CROSS-CULTURAL RESEARCH WITH INTEGRITY

Collected Wisdom from Researchers in Social Settings

Linda Miller Cleary

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University of Minnesota, USA

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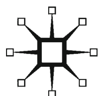

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1
Nothing Stands Still

To cross-cultural borders in research is a slippery and complicated endeavor, and good intentions, though essential, are not enough to help researchers make those crossings with respect for those they research and with their own integrity intact. With diversity now a world-wide reality, cross-cultural research has become an endeavor for most of those who research in social settings. Though cross-cultural research has different meanings in different disciplines, it is hoped that this book will benefit any researcher who crosses into another culture to pose questions, formulate hypotheses, accrue new knowledge, or, even better, collaborate with those of a different culture to solve problems.

An increase in the multicultural nature of our regional research populations, due to regional and global mobility and migration patterns, has been further increased by newer notions of culture. Though research used to focus on the cultural difference of race and ethnicity, researchers now see the need to reach beyond those borders that implied travel to different neighborhoods or distant spaces. Now we rarely engage in research that doesn't include participants from different ethnicities, nationalities, sexual orientations, races, religions, social classes, political affiliations, occupations, and/or language groups, all groups with different ways of being. These factors affect research and call for sensitivities that were not deemed as important in previous decades.

In the past, many researchers came to their inquiries bound by their own cultural perspective and intent on their own goals and conclusions. Researchers now investigate and question the primacy of their own realities and have come to value different world views. Furthermore, within the last half-century, ethical concerns have taken on serious consideration in research, and researchers are finding ways to collaborate with communities that have been, with good reason, resistant to research that has been harmful in the past. Thinking through cross-cultural research methodology is necessary to heal wounds and to meet local as well as knowledge-based needs.

Certainly, globalization allows us to learn from other cultures and from other researchers, shifting us away from being a solitary researcher to undertaking team endeavors with "an emphasis on transdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, and multi-perspective approaches . . . which cross discipline boundaries as well as state and national divides" (Grbich, 2004, pp. 51–52). Traveling, physically or metaphorically, from one culture to another allows us richer perspectives, from richer understandings of different social settings to richer ways of viewing reality. And there is an impetus in the very world problems that face us. As Leung and Van de Vijver (2006, p. 443) note, "Challenges of humankind such as global warming, terrorism, and arms control require the cooperation of many nations." We must understand other perspectives if we are to transact the social change needed to address these problems, and the issues of human suffering and human rights.

The reality of globalization continues to challenge local cultures and their needs. Business and media conglomerates, most often driven by profit, will continue to capitalize on those who have less power in the world instead of learning from local insights and meeting local needs. Walter Ong (1999, as cited in Ladson-Billings and Donnor, 2008, pp. 74–75) "warns of the growing threat of global capital that destabilizes notions of cultural unity and/or allegiance. Instead, the overwhelming power of multinational corporations creates economic cleavage that force people, regardless of their racial, cultural, and ethnic locations, to chase jobs and compete against each other to subsist." Cross-cultural research collaborations can seek to disrupt those competitions and elucidate the "tension between democratic and market values" that disadvantages certain cultural populations (Giroux and Giroux, 2008, p. 181).

This book looks at issues in cross-cultural research, from initiation of research to its dissemination, by tapping the insights of interviewed researchers who were both troubled and pleased, many simultaneously, with their cross-cultural efforts. Some 70 researchers (from four continents, from seven different nations, from different cultures within those nations, and from different academic disciplines) each draw from their geopolitical and cultural contexts and give earnest insights from their cross-cultural research experiences. Those interviewed were themselves varied: some well known in their fields, others working hard at research but who haven't yet made it to the top of the academic ladder; those sitting well on top of their privilege to those fighting on the margins for privilege well deserved. Herein lies a cross-cultural, cross-disciplinary, and cross-national intersection of thought. Interviewed researchers offer their experience, stories, insights, and analyses, but the book also integrates their experience with thought from seminal works on cross-cultural research and with critiques on methodological issues from authors who draw from (and even critique) postcolonial, post-structural, and postmodern ideologies.

Researchers work off one another to create progress in cross-cultural research. Indeed, readers of this book must be active in considering, rejecting, or accepting the proffered advice in relation to their own research agendas. Multiple researchers, multiple stories, and multiple interpretations reach out across the pages to the curious readers as they consider their own research. Many of the interviews for this book morphed into recorded dialogic conversations between the interviewee and me as interviewer, creating, as Grbich (2004, p. 84) describes, “a link between the therapeutic and scholarly aspects of research.” As researchers we evolve. Through this gathering of researchers’ stories, reflexivity (the researcher’s self-examinations of interpretive positions), and resultant insights, we help each other evolve. Nevertheless, perhaps we are arrogant if we think that any absolute truths can outlast a conversation or the reading of a book.

As researcher and author, I take agency in the construction of this text, positioning myself in relation to the topic as the book progresses, allowing my lived cross-cultural experiences to be a part of the whole. The impetus for this book was not dispassionate; it originated in my research association with Julian Cho, the Humanities Department Chair at Toledo Community College. On my first trip to southern Belize in 1996 to study Indigenous literacy, I hiked into a Maya community inland from Punta Gorda. There I witnessed the results of the advent of electricity in the village, which had occurred just days before: one electric pole wired to a thatched community gathering place, a television, and 15 or so Maya children mesmerized by US television. The following day, in an interview with Cho, I described what I had seen and asked him about the possible loss of culture in his Maya village. His response was: “Nothing stands still.” We talked about the complexities of surface vs. deep culture, about the tenacity of deep culture, about the place of literacy and schooling in a changing world, about the losses and gains of modernization, and about issues of poverty and power, and gender and culture in Belize schooling. “Nothing stands still” has become a mantra that he has contributed to this book.

I dedicate this book to Julian Cho. Normally a dedication comes before a book begins, but in this case Cho is a part of my research narrative in multiple chapters. Though my formal research about cross-cultural research wasn’t to begin until after his death, his phrase “Nothing stands still” has come back to me again and again, sometimes from the mouths of those whom I interviewed, sometimes in what I have read, but often as if the late Cho’s contribution was being whispered across the years.

I started with research questions, but they have not stood still and so are hardly worth mentioning. I started with what I thought were some truths, but they quickly dissolved as I collected wisdom from those who had done similar research. Every time I think I have a hold on something absolute to say, it refuses to stay reliably in place. The researchers interviewed for this book rarely touted simple guidelines for a researcher to follow and

often raised as many questions as answers. In many cases they posed the very questions that they wished they had asked themselves before entering their own research endeavors. So this will not be a book of absolutes about cross-cultural research, but I feel sure that those who read it, with their own research agendas and minds in tow, will do better research. This is the book that I wish I had had before I began my cross-cultural endeavors.

A not-so-definite definition of culture and identity

In trying to define what cross-cultural research is, I open myself and my readers to an inclusive notion. What Cho had realized wouldn't stand still, Bhabha (1994, p. 5) deemed as the "shifting nature of culture" and, hence, the shifting nature of cultural borders. For instance, Larry Knopp, Director of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences at the University of Washington Tacoma and geographer, perceived his crossing of cultural borders to be multilayered. He describes his research as looking at "issues of gender and sexuality, and urban change and verbiage, and cultural politics." In his research he asks the question: "How are gay politics done in a cultural context like Britain, versus the United States, versus Australia, with their different traditions of property ownership or land tenure, like freehold versus leasehold, and the position of these various places in a global and regional economy?" As Knopp and many others point out, cultural borders are layered, complicated, and elusive constructs.

One would think that one region, coastal Maine in the USA, for instance, might evidence some consistency in culture, but Julie Canniff, teacher educator and researcher at the University of Southern Maine, described the complexity she found in studying "concepts of success" there:

> In the six years I spent working with teachers and students on the remote Maine islands, I was fascinated with cultural points of view as those from island cultures talked often about how difficult it was for their kids to go to the mainland school. In ways, the culture of poverty was more salient than ethnic culture, but then again you had Native American, French Canadian, and Catholic populations and all their different concepts of success through many generations. I suppose the notion of "culture" to a Maine islander is simply "the way we do things out here."

I asked Ian Anderson, Director for the Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal Health at the University of Melbourne, what advice he gave to graduate students in considering research that crossed cultural borders. He replied:

> Don't look for the border; it may well be seamless. People who are looking for the border trip over things. Be really aware that you carry a whole set

> of stereotypes that you will unlearn through time. You may think you are on one side of the border when you aren't. You may think that you are talking about the same thing, but people have profoundly different experiences even if they are using a common language.

The term cultural "border," then, is a geographic metaphor. Cultures are rarely totally isolated from one another. Since time immemorial, they have intruded on other cultures, and groups have been pushed out of what was even formally another group's space (Safran, 1991; Alexander, 2008). In colonization, more powerful groups, often acting beyond their need to survive, have traveled to exert their forceful presence on other cultures around the world, to intrude purposively, with cultural domination, power, privilege, and material gain as motives. Slavery, for instance, was known in almost every ancient civilization and still exists today (Harris, 1999). Hence, oppression has forced most subjugated people to adjust their ways of being by *integrating* themselves into the intruding culture's dominant constructs in order to survive and maintain some of their own cultural dignity, or by *adapting* to the oppressive constructs in order to survive. The Indigenous or other marginalized groups within dominant society often find ways of resisting. bell hooks (1989) noted that "Oppressed people resist by identifying themselves as subjects, by defining their reality, shaping their new identity, naming their history, telling their story"(p. 43). hooks (1989, p. 67) quotes Paolo Freire (2005, p. 67), who makes the distinction between integration and adaptation:

> Integration with one's context, as distinguished from adaptation, is a distinctly human activity. Integration results from the capacity to adapt oneself to reality plus the critical capacity to make choices and transform that reality . . . The integrated person is person as Subject. In contrast, the adaptive person is person as object, adaptation representing at most a weak form of self-defense. If man is incapable of changing reality, he adjusts himself instead. Adaptation is behavior characteristic of the animal sphere; exhibited by man, it is symptomatic of his dehumanization.

It would be nice if the age of colonization were over, but the motives for gain may have just changed from the quest for gold or chalices to their metaphoric equivalents. Furthermore, as to be discussed in Chapter 2, power comes with privilege; one moves around in the world with both conscious and unconscious privilege and its benefits, or, possibly even more conscious, the lack thereof.

As researchers, we must interrogate our own motives and privileged positions in research as we move across seemingly seamless, multilayered, yet existing cultural borders to determine whether they involve a sort of

neo-colonialism. And in studying what we deem to be important distinctions between cultures, many complications arise. "Nothing stands still." For instance, some researchers in this study found their participants had taken on more complicated identities than the researchers had initially considered, due to the absorption that occurs when those of one culture either choose or are forced to disappear into another, abjuring or hiding cultural traces of which they might be proud or ashamed, or sometimes simultaneously proud and ashamed. Boundaries become permeable, further complicating this notion of culture. Rosaldo (1993) says: "In contrast with the classic view, which posits culture as a self-contained whole made up of coherent patterns, culture can arguably be conceived as a more porous array of intersections where distinct processes crisscross from within and beyond its borders" (p. 20). Researchers in this study talk of the intersections of race, ethnicity, nationality, region, religion, class, language, gender, generation, sexual preference, and, hence, political stance. Indeed, some found that being culturally sensitive to ethnicity was actually largely being sensitive to the "intersectionality" of gender, language, identity, and socio-economic issues (Delva et al., 2010). Furthermore, each culture and sub-culture (if indeed that isn't another culture altogether) has its own views of what is right and what is wrong, which further confound researchers' endeavors because, as with most deep levels of culture, these differences are not necessarily visible or discernible. And consistent with porosity, people often go back and forth between different cultures, speaking with a multiplicity of voices depending on their needs at the time, especially when they are of mixed heritage/hybridity. Both participants and researchers may be caught between pressures from different cultures, finding it expedient to identify differently for understandable purposes. Neither people nor cultures exist in boxes.

Once, in 1993, just as the ice was going out of the rivers and lakes in northern Maine, I talked with a Passamaquoddy elder and educator. I told him that I was beginning to see just how complex the cultural issues and literacy issues were surrounding the education of native people. He paused and then said to me: "When you start to see things simply, you will come closer to the truth." Since then, I've tried to think more simply about culture. As researchers have found, starting with the simplest theory about social and cultural behavior may prove to be more accurate. Surface markers of culture, such as group membership, dress, language, food, customs, language, and geographic positioning, may be easy to identify; deep culture, such as ways of being, shared ways of viewing the world, shared bases of social action, inherited ideas, beliefs, and knowledge, are less transparent. Thinking more simply about culture has led me to see surface and deep culture as a construct that people have developed to live in the conditions that their worlds present, ways to survive and thrive. And, of course, the conditions of survival and "thrival" change. The language of a culture evolves, both to allow communication between people for survival and to simultaneously shape, or maintain and articulate, experience. Religion develops to

explain the mysteries in the seeable and unseeable world. When people from one culture come into contact with those from another, what Cole (1991) calls "inherently sociocultural-contextual-historical boundedness of mental processes" can be hard to figure out (p. 437). But this lack of understanding is dependent on the relative lack of contact between people who have been inculcated into different ways of being and who use different geopolitical knowledge upon which to thrive and survive. Furthermore, different disciplines use different concepts of culture, indeed different researchers within the same discipline, upon which to base their research. For instance, psychologists Matsumoto and Yoo (2006) note that some definitions allow psychologists to better control variables, eliminating noncultural variables.

And, of course, identity and perspective are inextricably related to culture and sometimes seen as derived from ancestors. As Grande (2008, p. 233) says, "And when I say 'my perspective,' I mean from a consciousness shaped not only by my own experiences, but also those of my peoples and ancestors." Yet, identity is also, in part, a willful thing. One takes on cultural values, perspectives, and behaviors and rejects them, in part due to the way one has been enculturated (the way one has taken on culture non-consciously) but also based on decisions about the way one views oneself in relation to surrounding groups. Identity can also be evolved in rebellion. When we become cross-cultural researchers, we confront the importance of understanding ourselves, our cultural roots, how we live those roots or challenge them, where we are going, and what influences us along the way. Notions of culture thus become intermixed with notions of identity. Shirley Brice Heath, linguistic anthropologist at Stanford University, who has looked at language and literacy development across socio-cultures, stated at the American Educational Research Association (AERA) Conference in 2006 that people hold not just one or two identities but are "bundles of identity." More recently in an interview, Heath referred to "crowded selves" using Shemeem Black's (2010) term. Bundles of identity play out in the multiple ways one presents oneself, determined by one's surroundings at any given moment. Indeed, we construct identity as a way to survive or thrive in that moment. I am a bundle of identities, and I may play out a particular construct of my multiple identities, consciously or unconsciously, as I go about my life. These conceptualizations of myself tie into social identities or collective identities as I move into different groups and arenas (Stryker et al., 2006, p. 26). I present the following because I believe that acknowledging one's complex identity informs the readers of one's values and subjectivities as they affect one's research (see also Denzin, 1998; Lather, 1991; Stonebanks, 2008).

I am a white middle-class university professor. I prepare teachers of English and have taught undergraduate courses in literature, composition, linguistics, and their pedagogy, and graduate courses in literacy and research. That may identify me by class, profession, and discourse community. Before I considered the complexity of culture, I was convinced that I had none as my ancestors were of English, Irish, Scottish, German, Dutch, and French

heritage. My ancestry is rowdily European and highly affected by centuries of presence in North America. Being identified as Euro-American doesn't feel right. I hail from the east coast, spent some formative years on the west coast, declare Maine as my home of heart, but work in the Midwest and cherish many Midwest ways of being. I am a regional hybrid. I am a mother, a sister, a grandmother, and still a child of elderly parents. There was a time in my life of single parenting when I used food stamps, had no insurance, and worried about how my children would get through college. I can empathize with what researchers call the "culture of poverty," but I was not raised in poverty. I am, indeed, a "bundle of identities." I am a crowded self. Though I sit in a place of white privilege, I did come through a time of being painfully aware that I was not gender privileged in an academic setting. I am constantly discovering parts of my identity that I haven't been aware of until I have acted from them. Recently, I surprise myself, for instance, when I act with courage in certain situations. It has been a delightful discovery to me that there is more to me than I even know.

It may seem counterintuitive to consider bundles or categories or theories as simpler than a mass of the interwoven, but the Passamaquoddy elder was onto something in saying, "When you start to see things simply, you will come closer to the truth." In this research, one begins to see things more simply by seeing interwoven complexity as the reality. When one sees how really complex the considerations are, one may be jolted into more overarching constructs. In this way one can see identity as simply a version of a self-construction for the purpose of survival and thrival. Cultural borders are where a person's conscious and non-conscious, crowded self meets the surface and deep culture of "others" who have different sets of shared meanings transferred through different symbols and patterns of behavior, and different modes of getting on with life. What one might think of as clear borders may not stand still. As researchers, to become what some deem to be culturally competent, we need to scrutinize our own crowded identities, develop strategies for discerning our own possible biases and privileges, and become sufficiently confident, happy enough in ourselves, to not be intimidated by difference. Researchers need to cross permeable borders, working hard to prepare themselves for departure, and then entering another culture with both curiosity and respect. The purpose of this book is to help in those crossings while placing ethics and actions of right conduct at the center of our scholarly endeavors.

A brief and recent history of ethical issues in cross-cultural research

Humans have long sought to understand the universals and idiosyncrasies of nature, and of human nature and experience, through inquiry. We are curious beings. Researchers, in more organized endeavors, have participated

in an unending search into understandings of human behavior and thinking. Robben and Sluka (2007, p. 446) describes this search as a "hermeneutic circle in which understanding was advanced in circular, rather than linear, ways between part and whole, and back again."

Researchers have, perhaps more recently, debated the ethics, the rightness of the methodologies and methods used, when they move beyond their own culture. They have followed a long path to the recognition that all people are moral beings, though those who are culturally different may have had very different circumstances that have informed what grounds them morally. As researchers have become less culturally myopic, they have begun to realize that each culture has different views of the world and of good behavior in research, and most have realized that all inquiry has ethical and political dimensions.

In many countries, the development of ethics protocols became a notable occurrence in the 20th century, perhaps in reaction to medical research in Nazi concentration camps, to the US government's Tuskegee Syphilis Study, to the more recently discovered syphilis study in Guatemala, and to other heinous research around the world. These grievous breaches of respect for humanity have fed world outrage, and ethics procedures surrounding medical research now operate under the injunction of "Do no harm," monitored by rigorous Institutional Research Boards (IRBs) and other ethics reviews at the national, state, and community level (see Chapter 3 for a full view of ethics protocols). The recent publication of Skloot's non-fictional narrative (2010) entitled *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* presents an interesting (and disturbing) view of the development of medical research ethics in the USA.

Though no one would question the harm done in the research mentioned above, what does and doesn't "do harm" can be complicated due to different takes on what is perceived as harmful in different cultures. As Stanfield and Rutledge (1993) notes, the research rules of procedure and evidence have been historically construed by Eurocentric researchers and have been rooted in Eurocentric hegemony. Stanfield calls for new epistemologies to ground our theories because, in the past, researchers' views of ethical practice have been limited, even arrogant, in their unwillingness to view ethics from other cultural perspectives. For instance, in the past the Western view of research was one in which the researcher remains "under a veil of neutrality or of objectivity; whereas, in Māori culture, research is only considered ethical if there is a 'face-to-face' and continuing relationship between the researcher and researched" (Bishop, 1996; see also Smith, 1999).

Anthropologists have been at these debates since they professionalized their work (see Welsch and Endicott, 2002). They began serious discussions that set ethical standards within the profession of fieldwork in the midst of political turmoil in the 1960s and 1970s, when the USA supported stable governments while ignoring what might be change for the good of the larger

population. Anthropologists' debate over their involvement in US endeavors triggered their first code of ethics (see Sluka's discussion of Project Camelot, 2007; Robben, 2007).

Yet anthropologists have been consistent in their empirical studies, long holding ethical obligations not to impose Western culture on Indigenous communities. This complicates, for instance, what might be an individual researcher's inclinations to provide medical assistance in the field from the spirit of compassion and reciprocity (Pollock, 2007). A decade of concern has surrounded Changon's work amongst the Yanomamö in Venezuela. A critique of his work was reported by Tierney (2000) in *Darkness in El Dorado: How Scientists and Journalists Devastated the Amazon*, the book then factually critiqued by the University of Michigan (http://cogweb.ucla.edu/Debate/UMichOnChagnon.html), setting off a debate that involved serious consideration of ethical standards, and shook the American Anthropological Association and the field of cross-cultural research in general (see Borofsky, 2005).

Linguists, psychologists, and educators in the 1960s and 1970s also considered culture and issues that arise when research reaches across cultural borders, becoming responsive to the way ethnicity plays out, for instance, in educational settings (see Bernstein, 1972; LaBov, 1972; McDermott, 1977; Cole and Scribner, 1978; Hymes 1964). They have offered insights into culture, language, and learning that have been seen more clearly in the light of juxtaposed cultures and have benefited from the cautions and ethical insights of anthropology. More recently, groundbreaking ethnographies have been respected as shedding more focused light on crucial issues and relationships with power, respectfully acknowledging the intelligence and literacy of participants along the way (for instance, Shirley Brice Heath's seminal work on literacy, *Way with Words* (1983)). Indeed, postmodern researchers in all the social sciences have critiqued the ethics of research, looking carefully at the complications and fluidity of identity and hybridity in both the researcher and the researched, both when the researcher is an "insider" or "outsider" to the community researched. Post-structuralists have concerned themselves with the power and privilege relationships consequent in the cross-cultural research process, warning of the limitations of positivism (see Foucault's warnings about omniscient statements of truth and his critiques of power in institutional discourse, 1980).

Recognizing the danger of identity simplification has enabled researchers to take another step forward in recognizing ethical issues in research. But as Stacey (1991) notes, a postmodernist approach "acknowledges, but does little to ameliorate, the problems of intervention, triangulation, or inherently unequal reciprocity with informants..." (p. 117). Anthropologist Renaldo Rosaldo (1993) says: "The call for a social analysis that made central the aspirations and demands of groups usually deemed marginal by the dominant national ideology came from the counterculture, environmentalism,

feminism, gay and lesbian movements, the Native American movement, and the struggles of blacks, Chicanos, and Puerto Ricans" (p. 35).

Feminist studies, since the 1970s, have critiqued research when it reached across gender, cultural, sexual, racial, and class borders with concern for the care of those being researched. As well as acknowledging multiple voices and ways of perceiving the world, many feminist researchers resonated with what "Gilligan (1982) discerned in the moral reasoning of women and contrasted it with the orientation toward justice and rights which she found to typify the moral reasoning of men" (Friedman, 1987, p. 258). Furthermore, Belenky et al. (1986) led researchers to acknowledge different ways of knowing, to challenge dominant knowledge, to herald different epistemologies, all through this examination of women's ways of knowing.

Though prompted to put the social construction of gender at the center of their research, feminists have also looked at the invisibility of marginalized groups and have critiqued the hierarchical and exploitative tendencies of conventional research, urging it to seek an egalitarian process that is not falsely objective or impersonal (Oakley, 1981; Stacey, 1991). Acknowledging alternative epistemologies, being sensitized to researcher partiality, urging responsibility for authorial construction, and alerting researchers to heed relationality have all played out in what has been termed the empathy and mutuality of the "ethic of care." Feminist standpoint theory challenges "truths" held as universal and demonstrates the effect of biases and perspectives based on sex, class, race, and so on (Harstock, 2004). Though sometimes fractionalized, a broad range of feminisms pull together in discussions of research (Fine, 1992; Spivak, 1993; Cannella and Manuelito, 2008) and find a resultant social justice agenda. For instance, ecofeminism affirms the ethic of care across all cultures, including all people, living things, and the environment, and considers their interconnectedness (Gaard, 1993). Prompted by feminists, these concerns have been much on the minds of all researchers working in social settings as they entered the 21st century, moving research from a "do no harm" imperative to center in an "ethic of care" and respect.

Questions of whether research should even be carried out in a culture that is not one's own have been raised by many researchers in the social sciences (for instance, Patai, 1994), and the most poignant concerns are heard from Indigenous peoples. On reservations, reserves, homelands, and in maraes, I heard a similar, ironic joke that cautioned my inquiry. I first heard it on the Navajo reservation. Question: "What makes up a Navajo (substitute Aboriginal, Penobscot, Māori, etc.) family?" Answer: a mother, father, children, and anthropologist (note the absence of elders). Justifiable anger has fueled the interrogation of past research practices that demeaned participants, intruded on spiritual aspects of life, sensationalized community difficulties, misinterpreted data, and brought nothing back to the communities studied (DeLoria, 1969; Denzin et al., 2008).

Many 20th-century discussions of research ethics have lacked the voices and critiques of Indigenous peoples in considering the very research "done upon" them. Nevertheless, Rigney (2003, p. 9) warns that in becoming credentialed in the eyes of educational institutions and funding agencies, "Indigenous people have had to learn the dominant research epistemologies and methods with precision at the expense of our own [methodologies] whilst recognizing that our engagement in them is the fundamental aspect of our oppression." Recently, Indigenous researchers around the world have weighed in on issues of power, legitimation, benefits, and representation in what some refer to as "liberation epistemologies" or "emancipation epistemologies" and, in some cultures, have re-constructed methodologies and termed them "emergent" (Nakata, 1998; Bishop and Glynn, 1999; Smith, 1999; Hermes, 1998). Many voices are now coming to consider ethical issues in research. Denzin and Lincoln (2008, p. xi) list the critical approaches that have arisen that address issues in research: "Postcolonial, subaltern, First Nation, and Red pedagogies; post-poststructuralism criticism; cultural critique; critical race feminism; critical White studies; Latino criticism/critical theories (LatCrit); critical pedagogy; pragmatic action theory; participatory action research (PAAR); and critical race and queer theories . . . ." Even with this impetus for change and the intellectual understandings for its need, researchers still encounter confusions when they cross-cultural borders, be they distant or local crossings. Research in social settings has moved toward a humanitarian commitment, beyond the previous un-negotiated taking of knowledge, and is now based on the well-being of those researched, emphasizing the reciprocity and collaborative partnerships attentive to the social concerns and local needs.

Need for continued attention to cross-cultural research methodology

Though reconsidered repeatedly, most deem there to be a continuing need for research support from academics whose culture is different from that of those requesting research, but only if that research is done with the self-determination and benefit of those researched in mind (Smith, 1999, 2003). Now institutions and communities have ethics protocols that intercede on behalf of the researched (see Chapter 3). One might align these protocols and rule-bound procedures with the model of morality where justice begets rules. The advent of these ethics protocols is indicative of concern, but some researchers see the rules as oppressive "band-aids" when self-reflexivity and conscience are more to the point.

Because unexamined research reifies traditional methods and methodologies, the need for self-sustained examination is real. The researchers interviewed for this study were earnest in their attempts to fathom the complex terrain of doing research in differently cultured settings and with

differently cultured people. All saw that we were in an era of post-positivist social science research. All were reflective and insightful in discussing their histories with cross-cultural research, thinking deeply about what was problematic in their own research. Indeed, many remained conflicted, even simultaneously heartened and disheartened in their practice. It was interesting to collect the vocabulary that differently disciplined researchers used to describe the methods of research they did not respect: "helicopter research," "safari scholars," "data strip mining," "vacuum cleaner research," "smash and grab research," and "hit-and-run interviews." Neither researchers nor research mores stand still.

In considering the researchers' experience proffered in this book, one must suspend disbelief and engage in their stories and thoughts; yet careful reading also demands that the next stage be one of disengagement and reflection. In suspending disbelief, one can enter into the experiences of the 70 researchers and other cited researchers; in disengaging, one can consider how these experiences can inductively inform the research one is doing or is about to do. I have not attempted to evaluate everything that researchers have said. In some cases they disagree with one another. We are all working hard to know how we can go about our work.

Replete with good intentions and misassumptions

Experienced researchers enter research with a developed sense of cultural relativism, but those same experienced researchers, though they may understand the concept of cultural relativism, may have had to stumble across a few cultural borders, or maybe more than a few, before being more practiced at discerning the perspectives of others. "Behaviour in a particular culture should not be judged by the standards of another culture" (Goldstein, 2000, p. 25). To work well across cultures we must become conscious of our own misassumptions, just as we need also to learn of the assumptions another might have of us. Susan Rodgers, an anthropologist from the College of Holy Cross in Massachusetts, USA, talked about the value of mistakes:

> Researchers who are trying to think through how to do their own work with distant cultures often make their most useful insights from mistakes in the field. People should not be ashamed to make mistakes. Sometimes they are useful and illuminating, so if you do make a mistake you can apologize and sort your way through it. [In the end] you're probably going to learn more from that than if everything was going along just fine.

As I know too well, when our mistakes cause discomfort in others, we are obligated to apologize and adjust what we are doing and thinking. Most often, mistakes come when we least expect them, both when we are actually concentrating hard on border crossing or when we have dropped

our vigilance and are not searching for the borders that, as Ian Anderson describes, may well be seamless.

Below are some of my earlier stumbles, times when I tripped and definitely times when I discerned my own cultural myopia. Though these events did not all occur in research situations, they did stem from my own enculturated layers of attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs that separated me from a clear vision of others' cultural ways of being, times when the theory of the world in my head needed adjustment and reformulation. In retrospect, I appreciate my mistakes as change agents, and I offer them up to you as examples of how easy it is to make misassumptions with good intentions.

Setting: a four corners, USA, grocery store

> In 1993 I had been in Tuba City, Arizona for several weeks, working from there to interview teachers on the Navajo and Hopi reservations about literacy. When I arrived, I craved connections beyond professional contacts but didn't know how to make them. One weekend I was standing at a meat counter in a local grocery store, thinking about the prospects of a good but lonely dinner. An elderly woman in full traditional dress (my memory prompts a picture of velvet and turquoise) was accompanied by a boy of grandson age. She stood next to me as we both selected chicken. She said: "These look like they pecked around someone's door step too long." I laughed, so pleased that she had talked to me. Taken off guard by her English, I asked her advice about how to tell the age of chicken by how they looked wrapped in plastic. I turned to look at her straight in the eye, just as a proper mid-Western white listener should, but it was as if I had slapped her in the face. She turned back to the chicken and went silent.

My misassumption: I had read that direct eye contact might be offensive to Navajo people, indeed many Indigenous peoples. Julian Cho had told me that in Maya communities you "don't look at the person when you are talking to the person. You look away from the person, especially an elder." But there, out of the research context and in that grocery store, my own cultural patterns kicked in. I assumed that I was on my side of the border, but I wasn't. I had simplified this woman's identity. I assumed, given my own ways of being, that her English speaking friendliness, which I craved, was an overture to be relational.

Setting: near a game preserve in Tanzania

> In 1996 I was in Tanzania, interested in interviewing at the local schools. My cousin. who ran a safari company, was seeking rights to set up a camp outside a game preserve and was negotiating land use in exchange for a new well in the nearby village. The Masai village chairman was delighted to accept the exchange, as a new deep well would solve health problems for his people. Aware of the remnants of colonialism in this democratic

nation, I went with a troubled conscience to the county seat to assist in the permit paperwork. In a trail-worthy Land Rover, we picked up the chief, whose wife had handed me the gift of a chicken with its feet tied together. I held that chicken nervously the whole way. As if in a sort of royal conveyance, the chief waved at people along the route, full of good cheer. We finally arrived at the county seat with an hour to spare. Toddlers playing in the area stared at me until I wooed them with super balls, brought for just that purpose. We bounced some wait-time away, with brief intermissions as they touched my skin and felt my hair. Finally noticing that the chief was uncomfortable with this play, I left them with the balls and took up my "professor" role, sitting by the door with the other permit seekers. When the office opened, I finally walked toward the door, trying to converse with the chief. When the door was opened, I, in my Western female position, went first. I crashed into the chief who, in his Tanzanian Masai village chair position, was also going first. We were both surprised and diminished by the collision. That evening, the chief organized a tribal dance for us as something that might be offered at the future safari camp. Though traditionally they danced under the full moon, due to expected storms, the chief arranged for us to see the dance in the local school. The women had covered their breasts with basketball jerseys and even tattered bras from the local Good Will trove of clothing destined for third world nations. They covered themselves so as not to "offend Westerners" (I was told, that they were told). The men wore fierce lion masks and charged with frightening noises, all in the small confines of cement and thatched classroom, already filled with the noise of beating drums, carved whistles, and with the added contribution of thunder. The village chair explained some of the dances to me. In my concern for the loss of culture, I begged him not to let his villagers stop their dancing on the full moon just because they were dancing for safari participants. He looked at me as if it was none of my business. It wasn't.

My misassumption: As Hall (1973) said, "We are not only almost totally ignorant of what is expected in other countries, we are equally ignorant of what we are communicating to other people by our own normal behavior" (p. 14). My mistakes in entering a new culture were numerous. I didn't ask my cousin enough questions about what would be appropriate behavior for me on this trip. I was uncomfortable holding the gift of the foot-bound chicken and didn't know that I only had to say so. I didn't know that the appropriate demeanor of a signer of documents didn't include superballs. Then I carried my unconscious white ways of being, of privilege, into a literal and metaphoric door-entry collision. Furthermore, I had such heightened misgivings about cultural loss that I didn't fully realize the value of pure water to this community whose children often died of water-related diarrhea and subsequent dehydration.

Setting: in a Maya village

> In the cool of an early morning, I hiked in from a bus stop on Belize's Southern Highway, through the bush to a Maya village and beyond it to the grass-thatched school buildings set in a field that was close cropped to keep the dreaded and deadly Tommy Goff snakes well away from the children. I found the principal's office, with its solitary desk and three-foot, three-tiered bookcase, which I later discovered held almost every book in the school. The principal took me off to interview a teacher and left. The teacher greeted me in Creole. She said something like, "Ah, so, you're the English teacher," and then left me speechless with 30 six-year-old children who spoke Kekchi Maya. A child tugged at my skirt and said, "Miss." I thought, "Good, an English word." I turned to the child and asked what English words he knew. He pointed at my skirt and said, "Blue." Colors, I decided. I grabbed a blue pencil, a blue book, and a child with a blue dress. We started. "Blue . . . , blue . . . , blue . . . . Children, find something blue?" The child that said, "Miss," pointed to each object and said "blue" in English and Kekchi Maya. He touched the child's flip-flop next to him and said, "blue," and all at once the children were running bringing blue things to me while I was desperately looking around the village for the teacher gone missing, the principal, any handy adult. With no one in sight, we proceeded to yellow: a yellow flower in the weeds at the edge of the classroom, a yellow book (one of a short pile on the teacher's desk), and a school-yellow stubby pencil. Children ran for yellow things. Connections, I thought; these sharp little minds are making vocabulary connections, exposed to several of the 10 to 15 times they would need to hear the word in context to acquire it. I was beginning to be delighted with myself. Reviewing blue and yellow using children's clothing, we began on purple. A purple flower, a girl with a purple dress, sleeve missing. I said, "Find purple" or something like that. Did "purple" sound like the Kekchi word for "head to the bush"? I still don't know. All the children headed out of the classroom, across the field, and beyond the clearing. I was so dumbstruck that it took a while to realize that I now had to admit to the principal that I had lost 30 children. I trudged back to the office with the three-tiered bookcase and made my confession, but the principal wasn't the least bit upset, so different than in my world where the principal would have had police, school officials, and hysterical parents out searching. He laughed and walked with me to introduce me to the village alcalde (mayor) and to tell him that some of the "young ones" were sent home early for lunch.

My mistake: The lesson I learned wasn't just that language similarities and differences make for confusion. What I learned later in this event was that the teacher was reprimanded over the noon hour for leaving and was angry

at me for that. I had a tense interview with her later that day and lost what might have been some valuable perspectives she might have had about Maya literacy from her Creole perspective. I don't know how I could have gotten out of this predicament unless I had known that her job was in jeopardy. I didn't have enough information to fully respect that participant for where she was at that moment. I did learn about the mistakes that one can make if one doesn't know the language of those in the communities one researches.

Setting: in a school, Maree, South Australia

> One morning in 1997, I drove through the purple haze of the Flinders Range, at dawn. I avoided kangaroos, bouncing across the highway with their early morning business in mind, and passed eagles perched on rocks, bickering over the carcasses of rabbits. Other than these creatures, there was no sign of life, even after hours of driving. No cars, no buildings. Finally I arrived at a community with a few buildings, several satellite dishes, and a school. While the teacher arranged for lunch, I joined his students so I could tell them about Minnesota. I had developed a little routine about how one dressed for the cold, about bears, and about the proverbial water pump and tongue which had amused children around the world. I wasn't about to be as unprepared as I was in Belize. But an adolescent girl interrupted, saying that she knew someone from Minnesota. The others agreed, "Yes, Miss." I was flabbergasted since I had experienced just how far this community was from anywhere. Then she said, and I can duplicate only the gist of her Aboriginal English, "Do you know her, Miss? Her name's Brenda. She doesn't really live in Minnesota anymore; she moved to Beverly Hills, but she talks about Minnesota." I told them that Minnesota and Beverly Hills were even larger than Adelaide. She was very disappointed that I didn't know Brenda. Later I asked her teacher about this visitor from Minnesota, and he laughed saying that she was a character on US sitcom reruns (*Beverly Hills, 90210*) that came in on satellite, and that he was having trouble getting the kids to understand the concept of actors.

My mistaken assumptions: As Hall (1973) said,

> We must never assume that we are fully aware of what we communicate to someone else. There exists in the world today tremendous distortions in meaning as men [sic] try to communicate with one another. The job of achieving understanding and insight into mental processes of others is much more difficult and the situation more serious than most of us care to admit. (p. 52)

My friends often call me "media deficient," so I didn't know about Brenda of *Beverly Hills, 90210* rerun fame. I had underestimated the worldliness of

the young Aboriginal adolescent's knowledge and was at once thrown by the misconceptions she could have. It was hard for our worlds to meet. Actually, this began a very interesting interview with the teacher, a time when the corrections of misassumptions gave valuable insights. As Rosaldo says,

> The ethnographer, as a positioned subject, grasps certain human phenomena better than others. He or she occupies a position or structural location and observes with a particular angle of vision... By the same token, so-called natives are also positioned subjects who have a distinctive mix of insight and blindness. (p. 10)

My positioned blindness and that of the student brought the teacher a moment of humor, and this illustrates the complications of technology used between people coming from different cultural standpoints.

Setting: in a school on the Mikasuki reservation

> One of my final interviews for the book *Collected Wisdom* was with a white teacher teaching at a Mikasuki reservation school in Florida. As I talked with her, I asked her what she had learned about what her students needed to know. She talked about her love for the children she taught; she was thoughtful, clearly concerned about what would help the "beautiful native children" to get along in the world. She said they needed to know how to act in the world beyond the reservation, adding: "More than reading and writing, they need to know manners, how to give a firm handshake. We practice firm handshakes in our class." I looked at her in surprise, and slipping beyond my usual non-judgmental listening stance, my mouth opened, and I couldn't catch the words in time that tumbled out of my mouth: "Perhaps we need to teach mainstream children that American Indians are apt to have gentle handshakes."

My mistake: At this time in my team's research, we already knew that many white teachers care deeply about their students, but, with the best intentions, assume that assimilation is their route to happiness. And though I later engaged effectively in more dialogic interviews with seasoned researchers, I'm quite sure this teacher experienced my comment as a reprimand. When does a researcher enter into a dialog and when does he/she simply listen? The teacher closed down in that interview, and I lost my ability to look further into her well-intentioned reasoning about why handshakes were more important, for instance, than literacy. And this raises an issue that will re-emerge again and again throughout this book. When does the researcher take what is proffered, and when does one assume a more activist stance in research? When does one simply contribute to the standing body of knowledge, and when does the researcher's privilege compel him/her to leverage the knowledge gained to benefit those researched and their

communities? Researchers swing between allegiance and empathetic understanding, between critical detachment and empathy in the data gathering of the moment.

Caring and best intentions are not enough

When I was working with the South Australian Aboriginal Education Unit, Paul Hughes, an Aboriginal leader who made remarkable strides in developing culturally relevant educational materials for Aboriginal Australia, addressed a group of Aboriginal Education Workers from across South Australia. His topic was "Caring is Essential, but Not Enough." I've applied his title in relation to rigorous consideration of cross-cultural research. I care about the effects of my own misassumptions. The events above primed in me critical moments of reflexivity. Caring about those of a different culture during the planning and course of research is essential; nevertheless, work across cultures demands constant reflexivity and respectful attention. The narratives presented in this book can prime our own critical reflections about our planned and current research. We can all learn from the narratives of 70 researchers.

Overview of this book

This book raises issues in cross-cultural research by following the progression that research normally takes, from initiation to dissemination and action.

Following a discussion of privilege and the power differential between the researcher and the researched, Chapter 2 considers the initiation of research by consideration of who benefits, whose questions are asked, and how the participants' knowledge is used. It includes discussion of the tension between participatory research and more traditional academic freedom.

Chapter 3 looks at the initiation of research: at the generation of and development of research questions, at the initiation of access and agreements through collaboration, and at the complexities of managing the gatekeeping of ethics protocols and of funding institutions.

Chapter 4 makes the distinction between methodology and methods, takes yet another look at the values of qualitative vs. quantitative methods, and considers the juxtaposition of methods and the blurring of the disciplinary boundaries of traditional research.

Chapter 5 looks at the issues of identity, hybridity, and standpoint in all phases of research. It also considers language differences and discourse differences that complicate meaning-making transactions between the culture of the researcher and that of the researched. The chapter complicates the categories of "insider" and "outsider" in research.

Chapter 6 begins with a description of pre-entry knowledge that is valuable to attain before stepping into a different culture. It advocates entering

a community as a respectful learner, discusses whether it is really possible to understand another, and continues to discuss varieties of cross-cultural research partnerships.

Chapter 7 focuses on gathering data while protecting and respecting participants and institutions, looking at the researcher—participant relationship, the maintenance of that relationship through care, and reciprocity while providing safeguards for the participant.

Chapter 8 explores analysis of research data and the ways in which researchers can collaborate in analysis with participants. Postmodern questions addressed here are: "Is there a 'truth' with so many positionings possible?" and "Can one really separate oneself from analysis?" Other topics include analysis as a layered process, issues of power in analysis, and ways of moving from data to theory.

Chapter 9 delves into issues of dissemination and addresses the imperative of sharing gained knowledge in accessible forms with those researched. It returns to the privilege that the educated researcher often has in mainstream society, and, hence, the imperative of using that leveraging action in implementing research for the benefit of those researched.

Chapter 10 again poses the question of how to do cross-cultural research with integrity. It speaks of the value of rich reflexivity of the contributing researchers as they talk both about the stresses that researchers are under and the remarkable richness of their cross-cultural experience. The question is re-visited as to whether researchers from another culture necessarily undercut the self-determination of those researched.

2

Initiating Research: Whose Question? Whose Benefit? Whose Knowledge?

As an Australian friend and I walked in Melbourne's Arboretum on the way to an outdoor family tea, she said something like: "You know, Americans are known for the way they ask so many questions. Would you mind asking a few questions of my family that I haven't had the nerve to ask?" And when we joined her family, I gorged on her brother-in-law's freshly baked scones, clotted cream, and apricot jam, enjoying that vestige of surface culture of commonwealth people while choking on those questions that would have otherwise flowed out in unprompted tumbles. I had no idea that it was so American to articulate any old question that was on one's mind, that some Australians perceived us as bold, perhaps rude, though my Australian friend would never have said that. At that moment in the arboretum, I realized that modes of question asking are culturally inscribed and, subsequently, I found that I was a better researcher when I asked as few questions as possible.

At about the same time I read Linda Tuhiwai Smith's book *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. Before this I had always fueled my research with my own questions. My research questions may have needed answering for the good of the "knowledge base," or for the good of a cross-section of people, or even for the good of people whose voices needed to be heard, but in my mind they were probably still my questions. I know that good research does come from researchers who are intrigued by the questions they study, but they are also privileged to pose research questions. As Mary Hermes, colleague of mixed Dakota heritage at the University of Minnesota, USA, said to me:

> There is irony in the fact that those with the time to ask questions are those who don't have to worry about food on the table, don't have to worry about being taken seriously by mainstream institutions and publishers. Academics have a certain privilege in crossing cultural borders to ask questions; research is an elite activity.

Many of those who have been "researched" have wanted to pose their own questions and to have self-determination over the questions asked of them,

about them, and for them; they have wanted the right to ask the questions themselves and benefit from the answers; and then the right to access the resultant knowledge to use for themselves. This chapter is about power in research when it crosses cultural borders and about whose questions should be asked, about who should benefit, and who owns the resultant knowledge.

Researchers in most disciplines and many cultures are now listening to those whose voices have been marginalized in the past. Amongst the strong voices for self-determination in the seeking of knowledge are, for example, the Māori of Aotearoa/New Zealand. Graham Smith, Linda Tuhiwai Smith and Russell Bishop, amongst other Māoris, have insisted upon "kaupapa Māori research," which, as described by Bella Graham of the University of Waikato, New Zealand, is "more about attitude, ethics, and approach, and about the way you work with people than about methods," though enriched methodology is emerging from previously marginalized groups. Perhaps Māori people are in a stronger position for self-advocacy than others in articulating their research questions and positions because they operate rather cohesively, given their common language and the relatively small regional space of their two islands. Nevertheless, their message is reverberating and joining the other voices of those who have previously been marginalized. Russell Bishop, researcher at Waikato University, talked of connecting with the Māori side of his family and how his finding that part of his heritage had led him to think in new ways:

> Over a year or two, I researched the education that my [Māori] grandfather experienced and what that meant to him in the sense of what he had then passed on to his family. I started learning about who asks the questions and sets the agenda, whose voice is being heard, whose world views are being given a priority, and who has the authority to speak. At the time I had seen myself as accountable to the university, but the family members told me that they wanted the whole family to benefit out of the research. So my research started to change, and in my PhD, my first thing was to critique my master's thesis through five issues: initiation, and benefits, representation, legitimation, and accountability. I didn't fully understand those until I became positioned within a Māori world.

This chapter will use the issues that Bishop examined as an organization, but it will begin by examining how privilege has shaped research in the past and how it demands critical consciousness on the part of researchers in the present and future. Cross-cultural research involves political and ethical decisions about "benefit," "harm," and "care," but, unfortunately, decisions are often unconscious about participant care and policy implications. A practice without critical consciousness (Freire, 1970; Giroux and Giroux, 2008; Willis et al., 2008; Giroux, 2010) can lead to unconscious, but no less culpable, harm.

Issues of power, privilege, and critical consciousness in research

Although I have long understood that I have had white privilege, it wasn't until the summer of 1996 that I began to be aware of some of its realities. My research colleague Tom Peacock came to Maine with his family so that he and I could work on *Collected Wisdom*. In the afternoons we went to the beach, but, after several days there, Tom's sons told me they didn't feel comfortable: "People are watching us." I assumed they were self-conscious. That afternoon the tide was low, so I led them around a point of land at Parson's Beach to a deserted beach where we were entirely alone. The boys were joyous and carefree in the surf, something I hadn't seen before. Later that week we went north to the Passamaquoddy reservation and to a nearby store. As I breezed around the aisles, I noticed that one of Tom's sons was being followed by store security; I was distressed with racial profiling of people I so respected. I had not fully recognized the privilege I had to roam in most any setting without scrutiny. Days after the Peacocks departed, a friend told me that he had seen me with some darker-skinned people heading around the rocks and wondered whether he should follow to be sure I was safe. I was shocked. Kendall's (2006) article "Understanding White Privilege" quotes Harry Brod as saying: "Privilege is something that society gives me, and unless I change the institutions which give it to me, they will continue to give it, and I will continue to have it, however noble and egalitarian my intentions" (Brod, 1989). Years ago as a woman in academia, I had certainly known what it was like to be without male privilege, and even later I was over-committed when women, scarce in academia, were sought after as tokens on each and every university committee. We were burdened with service when we needed time for research, just as academics of color are overburdened now.

Those who are privileged often know the concept intellectually but, as with so many things, when one doesn't hold power, that lack of it may be more recognizable. When one holds privilege without recognizing it, all seems right with the world. And power isn't always "white." In a Belizian open market, I noticed that Garifuna and Creole farmers and merchants held the stalls, and it was the Mayas who were more often positioned/seated on the road edge to sell their wares. Privilege is not based solely on white skin; it is wrapped into most social settings. There is, of course, gendered privilege, skin color privilege, sexual preference privilege in homophobic settings, able-bodied privilege, ethnic privilege, and class privilege, amongst others.

Colleague and sociologist at the University of Minnesota Duluth, John Arthur, suggested I check out social conflict theory as a way to think about power and privilege. This theory was generated in the realization that people cannot be happy if a social system exploits them or makes life uncomfortable for them. For instance, in the case above, the discomfort that the boys felt on the beach and in the store was based in a reality, though even if they had just