

An Integrated Project

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What a journey life is! I have always felt incredibly lucky, counting my blessings at every turn, and slowing down every eve to give thanks.

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An Educational Autobiography

"I have never let my schooling interfere with my education."

—Mark Twain

HELLO?: Journeying In

My heart thumped. I sat on the stairs, picked up the receiver, and dialed the 10-digit number in bold on the blue card stock. A phone would ring in Texas. It was mere weeks before starting college, and I would soon be talking to my

roommate... or so I thought. My life would be forever transformed. Who I was at that moment and who I was becoming were converging as the ringing ceased and someone answered, "Hello?"

WHO ARE YOU?: Telling My Story

"[Stories remind us] of our shared humanity, strengthen and build the connections between people, teach the value of listening, and weave into the fabric of our culture the understanding that every life matters."

—StoryCorps

We are all composed of a multitude of stories—of love and loss, joy and pain, longing and belonging; stories of moments of clarity, of times when nothing makes sense; and stories of who we are and who others think us to be. We all have stories untold, stories unfinished, and stories not yet realized.

We are not only connected to our own stories and the stories we hear, but also the lives we are a part of and contribute to. As we share our lives and stories, there is much to be learned, questioned, challenged, and reflected upon.

The story we are about to embark on is an educational autobiography, a "writing down" of a personal journey toward a destination of what I hold true about education, imagination, the arts, oneness of humanity, and service to humankind. This odyssey is both discursive and integrated, climbing up and down ladders of abstraction, and posing challenges to how we understand one another.

This paper is significant within the academy of higher education as a model of an imaginative approach—imagining what could be—both in the style of the paper, and the execution of the accompanying *MeYouZeum*. It truly aims to integrate the learning facilitated through my masters program. It is also, in many ways, a thank you to the inspiring, thoughtful, and motivating advisors, professors, families, and friends I have had the honor and privilege to garner knowledge and wisdom from over the years.

Telling stories, putting life experiences into narrative form, and understanding peoples' contexts and histories are important and valuable not only to human connection, but also as a tool for self-revelation. There is, additionally, an element of ethics in reading, which Rorty (1997) addresses in *The Ethics of Reading*. He notes that in reading any text, we are being invited into an author's domain and with that invitation, the reader is expected to exhibit tact and fairness. "As we read, we too are read: and sometimes we discover ourselves by reflecting on the patterns of our interpretations and misinterpretations" (p. 85). In both reading and telling stories, both author and reader, speaker and listener are essential—both in content and context. Either party's message cannot be taken out of context of their lives and how they came to believe what they believe.

In *Teaching to Transgress*, hooks (1994) speaks very clearly to this point, emphasizing an "engaged pedagogy" that requires teachers, in this case, to be "actively committed to a process of self-actualization that promotes their own well-being [so] they [can] teach in a manner that empowers students" (p. 15). She argues neither the life nor soul of the teacher or student can be detached from the teaching or learning process for a truly aesthetic experience to occur.

Sometimes reduced to an introduction, sometimes woven through a text, and still other times not included at all, writers make choices on how to engage and contextualize themselves

in their writing. I would argue with Rorty and hooks that context is crucial, not to mention more interesting, and for these and other reasons—as a tool for self-revelation and a foundation for creating a learning experience—I have chosen to use an educational autobiographical genre. The autobiographical content and context is meant to be a building block to the creation of an interactive, collaborative, participatory museum exhibit exploring and (re)imagining

WHAT DO YOU DO?: Lights, Camera, ACTION!

"The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go."

—Dr. Seuss, *I Can Read With My Eyes Shut!*

John Dewey often talks about imagination. He considers it a stage of knowledge, a vehicle of learning, and a power of realization—in other words, what might be. He also talks about the need for action to determine whether the "might be" can be transformed to an "is" (Chambliss, 1991). As my own life has become progressively more itinerant and complex—the journey more winding, unsure, and remarkable—my ability to imagine *what might be* has simultaneously expanded while also becoming fatigued. The more I seemingly know about the world, the more evades me—the more I want to explore the complexity and nuance of people, ideas, and communities.

As will be revealed in my writing, I am a strong proponent of action to accompany thoughts, words, or writings. Bahá'u'lláh (1985) revealed in the Hidden Words: "Let deeds, not words be your adorning" (p. 24). So, in addition to writing an educational autobiography for this masters of arts Integrated Project (IP), I will be putting some of my philosophies into action by designing a interactive, collaborative, participatory museum exhibit called, *MeYouZeum: (Re)Imaginations of Home and Identity*. The goal of my IP and the exhibit is to take up Dewey's challenge of transforming *what might be* into *what is*. It will push to expand the discourse on who we are, moving past overused and often irrelevant questions of "Who are you?," "What do you do?," and "Where are you from?" to ways of more fully getting to know one another, of learning about each other. This work starts with first understanding one's own complexity and then realizing it in others.

notions of home and identity. This exhibit will focus heavily on imagination and creativity as modes of self-revelation. Madison (1998) writes, "It is through imagination, the realm of pure possibility [where] we freely make ourselves to be who or what we are, that we creatively and imaginatively become who we are, while in the process preserving the freedom and possibility to be yet otherwise than what we have become and merely are" (p. 191).

"The function of art is to do more than tell it like it is—it's to imagine what is possible."

—bell hooks

The complexity of identity has long been an interest of mine. Of late, seeking out stories of the complex identities and internationally itinerant lifestyles of Third Culture Kids (TCKs) or Global Nomads, who have spent significant portions of their formative years in a country outside the passport country of their parents, has captivated my interest. I think TCKs and Global Nomads have a unique perspective that can offer great insights into the many varied lives and lifestyles springing up among our generation of youth engaged with a much larger world than that of the past. In continuing to develop this IP, I will create a website to share artistic expressions of self, identity, and home that emerge as part of the *MeYouZeum*, as well as access to relevant past academic paper, and resources for TCKs.

Some essential questions guiding my thought and design are

- ★ How can we come to know each other and learn about one another as multi-faceted human beings?
- ★ How can we take the awareness of our own multiple layers and accord that to others?
- ★ How can we imagine and change the discourse of how we learn about one another?
- ★ What insights can TCKs or Global Nomads provide in re-imagining identity discourse?
- ★ How can art be used as the conduit of greater understanding and reflection of selves and others?

Who are you?

What do you do?

Where are you from?



WHERE ARE YOU FROM?: Growing Up and Branching Out

“...Roots? I’m more worried about my branches, you know. It’s the branches that bear the fruit and tilt for the sky.”

—Diran Adebayo, Some Kind of Black

Raised in a hard-working family busy nurturing roots in our rural Minnesota village, I learned early the value and values of service, action, involvement, and learning. This could be attributed to my parents being social workers, one working in child protection and adoption, and the other working with adults with developmental disabilities and mental illness. In our house, the importance of empathy, compassion, and creativity were nourished. Education was well understood to be located in many different environments, not just schools. These values were reinforced through our summers spent sojourning in Minnesota State Parks, where we three kids were part of the Junior Naturalist Program, earning badges by completing activities and attending park educational events. When not making s’mores,



Perfecting the art of lefse-making, (top) first with Grandma Lois and Mason, and (bottom) later with Tsiu Moorosi, Nyalleng Moorosi, and Mason



After nearly 70 years in the family, Lynk’s Coast to Coast (most recently Lynk’s TrueValue) closed its doors L-R: Mason, Dylan, Allan, Terry, and Steve Lynk



A few pictures from various camping trips growing up. Occasionally our grandparents would join; same went for the bicycles. (middle L-R: Grandpa Dale Lynk, Grandma Ruby Lynk, Mason Lynk, Grandma Lois Johnson, Grandpa Vernon Johnson)

we would spend our summer days at Grandma and Grandpa Johnson’s house learning how to host guests, make *lefse* and braided rugs, solve cases on *Matlock*, play strategic games, and roll the perfect bun to bake and share, of course.

Values of service, action, and involvement have also been strongly reinforced on the Lynk side. My father’s family was a hardware store family, known throughout the region for bein’ able to fix things—and well. Every one of my two and a half-dozen aunts and uncles (the “sibLYNKs:” two girls, a half-dozen boys) grew up with these values that were passed on to the next generations.



The sibLYNKs at Grandma Ruby’s 80th birthday celebration in 2004

With a family rooted in the small-town community and dedicated to its progress and betterment, I began exploring my interests from an early age with great intensity. I, too, was not able to escape the personal fulfillment and importance found in service, action, and intellectual curiosity exemplified by my family. Deep roots supplied sustenance to long limbs,

allowing me to branch out, bear fruit, and leave home at age eight for the first of many adventures at summer camp. My world expanded and flourished in the search for life’s realities in the stories of these new friends bringing profound insights of how to live, love, and find purpose and hope. I learned people are as similar as they are different across arbitrary lines of race and culture; enduring is that *something* about the human experience that irrevocably joins us all.



Wadena: a popular destination for dear Macalester friends Demoya Gordon, Nyalleng Moorosi, Sheila Nabanja, Koby Jeschkeit-Hagen, and Jess Thimm



The annual Thanksgiving tractor pull is a favorite Lynk family tradition



Let the Journey Begin

PASSPORT TO LEARNING: Minnesota Institute for Talented Youth

"I am what I am not yet."

—Maxine Greene

A fertile playground for hearing stories and meeting diverse people was in the dorm rooms and at the cafeteria tables of Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota. I was first a student at

Minnesota Institute FOR TALENTED YOUTH

"Founded in 1967 and formerly named *Twin Cities Institute for Talented Youth*, *Minnesota Institute for Talented Youth* continues to provide an educational community where diverse, intellectually curious students can experience the excitement of learning and expand their academic and social visions."



Wonderful MITY students during my time as a Dorm Supervisor



Minnesota Institute for Talented Youth (MITY) on Mac's campus while still in high school, and then seamlessly transitioned there for college. Diverse in every sense of the word, MITY was a special, life-changing academic enrichment program where school was cool. The first day of MITY in July of 1998 is still clear in my memory: as our family neared campus, Dad was spouting facts about his alma mater, how the neighborhood had changed, and pointing out spaces where important things had happened in his previous life. Understandably, I can recall very little of his reminiscing, my emotional state being otherwise occupied with a mix of 73% raw excitement and 27% heart-thumping anxiety.

I did not know anyone at this camp, and although knowing the literature to the point of recitation, I had little idea what was in store. After registering, meeting the slightly bizarre staff, settling into a room in Doty Hall, and finding people to sit with at the first dinner, I was starting to feel a bit more at ease. After dinner, the "MITY Challenge" was announced, a contest to learn everyone's name with the incentive of winning a T-shirt.

The challenge was on—that T-shirt was mine! So I ran around meeting everyone, learning their

"Neither my self nor my narrative can have, therefore, a single strand. I stand at the crossing point of too many social and cultural forces; and, in any case, I am forever on the way. My identity has to be perceived as multiple, even as I strive towards some coherent notion of what is humane and decent and just."

—Maxine Greene



A MITY tradition: Reading Oh! The Places You'll Go! by Dr. Seuss at the final farewell meeting

names, where they were from, and what they liked to do. (This has since been renamed the "Lynk Challenge" after I won eight consecutive sessions, once learning 92 names in less than 24 hours). These tidbits of information were not only part of the mnemonic device to remember the person, but they also offered windows into each person, allowing us to connect on several levels as our commonalities and overlapping interests emerged.

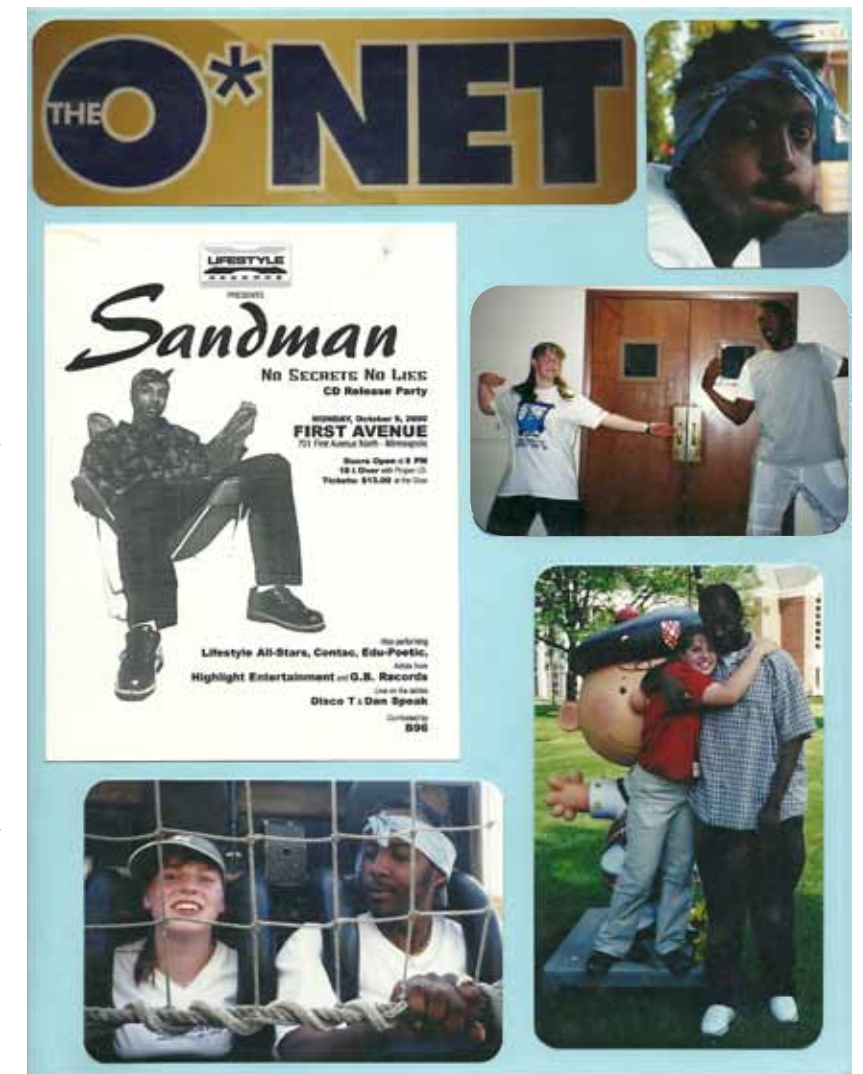
Meeting Onyx, in particular, was exciting. Giddy after meeting so many people with only a few left to know, I rushed into his room with that energy, threw all my weight onto the bed of his roommate, and while allowing the bed springs to catapult me up and down like a child, I said, "My name's Brittany. What's yours?" That was the beginning of a beautiful friendship. To look at us side by side was a sight: he, a 6-foot, 4-inch Black rapper from an urban densely populated neighborhood in North Minneapolis who, with a calm intensity, saved toothy grins only for special occasions, and I, a 5-foot, 3-inch backwater girl from Minnesotan cornfields whose volume and energy filled a room (umm, sometimes to the point of abrasion). In those two weeks, he and others taught me to rap, step dance, and cornrow hair. They taught me that although our upbringings were very different in many ways, they were remarkably similar in others. They told stories of discrimination, of survival, of joy. They kindled an electromagnetic force that has inextricably drawn me from then on to know and learn about others seemingly different. They offered doors to new cultural habitats; I identified with them and ran through to find a new universe where I was no longer a singular narrative.

Maxine Greene (1995) writes, "Neither my self nor my narrative can have, therefore, a single strand. I stand at the crossing point of too many social and cultural forces; and, in any case, I am forever on the way. My identity has to be perceived as multiple, even as I strive towards some coherent notion of what is humane and decent and just" (p. 1). MITY added strands to my narrative, brought challenge to my homogenous upbringing, set me *on the way*, and changed me into who I am still becoming.

MITY fostered my original interest in education and brought appreciation for education's necessary links with social development. My core values of learning names and holistically understanding people through their stories and experiences grew over this month-long experience every summer for five years before beginning college. In asking, "Where is education?" at MITY, the answer was no doubt in the chemistry, physics, calculus, speed reading, humanities, and psychology courses. More powerful and life-changing was the education naturally transpiring in the dorms, on field trips, and at the breakfast table as this eclectic group of students from around the state and country came to know and learn from each other.



Some coveted MITY t-shirts



A page with Onyx, taken from one of my many MITY scrapbooks



MACALESTER COLLEGE



Macalester College is committed to being a preeminent liberal arts college with an educational program known for its high standards for scholarship and its special emphasis on internationalism, multiculturalism, and service to society.

"For the earth is but one country, and [human]kind its citizens."

—Bahá'u'lláh

TICKET TO THE WORLD: Macalester College

"How could youths better learn to live than by at once trying the experiment of living?"
—Henry David Thoreau

MITY led me to attend Macalester College (Mac). I chose Mac for several reasons: the campus was beautiful—I knew it inside and out—it had high academic standards with a commitment to civic engagement. But most importantly, I chose Macalester for its internationally diverse student body representing over 90 countries and composing over 12% of the student body. MITY opened me up to better understanding others' experiences of Minnesota and the United States—now Macalester was offering me the world.

Remember that phone call to Texas proclaimed to have been so important? Let us take a quick step back to that fateful day.

The summer prior to matriculating at Macalester, I was eagerly checking the mailbox every day for the orientation packet with the rooming assignment. All I was asking for was merely one person out of that 12% to be my roommate. Imagine the shock of opening the envelope to find a blue card stock, with the name of some Jessica Thimm from Texas! Though Texans often consider their state a separate country, this was not exactly what I was hoping for. It took a while to build up the courage to give her a call. Several rings and heart-thumps later: "Hello?" Following is the exchange, along with some clear thoughts:

"Hi. Is Jessica there?"

"Who?" *Oops, wrong number?*

"Uh, Jessica?"

Slightly irate: "Jessica who? Who are you trying to call?" *Oh no, she thinks this is a prank call.*

"Jessica Thimm? She's supposed to be my roommate in college next year." *Ugh, I hope I pronounced her name correctly.*

"Huh? Oh, yeah, Jess. Hmm, I don't actually know where she is." *Why does it sound like she doesn't know where this girl is? Did she run away from home or something? What's going on?*

"She could either be in Albania or South Africa; maybe even in London where her brother goes to school. I'm just not sure. I'm her mom's twin sister, and they must have used my Texas address for her forms." *Yippee! Jackpot! She is the most international roommate ever! Who knows what any of those places have to do with one another, but this is fantastic (no offense, Texas).*

It did not take long, through e-mail and getting to know each other to have the main transition moments of Jess' life committed to memory and ready to recite in under one minute flat—to go into detail would fill days. I was fascinated by the multiple evacuations, boarding school pranks, and pure eloquence in how she told stories. It is hard to resist retelling the stories of this girl born and raised for ten years in Lilavois, Haiti, to a German father and American mother, who met in Germany. At age ten, Jess and her family were evacuated from Haiti due to civil strife. After nine months in Texas, (having arrived on Halloween day—scary!), Her mom was appointed to be the first Peace Corps Director in Albania, a country just opening up to the world after fifty years under a cruel Communist dictator. Five years later, they were evacuated again, because of civil strife and the fall of a pyramid scheme in Albania, at which point it was decided the kids would go to boarding school in the Czech Republic. Bahá'ís, after graduating, are encouraged to do a year of service, which Jess chose to do in South Africa with a dance troupe performing social justice dances. It was then she came to Macalester, and our story began.



Jess Thimm and Brittany at the Bahá'í Temple in Wilmette, IL

Meeting Jess led not only to a fulfilling lifelong friendship, but also to the Bahá'í Faith, with its focus on unity, education, service to humanity, and carrying forward an ever-advancing civilization to establish the Most Great Peace. A Bahá'í quote by Bahá'u'lláh

reads, "For the earth is but one country, and [human]kind its citizens" (1990, p. 250). Being planted in the globally focused, socially conscious liberal arts garden of Macalester with similar philosophies, I edged closer to becoming the global citizen to which I aspired.

Stumbling through first semester, I had no idea where life was taking me. I had no advisor, did not know what classes to take, and definitely had no major—when asked, my flippant answer was "tattooing and body piercing." On a whim, knowing nothing about anthropology, I took the introductory cultural anthropology course taught by Professor Jack Weatherford. He supported his reputation as a brutal teacher through his introductory lecture—*Why you do not want to take this class*—with takeaways such as, "If you take this class, you will have to learn all the countries of the world," and "You can write college papers all day and think it matters. *It doesn't matter what you believe. What matters is what you do.*" I was SOLD! His threat was my inspiration. My major was, henceforth, anthropology, with a concentration in African studies, and a minor in psychology.

Our major assignment in that class was to design and implement a project that helped children in Mongolia in some tangible way. Professor Weatherford was critical of the typical style of higher education where college students discuss issues, create project proposals, and critique arguments. Instead, we were instructed to *actually* pose a solution and enact it. Enter Mongolia, which became a democratic nation in 1990. With the transition, English replaced Russian as the official second language. Our group decided to create a children's book in both English and Mongolian, using the American folktale, *Pecos Bill*. Not only were Mongolian students hungry for materials in English, but also for literature in their own language. We worked side-by-side with Dulmaa Enkhchuluun, a native Mongolian college student, who acted as translator, cultural interpreter, and ultimately

distributor of the books in Mongolia. The books were received with much fanfare, singing, and dancing as he presented them to two squatter schools and students in the capital city, Ulanbataar. Those students then took the books back to their villages. A year later when a fellow Macalester anthropologist returned from Mongolia, she reported the story of one Mongolian girl trailing her while reciting from memory the whole tale of *Pecos Bill*.

This project and Macalester's publications office introduced me to the world of graphic design. Kim David, the master designer, took a chance on me, offering the opportunity to work with a student worker on her way to study abroad in Mongolia. Something clicked, and graphic design became my medium, my way of applying anthropology, my tool for "doing"—it became part of me. Graphic design is the tight, applicable link in my desire to make

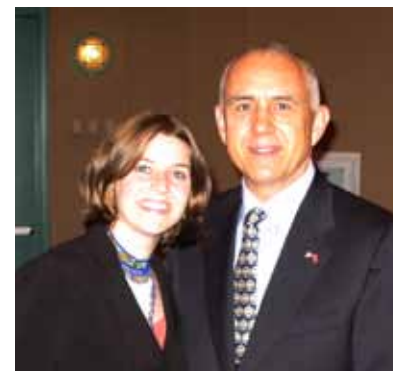
a difference in people's lives. Social betterment is my goal. Graphic design is my medium. Learning is my sustenance.

A few years later, Macalester accepted its first Mongolian student, who was interested in creating another children's book, this time using a Mongolian tale. This project blossomed into another two books,

evolving from the original project into a cross-cultural, multilingual book series. In the process of creating the second book, we realized how similar folktales were across the world as they attempted to pass on history, explain origins, and reinforce values. What better opportunity for students around the world to see some of these similarities than to include several stories in one book? The result, *Doorways to the World, Doorways to Ourselves*, included stories from the United States, Mongolia, Lesotho, and Jamaica,



Dulmaa Enkhchuluun and Brittany



Brittany and Dr. Jack Weatherford at the 2007 NAFA conference

"It doesn't matter what you believe. What matters is what you do."

—Dr. Jack Weatherford



all in the local languages. To offer important learning opportunities for young people in our own community,



The current BLink Creations series of cross-cultural, multilingual folktale books for children



The Heegaard Family: Eric, Carreen, Elena, Ian, and Mya



we created a third book: *The Tale of Why the Moon is Free*, a Mexico folktale, translated into Spanish and Yukatec Maya, which was produced with the assistance of fifth- and sixth-graders at Friends School of Minnesota in St. Paul. All these books have been sent to schools, libraries, and orphanages in their respective communities.

It is critical for any person's development to share intimately in multigenerational spaces of learning, growing, and mentoring, most often seen in the family unit. I could not have asked for a better learning space than that of the Heegaard home in St. Paul, Minnesota, where I lived the summer following sophomore year. That swell summer stretched into five years living in their third floor, observing exceptional models of parenting, and being an integral part of the lives of the two children from when they were ages 6 and 9 to when they were 11 and 14. They often accompanied me to the several Caribbean Students Association or Afrika events I organized or attended on campus. Now, 14 and 17 years old, they are well-rounded, interested in

the world, and wish to be of service in their community. I am inspired and awed, and further convinced of the importance of exposure of young people to a larger reality in whatever form that takes.

Tom Robbins, a favorite author, wrote, "We're making it up. The world, the universe,

life, reality. Especially reality." If that is the case, I want to *make up* a reality that is supra global. Before starting college, I had barely left the confines of the state border, much less stepped foot out of the country. Making up my reality, I boarded an airplane the summer following first year at Macalester, to land in Ghana, serving as the Community Engagement Leader at the Kokrobitey Institute. Whatever it was—the rich red soil of the earth, the bright smiles of the children playing on our campus, or the powerful slave spirituals we sang in the Cape Coast dungeons with Rev. Al Sharpton, Dr. Cornel West, and the Afrodiasporic band, Soufège—it changed me. From then on, I was always



A special ceremony for Rev. Al Sharpton and Dr. Cornel West at the Kokrobitey Institute in Ghana

looking forward to the next break or holiday to either visit a friend and their family abroad, or to invite friends over to my Minnesotan home, which has become somewhat of an international roadside attraction over the years. No matter the locale, the small-town girl in me comes out, always rooted in the family unit, the very core of every community.

Four continents and two and a half-dozen countries later, you will find me now, having lived, worked, traveled, and engaged in local communities from Albania to Jordan to Zimbabwe, studying abroad in South Africa and Jamaica. Engaging the world and its diverse views is essential and valuable. That essence has been made wonderfully accessible with the help of strong, joyful communities of kindred spirits (Macalester folks and Bahá'ís) packing well-worn paths of service worldwide.

A MIRAGE? OR AN OASIS?: My Sherlock Year

"In the end, perhaps we should simply imagine a joke; a long joke that's continually retold in an accent too thick and strange to ever be completely understood. Life is that joke, my friends. The soul is the punch line."

—Tom Robbins

Following Macalester, my dream and only goal was to work at the not-yet-opened African Leadership Academy in South Africa started by a fellow Mac alum. The school had a unique pedagogy in line with my ideology and vision of education, both holistic and action-oriented, as well as supporting creativity in the types of work produced. When the school opened two years later, I applied and was first alternate for one of the two available female positions. Devastated, I mourned only for as long as it took me to come up with a new plan.

The plan was an educational adventure based on the model of the Watson Fellowship, which is "a year of independent, purposeful exploration and travel—in international settings new to [the fellow]—to enhance their capacity for resourcefulness, imagination, openness, and leadership and to foster their humane and effective participation in the world community" (Thomas J. Watson Fellowship, 2006). Eureka! That was it, enhancing my capacity for contributing to the betterment of society through deep exploration of new places.

What I came to call my Sherlock year, a year of investigation and life-detective work, had three requisites: (1) Novel destinations—places I otherwise may not have ever gone. With a passion for Africa and the Diaspora, I knew a return to the Continent and the Caribbean was only a matter of time. (2) Affordable housing—not only was I was living on a very limited budget, but there is also no better way to know and learn a place than through the core unit of community—the family. (3) Access to internship opportunities in areas or fields I otherwise would not have had the chance to investigate had I gotten the job in South Africa.

From September 2008 to May 2009, Albania became "home," where I stayed with the family of my first-year college roommate and worked with several contractors for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in everything from agro-

entrepreneurship to women's empowerment to community development. I also interned with Terre des hommes, a Swiss organization, and Common Actions Against Poverty, an Albanian organization. Both focused on combating child trafficking by building a strong, multi-focal support structure for children.

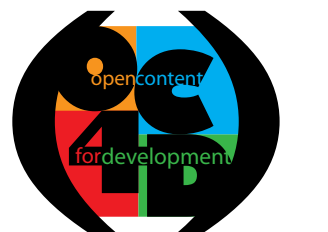
From May to June 2009, I was in Nepal mentoring leaders from Youth Managed Resource Centers, training and working side by side with them in web development, with the broader purpose of building community through technology. From July to December 2009, I went back to Minnesota to apply for graduate school before heading back to Albania from January to June 2010 to continue much of my previous work.



With youth leaders at the 4th annual Youth Summit in Sankhu, Nepal

In retrospect, I am grateful the job in South Africa eluded me. Albania, Nepal, and the several other places visited during this time spoke new life, thus revealing more complex and nuanced perspectives, unique historical vantage points, with the added gift of cherished friends. I grew a great deal and benefited dearly from these experiences; I trust my contributions were valuable and in line with the dreams, goals, and visions of the communities who graciously hosted me.

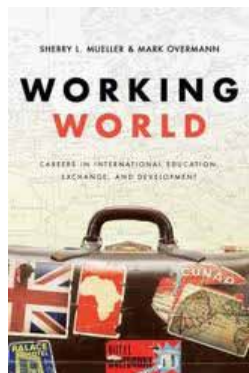
The time back in Minnesota from July to



Macalester College in the fall

“Go confidently in the direction of your dreams. Live the life you’ve imagined.”
—Henry David Thoreau

December of 2009 was critical in identifying and starting to tread the path that has become my life trajectory. If graduate school was the next move, I had to be sure of the goal and what to study. To work with youth, especially through non-school or informal educational opportunities such as cross-cultural exchanges, was foundational. Also fundamental: education and creating spaces of knowing and learning about one another, which is crucial in shifting mentalities and challenging stereotypes. Finally, connections to international work must be maintained. A library search led to the book, *Working World: Careers in International Education, Exchange, and Development* by Dr. Sherry L. Mueller, then President of the National Council for International Visitors (NCIV). I pored over the book and knew instantly—this is my field. I researched every school with an International Educational Development program, and confidently moved in the direction of my dreams, a message Henry David Thoreau had been teasing for years: “Go confidently in the direction of your dreams. Live the life you’ve imagined.”



Filling out applications, followed by eager waiting, I kept myself active at The Advocates for Human Rights and taking Albanian lessons. At the same time some friends and I were incubating an NGO, now JaMinn Link, established to increase direct engagement of Jamaicans at home and abroad in issues facing Jamaican youth, such as violence, unemployment, and access to quality education.

When the opportunity to move back to Albania came, however, I took it, arriving in January 2010. The Albanian Agriculture Competitiveness



RASTI: Young Agro-entrepreneurs for Markets and Innovation launch event with USAID’s AAC project in Lushnja, Albania

Program through Development Alternatives (DAI) and USAID needed a public outreach and communications advisor. The contract took unexpectedly long to be finalized, and when it seemed it would not go through, I glanced at an international education listserv with weekly job listings to start preparing a summer backup plan. With a few down swipes of the mouse scrolling through the document, an internship with NCIV boldly presented itself. Could it be true? The same organization led by the woman who opened up my world to international education? I am a true believer in breezes of confirmation, and at that point, the gust flattened me. I applied for it immediately, interviewed, and got the job just as my contract in Albania was signed. Of course, I did both. With focused determination, I squeezed four months of work into two with DAI before descending upon Washington, D.C. for the summer to work with NCIV.

SAFELY LANDED: Citizen Diplomacy, International Education, and Cross-cultural Exchange at NCIV, Teachers College, and the New York Program Branch

“It’s opener, out there, in the wide, open air.”

—Dr. Seuss, Oh, the Places You’ll Go!

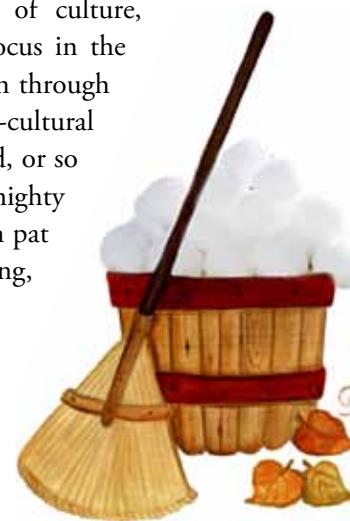
Like raking dry snow, forming my life path has necessitated many spirited strokes, gathering heaps of un-bonding powdery ideas, activities, and involvements. Only recently have professional and academic forces merged my seemingly disparate interests of culture, design, and education to a focus in the field of international education through informal learning and cross-cultural exchanges. I have safely landed, or so it feels, and in my hands a mighty snowball is forming, with each pat bringing more clarity, meaning, and purpose.

NCIV introduced the term “citizen diplomacy,” the concept that the individual has the right, even the responsibility, to help shape foreign relations “one handshake at a time.” A citizen diplomat is motivated by a responsibility to engage with the rest of the world in a meaningful, mutually beneficial dialogue (U.S. Center for Citizen Diplomacy, 2012). Here, then, was the definition and social sphere to understand the ideology-rich soil in which I grew, and the interaction-rich life I have been living all this time.

NCIV, a nonprofit membership association with 50 years of leadership in citizen diplomacy, introduced me to a nationwide network of



NCIV staff and interns, Summer 2010



citizen diplomat members designing and implementing professional programs, providing cultural activities, and offering home hospitality for foreign leaders, specialists, and scholars participating in the U.S. Department of State’s International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) and other exchanges (NCIV, 2010).

The summer passed all too quickly as I learned the ins and outs of the IVLP, met the many players who made exchange programs like this one successful, and confirmed that I was in the right field. Before I knew it, I was hopping in a van with my bicycle to start a new life in New York City as a student at Teachers College, Columbia University (TC), in the masters program in

International Educational Development. The IVLP and exchange programs remained in my gaze. The first year I interned locally with an NCIV associate member, One to World, and worked internationally with Global Potential as a CUPID fellow (Columbia University Partnership for International Development) in the Dominican Republic. Second year, I started with the U.S. Department of State’s New York Program Branch (NYPB), Office of International Visitors, the sole office of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs in New York. Challenging and mentoring me every step of the way, NYPB has a powerfully

diverse, eclectic, and resourceful staff with a combined total of nearly 300 years of service to the nation, many of which have been spent engaging in people-to-people diplomacy and

Citizen Diplomacy is the concept that the individual has the right, even the responsibility, to help shape U.S. foreign relations, “one handshake at a time.”



Youth from New York and Boston in Batey 8, Dominican Republic, preparing for a community clean-up



BRITTANY'S SHEROCK year +





New York Program Branch, Office of International Visitors, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State housed in the U.S. Mission to the United Nations building

professional exchange programming. I am part of a potent team.

At last: (1) Laser focus on the academic objective of engaging in the discourse of international education, and (2) professional desire for pragmatic action to increase the number of active and engaged global citizens.

Looking over the diverse array of courses taken at TC including *Economics of*

Education, Education and the Aesthetic Experience, Family as Educator, and Global Citizenship Education, I am confirmed that this was the right place. During my years at Macalester in the anthropology department, I often felt I was fighting the norms of the academy of higher education by proposing to incorporate the arts into projects and assignments. I managed to produce a newspaper, magazine, and a few games, but it was too often a struggle.

At TC, founded on Dewey's ideas of imagination, hardly a class can pass without a requirement to incorporate the arts, multimedia tools, and creativity into work submissions. That stipulation in partnership with the strict instructions of my advisor Dr. Hope Jensen Leichter, "Don't listen to anything that's not creative enough for you.



Professor Hope Jensen Leichter in the MeYouZeum workshop, "Projections: What's My Question?"



Professor Maxine Greene hosting our class showcase for *Education and the Aesthetic Experience*

Do things differently." is modeled in this integrated product; my humble aspiration to create a product integrating the arts.

"Don't listen to anything that's not creative enough.

Do things differently."

—Dr. Hope Leichter

Ultimately, my purpose is to nurture and create an expansive world view for others by forging connections and advancing an interaction-based approach. I stand firmly on the platform of wisdom declared by my mentor, Professor Jack Weatherford: "It doesn't matter what you believe; what matters is what you do."

Winter is nigh; blizzards are imminent. As I prepare for the next life stage, post-master, I plan to retire my rake and secure a shovel. Snowballs will be passé, and I—with passions of culture, design, and education all fused for the purpose of citizen diplomacy—will be constructing

formidable snow forts with the big kids.



TEACHERS COLLEGE
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

IN SHARP FOCUS: The Irony of Education

"All a person can do in this life is gather about her her integrity, her imagination, and her individuality—and with these ever with her, out front and in sharp focus, leap into the dance of experience."

—Tom Robbins, Even Cowgirls Get the Blues

The bulk of my story tells of movement, chronological happenings, relationships, communities, and serendipitous events with only peripheral mention of the institutions.

However, we must not lose sight of the institutions, which are indeed present, from the roots of the family, to the trunk of communities, to the many branches and fruits of learning, found in schools, camps, clubs, organizations, mentorships, and friendships. In discussing education, I think it is important to bring in the words of Lawrence Cremin (1973), President of TC from 1974 to 1984;

What is taught is not always what is desired, and vice versa; what is taught is not always what is learned, and vice versa. Moreover, there are almost always unintended consequences in education; indeed, they are frequently more significant than the intended consequences. Hence, educational transactions are often marked by profound irony (p. 5).

The importance and significance of the countless role models, mentors, and important people who have contributed to my growth and development cannot be overstated. All these institutions hold and support critical spaces of learning, interaction, and growth, whether the results were what they intended or not.

I did not undertake this educational autobiography as a way of showing a particularly revolutionary or unique way of thinking and living, but rather to explore how I have become situated in my experiences and thereby in my thought processes and approaches. Additionally, I also offer my own story as an example, meant to connect and relate to others' experiences. I present this educational autobiography as a challenge to educators and people looking at education to do things differently, to incorporate the arts, to ask new questions, to re-imagine education, and to not only anticipate but also embrace the irony.

In the next section, I will be delving into the concept for the *MeYouZeum: (Re)Imaginings of Home and Identity*, contextualizing it within personal and academic spheres. That will be followed by appendices of the eight activity stations at the *MeYouZeum*.

As you read through the concept and explore the stations, note the themes pulled from the autobiography: inclusion of the arts to explore complex ideas and processes, importance of telling our stories, emphasis on action following reflection, challenge of "where is education?," understanding of ourselves to be in a state of constant change, and always aiming to do things differently.



The MeYouZeum: (Re)Imaginings of Home and Identity

WHY A MUSEUM EXHIBIT?

"I'd like to design something like a city or a museum. I want to do something hands on rather than just play golf which is the sport of the religious right."

—Brad Pitt

I started my masters program in a course called *Family as Educator*, looking at the role of the family in fostering creative intelligence, and am ending it with a course called *Education in Community Settings: Museums*, exploring the role of community institutions in creating new possibilities of learning. I am a strong advocate of museums, believing in the benefit of multiple configurations of learning, exploring, and questioning as we grow in order to create well-rounded, contributing members of society. There is no definitive definition of what a museum is, which is continuing to evolve with the shift in technological tools and online platforms. The American Association of Museums (2010) notes that the common denominator of a museum is that it makes a "unique contribution to the public by collecting, preserving, and interpreting the things of this world." "Things," when talking about museums, is most often

WHY IDENTITY?

"All we can do, I believe, is cultivate multiple ways of seeing and multiple dialogues in a world where nothing stays the same."

—Maxine Greene

In my first year at Macalester, I was a part of the Pluralism and Unity program, aimed at exploring and understanding issues of race, culture, identity, and social justice, working to end racism in a global context. This acutely fed my passion of getting to know others on a deeper level through the exploration of identities via discussions, storytelling, and community engagement. This focus on identities in my life, relationships, and inquiry has not dissipated. Gilbert (2005) writes, "Identity is perhaps one of the most highly-contested and theoretically-complex concepts to understand when seeking to fuse the conceptual with the lived experiences of people. Identity cannot be described, explained, or categorized" (p. 65). And yet, the question

related to physical objects, but we should not neglect the things of this world that are dynamic and intangible, such as stories, memories, and explorations of who we are, where we have been, and where we are going. This type of work takes imagination, which is a gateway through which past experiences make their way into the present. Greene (1995) writes:

A reflective grasp of our life stories and of our ongoing quests ... depends on our ability to remember things past. It is against the backdrop of those remembered things and the funded meanings to which they give rise, that we grasp and understand what is now going on around us (p. 20).

It is precisely that type of reflection I would like to facilitate and capture through a museum exhibit focused on (re)imagining home and identity.

"Who am I?" sets the fundamental base of our human existence.

Once we ask "Who am I?," we start to explore "With whom do I fit in?" and "What does it mean to be (a) _____ (e.g. woman, black, artist)?" These questions lead us through three conceptual frameworks for understanding identity posed by Phinney (1990): identity formation, acculturation and cultural conflict, and social identity models (p. 501).

Identity formation places an emphasis on the self, the "I," which pulls heavily from a psychological framework emphasizing the ego. However, the self-search sphere is not located only within the individual and who we think ourselves to be, or on how society tries

to frame us. Thom and Coetzee (2004) write, "Identity formation relies not only on societies' expectation and recognition of the individual; it also depends on the individual's expectation and recognition of society" (p. 183).

The second framework of acculturation and cultural conflict requires the presence of more than one identifier or identity group, inviting the question, "With whom do I fit in?" Gaudelli (2003) writes, "Scholars in this paradigm seek to understand how people's ethnic identities are changed when they interact in larger social contexts with other groups" (p. 101). In his book, *In the Name of Identity: Violence and the Need to Belong*, Maalouf (2000) stresses that identity is made up of a number of allegiances. "But," he writes, "it is just as necessary to emphasize that identity is also singular, something that we experience as a complete whole" (p. 26). He continues to say that as we go through life, different affiliations will "swell up," often as a result of being threatened by some interaction in the larger social context, which eclipses all the others, appearing to represent our whole identity (pp. 12-13).

Social identity, as the final framework, often incorporates and uses common social science identifiers and categories, such as race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, and class, whereby the individual asks, "What does it mean to be (a) _____?" Through the social identity framework, we start to understand who we are in relation to the cultural or societal

WHY HOME?

"I long, as does every human being, to be at home wherever I find myself. The ache for home lives in all of us, the safe place where we can go as we are and not be questioned."

—Maya Angelou

Born and raised in a small, rural Minnesota village, I lived in only one house before starting college. The most transience I experienced was switching rooms from the first floor to the second. Had the political situation been different in Haiti in 1992 when Jess, my Macalester first-year roommate, was evacuated, she may have had a similar narrative: born and raised in a small, rural Haitian village, living only in one house before starting college. Many

structures around us. Unfortunately, what often accompanies the individual's questioning is society providing or hegemonically imposing an understanding on the individual for what it means to be (a) _____. The MeYouZeum is an important space to complicate cultural and societal constructions of identity, because these constructions are often lacking in depth and flexibility. Again, drawing from Maalouf (2000) as he challenges how society has tried to define his ethnic identity:

So am I half French and half Lebanese? Of course not. Identity can't be compartmentalized. You can't divide it up into halves or thirds or any other separate segments. I haven't got several identities: I've got just one, made up of many components in a mixture that is unique to me, just as other people's identity is unique to them as individuals (p. 2).

So although the concept of identity is highly-contested and theoretically-complex, not to mention forever dynamic, I keep coming back to it in my academic work as well as my personal intrigue. I am fascinated by how people come to understand themselves, how identities shift and morph over time, are enacted in different situations, and are used politically and historically. I am especially drawn to communities whose primary or political identities have been minimized or marginalized, or seem to be less understood in society at-large.

"Identity is perhaps one of the most highly-contested and theoretically-complex concepts to understand when seeking to fuse the conceptual with the lived experiences of people. Identity cannot be described, explained, or categorized."

—David Gilbert

The common denominator of a museum is that it makes a unique contribution to the public by collecting, preserving, and interpreting the things of this world.

—American Association of Museums



Kids: Growing Up in a Wider World.” She talked about the “typical profile, the benefits and challenges for this special group of kids and families, and how it affects their current and future life.” I had never heard the term “Third Culture Kid” (TCK) before that moment, but became captivated with the concept, both personally and anthropologically.

So, who is this “special group of kids” and how does my interest in TCKs appear here under the “why home” question?

Anthropologist and sociologist Ruth Hill Useem first introduced the term “Third Culture Kid” in the 1950s out of research she and Dr. John Useem were conducting in India, studying Americans working in various capacities, primarily “foreign service officers, missionaries, technical aid workers, businessmen, educators, and media representatives.” She identified a “third culture” within the expatriate community, defined as “a generic term to cover the styles of life created, shared, and learned by persons who are in the process of relating their societies... to each other.” The third culture kid was one who grew up in this interstitial culture, sharing similar characteristics and reactions to a high mobility lifestyle (Useem, 1993). In her model, she described the first culture as the home culture, the second culture as the host culture, and the third culture as the “culture between cultures,” which was the space of creating, sharing, and learning for those living an internationally mobile lifestyle (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009, pp. 14-15).

The term TCK stayed in academia for a while before being adopted by David Pollock and Ruth Van Reken (2009), who defined and explained a TCK to be

a person who has spent a significant part of his or her developmental years outside the parents’ culture(s).

The TCK frequently builds relationships to all of the cultures, while not having full ownership in any. Although elements from each culture may be assimilated into the TCK’s life experience, the sense of belonging is in relationship to others of similar background (p. 13).

Norma McCraig then coined the term Global Nomad in 1984, which has been used synonymously with TCK ever since (Schaetti, 2000, p. 69). However, the definition for a Global Nomad includes the explicit reason for the international mobility: parental occupation. A child who moves around because of a parent’s job will have quite different life circumstances and experiences from those of a child who is displaced or migrates to another country. Though research around TCKs assumes a connection to parental occupation, it is never clearly stated.

For TCKs or Global Nomads, there is a search for identity congruence, a harmony between vastly different worlds converging into a single life experience (Schaetti, 2000, p. 6). This search, it would seem, is more difficult because of the multiple ideologies, world views, and values emphasized by parents, teachers, peers, and society, referred to as “validators” by Fail, Thompson, and Walker (2004). They argue validators are necessary for confirming one’s identity and self-constructs. In cross-cultural

situations, “these validators may change and communicate different values each time there is a cross-cultural move, and the child’s identity will

be very different therefore from someone who grows up in a homogeneous society” (p. 324).

Thus, we have what Adler (1977) refers to as the Multicultural Man, whose identity is a continuous cycle of birth and death, as

embodied identities come and go (p. 38). He posits the multicultural man as being “propelled from identity to identity through a process of both cultural learning and cultural un-learning” (p. 30) transcending an “indigenous culture” to be known through the configuration of his or her world view (p. 25). Adler even goes so far as to characterize the multicultural man as one “intellectually and emotionally committed to the fundamental unity of all human beings while at the same time [recognizing, legitimizing, accepting, and appreciating] the fundamental differences that lie between people of different cultures” (p. 25). This positioning and understanding helps the person start to symbolize the various aspects of their identity, navigating through a maze, an image of society, culture, and belief structuring the individual, who is perpetually being redefined.

Throughout all this redefinition, relearning, and moving around, emerge those all too familiar questions around identity: “Who am I?,” “With whom do I fit in?,” and “What does it mean to be (a) _____?” As if that is not difficult enough, there is now an added layer of complexity as people ask, “Where are you from?” or “Where is home?” The answer is never simple, and when talking to TCKs or Global Nomads, this is reported to be the single-most difficult question to answer.

Pollock and Van Reken (2009) outline the most common benefits and challenges that affect global nomads, impacting self-awareness, identity formation, and subsequently, further global engagement or lack thereof (pp. 87-98).

BENEFITS		CHALLENGES
Expanded worldview	v.	Confused loyalties
Three-dimensional view of the world	v.	Painful view of reality
Cross-cultural enrichment	v.	Ignorance of the home culture

This list is by no means comprehensive, and the detail behind each point as well as lived experiences of each individual could fill a book. However, threaded through these and many of

the other challenges is the quest for “home”—what it means and where it is located.

TCKs can find themselves in positions of cultural marginality, which intercultural scholar Bennett (1993) writes is both encapsulating and constructive—both locking one into being different and feeling at home nowhere, as well as allowing opportunity for personal and professional gain, enabling a feeling of home everywhere. However, Knefelkamp says, “Living in the liminal without a home is different from living in the liminal as a home” (Schaetti & Ramsey, 1999).

As our world becomes evermore connected, living in liminal space and “making a home in the intersection of multiple identities” will become commonplace (Schaetti & Ramsey, 1999). In a 2008 article titled *Obama Has a “Third Culture” Team*, Van Reken quotes sociologist Dr. Ted Ward from 1984, calling TCKs “the prototype citizens of the future.” She muses that it seems the time has already come when a childhood lived in various cultures is the norm.

But, let’s face it, as much as we want to theorize to better understand, explain, and predict human behavior, we are dealing with complex moving parts and dynamic elements—identity, culture, people, and character. Each person deals, copes, and experiences their unique life trajectory differently. Each person is also situated within configurations of families, communities, and institutions, all of which play a part in the experience. Tensions will arise between siblings, parents, children, and friends as each makes sense of their world. Following is a funny exchange, if not a telling example, of some of these tensions with TCKs trying to make sense of their world and a parent, Vic Scaduto (Italian-American), and his colleague, a U.S. Foreign Service Officer, listening on. The dialogue is select excerpts from the chapter, “Children,” from *The London Embassy*, by Paul Theroux (1983).

“My father was born in Malaysia,” one of the boys said. “He still owns part of a tea estate there... They have thousands of workers—Indians mostly.”

“Could a greater miracle take place than for us to look through each other’s eyes for an instant?”

—Henry David Thoreau





Families I have stayed with around the world

“My father was born in India,” another boy said. This was Nigel.

“You’ve been to India, haven’t you, Dad?” Scaduto’s youngest son looked pleadingly at him to verify the fact, and then glanced at his school friend, a mouse-faced boy the others called Littlefair.

“We saw some Indians in Trinidad last summer.” This was Littlefair.

“They’re Italian,” Jocko said. “Scaduto’s an Italian name.”

“Smart boy,” Vic said. And he whispered to me, “They have this fantastic awareness about language.”

“We’re not Italian,” Mario Scaduto was saying. “We’re American. We’ve got this huge house in Silver Springs, Maryland.” But Mario’s accent, and its nervous urgent tweet, was English.

“I’ve been to America lots of times.” This was Nigel.

“So have we.” Littlefair.

“We never go to America,” Tony Scaduto said. “We prefer it here.”

Jocko said, “You’re American.”

“I don’t feel American,” Mario Scaduto said.

WHY A “MeYouZeum”?

“*Umuntu Ngumuntu Ngabantu*”. I am because you are. *Ubuntu*.

The southern African *Ubuntu* philosophy is talked about as a universal truth, a way of life, and the essence of being human. It is the idea that I am because you are; that “my humanity is inextricably tied up with yours” (Tutu, 2007). *Ubuntu* highlights the importance and fundamental nature of the oneness of humanity—humanity, which “in the relevant sense, [isn’t] an identity at all,” writes Appiah (2006, p. 98). However, it is through humanity that we come to know who we are, where we fit in, and what it means to identify in different spheres through our fellow denizens of one world.

“Neither do I,” Tony Scaduto said.

“But you are!” Littlefair said. “Your parents are American, so that means—”

Vic had caught up with me, and he had abandoned the boys, given up on their conversation. They were screaming at each other now, and he looked sheepish.

He said, “I’ll get that job in Italy. Then everyone will be happy. My folks will come over and visit. They’ll be proud—it’s what they always wanted. I think I’ll put these kids in the American school in Rome. You don’t have to tell me they need it. I know. They won’t like it, but they’ll get used to it. A job like this can be hell on a family—you have no idea” (pp. 58-64).

Home, identity, and nationality are clearly being challenged in this exchange as the boys try to make sense of their worlds, trying to contextualize things they have heard around them. The father, too, has some interesting lines, revealing the tensions and challenges in his position as father and decision-maker, as well as being a son himself of immigrant parents.

Home and identity unquestionably inspire and prompt stories, which is why these themes are a central part of the *MeYouZeum*.

—Southern African philosophy

In our globally-connected world, the ability to see ourselves as interconnected in crucial. This is happening almost innately among “First Globals,” the current 22- to 33-year-old cohort, reports acclaimed pollster, John Zogby (2008). “First Globals are already leading us into a new age of inclusion and authenticity,” looking outward rather than inward, owning passports, and traveling the world or accessing it on their phones or computers (pp. 196-197). The inward look is also important, however, so the *MeYouZeum* will offer spaces for both individual exploration as well as dialogic activities created in collaboration with other visitors. It will be a space that takes up Greene’s (1995) challenge to



“move beyond schooling to larger domains of education” (p. 5).

I hope that through this *MeYouZeum*, visitors will be able to dive into their imagination, coming to know themselves and others more deeply, and leave with not only a deeper understanding of our similarities and differences, but more significantly with maverick questions of how to come to know each other in new ways. As Appiah (2006) writes,

The great lesson of anthropology is that when the stranger is no longer imaginary, but real and present, sharing a human social life, you may like or dislike him, you may agree or disagree; but, if it is what you both want, you can make sense of each other in the end (p. 99).

The *MeYouZeum* will take place Saturday, April 28, 2012, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. in Grace Dodge Hall 449, Teachers College, Columbia University, 525 West 120th Street, New York, New York 10027. Information about the *MeYouZeum* can be found in the appendices or at www.meyouzeum.weebly.com.

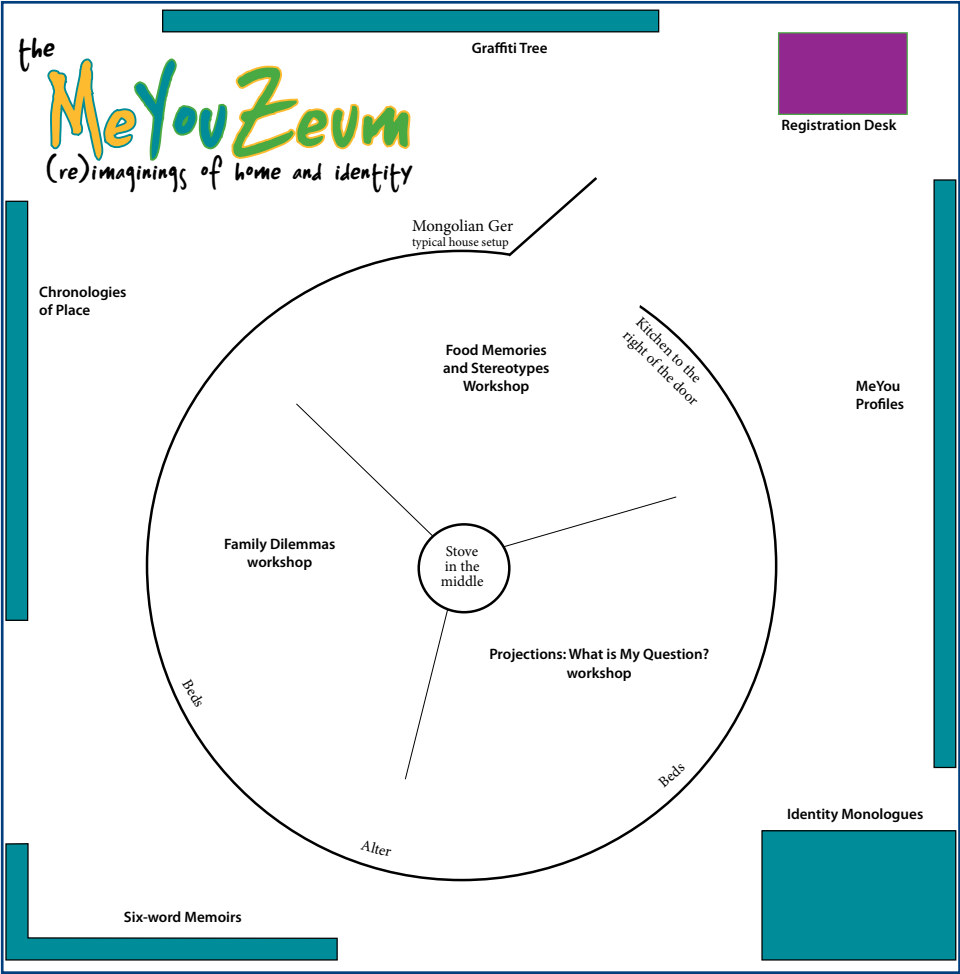


Families I have stayed with around the world

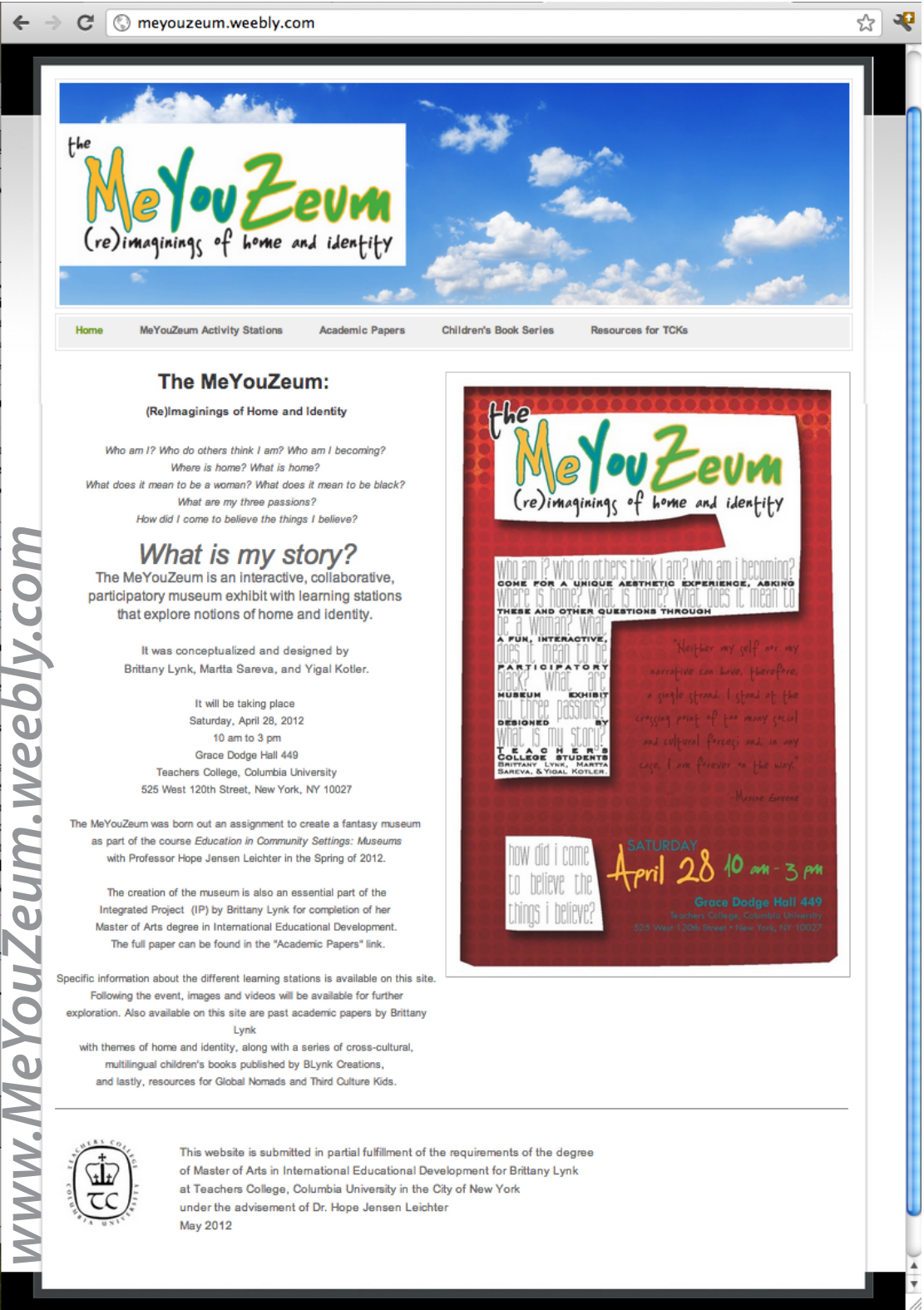


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The MeYouZeum website serves multiple purposes. It is a resource for capturing the one-day MeYouZeum exhibition through photos and videos as well as sharing lesson plans for the activities designed for the event. Additionally, it offers downloads of past academic papers I have written on themes of home and identity; viewings of the three cross-cultural, multilingual children’s books; and resources for Third Culture Kids or Global Nomads.

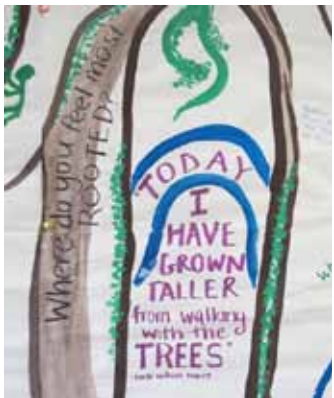


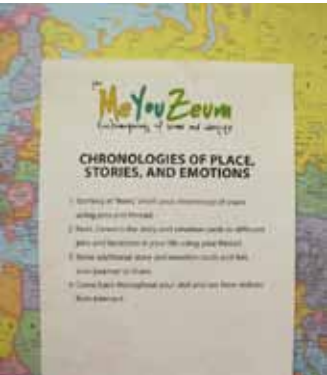
GRAFFITI TREE

GUIDING QUESTIONS	MATERIALS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Where do you feel most rooted?Where is home?What lessons, ideas, thoughts from this place of “home” do you carry with you?How are you connected to trees in your life?What role do trees play in your culture?What memories of trees do you have?What is a story that has been passed down in your family?Who and what has helped you grow?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">large paper with trees drawn out + questions to respond totape to put up papermarkerspaintexplanation “Why a tree?”
OBJECTIVES	
Participants will engage in conversation about home and identity through written and visual representation while taking part in creating a final visual piece.	

PROCEDURE/METHOD

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY
At this station you will take part in creating a collective mural while exploring questions of home and identity, through written and visual conversation.
PROCESS
Have a blank paper with trees drawn on it. Have the above probes/questions on the wall/tree for people to respond to. Participants will use markers and spray paint to draw and write answers to the questions, as well as respond to others.
Why a tree?
The tree idea comes from a story our classmate told us about a tree from her childhood home acting as a witness to her life. Trees are powerful in many cultures as gathering places, as spaces to discuss legal matters, as places to pass on oral history. In addition, trees act as a metaphor for us as individuals growing roots and help us widen our concepts and thoughts of “home”.





SAMPLE EMOTION AND STORY CARDS

- Born here.
- Had lots of cups of tea here.
- Danced here.
- Met my best friend here.
- My heart is here.
- Learned about death for the first time here.
- Went to school here.
- Learned what happiness is here.
- My heart beats faster here.
- Became a sibling here.



MeYouZeum ACTIVITY STATIONS

CHRONOLOGIES OF PLACE, STORIES, AND EMOTIONS

GUIDING QUESTIONS	MATERIALS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Where have I been? Who has been the force behind my movement?• Where do my stories, emotions, or locations intersect with others?• Is it difficult to assign emotions or stories to pins or life stages?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Map• Bulletin board• Spools of thread• Paper slips• Push pins• Scissors• Markers
OBJECTIVES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To get a visual sense of human movement.• To reflect on what movement has meant in their lives• To gain an deeper understanding of the similarity of the human experience	

PROCEDURE/METHOD

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY
Have you ever wanted to map your life? Have you wanted to see what it looks like mapped onto other lives? How can we map our life in a way that includes important events and emotions? Come to this station to experiment with mapping your chronology of place, with accompanying emotions and stories.
PROCESS
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Chart your chronology of place using pins and thread. Your life is the thread.2. Create and connect emotion or story cards to relevant pins and life stages.3. Ask yourself or chat with a neighbor:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What/who has been the primary force behind my movements? When in my life has that force morphed or changed?• Where do my stories, emotions, or locations intersect with others?• Was it difficult to assign emotions or story cards to relevant pins?• What emotions come with leaving or staying? What is different for you in being the person who leaves versus the person who stays?



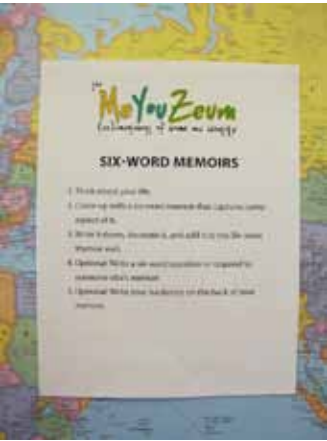
MeYouZeum ACTIVITY STATIONS

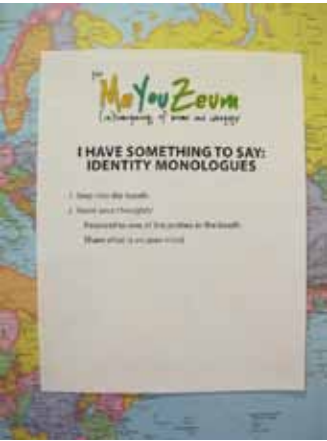
SIX-WORD MEMOIRS

GUIDING QUESTIONS	MATERIALS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is my story, distilled?• What is included versus what is left out?• How can I convey myself in just six words?• What can I learn about myself through others' stories?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Paper slips or index cards• Markers
OBJECTIVES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To reflect back on our lived life, extracting themes, and making choices about what gets told• To read, empathize with, respond to others' stories• To remember the depth of how we experience our own life, and how that interfaces with how others experience theirs	

PROCEDURE/METHOD

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY
One life. Six words. What's yours? TM This memoir project was started in 2006 by Smith Magazine as an online challenge and has become a global phenomenon. The website (www.smithmag.net/sixwords/) currently has nearly 3 million memoirs, many of which have been included in a series of compiled six-word memoir books. Join the movement!
PROCESS
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Think about your life.2. Come up with a six-word memoir that captures some aspect of it.3. Write it on a sheet and put it on the Six-word Memoir wall.4. Optional: Submit it to Smith Magazine's website. Take it further: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Write a six-word questions or respond to one another's memoirs or questions, positioning your responses together.2. Include your backstory on the back of the index card or sheet of paper.





MeYouZeum ACTIVITY STATIONS

IDENTITY MONOLOGUES

GUIDING QUESTIONS	MATERIALS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">What is on your mind? What is your story?What are the MeYouZeum activities making you think about?What is your response to one of the probes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Flip camTripodBoothProbes
OBJECTIVES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">To offer a space to mull over ideasTo encourage visitors to tell their storyTo capture feedback	

PROCEDURE/METHOD

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY
Do you have more to say after doing one of the activities? Do you want to chew on some thoughts? Have you ever recorded an identity monologue? Here is the place for you! Stop in the booth to share your thoughts on some of the activities or respond to one of the probes on the wall in the booth.
PROCESS
<p>This station requires very little work—just encouraging people to go into the booth to record, and helping people know how to work the camera.</p> <p>People can go in the booth individually or in groups of 2.</p> <p>There will be several questions on the wall that visitors can answer or they can free associate or respond to any of the activities. This is loosely structured around the StoryCorps model of encouraging people to tell their story.</p>

SAMPLE PROBES

- What are the MeYouZeum exhibits making you think about? What is on your mind?
- How has the notion of home changed for you over the years?
- What are your most salient identifiers? What used to be?
- What types of friends do you most often seek out or make when you move to a new place?
- What are your memories of isolation or inclusion?
- Who are you in different locations and settings?
- How has Facebook changed the way you think about your life narrative?
- What identities were pushed on you growing up that you didn't like/baffled you/still relate to?
- Do you generally keep things or throw things? What do you keep? What do you throw?
- What is a story often told in your family? Who told it? Under what circumstances? Is there more than one version?
- How was your name selected? How is naming done in your family? Has your name affected how people treat you?
- What objects or artifacts do you value the most? Why? Where did they come from? What will happen to them in the future?
- What role has religion or spirituality played in your life?

MeYouZeum ACTIVITY STATIONS

MeYou PROFILES

GUIDING QUESTIONS	MATERIALS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">How do I see myself? What colors and images represent me?How do others see me?What aspects of myself often go unnoticed?What are the tensions and complexities I experience surrounding my identity?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Adhesive magnets with cut up art from magazines, ads, art pieces, etc.Magnetic boardExpo pens or chalk
OBJECTIVES	
Explore visual self-identity and individual stereotypes of self-understanding through images	

PROCEDURE/METHOD

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY
“How do I see myself?” “How do others see me?” This station will allow participants to explore these questions through the use of magnetic art.
PROCESS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Using images or other fragments from magazines, printed art pieces, pictures, advertisements, etc. and fixing them on a board using magnets, participants construct two separate images: how they see (or imagine themselves) and how others see them.Finish the statement “I am...” to explain your imagesTake a photo in between your two images





MeYouZeum **ACTIVITY STATIONS**

FOOD MEMORIES AND STEREOTYPES

GUIDING QUESTIONS	MATERIALS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What memories do you associate with food?• Why do we eat what we eat?• What emotions do you associate with different foods?• What are some of the foods/ingredients you love? Hate?• When I eat _____ I think of _____.• What are some of your favorite spices and how do you use them?• How and where do you eat most of your meals?• How would like to eat most of your meals?• Do you have a favorite kitchen item? What is it? Why?• What was the kitchen like growing up?• What was your favorite food prepared in your family?• Do you remember food stories told by your family that have been passed down from generation to generation?• Do you cook any family recipes that have been handed down to you?• Do you ever use food as remedies for illness?• Do you prepare any dishes in a particular way as part of your tradition for the holidays or special times?• What are different food traditions in your family?• What foods remind you of home?• What is “comfort” food to you?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• large paper with trees drawn out + questions to respond to• tape to put up paper• markers• two quotes written out (other tree quotes?)• directions• explanation “Why a tree?”• spray paint
OBJECTIVES	
Explore memories, emotions, ideas and stereotypes associated with food.	

PROCEDURE/METHOD

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY
This workshop will use food memories to explore notions of home, identity, community and stereotypes. Through a series of activities and discussions, participants will share their own memories of food, family and home, as well as examine and question food stereotypes.

PROCESS
<p>Group will be seated around a table, as if for a meal, for the duration of this station.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Introductions/Sharing Food Memories: Participants introduce themselves through choosing an object/food/spice from the table and sharing a story. This could be about a recipe, a dish, a ritual, a memory, an event, or an answer to one of the questions above. (Why is this a significant memory for you? Why did you choose to introduce yourself in this way?) As people share stories, they pass the ball of yarn to each other, creating a web of memories by bouncing ideas off of each other (“That reminds me...”). How can we use food memories to create community and engage in cross-cultural dialogue? How can we connect through talking about food?2. Exploring and Challenging Food Stereotypes: Have images of different foods on cards and have participants choose cards. In the group, talk about different stereotypes associated with the foods, why people think these stereotypes exist in our societies and how we can challenge them. Ex. certain cultures being associated with certain foods, certain members of the family3. Closing: Rethinking the “Food Pyramid”: What is one take-away from this workshop? Write it down in one word on one of the small triangles. Share your word and tell us why you chose it, then add it to our “Food Pyramid.” <p>Interested in learning about other “food memory” workshops? Visit http://stiramemory.blogspot.com/</p>





FAMILY DILEMMAS

GUIDING QUESTIONS	MATERIALS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">What are some dilemmas in your life? Where they individual? Related to family? Situational?How did you solve the dilemma?What is your problem-solving style? Does it change depending on the configuration of people involved? Do you prefer to solve problems alone or in a group?What are different ways families can approach and solve conflict?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Small pieces of paperSheets of paperBig wall paperScissorsPensMarkers
OBJECTIVES	
Explore moments of choice in our individual and collective lives and analyze the many solutions; choose your own adventure!	

PROCEDURE/METHOD

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY
Participants identify dilemmas in their life and the importance they carried. Collectively, using elements of role-playing games and visual art, they try to re-imagine the process of decision-making.
PROCESS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Participants will be seated in a circle and will share their names.Each person will have three minutes to identify a personal dilemma he/she experienced and write it in a piece of paper.Each one announces their identified dilemma.Then pieces of paper will be mixed in a bo—one dilemma will be chosen randomly.The dilemma’s “owner” describes the background to the dilemma (location, who else was involved, what else was involved, such as objects, sounds, smells, etc.).Participants re-imagine the scenario by drawing some of the mentioned objects and putting them on the wall or tables around.Participants split their roles.With the assistance of the station’s facilitator and through the role-playing, participants reflect on the process of coming to the dilemma’s solution.As a conclusion they draw collectively the image of dilemma on the wall paper, akin to the idea of recording history and stories on cave walls.



PROJECTIONS: WHAT’S MY QUESTION?

GUIDING QUESTIONS	MATERIALS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">What underlying messages and values are expressed through the common questions “Where are you from?,” “What do you do?,” and “What are you?” Is this problematic?How can we change our discourse and questions in getting to know one another?What do the questions we ask others reveal about ourselves?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">PaperMarkersOptional: ProjectorOptional: ComputerOptional: White wall or screenOptional: White T-shirts
OBJECTIVES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">To think deeper about how we learn about one anotherTo question assumptions behind the questions we askTo come up with new questions to get to know one another	

PROCEDURE/METHOD

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY
This workshop station will include several activities around identity that probe and critique the ways people interact and engage with one another, delving into the dilemmas typical questions such as “Where are you from?,” “What do you do?,” and “What are you?” can elicit. Together we will explore and expand our ways of getting to know one another more fully.
Issues of identity are also often very personal. As we go through the workshop, let’s be conscious of being present and respectful of the space, so that we all feel safe.
PROCESS
This workshop will have 3 parts: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Diving in:<ul style="list-style-type: none">Stereotype introductions: Introduce yourself through the stereotypes put upon youDiscussion on the discourse:<ul style="list-style-type: none">Critique questions: “Where are you from?,” “What do you do?,” and “What are you?”Share personal stories that involve these questionsDiscuss different elements and factors that contribute to how we come to know ourselves and othersExpanding the discourse:<ul style="list-style-type: none">What’s my question?:<ol style="list-style-type: none">What would you want to be asked when someone meets you for the first time, instead of “Who are you?,” “Where are you from?,” or “What are you?”?What would you ask someone when you meet them for the first time, instead of “Who are you?,” “Where are you from?,” or “What are you?”?Document question on white paper, or project onto participant wearing white T-shirt.



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