreciation for the narrative inquiry methodology. Before composing my final research texts, the participants' final narrative portraits, I spent a total of 103 hours analyzing the data. It was important to follow each step carefully to fully capture each of the participants' distinctive stories within the context provided.

In order to further explain the analytical process for this research study, I have provided an example for each of the seven analytical steps. I chose one participant's interview transcript for all of the analytical examples to ensure cohesion and clarity.

### **Listening Guide**

Carol Gilligan's (2003) Listening Guide, as outlined in the methodology chapter, was utilized to analyze all of the semi-structured interviews. The method is built around four listenings, with each listening focusing on a different feature of the participant's

narrative; the first listens for plot, the second listens for the “T”, the third listens for voice, and the fourth listens for the structure (Gilligan et al., 2003). The following explanation shows how each step of the listening guide was systematically conducted and how the interviews were analyzed.

**First listening: the plot.** The first time I listened to the full transcript of the interview served as a guide to the remaining three listenings, as the first time I listened for the plot of the participant’s narrative. During the first listening I followed Gilligan’s (2003) method by carefully listening for plot, subplots, recurring words, phrases and themes, and the chronology of events. The listening seeks metaphors by the participant that were integral to the overall arc of the narrative. I also noted any apparent shifts in the participant’s narration style, as well as any inconsistencies or revisions made in their stories. Additionally, I made note of any links or references to TCK literature, questions to prompt further conversations, and my own personal emotions that were related to their experiences.

To conclude the first step of analysis, I composed an interview summary (these summaries are also identified as interim texts). As summaries are written reflections of the researcher’s perspective on the participant’s experience, it was important that I also included my personal positioning within the fields texts (Clandinin, 2013; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2012). Due to the democratic and transparent nature of narrative inquiry, a method that values openness and trustworthiness, I shared the summaries with the participants. The summaries included excerpts from the interview to maintain authentic representation of their narratives and labeled both my emotions and the participants’ emotions associated with the specific conversation. Maintaining the



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reflexive nature of narrative inquiry, participants were encouraged to read the summaries and make notes or summaries of their own. The participants felt the summaries accurately captured their experiences and they often made note of emotions associated with the chosen excerpts. Presenting a summary of their experiences allowed the participants to relive their story in a new perspective. There were, however, instances where participants asked for certain details to be edited or deleted, either for clarity or for personal reasons. Table 4 is an example of step one of the Listening Guide.

Table 4: Jiggy Listening Guide Step 1 Transcript 2 : December 12, 2015	
<b>Plot</b>	<p>Discussion of repatriating critical incidents:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Repatriating to New York in 2004</li> <li>2) Visiting Ground Zero in New York</li> <li>3) Family moved back to the United States, to Kansas</li> <li>4) Officially becoming a citizen of the United States of America</li> <li>5) The 2014 FIFA World Cup</li> </ol>
<b>Sub Plots</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Repatriating after freshman year of college spent in Florence, Italy. Repatriating challenges, what was missed from his past. Noticing differences in American students. Mention of missed pub culture. "For the most part, my friends were international TCKs so we all had the same understanding and were brought up the same. Then, when we were thrown into the mix with American kids you could really see the difference in how people react when they're in that environment" (Page 17).</li> <li>2) Reliving 9/11 as an American TCK. The unexpected emotional connection five years later. American patriotism. "It was a strange feeling because I had never felt that before. I had never felt that inside. That American patriotism. When I was there, it really hit me and it was a powerful experience. I started to think of it as "Why did they do this to us?" Versus my initial emotional reaction which was, 'That's terrible. It's sad', but it's not really affecting me.'" (Page 7)</li> <li>3) Experiencing American culture, Midwestern culture. First exposure to American college sports. "It's almost as if you're a</li> </ol>

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	<p>part of a religion, of a cult, of a movement that is very unique to the American culture” (Page 9).</p> <p>4) How it felt to identify as a U.S citizen without holding a passport. Understanding what it means to be an American citizen. Looking forward to voting for the first time. “Being able to make it official and actually say I’m American was a huge piece of it because it was a culture that I had always identified with, grew up in. In the way that I talk, in the music that I like, in the sports that I like. It was all American based. I wanted it to be official” (Page 4).</p> <p>5) Understanding his repatriation transition based around his world cup allegiance. Supporting England—supporting both teams—supporting the US team. “I remember wearing like U.S. gear this time around. You could really see the change in support of something as small as a size of sports team. That for me was really telling and I thought, "Oh, wow!" It really feels like I’m assimilating because I can see it. I was a diehard English fan and now I’m supporting the English team, but I’m rooting for the U.S. to win” (page 13).</p>
<b>Characters</b>	<p>1) Participant</p> <p>2) Parents: Play a major role in his TCK and repatriating stories.</p> <p>3) Kansas Neighbors: integral to his understanding of American people and different cultures within the US.</p> <p>4) Kansas Jayhawk Basketball Team: As a culture and a sports team, influenced the participant and his re-acculturation into American culture.</p> <p>5) Other repatriating TCKs: Important factor in repatriating experiences and transition process.</p>
<b>Chronology of Events</b>	<p>1) First memory of holding a green card at the age of 6; “I always held a green card, but I wasn’t really a full citizen. While I identify as one on paper, technically I was not officially a U.S. citizen” (page 2).</p> <p>2) Repatriating in 2004 after spending first year of college in Florence, Italy. Felt lucky to be repatriating with other TCKs, made the transition process easier; “If I graduated high school and then went straight to New York, I honestly think it would have been too overwhelming. I think that there was definitely anxiety, but it was definitely dampened by the fact that I had friends to go there with and that I had a group that would experience it with me (page 15).</p> <p>3) Parents leaving London and moving to Kansas. He was sad to lose the connection to “home”; “Why would you do that?” I was</p>

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	<p>living in New York, going back to see them at Christmas in London. What else could you really ask for, being an international kid, growing up within so many different cultured places. "Why would I ever want to go to Lawrence to visit you guys? Why would I want to go there and experience that?" (pages 8 -9)</p> <p>4) Visiting Kansas for the first time, unexpected kindness, learning culture of Kansas; "I think I was putting up Christmas lights. A car drove by in the neighborhood and they were waving in my direction, I was confused and I started looking behind me and looking around. I realized they were waving to me and I thought, "This is strange. I'm going to wave back." I waved back. Everybody there is extremely, extremely nice" (page 11).</p> <p>5) Experiencing Jayhawk basketball opened his eyes to the culture of college athletics and its impact on American culture; "Knowing that it's like a religion out there and to be part of that American basketball culture was mind-blowing" (page 9).</p> <p>6) Visiting Ground Zero for the first time was unexpectedly emotional; "It was a strange feeling because I had never felt that before. I had never felt that inside. That American patriotism" (page 7).</p> <p>7) Viewing the 2014 world cup and supporting the US team over the English team signified his repatriation transition process; "it was different 4 years later because I felt more affinity towards the U.S. team" (page 13).</p> <p>8) Applying for American citizenship opened his eyes to American immigration; "It opens up your eyes and shows you that the U.S. is a nation built on immigration" (page 2).</p> <p>9) Obtaining American citizenship at the age of 25 and legitimizing American identity; "When people ask me where I'm from, it's a hard question for me to answer, but I can always default back to being an American" (page 5).</p>
<b>Recurring Words/Phrases</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) American</li> <li>2) Citizen</li> <li>3) Officially</li> <li>4) Identify</li> <li>5) People</li> <li>6) Responsibility</li> <li>7) Society</li> <li>8) Voting</li> </ol>
<b>Recurring Themes</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) <b>TCKs endure struggles with identity</b> - TCK identity vs. American Identity- "being able to officially be part of a culture that I always felt like I was part of. Friends would say, "I'm</li> </ol>

	<p>American. I'm American. I'm American" and then it would come to me and I'd actually say "Well, I'm actually not American." For me, being able to make it official and actually say I'm American was huge. It was a culture that I had always identified with, grew up. In the way that I talk, in the music that I like, in the sports that I like. It was all American based. I wanted it to be official" (page 4).</p> <p>2) <b>TCKs have difficulty identifying with "home"</b> – One of the most confusing questions a TCK is forced to answer is "Where are you from?" Jiggy had found that his answer depends on who he is talking to. "When people ask me where I'm from, it's a hard question for me to answer, but I can always default back to being an American" (page 4).</p> <p>3) <b>TCKs value their third culture experience, but ultimately connect to American identity upon completion of repatriating transition process-</b> "I'd say it was a long process. It was a slow process. I'd say that you definitely pick up things here and there, and a lot of it has to do with the people around you, the community that you're in, the people that you talk to on a regular basis, being in the work environment, pretty much all Americans" (page 14). "For me, it was all positive. Being part of this culture, I only see as positive" (page 14). "The process was long and longer than I thought it would have been. I'd say that there's obviously speed bumps, but I think that there was never a time where I was repatriating or becoming American where I saw it as a negative thing, and it was never a negative experience for me" (page 14). "I guess it means a certain sense of like pride. It means that I'm officially part of the culture that I've always been associated and identified with" (page 3).</p> <p>4) <b>TCKs have initial trouble accepting American regulation on drinking-</b> "It was definitely a shock because I couldn't walk into a liquor store, or an off-license as they call it in the UK, and buy beer. It was definitely hard not being able to do that because it was about having a couple beers with friends, having good laughs, and then going home" (page 16). "I was able to get my hands on a fake ID which a lot of us were able to do. When we had that, we were able to continue on with that pub culture. It was definitely hard not being able to do that because, you're right, we would go after school or on the weekend" (page 17). "There's definitely a difference in drinking culture from Europe and the UK to the states. I'm not saying it doesn't happen out there but the underage kids here in the U.S., "Let's get as messed</p>
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	<p>up as we can on shots because we can and it's available to us" (page 17).</p> <p>5) <b>Re-establishing connection to American culture is important to the repatriating process</b> – being involved in an aspect of American culture aids in re-acculturation. "Ever since then I've been a diehard Kansas Jayhawk fan" (page 9). "It's almost as if you're part of a religion, of a cult, of a movement that is very unique to the American culture... It's about legacy and being proud of where you went to school. That's big here in the states. That's a big part of American culture" (page 10). "I felt more affinity towards the U.S. team... When the U.S. would play, I actually paid more attention to the United States soccer team than the English soccer team. I remember wearing the U.S. gear this time around. That for me was really telling and I thought, "Oh, wow!" It really feels like I'm assimilating because I can see it. I was a diehard English fan, and now I'm supporting the English team, but I'm rooting for the U.S. to win" (page 13).</p> <p>6) <b>TCKs believe that the American stereotype is due to unfamiliarity and upon repatriation see the beauty in America and the vast culture-</b> Americans and American culture represented negatively abroad. The vast culture in the United States often overlooked and unacknowledged. "The U.S. has a lot of deep culture as well, the Midwest, the East, the Northeast, the South, the West. It's a culturally diverse country even within the American people... Every culture is interesting... They need to be appreciated for what they are because the differences are what makes everything beautiful. Being third culture kids, I think we can always find the beauty in different places and we are able to adapt, see a place for what it is, and understand that it's different, but that it's different for a reason" (page 12). "All over Europe, there's so much culture and history. That exists here in the states just as much. The culture in the south is different than the culture in the Midwest and the culture in California is different than the culture in New York. You get that here. It's just not as glorified because maybe the U.S. is not as old as the European countries" (page 11). "A lot of it comes from history, the history of the country and being old. Being old for some reason means that you are more credible. Whether or not there is truth to that, and there might be, but every culture is interesting. They need to be appreciated for what they are because the differences are what makes everything beautiful. There's so many diverse cultures within the United States."</p>
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	<p>7) <b>To be an American means to engage civilly.</b> Jiggy believed that successful assimilation involves voting, being an active member of society, and supporting the military. “By hearing it and being a part of the community and society, in the American society, you feel like it is my duty and it is my responsibility to vote and make a difference, where it matters which is right here in the land that I live now” (page 2). “Whereas now, being an American citizen, living here, and understanding it, you feel a little bit more empowered to join in and be a part of the conversation” (page 3).</p> <p>8) <b>The repatriating transition is longer than expected-</b> For Jiggy it took nearly ten years. “I’d say it was a long process. It was a slow process” (page 14). “The process was long and longer than I thought it would have been. I’d say that there are obviously speed bumps” (page 14).</p> <p>9) <b>Home</b> is not a location; it is where your family is.</p>
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Table 5 is an example of the interim text, the summary that was composed after the completion of the interview.

<p><b>Table 5:</b>  <b>Jiggy Listening Guide Step 1 Summary</b>  <b>Transcript 2</b>  <b>December 12, 2015</b></p>
<p>Repatriating to the United States, although positive, was a long process for Jiggy. There are five critical incidents that Jiggy identified as integral to his repatriation.</p> <p>1) Jiggy was accepted into New York University's one-year program in Florence, Italy. New York University's extension program offered Jiggy the opportunity to start his college career in Florence, in a class of one hundred international freshman students, many of whom were fellow TCKs. Jiggy believed that attending the extension program in Florence is responsible for his successful repatriating experience. After completing his freshman year in Florence, Jiggy moved to New York to complete the remaining three years of his program. He was excited to move back to the United States. However, along with his excitement to explore a new culture, he was anxious to attend an American university.</p> <p>2) After living in New York for over one year, Jiggy decided to walk to Ground Zero, the site of the World Trade Center tragedy. During his visit to the memorial, he started to understand what 9/11 meant to the American public. He remembers watching the towers fall in London and while understanding it as a tragedy, did not feel a personal connection.</p> <p>3) While Jiggy was living in New York, his parents moved to Lawrence, Kansas. Jiggy was not pleased with their decision to move as he would no longer be going home to London for vacations. Jiggy had never experienced Midwestern America. Jiggy traveled to Lawrence for Thanksgiving and was pleasantly surprised. He found that Lawrence had its own unique culture, and Jiggy was happy to experience it, particularly the college</p>

basketball culture.

4) After living in New York, Jiggy moved to San Diego. It was there that Jiggy began the application process to become an American citizen. The application process was long and time consuming, but he was ready to officially become a U.S. citizen. When Jiggy found out that he passed the interview and that his application was approved. He had to drive back down to San Diego for the ceremony as he had moved again, this time to Los Angeles.

5) During the last Soccer World Cup in 2014, Jiggy was cheering on team U.S.A to win the cup. Jiggy felt that this was a critical incident in his repatriating timeline as it represented his assimilation process. He could see the transformation as he was no longer cheering on England to win. This was ten years after Jiggy had moved back to the United States.

Jiggy's repatriating transition process has been directly shaped by his ATCK identity and his experiences here in the United States. It is clear that he treasures his third culture experience as it remains at the forefront of his identity.

**Second listening: "I poems."** The second listening focuses on the participant's subjectivity and sense of self. During this step I listened for when the participant used their first person "I" voice. Listening for the "I" allows for the construction of the "I-poems," poems that represent the relationship between subjective voice and meaning (Gilligan et al., 2003). In order to collect all of the self-voice statements, I underlined every subjective "I" along with the verb and necessary information. After collecting all of



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the “I” statements, I put them together in their exact sequence, line by line, to create the I-poem.

Upon completion of the I-poems I had a better understanding of how the participant spoke of themselves and their experiences. Although the researcher can choose to send participants sections of the I-poems, I chose to send the participants the I-poems in their entirety so that they were able to view the authentic representation of their perceived experiences. Due to the length of the I-poems, after the participants checked their accuracy, I decided to shorten the poems, keeping only those that were integral to the narrative, and to ensure coherence and readability, (the complete I-poems can be found in the Appendix). Similar to step 1, I wrote a summary that reflected my personal response to the participant's I-poem and identified areas that reflected recurring themes in the narrative. Table 6 and Table 7 are examples of the constructed I-Poems from the participant's second interview, and the summary:

<b>Table 6</b> <b>Jiggy Listening Guide Step 2 – I-poem</b> <b>Transcript 2</b> <b>December 12, 2015</b>
I guess, I've always identified as being an American. I always felt, I've been an American. I guess, I actually became an American. I held a green card for as long as I can remember. I always held a green card. I wasn't really a full citizen. I identify as one on paper, I was not officially a U.S. citizen. I felt, I didn't uphold my American duties or duties as an American like voting. I didn't vote in the last election. I know you learn it when you're becoming a citizen,

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I'm looking for that civil responsibility.  
I think being an American and being here with all my other American compatriots,  
I think that's part of the shift to being a third culture kid and being in a society for so long.  
I just feel growing up,  
    I've always been a visitor or somebody watching from the outside.  
I think being able to officially be part of a culture,  
    I always felt like,  
    I was part of.  
"I'm American. I'm American. I'm American"  
I'd actually say,  
    "I'm actually not American."  
I'm American was a huge piece of it because it was a culture that,  
    I had always identified with, grew up. In the way that,  
    I talk...  
        in the music that,  
    I like...  
        in the sports that,  
    I like.  
I wanted it to be official.  
I think being officially an American,  
    I wanted to identify and be a part of it officially.  
I guess it means a certain sense of pride.  
I'm officially part of the culture that  
    I've always been associated with and identified with.  
I can always default back to being an American.

**Table 7**  
**Jiggy Listening Guide Step 2 Summary**  
**Transcript 2**  
**December 12, 2015**

Although Jiggy had always identified as an American, he was not legally an American citizen. Listening to Jiggy speak about the importance of becoming an American—  
officially, on  
paper—showed me that sometimes personal identification with a culture may not be enough justification. One of the most difficult questions a TCK can be asked is, “where are you from?” When a TCK’s answer appears confusing, it is because they often do not

know how to answer, they are themselves confused; their confusion represents an inner struggle with identity.

**Third listening: contrapuntal voices.** The third listening is shaped by the research question and concentrates on the contrapuntal voices represented in the narratives. During this step I listened for multiple voices—conflicting and complementary—underlined each voice, noting its relationship to the participant’s view of themselves and the experience. Before I began my research, based on my experiences as a TCK, the contrapuntal voices I believed I would be listening for would be the “voice of the American” and the “voice of the TCK.” However, I understood that during the listening, in order to maintain the authenticity of narrative inquiry, it was important that I allowed the voices to emerge organically through the participant’s voice. Through several listenings I was able to explore the overlap of the defined unique voices, as I listened not only for the voices that were heard but for the voices that were not heard (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Voices were unique to each participant, conversation, and topic. After reading all of the interviews I began to explore the common voices represented across each participant’s conversations as well as across the participants as a whole. The findings were sent to each participant for clarity and negotiation.

<b>Table 8</b> <b>Jiggy Listening Guide Step 3</b> <b>Transcript 2</b> <b>December 12, 2015</b>	
<b>Voice of the American</b>	“I’ve always identified as being an American” (page 2) “Being an American... get that sense of pride” (page2) “I’m American. I’m American. I’m American”

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	(page 4) “I wanted it to be official” (page 4) “Being here with all of my other American compatriots” (page 2)
<b>Voice of the TCK</b>	“I wasn’t really a full citizen” (page 1) “I was not officially a U.S. citizen” (page 1) “It wasn’t like they were attacking me” (page 7) “Being international kids, and TCKs, growing up with so many different cultures places... why would I ever want to go to Lawrence” (page 9) “Americans don’t really... when you go there, they don’t dress up... its strange” (page, 11) “These people, they are American” (page 11) “The British person in me was very much alive” (page 13)

In addition, I examined the participant’s intimate and social relationships. The social networks included relationships with other TCKs, previous classmates, co-workers, community members. and other relationships that may have impacted their repatriation experience. The intimate relationships consisted of family, spouses, children and friends.

<b>Table 9</b> <b>Jiggy Listening Guide Step 3</b> <b>Transcript 2</b> <b>December 12, 2015</b>	
<b>Intimate Relationships</b>	<p>1) <b>TCK community in Florence and New York</b> – the students/friends that repatriated to New York with Jiggy. They were integral to Jiggy’s successful assimilation into American culture. He relied on his friends during the initial transition steps.</p> <p>1) <b>Family</b> – Extremely close to his family (parents, siblings, and cousins). Jiggy would visit his family in London, Kansas, and the Philippines. Making a new connection to the Kansas University basketball team through his sister was a critical incident in his transition timeline.</p> <p>2) <b>Friends in San Diego</b> – Jiggy moved in with a fellow TCK – friend from high school in San Diego. It was there when Jiggy began to plant his roots in the United States. It was there that he received his received his American citizenship.</p>

	<p>3) <b>Friends in Los Angeles-</b> Moving to Los Angeles was the most recent move for Jiggy. He lives with a fellow TCK and new friends that he made through his family. He also met his fiancé in Los Angeles.</p> <p>4) <b>Fiancé-</b> Newly engaged. His fiancé is from Los Angeles and is heavily involved in the Coptic religion.</p> <p>5) <b>TCK friends</b> –Maintains close relationships with a few of his high school TCK friends.</p>
<b>Social Networks</b>	<p>1) <b>TCK friends</b> – Values the relationships that he made during his third culture experience.</p> <p>2) <b>Friends from New York-</b> Classmates from NYU.</p> <p>3) <b>Friends in Kansas</b> – University of Kansas friendships established through his sister.</p> <p>4) <b>The Coptic Community/Church</b> – His fiancé is heavily involved in her community and Jiggy has thus started to form relationships with the community and the church. He has started to become an active participant in their community. She's deeply rooted here, not only in the American community, but also in her own Egyptian community. She's actually been a huge part of the community, giving back to the community and community events” (page 6). “I'm starting to develop and realize that it is part of my responsibility too” (page 6).</p>

**Fourth listening: power structures.** Similar to step 3, listening for power structures relies heavily on the research question and the stories presented by the participants. This listening focuses on the cultural, social, political, and economic structures that frame both the participant’s narrative and subjective identity (Chase, 2005; Edwards & Weller, 2012; Doucet & Mauthner, 2008). As I read through the interviews I first noted segments that represented the different structures. Later, on a separate

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document, I created tables where excerpts were copied and pasted under the corresponding structure. I found that many of the stories aligned with multiple structures (e.g. social and culture, political and cultural).

<b>Table 10:</b> <b>Jiggy Listening Guide Step 4</b> <b>Transcript 2</b> <b>December 12, 2015</b>	
<b>Cultural</b> <p>“I went one Thanksgiving, for the first time, and I loved it. I still love Lawrence, Kansas. One of the experiences that is burned into my memory is attending a Kansas Jayhawk college basketball game. We never had anything like that growing up. My sister was going to KU and we were able to get tickets to the game. When we walked into the stadium, it was an electric feeling, electric. From the traditions, to the songs, to the feel of the university...” (page 9).</p> <p>“A big time college experience like that is very unique to the U.S. and something that I had never experienced” (page 9).</p> <p>"Do you drink and go to church?" I was like, "Wow!" That's pretty intense” (page 9).</p> <p>“It’s almost as if you're part of a religion, of a cult, of a movement that is very unique to the American culture... It’s about legacy and being proud of where you went to school. That's big here in the states. That's a big part of American culture” (page 10).</p> <p>“Lawrence is very different, but there are definitely times when you are out there and you feel like "Wow! This is America." It's because of the people. It's because of how the people act. It's because of how the people look” (page 10).</p>	<b>Social</b> <p>“I remember England played the U.S. at that time. We went to a bar... I went in there wearing my England uniform which a lot of people were not so happy about and a lot of people called me brave. It was the England /U.S. game and I was cheering for England and wearing the English jersey” (page 13).</p> <p>“I guess the bigger question for me was going to university. I guess more of the anxiety that I felt was going to university and being part of a larger student body than I'd ever been used to. Going to a lecture hall with 40, 50 kids versus 40, 50 kids being in my entire year... Our graduating classes were probably 50 people” (page 15).</p> <p>“What really helped me though was going to Florence, going to Italy first and having all of the international students around me. For all of us to be able to go back to New York together was so important because I feel like if I was alone and just thrown into New York at NYU, into those classes and that environment...If I graduated high school and then went straight into New York, I honestly think it would have been too overwhelming for me” (page 15).</p> <p>“I think that there was definitely that anxiety, but it was dampened by the fact that I had friends to go there with and I</p>

<p>“I think I was putting up Christmas lights. A car drove by in the neighborhood and they were waving in my direction, I was confused and I started looking behind me and looking around. I realized they were waving to me and I thought, "This is strange. I'm going to wave back." I waved back. Everybody there is extremely, extremely nice” (page 11).</p> <p>“You go there and you're in a community where people are so welcoming and so nice. You just feel like "Wow!" They are American and you can judge them on the cover, but at the end of the day, they are just happy people that are living by their means, having a good time. They have their own culture” (page 11).</p> <p>“All over Europe, there's so much culture and history. That exists here in the states just as much. The culture in the south is different than the culture in the mid-west and the culture in California is different than the culture in New York. You get that here. It's just not as glorified because maybe the U.S. is not as old as the European countries” (page 11).</p> <p>“A lot of it comes from history, the history of the country and being old. Being old for some reason means that you are more credible. Whether or not there is truth to that, and there might be, but every culture is interesting. They need to be appreciated for what they are because the differences are what makes everything beautiful. There's so many diverse cultures within the United States” (page 12).</p> <p>“Someone from California, born and raised, could go to Lawrence, Kansas and be like, "I hate it here. It sucks. There's nothing really to do here. It's weird. It's</p>	<p>had a group that would experience it with me” (page 15).</p> <p>“When I moved to New York from college, I was 19 years old, after my freshman year of college. That was definitely hard. Growing up and being able to drink since you were 15 or 16 years old in Europe and then coming here. You've been drinking for about 3, 4 years and then you come here and you have to wait another 3 or 4 years to actually become legal” (page 16).</p> <p>“The way we got around that is in New York there's a culture that is heavy on the club scene, and if you spend enough money, you can get whatever you want” (page 16).</p> <p>“We would frequent the clubs and spend enough money to be able to have our age overlooked” (page 16)</p> <p>“We would hold what we would call house parties or parties where we would buy kegs from guys that we knew. We would pick up a keg and then have a party at our house or have a party in the dorm” (page 16).</p> <p>“It was definitely a shock because I couldn't walk into a liquor store, or an off-license as they call it in the UK, and buy beer. It was definitely hard not being able to do that because it was about having a couple beers with friends, having good laughs, and then going home” (page 16).</p> <p>“I was able to get my hands on a fake ID which a lot of us were able to do. When we had that, we were able to continue on with that pub culture. It was definitely hard not being able to do that because, you're right, we would go after school or on the weekend” (page 17).</p>
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<p>middle America." Being third culture kids, I think we can always find the beauty in different places and we are able to adapt, see a place for what it is, and understand that it's different, but that it's different for a reason" (page 12).</p> <p>"I remember England played the U.S. at that time. We went to a bar... I went in there wearing my England uniform which a lot of people were not so happy about and a lot of people called me brave. It was the England /U.S. game and I was cheering for England and wearing the English jersey" (page 13).</p> <p>"I felt more affinity towards the U.S. team... When the U.S. would play, I actually paid more attention to the United States soccer team than the English soccer team. I remember wearing the U.S. gear this time around. That for me was really telling and I thought, "Oh, wow!" It really feels like I'm assimilating because I can see it. I was a diehard English fan, and now I'm supporting the English team, but I'm rooting for the U.S. to win" (page 13).</p> <p>"Landing in New York, I still remember the taxi ride from JFK to my apartment. There wasn't really any anxiety. It was more of an excitement and that might be because of the city itself... being in New York and the energy it exudes. I think anybody and everybody feeds off that. When you go to New York, there's an energy there" (page 15).</p> <p>"I guess some of the things I missed were definitely the food. Obviously, the food in Italy was amazing. We had the finest wine and pasta and steaks. That I definitely miss. I miss the snacks from England, Quavers and LAY'S chips with different flavorings like ketchup flavor or prawn flavor. There are so many different flavors</p>	<p>"There's definitely a difference in drinking culture from Europe and the UK to the states. I'm not saying it doesn't happen out there but the underage kids here in the U.S., "Let's get as messed up as we can on shots because we can and it's available to us" (page 17).</p> <p>"I felt the same way with the American kids that would come to our parties. For the most part, my friends were international TCKs so we were all under the same understanding and brought up the same. Then, we were thrown into the mix with American kids, and that's when you can really see the difference of how people react when they're in that environment" (page 17).</p>
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<p>out there that the American palate just doesn't have. I definitely missed those things. I missed being able to drive because I was living in the city. I missed some shows that I would watch like Top Gear in London" (page 15).</p> <p>"New York is an international city where you can find things if you look hard enough for them. It's definitely evident you are in the U.S., there's no doubt about that, but there's a big international community there which makes it a little bit easier to transition and repatriate. Maybe that's why it took so long for me to repatriate. It wasn't as if I was thrown into Lawrence, Kansas or Tampa, Florida. I was in New York City, a ginormous melting pot" (age 16).</p>	
<p><b>Political</b></p> <p>"It opens up your eyes and shows you that the U.S. is a nation built on immigration. I could relate to the people there because I felt like it was a nationalized American feeling versus being born American" (page 2).</p> <p>"I think being an American and being here with all my other American compatriots, you kind of get that sense of pride in voting and being able to be heard. I think that's part of the shift to being a third culture kid and being in a society for so long. You start to, by osmosis, just absorb everything and all that starts to really rock through your veins" (page 2).</p> <p>"By hearing it and being a part of the community and society, in the American society, you feel like it is my duty and it is my responsibility to vote and make a difference, where it matters which is right here in the land that I live now" (page 2).</p> <p>"Whereas now, being an American</p>	<p><b>Economic</b></p> <p>"Being an American meant much more opportunity from a career perspective, from a growth perspective, from just an overall quality of life perspective" (page 4).</p> <p>"I wanted to identify and be a part of it officially, but it also provides a better life for me and my next of kin or my family" (page 4).</p> <p>"We would frequent the clubs and spend enough money to be able to have our age overlooked" (page 16).</p> <p>"I was able to get my hands on a fake ID which a lot of us were able to do. When we had that, we were able to continue on with that pub culture. It was definitely hard not being able to do that because, you're right, we would go after school or on the weekend" (page 17).</p>

<p>citizen, living here, and understanding it, you feel a little bit more empowered to join in and be a part of the conversation” (page 3).</p> <p>“What's the point?” That's a very distant and separated way to look at things, but just the reality of how a TCK feels” (page 3).</p> <p>“It just felt like more of a check the box sort of class and something that I had to take versus something that I really needed to learn because, again, it didn't apply to me and I didn't really feel the repercussions of me voting or me not voting” (page 3).</p> <p>“Talking to people and they say, "Oh yeah, back in the Reagan days ..." I'm like, "Oh, okay, great." I can't relate to you at all on that level” (page 3).</p> <p>“I would say being a good American probably entails voting, 1- being active in the community, like giving back to the community whether it's working weekends to help the needy or planting trees in a park that needs it. Anything that you can do to give back to your immediate community and country, I think that's definitely part of the civil responsibility. Doing things like jury duty” (page 5).</p> <p>“Being mindful that these people are protecting us and our way of life... I didn't always think about the American military...probably because I grew up overseas. When you are here, you start to realize that it's your civil responsibility to support our troops” (page 5).</p> <p>“I support our military 100%.... If I were on an airplane or a bus and military personnel walked by and needed a seat, I would give my seat up to them. I would</p>	
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<p>buy them a drink or buy them food if they needed it. I think that is part of my responsibility as well” (page 5).</p> <p>“Now, thinking back, maybe I should have made the effort. Even though we were young and we didn't understand it, maybe we could have made a better effort to understand. Even though it doesn't affect us directly, it will affect other people in our community that we care for” (page 6).</p> <p>“I was 3,000 miles away, I came home from school in the afternoon in London, and watched the towers go down. There wasn't a strong connection” (page 7).</p> <p>“From a nationalistic point of view, I can identify with it because I identify with American culture, but I didn't feel like they were attacking me personally, which is what all Americans felt during that time” (page 7).</p> <p>When I finally visited the site, it was probably like a year or two into my stay in New York. I felt like I've visited before, but after being there for a while, I think the connection was just stronger with the city, with New York, with the country. I had been living there. I started to feel a little bit emotional about the site and what had happened there. More than I had felt when I watched it on TV and saw it happen” (page 7).</p> <p>“Our country is now fighting to right that wrong. It was a strange feeling because I had never felt that before. I had never felt that inside. That American patriotism” (page 7).</p> <p>“When I was there, it really hit me and it was a powerful, powerful experience. I started to think of it as "Why did they do</p>	
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<p>this to us?" Versus my initial emotional reaction which was, "That's terrible. It's sad," but it's not really affecting me. It was a distant experience" (page 7).</p>	
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### **Narrative Analytical Process**

Narrative analysis explores what Clandinin and Connelly (2000) defined as a three-dimensional conceptual framework—a framework acknowledging the that experiences are interrelated and exist contextually. The narrative analytical process identifies three important dimensions to explore while analyzing the participant's experiences: temporality, sociality, and place. Each of the participants' interviews were analyzed using the narrative analytical process. The interviews were listed o three separate times, first listening for temporality, second for sociality, and the final listening explored place.

**Step 1: temporality.** The first step of narrative analysis requires the researcher to locate the temporal positioning of the experience as narrative researchers argue that experiences exist along a chronological continuum (Bach, 2007; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, 2006; Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2012). During this step I listened for the participant's description of their past, present, and future, while also making note of how they live and tell their stories. This included analyzing their discussion of their past experiences as TCKs, their memories associated with repatriation, their identification of critical incidents, their current experiences as ATCKs, and their future plans and goals. When listening to the interviews I made note of how and when they mentioned their past, present, and future experiences. Doing so allowed me to explore themes.

<b>Table 11:</b> <b>Jiggy Narrative Analysis Step 1</b> <b>Transcript 2</b> <b>December, 12, 2015</b>	
<b>Past</b>	Repatriation Memories: 1) Memories of identifying as an American citizen since he was a child. 2) Memories in Florence: Attending NYU program 3) Moving back to the U.S. to New York to finish at NY. Nervous to attend an American university. 4) Memories of culture in New York 5) Visiting the 9/11 Memorial. Emotional experience, began identifying more with the American public. 6) Visiting his parents in Lawrence Kansas. Enjoyed the community and the Midwestern culture. Attended a KU basketball game. Fell in love with Jayhawk basketball. 7) Move to in San Diego 8) Memories of social and civic engagement in the U.K. 9) Applying & obtaining American citizenship. Felt his identity was legitimized. 10) Move to Los Angeles 11) Memories associated with FIFA World Cup: 2006, 2010, 2014. Changed allegiance in 2014 and began rooting for the U.S. team
<b>Present</b>	1) Feels proud to be an American citizen. 2) Is an active participant in his community. 3) His engagement to his Fiancé has increased his participation with American culture and the Coptic religion
<b>Future</b>	1) Planning to execute his civil right to vote in the upcoming election 2) Planning a wedding for the fall

**Step 2: sociality.** The second step of narrative analysis examines the interaction between the personal, social, cultural, and institutional dimensions of experience. During this step I listened for reference to personal feelings, reactions, morals, 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). I also listened for any reference to their surrounding environment, and their social and family life. Similar to step 1, I identified

the themes and referenced the transcripts.

<b>Table 12</b> <b>Jiggy Narrative Analysis Step 2</b> <b>Transcript 2</b> <b>December 12, 2015</b>	
<b>Personal</b>	<p>“I could relate to the people there because I felt like it was a nationalized American feeling versus being born American” (page 2).</p> <p>“I think being an American and being here with all my other American compatriots, you kind of get that sense of pride in voting and being able to be heard” (page 2).</p> <p>“What's the point?” That's a very distant and separated way to look at things, but just the reality of how a TCK feels” (page 3).</p> <p>“It just felt like more of a check the box sort of class and something that I had to take versus something that I really needed to learn because, again, it didn't apply to me and I didn't really feel the repercussions of me voting or me not voting” (page 3).</p> <p>“Talking to people and they say, "Oh yeah, back in the Reagan days ..." I'm like, "Oh, okay, great." I can't relate to you at all on that level” (page 3).</p> <p>“Now, thinking back, maybe I should have made the effort. Even though we were young and we didn't understand it, maybe we could have made a better effort to understand. Even though it doesn't affect us directly, it will affect other people in our community that we care for” (page 6).</p> <p>“I was 3,000 miles away, I came home from school in the afternoon in London, and watched the towers go down. There wasn't a strong connection” (page 7).</p> <p>“From a nationalistic point of view, I can identify with it because I identify with American culture, but I didn't feel like they were attacking me personally, which is what all Americans felt during that time” (page 7).</p> <p>When I finally visited the site, it was probably like a year or two into my stay in New York. I felt like I've visited before, but after being there for a while, I think the connection was just stronger with the city, with New York, with the country. I had been living there. I started to feel a little bit emotional about the site and what had</p>

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	<p>happened there. More than I had felt when I watched it on TV and saw it happen” (page 7).</p> <p>“It was a strange feeling because I had never felt that before. I had never felt that inside. That American patriotism” (page 7).</p> <p>“When I was there, it really hit me and it was a powerful, powerful experience. I started to think of it as "Why did they do this to us?" Versus my initial emotional reaction which was, "That's terrible. It's sad," but it's not really affecting me. It was a distant experience” (page 7).</p>
<b>Social</b>	<p>“I guess more of the anxiety that I felt was going to university and being part of a larger student body than I'd ever been used to. Going to a lecture hall with 40, 50 kids versus 40, 50 kids being in my entire year... Our graduating classes were probably 50 people” (page 15).</p> <p>“I feel like if I was alone and just thrown into New York at NYU, into those classes and that environment...If I graduated high school and then went straight into New York, I honestly think it would have been too overwhelming for me” (page 15).</p> <p>“I think that there was definitely that anxiety, but it was dampened by the fact that I had friends to go there with and I had a group that would experience it with me” (page 15).</p> <p>“When I moved to New York from college, I was 19 years old, after my freshman year of college. That was definitely hard. Growing up and being able to drink since you were 15 or 16 years old in Europe and then coming here. You've been drinking for about 3, 4 years and then you come here and you have to wait another 3 or 4 years to actually become legal” (page 16).</p> <p>“It was definitely a shock because I couldn't walk into a liquor store, or an off-license as they call it in the UK, and buy beer. It was definitely hard not being able to do that because it was about having a couple beers with friends, having good laughs, and then going home” (page 16).</p> <p>“It was definitely hard not being able to do that because, you're right, we would go after school or on the weekend” (page 17).</p> <p>“I felt the same way with the American kids that would come to our parties. For the most part, my friends were international TCKs so we were all under the same understanding and brought up the same. Then, we were thrown into the mix with American kids, and that's</p>

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	<p>when you can really see the difference of how people react when they're in that environment” (page 17).</p>
<b>Cultural</b>	<p>“I went one Thanksgiving, for the first time, and I loved it. I still love Lawrence, Kansas. (page 9).</p> <p>“A big time college experience like that is very unique to the U.S. and something that I had never experienced” (page 9).</p> <p>“It’s almost as if you're part of a religion, of a cult, of a movement that is very unique to the American culture... It’s about legacy and being proud of where you went to school. That’s big here in the states. That’s a big part of American culture” (page 10).</p> <p>“Lawrence is very different, but there are definitely times when you are out there and you feel like "Wow! This is America." It's because of the people. It's because of how the people act. It's because of how the people look” (page 10).</p> <p>I realized they were waving to me and I thought, "This is strange. I'm going to wave back." I waved back. Everybody there is extremely, extremely nice” (page 11).</p> <p>“You go there and you're in a community where people are so welcoming and so nice. You just feel like "Wow!" They are American and you can judge them on the cover, but at the end of the day, they are just happy people that are living by their means, having a good time. They have their own culture” (page 11).</p> <p>“I felt more affinity towards the U.S. team...When the U.S. would play, I actually paid more attention to the United States soccer team than the English soccer team. I remember wearing the U.S. gear this time around. That for me was really telling and I thought, "Oh, wow!" It really feels like I'm assimilating because I can see it. I was a diehard English fan, and now I'm supporting the English team, but I'm rooting for the U.S. to win” (page 13).</p> <p>“Landing in New York, I still remember the taxi ride from JFK to my apartment. There wasn't really any anxiety. It was more of an excitement and that might be because of the city itself... being in New York and the energy it exudes. I think anybody and everybody feeds off that. When you go to New York, there's an energy there” (page 15).</p> <p>“I guess some of the things I missed were definitely the food.</p>



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	<p>Obviously, the food in Italy was amazing. We had the finest wine and pasta and steaks. That I definitely miss. I miss the snacks from England, Quavers and LAY'S chips with different flavorings like ketchup flavor or prawn flavor. There are so many different flavors out there that the American palate just doesn't have. I definitely missed those things. I missed being able to drive because I was living in the city. I missed some shows that I would watch like Top Gear in London" (page 15).</p>
<b>Institutional</b>	<p>"It opens up your eyes and shows you that the U.S. is a nation built on immigration. I could relate to the people there because I felt like it was a nationalized American feeling versus being born American" (page 2).</p> <p>"I think being an American and being here with all my other American compatriots, you kind of get that sense of pride in voting and being able to be heard. I think that's part of the shift to being a third culture kid and being in a society for so long. You start to, by osmosis, just absorb everything and all that starts to really rock through your veins" (page 2).</p> <p>"By hearing it and being a part of the community and society, in the American society, you feel like it is my duty and it is my responsibility to vote and make a difference, where it matters which is right here in the land that I live now" (page 2).</p> <p>"Whereas now, being an American citizen, living here, and understanding it, you feel a little bit more empowered to join in and be a part of the conversation" (page 3).</p> <p>"It just felt like more of a check the box sort of class and something that I had to take versus something that I really needed to learn because, again, it didn't apply to me and I didn't really feel the repercussions of me voting or me not voting" (page 3).</p> <p>"I would say being a good American probably entails voting, 1-being active in the community, like giving back to the community whether it's working weekends to help the needy or planting trees in a park that needs it. Anything that you can do to give back to your immediate community and country, I think that's definitely part of the civil responsibility. Doing things like jury duty" (page 5).</p> <p>"Being mindful that these people are protecting us and our way of life... I didn't always think about the American military...probably because I grew up overseas. When you are here, you start to realize that it's your civil responsibility to support our troops" (page 5).</p>

	<p>“I support our military 100%.... If I were on an airplane or a bus and military personnel walked by and needed a seat, I would give my seat up to them. I would buy them a drink or buy them food if they needed it. I think that is part of my responsibility as well” (page 5).</p> <p>“From a nationalistic point of view, I can identify with it because I identify with American culture, but I didn’t feel like they were attacking me personally, which is what all Americans felt during that time” (page 7).</p>
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**Step 3: place.** The third step of narrative analysis explores place, the most tangible aspect of the three-dimensional space. During this step I listened specifically for mention of physical location. Due to the unique TCK experience, most of the discussions focused on place, and the sequencing of events were often based on their past demographic locations or the locations identified in their critical incidents.

<b>Table 13:</b> <b>Jiggy Narrative Analysis Step 3</b> <b>Transcript 2</b> <b>December 12, 2015</b>	
<p><b>Place</b></p> <p><b>Reflection:</b> Jiggy discusses different critical incidents in his repatriating timeline, each in a specified location. Jiggy is accustomed to moving, to change. While location is important to his transition process, experiencing different cultures and highlighting TCK mobility, his stories focus on the incident and the experience rather than the geographical location.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) New Jersey- Holding a Green card</li> <li>2) London- – didn’t see the point of being civilly engaged, the identity of a visitor.</li> <li>3) London- Learning about other cultures, not his “native” American culture</li> <li>4) Florence – NYU Extension program</li> <li>5) New York- Repatriated after first year of college with fellow TCK students</li> <li>6) New York- drinking culture different than the U.K.</li> <li>7) New York – Visiting Ground Zero and feeling a connection to America and his American identity.</li> <li>8) San Diego – Moved in with a high school TCK friend</li> <li>9) San Diego – 2010 World Cup – still rooting for England</li> <li>10) Los Angeles – moved in with fellow NYU TCK and cousin.</li> </ol>

	<p>11) San Diego – obtained American citizenship</p> <p>12) Los Angeles – began dating his fiancé and started participating in the Coptic community</p> <p>13) Los Angeles – 2014 World Cup – cheered on team USA and acknowledged his successful repatriation.</p>
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## Final Research Texts: Findings as Narrative Portraiture

The last step of narrative analysis is the composition of the final narratives. In narrative inquiry, the final narratives are considered the findings as they represent the re-telling of the participant's story. The narratives were created using the various field texts and conversations that were analyzed using the listening guide and narrative analysis. All of the transcripts and photographs were put together to create the participant's story. Due to the nature of conversation, participants revisited discussed topics in their different interviews and during the composition of their narratives I went back and put them together chronologically.

Negotiation and co-construction with the participants was important as the narratives were my interpretation of their lived experiences. In order for the participant's voice to remain "the most influential voice" (Chase, 2005; Clandinin, 2013, p. 205; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Josselson, 2007), I sent the completed narrative drafts for them to review. I had composed their narrative based on the information that I gathered and felt it was important for them to review their narratives to ensure that I captured their narrative profile correctly.

The final narratives are represented in the following narrative portraits. While each portrait is unique, the narrative structures are loosely formatted for clarity, an

introduction to the Adult third culture kid (ATCK), their TCK narrative, and their repatriation narrative. It was important to include the participant's TCK background as critical incidents experienced in their third culture past proved to directly influence their repatriation transition process. Both the TCK and repatriation narratives begin with critical incident timelines for reference. As Arts Based Research encourages the use of artistic representation; the four portraits begin with a quote lifted directly from the participant's interviews, answering the question, "Where are you from?"

### **Jiggy's Final Portrait**

#### **Where Are You From?**

*"Honestly, it's a hard question to answer... I'm originally from the Philippines but I grew up in the states; I lived in Poland and lived in London, then lived in Italy for a while, and then went to school in New York. That right there is already so much to discuss and talk about... It changes based on who I'm talking to, "I'm from the Philippines" comes out just as easily as saying "I'm from New York," or "I'm from London," or "I'm from New Jersey." They all come out naturally. When I say I'm going home, I'm saying I'm going to the place where I live right now. It's not necessarily home."*

#### **Jiggy Today**

Jiggy is an American male who has spent thirty years jumping between continents and cultures. He currently resides in the multicultural City of Angels—Los Angeles, California. From a family of five—his mom and dad are happily married and continue to travel between the United States and the Philippines; his younger sister repatriated to the Midwest and his older brother repatriated to the East Coast—he proudly states that he is in fact the middle child. Jiggy is ready to embark on another new adventure, marriage. Recently engaged and planning a wedding in Los Angeles with his fiancée, Jiggy is elated to enter a new life chapter. It is clear that Jiggy values relationships as his

discussion of family quickly moved to a discussion of his close friendships. “I value friendship to the utmost regard. Basically for me, friends are really family because a lot of time family is far away” (Jiggy, conversation, December 8, 2016).

Jiggy is an account supervisor for a digital advertising agency in Los Angeles that services Fortune 500 companies. “I am the frontline for our agency in terms of client relationship. I maintain the client relationship on the brand side... the account supervisor is essentially the conduit between a brand and an agency” (Jiggy, conversation, December 8, 2015). What Jiggy loves most about his job is working with people—the designers, the developers, the strategists—and building lasting relationships that are built on trust. Speaking very passionately about his role within the company, he explained how important it is to remain balanced and patient; satisfying both the agency and the client is integral for business and Jiggy possesses the personal skills necessary to do so. “I love it. It is the perfect position for me because I like to talk to people. I can gain people’s trust and lead people. Whether it’s leading the internal agency folks or leading the client in a certain direction, I think that it fits well with my personality and who I am” (Jiggy, conversation, December 8, 2015).

## Jiggy’s Third Culture Narrative

### Critical incidents.

1	2	3	4
Warsaw	London	Antwerp	Madrid

Jiggy’s TCK story begins as a child in the Philippines, in the city of Manilla, the

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city his parent's originally called home. Jiggy's father worked for a multinational corporation and when Jiggy was three years old his father was offered an executive role at the company headquarters in New York. Upon acceptance of his new role within the company, Jiggy's family left Manila and Jiggy embarked on his first move to a new country, a new continent. This move marks the first of nine moves for Jiggy. After a few months of living in New York, his family relocated to the nearby city of New Jersey. They lived in Bergen County for five years and their final year in New Jersey was spent in Saddle River. Although Jiggy was born in the Philippines, because he moved to the United States at a young age, he has always identified primarily with American culture.

When Jiggy was nine years old his father was presented with another life-altering job opportunity. He was offered an executive marketing position, the director of marketing for the corporation's Eastern Europe division; the headquarters were located in Warsaw, Poland. After much consideration, Jiggy's parents decided to make the transatlantic move to their third continent. While Jiggy had moved to a new culture before—from Manila to New York—because he identified as an American, this was the first move he recognized as the start of his third culture experience.

Before moving to Warsaw, Jiggy attended culture shock classes, classes that were geared towards preparation—preparation for understanding new places, new cultures, new ways of life, new foods, and new religions. Jiggy felt that the classes were pointless: “it can't be that different culturally. It's going to be fine. People are people... Why do we need to even do this?” (Jiggy, conversation, December 8, 2015). Rather than preparing for the potential challenges he might face, Jiggy used his time in the course to find the answers to “who is the president of Poland, and what are the foods that they eat in

Poland? How do you count to 10 in Polish?” (Jiggy, conversation, December 8, 2015).

Jiggy remembered looking around the room and seeing the different Americans that would be moving to a new culture; he wondered where they were moving, why they were moving, and why they were concerned about their move. Jiggy had little concern and didn't understand why so many people bothered to attend the course. Jiggy's parents, however, understood the importance of the culture shock courses as they had experience moving between cultures. They had hoped that Jiggy and his siblings would “understand that there is a different world out there that isn't America or the Philippines” (Jiggy, conversation, December 8, 2015) and that the purpose of attending the culture shock classes was to relieve anxiety about their impending move; however, culture shock classes cannot fully prepare most nine-year-olds for such a drastic culture change.

***First critical incident: the move to Warsaw.*** Jiggy's unconcerned outlook was challenged upon arrival in Warsaw when he quickly realized it was “different” and he began to ponder, “I can't get marshmallows...They don't play American football here. They don't play basketball here. What sports are they into? All of a sudden, you start to realize, things are a little bit different” (Jiggy, conversation, December 8, 2015). While these questions and concerns seem trivial, to nine-year-old Jiggy, these were major changes in his culture. Once the initial culture shock dissipated, Jiggy realized that he was an outsider. Jiggy understood that Poland had recently come out of communist rule, and while not fully understanding what that meant, Jiggy noticed that “everybody was white. Everybody was blonde haired, blue-eyed. I looked completely different to everybody else. It was shocking” (jiggy, conversation, December 8, 2015). Jiggy remembered many instances of walking into restaurants and instantly feeling judged.

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When “everybody turns their head to look at you when you’re 9 years old, you wonder why everybody is looking at you. You have no idea. But then you start to realize, I look different. I am different to these people” (Jiggy, conversation, December 8, 2015). Jiggy felt uncomfortable and confused; at first he didn’t want to believe that they were judging he and his family, but after multiple occurrences he realized the truth, “even if you were American, even if you were white, you would be looked at differently there” (Jiggy, conversation, December 8, 2015).

Although there were times where Jiggy experienced discomfort and discrimination in his community in Warsaw, while he was in school at the American School in Warsaw (ASW), he felt accepted. ASW was a school composed of multiple nationalities, including Polish children, and the school community embraced diversity. “Kids are kids; they don’t really see color, race, or religion” (Jiggy, conversation, December 8, 2015). The Polish friends that he made in school were familiar with different nationalities and people. “I made a lot of friends who were Polish, Polish-American, Polish-Canadian, Bulgarian, Eastern European. To them it was normal. It was normal to have a friend that was different” (Jiggy, conversation, December 8, 2015). After establishing friendships with his Polish classmates, he felt comfortable within the community and began to adapt to the Polish culture, and being an American abroad. With family thousands of miles away, Jiggy’s family and other American expatriate families created a unique bond and often traveled and celebrated holidays together. He experienced Europe’s many cultures with these families and cherishes the memories that they shared. He believed that those strong bonds are the reason behind his assimilation.

***Second critical incident: move to London.*** After four years of living in Warsaw,



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Jiggy's father accepted another position in London, England. Once again, Jiggy had to leave the life he had gotten used to, his friends and community, and a culture he was beginning to understand. Understandably saddened by another move, Jiggy considered the positives and chose to look at the approaching move as one more adventure. Jiggy felt comfortable and excited for his future in London. "I think at that point we were already accustomed to change and adapting. Going to an international school really opened up our eyes" (Jiggy, conversation, December 8, 2015). Jiggy started to understand the life of an expatriate, and the lives of his fellow TCK peers. "They would come for a year, 2 years, 3 years, and then they would cycle out. You got accustomed to, and used to saying goodbye to a lot of people and hello to a lot of new people" (Jiggy, conversation, December 8, 2015). Although making and losing friends could be challenging, Jiggy chose to define the high mobility in terms of "expanding this web that we have" (Jiggy, conversation, December 8, 2015). Jiggy looked forward to meeting new friends and settling into a new culture; he was especially eager to move to an English-speaking country.

Jiggy was thirteen when he moved to London; his transition was "an accelerated version of the Polish experience" (Jiggy, conversation, December 8, 2015). Jiggy felt that while the move was easier, he was expected to assimilate quickly. He was eager to begin eighth grade at his new school, the American Community School (ACS), located in a suburb of London. Living in an English-speaking country made him feel more culturally connected. "Being able to communicate with locals easily is a huge part of feeling like you have acculturated and are a part of what's going on... You're not going to feel like you're a part of it unless you can communicate with them in your first language" (Jiggy,

conversation, December 8, 2015). Assimilating quickly, with ease, Jiggy enjoyed the freedoms of living in London as a teenager, from taking the train into London with friends to experiencing the pub culture in his local town. He definitely took advantage of a city that promoted independence. Some of his most cherished memories of living in London involved traveling around Europe with his friends from school. “In London everything is close. Everything in Europe is close. In London, with age, came independence. As you start to get a little bit older, you start to get a little bit more independent and then you’re traveling alone, without your parents” (Jiggy, conversation, December 8, 2015). He traveled for sport, for school, and for pleasure.

***Third critical incident: traveling to Antwerp for sports.*** One of the benefits of attending an international school was traveling for sport. During his time at ACS, Jiggy attended multiple sports tournaments around Europe. As an athlete, Jiggy traveled to Antwerp, Brussels, Paris, and Munich. While in those cities he was housed by families from the hosting schools, often sharing a living space with the competition. The families would not only house the students but would prepare their meals and the hosting players would often take them around the city and to local gatherings. Jiggy often reflects on the countless moments he shared with his friends and hosting families during these trips and is forever grateful for the unique experience he was afforded. He was able to get a glimpse into their culture as an American family living in France or a German family living in Belgium. “You get to see all different cultures. Not only are you waking up and having breakfast with them, or eating traditional food with them, but you’re also going out and exploring the city with them” (Jiggy, conversation, December 8, 2015). Jiggy was afforded a unique way to experience the world. “You get to see it in a way that’s

very authentic and real... Going to local places that aren't tourist spots and eating food that isn't the touristy food... you get the full experience" (Jiggy, conversation, December 8, 2015).

Each fall, Jiggy's soccer team, along with the other junior varsity and varsity fall sports teams, would travel to Antwerp. It was a trip that Jiggy looked forward to, not because they were competing in a soccer match, but because he got to experience the city of Antwerp with his friends. After three years of traveling to Antwerp, Jiggy was embarking on his last trip to Antwerp. He looked forward to all aspects of the trip: taking the ferry from Dover to Belgium, the comic and eventful bus rides from each of the connecting cities, and visiting the local bars and restaurants that he had been to during his previous trips. At night, Jiggy and his friends would gather downtown Antwerp at the Grote Markt, a town square that represented the heart of the city, and make their way to a converted undergrown dungeon that served as a local tavern. Their trip was straight out of a movie, drinking pints of local beer, indulging in Belgian chocolate, and walking arm in arm down the small historic streets of Antwerp. After a long weekend in Belgium, the bus stopped in Bruges for a couple hours of chocolate hunting and beer drinking. Jiggy remembered sitting in pubs, with many of the student athletes reminiscing and laughing about the previous night's events. Looking back, Jiggy doesn't remember the soccer games; he focuses on the amazing memories he created with friends in the romantic city of Antwerp and Bruges.

***Fourth critical incident: traveling to Madrid for school.*** Jiggy not only traveled for sports but for education. Starting in eighth grade, Jiggy traveled to Spain with his Spanish class. These trips allowed the students to not only converse with native Spanish

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speakers but engage with the Spanish culture. The most rewarding Spanish trips occurred during high school. Jiggy's Spanish class traveled to Madrid, Spain, for what he referred to as the "ultimate exam." From the minute Jiggy and his classmates arrived in Madrid, they were completely independent; they were paired up, put into taxis, and given their host's address. They stayed with local Spanish families where they were forced to "speak Spanish, learn with them, and converse with them" and were expected to navigate around the city. He was in charge of "finding the house, getting to the classes, getting to school, getting back to the house, going to dinner, and going out at night. It was the full experience" (Jiggy, conversation, December 8, 2015). He remembered nights where he would come home from an evening out in the city, "it would be 1- 2 AM and the [host] family was up cooking eggs and chorizo. It was like what's going on? That was it. That was part of learning the culture" (Jiggy, conversation, December 8, 2015). It is important to note that these experiences occurred prior to smartphone technology; Jiggy's tools included his knowledge of the language, his knowledge of people, and a pocket dictionary. While this could be daunting for many adolescents, Jiggy's past experiences within the third culture helped prepare him for these independent excursions.

Reflecting now, Jiggy believes that, "15 years old is so young but... I think it helps you grow up and mature a lot faster than any other experience... If anything, it was exciting" (Jiggy, conversation, December 8, 2015). While at times Jiggy felt apprehensive about the amount of independence he was given, "You're living in Europe, you're in foreign place, and you don't speak the language," he looked forward to "the adventure and just living and experiencing... the rush of the experience takes over and you just thrive on seeing new things and experiencing new adventures" (Jiggy,

conversation, December, 8, 2015). The experiences of traveling for sports and education offered Jiggy unique opportunities to interact with different cultures.

**Third culture reflection: “cultural chameleon.”** Jiggy’s third culture life afforded him the freedom to explore new places, new foods, new people, and new cultural norms on a daily basis. When Jiggy describes his third culture life, he does so by introducing people. He has explored different countries and historical sites, but what he cherishes more are the people that were there with him, the people that helped shape his third culture experience. “When I think of London, I think of happy times with a lot of really good friends of different backgrounds. We had American friends. We had European friends. We also had English friends. There was such a wide variety of people in our network” (Jiggy, conversation, December 8, 2015). Having friends from different cultural backgrounds was “enlightening and the experience of learning new cultures and being around all the different people was such a valuable experience” (Jiggy, conversation, December 8, 2015).

Jiggy values his relationships most in life and it is apparent that his third culture experience has affected the way in which he holds on to past friendships and the way in which he creates new ones. When Jiggy meets someone new he is instantly able to strike up a conversation. While Jiggy has an outgoing personality, he credits his ability to connect with others and create common ground to his past. In Jiggy’s line of work, building lasting relationships is crucial and Jiggy tries to find common ground with each of his clients. He remembers many instances where he was able to make a connection based on memories from his TCK life. “Even if it’s totally unrelated you can relate because somehow, some way, in your journey of life as a third culture kid, you’ve come

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across somebody or some sort of talking point that you can speak to” (Jiggy, conversation, December 8, 2015). Being a TCK, “moving around, and being exposed to so many different people, trains you to be able to have a conversation with anyone from all walks of life” (Jiggy, conversation, December, 8, 2015).

At times, growing up among cultures and having friends from different backgrounds, activated cultural confusion, “growing up in Poland, growing up in London, growing up in New Jersey, being a true cultural chameleon, my physical being, stature and characteristics aren't necessarily what I would draw inside of my mind” (Jiggy, conversation, January 28, 2016). Being able to identify with multiple cultures may have caused internal confusion, however experiencing various cultures influenced his epistemological stance; he is worldly and approaches life with an open mind. Jiggy believes that the benefits of the third culture lifestyle heavily outweighed the challenges, moreover, the challenges prepared him for the future. “I think we are better prepared to move around and be in a situation that makes us uncomfortable, because we’ve grown up having to adapt. It’s a surviving mentality” (Jiggy, conversation, December 8, 2015). Jiggy is proud of his third culture identity and although a highly mobile lifestyle involves loss, “I think it’s all happy memories that come back...because that’s what shaped me to be the person that I am now” (Jiggy, conversation, December 8, 2015). Jiggy's third culture experience prepared him for his repatriating adventure.

## Jiggy's Repatriating Narrative

### Critical incidents.

1	2	3	4	5
New York	Ground Zero	Jayhawk Nation	American Citizen	World Cup

Jiggy left the United States when he was nine years old and began his repatriation process at eighteen. Those nine developmental years are the reason that the third culture remains central to his identity. Repatriating to the United States, although positive, was a long process for Jiggy; he assimilated with ease and was happy to be back in the United States, however it took ten years for Jiggy to feel that he had successfully repatriated and fully committed to American culture. There are five critical incidents that Jiggy identified as integral to his repatriation. His transition process begins after his freshman year of college with his move from Florence Italy, to New York, and ends in Los Angeles California, watching the FIFA soccer World Cup and rooting for team U.S.A.

***First critical incident: transition to New York.*** Jiggy's repatriation story begins in 2003, once he received the news of his acceptance into New York University, located in New York City. Jiggy had considered attending a university in Europe; he had settled into the English culture and had created relationships that he was not ready to leave. Like many TCKs, Jiggy became tired of moving and adventuring, and he envisioned his future in London:

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I actually wanted to stay in the UK.

I'm sick of it.

I'm sick of moving around.

I'm sick of exploring.

I'm sick of having to make new friends.

I'm sick of all that!

Jiggy's family had always envisioned a future in the United States and felt that obtaining a degree from an American university would be imperative for Jiggy. Once Jiggy considered the alternatives, he agreed that moving back to the United States was important for the next chapter in his life. However, at that moment in time, Jiggy was not ready to leave his third culture lifestyle.

Coincidentally, an opportunity arose that would satisfy both Jiggy's desire to stay in Europe and his decision to start a new life in the United States; Jiggy was accepted into New York University's one-year program in Florence, Italy. New York University's extension program offered Jiggy the opportunity to start his college career in Florence, in a class of one hundred international freshman students, many of whom were fellow TCKs. "It was one of the most amazing years of my life" (Jiggy, conversation, December 15, 2015). Rather than moving to New York, Jiggy spent another year living in the third culture, traveling around Europe, and traveling home to London to see friends and family.

After completing his freshman year in Florence, he went home to London to spend the summer. During his final days in London he remembers being ready and excited for his move to New York. Because he was repatriating with his entire freshman class, his TCK friends, he felt as if he were embarking on an extended school trip: "it felt like one big vacation with all of my best friends. I was with ninety-nine other third-culture kids,



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all kids from international schools, with similar journeys. We were all in the same boat, and it was fun and adventurous” (Jiggy, conversation, January 28, 2016). Jiggy believed that attending the extension program in Florence is responsible for his successful repatriating experience. “What really helped was going to Florence, going to Italy first...For all of us to be able to go back to New York together was so important because I feel like if I was alone and just thrown into New York at NYU, into those classes, and into that environment...I honestly think it would have been too overwhelming” (Jiggy, conversation, December 15, 2015).

After his flight “across the pond,” he landed in New York and took a taxi from JFK airport to his apartment. He distinctly remembers being overwhelmed with excitement, a familiar feeling; he was ready to live in New York, and experience the “energy it exudes” (Jiggy, conversation, December 15, 2015). However, along with his excitement to explore a new culture, he was anxious to attend an American university, “being part of a larger student body than I'd ever been used to. Going to a lecture hall with 40, 50 kids versus 40, 50 kids being in my entire year” (Jiggy, conversation, December 15, 2015). Jiggy’s anxiety diminished after attending his first lecture at an New York University, in New York. Aside from his experience in Florence, Jiggy attributes moving to New York, an American city known for its diversity, as another reason for assimilating back into American culture with ease. “New York is an international city where you can find things if you look hard enough for them. It's definitely evident you are in the U.S., but there's a big international community there which makes it a little bit easier to transition and repatriate” (Jiggy, conversation, December 15, 2015). Jiggy believed that one of the main reasons it took him nearly ten years to complete his repatriation process was because he

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chose to move to a diverse city like New York rather than “Lawrence, Kansas or Tampa, Florida. I was in New York City, a ginormous melting pot” (Jiggy, conversation, December 15, 2015). During Jiggy’s time abroad, he had always identified as an American. Being labeled an immigrant was something to which he got accustomed. Therefore, he believed that moving back to a culture that he identified with would be easy. Jiggy realized that he was comfortable being identified as an outsider, and was accustomed to being different. It was all he knew.

Although his initial transition was met with little struggle, Jiggy missed his life in Europe, especially the social norms. Jiggy started legally drinking at pubs around the age of fifteen. Jiggy and his friends would socialize at the local pubs after school and on the weekends. Moving to New York and losing that part of his culture was difficult and, “was definitely a shock because I couldn’t walk into a liquor store, or an off-license as they call it in the UK, and buy beer. It was definitely hard not being able to do that because it was about having a couple beers with friends, having good laughs, and then going home” (Jiggy, conversation, December 8, 2015).

***Second critical incident: experiencing Ground Zero.*** After living in New York and beginning to transition successfully into American culture, Jiggy began to acknowledge his American identity. One afternoon, Jiggy decided to walk to Ground Zero, the site of the World Trade Center tragedy. Jiggy lived a few blocks away from Ground Zero but due to his detached association, it wasn’t until after a year of living back on American soil that he felt compelled to visit. Jiggy was 15 years old when the 9/11 attack occurred. “I was 3,000 miles away, I came home from school in the afternoon in London, and watched the towers go down. There wasn’t a strong connection” (Jiggy, conversation,

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December 15, 2015). While Jiggy could relate as an American, “from a nationalistic point of view,” he didn’t “feel like they were attacking me personally, which is what all Americans felt during that time” (Jiggy, conversation, January 28, 2016).

Jiggy remembered walking down to the barren site that once housed the World Trade Centers. As he stood there looking at the cold, vacant, hole, he remembered what the freestanding structures looked like. Standing there, in front of the memorial, he was overwhelmed with emotion. For the first time since he had repatriated, he truly identified as an American. It was at that moment Jiggy began to understand what 9/11 meant to American citizens. It was an attack on their people, their country, their culture. He had always felt removed; it wasn’t until he visited Ground Zero that he started to feel an emotional attachment as an American, rather than just as a human being; he began to identify with the emotions of the American public. This was a critical moment for Jiggy and his repatriating process:

I was living in New York.

I visited Ground Zero.

I can identify with it because,

I identify with American culture.

I didn’t feel like they were attacking me personally,

which is what all Americans felt during that time.

I was living in New York.

I eventually was able to go down to Ground Zero.

I actually lived close to Ground Zero.

I was in New York for a while before,

I actually visited the site.

I finally visited the site.

I felt like I’d visited before,

I think the connection was just stronger.

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I got there to Ground Zero  
I started to feel a little bit more emotional than  
I had felt when  
I watched it on TV and saw it happen.  
I guess,  
I had really started to strongly identify with the country and the people.  
I had never felt that before.  
I had never felt that inside,  
that American patriotism.  
I was there, it really hit me, and it was powerful.  
I started to think of it as "Why did they do this to us?"

His emotional reaction to the tragic event had changed, “made me feel like why did they  
do this  
to us, rather than why did they do this to them” (Jiggy, conversation, December 15,  
2015). This  
was a monumental moment for Jiggy and his repatriation process.

***Third critical incident: experiencing Jayhawk Nation.*** When Jiggy was living in  
New York, his parents decided to leave London and move back to the United States,  
again another job opportunity. When Jiggy heard the news of his parents’ impending  
move to the small college town of Lawrence, Kansas, his response was one of confusion.  
"Why would you do that?... Why would I ever want to go to Lawrence to visit you guys?  
Why would I want to go there and experience that? I was living in New York, going  
back to see them at Christmas in London. What else could you really ask for” (Jiggy,  
conversation, December 15, 2015). Jiggy had never experienced Midwestern America.  
His understanding relied entirely on what he had been told about Midwestern culture and

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it didn't appeal to him. London was Jiggy's home. When his parents moved, he was afraid of losing his connection, losing a part of his identity. Being able to call London home was important to Jiggy for multiple reasons: 1) London held a special place in Jiggy's heart as it was the longest place he had ever called home; 2) Jiggy felt that his connection to London justified his TCK identity; and 3) it was important for Jiggy to have a unique story to tell as he was used to being othered and being different. It took a few months for Jiggy to accept that London would no longer be considered his home. It was important for Jiggy to travel back to London before his parents moved. He was not only able to help pack his childhood belongings but he was able to officially say goodbye. While packing up another house, for another move, Jiggy came to the realization that it wasn't just the city of London that he was going to miss; London had offered Jiggy stability. Jiggy began planting roots when he was thirteen years old. He believed that his parents move back to the United States would have been more difficult had he not already created strong ties to New York City.

After Jiggy's parents made the move from London to Kansas, he traveled from New York to Lawrence for Thanksgiving, the first Thanksgiving he had spent in the United States in 16 years. He did not expect to have such a positive experience. Jiggy landed in Kansas with a preconceived notion of the culture and the people; he was visiting "middle America" and was aware of all of the stereotypes. Soon after his arrival, he was pleasantly surprised by the community in Lawrence. Jiggy remembered one cold winter day: "I think I was putting up Christmas lights. A car drove by in the neighborhood and they were waving in my direction, I was confused and I started looking behind me and looking around." Realizing he was the only one outside, he figured they

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were waving to him and he thought, "This is strange. I'm going to wave back." I waved back. Everybody there is extremely, extremely nice" (Jiggy, conversation, December 15, 2015).

Jiggy was particularly captivated by the University of Kansas Jayhawk basketball culture. Jiggy's sister was a student at the University and was able to get Jiggy tickets to one of the first basketball games of the season. Jiggy was not prepared for the intensity that surrounded college athletics. "When we walked into the stadium, it was an electric feeling, electric" (Jiggy, conversation, December 15, 2015). As he looked out into the sea of crimson and blue he heard Jayhawk fans chanting and the band playing the Kansas University fight song. He couldn't believe that he was at a college athletic event, he felt that there was more energy than he had experienced at any professional game. Jiggy saw Jayhawk fans of all ages and sizes; babies in blue onesies, children with Jayhawk face painting, college students wearing jerseys and shaking crimson and blue pom-poms, and parents and grandparents in Jayhawk family apparel. The way the fans interacted with one another made Jiggy feel like he was a part of something bigger than just a basketball game, he felt a part of a special community, he felt like he was a part of the Jayhawk family.

One thing Jiggy did not see, however, was a lot of drinking. He remembered his sister telling stories of her tailgating experiences for Kansas University football games and realized that not only did they not tailgate before the basketball game, but he didn't see much drinking in the stadium. He asked a Kansas University student why they didn't tailgate before the Jayhawk basketball games and her response was, "Do you drink and go to church?" (Jiggy, conversation, December 15, 2015). He was shocked; he couldn't

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believe that a student just compared their basketball game to attending church. New York University did not promote athletics and due to Jiggy's life abroad, he was not aware of the unique college athletic culture that can be found at many American universities. Ever since attending that Jayhawks basketball game, Jiggy added "die hard Kansas Jayhawk" to his layered identity. "It's almost as if you're part of a religion, of a cult, of a movement that is very unique to the American culture... It's about legacy and being proud of where you went to school," and he understood "that's big here in the states. That's a big part of American culture" (Jiggy, conversation, December 15, 2015).

Jiggy's Jayhawk experience was integral to his transition process. Participating in a unique aspect of American culture was significant for Jiggy; he was proud to be a part of an American tradition. Likewise, Jiggy's trip to Lawrence introduced him to the Midwestern culture, "middle America," and furthered his growth as a global citizen; after his trip to Lawrence, Jiggy came to the realization that America is composed of many diverse cultures; the country is divided into diverse American populations within Midwest, the East, the Northeast, the South, and the West. Jiggy believes that

"they need to be appreciated for what they are because the differences are what makes everything beautiful. Being third culture kids, I think we can always find the beauty in different places and we are able to adapt, see a place for what it is, and understand that it's different, but that it's different for a reason" (Jiggy, conversation, December 15, 2015).

***Fourth critical incident: becoming an American.*** Before reaching his fifth anniversary of living in New York, Jiggy decided he was ready for a new adventure.

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After many conversations with a friend in San Diego—a fellow TCK from high school—Jiggy packed his bags, left the Big Apple and headed out West to sunny San Diego. Jiggy spent time in San Diego reminiscing about his third culture experience and what it meant to be creating a life back in America. Although he identified as an American, he was not legally an American citizen:

I guess,

I've always identified as being an American.

I always felt,

I've been an American.

I guess,

I actually became an American.

I held a green card for as long as

I can remember.

I always held a green card.

I wasn't really a full citizen.

I identify as one on paper,

I was not officially a U.S. citizen.

I felt,

I didn't uphold my American duties or duties as an American like voting.

I didn't vote in the last election.

I know you learn it when you're becoming a citizen,

I'm looking for that civil responsibility.

I think being an American and being here with all my other American compatriots,

I think that's part of the shift to being a third culture kid and being in a society for so long.

I just feel growing up,

I've always been a visitor or somebody watching from the outside.

I think being able to officially be part of a culture,

I always felt like,



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I was part of.

"I'm American. I'm American. I'm American"

I'd say,

"I'm actually not American."

I'm American was a huge piece of it because it was a culture that,

I had always identified with, grew up. In the way that,

I talk...

in the music that,

I like...

in the sports that,

I like.

I wanted it to be official.

I think being officially an American,

I wanted to identify and be a part of it officially.

I guess it means a certain sense of pride.

I'm officially part of the culture that

I've always been associated with and identified with.

I can always default back to being an American. (Jiggy, conversation, December 15, 2015).

A few months into Jiggy's new life in San Diego, he began the application process to become an American citizen. Jiggy felt that it was a necessary step in completing his repatriation process; in order to transition successfully he knew that gaining citizenship was crucial. While he identified as American, he still felt like an outsider because he was not able to practice his civil responsibility: "growing up, I've always been a visitor, or somebody watching from the outside. Whereas now, being an American citizen, living here, and understanding it, you feel a little bit more empowered to join in and be a part of the conversation" (Jiggy, conversation, December 15, 2015).

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The application process was long, time consuming, and required a lot of steps—fingerprints, photographs, and interviews, a process Jiggy was prepared to complete. During his time spent at the United States Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) offices, Jiggy was amazed at the different cultures he came across. He realized that the United States really is a “nation built on immigration” (Jiggy, conversation, December 15, 2015). Experiencing this naturalization process with different cultures made Jiggy think deeply about what he was going to achieve. “These people, from different backgrounds and cultures, why do they want to be affiliated with the U.S. and integrate themselves into the culture? ... That speaks a lot to the country itself, having a lot of pride for being an American” (Jiggy, conversation, December 15, 2015). Watching people give up so much to become American was important to Jiggy, it reinforced his belief that people should be proud to be American and a part of the diverse American culture.

During his journey to citizenship, Jiggy felt it necessary to reflect on what it meant to be an American citizen and the impact of the accompanying civil responsibilities of voting, serving on a jury, being an active participant in one’s community, and supporting the military, a responsibility Jiggy felt is often overlooked. Supporting the military demonstrates that people are “being mindful that these people are protecting us and our way of life” (Jiggy, conversation, December 15, 2015). In the past, Jiggy didn’t think about the American military and the connection between the troops and American responsibility, “probably because I grew up overseas. When you are here, you start to realize that it’s your civil responsibility to support our troops... I support our military 100%.” (Jiggy, conversation, December 15, 2015). Living in a city that is known for its

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military scenery, Jiggy became aware of the large military presence: “if I were on an airplane or a bus and military personnel walked by and needed a seat, I would give my seat up to them. I would buy them a drink or buy them food if they needed it. I think that is part of my responsibility as well” (Jiggy, conversation, December 15, 2015) Jiggy believes in the importance of civic engagement and active participation in both one’s community and country. He believes that when people become complacent they are missing out on the beauty of American culture and what America represents, the freedom to experience.

After months of waiting to hear about the status of his application, Jiggy was notified that he had passed the interview and that his application was approved; Jiggy was thrilled to officially be recognized as a citizen of the United States of America. His American identity was validated. “I’m officially a part of the culture that I’ve always associated and identified with. When people ask me where I’m from, it’s a hard question for me to answer, but I can always default back to being an American” (Jiggy, conversation, December 15, 2015). Jiggy felt that piece of paper offered him “the beginning of a root that was never there before” (Jiggy, conversation, December 15, 2015).

Jiggy was elated to drive back down to San Diego to attend his nationalization ceremony. (Yes, amidst the final months of waiting, he had packed his bags and moved yet again, to Los Angeles). Jiggy was the final member of his family to receive citizenship in the United States and he was proud to become a legitimate American. Jiggy attended the nationalization ceremony unaccompanied, however he did not feel alone; he shared that day with the many other immigrants who had worked so hard and wished for

the opportunity to become citizens of the United States of America. As he looked around the room, watching families celebrate, he was reminded again of the value of being a member of a prosperous culture that values freedom.

*Fifth critical incident: experiencing the FIFA World Cup.* Although becoming an American citizen was an important step in Jiggy's transition process, it wasn't until he experienced the 2014 soccer World Cup that he came to the realization that his repatriation process was complete. As mentioned previously, Jiggy had moved from San Diego to the city of Los Angeles. He and two of his TCK friends from New York had all decided that it was the city they wanted to relocate to, together.

When Jiggy described his repatriation experience he was able to locate his progress in terms of Soccer World Cups. For the 2006 World Cup Jiggy was living in New York and was still very connected to Europe as he had spent his freshman year in Florence and was still traveling to London throughout the year to visit his parents; he was still "in that infancy stage of repatriating" (Jiggy, conversation, December 15, 2015). Therefore, it comes as no surprise that he was an avid supporter of England's national team but simultaneously was pleased when Italy won the cup. "The British person in me was very much alive and watching that World Cup, I identified with England probably more than the other international team. The U.S. played, but I was rooting for England" (Jiggy, conversation, December 15, 2015). Four years passed, Jiggy was living in San Diego and still a supporter of team England. He remembered going to a local tavern with friends to watch team U.S.A play England. He chose to wear his "England uniform which a lot of people were not so happy about and a lot of people called me brave. It was the England /U.S. game and I was cheering for England and wearing the English jersey (Jiggy,

conversation, December 15, 2015). Although supporting team England, he was proud of the United States team and their success within the World Cup. His acknowledgement of team U.S.A and his minimal support acknowledged the beginning of a shift in allegiance, an advancement along his repatriation timeline.

It wasn't until the most recent FIFA World Cup in 2014 that Jiggy became aware of where he stood in his transition process. Whether he was watching the U.S games in the office with his co-workers, or watching at home with his roommates, Jiggy was cheering on team U.S.A to win the cup, "I felt more affinity towards the U.S. team" and "that for me was really telling and I thought, "Oh, wow!" It really feels like I'm assimilating because I can see it. I was a diehard English fan, and now I'm supporting the English team, but I'm rooting for the U.S. to win" (Jiggy, conversation, December 15, 2015). This global affair signified more than a sports event for Jiggy; it represented his transition back into the United States. Jiggy successfully repatriated ten years after stepping foot back on American soil.

**Repatriation reflection: "America is the best."** While it took nearly ten years to complete his transition, Jiggy's repatriation process was positive and enlightening. During his time abroad, Jiggy remembered Europeans painting a negative picture of Americans and the American lifestyle was often criticized. Initially, this impacted Jiggy's perception of the United States and his repatriating expectations, however as he began to assimilate and experience American culture, his views changed: "I guess you have a lot of weird preconceived notions of coming back... thinking for some reason or another, Europe is so much more progressive than the States" (Jiggy, conversation, December 15, 2015). The first few months he was living back in the U.S. he thought, "I

might be a little more advanced...you come back, you repatriate, and you think everybody is backwards. You start to look at people differently"; however, when he started to assimilate into American culture, "the table starts to turn and you start to think America is the best and everybody else is backwards" (Jiggy, conversation, December 15, 2015). Jiggy learned that living within the third culture impacted his perception of the world, "because you can now understand both sides of the story very well. It really opens your eyes, being abroad and then coming back...As you evolve, you start to get a very comprehensive viewpoint, of the world for better or for worse" (Jiggy, conversation, December 8, 2015).

### **Jennifer's Final Portrait**

#### **Where Are You From?**

*"That is probably one of the hardest questions to answer, especially depending on the person who asks and how much I'm willing to give them. Usually, I just say, "Well, I moved every three years." That's usually my answer, but now, since I've been in Florida for almost ten years, sometimes I'll say, "Well, I moved every three years, but Florida is the longest place I have lived." A lot of the time, people probably think I'm being snobby and they're like, "Ooh, you move every three years..." and then I'll break it down. I'll say, "Well, okay, I was born in New York, then I moved to Maryland, then Chicago, then Toronto, then London, then San Francisco, then here."*

#### **Jennifer Today**

Jennifer is a thirty-one-year old American stay-at-home mom currently residing in Southern Florida with her husband, four-year-old and two-month-old sons. Jennifer married her high school sweetheart, and they have been together since they were seniors in high school. Their thirteen years together have been integral to both Jennifer's third culture and repatriating experiences. They have lived in Southern Florida for the past ten

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years and are reminded of its unique culture every day. They moved to Florida to be close to Jennifer's family—parents, older sister, and younger brother- —however, since their move, every member of the family has moved outside of the state or country.

While Jennifer is primarily attending to her children at home, she enjoys her side businesses, newborn photography and jewelry making. Her love for photography and jewelry making stems from her education and experience with the creative arts. Before her recent job as a mom, Jennifer was the health center manager at an international University for over five years where she managed the patient relations at the clinic and was responsible for the center's health programs and events. She was also in charge of the community outreach programs and enjoyed the opportunity to be involved in the community. The most rewarding aspect of her job was working with the students. "I thought it was really cool...There were a lot of kids that came from American community schools. [It] is a huge international school... I could always connect with them" (Jennifer, conversation, December 2, 2015). Although she loved her job at the University, and she hopes to return in the future, right now, staying at home with her children is best for their family.

Jennifer has planted her roots in the United States. She has always envisioned moving back to California, however, she and her husband are content where they are; while Jennifer does not identify with the culture and political affiliation of most Floridians, she enjoys living in warm weather near beautiful beaches.

## Jennifer's Third Culture Narrative Critical incidents.

1	2	3	4
Move to Canada	Move to London	London Carnival	Discrimination

Until her most recent move to Southern Florida, Jennifer moved, on average, every three years of her life. Her first move occurred when she was four years old when she moved from her birthplace in Upstate New York to Maryland. After completing elementary school, Jennifer's family moved to a suburb of Chicago, Illinois, where she began the sixth grade and lived for three years. At the end of her eighth grade year, at age thirteen, Jennifer moved to Mississauga, Canada, a city just outside of Toronto. This move marked the beginning of Jennifer's third culture experience.

As a lover of the arts, it comes as no surprise that Jennifer associated a song to each individual move she experienced. Every song represents a different physical and emotional journey in Jennifer's life and she remembered that listening to the song during each new transition was cathartic but also brought up sentiments of loss, "I would just listen to it and just cry and cry and cry" (Jennifer, conversation, December 2, 2015). To this day, when she hears one of the identified songs she is reminded of specific memories and emotions that occurred during those transitional times in her life. Jennifer's third culture and repatriating memories will begin with a quote from each of the corresponding songs.



***First critical incident: The move to Canada.***

*“And it's not alright now; you need to understand; There's nothing strange about this; You need to know your friends”* (Our Lady Peace, Clumsy)

Jennifer had become familiar with moving and she was at an age where she understood the differences between cultures; therefore, she felt better prepared for her move from the United States to Canada. However, once she landed in Toronto and began living her life in Mississauga, she realized that it was in fact very different, and was a “really big change” (Jennifer, conversation, December 2, 2015).

The differences she encountered were primarily at school. Jennifer felt that not only did she look different, but that she sounded different as she had adopted elements of the Midwestern accent. She and her sister were the sole Americans at her new high school and they were constantly reminded that they were outsiders, whether it be due to their appearance, the way they spoke, or because of where they were from. It was difficult for Jennifer to be labeled an outsider, “I feel like people were always calling us Yankees. I had a hard time adjusting, to be honest...my sister and I stuck out like sore thumbs” (Jennifer, conversation, December 2, 2015). Although Jennifer initially experienced discrimination at school, with time, she was no longer characterized as different, and she began to assimilate.

Jennifer had only been living in Mississauga for two years when her father was presented with another job opportunity, this time in London, England. When Jennifer first heard the news of her impending move, she was upset and disappointed. She was anxious to move to London as she had not only just started to feel comfortable in Mississauga, but was beginning to create lasting friendships with some of her classmates. To this day, she

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has maintained close relationships with a couple of her Canadian friends. Jennifer had begun to connect with the Canadian culture and was less than enthusiastic to move.

### ***Second critical incident: the move to England.***

*I don't wanna go to London; I told you I don't care; I don't wanna go to London;  
To live there; I don't wanna go to London” (Third Eye Blind, London).*

Jennifer’s family moved to a suburb of London where many of Jennifer’s future classmates were living. Aware of her initial experience in Mississauga, her parents had hoped that moving close to other American families would help Jennifer adapt easily. Likewise, her parents decided to enroll her in an American school that followed the American curriculum. Jennifer spent the remaining three years of her high school career at the American highschool. While she had already completed the tenth grade in Mississauga, she had missed a large portion of the year due to an illness, and was encouraged to repeat the tenth grade at her new school in London.

When Jennifer started at her new highschool, she identified as Canadian. She had connected to the Canadian culture and was also aware of her surroundings; Jennifer understood that being an American abroad was not always a positive group to identify with, “I didn't really want to consider myself American. Because, I kind of realized that a lot of people didn't really like Americans. I didn't really want to be in that category” (Jennifer, conversation, December 2, 2015). While Jennifer’s move to London was her second move across cultures, it proved more difficult. Jennifer already felt disconnected to many of her peers due to her age difference and was having trouble fitting in, “I felt like I didn't fit in with the Americans. But, I also felt like I didn't fit in with the

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Europeans” (Jennifer, conversation, December 2, 2015). She remembered that “Everyone had money, everyone was really smart, and everyone was really athletic. I felt like, I didn't fit in with that criteria. I was a drifter” (Jennifer, conversation, December 2, 2015).

At first, Jennifer blamed her struggle to adjust on her parents; she was angry that they had moved their family, again. Jennifer understood that adjusting to a new culture could be difficult, and realized that she couldn't blame her parents and that her struggle stemmed from her inner desires to connect:

I moved to London.

I feel like it was a really hard adjustment.

I felt like, although it was completely multi-cultural,

I felt, really out of place.

I felt really alienated.

I felt like,

I looked different than a lot of people

I probably really didn't.

Jennifer acknowledged that she was going to be living in London for the remainder of her high school years, so she began to consider the positives of living in this new culture as a teenager, “I think, probably, the only reason I got over it, was because, I realized that I was sixteen and I could do whatever I wanted, essentially” (Jennifer, conversation, December 2, 2015). Despite being an American, Jennifer gravitated toward her European classmates as they were familiar to the freedoms that London offered and were excited to introduce them to the unfamiliar. It didn't take long for Jennifer to experience the many freedoms of the English culture.

*Third critical incident: attending a carnival.* Jennifer faced culture shock the first couple months of living in London. One specific example occurred during her first visit to the local carnival, run by gypsies—a unique subculture of London. Jennifer understood that her life in London was going to be quite different. Her parents had sent her to the carnival with more than enough money to enjoy a Friday night. The carnival was located in the center of the town, next to the local pubs. While Jennifer was of legal age to drink in a pub—sixteen—she looked young and did not have the proper identification to enter; therefore, she stayed at the carnival by herself, while her new friends gathered and socialized over drinks.

Walking around the carnival she spotted a ring toss booth. At first glance Jennifer thought that the prize for the ring toss was a six-pack of beer. As she approached the booth, her suspicion was verified. She was in total shock as her previous experience with carnivals included cotton candy and stuffed animals. Because she was turned away from the pub, and was eager to drink like the rest of her peers, she spent her “sixty-quid” at the ring toss booth trying to win that six-pack of beer. After numerous unsuccessful attempts, the carnie felt bad and decided to give her the beer.

Walking around the carnival, with the unopened six-pack of beer, Jennifer came across a claw crane machine; however, instead of toys and stuffed animals, the machine was filled with mini-bottles of vodka, fake Rolex watches, and packs of cigarettes. Again, Jennifer’s reaction was one of bewilderment, “I was like, where am I?... I don't understand this” (Jennifer, conversation, December 2, 2015). Everything that she had known about the innocent nature of carnivals was destroyed; she underwent a form of

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culture shock. Jennifer's carnival experience was one of many events that caused Jennifer to believe that the culture in London promoted young independence and fostered early maturity.

The youth in London were encouraged to acquire independence during their adolescent years. They were expected to learn the local transit systems to get around the city, travel and explore Europe unaccompanied. A unique aspect of their independence was the early introduction to social norms that were prohibited in the United States, "I would take the train, all the time with my friends, and I would stay in London, until six in the morning" and would attend parties and go clubbing all night with her European friends. Jennifer remembered "It was a completely different lifestyle" from what she was used to (Jennifer, December 2, 2015). One of Jennifer's favorite afternoon hangout spots was a local café, Café Rouge. Nearly every day, Jennifer and her friends would take the bus home from school and walk to the café. They sat at the café, eating French fries, drinking beers and cappuccinos, and pondering life until it was time to head home for dinner.

Jennifer believed that her parents felt guilty for moving their family to London and thus allowed their children to explore their new found freedoms with little supervision. Reflecting on her young independence, Jennifer wished that her parents had set rules as that freedom often resulted in "a lot of bad decisions" (Jennifer, conversation, December 2, 2015). Similarly, Jennifer felt that her parents overcompensated by giving her a large allowance and sending her on expensive trips. For example, to celebrate Jennifer's seventeenth birthday, her father sent she and her best friend to Barcelona for

the weekend. They were put up at a hotel and were encouraged to experience the bright culture that Barcelona offered to many visitors. Jennifer remembered traveling around the city, enjoying the beautiful buildings, shopping, and eating the delicious Spanish cuisine. She was gifted the opportunity to experience a foreign culture, unaccompanied, as a teenager.

Jennifer became accustomed to traveling with and without her parents. She traveled to “Barcelona, six times...Paris, a couple of times. I went to Rome. I went to Norway. I went to Sweden, a couple of times. And I went to Amsterdam a couple of times” (Jennifer, conversation, December 2, 2015). While her parents traveled nearly every weekend and extended the invitation to her and her brother, she often chose to stay home and instead have house parties, a popular choice among teenagers. While being a TCK was an important aspect of Jennifer’s identity, it is important to remember that like many TCKS, she had the same desires as regular teenagers. Spending weekends traveling with her parents was not as important as creating high school memories with friends; regardless of residency, teenagers remain teenagers.

***Fourth critical incident: experiencing discrimination.*** Due to Jennifer’s experiences in Canada and traveling around Europe, she became aware of the American perception and understood that being American was not always a popular nationality to be associated with. Americans were heavily stereotyped and the American government and military were often spoken of negatively. Jennifer remembered being treated differently during her travels and being a victim of discrimination as an American abroad.

One particular weekend in London, Jennifer and her friends had decided to get together at the local park, which was overrun by the seasonal carnival. This, however,

was not a typical Friday night; it was the Friday after the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centers in New York, a tragedy felt around the world. The group of friends gathered at the park, like they had done every other weekend, but were quickly identified by a group of carnival attendees as American. While there were Americans in Jennifer's group, the majority were of other international backgrounds. Before they understood what was happening, Jennifer and her friends were surrounded by a group of Londoners—rudeboys and rudegirls— a label given to the street and urban subculture of London. Jennifer remembered hearing them shout, "Oi, oi, there's Americans here" (Jennifer, conversation, December, 2 2015). Jennifer and her friends were uncertain of why they were being targeted.

Jennifer and the rest of the group decided to leave the park to diffuse the situation as the amount of rudeboys and rudegirls continued to increase. Jennifer believed that among the group of street youth, there were also some of the adult carnival workers involved. Jennifer didn't understand what instigated their violent anger, and why she and her friends were being harassed. She recalled one person saying, "Get out of here, we don't want you Americans here, just go." And it was with that, Jennifer and her friends understood the severity of the situation, "Okay, we're just going to go. We're not trying to cause any problems" (Jennifer, conversation, December 2, 2015). They decided to walk down the main high-street of town, the opposite direction of the conflict. They had only made it a few streets, when they heard a loud group of people running behind them; the anti-American group of Londoners was chasing them with metal pipes and bats. Jennifer's anxiousness immediately turned into fear. Jennifer and her friends started running away to find safety, "It was really extreme. It was really extreme hatred; I

couldn't believe it" (Jennifer, conversation, December 2, 2015). Jennifer had fallen behind the group and decided to walk with one of her friends, "He was a hippie; he didn't even have shoes on. Because he and I were last in the group, and he was a peace keeper, he said, "I'm not going to run" (Jennifer, conversation, December 2, 2015). The angry group of rudeboys and rudegirls quickly caught up to she and her friend. After choosing to remain peaceful, her friend was "punched in the face, and got a bloody nose, because they thought he was American. It was terrible" (Jennifer, conversation, December 2, 2015).

Once Jennifer and her friends finally all made it back to a house, they notified their parents and called the local police to report the incident; she did not remember the police showing up and believed their report was dismissed. Moving forward, Jennifer realized that as outsiders they were not treated equally and with the same level of respect. Not only was the social culture different in London, but the policing culture was much different than what she was accustomed to in Canada and the United States. In London, police officers did not carry weapons, and while Jennifer was an anti-gun proponent, she felt that the officers should assume a more authoritative role. Jennifer was a victim of a hate crime, and from that day forward, she was more cognizant of her surroundings, as her feelings of security decreased. She felt that if this event had occurred in the United States it would have gained a lot of attention and handled immediately, potentially with legal force. Later, they were notified that due to the terrorist attacks that happened early that week, for security purposes, London officials had decided to cancel many of the city's downtown raves. They believe that this may have angered the locals and amplified their hatred towards Americans. That event forever changed the way Jennifer viewed and



experienced foreign countries. From then on, she felt vulnerable during her travels and was aware of the kind of hatred that some felt towards her and her American compatriots.

**Third culture reflection: “a better understanding of the world.”** Although the negative events are a part of her third culture experience, they are but one piece of her third culture puzzle. Jennifer described her third culture experience as positive; she felt very fortunate to have had the opportunity to live abroad and believed that those who are given the chance to move to a new culture should take advantage of the amazing opportunity, “I think that I have a better understanding, maybe not necessarily of our culture, as Americans, but, I have a better understanding of the world” (Jennifer, conversation, December 2, 2015). Jennifer is more knowledgeable of stereotypes and is “more open, you could put me at any party, at any place, and I would come home with five new friends... I definitely think, that made me more well-rounded, and more open, to differences in people” (Jennifer, conversation, December 2, 2015).

Being open to cultural differences fostered many special and lasting relationships for Jennifer, most notably her husband. Jennifer also continues to value the relationships she made with her classmates, who live across the world. She remembered her senior year of high school, and the diversity of her class, “Everybody kind of intermixed, and everyone hung out together. It didn't matter if you were European, or if you were American, everybody was close, everybody was supportive of each other... there is this special bond (Jennifer, conversation, December 2, 2015). Furthermore, experiencing the third culture with her family strengthened their relationship, “You are outside of your element, and that is who you depend on...the first, six months, I didn't really have very many friends, so I would go out to dinner with my parents, every night, and talk about

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what I did at school...It brings your family closer, because, you have to depend on each other” (Jennifer, conversation, December 2, 2015). Being a part of a global community directly affected Jennifer’s interest in meeting people of different cultural backgrounds; similarly, Jennifer is very comfortable working with international people who speak different languages.

Jennifer’s parents continue to live overseas, in Ireland. Since they’ve lived there, Jennifer and her family have visited once. Although Jennifer felt removed from her third culture identity once she repatriated to the United States, she still felt connected, “I am still tied to it, because they are still there” (Jennifer, conversation, December 2, 2015). Jennifer has gotten used to living back in the United States and assimilated back into the American culture, enjoying the American conveniences that one misses overseas. Jennifer remembered her travels, “It was a really good experience. I’m really happy that I got to go to Barcelona for the weekend, or take the train to Paris,” however, “looking back, now that I am American again, I feel like, I love that I have a dryer that only takes forty minutes...I love that my house has proper heating and proper air conditioning. These modern American conveniences, I actually really love” (Jennifer, conversation, December 2, 2015).

Jennifer enjoyed the third culture memories she shared with her friends and family, however if given the opportunity to move now, she would decline. Her desire to live in the United States does not negate the lessons she learned while living in Mississauga and London, she is grateful for the experience that influenced her

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repatriation process and the way that she lives her life back in the United States, back in her native culture.

### **Jennifer's Repatriating Narrative**

1	2	3	4	5
San Francisco	U.S. Road trip	D.C Protest	Euro-trip	Pres. Election

### **Critical Incidents**

There are five critical incidents that Jennifer identified as integral to her repatriation. Jennifer began her transition with her high school sweetheart in San Francisco, California and completed her repatriation journey after a backpacking trip with her fiancé.

Approaching her high school graduation, Jennifer was forced to discuss her future and decide if she was going to repatriate for university or remain in London with her parents. Had it not been for her boyfriend, who had already committed to attending a University in San Francisco, Jennifer may have stayed in London with her family, to attend art school. After much consideration, she made a last minute decision to move to San Francisco with her boyfriend; she felt that moving together was the appropriate step in their relationship and their future as a couple. Jennifer quickly found an art school with rolling application deadlines, a college that a fellow TCK friend was going to be attending; much to her delight she applied and was accepted into the fall semester

program. Having a plan aided in Jennifer's preparation to repatriate, and marks the beginning of her repatriation process.

***First critical incident: transition to San Francisco.***

*"I would like to hold my little hand; And we will run, we will, we will crawl; Send me on my way (On my way)"* (Rusted Root, Send Me on My Way)

After spending her last summer with friends and family in London, Jennifer traveled back to the United States with her family and her boyfriend. During the plane ride, Jennifer wondered what the next chapter of her life would look like. She felt more comfortable repatriating with her boyfriend, having that support was important; however, she was sad to have left her third culture lifestyle behind and thought, "I'm really not special anymore. There is nothing interesting anymore. I'm an American living in America" (Jennifer, conversation, December 2, 2015). Jennifer had spent the last eight years of her life living outside of the United States and had started to identify more with the Canadian and English cultures rather than her native American culture. She was unsure of how that might affect her repatriation process.

While Jennifer missed her life in London, she was excited to move to California, her first time out west. She was not aware, however, that the state of California has a variety of landscapes and climates. "I didn't even know that San Francisco was going to be cold," she thought, "moving to California, must be nice, must be beaches, must be great. I had no idea what I had really signed up for" (Jennifer, conversation, December 2, 2015). Upon arrival, her excitement dissipated; the car ride from the airport to the city center was disheartening for Jennifer. While listening to *Send Me On My Way*, on repeat,

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she noticed how different the city looked, “I remember the color of dirt. I remember dirty buildings, and then rundown buildings... I also remember once I got to the city, seeing a lot of tall modern buildings, which was very different from London” (Jennifer, conversation, December 2, 2015). Although Jennifer understood that California would be much different to what she was used to in London, she did not realize the extent of the differences, “I remember a lot of homeless people, which was different to me, and a lot of police officers.” During her drive she thought, “Wow. This is America now” (Jennifer, conversation, December 2, 2015).

While the appearance of the city was unappealing at first, as she began to experience the San Francisco way of life, she found that the city was composed of various cultures and eccentric populations, making it easier for her to assimilate. Similarly, she attended an art school that promoted difference and unconventionality, where she didn’t feel “weird” among her peers. The only time Jennifer felt that she did not fit in with the surrounding American population was when she attended parties at her boyfriend’s university. Due to the pub culture and drinking laws in London, Jennifer had been introduced to alcohol at a younger age and in a different environment. She acknowledged that while many of her new American friends were drinking in high school, it was not legal or culturally accepted, therefore resulting in different experiences. Jennifer felt that many of the students at the university abused alcohol. She suspected that the behavior she witnessed was due to inexperience and the taboos associated with alcohol consumption in the United States. Feeling more mature than the students, Jennifer often thought, “This is so American and it's so ridiculous... I'm so glad I'm not like that” (Jennifer, conversation, December 2, 2015). Jennifer was aware of her perceived

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arrogance, however she truly felt that her experience with drinking at a younger age taught her appropriate drinking conduct.

Attending college parties reminded Jennifer of the drinking culture that she had left behind in London, “I think it was hard to go from being sixteen and being able to drink... having all these freedoms to then being babied” (Jennifer, conversation, December 16, 2015). After a few college parties Jennifer realized that she didn’t want to be a part of the college drinking scene; she had been to too many parties where college students had embarrassed themselves. Her early drinking experiences in America contributed to her strong belief that the drinking age should be lowered to age eighteen, “especially since you can fight for your country, own a gun, and go to war... but you can't have a drink. It doesn't make any sense to me” (Jennifer, conversation, December 16, 2015). She believed that it was more dangerous for Americans to consider drinking as taboo.

After a couple months of living back in the United States, colleges went on Thanksgiving break and most students traveled home to celebrate with their families. Jennifer’s family was still living in London and so she decided to stay in the Bay area to celebrate with her boyfriend’s family, as the eleven-hour plane ride to London would result in a mere weekend visit. Holidays were difficult for Jennifer, “I always thought it was sad because everyone got to go back...Usually to their childhood house. They got to look at their pictures and posters on their wall that they had, and see how much they had changed as a person,” but most important, “they got to see their old friends, and I didn't have any of that” (Jennifer, conversation, December 16, 2015). Jennifer’s family traveled

to Florida for the Christmas holiday as they owned a vacation home that they frequented throughout Jennifer's life. When Jennifer arrived in Florida, she didn't feel at home. She spent the holiday with her family at their vacation home, and it was just that, a vacation home; it was not the home that she grew up in, she did not have a closet full of memories, pictures on her walls, or the memorabilia that she had collected from her travels. The majority of her belongings, her memories, were still in London. Jennifer never truly felt at home when she spent the holidays at her boyfriend's parents' house or at her parents' vacation home.

*Second critical incident: road trip across the United States.* After Jennifer's boyfriend graduated from the university, they decided they wanted to leave the city of San Francisco. Jennifer's parents had recently moved to Southern Florida and Jennifer and her boyfriend decided to move there to live by the beach. Both Jennifer and her boyfriend felt strongly about taking the entire summer to road trip to Florida. They were eager to experience the United States, especially the national parks. Without any future plans, with just a car, a tent and their dog, they embarked on a three-month journey across the "home of the free and the land of the brave." Traveling around the United States, together by car, was an important aspect of Jennifer's repatriating process.

Jennifer felt extremely American during her road trip. She visited many different states that she had never been to, and witnessed cultures she didn't know existed within the United States; visiting what she referred to as Middle America was enormously educational. She remembered driving through collapsed cities, cities that belonged in Western movies, metropolitan cities, and socializing with other American travelers at the

beautiful national parks. She felt that she “learned so much about America on that trip...I felt like it was a wild experience. It was something I wouldn't trade for the world. I even think that experience, shaped me probably, in understanding who I was” (Jennifer, conversation, December 16, 2015). Experiencing the range of culture in the United States forced Jennifer to examine her self-perception; she explored who she was and how she wanted to express her individuality. This was the first time that Jennifer witnessed the beauty of America and began to appreciate America for what it was; this marked the first time that she started to identify with the American people.

In hindsight, Jennifer felt that she learned more on that trip than she did backpacking around Europe. She discovered that “Americans are super friendly, especially to other Americans” (Jennifer, conversation, December 16, 2015). They couldn't believe how friendly the campers were. At one particular campsite, Jennifer remembers “families would introduce themselves, invite us over for s'mores, ask to borrow a can opener. That was really wild to me” (Jennifer, conversation, December 16, 2015). They all thought that Jennifer and her boyfriend were the “best couple in the world, because we had been together so long, and now we were doing this cross-country trip” (Jennifer, conversation, December 16, 2015). Jennifer learned a lot about American history and the American people. She realized that there is so much culture represented within the United States, and that the American people are eccentric; she remembered some of the unique and telling signs she came across during their drive: “God is watching you,” and “Look for the aliens” (Jennifer, conversation, December 16, 2015). She learned that signs and billboards represent a town's people and values.



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Jennifer felt that her cross-country experience afforded her a rich understanding of the United States: of the rich history, of the varying topography, of the diverse culture, and the people. It is important to note that their cross-country adventure was pre-smart phone technology, however they were equipped with a Tom Tom, a novel navigation system at that time. It would have been helpful to have the current technologies when they got lost in the Glacier National Forest. Jennifer's love for photography encouraged her to take pictures along their drive. Jennifer compiled a scrapbook of Polaroid photos to relive their American adventure.

***Third critical incident: executing American rights.*** When they arrived in Florida, Jennifer immediately understood that she was no longer in San Francisco. While she respected the unique diversity of San Francisco natives, the population in Florida was bizarre, and she instantly noticed the cultural and political difference between the two regions. "Northern Florida is considered the South, and they're really Republican. Southern Florida is much more liberal, and we don't consider ourselves the South" (Jennifer, conversation, December 16, 2015). Jennifer believed that when she moved to Florida her interest in politics was amplified as she "felt like it was a bigger responsibility for me, because my word meant more here than it did in San Francisco" (Jennifer, conversation, December 16, 2015).

George Bush had been elected President during Jennifer's eleventh grade year when she was living in London, and again during her second year of art school. When she voted for the very first time, in the 2004 election, she believed her vote didn't matter, "I felt like I wasn't getting heard... There's nothing more I could do. I voted. I followed what I could follow... Part of me felt really angry inside that there was nothing more I could

do” (Jennifer, conversation, December 16, 2015). Jennifer knew since she had decided to remain in the United States, it was time to become involved politically, and Jennifer was ready for change. She didn’t want to be what many abroad had unjustifiably characterized as an “ignorant American” and she began educating herself on political issues and attending multiple political panels where she was given the opportunity to meet some of her political favorites. Jennifer “hugged Dennis Kucinich...I stood in line and I got to bro-handshake Bill Clinton” (Jennifer, conversation, December 16, 2015). Jennifer’s growing interest in American politics coupled with her desire to be civically engaged, resulted in a road trip to Washington D.C., to protest the war in Iraq.

Jennifer felt strongly about executing her right to protest. She and her boyfriend were against the war and decided to join a peaceful protest at Capitol Hill. One Friday afternoon in the spring of 2007 they jumped into a Volkswagen Beetle and drove straight through the night to Washington, D.C. They arrived early Saturday morning and immediately began to march. Jennifer had crafted hand-painted signs that read, “ $2 + 2 = 5$ ” and “when the power of love overcomes the love of power, the world will know peace” (Jimi Hendrix). With peace signs painted on her face, Jennifer marched with her sign the entire day.

Jennifer was one of thousands protesting the war. Marching around Capitol Hill, Jennifer and the protesters chanted, “Tell me what democracy looks like? This is what democracy looks like!” (Jennifer, conversation, December 16, 2015). As she marched, she noticed a large police presence but felt the protest remained peaceful. Jennifer was proud to be protesting something that was important to her, “I felt like I did my job successfully, marching for what I believed in” (Jennifer, reflection, January, 28, 2016).

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The next day as Jennifer and her boyfriend were leaving Washington D.C., “we saw our protest on the front cover on the Washington Post. I think this protest was very important for me, as I really felt like I needed to do something political” (Jennifer, reflection, January 28, 2016). Although she had never promoted her American identity, at that moment, she felt more American than she had ever before.

***Fourth critical incident: backpacking across Europe.*** Jennifer became aware that she was successfully repatriating as she began to identify as an American more and more. Moving to Southern Florida was not only an important step in Jennifer’s repatriating process but was integral to her relationship with her boyfriend. After living there for two years, her boyfriend proposed. Jennifer happily accepted and they began another new chapter together as fiancées. Always looking for a new adventure, Jennifer and her fiancé quit their jobs and decided to go backpacking around Europe for several weeks. Traveling back to Europe really highlighted Jennifer’s American transformation.

With twelve hundred dollars in their bank account and a few hundred dollars in cash, Jennifer and her fiancé embarked on their memorable trip around Europe. They had previously scheduled their connecting flights and had booked their lodging, which would prove to be the best decision they had made. The trip was planned and they were ready to enjoy a romantic engagement vacation. However, what they experienced was not what they had imagined or hoped for.

Their European backpacking adventure began in the familiar city of London, however, London no longer felt like home. Jennifer’s family had moved, the majority of her friends had moved, and the town had changed, “It felt like a completely foreign city

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to me. It felt like a huge city to me. I felt out of the loop, hearing everybody speak British...I was just overwhelmed. It felt like I hadn't lived there, really” (Jennifer, conversation, December 16, 2015). It was not the start that Jennifer was hoping for.

After a quick visit in London, Jennifer and her fiancé left to travel the remaining countries on their backpacking checklist. Jennifer felt comfortable with the notion of backpacking across Europe with her fiancé. She credited her comfort level to her third culture lifestyle and her previous experience traveling unaccompanied. Having been a victim of discrimination in the past, she had considered attaching a Canadian flag patch to her backpack, “because if you have a Canadian patch on your backpack, people know that you're foreign, obviously, but they're much nicer to you” (Jennifer, conversation, December 16, 2015). In the end, she did not display a Canadian patch, and while she was prepared to be labeled a tourist, she had hoped to be treated with kindness and respect, rather than hate and ignorance.

Jennifer and her fiancé were ready to travel to Lisbon. On their way to Lisbon, Jennifer went to charge something at the airport, and was informed that her credit card had been maxed out. Jennifer was confused and distraught, called the credit card company and was told that somebody had retrieved twelve hundred dollars from her account. She instantly remembered the concierge at their hotel in London had asked for interesting personal information and she remembered thinking, “Something isn't right” (Jennifer, conversation, December 16, 2015). He actually ended up writing down all of my credit card numbers and charging me twelve hundred dollars” (Jennifer, conversation, December 16, 2015). Luckily she and her fiancé had already booked and charged their

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hotel rooms and flights. Jennifer “didn’t even get that money back until the end of the trip,” which meant for the remaining few weeks they were living off the few hundred dollars that her fiancé had cashed, and instead of having a pre-honeymoon, romantic trip as planned, they had little money to spend and couldn’t afford to “take transportation anywhere. We literally walked over ten miles a day. I think I lost thirty pounds on that trip” (Jennifer, conversation, December 15, 2016). The highlight of their trip was visiting with an old friend from their London days.

After visiting Lisbon, they traveled to Barcelona, one of Jennifer’s favorite cities.

They had decided to stay in a hostel in the city center. Jennifer was ready for their trip to turn around; she was in her favorite city with her fiancé and was ready to enjoy the city nightlife. While they were out that night, one of the hostel’s maids stole clothes out of her suitcase. The next morning Jennifer was furious and approached the manager of the hostel. The manager refused to acknowledge what had happened and did not reimburse her for the stolen clothes. Jennifer thought, “what more could go wrong?” The next day, while out exploring the city, Jennifer’s wallet was stolen, “I had nothing. I literally had nothing,” (Jennifer, conversation, December 15, 2015) and Jennifer was ready to call off the remaining few weeks of their trip.

Jennifer’s fiancé was able to convince her that they should stay and they continued their travels to Venice and Berlin. Once in Berlin they had decided to rent a car and drive to Prague. They had always wanted to experience the beautiful countryside that they had heard so much about, “My family is from old Bohemia and I’m in love with Art Nouveau, so I really wanted to go to Prague” (Jennifer, conversation, December 15,

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2016). After gathering their free biscuits and jellies from the hotel buffet, “that's what we ate all week, because we had no money,” they walked from the hotel to the rental car agency. Before departing on their trip to Europe, Jennifer had gotten her driver's license, and an international driver's license, “which apparently means nothing” in case they decided to rent a car abroad. Interesting to note that Jennifer had lived in the United States for six years before getting her driver's license, “because I was terrified to drive, probably because I never had to” (Jennifer, conversation, December 16, 2015).

However, since her international driver's license was located in her wallet, which had just been stolen a few days prior, Jennifer's only form of identification was her American passport. She was hoping that her passport would be suitable identification to rent a car. The clerk at the desk was not satisfied and asked, "All you have is your passport. You don't have a license? You don't have your international license on you? You don't have your wallet? You don't have your credit card? You have nothing” (Jennifer, conversation, December 5, 2015). Jennifer explained that she had a “letter from the Barcelona police saying that all of her items were stolen” (Jennifer, conversation, December 16, 2015). When the clerk explained that he could not rent them a car due to lack of a driver's license, Jennifer began to cry and plead with him. Fortunately, the clerk decided to take one last look at Jennifer's passport and noticed Jennifer's last name. The clerk paused, “Well, wait a minute... You are German?” and that was it, he completed the paperwork and gave them keys to their rented Mercedes Benz.

Jennifer couldn't believe what had just happened. The clerk took one glance at her last name, assumed it was German, and sent them on their way. As she and her fiancé

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were walking out the door they mentioned that they were driving to Prague and Amsterdam and the clerk responded, "Oh, good thing you told me that, because most Americans just take the car and they go drive to a different country, and then they get arrested because it looks like they stole the car;" he then proceeded to write, "I'm going to handwrite you this note that you can show the police. It says that that you have our permission to drive to Prague and to Amsterdam" (Jennifer, conversation, December 16, 2015). At first, Jennifer felt uneasy about the handwritten note, and the entire situation. She began to question their cross-country drive, however her fiancé reassured her that they would be safe and would stay on the right side of the law and avoid police officers; however, "the whole drive, every single time we saw a cop, we were terrified. We were shaking. We're like, 'Oh my God, we're going to go to jail'" (Jennifer, conversation, December 16, 2015). They couldn't believe that all they had was a handwritten note from a rental car employee in Berlin. Jennifer knew that had she been in the United States, that would never happen. They continued on their drive through Prague and Amsterdam, flew to Oslo and Stockholm to visit friends, and ended their European trip in London.

Jennifer's trip didn't quite go as planned. Jennifer was treated like an inexperienced tourist: "part of me expected it because nobody knew that I was a slightly more cultured person" and "there was nothing setting me apart from being a typical American" (Jennifer, conversation, December 16, 2015). While Jennifer "expected to run into a few problems," she "didn't expect to have her money, clothes and wallet stolen" (Jennifer, conversation, December 16, 2015). Jennifer has fond memories of her trip, visiting friends and experiencing Europe with her fiancé, however it has impacted her desire to travel internationally in the future.

*Fifth critical incident: experiencing a presidential election.* Jennifer continued to transition positively. Although she had assimilated quickly, Jennifer felt that it wasn't until the 2008 presidential election that she truly completed her repatriation process. Jennifer was an avid Barack Obama supporter during the entire 2008 election year. She remembered Tuesday, November 4th vividly. Jennifer was glued to the television; from the moment she voted to when Obama was officially announced as the president-elect, Jennifer paid attention to every media outlet hoping for change. When Obama was announced the winner, Jennifer celebrated, "I felt proud to be an American at that point, proud to be a part of CHANGE and history!" and felt a "huge sigh of relief" (Jennifer, reflection, January, 28, 2016). Jennifer was nervous that like the previous election, her vote wouldn't matter and her voice wouldn't be heard. President Obama's victory restored Jennifer's "faith in the American people" (Jennifer, reflection, January 28, 2016). It was at that point that Jennifer felt that she had successfully repatriated. "That is when I was happy to start calling myself an American again" (Jennifer, reflection, January 28, 2016). Obama's victory meant more to Jennifer than just electing a democrat into office; Jennifer felt that she connected to the American people, and that her voice mattered.

Two months later, Jennifer and her entire elementary school class (she was an assistant teacher at a Montessori school), sat quietly in the classroom and watched the inauguration of President Barack Obama. Tears streamed down Jennifer's face as she watched the inauguration of a president she believed in and supported. The waving flags evoked emotions that she had never felt before, the emotions of an American patriot. She told her students that they had just witnessed a monumental event in American history.



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She herself had just experienced an event that would influence her civic involvement as an American forever.

Jennifer reflected on Obama's presidency: "I truly do believe in Obama. I voted for Obama. I loved Obama. I still like Obama" (Jennifer, conversation, December 16, 2015). She believed in Obama and what he stood for, she believed in a better United States, in a country that helps its citizens. As an American, she is hopeful that this next election will help the United States move forward in the direction of positive change, in the direction that Obama initiated. Jennifer has not been following this election race as closely as she did in previous election years, and part of that may be due to the candidates. As the election draws near, she believes that she will be more involved and will have more to say in regards to the debated policies. On November 4<sup>th</sup> of this year, Jennifer will vote again as she is eager to exercise her civic duty as an American. Americans are fortunate and are "so privileged as a country;" Jennifer feels that it is time that the American people accept their responsibility and become active participants in society (Jennifer, conversation, December 16, 2015).

### **Repatriation Reflection: "I don't want to move anymore"**

Jennifer's five-year repatriating experience was "positive, mostly. I think either way it's hard. I think that it comes with a lot of responsibility, like learning about your country" (Jennifer, conversation, December 16, 2015). Jennifer has reassumed her American identity and has fully invested in the United States. She has reassimilated into the American culture, has contributed to her society, and is focusing on creating a stable home for her children. Despite her international exposure Jennifer wants to remain in the United States and has little desire to "move anymore" (Jennifer, conversation, December

16, 2015). Rather than chasing culture internationally, she looks forward to experiencing the vast culture here in the United States.

### **Andrea's Final Portrait**

#### **Where Are You From?**

*"I feel like my answer has probably changed over time the longer that I've lived here and depending on who is asking me. That was definitely the hardest question right after moving back, especially when I moved back, I started college right away. It's common just for everyone to ask, "Where are you from?" At that time, I would say, "I'm originally from Illinois, but I just moved here from London, England." I definitely included that in my response in the beginning. Now that I've been living here for like 12 years, it's becoming less and less part of my response on who is asking me or how much conversation you want to delve into with the person."*

#### **Andrea Today**

Andrea is a thirty-year-old married woman, mother of two, and full-time physician's assistant servicing urgent care and emergency departments. To say she leads a busy life is an understatement. Andrea's career requires building relationships with the medical staff and working patiently with patients. Andrea prides herself in the work that she does and the positive environment that she creates for her colleagues and those in need of medical treatment. Andrea's Third Culture life directly influenced her career choice.

While her career has been an important part of her identity, Andrea values her family and her relationships most in life. Her parents, three older siblings, and eight nieces live in neighboring Midwestern states and she is able to visit with them often. Her decision to repatriate to the Midwest was heavily influenced by the proximity to her family. Andrea is an active member of her church, and she and her husband host and attend Bible study groups where they discuss ways to incorporate Christianity into their

daily lives. Andrea grew up in a religious household and believes it is important to teach her children religious values and practices.

## Andrea’s Third Culture Narrative

### Critical incidents.

1	2	3	4
Move to London	Adjusting to London	Antwerp for Volleyball	Barcelona

Andrea was born in Pekin, a small town in the state of Illinois. She lived in the same house that her parents had been living in since they moved to Pekin years prior. After living in Pekin for over twenty years, Andrea’s dad accepted a job opportunity within his company in London, England. Andrea and her older brother were going to be accompanying their parents to London, while her two oldest siblings remained in the United States as they were already attending American universities. Her move to London was the only Third Culture move she had ever experienced. She was excited for a new adventure but was sad to leave the only house she had ever lived in and the only town she had ever known.

During her final weeks in Pekin, friends and other members of the community asked Andrea questions about her upcoming move, questions that she herself thought were common knowledge. “I would have people ask me what language they spoke in England. I would have people ask me where it was, and it blew my mind.” She understood that she lived in a town “where people didn’t leave, people really didn’t even move to other states” (Andrea, conversation, November, 21, 2015). While Andrea

admitted to not knowing much about London, she was still able to identify its location on a map and knew that they spoke English in England. Andrea's concerns were centered around what her life would be like, not where she was going to be living. She remembered having typical moving concerns: what kind of town would she be living in, what would her house look like, would she like her school, and would she make friends easily. Andrea didn't know what to expect and didn't have anyone to turn to for answers.

*First critical incident: the move to London.* After many tearful goodbyes, Andrea boarded her first international plane ride. She and her mother flew to London together. Andrea's brother had decided to stay in Pekin for the remainder of the summer and her dad had already been living and working in London for the past few months. During the plane ride, Andrea thought about the comforts and the familiarity of the life she was leaving and was anxious to start all over in a new town, in a new country. After a day of traveling, she and her mother arrived to Heathrow Airport, one of the largest and busiest airports in the world. Andrea was overwhelmed and felt lost, but was grateful that they spoke English.

After exiting the plane Andrea and her mother were guided to Border Control. They entered the "all other passports" line with several immigrant travelers, and after waiting in the extremely long line, she and her mother were greeted by a United Kingdom border immigration officer. She couldn't believe that upon arrival in the United Kingdom, even with proper identification for travel, one could be refused entry. Before arriving in London, Andrea's mother was notified that the officers would ask her a few questions but they were assured that the officers were polite and were following protocol. The border immigration officer instructed them to present their passports and asked them

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a series of questions about their stay in the United Kingdom. Andrea's mother explained that they were moving to London for her husband's job and gave the officer their issued visa. The visa, however, was listed under her father's name, as it was his work visa and they were the accompanying family. After more questions and showing concern for their entry, Andrea's mother was pushed to tears. She was already overwhelmed having to travel alone with her daughter to a foreign country, and then her entry into the country was being questioned.

After what seemed like "forever," Andrea and her mother's credentials were confirmed and they were allowed entry into the United Kingdom. As they passed through customs with their many suitcases, they searched eagerly for Andrea's father. Andrea was relieved after they spotted him in the crowd, yelling their names, in an "American" accent. Although reconnecting with her father eased some of their emotional anxiety, Andrea was disoriented and confused. "I was surrounded by so many different nationalities that I had never seen before" (Andrea, conversation, November 21, 2015). Still in shock over the border control fiasco, Andrea and her parents made their way through the busy airport to their car, Andrea realized that she had just survived her first Third Culture experience.

After a stressful day of travel, she and her mother were ready to relax, but more important, they were hungry. Andrea's dad explained that the closest American food chains were twenty to thirty minutes away from their new town; Andrea wasn't interested in exploring new foods at that point in time, she was interested in eating something that was familiar. Andrea's father also understood that they were a little traumatized by their airport experience and wanted them to feel comfortable in their new home, so he took

them to one of the American chains they knew well, Pizza Hut—their only other options were McDonalds or Burger King. Andrea approached the pizza counter in search of her favorite pizza supreme, and saw “pizza with corn and pizza with mayonnaise” (Andrea, conversation, November 21, 2015). It was then that Andrea realized that things were going to be different here in London; she was no longer in Peking. Culture shock comes in different forms, and in Andrea’s case, different foods. Andrea remembered enjoying the most “normal” slices of pizza before heading to her new house for a long afternoon nap. Although Andrea was ready to explore her new town, she was exhausted and she gave into the jet lag fatigue that she was warned about.

*Second critical incident: adjusting to London.* After settling into her new house, and becoming acquainted with her new neighborhood, Andrea attended a new student school orientation. Andrea was going to start her eighth grade year at the American Community School, a school that instructed students from around the globe. Andrea distinctly remembered the drive to her new school; the scenery was much different from driving to her school in Pekin. Twenty minutes into their drive, Andrea wondered if they would ever reach their destination, and then Andrea saw the sign for her school. Andrea’s mother pulled up to a guard gate where they were instructed to pick up a visitors’ pass. Andrea looked up the long driveway at her new school and was in awe of its beauty; her new school looked like an old manor, a large stone building that looked like something she had seen in movies. During the tour she was told that the school was a converted historical mansion that once belonged to Sir Charles Mills. She learned that the mansion was damaged during a World War II bombing and had been restored to its original

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architecture (of course learning too that the ghost of Lady Hillingdon still haunts the school's manor).

Aside from the beauty of the grounds, Andrea was pleasantly surprised to meet other American students who were also new to the school. The orientation was important to Andrea's transition to her new school as she was able to navigate around the property and get to know some of her classmates. The following week classes began, and Andrea was already feeling comfortable in her new surroundings. During the first few weeks she already felt accepted among her peers and was beginning to form relationships with the other TCKs. However, she noticed one main difference between her and many of her new friends: "I almost felt like an outsider because I had been in the same place my whole life; none of the other TCKs had that stability prior to moving to London" (Andrea, conversation, November 21, 2015), as many of them had lived in multiple countries. She enjoyed learning about their Third Culture experiences and was eager to begin creating Third Culture memories of her own.

Andrea was accustomed to attending a small school; coming from a class size of ten, she adjusted easily to her new private school environment. "I left an even smaller school, actually. I was in a Christian, Lutheran school, and I had gone to that school basically my whole life from preschool through seventh grade" (Andrea, conversation, November 21, 2015). The bigger difference for Andrea was the many cultures represented in the new student body. Andrea was used to going to school with white Christians. "I would say I didn't really have that much exposure to different religions prior" (Andrea, conversation, November 21, 2015), and now she was in a school with

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diverse students from different religious backgrounds. While Andrea's new school was identified as an American Community School (the title of the school has since been changed to an International Community School) the majority of the enrolled students were of international backgrounds.

The naming of the school was based on the notion that it was a school that offered the American curriculum program, making it easy for American expatriate families to move between cultures, and "the diploma was easily transferable to America if you were coming back for a university" (Andrea, conversation, November, 21, 2015). Andrea felt that while there were many nationalities represented, "the majority of my friends were American. Which is also interesting, I would say, because as much as I loved that experience, and feel like I enjoyed different cultures" (Andrea, conversation, November 21, 2015), she left London with close American relationships only. Not only did Andrea have many things in common with her American classmates, but she also lived in close proximity to many of the American families.

Andrea had moved to a small town, outside the city of London. It was considered an affluent area and was known for hosting "a fair amount of transplants and people that went to our high school" (Andrea, conversation, November 21, 2015). Andrea loved her town and embraced the differences. She loved that there was a small, three-block high street with local shops, restaurants, and a two-theater cinema. Andrea's new town was much smaller than the town she grew up in and she loved the ease of walking to the high street, the parks, the pond, and most important, the train station. Andrea would often take



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the train to downtown London with her parents, and when she was in ninth grade she started traveling into London, unaccompanied, with her friends.

Andrea's newfound independence allowed her to experience the culture of London on her own. She spent many weekends touring castles, museums, and other historic monuments, shopping downtown, going to different restaurants, experiencing the London theater, and eventually enjoying the city nightlife, occasionally missing the "last train back and so we would have to take a cab. That was really expensive!" (Andrea, conversation, November, 21, 2015)

Andrea enjoyed the freedoms that the European culture promoted. Being the youngest of four children, Andrea watched her older siblings during their high school years and remembered the rules and guidelines they were expected to follow. She was beginning to learn that her parents' rules were changing and molding to their new culture. Andrea remembered her parents setting strict rules for her siblings, specifically the "no drinking rule." However, in London, the drinking age was sixteen and Andrea began spending many weekends socializing and drinking at the local pubs. Like many of her Third Culture friends, she did not have a driver's license and her "mom would pick us up at the bars before we were even 18, and drive us home" (Andrea, conversation, November, 21, 2015). Her siblings could not understand how Andrea was given so much independence.

***Third critical incident: travelling to Antwerp for volleyball.*** While living in London was exciting, living in close proximity to the many other neighboring countries provided even more opportunities for adventure. Andrea's fondest memories of her Third Culture life are centered around travel. The ease of traveling between different countries

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and experiencing multiple cultures is something she misses about living back in the United States. While she traveled with family and friends she felt that traveling with her school, for education and sport, were unique to her Third Culture lifestyle: “we stayed with different families, so we were constantly exposed to different cultures, and saw different areas of Europe” (Andrea, conversation, November, 21, 2015). She remembered her first international sports trip.

Looking back, she was shocked at the amount of trust given to the schools, the hosting families, and the student athletes themselves: “they felt comfortable giving us that much freedom” (Andrea, conversation, November 21, 2015). The student athletes would stay with local families who had “kids at the school, and a lot of times it was somebody who was maybe around your age, or within a couple years,” but “there weren't background checks” (Andrea, conversation, November 21, 2015). The student athletes were given complete freedom to roam the city during the evenings or on days where they weren't playing in their tournaments, with or without their hosts; “often, the parents would drop you off downtown, and a lot of times we would be with the host student, who was around our age” and while living with them she was “learning from them” (Andrea, conversation, November 21, 2015). Andrea was experiencing the city through a local lens rather than the lens of an outsider, “You're not going to the touristy spots, really. You're seeing a very different view of the city than you would see if you went there as a tourist” (Andrea, conversation, November 21, 2015).

I haven't been back as a tourist.

I don't even know what's famous, if

I were to go to Antwerp now, or

I were to go to Brussels now, or

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I were to go to Frankfurt now.  
I would probably look it up online,  
I have to do this, this, and this.  
I've been to Brussels 5 times,  
I don't even know how many times.  
I have never been to anywhere that would be listed online as places you have to visit.

Living with families of different cultures, offered another dimension to the international sports experience, resulting in a layering of multiple cultures. For example, Andrea would often attend volleyball tournaments in Paris and stay with American, German, or French families. The hosting families would, “supply, usually, your dinner and breakfast in the morning, and sometimes make you lunch” (Andrea, conversation, November 21, 2015). Therefore, while you may be visiting one country, you are living with a family from another. Andrea learned that food was an important part of experiencing new cultures. Many of her stories involved food culture shock, or being exposed to new traditional foods. Andrea discussed one of her sports trips where her she was given Nutella for breakfast, which at that time was not a known food in the United States:

I had Nutella,  
I'm trying to remember where it was  
I was staying at the time.  
I had never had Nutella before, and they put it on their toast for breakfast.  
I was like, "Oh. It's chocolate."

***Fourth critical incident: experiencing culture in Barcelona.*** She remembered another food culture experience during her first family vacation. Andrea and her family would travel to Spain to visit her sister that was there for a study abroad program. One

particular night they went to a local Spanish restaurant where “they obviously didn't speak any English” (Andrea, conversation, November 21, 2015). Again, it is important to note that during this time smart phone technology did not exist and therefore they had to rely on their Spanish speaking abilities, and “that was my first year of Spanish class, so I didn't really know all that much Spanish” (Andrea, conversation, November 21, 2015). Andrea defined herself as an adventurous eater, “basically as long as it's not peas, I eat anything” (Andrea, conversation, November 21, 2015).

Andrea remembered that she and her entire family randomly pointed to something on the menu, figuring that they could share their unknown selections. When the waiter brought out their food and placed Andrea's item in front of her, the entire table broke out in laughter. “Literally, it was a bowl of peas with ham in the middle...what are the odds?” (Andrea, conversation, November 21, 2015). That experience taught Andrea that it is important to recognize that when traveling between cultures, one must prepare for the unexpected. Likewise, English will not be the dominant language spoken, and she had witnessed many tourists being rude and demanding; she learned that as a visitor it was her responsibility to be respectful of other traditions and languages... and the food.

Andrea's comfort with traveling and her respect for different cultures encouraged her to apply for an internship with a medical charity that traveled to developing countries to provide ophthalmology procedures to the locals: “they take huge, huge airplanes, and convert them into doctor's offices and surgery centers” (Andrea, conversation, November 21, 2015). Andrea was thrilled when she was one of the few that was awarded the internship; she was eager to travel to Ethiopia to help ophthalmologists perform eye

procedures that improved sight for many of the legally blind and teach the local doctors how to perform the surgeries on their own. Andrea was grateful for the unbelievable opportunity she was given to not only experience another culture, but to assist in bettering the lives of the less fortunate.

**Third culture reflection: “I have a wider perspective.”** Andrea believed that her TCK experiences influenced many decisions in her life but had the biggest impact on her perspective of the world: “I definitely feel like I have a wider perspective on things and I feel like I have a different appreciation for different cultures, and different countries” (Andrea, conversation, November 21, 2015). News of global tragedies are more relevant as she is able to draw connections to the country and to the people. For example, during the recent terrorist attack in Paris, Andrea felt that her response to the tragedy was very different from her peers. “I’ve been there. I remember being there. I remember the people that I met there, the people that I stayed with” (Andrea, conversation, November 21, 2015).

Similarly, Andrea’s Third Culture lifestyle impacted her love for travel and “sparked” her desire to explore the unknown, “knowing just that there is so much more out there, I feel like I want to see more. I want to do more” (Andrea, conversation, November 21, 2015). Andrea felt that her parents’ decision to move overseas was the best opportunity they could have given her, and is thankful for the sacrifices that were made.

I had a great experience.

I mean, obviously there were difficulties and challenges with it but,

I think that those challenges and difficulties make you grow as a person.

I said, bring independence sooner.

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I think you find out a lot about yourself.

I think, as a growing and learning experience for my family,

I think, it would be invited.

I mean, my husband said he would be open to that as well.

I've been through and what a good experience

I had.

I'm sure that plays into his willingness as well.

I would say,

I'm fairly easygoing, adaptable.

I would say,

I am ... optimistic

I would look for the best in a situation.

I had a unique experience.

I've been to multiple different places, and traveled, and been exposed to lots of different cultures.

### **Andrea's Repatriating Narrative**

#### **Critical Incidents**

1	2	3	4	5
Everyday America	American Football	Thanksgiving Break	London X-mas	Honduras

The month before Andrea graduated high school she and ten of her friends took a trip together to Costa Brava, Spain. They had researched and planned the entire trip themselves and were anxious to experience the coast of Spain together before going to college. Andrea's parents supported her unaccompanied trip to a foreign country with

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little concern: “they were just probably accustomed to seeing us travel, and go places, and be independent, and I think you became independent a lot quicker” (Andrea, conversation, November 21, 2015). Andrea remembered that her older sister was shocked to find out that she would be traveling out of the country, unaccompanied, with boys, especially after she was not allowed to go on an all-girls senior camping trip two hours away from home in Illinois. Andrea’s senior trip to Costa Brava was the perfect way to end her senior year. It represented the freedoms of living a Third Culture lifestyle; she was exploring a foreign culture with her best friends, for the last time. Andrea spent her days on the beach, sharing pitchers of Sangria, and her nights in the clubs dancing to Spanish music, sipping on Spanish liquor. While her senior trip highlighted the end of her third culture life, it also marked the beginning of her repatriation transition. Andrea had always planned on moving back to the United States for attending a university, however it wasn’t until this trip that she realized what she was going to be giving up.

### ***First critical incident: re-adjusting to everyday America.***

*Shopping.* After graduation, Andrea packed her bags for college and moved in with her older sister in Cincinnati, Ohio. She had decided to spend the summer back in the United States to prepare for her upcoming university transition and to begin to assimilate back into American culture. Her move to Cincinnati represented the initial phase of her transition process. Re-familiarizing herself with American culture was important; Andrea wanted to be exposed to the differences before attending college so that she could get ready for her freshman year. Andrea remembered when her sister took her to shopping malls to see the current trends and to buy new clothes, she was overcome by the size of the malls and the entire shopping experience, the “department stores...they

are so big, and offered pretty much everything, and I didn't even know what size I was because the sizes are different in London” (Andrea, conversation, December 15, 2015).

Similarly, when she went to buy groceries for the first time, she was overwhelmed by the size of the stores and the abundance of options. Back in London, while there were larger grocery stores in the main cities, in her town, “you would have your butcher. You'd have your greengrocer. You'd have your bakery ... and a couple of little grocery stores”

(Andrea, conversation, December 15, 2015). One of the main differences Andrea noticed was that there were many different varieties of the same grocery item, for example, and an entire aisle dedicated to cereals. She remembered in London having the choice between just a few different types and brands. Andrea’s first few trips to the grocery store became lengthy events; Andrea went down each aisle looking at the different items, often leaving with more than what was on her list.

*Driving.* Andrea began making steps to facilitate a quicker transition; her first step was to get her American driver’s license. She was tired of people assuming that she had failed her driver’s test or that she had a fear of driving. Andrea remembered feeling behind the rest of her peers because, “in America, everybody gets their driver's license at 16, so it's like, ‘Why don't you have your driver's license?’” (Andrea, conversation, December 16, 2015). Andrea had some previous driving exposure, however it was on the opposite side of the road. During Andrea’s senior year in London, she had taken a few driving lessons, but never took the driving test. Most teenagers did not drive as public transit was so accessible. Also, it was common knowledge that the English driving test was difficult and that it took many Americans two attempts to pass (Andrea commented that she was unsure if that was because of their driving ability, or because of their cultural



identity). Andrea's sister had agreed to lending Andrea her car for practice. Andrea began driving around the neighborhood, and because she was over eighteen years old, she did not have to take drivers education courses; all she had to do was pass the driving test. After a few weeks of driving and studying, Andrea took the driving test and passed.

Andrea never once felt that she missed out on an "American rite of passage" (Andrea, conversation, December 16, 2015), but she was excited to have her driver's license, even if she didn't have a car to drive. Her driver's license also acted as a form of identification. In London, and traveling around Europe, Andrea had become accustomed to traveling with her passport as her primary form of I.D., and now, Andrea's passport was locked away for safe keeping. Obtaining her driver's license satisfied her desire to feel connected to her American peers. Knowing how to drive, and having the legal documentation, Andrea felt comfortable heading into her freshman year of college; she felt that she was one step closer to assuming the same identity as her future classmates.

***Second critical incident: experiencing American football.*** Andrea had always envisioned her life back in the United States, and therefore only researched colleges in the United States, primarily the Midwest, to be close to her family. Andrea had always known she wanted to work in medicine and therefore narrowed down her college search according to physician assistant programs. Marquette University was a perfect fit for Andrea; Marquette is a midsized, private, Jesuit University located in the heart of Milwaukee. Graduating from a class of forty-eight students, Andrea was looking forward to attending a college that wasn't too small, and wasn't too big. While she was anticipating a diverse student population, she felt that the student body was primarily

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American and during her five years there, “it definitely didn't feel like it was that diverse” (Andrea, conversation, November, 21, 2015).

Andrea’s transition into college was easy, “not that there weren't difficulties at the time, but it was just more of like, ‘This is where I'm going to be. This is what I have to do. This is the new normal I need to get used to’” (Andrea, conversation, December 21, 2015). Because she had only moved once before, and between two cultures, this move was more of a “homecoming.” Her life in London suddenly started to feel like an extended vacation. She found it easy to fit in with her classmates, easy to adjust to the American lifestyle, and she began to consider herself like the rest of her American classmates, detaching from her Third Culture identity. While she had little trouble adjusting, she did notice minor differences between her and the American students.

The fall season in Milwaukee was similar to the fall she experienced in London, shorter days, nights were crisp, and smells of pumpkin and apple spice filled the air. There was, however, a new element to the fall season that Andrea remembered to be unique to American culture, and that was American football. During her time in London, Andrea was aware that she was missing out on an American pastime, but because she was removed and it wasn't a main focus where she was living, she didn't pay much attention. Once a year, on Super Bowl Sunday, she and her best friend would stay up until midnight to watch the only broadcasted American football game; “my friend and I would watch it live and have a party, but it was on so late” (Andrea, conversation, December 16, 2015). To this day, she feels weird watching the Super Bowl during the daytime. “I'm like, ‘It's

on so early.’ I forget how early it is because I’m so used to it being a really late thing” (Andrea, conversation, December 15, 2015).

Walking through the dorms on Sundays, it was evident that Andrea felt disconnected to her peers. She couldn’t understand how a sport could dictate an entire day; “everybody would stop what they were doing” (Andrea, conversation, December 15, 2015), to watch football, all day. Andrea did not have a football team that she supported. “I still don’t feel like I have a football team.” (Andrea, conversation, December 15, 2015). Andrea’s indifference was questioned by many. “You live in Wisconsin. Are you a Packers fan?” No. “Ok then who do you root for?” and without being able to give an answer, she felt “un-American.” She had always enjoyed watching football, but for the past few years, it was not a prominent part of her life.

It was during the football games when Andrea started noticing the difference in drinking cultures. She was aware that twenty-one was the legal drinking age in the United States, however she did not agree with it nor did she understand it. Andrea had been drinking in London, legally, since she was sixteen years old, and found it amusing to watch eighteen-year-old college freshman go to great lengths to then smuggle alcohol into their dorm rooms to watch the games. At first the change in drinking culture was difficult for Andrea, not because she wanted to “go and get drunk at the bar” but because she missed the pub culture and having “a place to go to hang out with people, a social gathering more than anything (Andrea, conversation, December 21, 2015).

***Third critical incident: first American Thanksgiving.*** The first few months of Andrea’s transition back into the United States were “fairly easy” (Andrea, conversation,

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December 15, 2015), and her transition was proving to be successful. While she had noticed minor differences, they were aspects of the American culture that were easy to adapt to. It wasn't until her classmates returned to their respective homes for Thanksgiving break, "pretty much everybody had somewhere to go, they were going back home, seeing friends from home and family," that she realized a major aspect of her life was much different than her peers. Andrea's parents were still living in London and the four-day vacation was not conducive for travel across the Atlantic. It was at that point that Andrea felt lost, and "didn't feel like there was anywhere that I belonged" (Andrea, conversation, November 21, 2015). That was the first time Andrea mourned her Third Culture lifestyle. "What am I going to do?... that was the first shock I experienced, I don't have anywhere to go. I don't really have a home or family near here" (Andrea, conversation, November 21, 2015), and thought that she may be celebrating her first American holiday back on American soil, alone.

It wasn't long until Andrea's anxiety subsided; Andrea's best friend from London had moved out to California to attend a university, and her family was also living in California. Andrea had grown close to her best friend's family in London. She had spent vacations and holidays with them, and even spent many Thanksgivings with them. Andrea explained that in London, many American families joined together for holidays, creating a Third Culture family; their bonds were strong and their relationships continued beyond the Third Culture. After learning that Andrea was going to be alone for the holiday, her best friend's family invited her out west to join them. Although Andrea could not travel home to be with her family, celebrating with a family from her Third Culture past was comforting.

*Fourth critical incident: home for the holidays.* At the end of Andrea's first semester of college she was ready to make the ten-hour flight back home to London for the Christmas holiday. She was elated to have somewhere to go, back to her town, back to her family. "I went and stayed for a whole month," however it immediately felt different (Andrea, conversation November 21, 2015). Many of her friends from high school had repatriated to attend a university and their families were no longer living in London. "I didn't feel like I had the same connection and group there. Going back there felt like it wasn't really home either. It was different. It was definitely different" (Andrea, conversation, November 21, 2015). Andrea had a lot of time to contemplate the differences as she was not going to school or working; she was back in her house, living with her parents, but didn't feel at home. Andrea's best friend, now living in California, flew back to London to stay with Andrea and her parents for an entire week. It was during that week, having her best friend back home, experiencing London together, that Andrea felt as though she was back at home. From that, she learned that home was not a geographical location and that relationships play an important role. Andrea understood that it would never be the same.

That trip was integral to Andrea's repatriating process as it was the last year her parents would be living overseas. At the end of the year, they would be repatriating back to the Midwest and the physical connection to London would be lost. Having the opportunity to go back one last time was important for Andrea; she was able to experience London one last time as a TCK and say goodbye to her Third Culture life. While her trip home for the holidays was emotional, Andrea realized a lot about who she was, what her Third Culture lifestyle meant to her, and what it meant to be living back in

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the United States. She continued to hold on to her Third Culture identity because with her parents still living there, she was able to feel the physical connection:

I still felt like I had a connection there.

I wasn't living there.

I could always just say my parents still live there.

I still had this connection.

I knew I was going back.

I had a place to stay, a home there.

Once her parents moved back to the United States, Andrea no longer felt connected to her Third Culture life; she felt that it was necessary to let go of some of her Third Culture ties:

I felt like,

I no longer had that connection.

I didn't have a home there anymore.

I didn't have connections there anymore.

I didn't know the next time,

I would be back there.

I didn't know if,

I would ever be back there again.

Andrea started to talk about her experiences less and began to focus on her future in the United States rather than her past as a TCK. She was excited to be living back in the United States, was proud of her American identity, and was ready to become an active member of her society.

***Fifth critical incident: giving back globally.*** Although Andrea had successfully assimilated and was close to completing her repatriation transition, it wasn't until she

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traveled to Honduras to provide medical care to the local communities that she truly felt she had completed her repatriation journey. Andrea's opportunity to travel to Ethiopia with the medical charity in high school encouraged her to seek similar opportunities while in college and as a student in the medical field she was eager to experience that again with a larger skillset. During Andrea's sophomore year at Marquette she was presented with another charitable opportunity in Honduras. Andrea was excited to help offer her services and experience a part of South American culture.

Before embarking on the one-week trip, she and the other doctors were asked to collect medical supplies and medications from different companies to offer the local communities. Because they were traveling with a charitable organization, all of the medications were donated by various companies. Each of participating medical volunteers were allotted "two fifty-pound bags to bring with us" (Andrea, conversation, December, 15, 2015). The organization was directed by a Franciscan nun who lived in one of the local villages. "When we arrived in Honduras we were transported to the nun's compound outside of the city center" (Andrea, conversation, December 15, 2015). The nun's compound housed twenty-five medical volunteers and was serviced by hired locals who "helped take care of us and cook our meals" (Andrea, conversation, December 15, 2015). Although the organization provided Spanish-speaking interpreters for the clinics, Andrea enjoyed using her Spanish-speaking skills while conversing with the locals at the compound.

Andrea still remembers the very first day at the clinic: "we all piled in cars, I think ten of us sat in a truck bed of a pickup to get there. We drove down roads, that

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weren't really roads, through sugar cane fields. We passed hundreds of people, adults, kids, babies, walking to the clinic" (Andrea, conversation, December 15, 2015). The week-long medical clinics had been previously advertised so that the communities were aware of the medical services that were going to be offered. Andrea could not believe how many people would walk hours to receive medical care. Andrea had previous experience. The clinics were assembled in rural villages, "at local schools, which were basically buildings, that were large enough to provide medical attention to the locals," and they "didn't have electricity or running water. There weren't bathrooms, there were holes in the ground" (Andrea, conversation, December 15, 2015). While Andrea had been exposed to Third World inconveniences in her previous travels, it was difficult providing medical care without having electricity and running water. Water was brought in to the clinics daily; "they had wells but you couldn't drink the water," and the clinics were only open until sundown.

The patients were in need of medical help ranging from open wounds, to illnesses, to serious health diagnoses. The medical volunteers were only equipped to help where they could and with the supplies they had brought over from the United States. Many of the patients would complain about head pain or other pains in their bodies in order to receive simple pain relieving medications that are not available for purchase: "we brought a lot of prescription medications that would help with many illnesses, but what a lot of them really wanted were Tylenol and ibuprofen" (Andrea, conversation, December 15, 2015). Andrea thought about the convenience of buying medications in the United States: "we have them in abundance in the states. You can even buy big bottles with five-hundred tablets"; their jobs "so physical, working in the fields all day, and they have



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common body pains that they can't even relieve with pain medication" (Andrea, conversation, December 15, 2015).

Andrea felt blessed to be given the opportunity to help these struggling communities, even if just by providing pain relievers. There was one instance in particular that caused Andrea to reflect on the difference in attitude between the American culture and many of the cultures she came across during her Third Culture experiences. One of Andrea's patients was an older man, in his late sixties, who had clearly suffered a stroke, "but he didn't know it because he did not have the necessary medical care" (Andrea, conversation, December 15, 2015); he strained to move the entire right side of his body. Andrea explained the symptoms and causes associated with a stroke but felt helpless as she could not help him—the damage had already been done and was not properly cared for. She was, however, able to provide him with examples of therapeutic exercises to help increase movement and alleviate pain. He was so grateful for the help she provided that the very next day he walked all the way back to the clinic, this time with his entire family, "and thanked every single person there" (Andrea, conversation, December 15, 2015). Andrea could not believe that although she was unable to provide medical care for his disease, he was appreciative for the little help that she offered.

During her five years at Marquette, Andrea traveled to Honduras four separate times and after college traveled to India and Haiti. While many students and medical volunteers were hesitant, Andrea felt comfortable traveling to developing countries due to her past Third Culture traveling experiences. "I don't know that my family would have

been as supportive if I hadn't had that experience” (Andrea, conversation, November 15, 2015). Andrea explained that her desire to travel to provide medical resources to the developing countries was a result of her Third Culture experience in Ethiopia; she understood that many citizens of the world live without necessary and appropriate medical care. Contrary to Andrea’s medical experience in the United States, there are many people that are thankful for not only the treatment but the emotional attention they receive: “many people here in the states are so demanding, they want everything, they expect everything. And this guy, walked all the way back to the clinic to thank me for showing him exercises” (Andrea, conversation, December 15, 2015).

Andrea walked away from each of those medical trips with many valuable lessons. It goes without saying that Andrea felt extremely fortunate to be an American, where medical care is readily available: “it opened my eyes to the needs in the world” (Andrea, conversation, December 15, 2015). Being exposed to different cultures, and participating in global charitable organizations, directly influenced Andrea’s participation in her own culture. She recognized that while not all American citizens choose to give back to their communities or help the less fortunate, they should choose to treat “other people with respect and not be judgmental” (Andrea, conversation, December 15, 2015). The United States has been defined as a “melting pot<sup>3</sup> and we have a lot of different people that come into the country” (Andrea, conversation, December 15, 2015) and it is the public’s responsibility to remain open-minded, welcoming, and respectful to those from diverse cultural backgrounds.

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<sup>3</sup> Today, the literature speaks more to a salad bowl metaphor where each identity remains intact, not a deficit model that assimilation requires.

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Andrea's global experiences have exposed her to countries where basic needs are not met and where running water is considered a luxury. She has experienced cultures where people's voices are silenced, where aspects of daily life are controlled, where information is censored, and where people are not free to practice religion. Andrea is not only grateful for the available basic need resources in the United States, but has a deep appreciation for the American freedoms and liberties.

I vote.

I think that for me it's important.

I know people that don't vote.

I feel like if you don't have that strong of an opinion or you're not paying attention, you almost shouldn't vote.

I think that they don't have a 100% voter turnout because people would then just be voting at random.

I guess that's how,

I feel that's a benefit to being American.

I feel like that's a right that we're given, that

I choose to exercise, but

I don't know to say that every single person that's American should do that.

I want to say yes, everyone should vote but,

I don't know.

Taking advantage of American rights and freedoms is just that, freedom to engage in American rights, "that's the whole point of the nation that we live in...there are different people and people that do different things. You have a right to pick or choose with what you want to participate in" (Andrea, conversation, December 15, 2015).

While Andrea strives to be civically engaged, she admits that her knowledge of American history and “even knowledge of the current system and how things run...is definitely not on par to where it should be” (Andrea, conversation, December 15, 2015). People often attribute Andrea’s lack of American knowledge to her global education; however, Andrea argues that she has never been interested in government, regardless of where she was living: “the Queen doesn't make any decisions, but I don't know. I think she's just a figurehead, but I'm not exactly sure” (Andrea, conversation, December 15, 2015). When living in London, Andrea was viewed as an outsider and did not feel an allegiance to the country; therefore, didn’t take the time to learn about the history of the government.

**Repatriation reflection: “blend in with the crowd.”** Andrea did not like to draw attention to her Third Culture experience; she wanted to “blend in with the crowd” (Andrea, conversation 3, 2015). Interestingly, many of her friends in college did not know that she was a TCK and had spent the last five years abroad in London. Andrea wanted to “blend in with the crowd.” Andrea believed that while “it serves an important role in shaping who I am now and what I've been through, I don't like to draw attention” (Andrea, conversation, December 15, 2015). Andrea had an amazing experience and “wouldn't trade it for anything,” however as time passes, “it almost feels like something that's not even relevant anymore” (Andrea, conversation, December 15, 2015). Those closest to Andrea “understand that it has shaped who I am” and even though “I still think it's a big part of my identity...I think that I don't feel that need to prove myself, to show that I’m unique” (Andrea, conversation, December 15, 2015).

### **Jeff's Final Portrait**

#### **Where Are You From?**

*Where am I from, that's a loaded question. For most people it isn't, for me it definitely is. I was born in Long Beach, California, I lived in Poland for 3 years, and I lived in London, England for 15, so my developmental years were there. Then I moved back to the U. S. in 2003, lived in South Carolina. I've lived in Florida. I've lived in Missouri. I've lived in South Korea. So where am I from? I'm kind of from everywhere. I'm not from one specific place. I'm not really at home anywhere. I'm not from anywhere, but I'm from everywhere. There is no home. Home was with friends and family. Home is not a physical place. It's my parents, my family, my wife, that's home.*

#### **Jeff Today**

Jeff is a thirty year-old Caucasian male who was born into a missionary family and is the youngest of three. Jeff has two older sisters and his parents recently celebrated forty years of marriage. Jeff feels blessed to have been born into a family that practices and values the Christian faith. Jeff's faith not only impacts his relationship with his family; it plays an integral role in his relationships with friends. In Jeff's life, "God plays a huge role" (Jeff, conversation, January, 4, 2015) and he believes that his involvement with Christ continues to help him grow spiritually and emotionally.

Jeff currently resides in Washington State with his wife. Since living back in the United States Jeff has lived in four states and seven cities, and attributes his constant mobility to feelings of rootlessness. Enjoying life in the multicultural Pacific Northwest, Jeff has no immediate plans of moving elsewhere. After praying about direction in his life, Jeff found a passion for firearms. Jeff is a gun range supervisor and firearms instructor at his local gun range, where he teaches various hand gun safety courses and intermediate and marksmanship classes. Jeff's passion for firearms and for teaching

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came across through conversation. His love for firearms has progressed from a hobby to a career to a way of life.

“As a third culture kid, as a nomad, as a traveler, as someone who loves people,” Jeff believes that his faith and his Third Culture experiences have impacted the way he lives his life, “I feel I definitely want to treat, and love, and respect every day in the same way, and just really be welcoming to other cultures.” When asked about the many accomplishments in his life, the one that ranks high on his list is, “I have celebrated my birthday in five continents” (Jeff, conversation, November 22, 2015).

### **Jeff’s Third Culture Narrative**

#### **Critical incidents.**

1	2	3	4	5
London	Accepting Jesus	Brussels for Sports	Trip to Africa	Pub Culture

Jeff was born in Long Beach, California, in 1984, and after two months of appropriate medical care and pediatric appointments, his family travelled back to Poland. Jeff’s family had been living in Poland as Christian missionaries for the previous five years, however his mother had chosen to fly back to the United States to give birth. Poland was a communist state at that time and she felt more comfortable giving birth at a hospital in the United States that offered superior medical care, and where her son would be granted his U.S. citizenship. While some could argue that Jeff began his Third Culture

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experience while in utero, his first true Third Culture move was at the age of two months, when he took his first cross-country and trans-Atlantic flights; he travelled with his family from Los Angeles, to New York, to London, to his new home in Poland. He spent the next four years living in communist Poland, “which was interesting. I didn't really get to experience it because I was so young, but I do remember going to the United States Embassy for a safe haven during martial law” (Jeff, conversation, November 22, 2015). When Jeff’s family was presented with a new missionary opportunity in London in 1988, they were eager to move, follow their calling, and begin a new chapter together.

***First critical incident: the move to London.*** Jeff moved to a suburb of London at the age of four and spent the next fourteen years of his life growing up as an American Londoner. While he identified as an American, and did not have a strong connection to Poland, he quickly accepted London as his new home: “It was definitely a unique experience...I grew up over there” (Jeff, conversation, November 22, 2015). Upon arrival in London, Jeff and his sisters immediately began their schooling at the American Community School (ACS); however, due to the high tuition costs, after two years Jeff was moved to an all boys’ British school. After finishing his elementary years at the British school, Jeff returned to ACS to attend middle school. Knowing that Jeff would repatriate in the future to attend an American university, his parents felt it was important that his middle school and high school education parallel the American curriculum.

Like many TCKs, a number of Jeff’s Third Culture memories arose from travelling around the world. During one of our conversations, Jeff retrieved a small lock box that contained important mementos from his life, many of which were from his Third

Culture experiences. As he opened the box his voice was given life, his face brightened by a smile; each memento represented a unique event from Jeff's past and held sentimental value. Looking through the lock box "feels completely comfortable. It's fun. Most people wouldn't get it or understand it. It's just pretty cool to have all of these little things" (Jeff, conversation, December 14, 2015). The following stories were prompted entirely by some of the treasured and nostalgic keepsakes that Jeff has saved.

*Second critical incident: inviting Jesus into his life.* As a young child, Jeff understood that being born into a Christian missionary family required certain responsibilities within the church; his parents spent their days working at the local parish, leading Bible studies, and working with global Christian organizations to not only spread the word of God, but give back to the communities, and Jeff was required to attend weekly church services and church organized functions. One afternoon after attending morning services, Jeff and his mother were driving to the local grocer and he asked, "how do I invite Jesus into my life?" (Jeff conversation, January, 4, 2016). Jeff was only five years old and knew that he wanted to begin a relationship with God. As missionaries, his parents had always encouraged religion in the household, but choosing to commit to Jesus was viewed as a personal choice. Jeff's mother was thrilled that he had opened his heart to the Lord and was excited for his future within the church.

Jeff's decision to commit to Christ meant that he accepted Jesus Christ as his "savior, part of the holy trinity—God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit. His spirit lives with me as I pursue him because I invited him into my life" (Jeff, conversation, January, 4, 2016). Committing to Christ was integral to Jeff's TCK and repatriating stories as it marked the beginning of his individual religious process, a



journey that impacted every decision that he made to date. “I feel without God, things would have been a lot harder. Any sort of transition would be a lot harder,” however due to his faith, “it made things a lot better, a lot easier. He helps me. I think He helped me to be more active in everything that’s going on around me” (Jeff, conversation, January, 4, 2016).

***Third critical incident: travelling to Brussels for sports.*** As Jeff opened his lockbox he noticed a stack of athletic patches he collected from playing in multiple sports tournaments. One of the benefits of the international school experience was the unique travel opportunities offered to student athletes: “I played a sport every season for 4 years of high school...I played 3 sports a year, and I was able to just travel to other American international schools all around Europe to compete” (Jeff, conversation, November 22, 2015). Jeff referred to his sports trips as unique educational opportunities where he was able “to experience the culture first hand, staying in a flat near the Champs-Elysees in Paris, or staying in a home right outside the heart of Brussels, Belgium” (Jeff, conversation, November 22, 2015). The patches that he had saved were from the international school sports tournaments he participated in (ISST):

I have all of my ISST patches.

I have Vienna for basketball.

I have Paris for multiple sports

for rugby, for baseball, and for basketball.

I have Belgium.

I have The Hague.

I went to Belgium twice,

I did Brussels, and St. Johns.

I don’t have them in this little box.

I have them, Geneva Switzerland for rugby.

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I couldn't afford it otherwise.

I miss that.

(Jeff, conversation, January, 4, 2016)

Jeff held one patch longer than the rest, an ISST patch that he was awarded in Belgium. Jeff played rugby in the fall and winter season and remembered travelling to Brussels for a rugby tournament. After a quick one-hour plane ride, the team arrived at the Brussels airport and travelled to the International School of Brussels (ISB) via coach. Upon arrival to the campus, the team was greeted by the volunteering families that would be housing the ACS team for the duration of the tournament. Similar to the many international tournaments he had attended previously, Jeff didn't know what type of family he would be staying with; he could be housed by "expatriate families that lived there, or even local families who send their kids to an international school" (Jeff, conversation, November 22, 2015). As they read the athletes names off of the list, someone from each family came to the front to greet them. Jeff was one of the first names read and learned that he was going to be staying with the Kuwaiti ambassador and his family. However, the family was not there, and he was instead met by the family's driver. Jeff and another teammate were escorted by the driver to the ambassador's home in the heart of Brussels, just a few train stops away from the Grand Place, the central square of Brussels.

Once they arrived at the ambassador's house, Jeff and his teammate were greeted by the family and were taken to their bedrooms. After settling in, they waited to be notified of dinner. Typically, during the first night of the international sports

tournaments, the athletes and families sat down to share a meal together. The Kuwaiti family was in the midst of Ramadan, a month of fasting in the Islamic religion that commemorates the revelation of the Quran. While Jeff and his teammate were hungry, they “waited until dark to ask for food because we understood, in that culture during Ramadan, they cannot eat anything until dark (Jeff, conversation, November 22, 2015). Therefore, it wasn’t until after sundown that they all sat down to experience a traditional Kuwaiti meal. While Jeff had knowledge of the Islamic ritual, he was grateful for the opportunity to experience the culture firsthand, and was respectful of their customs. Jeff attributed his knowledge and understanding of varying cultures to his sixteen years as an expatriate, and his experiences within the Third Culture; many of his cultural knowledge was gained from travelling internationally for sports. “It’s really cool because I wasn’t just there for a night; I was there for a weekend, 4 or 5 days for a tournament.... I got to see the culture and experience what night life was like” (Jeff, conversation, November 22, 2015). While Jeff enjoyed visiting different cultures, and experiencing them from an authentic lens, he was most grateful for the knowledge gained and the lessons learned from meeting multinational people.

Reliving travel stories from his past reminded Jeff that while he was appreciative of the multiple travel opportunities, on occasion he took them for granted; Jeff remembered a conversation he once had with his father, “when I was a junior in high school I was going to Paris for the 5th time in 4 years. And I said to my dad, “Dad, I am so sick of going to Paris” (Jeff, conversation, November 22, 2015). After Jeff’s father replied, “Son, you know, not many people can say that” (Jeff, conversation, November 22, 2015), Jeff thought about how blessed he was to have viewed the city of Paris

multiple times from the top of the Eiffel Tower, and the intimate memories shared with friends drinking wine beneath the tower at the Champ de Mars or “going to a party with a bunch of international students from all over the world” (Jeff, November 22, 2015). Jeff was thankful for his Third Culture experiences and believed if he could speak to his younger self he would advise to take advantage of all aspects of the Third Culture life, specifically exploring the beauty of cities several times.

***Fourth critical incident: travelling to Africa.*** As Jeff continued to sort through his treasures, he came across a few items that reflected his missionary trip to Africa. As a sophomore in high school, Jeff travelled to Botswana, Africa, as a missionary with a group from his church. For an entire month he travelled around the communities in Botswana, spreading God’s word. During his trip he had the pleasure of meeting village elders and students that were similar in age; however, the most memorable experiences came from working with the children, specifically the children from a local orphanage. Jeff remembered the first day he and his fellow missionaries arrived at the orphanage; the first thing that he noticed was that “It was run down, dirty, and there was not much of a playground” (Jeff, conversation, November 22, 2015) for the children to explore. As he walked into the barren play yard, the children stared up at him in wonderment and began to climb him like a tree; there were pictures “of the kids just climbing all over me because I was such a big dude...6-foot-four, over two-hundred pounds,” and “the smile that I brought to their faces as I let them just kind of hang on me and hang out, was pretty heartwarming” (Jeff, conversation, November 22, 2015). Jeff loved watching the orphaned children smile.

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The purpose of the mission was to create a Bible school for the children to attend. The missionaries read excerpts of the Bible to the children, sang with them, and played with them. While Jeff was unaware of “their real idea of God, or how sincere they were in making a commitment to Christ” (Jeff, conversation, November 22, 2015), he noticed how happy the children were to be a part of something new; he recognized the impact the children were having on him and the rest of the missionaries, “they got to experience happiness. They got to experience the joy of playing. It was awesome to just see that even though they didn’t have much, they’re still smiling. They can still find a way to smile and be happy,” while only possessing the “shoes on their feet, the clothes on their backs” (Jeff, conversation, November 22, 2015). They were some of the happiest and genuine children Jeff had ever come across.

Jeff was hopeful that through his encouraging presence and Bible program, he was able to “make a more positive impact in [the children’s] lives by showing them who God is” (Jeff, conversation, November 22, 2015). However, he truly believed that the experience may have had a stronger and lasting impact on the lives of the missionaries. Jeff learned that “you can have joy and happiness without having things.” The children’s positivity was unexpected and emotionally powerful, pushing Jeff to “want to give away everything I had because if they can be so happy with nothing, no worldly possessions” (Jeff, conversation, November, 22, 2015). A privileged missionary certainly could live “without the crap that we fill our lives with” (Jeff, conversation, November, 22, 2015). After spending a month experiencing life in Botswana, “I literally just gave away all of my clothes. I picked out 5 days’ worth of clothes that I was going to keep, and gave everything else to charity” (Jeff, conversation, November, 2015).

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Jeff was eager to find the rest of the photos from his trip, hoping the photos would stimulate his memory and remind him of the children's names, "photos are really important. I literally have a box full of photos from junior high to last year" (Jeff, conversation, January 4, 2016). Because Jeff cannot physically visit locations from his past, he places great value on his photos as he is able to revisit his Third Culture experiences.

***Fifth critical incident: working at the local pub.*** The next item Jeff found in the lockbox was his national insurance card, a form of identification that grants you the ability to work in the United Kingdom. In order to receive a national insurance number one must be a nationalized citizen. Jeff had obtained his British citizenship, resulting in dual citizenship, during his middle school years. Most of Jeff's peers did not have national insurance cards, as they "were on their father's visas," and were unable to work; "other than cash you can't legally work there unless you have a national insurance number" (Jeff, conversation, January 4, 2016). Unlike a few of his peers, who worked illegally at the green grocers in town, Jeff was able to work legally during his junior and senior years of high school.

After applying to job postings around town, Jeff landed a serving position at the local pub, a popular hangout spot after school, that was frequented by his classmates. Jeff had the ideal job; he was often paid to hang out with his friends. Many of Jeff's friends lived in the same town as he and would spend their afternoons at the pub, socializing, eating, and drinking. The drinking laws in the United Kingdom stated that it was illegal to serve any variety of distilled alcohol to those under the age of eighteen; however, it was legal to serve those who are sixteen years old beer and wine, as long as

accompanied by a meal and bought by an adult. The drinking laws, however, were loosely regulated, especially in the small towns outside of the city center; those who were sixteen were commonly served beer and wine without an adult present, and often provided with distilled alcohol. Jeff's serving job exposed him to more drinking opportunities and he soon became a part of the London pub culture, a culture that he would later miss.

**Third culture reflection: “we live in a small world.”** Living within the Third Culture provided Jeff with an open-minded approach to life. He feels that his global experiences have impacted his sensibility and respect towards various cultures: “I have a profound respect for other cultures. I always will. I have been exposed to so many cultures that I know how to greet many of them” (Jeff, conversation, November 22, 2015). Concerning his future, Jeff hopes that his children choose to be respectful towards varying cultures and celebrate their differences. Jeff understands that “we live in a big world, but we live in a small world. Cities are growing and international people and international business and missions are growing” (Jeff, conversation, November 22, 2015). Jeff feels grateful for the opportunity that he was granted by his parents and knows that with the growing TCK trend, it is important that the younger generations become aware of the different cultures that they may be exposed to during their lifetime.

Jeff continues to value the friendships and close bonds that were created with other TCKs: “we shared an intimate culture, something that defines us” (Jeff, conversation, November 22, 2015). When Jeff is fortunate enough to reconnect with old TCK friends, he is reminded of the unique bond that TCKs share: “we can just get together and pick up where we left off” (Jeff, conversation, November 22, 2015); TCKs

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are forever connected through the cultural experiences that they shared within the Third Culture, many of which he believes would no longer be encouraged. Many of Jeff's travel experience included travelling into the city alone, across European borders with friends, and with sports teams where they were hosted by complete strangers and given freedom to roam the foreign city. Many parents today may be hesitant to encourage their children to take advantage of the freedoms and independent opportunities the Third Culture offers. "I think that what the media portrays today, is fear, and what we had back then was a feeling of safety" (Jeff, conversation, November 22, 2015). It is those treasured experiences that Jeff remembers most about his Third Culture life.

### Jeff's Repatriating Narrative

**Critical incidents.** Being a dual citizen afforded Jeff the opportunity to remain in

1	2	3	4	5
Bible College	Orlando	U.S Army	Pacific Northwest	Firearms

the United Kingdom or start a new life in the United States, the country that he had identified with his entire life; his parents were American, his sisters were American, and his entire extended family was American. While Jeff had lived in the United Kingdom for fourteen years, he "had an American accent the whole time I lived over there. Some British people loved it, some British people weren't that friendly" (Jeff, conversation, November 22, 2015). Because Jeff preserved his American accent, many of the British locals did not recognize Jeff as a nationalized citizen, causing periods of cultural



confusion. Jeff identified with both the American culture and the British culture and felt that he was not fully accepted by either. Looking for a new adventure, he decided he wanted to uproot and move to the United States. Jeff had always imagined life in the United States, and although he had never officially lived there, he decided to repatriate to attend a university.

***First critical incident: attending bible college.*** With a strong faith-based background, Jeff enrolled in a private Christian Bible college located in South Carolina. He arrived to the small campus with one suitcase and was eager to make new friends immediately. “I need people in my life. If I don't have that, if I don't have that camaraderie, I'm going to go insane” (Jeff, conversation, November 22, 2015). Building relationships quickly was necessary while living in the Third Culture; the high mobility rates encourage TCKs to foster meaningful relationships faster than they would in domestic settings where people were afforded time to nurture them organically. Luckily, many of the incoming freshman were also “other missionary kids, other expatriates, other Third Culture kids” and Jeff determined that his decision to attend a “Christian mission-minded school was good for me because I knew it would make my transition easier” (Jeff, conversation, November 22, 2015). Jeff knew that in order to assimilate successfully it was important to surround himself with “people from international backgrounds who had similar experiences” and their “stories were just as crazy” (Jeff, conversation, November 22, 2015). He found that many of the domestic Americans he encountered were not always interested in hearing an explanation of home and his stories were often misinterpreted as arrogant even though “it's not my fault my parents decided

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to move there and be missionaries for 25 years” (Jeff, conversation, November 22, 2015). Jeff felt that his classmates didn’t really know who he was.

After completing his freshman year of Bible college, Jeff believed his “faith was strong. I was doing good things” (Jeff, conversation, December 14, 2015). He decided to move off campus to gain more independence. The Bible school he attended had strict behavior policies and Jeff struggled as he had become accustomed to the freedoms granted within the British culture. At the start of his college career he was required to sign an enrollment contract stating that he would not engage in illegal substances. At first Jeff signed the contract believing it would not be difficult to abstain from drinking; however, he began to miss what had become such a big part of his social life, the “pub culture. You go to the pub to have a pint and chat, talk about life, and things that are going on” (Jeff, conversation, December 14, 2015). He hoped that by moving off campus he would be able to partake in lost freedoms and regain his independence. However, he quickly felt isolated and alone and his life began to take a turn down a dark path.

Jeff felt lost. He found himself missing his Third Culture lifestyle, his friends, and his home: “when I had given up on school, I had thought, why didn’t I stay? Why did I move away? I could have gone to school there, I could have worked there” (Jeff, conversation, January 4, 2016). Jeff had given up so much to repatriate, and he began to mourn the loss of his home. Jeff didn’t have anyone to turn to for help—he felt alone, he felt that the rest of his college classmates were assimilating and he was not. Instead of looking for help, “I looked for my escape” (Jeff, conversation, December 14, 2015) and turned to drugs and alcohol to deal with the grief and to numb his pain.

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I found, once

I moved off campus after my freshman year,

I found it hard.

I wasn't motivated.

I smoked pot in high school, at least tried it.

When I was in college,

I had a really good first year, and then the second year,

I moved out.

I started smoking more pot.

I actually started doing harder drugs.

I wasn't going to school.

I was enrolled in school but,

I wasn't going to classes.

I wasn't there for a full third year.

I started doing cocaine.

I started drinking somewhat heavily.

I realized,

I don't want to be in school.

I don't really want to be here anymore.

I knew I needed help.

I couldn't keep going down that path.

I think,

I was spending more time in a new place and

I wasn't able to transition.

I spent so many years in one place.

(Jeff, conversation, December 14, 2015).

Jeff's life was spinning out of control and he didn't know what to do. His life "just collapsed" (Jeff, conversation, December 14, 2015). Jeff knew that using substances was a "cry for help," and one particular evening he "hit rock bottom" (Jeff, conversation,

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December 14, 2015) and found himself high and drunk, crying alone in a dark room. He felt completely isolated from everyone around him; he couldn't connect to his peers and he felt misunderstood. Through the tears Jeff thought of his Third Culture life, his friendships, and his family, and it was then that he decided that he need help and wanted to figure out his life.

***Second critical incident: move to Orlando.*** In the midst of Jeff's downward struggle, his parents repatriated to the United States, to Orlando, Florida. Jeff decided to finish his associates degree, leave Bible college mid-year, and move to Orlando to live with his parents. He was in desperate need of a trusting support system; Jeff's parents understood his struggles and acknowledged his losses, "loss of friendships, loss of home" (Jeff, conversation, January 4, 2016). While Jeff wished he could have reached out to friends that would understand his repatriating struggles, he found that maintaining relationships with friends around the world was difficult; "I try and do what I can to stay in touch with friends," however trying to coordinate conversations around the various time zones proved to be challenging.

Jeff's motivation to improve his life was fueled by the love and support he received from his parents. For the next year, he chose to stay away from unhealthy habits and filled his days working. "I had to repay my parents because they bailed me out a little, so I worked for a full year in retail and did nothing but pay my parents back" (Jeff, conversation, December, 14, 2015). Jeff's life was moving in a positive direction; he was proud of the progress he was making and was beginning to move forward in his transitioning process. He started to feel "more at home... I was with my parents again,

and I think being with them helped” (Jeff, conversation, December 14, 2015). While Jeff was away at college he chose to mask his depression with alcohol and drugs, whereas, his parents helped him locate the source of his unhappiness and encouraged him to accept help and guidance from others; rather than “trying to do everything on my own...it was helpful to have family to talk to, to be with. The fact that they moved back and started calling their new place home, helped” (Jeff, conversation, January, 4, 2016).

Jeff’s parents’ transition into the United States helped ease Jeff’s emotional pain as they began to focus on the future in Orlando rather than focusing on the past in London. Initially blinded by homesickness, Jeff did not understand that his sadness stemmed from loss; when he left London, he left his friends and family, he left his identity and culture, and he left his sense of belonging. After examining the origin of his sadness, and “coming to terms with the loss” he recognized that he wasn’t grieving over the loss of a geographical location as “home is where my family is, it’s not a place. It’s not a physical location, it’s where people are, it’s where my family is” (Jeff, conversation, January, 4, 2016). It was then that Jeff was able to move forward with his life, be at peace with his losses, and be able to look towards a hopeful future.

***Third critical incident: joining the U.S Army and renouncing British citizenship.***

Once Jeff was feeling confident in himself and his progress, he decided he wanted a fresh start in a new city. “I’ve kind of transitioned. I feel better, and moving seemed to help” (Jeff, conversation, December 14, 2015). He chose to move two and a half hours south of Orlando to the multi-cultural city of West Palm Beach, Florida. Jeff looked into colleges in West Palm Beach but was not motivated to re-enter the world of education, and instead found himself pondering, “how can I fit in to this state and fit into this

country? How can I be the person God wants me to be, in this place? (Jeff, conversation, December 14, 2015). Jeff was twenty-four years old, was looking for stability, and wanted to make something of himself. It was during his existential questioning that he decided to inquire about a role in the United States military, “the fact that I could have a job that I would be trained in... a job that could set me up for success” (Jeff, conversation, December 14, 2015).

Jeff remembered his first encounter with a United States military recruiter: “I was first approached by an Air Force recruiter via phone. I went to the recruiter’s office and decided that it wasn’t for me” (Jeff, conversation, January, 4, 2015). A week had passed and he received another phone call, this time from an Army recruiter. At first he was extremely hesitant about meeting with the Staff Sergeant but decided to set up an appointment with him to see what the military could offer. Jeff left the meeting unsettled; he was interested but was not sure that the military was the path he wanted to take at that moment in time. He was still working on bettering himself and wanted to make sure that joining the military wouldn’t interrupt his repatriating transition process. The past year, he had worked hard to make healthy life choices, and he was afraid that having to transition again could be detrimental to his success.

After prayer and several conversations with the Army Staff Sergeant, Jeff decided to enlist with the Army. Before his application was processed Jeff was required to take the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery. Once the Staff Sergeant received his test results, Jeff was notified that he could work for any of the departments in the Army; Jeff chose to work as a Military Police Officer. He felt that his calling was to join the

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Army and he was excited to begin a new adventure; his new job gave him a sense of purpose. Jeff was informed that he would begin his training one month later, and in the meantime was required to complete the Military Entrance Processing Command in Miami, the physical exam, and the medical requirements. Everything was happening so fast, Jeff didn't have much time to process his life-changing decision.

During his time in Miami, Jeff also attended his Secret Clearance interview and was notified that "I had to give up my British citizenship in order to receive clearance" (Jeff, conversation, January 4, 2016). At that moment Jeff began to question his decision. The interviewer explained that it was "simply a matter of turning in my British passport," but that wasn't a simple decision. Although Jeff looked forward to his military adventure, he wasn't ready to surrender his British identity. What would happen if he later changed his mind and decided to move back to London? Would he be able to reapply for citizenship? Jeff was overwhelmed with conflicting emotions and questions of concern but believed that, "to be in America, to be a patriot, that was the thing I had to do" (Jeff, conversation, December 14, 2015); and that was it, Jeff sacrificed his British identity in order to work towards becoming a true patriot, and to "show a love for the country" (Jeff, conversation, December 14, 2015).

The military represented "loyalty, duty, respect, self for service, honor, integrity, and personal courage"; Jeff believed that "because I gave up the right to be a citizen in another country, I was going to be a patriotic service member and uphold these military values" since "I feel like that's how God wanted me to live" (Jeff, conversation, January, 4, 2016). The final step in the enlisting process was to repeat the Oath of Enlistment. The

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Oath would have read as follows: "I Jeff do solemnly affirm that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; and that I will obey the orders of the President of the United States and the orders of the officers appointed over me, according to regulations and the Uniform Code of Military Justice. So help me God" (U.S. Code, 1960). After reciting the oath Jeff felt, "more American than ever" (Jeff, conversation, December 14, 2015).

Jeff began his military journey with the support of his immediate and extended family members. Jeff believed that enlisting in the United States Army would contribute to his transition progress, and after six months of basic and advanced individual training on a military base in Missouri, Jeff officially became a military police officer for the United States Army. Upon completion, Jeff was deployed to the military base in South Korea and was stationed there for the next year. After Korea, Jeff moved back to the United States to complete his service.

I was stationed in South Korea for a year,  
I didn't really get to travel much because being in the military,  
I was a military police officer.  
I was pretty much on post or off post.  
I then moved.  
I was then stationed at Fort Hood, Texas.  
I'd come in the year after the shooting had happened.  
I was attached to an infantry division.  
I was there.  
I had inactive reserve for 5 years.  
I'm good.  
I got out.



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(Jeff, conversation, December 14, 2015)

Texas was “as American as it gets” (Jeff, conversation, December 14, 2015) and after completing his military commitment, Jeff was eager to move to a more culturally diverse state.

*Fourth critical incident: transitioning to the Pacific Northwest.* With only one month left on assignment at Fort Hood, Jeff was forced to decide where he wanted to live. After weighing his options, he decided that he wanted to live near family on the West Coast, in Washington. Jeff considered moving in with his sister and her family near the Naval base, however a friend Jeff met while stationed in Korea had a room available for rent. Jeff jumped on the opportunity and began a month-long road trip across the western half of the United States, visiting friends and family along the way. He “got to stop by and see friends in the military...I got to see family friends who have been supporters of my parents for twenty plus years. I got to see friends in San Diego and San Francisco” and Jeff believed that “seeing familiar faces in my life, having a good time, and catching up on life, was helpful in the transition” (Jeff, conversation, December 14, 2015) from Texas to Washington. Jeff’s move to Washington was the catalyst to completing his repatriation process. During his time in Washington there were several critical incidents that influenced his transition.

*Working at the brewery: driving under the influence.* After four years of being in the military Jeff was concerned about his transition back into civilian life. Living with a “military buddy” and being close to his sister was integral to his transition process: “it made things a little easier... it definitely helped to see old faces, but also to live with someone who had a similar experience in the military, that helped” (Jeff, conversation,

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December 14, 2015). Being aware of his past experience with transition and depression, Jeff decided to remain busy and focus his attention on finding a career. After working in retail for a few months, Jeff discovered his love for the beer industry and began working at a local craft brewery, a job that Jeff would maintain for the next three years in Washington. “I enjoyed what I did, and I think that’s hard to find” (Jeff, conversation, December 14, 2015).

Jeff was hopeful that he would be able to control his drinking habits and refrain from spiraling downward again. However, Jeff’s passion for beer and working at a brewery “definitely collided. It collided really hard in 2012” (Jeff, conversation, December 14, 2015). Jeff had fallen back into his American drinking habits, “everybody’s getting shots. Let’s get wasted, we’ll have so much fun. I think I just fell into that mold, the mold I had despised when I first got here” (Jeff, conversation, December 14, 2015). One night, after drinking at a “club with a buddy, I got in a car and decided to drive home. Luckily I didn’t hurt anybody, but I got pulled over and got a DUI” (Jeff, conversation, December 14, 2015).

After waking up from what seemed to be a nightmare, a “ten-thousand-dollar mistake that I will never, ever, ever, make again,” Jeff chose to treat his mistake as a “big wake-up call” (Jeff, conversation, December 14, 2015). This experience encouraged Jeff to reflect on the underlying root of his current and past bad decisions, and he realized that he had never truly dealt with the loss that came with repatriating; his continued abuse of alcohol to disguise his emotions was preventing him from living a meaningful and happy life.

I needed to start feeling again.

I needed to start dealing with my emotions.

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I needed to start making life decisions, to grow up.

I feel like it was a “grow up” moment.

I don’t want my life to be like this.

I don’t want to be living from paycheck to paycheck, because

I’ve spent it all on booze.

(Jeff, conversation, January 4, 2016).

His wake-up call afforded him a new perspective on life. He started to acknowledge and appreciate his emotions, which resulted in another significant step forward in his repatriation process. After a year of rehabilitation at an outpatient clinic, and group therapy, Jeff proudly kept his drinking under control. He recognized that “because of alcohol and drugs, it has made my transition so much harder,” and he no longer wanted to depend on them to make him feel good. “I don’t want to focus on aspects that have only brought me down. I want to be happier... [and] I want God to be that dependency” (Jeff, conversation, January 4, 2016).

*Meeting his wife.* Jeff met his wife shortly before he was cited for driving under the influence of alcohol. He believes that without her support, he wouldn’t have been able to turn the negative experience into a positive, and would have instead reverted down a dark path. She kept Jeff honest and didn’t let his experience define who he was: “without her support, and keeping me in check, I don’t think I would be where I am now” (Jeff, conversation, December 14, 2015, and he would “probably be in another state already. I’d be somewhere else, trying to figure out life. If it wasn’t for meeting her, and staying here, I would be somewhere else (Jeff, conversation, December 14, 2015).

After a month of dating, Jeff knew that he had met the woman he wanted to spend the rest of his life with; “she grew up going to church, and we share the same faith. She’s

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kind of the opposite of me, she doesn't drink as much, she's shy, and she's not as outgoing and bonkers as I am" (Jeff, conversation, December 14, 2015). When Jeff talks about his wife, his entire demeanor changes, and there is a brightness that shines through his eyes and his smile. Jeff knew from the moment he met her, on their very first date, that she was going to change his life for the better. They shared their first date at Starbucks, and what was initially meant to be a quick coffee date turned into an afternoon of laughing and sharing stories about their lives: "we talked for hours, to the point where we were hungry and needed to go eat somewhere" (Jeff, conversation, December, 14, 2015). Jeff remembered that she was the first person he had met in the United States that was genuinely interested in hearing about his Third Culture life and she encouraged discussion of his Third Culture experiences. It was the first time that he had felt comfortable talking about his past since he had repatriated. He knew from that moment that they were meant to cross paths.

Eight months after their first date, during Easter weekend, Jeff asked his girlfriend's father for her hand in marriage, and with his blessing, bought a ring and began planning the marriage proposal. Jeff wanted the proposal to be a surprise and so he asked his girlfriend to go for a walk, which wasn't out of the ordinary as they had gone on walks to the local parks many times before. This particular Friday afternoon, Jeff walked hand in hand with his girlfriend to Alki Beach where they were able to experience the breathtaking view of the Seattle skyline. While his girlfriend captured photos of the beautiful scenery, Jeff knew that it was time to pop the question: "the ring was burning a hole in my pocket so just before she turned around," he got down on one knee and asked, "Love is the giving or withholding of feelings, words, and/or actions for the benefit of the

one loved regardless of my personal expense or sacrifice, for the ultimate glory of God! I love you and will you marry me?" (Jeff, conversation, January 4, 2016). And with no hesitation and through tears of joy, Jeff's girlfriend said "yes."

After Jeff placed the ring on her finger they spent the afternoon walking along the beach and talking about their future growing old together. Jeff realized that at that moment, he was the happiest he had ever been since living back in the United States. He looked forward to sharing his life with someone who accepted him, and acknowledged all of his unique identities. Because Jeff's girlfriend was born and raised in Washington, it was then that he began to envision his future in, "the Evergreen state," and in the United States.

***Fifth critical incident: a passion for firearms.*** Jeff continued to work at the brewery; however, he realized his job was being overshadowed by his passion for firearms. While having previous training and experience working with firearms in the military, "I hadn't been shooting since the military, and it reignited my passion" (Jeff, conversation, November 22, 2015). Jeff had always enjoyed shooting recreationally, and started to frequent the gun range. His growing interest encouraged him to explore his "expensive hobby" (Jeff, conversation, December, 14, 2015) and turn it into a potential career path.

Jeff first visited the gun range with his wife, slowly introducing her to different hand guns. Eventually, on their days off, Jeff and his wife would often accompany friends to the gun range to teach them to shoot. One afternoon he and his wife decided to bring a couple of their friends from church to the gun range. Jeff looked forward to sharing his knowledge of both guns and shooting techniques with anyone willing to

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listen. During their afternoon at the range, Jeff's wife noticed that Jeff was the happiest he had been in a long time: "my wife says there is an energy that surrounds me when I teach people how to shoot" (Jeff, conversation, December 14, 2015). Jeff taught his friends about gun safety and worked with each friend individually to help perfect their shot. His friends appreciated his knowledge and attention to the craft of shooting. It was clear that Jeff had found his calling. "I could talk about guns all day" (Jeff, conversation November 22, 2015). From that day forward Jeff knew that he wanted to be a firearms instructor and that it would play a major role in his life.

Jeff's interest resulted in a part-time job at the gun range, although managing two jobs proved to be challenging. After debating for a few months and weighing his options, Jeff decided to quit his job at the brewery and pursue a full-time career as a firearms instructor. After a year of employment Jeff obtained his National Rifle Association (NRA) instructors certification and was promoted to range supervisor and continues to teach a variety of handgun courses. "I feel more American today than I ever have before" (Jeff, conversation, December 14, 2015).

This life-changing career move represented the final step in Jeff's repatriation process.

To choose a career in firearms meant that he chose a life in the United States, as gun ownership is illegal in the United Kingdom. Jeff believed that guns represent "freedom and patriotism. You can only legally defend yourself with a firearm in this country, and that has made me more American" (Jeff, conversation, December 14, 2015).

I'm American.

I got this job at the shooting range and really started to pursue my passion.

I think that put the icing on the cake.

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I transitioned fully from a TCK to an American.

I realized,

I now understand the constitution.

I'm a firearms owner.

I will never live in the U.K again.

I can't own firearms, and the safety of my spouse and family is more important.

I still identify as a third culture kid, but that's not where

I am at.

I support the second amendment.

I love the freedom this country offers.

Firearms became an integral part of Jeff's life; aside from pursuing a career in firearms instruction, Jeff integrated it into his personal, social and religious life. Jeff continues to educate his community about firearms and through his church he has hosted shooting events for women.

**Repatriation reflection: "this is where I need to be."** Jeff's repatriation process was complete with multiple life-changing critical incidents. Initially, Jeff struggled with his decision to repatriate as he had a difficult time assimilating and transitioning into a life with new expectations. It wasn't until Jeff pursued his passion as a firearms instructor, eleven years after reentering the United States, that he believed he had successfully transitioned. He no longer yearned for his Third Culture lifestyle and he was proud to be an active American citizen, whether it be helping in his local church community or supporting the second amendment through his career.

I found that this is where,

I need to be, where,

I'm going to live.

I've said before,

I've lived in three or four different cities since,

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I've been here.

I've definitely found the Pacific Northwest is where,

I'm going to be and where,

I want to be.

(Jeff, conversation, January 4, 2016).

Jeff understood that by choosing a life in firearms, he chose a life in the United States. However, Jeff made it clear that his choice to remain in the United States did not negate his Third Culture experience and his connection to London: "my roots are still in London, in England. That's where I was raised, that's kind of my home away from home" (Jeff, conversation, December 14, 2015). For the majority of Jeff's life, he felt that he was a "nomad." It wasn't until he met his wife and began his career in firearms that he made the conscious decision to remain in the United States. With that being said, although Jeff doesn't have any plans of moving outside of the country, he still feels a sense of restlessness and is eager to move and experience new cultures within the United States.

I can't settle down in one place

I almost felt lost for a few years.

I don't feel settled.

I can't stay in one place for too long.

I feel like, in the next 4 to 5 years,

I need to move somewhere else otherwise

I'm going to go nuts.

I aim to advance my career,

I want to move to Arizona because they have firearms academies down there.

I'm always thinking that there's somewhere else

I need to be.

I'm here now.



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I'm enjoying life,

I'm loving life, loving my wife, but being a third culture kid, being a nomad, it's hard.

I wish,

I could just get up and go and take my wife with me.

(Jeff, conversation November 22, 2015).

Chapter Five: Discussion

**Introduction**

The previous chapter outlined the analytical steps of the research study and presented the findings in final narrative portraits. It is important to note that most often in narrative inquiry the final narratives are regarded as the findings as well as the conclusions. The final narratives act as platforms to convey the participant voices as they relived and retold their Third Culture and repatriating experiences. With that being said, there were storied themes that emerged from the repatriation experiences. The following chapter (a) provides discussion of the repatriating themes that were reflected within the TCKs' experiences; (b) explains the significance of the research methodology; (c) explores future implications of theory, research and practice; (d) provides explanation of the potential limitations of the study; and (e) concludes with my journey to the research, and my personal researcher reflections.

**Research Questions Revisited**

The goal of this study was to further understand the repatriation process of American TCKs by capturing four repatriating experiences and presenting them through narrative portraits. There were four research questions generated to investigate the Third Culture and Repatriation experiences of the participating TCKs. Each question looked at different aspects of the repatriating phenomenon. During the research process the questions did not change; however, once the emerging data suggested that the repatriating process did not occur upon immediate reentry, the focus shifted from studying the transition process specifically for post-secondary education, to studying the repatriation

process in its entirety, which for some concluded ten years after their return. The four questions that guided this research study are listed below for reference:

- What can we learn from the experiences of TCKs repatriating for post-secondary education?
- What repatriating transition experiences do TCKs identify as significant?
- What is the relationship between emotional intelligence and successful reacculturation?
- What is the relationship between the Third Culture experience and democratic responsibility?

### **Participant Repatriating Experiences**

After spending a significant period of time during their developmental years outside of the United States, Quick (2010) suggests that while TCKs have become familiar with the process of relocation, the most difficult transition process “is when they repatriate long-term to the country which their passport declares as home but in which they may not have lived for much or all of their childhood” (Quick, 2010, xv). When TCKs return to their native culture the research suggests that it may take longer than expected to feel comfortable in what is perceived as their home culture. There is an expectation that because they are returning home, they should be able to assimilate immediately and with ease; however, TCKs have to learn about their native culture in the same way that they learned about their host cultures. It can be emotionally confusing as they are both excited to re-experience the culture they have always identified as “home,” but are anxious to encounter something new.

It is important to recognize that the participants engaged in the repatriating transition stages in different ways, and moved through the process at varying rates; while the stages are not unique to TCKs, the process they experienced was intensified. The process should not be forced and in order to successfully repatriate it is necessary to transition through each stage naturally. The previous research suggested that upon reentry, specifically for post-secondary education, the average TCK transitions after the first year on native soil (Quick, 2010), however this study found that successful completion of the repatriation process can occur much later.

One of the strengths of completing this research study, over ten years after reentry, was that the participants were able to reflect on their repatriation process in its entirety—this as opposed to a study of current repatriating students who are in the midst of their transition and unable to consider the possible impact it may have on their future lives. The narrative retellings were not confined to the initial repatriation experience itself as the participants were able to reflect on the impact it had on their current lives as thirty-year-olds who are employed, married, engaged, have children, and are active participants in their societies. If the study were to focus solely on the transition as undergraduate students, it wouldn't have been able to explore the influence their Third Culture and repatriating experiences had on their sense of self and their current lives as ATCKs.

### **Interpretation of Findings**

This section explores the themes that emerged from the participants' repatriation narratives in relation to the existing literature and theoretical frameworks. While the TCK narratives strengthened previous research, the repatriating narratives offered new findings. The following sections address this research studies guiding research questions

and explore the five main conclusions: (a) home is not defined by one physical location, (b) assimilation and repatriation do not equate, (c) emotional intelligence is a factor in repatriation success, (d) Third Culture experiences influence civic engagement, and (e) There is one incident that is perceived as signifying the completion of repatriation.

### **Home Is Not Defined by One Physical Location**

I began each interview by asking the participants what many would view as a simple question, “Where are you from?” All of the participants took a few moments to gather their thoughts and it was clear that their responses required an analysis of their complicated TCK lives. As mentioned in chapter two, TCK research suggests that discussion of home will forever be a challenging and complicated topic of discussion as their sense of home may be different than “someone [who grew] up in one country. Home after all, is the place where you feel at home” (Eakin, 1996). As TCKs often feel connected to multiple cultures, they may feel at home in multiple locations, and thus answering the “ubiquitous question” (Bell, 1997, p. 1) proves difficult. The participants in this study offered in-depth explanations, however, it was obvious that they too struggled to define home and their love/hate relationship with the question was evident. Before the participants were able to respond, they all felt it necessary to preface their answer with an acknowledgement of their feelings about the question itself and the confusion it causes. All four of the participants felt it difficult to answer, no matter the context of the conversation.

Each participant mentioned that their response is dependent upon who they are conversing with and how much they are willing to share. Although they may find it difficult to answer, they are proud of their Third Culture experience and the high mobility

it may have caused in their adolescent and adult lives. While they may be excited to share their unique story, they have found that most are looking for a quick answer rather than an extensive and complete explanation. Therefore, they simply provide a chronological timeline that reflects the geological locations that they have at one point referred to as home, as they have become accustomed to viewing home as, “just another somewhere” (McCaig, 1996). An example that exemplifies the confusion that TCKs face was best expressed by Jiggy’s response:

I don’t know. I guess the answer is where I am right now. It depends on the context of the conversation because it also depends on who I am talking to. If I were talking to somebody at work and they are from New York, I would say I am from New York. If I were talking to an English person at a pub and they asked, I would say I’m from London. The question has different answers every single time. If I were talking to a completely random person that I met on vacation, I would say that I am from Los Angeles. I guess I pick and choose. It varies from person to person. When I say, ‘I’m going home,’ I am going to the place where I live right now. It’s not necessarily home. I guess it all depends on the person that I’m talking to. I guess up front I’m confused. I’ve started off confused. It’s confusing when you don’t have a kneejerk reaction or response. Anytime you don’t have one, it means that you are somewhat confused (Jiggy, conversation, December, 2015).

As a result of their confusion, most of the participants seemed to have formed a general, almost scripted, explanation of home. Although their most common explanation involved a list of their moves, they personally do not define home in regard to

geographical locations. An example that best represents their identification of home was discussed by Jeff: “I’m not from anywhere, but I’m from everywhere. There is no home. Home was with my friends and family. Home is not a physical place. It’s my parents, my family, my wife. That’s home” (Jeff, conversation, December 14, 2015). They all felt that home is identified by where their families live or where they currently reside and discussion of home centered around their close relationships. Ultimately, they believed that the term “home” carries a different meaning for TCKs.

Had this study occurred at the start of their repatriating transition process, the participants’ descriptions of home would have been much different. Most of them felt that upon reentry, they longed for their lives back in London and missed the culture that they had left behind. However, they soon realized that they would never be able to go “home.” This realization caused some to grieve and acknowledge their loss. When they repatriated they not only left behind aspects of their tangible world, such as family, friends, pets, possessions, and houses, but they experienced a loss of culture and lifestyle. They understood that even if they were to return to London, they wouldn’t be returning home, as the relationships that they had formed were no longer there; families they had gotten close to and friendships they had made were now scattered across the globe. Jeff explained that, “if I ever go back there, it’s not going to be the same, and that’s because everybody I went to school with lives everywhere else. Everybody I grew up with over there, they all live in other countries or back in the U.S., and I’m never going to get that back” (Jeff, conversation, December 14, 2015).

### **Assimilation Does Not Equate to Repatriation**

The final narrative portraits presented in chapter four provided a chronological representation of the TCK's repatriation process. The repatriating narratives consisted of five self-identified critical incidents that paralleled Pollock's (2009) five stages of transition: involvement, leaving, transitioning, entering, and re-involvement. While analyzing the interview transcriptions I made note of specific stories that highlighted the participants' re-assimilation into American culture and furthermore identified when they completed their repatriation. I discovered that assimilation and repatriation do not equate and occur at different times during the transition process. Again, because the study was completed over twelve years after initial reentry, it was clear that assimilation and repatriation do not equate.

All four participants assimilated into the American culture quickly, however the repatriation transition occurred gradually over time. The reasons for a quicker assimilation process may be due to their already assumed American identities. The participants repatriated by choice, with the intention of re-assimilating back into their native culture. Likewise, while it may have taken time to relearn American culture, they already looked and spoke the part and were therefore perceived by their American peers as natives. Jennifer remembered an instance where her college professor negated her Third Culture identity simply because she looked and sounded American: "he would literally laugh and anytime he introduced me to somebody else he would say, 'Well, here is Jennifer, and she says she's from London, but she looks like she's straight out of Minnesota'" (Jennifer, conversation, December 16, 2015). The four participants



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mentioned minor adjustment challenges during the first few months but by the end of their first year they had all successfully re-assimilated into the American culture.

Once the participants made the conscious decision to settle in, they began to build relationships and seek opportunities to participate in their new culture. They had been accustomed to adjusting to new cultures due to their mobile lifestyles as TCKs. Andrea successfully completed her repatriation process within one year, which was the average length of time reported in previous TCK research. However, the remaining three participants did not reach the re-involvement stage until much later. Repatriating proved to be a gradual process, with each participant progressing through the stages at their own individual pace. While it was easy to see the gradual progression through the transitioning stages, it was interesting to see the level of importance placed on each significant incident. Reading through the participants' critical incidents offered unique insight into the repatriating process and provided evidence that TCKs not only assimilate and repatriate at different times during their transition processes, but successful repatriation does not occur immediately and can take years to achieve.

Andrea was the only participant that both assimilated and repatriated within the first year back in the United States. Her assimilation began with help from her sister as she relearned American customs and traditions and she continued to assimilate throughout the first semester of freshman year. When Andrea travelled back to London for the winter holiday season, she recognized that she had not only assimilated back into the American culture but had completed her repatriating process. When she left London to begin the second semester of her freshman year in college, she knew that she had

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consciously chosen to be an active member of the American society, she felt that is where she belonged: “I was happy to be back” (Andrea, conversation, December 16, 2015)

Jiggy assimilated within his first year back in the United States; however, it took ten years to successfully repatriate. While most would assume that he completed his re-involvement stage when he was granted his American citizenship, it wasn't until he found himself supporting the men's United States soccer team in the 2014 FIFA World Cup that he recognized his transition process was complete. Jiggy became self-aware of his transition once he was able to physically see the change, “You could really see the change in support of something as small as a sports team. That for me was really telling and I thought, ‘Oh, wow!’ It really feels like I'm assimilating because I see it. I was a diehard English fan and now I'm supporting the English team, but I'm rooting for the U.S. to win” (Jiggy, conversation, December 15, 2015).

Jennifer's decision to repatriate was heavily influenced by her boyfriend's decision to attend a university in the United States. As a result of repatriating together she faced minimal challenges adjusting to the American culture; in fact, she was appreciative of the conveniences that she had missed when in London. Jennifer had struggled with her American identity overseas, and it continued upon reentry. While Jennifer had assimilated into the American culture early on in her transition process, it took a few years until she began to acknowledge her American identity as she felt that her worldview was not shared by her American peers. It wasn't until president Barak Obama was elected president, five years after reentry, that Jennifer felt a sense of belonging, “I felt so proud to be an American at that point, to be a part of CHANGE and history! It was a huge sigh of relief and I had faith in the American people. To me that is when I was

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happy to start calling myself an American again” (Jennifer, written reflection, January 28, 2016).

Similar to the rest of the participants, Jeff began assimilating during the first few weeks in the United States and transitioned to the American culture successfully. However, unlike the participants, Jeff struggled throughout his repatriating process. After his first year in the United States he was having a hard time connecting with his American peers as he missed his life in London. Jeff began to acknowledge what he left behind and turned to drugs and alcohol to numb his pain. For the next several years Jeff struggled with varying degrees of substance abuse and it wasn’t until he moved to the Pacific Northwest that he began the final stage of re-involvement. It was there that Jeff decided to pursue a career in firearms. He knew that his aspiration to be a firearms instructor meant that he had unconsciously chosen to remain in the United States, as firearms are not legal in London. With that decision, eleven years after living in the United States, Jeff had repatriated:

You can only legally defend yourself with a firearm in this country, and that has made me more American, because I believe in that, and I love it. Because of where I’m at now in my career, and my passion for firearms and teaching people how to shoot, this is where I want to be. I don’t want to be anywhere else. I feel more American today, than I ever have before” (Jeff, conversation, December 14, 2015).

### **Third Culture Experiences Influence Civic Engagement**

Dewey’s (1916, 1938) theory of experience offered a unique interpretation of the Third Culture narrative. Dewey suggests that we create meaning from experience to

understand our evolving reality. The final narratives acknowledged the importance of capturing “life histories” and furthered understanding of the repatriation transition process. As our experiences are contextually situated, it was important to understand the physical, environmental, historical, and economic conditions that shaped both the Third Culture and repatriating narratives (Ackerman, 2003; Dewey, 1916; Dewey, 1938).

Education through experience allows individuals to make decisions that influence their lives, furthering Dewey’s (1938) notion that life is experienced, and is meant to be actively participated in. This research study concluded that Third Culture experiences empowered TCKs to reflect on their actions and become civically engaged in their new societies. The research concluded that during the repatriation process, TCKs were directly influenced by their Third Culture experiences, to assume democratic responsibility in the home culture. Likewise, as ATCKs they continue to pursue meaningful experiences that encourage personal growth. This could be attributed to their emotional competency as their Third Culture experience fosters a foundation that promotes local, national, and global change (McCaig, 1996). Although the participants were not encouraged to engage civically in their Third Culture lives due to their self-identified “visitor” status, all of the participants understood what their civil responsibilities entailed in the United States. Jiggy offered a portrait of his understanding of a civically engaged American:

Being a good American entails voting, being active in the community, giving back to the community whether its working weekends to help the needy or planting tress in a park. Anything that you can do to give back to your immediate community and your country, [and] supporting our troops. Being mindful that

these people are protecting us and our way of life” (Jiggy, conversation December 15, 2015).

The narratives show that all of the participants have chosen to be civically engaged and assume active roles in their communities. They all appreciate the freedoms America grants and are happy to live in a country where their voices are heard. All of the participants are registered voters and understand their voter responsibility. Jiggy looks forward to his first voting opportunity in the upcoming election. As an official citizen of the United States Jiggy feels empowered to “join in and be apart of the conversation” and that it is his “duty and it is my responsibility to vote and make a difference where it matters, which is right here in the land that I live now” (Jiggy, conversation, December 15, 2015).

Jennifer too explained that she feels privileged to live in a country where she is able to vote and stand up for what she believes in. Within her first year of living back in the United States she registered to vote and began to participate in American politics; during the 2008 election she was actively engaged in the campaign for change. Along with executing one of her civic responsibilities, she made the decision to travel to the state capital to protest the war, “tell me what democracy looks like. This is what democracy looks like!”

Throughout Jeff’s life, as a missionary, he was presented with opportunities to give back locally and globally. His Third Culture experiences taught him the importance of being an active member in his community and encouraged him to seek community leadership roles upon repatriating. Jeff’s choice to join the military best represents his understanding of civic duty, “coming back to the U.S. and being at the U.S. military base

heightened my pride and I was proud to be a soldier in the U.S. military” (Jeff, conversation, January 4, 2106). His understanding of multiple cultures and varying communication styles pushed him to pursue a leadership role, “I needed to be a leader in the military, in the U.S. Army. I had to be a better example to the younger soldiers” (Jeff, conversation, January 4, 2016).

Three of the participants became active participants in their church communities, attending and hosting bible studies, participating and leading church organized activities, and giving back to their communities through various drives and serving opportunities. All three of the participants’ partners also participated in their church communities and therefore supported the participants in their active roles.

Andrea and Jeff were both given the opportunity to give back globally as TCKs and feel that it had a lasting impression on their current civic involvement. Upon repatriation, Andrea continued to seek medical excursions to provide help to developing communities. Her trip to Honduras was an example of her desire to support charities that promote global citizenship.

### **Emotional Intelligence is an Important Indicator of Repatriation Success**

Third Culture research suggests that during the repatriation transition, some TCKs struggle with adjusting to their new surroundings; the previous literature concluded that TCKs have trouble locating their identities, fitting in, and maintaining relationships. These challenges can affect the repatriating experiences of TCKs and impact their repatriation success. As presented in chapter two, Salovey and Mayer (1990) suggest that successful interaction is dependent upon one’s social and emotional intelligence, defined as the ability to monitor feelings and guide one’s thinking and actions. Their research

explored the human experience, and concluded that one's decisions and actions are driven primarily by one's emotions. Their theory argues that emotional intelligence is responsible for dealing with life's chaos, an element represented in the Third Culture, and those with well-developed emotional skills are more likely to lead content and effective lives (Goleman, 2005).

It was evident that social and emotional intelligence played a key role in the participants' repatriating experiences. Although the level of ability within each of the emotional domains varied from participant to participant, it was clear that all of the participants exhibited characteristics represented in the five emotional domains. At some point during their repatriating experiences the participants acknowledged their emotions, managed their emotions, motivated themselves, recognized emotions in others, and handled relationships. These are evident in their self-identified critical incidents.

**Knowing one's emotions.** The most prominent domain represented in the narratives was the participants' ability to observe their emotions. All of the participants were able to investigate their Third Culture and repatriating experiences while simultaneously acknowledging their correlated emotions. Their identification of critical incidents and significant turning points highlighted their self-awareness and self-reflexive thought process. Jiggy's recollection of his experience at Ground Zero highlighted an attentiveness of his emotions, "I've never felt like that was inside of me. That American patriotism. When I was there, it really hit me, and it was powerful" (Jiggy, conversation, December, 15, 2015). That experience encouraged Jiggy to not only reflect on his transition, but how he was going to move forward as an American citizen.

**Managing emotions.** The participants were self-aware of their emotions and were able to assess their significance in order to continue to move through their transition process. There were several times throughout their repatriating narratives where the participants recalled their emotions and the influence they had on their transition. For example, Jennifer struggled with her American identity because she did not feel that her viewpoint was represented by the political leaders and the majority of the American people, “I felt like I wasn't getting heard...There's nothing more I could do. I voted. I followed what I could follow... Part of me felt really angry inside that there was nothing more I could do” (Jennifer, conversation, December 16, 2015). Jennifer’s anger encouraged her to be more actively involved in American politics and led her to protest in Washington, which represented a critical turning point in her repatriation process.

**Motivating oneself.** While some participants struggled during their repatriating transition, they were able to navigate through their emotions to achieve their repatriating goals. Goleman (2005) asserts that enthusiasm, confidence, and persistence are all factors that influence achievement and it was evident that all of the participants were able to locate these characteristics and progress through situations associated with their repatriation. This was represented in Jeff’s narrative when he struggled with his addiction. Jeff was aware of his self-destruction and understood what needed to be done in order to overcome his addiction and move in a positive direction. As discussed in the literature, the Third Culture lifestyle promotes self-reliance; while Jeff may have encountered difficult times, his determination to belong resulted in perseverance. Along with familial support, Jeff continued to motivate himself to achieve his repatriating goals and began asking the necessary questions in his life, “How can I fit into this state, and fit



into this country. How can I be the person that God wants me to be, in this place? It was a real struggle. I was struggling with drinking and smoking, and I was just like forget it. I've had enough! I need to do something with my life, so I decided to join the U. S. Army" (Jeff, conversation, December 14, 2015). Jeff's continued motivation was one of the determining factors in his repatriating success.

**Recognizing emotions in others.** As Third Culture literature suggests, the global lifestyle that TCKs experience promotes an understanding of different cultures (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009; Gilbert & Gilbert, 2012; Quick, 2010). Being exposed to multiple cultures teaches sensitivity and empathy, encouraging an openness to difference. As a result, TCKs are often able to observe situations, read emotional cues, and respond appropriately (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). While all of the participants exhibited empathy, there were many stories from Andrea's travel experiences to Honduras where she was able to read situations and recognize the emotions and needs of her patients.

**Handling relationships.** As highly mobile lifestyle encourages TCKs to build relationships quickly; they develop the necessary skills to manage emotions in others and create lasting emotional connections (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). All of the participants value their relationships and believe that their Third Culture experiences have influenced the way they maintain and create relationships. TCKs are often characterized as bridge-builders, as they are great communicators and are skilled in navigating cultural boundaries. Jiggy's bridge-building skills encouraged him to pursue a career that focused on client services, a position that maintains client relationships, "I work a lot with people. My sole responsibility is to build a relationship. I'm the

relationship keeper. I'm the one that has to hold the trust of the client, they have to trust me and I have to trust them" (Jiggy, conversation, December 8, 2015).

These are only a few examples of how emotional intelligence played an important role in the participant's repatriation success. While the level of emotional intelligence varied among participants, the final narrative portraits offered retellings of critical incidents that highlight the five emotional domains.

### **There Is One Incident That Is Perceived As Signifying The Completion of Repatriation**

Identifying the critical incident that represented the end of their transition process was not only integral for the research study, but was essential to the participants' growth and understanding of their American citizenship. The participants were able to identify one specific incident that highlighted their conscious decision to become an active member of the American society. Their successful repatriation, represented by their fifth critical incident, highlighted their self-actualization process. The participants were self-aware of their re-involvement and sense of belonging. The significant incidents were explored in each of the four final narrative portraits.

Beginning with Jiggy's narrative, the perceived incident that signified his successful repatriation was cheering on team USA during the 2014 FIFA World Cup. It was during the global event that he felt a strong connection to the United States and consciously chose to support team USA with over England. Similarly, Jennifer felt a stronger connection to her American compatriots after the election of Barack Obama in 2008. Jennifer's sense of belonging was enhanced once she found that her beliefs were shared by the American people. For Andrea, her repatriation concluded after travelling

outside of the United States to Honduras. Although she had previous experience with third world countries, it was that trip that solidified Andrea's appreciation for her life in the United States; she felt particularly fortunate to live in a country where medical care is readily available. Finally, Jeff's repatriation was signified by his career choice. Choosing a career in firearms affirmed his decision to belong in the United States, a country where gun ownership is legal. Although he continues to miss aspects of his life in London, he believes that his values and beliefs are supported by the American culture.

### **Review of Methodologies**

#### **A Qualitative Approach**

As this research study attempted to understand the complex repatriating experiences of American TCKs, it was important to utilize research methodologies and modes of inquiry that recognized the importance of the human experience. Viewed as an extension of the quantitative research methodology, qualitative studies are not concerned with proving or disproving a hypothesis, rather their goal is to seek understanding of a specific phenomenon.

**Arts based research.** Originally defined as a qualitative methodological tool, Arts Based Research has emerged as a novel research paradigm (Barone & Eisner, 2012; Leavy, 2015). Arts Based Research is a creative methodological approach that highlights the importance of expression and allows an audience to vicariously experience the world through artistic representation (Barone & Eisner, 2012). While artistic representations are evaluated based on their aesthetic power, generativity, illumination, and social significance, Arts Based Research affirms that it is important to regard each piece of art as individual and not comparative. Art evokes meaning, and the purpose of using Arts

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Based Research in this study was to illuminate an aspect of the human condition that may not have translated through other research methodologies.

It was important that the presentation of the data not only be compelling but expand the audience's knowledge of the Third Culture experience. Without presenting their experiences through story, meaning would have been lost. In order for the public to become aware of the benefits and challenges of the Third Culture world, it is crucial that repatriation narratives be communicated.

**Narrative inquiry.** The Third Culture values and promotes the sharing of knowledge as they understand the level of intimacy that storytelling brings. Without the use of narrative inquiry, the participants' experiences wouldn't have been adequately represented as the narratives capture nuances that are often overlooked by traditional research methods. Each narrative portrait illuminates more than the identity of the individual TCK; it advances knowledge of the repatriating experience. The individual stories represented in the final portraits give meaning to the complex nature of the repatriating phenomenon.

While Arts Based Research focuses on the artistic representation of experience, narrative inquiry further highlights the importance of the research method behind each representation, analyzing the experience behind the experience (Connelly & Clandinin, 2000; Clandinin, 2006). Narrative inquiry goes beyond storytelling and explores the multilayered nature of the living, telling, reliving, and retelling of experiences. This process further encourages the participant to explore the time, place, and space that shaped each story.

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As an insider I experienced the repatriating transition process at the same time as the participants, and was able to relate to their stories. It was important to choose a methodology that engaged in mutual storytelling as story sharing is an experience that creates and strengthens relationships. Being able to share experiences and empathize with one another encouraged vulnerable authentic conversations, conversations that may not have been collected had we not already built a relationship founded on trust and mutual respect. Through the living, reliving, telling, and retelling of a shared experience, we were able to undergo personal and social transformation (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Dewey, 1938).

**The listening guide.** Once the stories were collected the data was analyzed using the four steps of Gilligan's (1982) Listening Guide (covered in detail in chapter three with an example given in chapter four). Understanding the personal, social, historical and cultural context of their experiences was necessary to complete the final narrative portraits. The rigorous method of analysis emphasized storied themes, "threads that's make up the fabric of life history" (Bell, 1996, p. 138), and offered a unique representation of voice through the I-poems. Because repatriation requires conscious participation with the transition process, an aspect of self-actualization was reflected through their sense of self. The I-poems offered an alternative representation of the participants' personal feelings, reactions, and connection to their experiences.

### **Implications for Future Research**

As mentioned in the literature review, TCKs are a growing demographic. With an estimated 6.8 million American expatriates living globally, the experiences explored in the four narrative portraits exposed future implications for research. The outcomes of the

study confirm the need for more empirical research on the repatriating experiences of TCKs.

There is a growing trend in Third Culture research as the population continues to expand. The amount of research pertaining to the Third Culture phenomenon has increased significantly within the past few years, focusing on the Third Culture profile, the various subgroups of the global Third Culture community, and the benefits and challenges that expatriates can expect to encounter when choosing to live a Third Culture life. However, there exists minimal literature regarding the repatriation transition process for TCKs, specifically those choosing to repatriate for post-secondary education. The few studies that were located focused on the initial experience of reentry. I was unable to locate any research regarding a reflection on a completed repatriation experience. For example, many studies were interested in reporting the transition benefits and challenges of first-year college students; however, this research study suggests that it could take years for a TCK to successfully repatriate and complete the re-involvement stage of transition. A longitudinal study that explored the lived experiences of the TCKs as they progress through the transition stages would be the most beneficial area of inquiry regarding this topic, but it may be difficult to locate participants who would remain actively engaged with the research for several years. Some other recommendations for future research are listed below:

- Studies that use different methodological tools to capture aspects of the Third Culture experience. From the stories, surveys could be generated to study experience in depth. For example, a national survey investigating the length of TCK repatriation.

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- A study that investigates the impact of Third Culture experiences on ATCKs' parenting techniques. What aspects of the TCK experience are passed on to their children?
- A study that explores the influence of the TCKs sponsoring organization (military, business, diplomat, missionary) on their repatriating process.
- A follow-up study that investigates the impact of social media on the repatriating experience.
- A study that investigates social and emotional maturity as a repatriation tool.

The stories represented in the participants' final narratives moreover suggest implications for future practice:

- Agencies that aid in third culture transition need to be aware that the transition process can last several years and should offer help for each stage of their transition.
- University programs that offer services for international studies should include programs that are designed to help TCKs during their repatriation transition process. Likewise, they should understand that repatriation is not immediate and may take years to complete.
- Introduction of social and emotional courses in secondary and post-secondary education.

### **Limitations**

Understanding the limitations of a study helps the audience contextualize the findings. Sample size and insider research are two of the areas that may be considered

limitations by those that are unfamiliar with the rigor and nature of the narrative inquiry process.

### **Sample Size**

This study consisted of four participants, a sample size that some research would consider inadequate in regards to standards of generalizability. Although a small *n* population is not a limitation in Arts Based Research, some social science journals might not yet understand that the rigor of narrative inquiry requires a small population (Bryan, personal communication, March, 2016). In this study, the total amount of time spent analyzing and completing the four final narratives was 186 hours.

Although the final narrative portraits represent the unique repatriation experiences of four TCKs, contextually situated, it is important to remember that narrative inquiry is not concerned with proving or disproving theories or forming simplified conclusions; the purpose of narrative inquiry is to generate new relevant knowledge that resonates with the audience and promotes generativity. Each of the five critical incidents that represent the participants' repatriating experiences not only offers new knowledge of the repatriating narrative, but encourages the reader to make personal connections.

The purpose of the findings is to offer a new understanding of repatriating literature. Having a small *n* population allowed me to dedicate appropriate time to each individual experience, which concluded with four authentic final narratives. With more time, I was able to strengthen the bonds I shared with each of the four participants and create lasting relationships built on trust and respect.



### **Being an Insider**

Many of the stories covered sensitive topics that may not have been explored had my time been spread thin with a larger sample size. It was my job as the researcher to respect the time I shared with the participants as they relived and retold a significant and emotional experience from their past. Rushing through stories would have altered the vulnerability that was often exhibited by the participants when reminiscing about their Third Culture and repatriating experiences. While insider research has been regarded as biased, I believe that having a connection to the material was a strength that fostered a more open relationship with the participants, resulting in the collection of deep and powerful stories, stories they may not have shared with an outsider for fear of being judged or misunderstood. Dewey argued that one can learn about the universal from the particular, but not the particular from the universal.

### **Researcher Reflections**

#### **Journey to the Question**

My journey to Third Culture research was a process that developed organically, beginning with how I came to find the research topic. Although I was aware that my childhood was different than most Americans, I was not familiar with the term “TCK” until I discovered an entertaining article located on a social media website titled, “You know you are a TCK when...” The article listed good-humored TCK characteristics and experiences that were unique to the Third Culture lifestyle. The list included:

Where are you from? has more than one reasonable answer, and can take more than ten minutes to answer; your life story uses the phrase ‘Then we moved to...’ two or three or four times; you speak with authority on the subject of airline

travel; you don't know whether to write the date as day/month/ year, or month/day/year, or some other variation; you own personal appliances with three types of plugs and more than one plug adapter; you consider a city 500 miles away 'very close;' you have friends from twenty different countries; and, you go into culture shock upon returning to your home/passport country.

After reading the article, I instantly began researching the legitimacy of the Third Culture concept, and before I knew it I was spending hours searching the internet and reading articles about a culture that defined me, a culture that I didn't know existed. Previously, I had always felt lost between identities and considered myself to be a mixture of many. I was relieved to discover that I was not alone and that I belonged to a unique subgroup of expatriates.

The research process continued as I located several scholarly articles that focused on the phenomenon of the Third Culture and the challenges and benefits of living a Third Culture lifestyle. After reviewing the articles' citations, I noticed that there was one book continuously referenced by the literature, David Pollock and Ruth Van Reken's (2009) *Growing up Among Worlds*, a book I later referred to as the TCK holy book as it offered the most comprehensive analysis of the TCK profile. After reading Pollock and Van Reken's eye-opening text, I made the life-changing decision to focus my attention on Third Culture literature and begin my dissertation process.

### **Researcher Positionality**

While I was delighted to explore my newfound identity, I was unaware of the emotional journey I was about to begin: a cathartic adventure that unpacked my TCK identity and encouraged reflection of my Third Culture and repatriating experiences. While reading and reflecting, I experienced moments of clarity that explained my life, my experiences, my attitudes, my emotions, and my decisions. I felt as though I was an ATCK engaging in free therapy sessions. Reliving my Third Culture life confirmed my appreciation for the amazing gift I was given, the gift of a global lifestyle. I was presented with authentic opportunities to interact with multiple cultures, affording me with an expanded worldview. I reflected on the lessons that I learned and believe that my global experiences prepared me for adulthood, as my experiences directly influenced my life decisions and affected my current civic engagement. While the research confirmed my beliefs about the benefits of being a TCK, it also encouraged me to reflect on hidden loss and unresolved grief. There were many emotional and tearful afternoons spent looking back at photographs and treasured objects that had been collected throughout my lifetime.

Once I was able to move past my TCK experiences, I focused on incidents that were significant in my repatriating process. Interestingly, this process was less emotional, and was much more systematic. I believe the ease of dissecting my transition experience was due to my successful transition, as well as my understanding of emotional intelligence. Likewise, analyzing Pollock's five stages of transition was integral to understanding my process from start to finish as I came to the realization that although I had assimilated quickly, I did not complete my repatriation process until I had lived in the

United States for nine years. It took one trip back to London, for the 2012 Olympics, for me to acknowledge that the United States was where I belonged. Becoming self-aware of my transition was emotional. It was important to work through my emotional connection to the research before beginning data collection, which led to the composition of a personal narrative, a requirement for the narrative methodology. Once I completed my personal narrative and felt I was able to separate my experience from the research it was time to start the interviews with my participants and move forward with the study. The reflective nature of this research study has been the most significant educational process I have ever experienced.

### **Summary**

The purpose of this study was to explore the repatriating experiences of American TCKs. Chapter one provided an introduction to the problem being studied, the purpose and significance of the study, the research questions, the orienting theoretical and conceptual frameworks, the research methodology, and discussion of researcher positionality. Chapter two provided an overview of third culture literature and the guiding frameworks, Emotional Intelligence theory and John Dewey's Democratic and Aesthetic Theories. Chapter three described the research methodology and provided a rationale for using Arts Based Research, narrative inquiry, and the Listening Guide. Chapter four contained an explanation of data analysis and presented the findings of the study through the final narrative portraits for each participant. Chapter five concluded with a discussion of the repatriating themes that emerged from the TCK's experiences, explained the significance of the research methodology, offered future recommendations for research

and practice, identified potential limitations of the study, and concluded with my researcher reflections.

### **Conclusion**

The repatriation process for TCKs is just that, a process. As TCKs move through the transition stages, they often rely on the lessons they learned from their Third Culture experiences for guidance. They are thankful for the opportunities that continue to shape their lives and as they move forward as “Americans living in America,” their global citizenship remains very much alive. I decided to end this chapter with a poem that weaves together the four narratives. Instead of using an I-poem to capture the repatriating experience of one participant, I composed a “We-poem” that captures the emotional resonance of the group. I reviewed the participant I-poems, looking for the I-statements that were supported by all of the participants, then converted them to “We” statements. The “We-poem” addresses the various aspects of the repatriating process and touches on the notion of home, assimilation, Third Culture influences, and being involved in the American community.

#### ***Where Are You From?***

We didn't know how to answer.

We-re not from anywhere

We're from everywhere.

Depends on the context of the Conversation.

***We can come across as confused.***

We feel a sense of pride from being from there and here.

We have good friends of diverse backgrounds everywhere,

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We wouldn't have traded this experience for the world.

Our Third Culture experiences shaped who we are today.

***We may have traded a simple sense of home but we gained a world perspective.***

We experienced being Third Culture Kids

We may stereotype less, understand sacrifice more,

We respect the "other" and remain open to many cultures.

We are mostly well rounded and adaptable, yet

***We lacked a connection to critical events in US history of our generation***

We know we can never go back to London,

We know it will never be the same.

It exists only in artifacts, personal memories and shared narratives.

We don't feel special now;

***We recognize our privilege.***

We returned to US institutions of higher education;

We thought we were already used to change.

We thought we were prepared

We got off the plane in the U.S., outsiders on the inside.

We had weird preconceived notions of coming back.

We'd say it took a year to be somewhat assimilated;

***We learned that repatriation however was a long and slow process.***

A decade has passed, of growing up and growing into ourselves.

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We feel more socially and emotionally secure and empowered.

We belong in the civic conversation.

This is where we live, where we choose to be.

We feel American now.

*We are Americans living in America with a global point of view.*

We have stayed connected to each other,

We are bonded by our TCK experience.

We are more complicated than confusing.

*Home is not a physical space as much as a dwelling place*

*We believe home is sculpted with love and inhabited by configurations of family.*

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