

A CRITICAL CONTENT ANALYSIS OF
INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL EXPERIENCES IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

By

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A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the
DEPARTMENT OF TEACHING, LEARNING AND SOCIOCULTURAL STUDIES

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

WITH A MAJOR IN LANGUAGE, READING AND CULTURE

In the Graduate College

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

2013

STATEMENT BY ATUHOR

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My journey in LRC is an unforgettable one. I would never be the same person because of the people that I have encountered me along the way. My sincere gratitude goes to my advisor, Dr. Kathy Short. Your passion and insights on children's literature have inspired me to approach books from a more critical perspective. The journey with you has helped me find my voice and believe in myself. You are not only a professor and mentor to me but also a role model as you put into practice your belief in equality every day, both personally and academically. I appreciate your encouragement, insight, trust and advice throughout the years. You have made a huge difference in my life.

I also want to acknowledge my committee members who have supported me in my study: Dr. Richard Ruiz, Dr. Perry Gilmore and Dr. Chris Iddings. The classes with you have changed my perspective on education. Thank you for your insights in this study. I appreciate your time and scholarly work.

Friendship provides valuable support. My dearest friends, Aura Gonzalez, Mi Kyoung Chang, Ke Huang, Chen-Chun Er and Mei-Kuang Chen, Thank you for your friendship throughout our years together in LRC. I also want to thank Ai-Chu Ding who traveled two hours for many weeks to study with me. Your companionship encourages me to finish the dissertation.

Thank you, Lord, for providing me with the opportunity to study in this wonderful program with knowledgeable professors and valuable friends. Thank you for loving me and always being with me.

DEDICATION

To my parents and younger sister
Thank you for supporting my dream.

To my husband Victor
Thank you for embarking on this journey with me.
Listening to me and sharing with me.
Without your love and support, this would have been impossible.

To my daughter Temperance
Your smiles lighten my heart when I was troubled in the writing process.
Your kisses relieve my anxiety and refuel my energy.
You are precious.

To the little baby in my belly
You gave me strength and kept me company during the last few months of
my writing and the oral defense
I would touch my belly and tell you about my dreams
With the hope that
people will love each other and stand up for equality.
The world will be more peaceful in the near future.

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ABSTRACT

This study examines representations of intercultural learning in global children's literature through critical content analysis. Cosmopolitanism provides a vision to connect individuals to the global communities through a critical lens. According to Rizvi (2009), intercultural learning should bridge the local and the global, move between cultures and communities, and develop transnational compassion and collaboration. Intercultural learning involves explorations of culture, active participation in the world, and critical thinking on issues that are normally taken for granted. Intercultural learning is not just learning about other cultures but focuses on individuals' awareness of their roles in the world and collaboration with people from global communities to make the world a better place. With this idea in mind, global children's literature is a useful resource to introduce readers to the global community and to their responsibility in the world.

This study is based on the importance of engaging with high quality global children's literature to widen and deepen readers' worldviews. Because readers are influenced by what they read and share, how books depict cross cultural experiences and international communities is crucial. Therefore, how books portray intercultural learning experiences in a global context is important to examine. This study provides a new lens on global children's literature because limited research has been done to understand how the idea of intercultural learning through international travel is portrayed in books at a time when many readers have the opportunity to travel across the continents.

The theoretical framework of this study consists of intercultural theories, global competency and critical literacy. This study looks at culture as ways of living that involve people's thoughts, values and engagements in daily life. In addition, two intercultural learning theories are used to examine the protagonists' learning including a continuum of intercultural learning by David Hoopes (1979) and a developmental model of intercultural sensitivity by Milton Bennett (1986, 1993, 2004, 2009). Theories relate to global education such as global competence by Hanvey (2000) and Case (1993), intercultural communicative competence by Michael Byram (1997), and cosmopolitanism by Rizvi (2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009) and Calhoun (2002). These theories inform my notion of intercultural learning in different ways. In addition, critical literacy is crucial to this study because it focuses on the characteristics that allow individuals to discover their role, relationship and responsibility with others in the world.

Nine children and young adult's realistic fiction novels were selected for this study. The books all involved protagonists' explorations of new cultures, places, and people as they traveled to another country for short term visits. All of them have close relationships with at least one local friend. Critical content analysis is used to examine the text from a critical point of view to understand whether the international journey enables the protagonists to critically examine their privileges and responsibility in the world. In this study, critical literacy supports my concept of intercultural learning and it is also used to develop useful thinking tools (adapted from Jones, 2006) to examine the texts from a deeper perspective.

First, the findings indicate that intercultural learning is portrayed with exoticism in this text set. In several of the books, international travel is associated with romance and exotic cultural icons. Secondly, insider authors and the authors who have close relationships with the groups they write about are more careful about cultural authenticity than outsider authors. Many of the insider authors care about the cultures they wrote about; therefore, they embed social messages in the stories. Additionally, several writers employ a writing formula to depict international travelers' intercultural learning process. The formula does not reflect readers' diverse cultural backgrounds in the current world. Lastly, throughout the journey, only a few protagonists develop critical consciousness regarding their roles in the global community. Conclusions from the analysis suggest the need for more sophisticated global children's literature that highlights international travel and cross cultural relationships. The implication section provides recommendations to educators, teacher educators, and publishers and suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

As an elementary teacher, I was familiar with big ideas such as globalization, worldview, English competence and technology because one of my duties was to incorporate these concepts and skills into the curriculum in order to prepare students for a global world. I do not know how much the students became globally-minded because of what I tried to teach, but my personal understanding of global competence changed when I had the opportunity to witness a group of elementary students engaging in learning about social justice through global children's literature.

Because of my background as an international student, I thought it would be a great opportunity to observe real classroom practices in American classrooms. Therefore, I observed in the learning lab at Van Horne Elementary School where Kathy Short was working with a group of teachers to develop literature-based curriculum that engages students in intercultural learning.

That semester at Van Horne, I followed third and fifth graders when they came to the lab once a week for literature discussion. I was amazed to see how the students read, reflected, discussed and then reflected again on texts, their thinking and others' ideas. Most importantly, the opportunity allowed me to witness the students' transformation to become more sensitive to others' needs and to become more open-minded about unfamiliarity.

One activity especially caught my attention and invited me to ponder more about the real meaning of intercultural learning. The students did a ‘drama in role’ with the book, *Lady in the Box* (2001), a story about a homeless woman on the street. The lead teacher read the book to the students. After a brief sharing on what they felt about the book, the students were divided into two groups. One group of students became journalists and the other chose a role from the book and pretended they were the character in that role. All the students needed to act and respond according to their roles. The activity paired a journalist with a character. The journalist interviewed the character to understand his/her point of view on the issues surrounding the homeless woman.

What surprised me was how the students started to make personal connections to the issues of homelessness. When students finished the drama in role and came back to the group discussion, they showed their concerns about homelessness. In addition, some of them talked about their concerns and prejudices about homeless people, some of which they had gained from adults in their lives. Throughout the rest of the semester, the teachers did not give conclusive or authoritative kinds of comments to “teach” students to accept difference and care for others. Instead, the atmosphere in the class was democratic. The students explored the meaning of diversity and personal connections with others. At that point, I came to understand that the major tenets of global education are not something that I as an educator can teach students to achieve, but rather, it develops through rich experiences that allow them to come to understand for themselves at a deep level that they are responsible to understand and capable to change the world. The

experience of observing the students in the lab indicated that the development of intercultural learning is a continuous process through which human beings learn to live their lives in a meaningful and critical way.

The experience at the Van Horne Elementary School helped me to understand that children's literature is a powerful vehicle introducing children to different worldviews and to critical thinking. This experience led me to be interested in the way in which books portray cross-cultural experiences and the thoughtfulness with which readers are able to engage with books. Thus, I decided to explore how cross cultural experiences are portrayed in books. This study focuses on the representation of intercultural learning in global children's and adolescent literature. I used critical content analysis to analyze and understand how cross cultural experiences are presented in global literature.

The current chapter shares my own intercultural learning journey and how the experiences influenced my thinking. I also explain my position on the role of children's literature in developing the significance of global literature in influencing children's understandings. At the end of the introduction, the research questions and the overview of the dissertation are introduced.

My Intercultural Journey

In the first section of the introduction, I shared the academic aspect of how I came to understand intercultural learning as an ongoing process. In this section, I share my personal journey of intercultural learning that leads me to think critically.

The meaning of globalization and cross cultural learning for me initially focused on cognitive aspects of learning cultural information and learning English as a world language. At that time, global citizen meant to me to follow modern Western values, especially the values of the United States.

During my doctoral study in Language, Reading and Culture, I was exposed to the conceptual frame of ideology. Gee (2006) argues that ideology is “a social theory which involves generalizations (beliefs, claims) about the way(s) in which goods are distributed in society” (p.21). What ‘good’ means for Gee (2006) is “anything that the people in a society generally believe are beneficial to have or harmful not to have”(p.21). Gee also claims that ideologies are important because what people believe leads to actions and these actions will create a social world that is based on certain beliefs. As I came to understand the influence of ideology, I asked myself why I never considered studying at other countries than America. I wondered how the international relationship between Taiwan and United States influenced me to assume that the United States was superior to other countries.

Ideology is prevalent in every aspect of life as Gee (2006) claims. It also influences the way I think about people from China, Africa, and Southeast Asia. Given the emphasis on modernization, I superficially disapproved of practices in some places based on “modern” material standards. Even though I acknowledged the natural beauty in these places, I consciously and sometimes unconsciously thought the places were dangerous and needed more modern development.

My study abroad experience helped me to become aware of the ideology that led to my prejudice and stereotypes. The opportunity to meet people from different countries during my doctoral study helped me connect to people's lives. The experiences also helped me to see beyond my own perspective and to understand that what I have understood from childhood might not be the truth for others; for example, the different interpretations of historical events from different countries. A recent popular topic about different interpretations is the sovereign rights of Diaoyu Islands/Senkaku Islands between Japan, Taiwan and China. Each country has its own point of view regarding why the islands belong to them. Without reading materials from each other's point of view and understanding their interest in the natural resources of the islands, it is hard to completely understand why the sovereignty is complicated.

Growing up in a single opinion educational system, I did not read books from multiple points of views. As a result, I had the tendency to believe in one authoritative voice and to accept that voice as a truth. The study abroad experience challenged me to step out of my comfort zone and become open to multiple interpretations. I cannot claim that I am completely open-minded, but I am learning to become more open through my own intercultural journey.

When entering the doctoral program, my interest of study focused on children's literature and literacy education. At that point, my definition of literacy was narrow. I saw children's books as being used to teach students how to read and write through pleasant experiences. However, one of the courses that I took with Dr. Gilmore,

Anthropology and Literacy, expanded my understanding of literacy. By looking at the meanings of literacy through different time frames and cultures, I came to develop a broader perspective on the definition. I no longer consider literacy as only learning about how to read and write words. I believe that words have the power to influence people's worldviews. Becoming literate in current societies should mean more than deciphering symbols and sounds or comprehending words. I now believe that reading is a way of sharing stories through oral and written forms that reflect particular ideologies about the world. In the case of this content analysis of children's literature, I intend to examine the kinds of stories about cross-cultural experiences that are brought told and how they are told through the written format.

In the next section, I elaborate on the benefit of reading global children's literature and the need to read through a critical perspective. It is important to claim that in this study, children's literature is a medium that presents life experiences.

The Role of Global Children's Literature

Many scholars have discussed the important role of global children's literature in helping children develop an understanding of the world. Hadaway and McKenna (2007) support the positive influence of global children's literature to help readers develop a critical understanding of the world and transform it for the sake of others. Fox and Short (2003) assert that children's literature can provide students with insights into the power structures of society, sociopolitical issues, democracy and social justice. In other words,

high quality global children's literature does not water down serious social issues such as racial conflicts, economic imbalance and cultural prejudices. High quality global literature provides readers with opportunities to understand social reality from a hopeful and humanistic perspective. Therefore, global children's literature is a useful resource to teach students about diversity and to be more active in the global community.

However, even though global children's literature has such great potential to help readers understand the world, there are many problems that need to be considered. One of the problems relates to the ideology embedded in texts. When reading global children's literature, readers should consider whose perspectives are presented and whose worldviews are highlighted.

Children's literature scholars such as Nodelman and Reimer (2003), Bishop (2003) and Bradford (2007) have recognized the danger of perceiving children's literature as a pure literary product and the need to recognize the political messages embedded in children's literature and how these messages can influence readers' worldviews. Rosenblatt (1995) argues that literature not only mirrors life; it is an integral and complex part of culture. Books reflect social values at a particular time and space in which the authors live and are influenced. When authors try to write stories about other cultures that they are not familiar with, they are influenced by ideologies, including their own cultural, racial, economic and national backgrounds.. These influences prevent them from telling authentic stories because they tend to use their own perspectives to explain cultural differences.

Stewart (2008) indicates that global children's literature has a problem with the presentation of others' places and cultures. Writers who write about others' stories tend to embed their ideologies in the stories they write. Rather than authentically present the worldviews of others, these stories convey the ideologies of 'American ways of living'. One example is seen in Gloria Whelan's (2001) book, *Homeless Bird*, which depicts the life of Koly, a 13-year-old widow in India. The essence of the story is about her pursuit of reading, education, love, marriage and independence. Taking on a common ending found in American books, Koly finds her 'happily ever after' life with a man she loves. In Stewart's article, he does not oppose Koly's desires. What he does not agree with are the 'American values' that Whelan uses in the book. These American values make the story an easy read for American readers because everything that Koly wants is exactly what Americans believe a life should be. Readers have no chance to deeply understand Indian cultures and social struggles. To make matters worse, the binary of good and evil that Whelan employs to present Indian life creates unfavorable associations with India that can result in stereotypes and egocentrism.

In contrast, *Keeping Corner* written by Kashmira Sheth (2009), also presents a child widow story but within an in-depth history of the feminist movement in India. The story is about a 12-year-old girl, Leela, who is required to be confined to her home because her husband died unexpectedly. According to Barhman culture, she is not allowed to remarry. In addition, she has to shave her head and put away her pretty saris. The same as Koly in the *Homeless Bird*, Leela desires a better future. Sheth describes the

struggles between tradition and rebellion that lead her family to hire a tutor to teach Leela. Instead of focusing merely on Leela's self determination to pursue a more successful life, Sheth parallels the family's courageous action for Leela with Gandhi's journey to be independent from British rule. The issue of young widows and female rights are seriously presented in *Keeping Corner*. Sheth tries to present people's lives, struggles and political tensions in India. Her focus helps readers understand India's history and culture from a hopeful but sophisticated perspective.

Eva Bunting's (1994) *Smoky Night* is another example of a problematic presentation of ideology and power in children's literature (Ching, 2005). *Smoky Night* depicts the 1992 Los Angeles riot. The following excerpt is a conversation in which a mother explains the riot to her son.

Mama explains about the rioting. "It can happen when people get angry. They want to smash and destroy. They don't care anymore what's right and what's wrong."

Below us they are smashing everything. Window, cars, streetlights.

"They look angry. But they look happy too." I whisper.

"After a while, it's life a game," says Mama.

Rioters in Bunting's story are portrayed as rather wild. Language, such as don't care, angry, happy, smash and game, suggests that the rioters enjoy using violence as a means to fulfill their own desires. In Ching's (2005) article, his university students question Bunting's presentation of the riot. Since the majority of the students' parents had

experienced the riot themselves, the students were more aware of the cause of the incident. From what their parents told them, the riot occurred because “something bad was done to a man and now people are mad” (p.128). However, Bunting neglects to mention the beating of Rodney King and the acquittal of the police officers who had excessively beaten King with clubs. Rioters did not protest their rights for no reason; they were protesting injustices that led them to go out on the streets. The ideology in the story is rather dangerous because it excludes the core conflict regarding power, prejudices, and racial inequality. It simply classifies rioters as troublemakers without questioning how power was misused in the incident and the enduring racial conflicts present in society. In short, the story only presents the dominant group’s point of view in explaining the cause of the riot. Bunting’s story waters down the seriousness of the social issues and sends the message to readers that silence is a virtue. Having no understanding of minority struggles, Bunting’s work addresses racial harmony at a superficial level.

Bishop (2003) understands that children’s literature is ideological and argues for the importance of understanding the ideological positions that underlie books and the effects of authors’ motivations as embedded in texts. It is crucial to examine what authors intend for readers to know. Hade (1997) urges readers to ask “what authors have made” and “how the authors make” in their stories when they read texts in order to challenge assumptions previously taken for granted. It is important to understand what has been said in texts, yet, what has been left out of text is equally critical for readers to consider.

In other words, the role of global children's literature is to read with the aim of thinking, challenging, and reforming societies.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to understand the representations of intercultural learning in children's and adolescent literature through examining protagonists' cross cultural experiences during their international journeys. This study focuses on the following research questions related to children's and adolescent literature published from 1998 to 2010 and distributed in the United States that depict protagonists' international traveling experiences and their friendships with local people.

1. What are the authors' understandings of intercultural learning?
 - What are the authors' backgrounds and cross cultural experiences?
 - What do the authors state are their intentions for writing about a particular culture/country in their books?
 - What are the authors' research processes for writing their books?
2. What are the protagonists' initial responses to their cross cultural experiences?
3. How are the protagonists influenced by their cross cultural experiences?

Conclusion

This chapter introduces the background of this study. I share how my journey as an international student studying in the United States has shaped my understandings of myself as a teacher, the world and the role of children's literature. The impact of these

experiences grounds my belief in the importance of intercultural learning within a critical perspective, the focus of this study. The chapter also introduces the purpose and research questions of the study and provides an overview of the organization of this dissertation.

Overview of Chapters

This chapter has provided the basic background of this study to illustrate the need to examine intercultural learning experiences in children's literature. I explain my position on children's literature as a powerful resource to promote critical thinking and social transformation and include my intercultural learning journey and how it influences the focus of this study. The chapter also argues that children's literature is an ideological product that needs to be examined critically. At the end of the chapter, I introduce the purpose and research questions of this study.

The second chapter highlights the theories I am drawing from to analyze and understand the representation of intercultural learning experiences in children's literature. The chapter defines the scope of culture used in this study and discusses the intercultural learning theories that influenced this study. The theories include intercultural learning as a continuum, the developmental model of intercultural sensitivity, intercultural communicative competence and cosmopolitan theory. This chapter also discusses elements from critical literacy to point out the need for critical thinking in intercultural learning.

The third chapter is methodology. The chapter discusses the nature of qualitative content analysis and includes the features of the research method, general procedures of conducting qualitative content analysis and issues related to trustworthiness. After a depiction of qualitative content analysis, three studies are reviewed to highlight the differences between content analysis and critical content analysis to explain the critical aspect of this study. The second section of this chapter outlines the methodological procedures of this study including the criteria and rationale for book selection to present how the text set was determined. For the nine books used in this study, a book summary for each book is provided and the coding processes for the three research questions are explained. In order to provide a clear picture regarding the analysis, the process of sampling, coding, categorizing themes, and interpreting the patterns is explained.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 present the data analysis for the three research questions. Chapter four introduces the authors' personal backgrounds, relationships to the places they wrote about, their reasons to write the book about a particular place, their traveling experiences, research processes, perspectives of self and other cultures and the purposes of their writing. The end of this chapter discusses the influence of the authors' personal backgrounds on their writing.

Chapters 5 and 6 deal with the major research questions of this study. The coding process and the structure of the chapters are the same. Chapter five examines data to understand the protagonists' initial responses to the new cultures in order to compare with their changes at the end of their travels. The research question of the fifth chapter is

how the novels portray the responses of protagonists to their encounters with a new culture. Chapter six addresses the question of how the novels represent the intercultural learning of protagonists across their experiences of a new culture.

Within the fifth and sixth chapters, I elaborate the coding process for each question, explaining how the excerpts were identified and merged into themes, subcategories and categories. Representative excerpts for each theme are presented to explain the content of each category. Chapter five ends with a discussion of the diverse representations of the protagonist's initial responses as well as their lack of critical thinking during their initial journeys. Chapter six discusses the importance of relationships in creating connections between the protagonists and the local people. The discussions in the two chapters are summaries from the overall patterns, findings and their intersections with the theoretical frameworks and professional literature.

Chapter seven provides a summary to conclude the overall findings regarding how intercultural learning is represented in global children's literature. I then provide implications and recommendation for educators, researchers and publishers. Ideas for further research are outlined to inspire more discussions around critical content analysis and global children's literature.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

I was not familiar with a conceptual understanding of culture when I first started my doctoral study. Many of my Caucasian friends thought I had a rich cultural background because of being an international student. But in reality, I did not know much about culture and what defines me as a Taiwanese except my language, nationality and food. At one point, I even chose an English name and decided to use it instead of my Taiwanese name.

However, the longer I study intercultural learning, the more I appreciate and understand culture-related studies from a broader and more flexible perspective: a perspective that allows individuals to explore who they are and their relationships to others through multiple paths.

In this theoretical framework, I highlight theories that scaffold my perspectives on intercultural learning. These theories not only serve to explain my thoughts on intercultural learning but also support my understanding of protagonists' intercultural learning processes.

Within this chapter, I first define culture and then use two models of intercultural learning from Hoopes (1979) and Bennett (1986, 1993, 2004, 2009) to discuss people's intercultural learning processes. The third section of the chapter focuses on global competence discussing the dimensions that are included in global competence through Hanvey (2000) and Case (1993) to demonstrate the tenets of global mindedness. Byram's

(1997) model of intercultural communicative competence highlights the linguistic and cultural aspects of successful communication, and the ideas from cosmopolitanism are discussed to consider international imaginary and social solidarity. At the end of the chapter, I discuss the elements from critical literacy to point out the need for critical thinking in intercultural learning. A review of related content analysis studies is provided in the methodology chapter because these studies reinforced the development of the methodology for this study.

Conceptual Definitions of Culture

Culture is a common word that people use in daily conversation to describe corporate culture, family culture, Asian culture and so forth. It seems as if we all know what we mean when we use the term but, in fact, the word is embedded into complex definitions. According to Gonzalez (2005), the concept of culture arose in the late eighteenth century in Britain to describe the growth of an organism, such as agriculture. Later in the nineteenth century, Germans and Anglo-Americans associated it with the evolutionary tenet which is influenced by the magnification of human creativity for intelligent work and the control of the natural environment for a stable way of living. Furthermore, cultural evolutionism sought to understand the long term change in human lives. This tenet is influenced by Darwin and his essential theories in *The Origin of Species* (2003) that the species best adapted to their environment can survive and pass their genetic characteristics to the next generations. In other words, the species that fail to

survive are doomed to extinction. The species that do survive are stronger than those that cannot.

Natural selection in social terms affects many areas of social life, such as family relationships, arts, forms of government, religious life, and so forth (Gonzalez,2005), and has gradually influenced people's ideas of race, gender, progress and civilization, even in today's world.

Nott and Gliddon argued that the shapes of a Negro skull, chimpanzee skull, and gorilla skull are similar; thus, they inferred that blacks are inferior to other species/races (Gould, 1996). Skull size is also used to explain the brain's capacity for intelligent thought. This biological interpretation of race led to the conclusion that culture is generic by nature. People with darker skin color were considered less intelligent, with a lower social status. The biological perspective shaped people's perception of others with different skin colors and reinforced racial prejudice.

Franz Boas later called attention to the omission of external factors in Darwin's theory of evolution. An important aspect that Boas illustrated is that human culture is shaped by the social environment in which humans live and act. In addition, his theory concerns historical distances and traditions for social progress (Gonzales, 2005). Boas's argument has great value for anthropology since, by transforming the relationship of culture, race, and racial hierarchy, the "scientific" method could no longer be the only way to interpret human differences.

As Boas shifted the concept of culture into a broader spectrum, culture in the field of anthropology was launched in different directions. As such, people developed multiple approaches to observe the formation and transformation of a culture. Many theorists of culture defined cultures as systems of ideas. According to Gonzalez (2005), this assemblage can be divided into three major groups: cultures as cognitive systems, cultures as structural systems, and cultures as symbolic systems.

The notion of cultures as cognitive systems perceives cultures as systems of knowledge. It argues that culture exists in human minds to help individuals organize, relate and explain what they have seen and to decide how to respond in order to behave properly in a cultural community. Another group that perceives cultures as structural systems values universal patterns across different cultures. Levi-Strauss considers cultures shared symbolic systems that are cumulative creations of the mind (Gonzalez, 2005). Since he is more interested in the patterns of cultures across groups than individual cultures, he found that human minds tend to organize observations and make sense of them through binary oppositions, such as low and high, life and death, as well as good and bad. This binary feature is also found in many myths that Levi-Strauss studied, which explains that all human beings across cultures process and format information in a same manner.

This dissertation discusses cultures from the perspective of a symbolic system which proposes that culture is a shared symbol and meaning. Geertz (1973) claimed that “culture is a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of

which people communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life” (p. 89). Geertz (1973) also interpreted cultures as “the fabric of meaning in terms of which human beings interpret their experience and guide their action” (p. 83). What he argued is that the meaning of culture does not exist in the human mind but is defined by social participants. From his perspective, a culture is an “assemblage of texts” (p.26). Thus, understanding a culture becomes a matter of interpretation, and interpretations need to be embedded in a contextual social life in a particular time and space. This perspective emphasizes the representation of culture in particular times and spaces and the interpretations of culture by people. Culture in this perspective is flexible and complex.

In relation to the multi-layered and dynamic features of cultures, it is important to be aware that the content of culture covers many shared patterns of human life. Short (2009) suggests these patterns include language, religion, gender, relationships, class, ethnicity, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, family structures, nationality, and rural/suburban/urban community, among others. Given these proposed aspects of cultures, Fennes and Hapgood’s (1997) Iceberg Model of Culture (Figure 2.1) depicts the idea that certain cultural traits in societies are highlighted, while others are neglected.

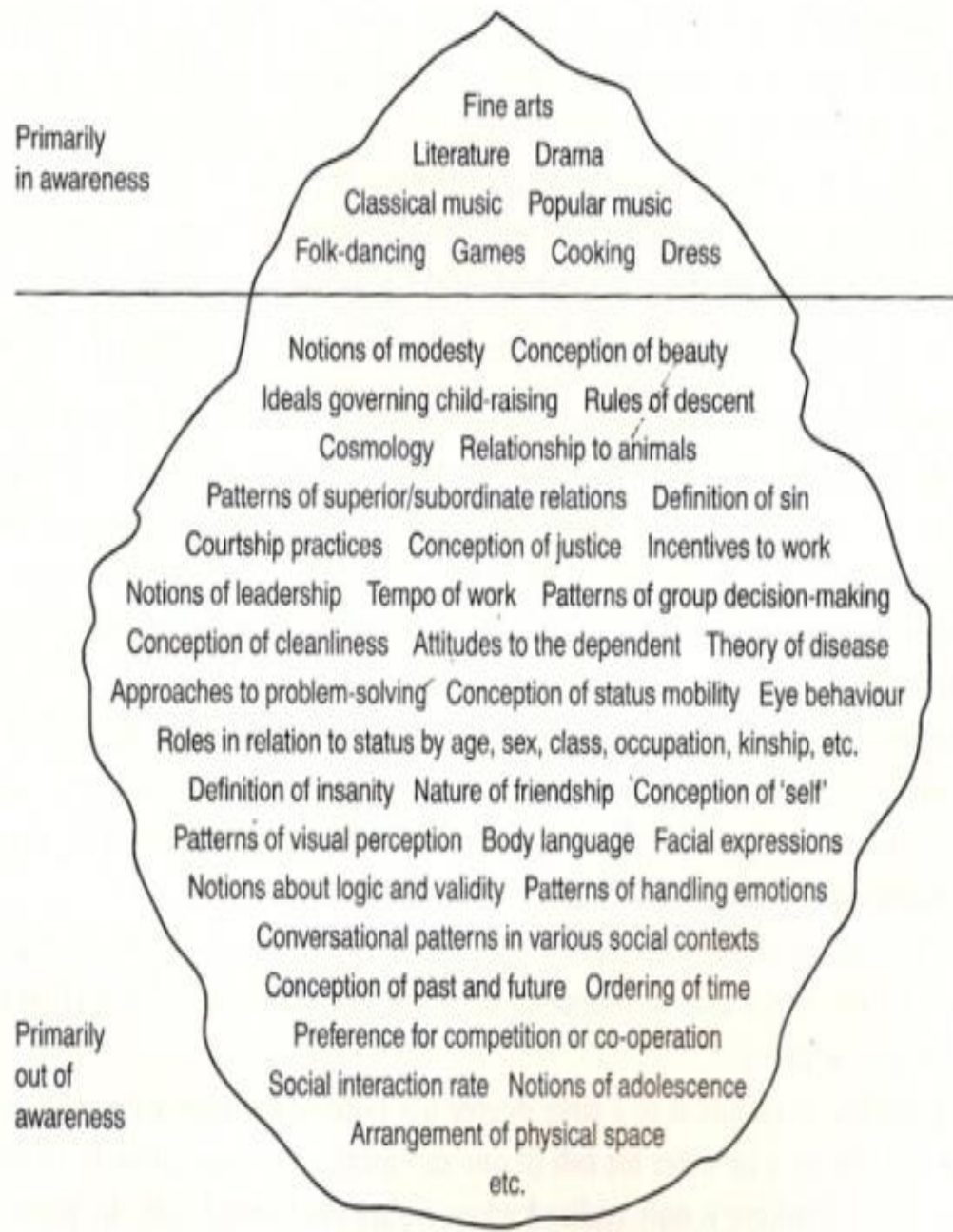


Figure 2-1: Iceberg Model of Culture. (Fennes & Hapgood, 1997)

The idea behind this visual model is that culture can be pictured as an iceberg and that some aspects of culture are more visible than others. The portion above the iceberg and at the forefront in our awareness includes observable cultural elements such as music, painting, food and dance, which people are usually more aware of when talking about cultures. The second part, which is less apparent to observers, includes the cultural elements that are rarely discussed such as the concept of justice, relationships to animals, facial expressions, self, past and present, and so forth. The iceberg model of culture implies that the visible parts of culture are actually expressions of the invisible parts, which focus on the values and beliefs of a culture. The elements in the primarily invisible part are the foundations of cultures.

Cultures can be considered as “ways of living and being in the world that are designed for acting, believing and valuing” (Short, 2009, p. 2), people need to have the chance to explore their cultures, as well as others’ cultures, on a deeper level (the part that is beneath the iceberg). Short claims that it is dangerous for people to simply acquire information regarding a culture instead of exploring its values in depth. Fang, Fu and Lamme (2003) point out that many multicultural literature programs teach students to look at culture through categories. In this binary You/I approach of learning a culture, students are engaged in activities such as a focus on how and what Chinese people eat, as well as what they wear. These scholars advocate that learning a culture through the lens of categories reinforces stereotypes and prejudice. As a result, others’ cultures are perceived only as exotic and foreign.

This study supports the concept of culture from the perspective of a symbolic system. As I look at the texts in this study, my focus on culture is how individuals interact and interpret the shared symbols and how the symbols create meaning in the life of people within a community. Besides the apparent cultural icons, I particularly pay attention to less obvious cultural values that depict human beings' daily life experiences as Fennes and Hapgood (1997) discuss. This understanding of culture underlies the intercultural learning theories that support this research, particularly the perspective that cultures are the daily life experiences that are shared by a group of people.

Intercultural Learning Theories

The idea of intercultural learning is explored by scholars across disciplines such as communication, business, language learning and psychology. A common focal goal among the disciplines is to help cross cultural groups learn and understand each other better. Even though the goal is the same, each scholar and discipline is grounded in various epistemologies which lead to different understandings of human experiences and the construction of intercultural learning.

Not only is there a broad interest about intercultural learning across disciplines, in the field of education, intercultural learning has been discussed from different aspects such as symbolic competence (Kramsch, 1995, 2006; Kramsch, Cain & Murphy-Lejeune, 1996), global education (Begler, 1996; Case, 1993; Smith, 2002), international

mindedness (Mathews & Hill, 2005; Tilke, 2011) and intercultural education (Allen, 2003; Fennes & Hapgood, 1997; Hofstede, 1991, Heyward, 2002).

As this study focuses on the process of intercultural learning, I particularly looked at the literature that centers on this focus and directly addresses learning processes of developing intercultural understanding. The models that were most relevant to this study include intercultural learning as a continuum by David Hoopes (1979) and a developmental model of intercultural sensitivity by Milton Bennett (1986, 1993, 2004, 2009).

Intercultural Learning as Continuum

Intercultural learning as a continuum focuses on a continuous process in which individuals change their perspective of the world from egocentrism to multiculturalism. David Hoopes (1979) uses the mode to describe the change of perception in individuals' thinking.

Hoopes says that one of the causes of cross cultural misunderstanding is deeply rooted and culturally conditioned perceptions of how a reality should be within every cultural group. Human beings' ways of perceiving the world are affected by sensory data (such as sounds, smells, and tastes), as well as by ideologies generated by particular social groups. Culturally conditioned perceptions allow one to behave in the social groups to which one belongs. Yet, since most perceptions are subconscious; it is hard for

human beings to accept the ideologies and ways of living that are outside of their community experiences.

Perception is a natural self-defense mechanism when humans face unfamiliar experiences. Since human beings are vulnerable to rejection, people prefer to stay within their own comfort zones. As perception helps people interact with others, the negative side is that human beings are prone to rely on their rooted perceptions to explain the unknown. Human beings' closed-mindedness can be altered only if they begin to explore and develop cultural self-awareness. Cultural self-awareness suggests the ability to be more aware of one's perceptions and behaviors and have a better understanding of how knowledge is conditioned by perceptions.

Hoopes (1979) says that the development of cultural self-awareness is not an easy task because awareness cannot be reached through an intellectual process; rather, it is emotional work through the medium of experiences. Cultural awareness is a process of looking inward to understand one's own cultural point of view and to understand the world from others' points of views. Allen (2003) furthers Hoopes' idea of affect by proposing the term cultural dissonance to explain the gap between individual perceptions and new cultural experiences.

Cultural dissonance refers to a sense of discomfort and disharmony that rises from individuals' experiences with cultural differences. Rosenblatt (1995) argues that students' development of constructive thinking is actually derived from their experiences with discomfort (p .217). These findings of discomfort (as a source of emotion) lead to

introspection and change. In other words, reason and knowledge rise in a matrix of feeling. The tensions that individuals experience inside themselves enable them to extend their thinking and responses. The emotion/tensions within students spur them to constructive thinking and cultural awareness.

Hoopes (1979) argues that the process of intercultural learning is a continuum (Figure: 2.2). Intercultural learning can take place in any part of the process. The process includes ethnocentrism, awareness of other cultures, understandings of others, acceptance, appreciation and selective adoption. At the end of the continuum are four possible outcomes of the learning: assimilation, adaption, biculturalism and multiculturalism. These outcomes can advance individuals' processes of cross cultural understanding. The four outcomes are not the fixed or final result of people's cross-cultural learning, instead individuals return to earlier points on the continuum when they encounter different issues.

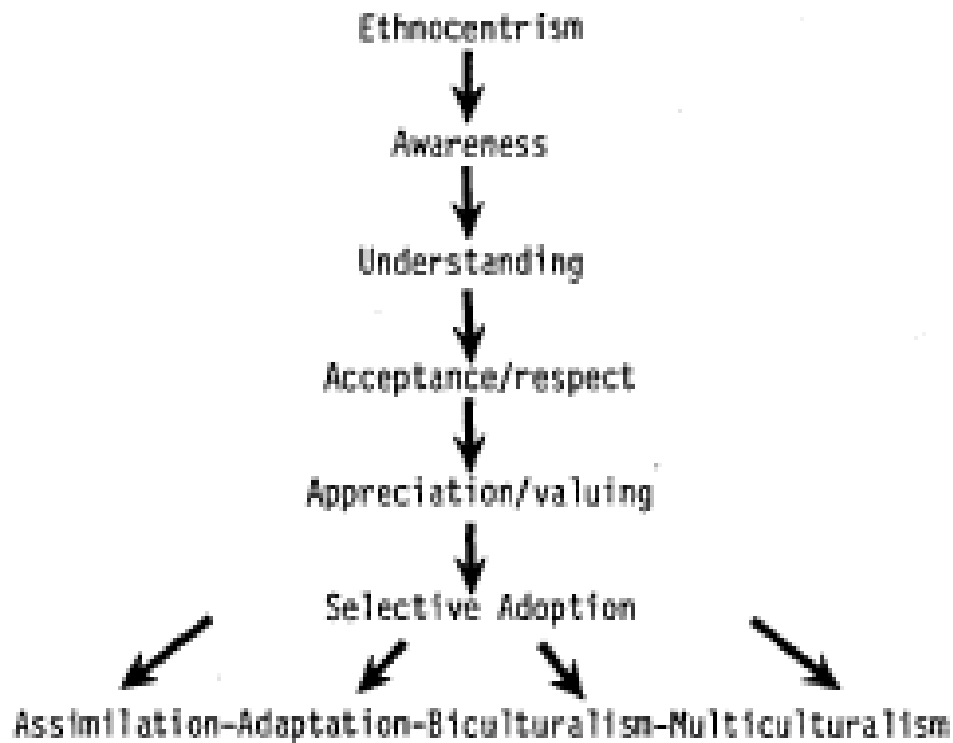


Figure 2:2 Model of Intercultural Learning as Continuum. (Hoopes, 1979)

Hoopes (1979) argues that ethnocentrism is a basic human response to the unknown. An ethnocentric attitude prohibits individuals from exploring other cultures, as they prefer to remain in isolation. As a result, people tend to think that their culture or ethnic group is superior to others, and that their way of living is the only correct way to be in the world. Ethnocentric thinking causes people to make erroneous assumptions about cultural differences.

Moreover, individualism contributes to ethnocentric thinking and leads to prejudice. Individualism by definition refers to people who cut themselves off from their

fellow human beings and believe in self-sufficiency. Individualists believe that everyone should be able to take care of themselves, no matter what kind of living condition they face (Turner, 2009); as a result, individualists have very limited interest in social involvement. Since individualists are able to afford their own lifestyle, they believe that they owe nothing to society. This self-sufficiency leads them to pay attention to their independence of freedom and happiness. The disconnection between self, society, and the world results from individualists refusing to recognize what really happens in other's lives.

Hoopes (1979) explains that awareness refers to an awareness of other cultures. The first step to avoid ethnocentrism is to recognize that there are other cultures in existence in the world, and that these cultures are not enemies. Yet, people in this phase have no interest in understanding other cultures. The phase of understanding is when people start to recognize that culture is a complex process of human life. At this phase, people tend to think that others' cultures are strange and different from their own, but rational thinking about cultures occurs when individuals encounter others. People are interested in learning about other cultures. Acceptance/respect refers to people being able to accept cultural differences and understand that every culture deserves respect. People stop judging others even when they think other cultures are strange. Or, if they question, the judgments remain internal rather than being spoken out loud. Appreciation/valuing means people appreciate specific aspects of other cultures. Selective adaptation means people selectively identify with particular cultures and desire to emulate them.

The four possible outcomes of the learning continuum are: assimilation/acculturation, adaptation, biculturalism and multiculturalism. From Hoopes's (1979) perspective, assimilation/acculturation refers to people assimilating to a second culture. Hoopes (1979) prefers to use acculturation rather than assimilation in order to highlight that individuals do not lose their origin cultures and that their acculturation is desired by the individuals. Adaptation means people adjust to the behaviors and challenges in a new culture in order to function effectively, but no fundamental values from their own cultures are changed. The next outcome, biculturalism, means people develop dual cultural personalities and values to function in different cultures. Bicultural individuals decide what they want or do not want to believe or follow in cultures. Multiculturalism means people who have mastered the knowledge needed to function in diverse cultures without disorientation, even in their initial stage of encountering new cultures. They are the people who can rapidly learn about culture and function appropriately in new settings.

One of the values of the intercultural learning continuum is its flexible definition of the intercultural learning process and its outcomes. Hoopes's emphasis that the intercultural learning process is interchangeable depending on the cultures encountered by people is important to their study. There is no fixed state for person to be forever multicultural or bicultural but rather the intercultural learning process is a life long journey that develops as an orientation toward a more open minded way of living.

Development Model of Intercultural Sensitivity

Milton Bennett (1986, 1993, 2003, 2004a, 2004b) is an American scholar who has his profession in intercultural communication. The fundamental idea of his belief in cross cultural communication is his recognition of the importance of cultural differences. He thinks that the more experiences people have with cultural differences, the more that they will develop intercultural sensitivity. As a result, they become more effective in working with cross cultural group.

Bennett is active in the field of communication. In 1986, he co-founded the Intercultural Communication Institute to help corporations and organizations improve in cross cultural communication. He shares David Hoopes' belief in the active role that humans play in constructing worldviews. Rather than passively accepting what the world has offered to individuals, humans receive, reflect and construct new perspectives. The model, Development Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS), that Bennett proposes, clearly explains individuals' attitudes of thinking from their own perspectives, changing to include variations across contexts.

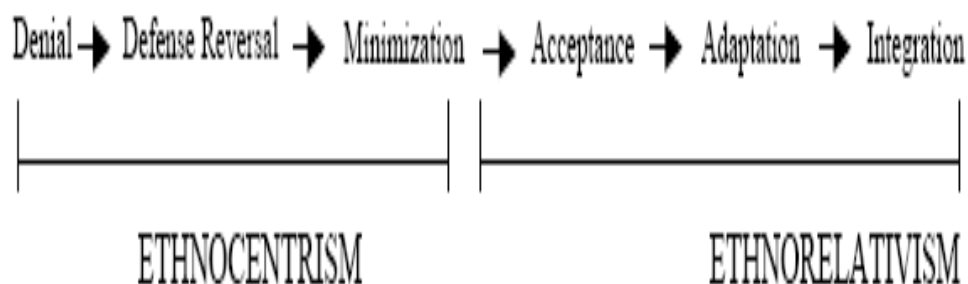


Figure 2-3: Development Model of Intercultural Sensitivity. (Bennett, 1986 & 1993)

The model is composed of six orientations. The first three DMIS orientations are conceptualized as ethnocentrism, where individuals consider their own cultures as central in cross cultural experiences (Bennett, 1986, 1993, 2004a; Bennett, 2004; Hammer, Bennett, and Wiseman, 2003). The three orientations consist of individuals' denial of cultural difference, defense of difference and minimization of difference.

The orientation of denial of cultural difference involves the denial of the existence of cultural differences. People use their own limited understanding of the world to generalize about others. For example, they might claim that all big cities are the same. Or they assume people who speak the same language think in the same way. Hammer, Bennett and Wiseman (2003) argue that people in this orientation associate with different cultures as *others*. As a result, they are not interested in other worldviews.

The second orientation is called defense of difference. People recognize cultural differences but they might receive it as totally negative or positive. They understand the

world through the binary of “we” and “they”. Usually, people criticize others’ cultures as inferior while theirs are superior. A common response is to feel “lucky” for how good their cultures are. For example, people might say “after seeing other cultures, I am glad that I live in the United States.” The sense of superiority develops as people identify difference but they use this difference to make them feel better about themselves.

The last orientation of ethnocentrism is called minimization of cultural difference. People are aware of differences among cultures; however, they still think that human beings are essentially the same. Therefore, they have no intention to recognize the existence of cultural differences, because they assume everyone is the same as them. Therefore, they can just be themselves. In addition, people with the attitude of minimization only accept the cultural differences that are actually similar with their own cultures.

These three orientations represent ethnocentrism. No matter if cultural differences are recognized, people think from their own perspectives to generalize cultural differences. Essentially, they believe that their own cultural values are the correct and worthy ones.

The next three orientations relate to ethnorelativism (Bennett, 1986, 1993, 2004a; Bennett, 2004; Hammer, Bennett, and Wiseman, 2003). The three orientations in ethnorelativism describe individuals’ experiences of their own cultures through the lens of others’ cultures. Ethnorelativism captures individuals’ movement toward developing

wider worldviews. The three orientations describe individuals' acceptance of, adaptation to and integration of cultural difference.

Bennett (2004a) makes it clear that acceptance of cultural difference does not equal agreement with the difference. He argues it is naïve to assume intercultural sensitivity and competence are always associated with liking or agreeing with other's ways of living. Therefore, acceptance of cultural difference focuses on individuals' attitudes in recognizing others' cultures as complex and valuable worldviews. They do not refuse to recognize difference but start to recognize the existence of differences and are willing to understand the complexity in cultures.

Bennett and Castiglioni (2004b) emphasize the importance of connection to cultural difference that enables people to "feel" or "experience" diversity and to change their attitudes from minimization of difference to acceptance of differences. Personal connection helps individuals to construct general cultural categories that allow them to understand relevant cultural experiences from others. Personal connection is an important element in the intercultural learning process that helps individuals to shift focus from themselves to others.

Adaptation to cultural difference describes the state in which individuals shift their own cultural frames and express culturally appropriate feelings and behavior in a particular culture. Adaptation is different from assimilation that asks individuals to give up their own identity in order to fulfill the cultural expectations of others. Adaptation is

expansion of one's own belief system and behavior in order to respond appropriately in another culture.

Bennett (2004a) recognizes the power conflict between the dominant group and non-dominant group in a society. He identifies that usually the non-dominant group is the one that adapts to the dominant culture. In order to see a real adaptation, Bennett encourages the dominant group to withhold their power and influence so that mutual adaptation between the two groups can be pursued. Thinking about the numerous countries in the world, some are more powerful while others are not. It is important for individuals to be willing to expand their own cultural frames and to understand diverse cultures from others' points of view in order to learn to act in a culturally responsive way so that authentic communication between groups is able to be achieved.

The third orientation in ethnorelativism is integration of cultural difference. Bennett (2004a) explains that this orientation is not any improvement from the previous one. Yet, it focuses on individuals' internalized ability to change cultural frames to understand self and the world by developing their identities according to two or more cultural values.

While a large number of publications for intercultural communication focus on individuals' cognitive, affective, and behavior changes, Bennett's model values individuals' changes of perspective on worldviews. Bennett (2004a) claims the model highlights reconstructed worldviews that allow individuals to generate wider and more

sophisticated explanations for cultural differences. They become more sensitive to cultural differences and become competent in handling cross cultural experiences.

Global Competency

Global competency addresses the key elements that are important to foster global perspectives. This section discusses the scholars' work that provides the tenets to describe global competency. These researchers include Case (1993) and Hanvey (2000) to discuss the dimensions of a global perspective; intercultural communicative competence by Byram (1997, 2005) to discuss the factors needed for effective communication with others from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds; and cosmopolitanism (Rizvi, 2005; 2006; 2007; 2008; 2009; Calhoun, 2002) to address social solidarity that connects people together to care for the global world.

Tenets to Develop Global-Mindedness

What is a global perspective? Beyond the personal intercultural learning process related to diversity discussed in the previous section, other theoretical frames describe the components of a global perspective. Hanvey (2000) states that a global perspective includes five dimensions: perspective consciousness, "state of the Planet" awareness, cross-cultural awareness, knowledge of global dynamics, and awareness of human choices.

The first dimension, perspective consciousness, relates to individuals' recognition or awareness that they have their viewpoints that are not shared universally in the world.

When people are able to recognize that their viewpoints are not the only right way, they are able to consider things from a deeper perspective. Hanvey particularly distinguishes the difference between opinion and perspective. An opinion relates to individuals' comments at a surface level as influenced by commonplace attitudes and behaviors, while perspective considers things from a deep layer that challenges assumptions.

Cross-cultural awareness relates to the "awareness of the diversity of ideas and practices to be found in human societies around the world, of how such ideas and practices compare, and including some limited recognition of how the ideas and ways of one's own society might be viewed from other vantage points" (Hanvey, 2000, p. 221). This dimension emphasizes people's knowledge about others, the people, culture, history and so forth. Hanvey believes that the more people are familiar with different cultures, the better they are able to connect to and care for them.

Knowledge of global dynamics relates to individuals' understanding of the world system. Hanvey (2000) especially focuses on the interconnection among the nations in the world so that one country's decision for its people consequently affects other countries. The focus on knowledge of global dynamics is to understand how the world functions as a machine with each part (nation) linked to another.

The last dimension, awareness of human choices, encourages the recognition of risks and rights when making a decision. The example that Hanvey uses to illustrate the orientation is the use of DDT to prevent malaria. Despite the fact that DDT can be used for an immediate remedy, Hanvey (2000) encourages an understanding of the long term

effects of DDT on the natural environment and human health. His point of this orientation is to encourage alternative solutions on any condition when human beings make a decision.

Hanvey's five dimensions provide a basic framework for the content of a global perspective. His idea highlights knowledge-based ability. Extending from Hanvey's work, Roland Case (1993) also discusses the importance of the perceptual dimension to consider the change of attitude needed to develop a global perspective.

Global-mindedness in Case's perspective consists of two major orientations, substantive orientation and perceptual orientation. Substantive orientation relates to the knowledge base discussed by Hanvey, and as also influenced by Kniep (1986). Case claims five major elements for this orientation. The five elements include universal and cultural values and practices, global interconnections, present worldwide concerns and conditions, origins and past patterns of worldwide affairs, and alternative future direction of worldwide affairs. As most of these are similar to the five dimensions in Hanvey's theory, I will only explain the element of origins and past patterns of worldwide affairs. This element stresses the historical roots and the evolution of current affairs in the world. Case (1993) recognizes the influence of history on the current world. In order to truly understand a place, how its past experience influences the formation of culture and development of a country is worthy to consider.

Perceptual orientation is the most important concept in Case's work. According to Case (1993), perceptual orientation is a lens of the substantive orientation. It is an attitude

that individuals adapt to understand and approach global communities. The dimension includes open-mindedness, anticipation of complexity, resistance to stereotyping, inclination to empathize, and nonchauvinism.

Open-mindedness means that individuals are aware of the existence of other worldviews and recognize that theirs' are not the only ones in the world. Case (1993) claims that this element is the most important one. An open-minded person does not need to have a 'right' answer or 'right' perspective; people can be wrong but still remain open-minded toward different viewpoints. It is an attitude that people demonstrate to understand others' thoughts and to be willing to change their existing beliefs.

Anticipation of complexity refers to the inclination to understand things beyond a surface explanation by looking for the interconnectedness of issues from multiple aspects. In global education, this is a crucial ability because students are not content to simply find a quick solution to issues but are willing to spend time exploring and understanding issues with complexity.

Resistance to stereotyping stresses people's assumptions toward other people by encouraging individuals to understand the diversity of cultural groups. As people around the world have more opportunities to cooperate nowadays, individuals' awareness to recognize their own stereotypes and ability to learn about differences will increase the possibility of successful cooperation.

Inclination to empathize refers to how people relate and identify with other's feelings. Case (1993) reminds educators that the most effective way to foster empathy is

not through teaching but teachers' personal demonstrations to show how they connect to the needs of others.

The last element, nonchauvinism, critiques excessive and unreasoned arguments for one's own group. Case defines this element from three aspects: personal level, national level and for future generations. At the personal level, Case encourages individuals not to judge others only due to unfamiliarity. The national level relates to cosmopolitanism and seeks to understand the world beyond nationality. People do not need to agree with every decision of their country but are encouraged to take a broader perspective that concerns the benefit to people in the whole world. The last aspect is to consider future generations. Every decision that people make in the current world will affect later generations. Case (1993) encourages people to have foresight when making long-term economical, political and environmental decisions.

This section provides the elements that are important to consider in fostering an open-minded global citizen. The elements include both knowledge and attentive attitude. In sum, the tenet of open-mindedness covers individuals' knowledge about the world, ability to understand complexity, and being attentive to the needs of others in the past, present and future. The next section discusses global competence from the aspect of communication. The model of intercultural communicative competence does not only discuss linguistic ability but also considers attitudes and cultures that often hinder successful interactions in cross cultural encounters.

Intercultural Communicative Competence

Michael Byram (1997, 2008, 2012) is a British scholar. His work focuses on foreign teaching and intercultural citizenship. His model, Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), describes the complex ability needed to perform effectively and appropriately when interacting with others from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

From Byram's perspective, successful intercultural communication involves more than linguistic competence, even though language can constrain one from fully engaging and knowing another culture that speaks different languages than one's own. Byram (1997) argues cross cultural communication requires a new way to know, express, interact, and perceive a new culture. Therefore, the model of Intercultural Communicative Competence (Figure. 2.4) includes five factors to capture a new way to better understand each other. The five factors include attitude, knowledge, skills of interpreting and relating, skills of discovery and interaction and critical cultural awareness.

	Skills interpret and relate	
Knowledge of self and other; of interaction: individual and societal	Education political education critical cultural awareness	Attitudes relativising self valuing other
	Skills discover and/ or interact	

Figure 2-4: Intercultural Communicative Competence. (Byram, 1997)

The first of the five factors is attitude. Byram (1997) highlights the importance of attitudes toward diversity such as curiosity, openness and readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures. The second is about knowledge. Knowledge relates to an understanding of social groups and their products in both familiar and unfamiliar cultures. Byram's proposal emphasizes the connections between history and the present in both one's culture and the cultures of others. This may include knowledge about the historical and contemporary relationships in both cultures and the types of causes of misunderstanding between cultures. He emphasizes that the historical aspect allows individuals to develop a comprehensive understanding of cultural differences.

The third factor is about individuals' skills of interpreting, particularly the skills related to interpreting and explaining texts or events from another culture and to relate that culture to one's own. A person can identify an ethnocentric perspective in a text or event by putting one's self in another's shoes. Byram (1997) points out that one's

perspective about things is influenced by socialization through the people around them and thus, people tend to be committed to certain ways of thinking. For intercultural learning, it is important to identify this unconscious ethnocentric thinking to avoid misunderstandings of each other.

The fourth factor relates to the skills of discovery and interaction. These skills signify the ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate with that knowledge. This factor of ICC relates to one's ability to search for and digest knowledge of a new culture in the information age.

The last factor relates to critical cultural awareness which highlights individuals' ability to acknowledge the ideologies they hold in order to evaluate and understand each other from an alternative point of view. Byram (1997) presents his definition of critical cultural awareness as the ability to "evaluate critically on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in our own and other cultures and countries" (p.53). This element is placed at the center of his model because he believes that this element is embedded in other elements. He warns that without the dimension of critical cultural awareness, foreign language teaching cannot be reached to its full potential. Byram, Nichols, and Stevens (2001) claim that the purpose of ICC is not to change learners' value but to help them be explicit and conscious in their responses to others (p.7).

In a Byram's recent article, he expands his definition of critical cultural awareness to include the role of social action. Influenced by British citizenship education, Byram (2012) recognizes the importance of moral responsibility, political literacy and

community involvement. He encourages foreign language teachers to teach students to critique, engage and take action beyond own state and nation. His theory in some ways is relevant to cosmopolitanism.

Cosmopolitanism

The concept of cosmopolitanism developed from ancient Greece. Its original concept argues for the liberation from the citizenship of the city-state. Philosophers such as Socrates and Cicero are examples from the ancient time who promote the idea of a ‘citizen of the world’. Even though the concept flourished in Western society, other cultures such as Confucius in traditional Chinese culture have discussed human fellowship in the world. The history indicates human beings’ interest and desire to understand their roles in the world.

The concept of cosmopolitanism continued to develop throughout history and in the modern world. Because of the opportunity for frequent travels, global economy and the change of life style due to the development of technology, the concept of cosmopolitanism in the current world needs to move beyond abstract discussion on the nation-state issue. It is not that the discussion about global government is not important, but what is more transforming is scholars’ recognition of new forms of cosmopolitanism that intend to connect the local and global through “cosmopolitan imagination” (Rizvi, 2005; 2006). Note that the next paragraph has the right justification for the margin turned on and it has to be turned off.

“Imagination” is usually associated with fantasy, especially within the flourishing business of Disney movies, in which imagination equals dreaming and being unrealistic. From my point of view, this type of imaginary context endangers children’s abilities to think deeply and to perceive reality. From Rosenblatt’s perspective, imagination represents a sophisticated practice of making meaning by considering alternative interpretations. Rosenblatt (1995) argues that imagination is about a reader’s ability to “imaginatively “put himself into the place of the other fellow. He/she becomes better able to foresee the possible repercussions of his [her] own actions in the life of others” (p.176). The function of imagination in this sense moves from individual’s personal enjoyment of unrealistic things to their concerns about the lives of others. Imagination is thus associated with consideration of both self and others, which echoes the fundamental elements of a democratic society. Furthermore, Rosenblatt (1995) argues that in imagination, readers “rehearse” the possible consequences or possible behaviors and actions that might occur in real life. Through imaginative trial and error experiments in their minds, readers are better prepared for certain situations and know how to make thoughtful decisions (p. 190).

Rosenblatt (1995) furthers her arguments by discussing the constantly developing and changing political and economic procedures in a democratic society. She argues that citizens need to be able to perceive what political policies and individual actions mean for human beings (p.176). Human beings’ perceptions of the consequences of their actions are what the function of imagination should achieve.

Similar with Rosenblatt's idea of imagination, the cosmopolitan imagination in Rizvi's (2006) perspective emphasizes collective engagements with global communities. According to Rizvi (2006), cosmopolitan imagination is "how people engage with their everyday activities, consider their options and make decisions within the new configurations of social relations that are no longer confined to local communities but potentially span, either directly or indirectly, across national boundaries" (p. 193). Ideas for imagination are brought by frequent travelers and speak to the effect of globalization.

Rizvi (2008) recognizes the input brought by international travelers to both the visited local community and the travelers' original place. He uses an example in a village in India to make his point of the possibility of social reposition. A small number of people leave an Indian village to work in Dubai as migrant workers. They shared their experience in Dubai with people in the village. There are many profound changes brought back to the village by the workers. First, their experiences encourage a strong desire by youth to work abroad, make money and become globally engaged. Second, the electronic products brought back by the workers to the village change the ways people use their leisure time. They now have the tool to imagine beyond their circumstances. Third, the most important change is the disruption of the social order such as ownership of land that is inherited by the caste system. Because of the money the workers bring back to the village, more opportunity exists. Although the changes are twofold, the impact of international travel is undeniable.

Rural places such as the one Rivzi mentions in India can benefit from other's international experiences. However, even in country such as the United States, communities exist that would welcome such international experiences as there are still people who never leave their communities and are not interested in the global community as they are not aware of their connection to others. Rivzi (2005) believes that mobility relates to privilege. The people who are able to travel to different places and experience diverse cultures should share what they learn from the outside world so that others might develop the interest as well.

James Clifford (1997) prefers the term of 'traveling cultures' or 'travel' over 'tourism' to capture the two-way process, consisting of interactive dynamic relations between local and the traveler. Rizvi (2009) claims that globalization changes the logic of national 'belonging' that tie people to a single place and group so that people are able to imagine themselves belonging to several places at once. In other words, individuals are able to create their identities across nations.

According to Calhoun (2002), the development of social solidarity with people from different cultural and national groups is crucial in cosmopolitan learning. Calhoun (2002) urges individuals to move beyond liberalism, universalism and patriotism when considering human relationships in the world. Both Calhoun (2002) and Nussbaum (1996) warn about the limitations of human beings who only define themselves through communal groups such as nation, culture and ethnicity. Their specific loyalty contributes to poor connections with strangers who live outside of the communal groups. The social

solidarity that Calhoun (2002) proposes frames a larger community in the world; a community that even without personal connection, involves people caring for how well ‘strangers’ live in the world. Calhoun (2002) urges that the problems in the world will not be improved if people only rely on political organizations such as NGO. The need for individuals to consider self beyond patriotism and to focus on humanity recognizes the influence that individuals can bring to impact the world.

Cosmopolitanism offers a broader perspective to look at a global perspective by recognizing the opportunity for constant interactions among people in the world and using the opportunity as a resource to exchange and develop cross cultural cooperation. The interconnectedness among cultures and nations presents a crucial idea that every culture and nation is always in the “state of becoming” (Rizvi, 2008) as a result of cross cultural interactions. Cosmopolitanism intends to challenge existing understandings of the world and to forge different imaginations of globalization that welcomes diversity and encourages multiple ways to cooperate.

Critical Literacy Pedagogy

Critical literacy is a pedagogical approach that encourages individuals to read texts critically in order to understand the connection of themselves and the world. Even though critical literacy is widely used in the field of language arts, it is not a specific instructional method. Rather, critical literacy is a framework that allows individual to think within a particular context. In this study, I adapt key elements of critical literacy to

consider the protagonists' development of critical consciousness and their relationship between self, others and the world. I consider texts from a wider perspective that is not limited to written forms. Alternatively, a text can be the life experiences that provoke individuals to connect, reflect and critique. The life experiences in this study particularly focus on cross cultural experiences.

General Background of Critical Literacy

Critical literacy is an educational perspective that encourages students to be conscious of social oppression and to reflect on actions that allow them to be freed from these oppressions. The origin of critical literacy is from critical theories. The German scholars from Frankfurt school such as Max Horkheimer, Herbert Marcuse, and Jürgen Habermas influenced on the key ideas in critical literacy.

The premise of critical theorists is that “men and women are essentially unfree and inhabit a world rife with contradictions and asymmetries of power and privilege” (McLaren, 2003, p. 69). Individuals are social actors who create and are created by society of which they are a part. Unless individuals are able to think critically about the struggles for self-emancipation and social change, they are repressed in a society.

The influence of critical theories on education are centered on the work of Paulo Freire who is the primary figure in critical literacy and is associated with Ira Shor, Shirley Steinberg, Allen Luke, Barbara Comber and others. Critical literacy is applied to a wide range of fields such as media, feminism, global learning, and education to highlight the

idea of critical thinking, emancipation and social change to encourage individuals to challenge the social status quo and discover alternative paths of self and social development.

Similar with the idea of cosmopolitanism, critical literacy highlights individuals' understanding between self and the world. The difference is that critical literacy approaches the self/other relationship from an emancipatory point of view. As Shor (1997) explains, each of us grows up with many ideologies that shape us. We are influenced by our family background, neighborhood, and schooling to develop perspectives of who we are. Critical literacy encourages individuals to examine their ongoing development and to develop subjectivity in the world. The goal is to develop the ability to critically and radically reflect, understand and act on the social problems around the world in order to promote social justice. Cosmopolitan also targets individual responsibility in the world, critical literacy provides more content in terms of the characteristic of this responsibility.

The critical stance cycle by Lewison, Leland and Harste (2008) use four dimensions to describe the elements individuals need to develop a radical stance (Figure.2.4). The four dimensions are a synthesis of the key elements in critical literacy. I found them helpful to describe the features of critical thinkers in intercultural learning. There four dimensions are (1) consciously engaging, (2) entertaining alternate ways of beings, (3) taking responsibility to inquire, and (4) being reflexive.

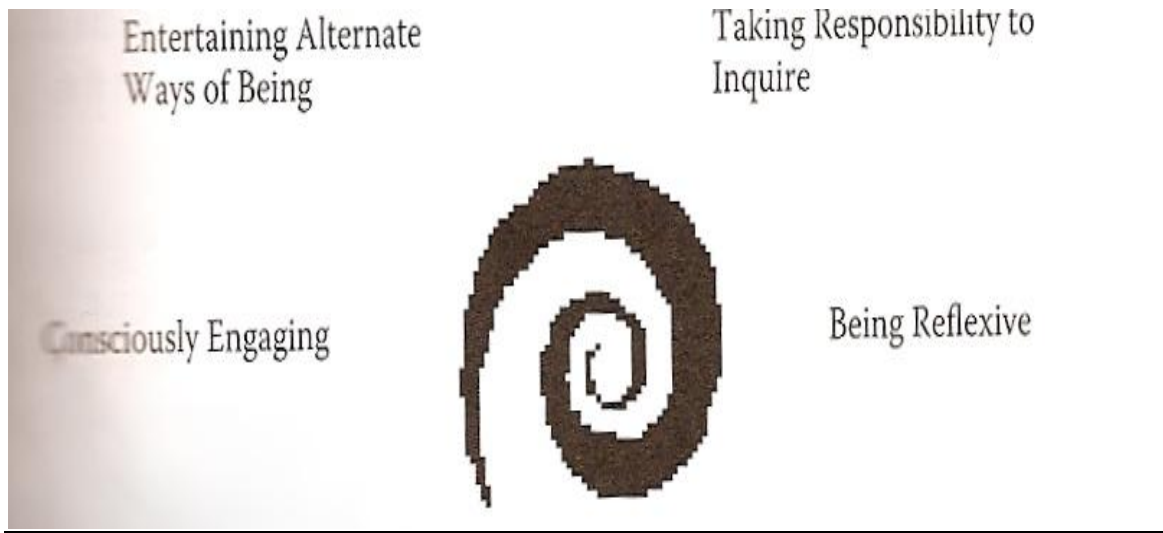


Figure 2-5: Critical Stance Cycle. (Lewison, Leland, & Harste, 2008)

Critical Consciousness

Consciously engaging permits individuals to ‘decide’ how they want to respond to events in their lives. It implies that they

thoughtfully evaluate the events and make decisions based on those evaluations.

In other words, people are aware of what is happening in their surroundings. It highlights individuals’ consciousness as they explore and respond to the experiences in their lives.

Conscious engaging can only be achieved when individuals ask the questions (problem-pose) that are related to the cultural dissonance they encounter in cross-cultural experiences.

Conscious engaging values individuals’ autonomy to name the world. Freire (2000) thinks that to exist humanly in the world is “to name the world [and] to change it” (p. 88). Naming requires people who are oppressed to speak out about their concerns and

problems so that changes can be made. It also requires oppressors to perceive how their power affects others' lives and to be willing to work together for the general good. Freire and Faundez (1989) say that asking questions is not an intellectual game (p.38) whose aim is to acquire informational facts. Instead, what really matters for questions are the actions that might be performed in the future. The chains of questions and answers enable individuals to understand what they can do in reality and can lead to the development of critical consciousness.

International travelers encounter the so called 'third world' defined by Western culture. They start questioning why and how the label was created and the connotations associated with it. Because of their relationships with local people that allow them to appreciate the culture in the society, the authentic experiences they have allow them to reflect on how the term affects their perspectives of certain countries. Moreover, they might also explore how power is manipulated in the world and influenced by people's worldviews. Individuals' processes of naming the world enable them to develop a clearer understanding of how their existence is affected by others and affect others in turn.

Alternative Perspectives

As individuals become critically conscious of the cultural conflicts they encounter, the second dimension—entertaining alternate ways of being--helps individuals' develop flexible perspectives (Lewison, Leland and Harste, 2008). The more flexible children are, the greater the possibility that they will be able to understand others' perspectives.

However, adopting another perspective is not easy since familiarity makes people feel secure, and human beings tend to reject alternatives that are unfamiliar to them.

Human beings' ways of being are greatly influenced by the social groups to which they belong. The shared cultural models in the groups enhance individuals' cultural identity and perspectives of self and others. Quinn and Holland (1987) define cultural models as "presupposed, taken-for-granted models of the world that are widely shared by the members of a society and that play an enormous role in their understanding of that world and their behavior in it" (p. 4). An essential point is that cultural models are beliefs shared either unconsciously or consciously by members of a cultural or social group. Cultural models explain "why and how things happen as they do and what they mean" (Gee, 1996, p. 78).

In a monolingual or monoethnic culture, people's cultural models are rarely challenged; as a result, they tend to think that their way is the only valuable way in the world. Even though they are aware of the existence of other countries, the limited contact with diversity prohibits them from challenging their established opinions.

Critical thinkers who are consciously engaged in their experiences tend to step out of their comfort zones to try a new way of living that might help everyone live a better life. Critical thinkers require people not only to think, but also to put their thoughts into action. For example, environment-related issues are currently hot topics. The media is flooded with information related to climate change, pollution and possible solutions to these dilemmas. However, in order to prolong the life of the earth, the preservation of

natural resources is one of the required methods. An alternative way of being would require people to examine the way they use natural resources in daily life and then change harmful habits into environmentally-friendly ones. People do not only learn facts; rather, they put their thoughts into actions so that changes can be made.

Even though cultural models affect human behaviors, human beings can actually change what they want to believe if they are consciously and critically engaged in life. People can take up a new position to experience an alternative way of understanding the world and the established ideas that influence them. Moreover, a new way of being sometimes helps people realize that their ways of being might not work in reality and that there is something else that might be worth considering.

Personal Responsibility

Lewis, Hoffer and Harste (2008) argue for “taking responsibility to inquire, to emphasize individuals’ responsibility to question and search for answers for themselves” (p. 17). Their roles in initiating learning are very important for cross cultural learning because personal motivation allows one to critically understand the world. Paul Fussell (1980) once criticized the development of tourism to change people’s perception of traveling. According to Fussell, “before the development of tourism, travel was conceived to be like study, and its fruit was considered to be the adornment of the mind and the formation of the judgment. The traveler was the student of what he thought” (p.39). Nowadays, many travelers surrender their right to discover a new culture and

place to their travel agents. International travelers become satisfied with superficial exposure to foreign experiences but not an in-depth journey that can transform travelers' minds and thoughts. For an in-depth journey, travelers begin their journey long before the day of departure. The learning experience lasts a lifetime because the whole learning process has a deep impact on them. No one can do the preparation for them because the travelers are the only ones who know what they want to learn and understand from the journey. While in a new place, their minds and experiences are shaken by the unknown. In this way, traveling has meaning for them because they are actively participating in risk-taking, experiencing, and constructing new understandings. Their participation allowed personal transformation to occur.

It is expected that sojourners will receive a massive amount of information before and during their travels. Taking the responsibility to inquire also puts the emphasis on individuals' ability to think conceptually to analyze the information they receive and to be able to apply what they have learned to a new situation. Short (2009) says that conceptual thinking requires children and adults to be able to identify critical issues and to apply their understanding to a future context (p.14). Conceptual thinking sees knowledge as a tool that can help individuals to continue to explore issues, rather than to focus on the finished product.

An example of conceptual thinking for intercultural learning is when sojourners explore why human beings function in different ways around the world. Rather than studying lifestyles in the host country, sojourners use the knowledge they have to explore

the causes of different ways of living and what the living means to themselves and others. Sojourners are making connections between their personal experiences, emotional responses, and factual information to establish a new mental framework.

Asking individuals to initiate and take the responsibility in learning is important to help them persist with the unknown before finding the answers they seek.

Responsibility focuses on an individual's ability to remain open-minded and to continuously work under the condition of the unknown. The responsibility indicates both personal and social responsibilities. The personal responsibility is for individuals to research their own interests, while social responsibility means individuals step outside of their comfort zones to understand issues from others' points of view. Even if others' points of view conflict with personal interest, individuals fulfill their social responsibility to investigate trust and search for a greater good for everyone.

Taking responsibility to inquire requires time and energy. This element is crucially important for intercultural learning because without individuals' active roles in constructing their understandings of the world, meaningful learning is impossible. Individuals need to name their world, to examine it, and to understand it. No matter what kind of situation individuals are facing, they have to take the responsibility to explore themselves and others.

Reflexivity

The idea of reflexivity comes from Harste's (2003) discussion of reflection and self-reflective interrogation. Reflexivity emphasizes individuals' critical reflection upon what they have done. Harste especially focuses on reflection of self rather than on reflection or critiquing of others. As efforts to achieve world peace become a common thread in the current global environment, people are outspoken on issues such as war, hunger, and other disturbing world events. While critiquing what others have done is important, it is also profound for individuals to thoughtfully consider what they have or have not done including their intercultural learning experiences.

Freire (2000) argued for the importance of individual subjectivity in the learning process to understand the world and to create a democratic society. He used the term, "praxis," to describe the experiences that successfully reconcile meaningful learning for individuals. Praxis consists of the individual's *critical reflections* upon their social reality and their *actions* that help them change the world. Both elements have the same importance in intercultural learning. In order to be free from oppression, an individual's awareness of who they are and their social relationships with others helps them criticize injustices in the world. Through their continuous experiences with praxis, individuals are fully engaged in their process of liberation. The experiences enhance their competency to critically engage the world.

Douillard (2002) notes that, "Reflection helps students remember and actively participate in the learning experience" (p. 93). Within the process of reflection, multiple

feelings, such as pressure, confusion, excitement, and achievement, might occur in students. These assorted feelings are the impetus for further growth. Reflection helps students focus on inner thoughts so that they can have deeper understandings about who they are as cultural beings. In addition, being reflective in daily practices helps students take responsibility in decision-making and refuse to engage in meaningless actions imposed by others (Dewey, 1997). In sum, being reflective allows individuals to take ownership of their own lives.

Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, et al. (1997) founds that women use reflection in transforming their ways of being in the world. The women obeyed authority in patriarchal societies and judged themselves according to others' expectations. Their voices were silent. Reflection gave them a way to discover what they want to learn and how to express their desires. Through reflection, they learn to recognize personal values and to connect with people. As the scholars indicate, "in order for reflection to occur, the oral and written forms of language must pass back and forth between persons who both speak and listen or read and write—sharing, expanding, and reflecting on each other's experience" (p. 26). The interchange leads women to enter into social and intelligent lives in their community. Reflections can be presented through various forms as long as the individual selves are actively involved in the processes. Hence, social interactions among people through reflection boost their understanding of social reality.

Reflection in intercultural learning is essential and crucial. It can be both personal and social when people share their thoughts with others. The function of social reflection

provides opportunities to build community and mutual understanding toward each other. Since people nowadays have rich interactions with diverse cultures, cultural conflicts are definitely to be expected. Rather than seeing cultural conflicts in a negative light, it actually opens up spaces for individuals to reflect upon what happened, why, and how to change. Through reflections, people can be involved in deeper introspection, which helps them to develop perspectives rather than opinions. They become more able to connect with other people's conditions and work with others for equality.

Reflection also helps individuals to be aware of their prejudice and stereotypes toward diverse cultures. Since everyone is bounded by the worldviews that he or she grew up with, reflection helps people understand how their thoughts are influenced by experiences, cultural models, metaphors, and the discourses they have developed. Through constant reflections, individuals are able to understand their biases and to develop broader worldviews. Reflection is a transformative tool that allows individuals to understand themselves and the consequences of their actions towards others.

This section discussed four dimensions that enable individuals to become more critically engaged in the world. The four dimensions of critical consciousness, alternative perspective, personal responsibility and reflexivity are based on the belief that the more people are able to be aware of their condition in the world, the more they will be able to develop their sense of agency. The sense of agency motives people to voice their opinions and to actively participate in the issues of concern in the world.

My Definition of Critical Intercultural Learning

Critical intercultural learning is a continuous learning process in which individuals explore their connections to others and their responsibility in the world. Critical intercultural learning means to foster critical thinkers and social/global action as participants commit to making a difference in the world. In addition, critical learning is a process in which individuals learn to hold and examine their prejudices toward the unknown in order to develop a broader and just perspective toward others. As people involved in critical intercultural learning respect and embrace diverse ways of being in the world, they are willing to adapt their worldviews in order to create a space for others to present their views as well. Critical intercultural learning is not a set of instructional practices but a process in which individuals become interested in exploring cultural differences and making connections with others.

Conclusion

This literature review consists of three parts to illustrate my understanding of critical intercultural learning. The three parts include the discussion of culture, intercultural theories and critical pedagogy. In brief, the definition of critical intercultural learning in this study is based on a continuous learning process toward cultures. Through individuals' reflection and action, they develop critical awareness toward self and others. The learning process is a life long journey. Through their journey, individuals learn to productively live with others around the world. In addition, critical intercultural learning

is a way for individuals to live in the world. They choose to live a life where they value deep cultural connections, care about others' needs, collaborate with communities, and step out of their comfort zones in order to work for justice in the world.

The next chapter focuses on the methodology of critical content analysis. I introduce the background of qualitative content analysis and provide reviews of related studies to give examples to demonstrate examples of conducting qualitative content analysis while also presenting relevant studies in the children's literature field. In addition, the chapter presents the meaning of 'critical' in the critical content analysis. Another section of the study presents the methodological process of data collection, analysis and interpretation of the data.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

According to Glesne (2005), qualitative research methods are used to “understand social phenomena from the perspectives of those involved, to contextualize issues in their particular socio-cultural-political milieu, and sometimes to transform or change social conditions” (p. 4). Qualitative research seeks to understand how participants understand and interpret the world with which they are changed. Therefore, the conclusions drawn from qualitative research may result in a theory to interpret what has happened.

In this chapter, I present the methodology that guided my study. The chapter consists of an introduction of critical content analysis and discusses studies that employ critical content analysis to present how critical content analysis is applied to examine children’s literature. I also explain the methodological process of this study which includes examples of the coding process for the three research questions. A summary of each book is presented to help readers be familiar with the content of the texts.

This study is a qualitative research study according to its goal of understanding and interpreting the protagonists’ cross-cultural experiences. The study intends to examine how the protagonists develop through international travel experiences and how these experiences of intercultural learning are presented in the texts.

Difference between Content Analysis and Literary Analysis

Before exploring the nature of content analysis, it is important to distinguish between content analysis and literary analysis to better understand what content analysis is about. Beach, Enciso, Harste and et.al (2009) explain that content analysis is a conceptual approach to understand “what a text is about” (p. 130). Krippendorff (2004) says that content analysis provides new insights, increases a researcher’s understanding of particular phenomena, or informs practical actions” (p. 18). In brief, content analysis tries to understand a text within a particular context (Galda, Ash, & Cullinan, 2000). Therefore, content analysis researchers read texts purposefully for research questions, but not to be led by what authors want readers to think (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 32). *In contrast, literary analysis, even though it also analyzes texts, focuses on author’s intentions through literary elements such as symbolism, figurative language, character and connotation to think about why a text is written in a particular way.*

Content Analysis

Content analysis has been widely used in various fields. It is a flexible method by which researchers develop understanding of a particular phenomenon and action. Krippendorff (2004) claims that “content analysis is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use” (p.18). In Krippendorff’s perspective, content analysis values the process of

the method and a particular framework which the researchers adapt to understand the texts.

The following six features of content analysis are adapted from Krippendorff (2004) to illustrate the nature of the method:

1. The development of meaning of a text depends on a reading event between text and reader. Therefore, there is nothing hidden in a text waiting for readers to decode. Rather, in reading events, readers conceptualize texts according to the attention they focus to make sense of the texts. Krippendorff's emphasis on the flexibility between readers and texts distinguish his concept of content analysis from Berelson's definition of the method. Berelson (1952) claims the importance of objectivity of texts and researchers so that the researchers' job is to discover the inherent messages in texts.

2. A text has multiple meanings depending on the perspectives and knowledge that readers use to read with. Krippendorff disagrees with the container metaphor viewpoint that argues that texts cannot be read with more than one perspective. He thinks the metaphor is naïve and ignores researchers' backgrounds.

3. Meanings invoked by texts do not need to be shared with other readers. In many research methods, the demand for researchers to find a common ground is required. It is believed that there is only one interpretation of data. However, in content analysis, each researcher's interpretations of texts are valid as long as the interpretations fulfill the criteria of the researchers who validate their results with evidence from the texts.

Therefore, researchers do not need to expect consensus for their interpretations with other researchers.

4. In content analysis, researchers often read different resources outside of the texts in order to gain insights for their analysis of the texts. Their resources might include other reading materials, others' thoughts on the texts, and researchers' personal connections to the texts, as well as the actions and conceptions that the texts encourage readers to develop. Content analysis from Krippendorff's perspective challenges the analysis results from computer programming because humans are able to read and connect different contexts for more comprehensive interpretations.

5. The contexts that readers read along with the texts create different interpretations. In content analysis, researchers need to examine their texts through a context. The researchers need to construct a world in which the texts make sense and the world is able to answer the researchers' questions. A context is a theoretical framework which the researchers adapt to make sense of their texts. Therefore, when different contexts are adapted to analyze a same text, different interpretations are expected.

6. Texts have no meaning for readers unless readers draw interpretations from the texts to their chosen contexts. Krippendorff emphasizes that texts, messages and symbols do not speak for themselves. They inform someone to read, decode, infer and interpret their meanings. Therefore, content analysis researchers do not find meaning in the texts because texts do not speak for themselves. In fact, researchers infer meaning to answers based on their particular research questions for their texts.

Krippendorff's perspective on reading texts as a conceptual approach to understand what texts are about fits with Rosenblatt's transactional theory (1994). Rosenblatt proposes that reading is a liberating process. During a reading event, readers transact with the texts and, as a result, they create a personal interpretation which Rosenblatt names as "poem". The poem will be able to transact with or within another context and so another poem is formed. The process of transaction acknowledges the concept of context and interpretation in the context analysis. The voices of researchers to interpret the texts they read are valued.

General Procedure of Conducting Content Analysis

As content analysis has been widely used in various fields, two directions have been applied with the method. One is a quantitative approach often used in mass communication to count textual elements in order to understand how a controversial issue is described in a chosen genre. Kracauer (1952) and Wilcox (1962) express the concern that as quantitative content analysis uses a counting method, its purpose is limited and the results might be mistreated. Weber (1990) agrees that quantitative content analysis is criticized for the neglect of syntactical and semantic information underlying the text. In contrast, qualitative content analysis is used mostly in nursing research, psychology, anthropology, information and library science, and education focuses more on understanding the underlying messages through specific contexts. Moving beyond counting words, themes, and patterns to test hypotheses, qualitative content analysis

attempts to generate theory and discover meaning through its data. Patton (2002) explains that qualitative content analysis is a sense-making process that allows readers to identify core consistencies and meaning from the data (p. 453). Zhang and Wildemuth (2009) summarize that “qualitative content analysis pays attention to unique themes that illustrates the range of the meanings of the phenomenon rather than the statistical significance of the occurrence of particular texts or concepts” (p. 308). Thus, qualitative content analysis focuses on unique themes in the texts that allow researchers to understand social reality in a subjective but scientific manner.

Even though quantitative and qualitative content analysis engages data/texts in different ways, they have a certain degree of similarity in the two methods. Both of them involve sampling, unitizing text, and contextualizing with research questions in mind (Krippendorff, 2004, p.87). The general process includes (1) formulating research questions, (2) selecting text to be analyzed, (3) unitizing text, (4) coding text, (5) conceptualizing coding results, (6) checking for reliability and trustworthiness, and (7) writing results to answer the research questions.

Coding Process of Qualitative Content Analysis

The procedure of qualitative content analysis involves three major elements: sampling, coding, and creating categories and themes. Sampling refers to the label of a meaning unit. In this study, they might be sentences or paragraphs. Codes are gradually developed when the numbers of samples are enough. During the initial coding process,

codes will be revised if the level of consistency is low. Coding sample texts, checking code consistency and change coding rules are integrative processes to be continued until coding consistency is achieved (Weber, 1990).

Labeling meaning units and developing them into codes are important because they allow the data to be examined from a new perspective. Coffey and Atkinson (1996) claims that ‘codes are tools to think with’ and ‘heuristic devices’ (p. 32). I found that after highlighting the samples and codes for this study, I was able to pay attention to the messages underlying the texts.

After sampling and coding, the next step of content analysis is to categorize the codes into groups. Krippendorff (2004) explains that a category is a group of text excerpts that share a commonality. He emphasizes that no data can be placed into two or more categories. However, it is not easy to avoid as human experiences are interrelated. Researchers need to carefully examine the data to include every text except that is suitable and to avoid duplication.

Graneheim and Lundman (2004) explain that the purpose of categorization answers the question regarding what the text means. The feature of category is to present a descriptive level of content. It might include subcategories and sub-subcategories if needed.

The next step is creating themes which answer the question ‘how’ the data is presented. Van Manen (1990) states that a theme describes “an aspect of the structure of experience” (p. 87). He also emphasizes that a theme cannot be an object or a thing. A

theme presents a thread of experiences. Graneheim and Lundman (2004) explain that the concept of a theme has multiple meanings. By creating a theme, researchers link the underlying meanings together in categories.

Trustworthiness

The key to trustworthiness in qualitative content analysis relies on how well researchers make the analyzing process explicit and whether or not the decisions made in a study are purpose-driven according to its research questions. It is critical to note that there is no universal application of findings in qualitative content analysis, but there are “multiple frameworks used to think within, through and beyond the texts” (Beach et al. 2009, p. 129). Different from quantitative research, qualitative research does not use validity and reliability as criteria to evaluate the quality of a study. Instead, qualitative research, as an interpretative research method, uses the criteria of credibility, dependability and conformability to determine various aspects of trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Credibility refers to how well the data and the process of analysis address the intended focus of a study (Polit & Hungler, 1999; Graneheim & Lundman, 2004; White & Marsh, 2006). Credibility concerns issues, such as making decisions regarding the focus of a study, data poll selection, persistence of data analysis and representative selection of data. In order to ensure the credibility of this study, the criteria used to make

the book decisions are explained in this chapter. Also, Chapters three to six discuss the definition of each category and theme and the details of the analysis process.

Dependability refers to “the coherence of internal process and the way the researchers account changing condition in the phenomena” (Bradley, 1997, p. 437) that is, the change that the researchers make during the process of analysis. Confirmability highlights “the extent to which the characteristics of data, as posited by the researcher, can be confirmed by others who read or review the research results” (Bradley, 1993, p. 437). To improve dependability and confirmability, it is important to audit the process of a study. Therefore, in this chapter, I present a general process for the data analysis. I also explain the framework that I used to look at the data for interpretation. The framework is a substantial lens to understand the protagonists’ development within the context of a critical intercultural learning process.

Related Studies Using Qualitative Content Analysis

I searched for studies that relate to cross-cultural experiences in international children’s literature, but there were not many to be found. Most findings related to book reviews and curriculum instruction regarding international literature, and there were only a couple of research studies carried out on the subject. There are many research studies that focus on multicultural children’s literature, including several conducted to study multicultural children’s literature with a focus on immigrants’ cross-cultural experiences in the United States. I only include George Shannon’s research in this category because

his work highlights the shifting cultural identities that relate to the study. The other three studies included relate to cultural superiority and cross cultural interaction.

The studies that inform this research include “Making a Home of One’s Own: The Young in Cross-Cultural Fiction” by George Shannon (1988). In the study, Shannon examines cross cultural protagonists’ self-defining process through their experiences in the two worlds they inhabit. His study aids in the interpretation of cross cultural children’s development of cultural identity. Claudia Mills (2008) in her article, “We Go to Europe to be Americanized”: European Travel and National Identity in *Betsy and the Great World* and *My Heart’s in the Highlands*,” analyzed the protagonists’ attitudes toward other cultures during their travels abroad. This article is the only study that I have found analyzing texts that deal with international travel. The study provides me with some guidelines to examine the transformation of protagonists’ attitudes toward intercultural learning. The study also shows protagonists’ sense of cultural superiority and how other cultural behaviors should be changed to be more American-like. Brock-Servais (2001) in “Intracultural Travel or Adventures at Home in the Ear, the Eye, and the Arm,” analyzed the protagonist’ attitudes when encountering new cultures in a scientific novel. The article indicates that even though the characters tried to understand others in their cross cultural experiences, the ultimate message is that others are dangerous and inferior. This article indicates that it is important to examine cultural superiority, even if protagonists show great interest in other cultures. Weimin Mo and Wenju Shen (2003) in their article, “From Author to Protagonist: Stories of Self-Identity

Development,” analyze the protagonists’ childhood cultural experiences and their struggles with self-identity in two cultures. This article provides examples and inferences regarding acculturation and self-identification in the stories.

George Shannon (1988) in his study analyzed the protagonists’ self-defining process regarding cultural identity in four books. Shannon proposes the dual importance of listening and telling stories related to the self-defining process for children with cross-cultural conflict experiences. Shannon argues that cross-cultural children are caught between two perspectives of seeing the world, and their process of developing identity is different from that of children who grow up in one culture. Reading others’ stories and telling one’s own stories helps in the process of self-definition.

The four books Shannon analyzed were *Arilla Sun Down* by Virginia Hamilton (1976), *Child of the Owl* and *Sea Glass* by Laurence Yep (1977, 1978), and *Annie on My Mind* by Nancy Garden (1982). The narratives address the self-defining process that cross-cultural children might go through. The four aspects used to analyze the cross-cultural protagonists’ self-defining experiences are (1) dual rejection by both cultures; (2) selective rejection, which means children are accepted by one culture, while rejected by another; (3) the attempt to develop dual identities at once; and (4) the self-created inclusive identity. Shannon found that children’s roles significantly shift in the last stage from defining the self through others’ eyes to taking charge of their own identities and being able to tell others their stories. In other words, children stop seeing themselves as

victims within the clash of cultural conflicts but as a bridge that associates the two cultures.

Claudia Mills (2008) argues that travel abroad has become a kind of secular ritual: travelers depart, stay in a privileged area, free from work and daily routine, engage in privileged activity, and finally, reintegrate to the home society. She thinks that travel draws travelers closer to identification with their home community in different formats.

The two books Mills examined illustrate female travel experiences published from 1940 to 1960. *Betsy and the Great World* (Lovelace, 1952) depicts the protagonist, Betsy, roaming by herself in Europe while Jill, in *My Heart's in the Highlands* (Durell, 1958), studies abroad with her teammates in Scotland. Mills analyzed the two texts to understand the presentation of American political and moral superiority during the trips and how the protagonists' preoccupied perceptions of their target countries are affected and transformed throughout the cross-cultural experiences. Furthermore, Mills also analyzed the texts through gender and class lenses to examine the protagonists' reorganization of their gender and class roles. As independent travel is a sign of female empowerment, Mills argues females are conscious of their conduct while traveling abroad, and this feminine consciousness is reflected in writing.

Mills's analysis is convincing and interesting. Even though both protagonists travel in Europe for a certain amount of time, their travel experiences demonstrate different levels of cultural adaptation and appreciation. Several examples demonstrate the presentation of superiority. First, Betsy, in *Betsy and the Great World*, reveals her

patriotic emotions before departing for Italy at the port in Boston by declaring her love for the city. Moreover, while seeing a long line of Italian immigrants waiting to get on board, Betsy questions why they were going to Italy. Mill infers from Betsy's question that she perceives America as a desirable destination that no one would want to leave once they had immigrated. It never occurs to Betsy that people might prefer to leave the country to return to their hometowns. In the book, Betsy also demonstrates her American embrace of a classless and democratic society. During her stay in Munich, she tries her best to become friends with three lower-class people, even though they refuse to cross the class boundary. In her trip, Betsy tries to apply her American democratic values to make things work in Germany; however, she is not able to understand the culture and cross barriers in her host country.

In contrast to Betsy, Jill is able to confront the culture shock she encounters. Unlike Betsy, Jill is sensitive to social class and the manner in which various financial situations can offer costly materials in her social group. The study abroad experience allows her to identify her classist assumption of relationships and self-perception and to change her perspectives. I found her knowledge of America honest and impressive. It is evident that Jill's growth comes when she admits her arrogance. For example, she and her teammates learn that Americans are not universally welcomed in every country they visit. Moreover, American standards cannot be applied to everything. She also recognizes that Scottish higher education is more rigorous than the American system.

Mills' analysis is helpful to my study because her inferences show how egocentric thinking and personal transformation are presented in the novels. Mills' study demonstrates two American attitudes: America is the standard in the world, as Betsy's actions imply, and America needs to learn to live with other nations and rely on mutual respect rather than superiority, as Jill's story reveals.

Brock-Servais (2001) examines protagonists' responses toward cultures within their moves across cultures in the article. The book *The Ear, the Eye, and the Arm*, written by Nancy Farmer (1995), is science fiction. The protagonists are three siblings, Tendai, Rita, and Kuda, who live in isolation and experience their own cultures as outsiders. Their adventures in the outside world begin when Tendai needs an explorer's badge. With supervision by one of the household staff, the children leave their house for adventure. Throughout their trip, their lives are threatened by a cultural group called She-Elephant that wants to sacrifice their blood to their god.

Brock-Servais argues that the way that the book presents other cultures is rather negative; a message sent throughout the book is that acceptance of others is dangerous. Every culture except the protagonists' culture is inferior and awkward.

In terms of protagonists' attitudes toward cultural conflicts, Tendai is more open-minded and flexible, while Rita is depicted as arrogant. For example, Tendai and Rita enjoy a meal with the people in the She-Elephant group. Tendai describes the smell of the food as delicious and the color of the food as rich. However, Rita refuses to eat and thinks that the people have inappropriate table manners. Rita says, "I don't eat with my

hands,....., and I don't eat without washing my hands. I'm not an animal...I don't lower my standards because I am surrounded with riffraff" (Farmer, p. 55).

Another example that Brock-Servails enlisted to show Tendai's and Rita's different attitudes toward new culture is their encounter with a new character, the Heart of Africa. Rita comments on the character's personality, stating "he has a wandering spirit...because he was abandoned and adopted by the entire village [Resthaven]" (Farmer, p.101). Rita's perception toward other cultures is strongly based on her own knowledge, and it is hard to change this perception. Tendai, on the other hand, reminds Rita to consider a culture's behavior in accordance with social and historical structures. His responses to cultural conflict are influenced by his ability to empathize. Yet, as Brock-Servails indicated, cultural superiority is embedded in his response to new cultural encounters, even though he tries to understand them from a comprehensive point of view. The incident occurs when he first arrives in Resthaven and is fed from a separate bowl. He thinks to himself that the reason that he was fed with a separate bowl was because he was not a member of the community. He thinks if a village person came to a modern society, people might not believe in the villager as well. He uses this example to explain Resthaven's actions and thus he says to himself that he "forgave" them. Brock-Servails argues that Tendai's act of forgiveness can be explained as a form of cultural superiority. Even though he tries to assimilate himself to the new society using his empathic ability and intelligence, he posits himself as superior to the Resthaven people.

Weimin Mo and Wenju Shen (2003) analyzed Jean Fritz's (1982) novel *Homesick* and Laurence Yep's (1978) book *Child of the Owl*. The two novels are considered to be the authors' autobiography because the stories are based on the authors' childhood experiences. *Homesick* depicts Fritz's childhood when she lived in China before age 12. She was born and grew up in China and moved back to America with her parents at the time when China's domestic politics became dangerous. Laurence Yep presents his experience living in a Chinese neighborhood in a U.S. city with his paw-paw through the voice of a female protagonist, Casey. In this article, Mo and Shen present how the authors' lives are impacted by their unique process of acculturation. Here I will only discuss Fritz's book because her experience references living overseas, and Yep's book is set in the United States.

Fritz's experience in China was similar to most sojourners, as many of them have power to control local residents. In her case, she came from a wealthy, Western family but went to a foreign school; she lived in a high fenced house with several Chinese servants at home. Mo and Shen analyzed the text from the perspective of Fritz's Chinese cultural awareness, acculturation, social isolation, and intercultural distance. The childhood experience was stressful and painful, mostly because of the lack of her parents' positive acculturation to Chinese society and ordinary Chinese people's perception of Westerners as foreign devils.

I found Mo and Shen's analysis of acculturation and intercultural distance helpful for my study. In their overseas experience, Fritz's mother taught Western manners to

Chinese people. Their family was the group dominating another group, which limited cross cultural interaction. Because of her parents' lack of positive acculturation to Chinese society, Fritz was caught in the clash of two societies: she was not recognized by her Chinese or European classmates. The different cultures, races, and nationality backgrounds also caused hardship for Fritz's self-identification. She was under a great deal of emotional pressure and confusion regarding Chinese people's hostility toward her, a Western devil.

However, not all the experiences were negative for Fritz. When she was young, Paw-Paw, a Chinese grandmother, took care of her. Paw-Paw taught her how to read and write Chinese poems and songs. Fritz's love of China and Chinese culture sprouted from her language practice with Paw-Paw. Mo and Shen indicate the connection between language and the development of cultural identity.

Fritz's return to America did not solve her problems with self-identification. She felt like an outcast because her experience was different from other Americans. She was trapped between two cultures. This is why, half a century later, Fritz still felt the need to go back to China to be accepted by the people there. Mo and Shen's analysis offers a detailed description of the complexity of self-identification in Fritz's book. Their analysis reminds me of the importance of positive acculturation for the sojourner's and parents' attitudes toward the host country. Many protagonists in the text set go to host countries with their parents, and most of their financial conditions were more stable than those of the people in the host country. Therefore, Mo and Shen's study provides two possible

categories, acculturation and intercultural distance, for data analysis to understand how the people surrounding the protagonists influence their understanding of self and others.

All of the above studies support my study, even though many of them are not directly related to the focus of this dissertation. Yet, they do reinforce my arguments and provide examples for methodological procedures.

The Critical Aspect in Critical Content Analysis

Critical content analysis is rooted in content analysis. And therefore, it also relies on researchers' coding and interpreting themes and patterns in the texts to understand particular phenomena. The difference is that critical content analysis looks at texts from a 'critical' lens and deals with issues related to power.

Beach and et al (2009) explains that critical content analysis cannot be defined with any one of the critical theories. Also, it does not have one set of research methods. In the article from this group of scholars, they present the flexibility of critical content analysis to understand the same book from different contexts. Using *The Day of Ahmed's Secret* (2009), Vivian Yenika-Agbaw, Christine Jenkins, and Rebecca Rogers employed three different critical theories to look at the same picture book. These three analyses also address power in critical content analysis through different contents.

The Day of Ahmed's Secret is a contemporary realistic picture book. It is written by Florence Heide and Judith Heide Gilliland and illustrated by Ted Lewin. The story is told from the perspective of a little boy, Ahmed, living in the city of Cairo. Ahmed states

that he has a secret to tell his parents after finishing his job of delivering fuel tanks in the city. Readers follow Ahmed to experience the historical buildings and busy markets and, at the end, Ahmed goes back home to tell his parents that he has learned to write his name. The message of the story for readers is the joy of writing. The illustration shows the culture of the city and life style. The content of the story is educational and safe. Teachers use the book to teach students writing as well as connections to a diverse culture. However, with the perspective of critical theory, the story is read with deep understanding.

First, Yenika-Agbaw looks at the text from the context of postcolonial theory. Yenika-Agbaw claims that the theory enables her to “carefully examine Ahmed’s actions--what he does/think---to understand how the authors and illustrator construct him as an Arab boy growing up in a postcolonial city” (p. 58). Through the lens of postcolonial theory, Yenika-Agbaw examines how the protagonist negotiates space, cultural identity, and personal identity from the author’s description of the setting, character, and culture.

From Yenika-Agbaw’s analysis, the text reveals the protagonist’s ownership of space, work, and personal as well as cultural identity. Postcolonial theory enables Yenika-Agbaw to critically understand the power dynamics embedded in the text. Through this lens, readers are able to understand the protagonist’s resistance and self-liberation process in the postcolonial society of Egypt.

Christine Jenkins analyzes the text through the lens of inquiry-based interpretive reading. With the background of library science, Jenkins focuses on readers’ responses

through the Great Book approach which was developed for book discussion with three types of questions: informational, evaluative, and interpretive. For her analysis, Jenkins recorded her own responses as well as readers' comments from book reviews and amazon.com. Jenkins claims that the result of the analysis is not the final destination of critical content analysis. Rather, helping researchers and readers to develop the ability to read text critically is the point for future inquiry. Critical content analysis in her study is available even for general readers to employ for personal reading.

Rebecca Rogers uses the theories of neoliberalism and critical discourse analysis as a method to understand the relations of labor and economy in the book. As Egypt faced political-economic backdrop during early 1990, the country signed a deal with the International Monetary Fund. The fund affects the country's development in government programs such as education and health care. Rogers explains that the result of a country using the loan usually ended up bearing large interest payments that stress the economy. The particular time period and the IMF made the book an interesting text to analyze from the perspective of the contexts.

The results present the mixing of globalization and tradition in the illustrations. Also, the discourse in the narrative shows the messages of hard work and individualism. From Rogers' analysis, the text that seems innocent is deconstructed and embedded messages regarding global politics in the text are revealed.

The three analyses present two points. First, a text can be analyzed from different contexts to develop multiple perspectives. Second, the basic foundation of critical content

analysis is the same as content analysis. However, it highlights issues related to power as shown in the three analyses. This study employs critical content analysis because I intend to explore the protagonists' exploration of their personal relationship to the world. I look at whether the international journey enables them to critically examine their privilege and responsibility in the global world.

Methodology of the Study

This section will present the information regarding the methodological process of this study. There are three research questions used to frame the analysis of how cross-cultural travel experiences and intercultural learning are presented in global children's literature. The research questions include:

1. What are the authors' understandings of intercultural learning?
 - What are the authors' backgrounds and cross cultural experiences?
 - What do the authors state are their intentions for writing about a particular culture/country in their books?
 - What are the authors' research processes for writing their books?
2. What are the protagonists' initial responses to their cross cultural experiences?
3. How are the protagonists influenced by their cross cultural experiences?

Criteria and Rationale for Book Selection

This text set consists of realistic fiction novels in which the stories depict the protagonists' journeys to another country and their friendships with local people. In the

following, I present the criteria and rationale that help me select the books for this study. The use of criteria for book selection is one of the ways to ensure credibility because criteria help in selecting relevant books for the text set.

The first criterion relates to the content to the book in which the protagonists need to have a significant amount of interaction with local people. Thus, each protagonist in this text set has at least one close cross cultural friend so that I can look at how the direct contact with local people is one of the factors that influence the protagonists' intercultural learning.

Due to this criterion, I first excluded picture books. During my initial search, I found that even though a great number of picture books focus on cross cultural experiences, most of them have plots on teaching readers "about" culture. An example of this type of picture is *Tokyo Friends* by Betty Reynolds (2006). The book depicts an American girl living in Tokyo. In the book, she introduces the name of everyday objects in Japanese, as well as the differences between American and Japanese customs. Also, protagonists rarely have interactions with local people in picture books, not to mention that they are rarely show the impact of cross cultural experiences on the main character, so I decided not to include picture books.

The second criterion is the genre of the book. The text set only includes books that are contemporary realistic fiction novels because this genre reflects real life experiences that might occur. Therefore, historical books, folktales, informational books and fantasy are not included in the text set. Two examples that are excellent choices for

the text set, but are excluded because they are historical fiction, are Fritz's (1982) *Homesick*, which depicts her childhood experiences in China during the Cultural Revolution, and *Till Tomorrow* by John Donahue (2001), which depicts the protagonist's experience in France on an army base in 1961. The selected text set features the years from 1998 to 2010.

The third criterion is the domain of the book. I decided only to include global children's literature, not multicultural literature. I understand that multicultural literature is an excellent resource that promotes cross cultural experiences. Many of the books even describe in depth cross cultural friendships that I cannot find in global picture books. However, even though this genre focuses on political tensions in the United States, my focus is to understand the intercultural learning process.

The last criterion concerns the accessibility of the books. In order to easily obtain the books, I only include books that circulate in the United States. I do not consider other languages besides English because this study does not compare the presentation of the concept of intercultural learning in different countries.

At the end, I included all the appropriate books that I could find in the text set except the S.A.S.S. series. Nine books are included in this series. S.A.S.S stands for students across seven seas and is a series for young adults. Fourteen books have been published in this series, each of them centers on an American girl's study abroad experience in a country, such as China, Finland, Mexico, and others. None of the books in this series is included because culture and intercultural learning in the stories are

presented in a superficial way. I decide there is no need to analyze these books. I did include a similar book, *Hot Scots, Castles and Kilts*, to represent this type of entertaining book that lacks cultural sensitivity.

Data Collection Process

I located books through databases, websites, and book search engines. I also used Worldcat.org to find books for the text set. I first used keywords such as ‘international travel’, ‘intercultural learning’, ‘sojourn’, ‘expat experience’ and ‘ministry’ to search, but there were no appropriate books for this study. Most books I found had stories set in foreign countries, but the content of the stories did not match the criteria discussed in the previous section. I then used the keywords ‘exchange program’ and found the S.A.S.S series.

Two websites were especially helpful for the data collection. They are Worlds of Words (<http://wowlit.org/>) and travelforkids (<http://www.travelforkids.com/>). The Worlds of Words website offers useful teaching strategies and booklists that can help educators teach about diverse cultures. WOW organizes its literature collection by genre, age level, and country. It provides bibliographical information and a summary for each book in its collection. Thus, I went through its data base for each country to identify appropriate books for the text set. Most of the books in the text set came from the WOW website. I went through the same process for the data base on travelforkids.com. Travelforkids offers parents valuable information regarding the process of preparing to travel with kids.

The website also organizes its data base by country. Besides the two websites, I also checked websites that relate to expatriate families and third culture kids to locate books. Even though many resources are on the web to help parents and children prepare for their adventures, fiction stories that highlight expatriates' intercultural experiences were limited. Only two books, *Sasha Visits Singapore* (Flint, 2006a) and *Sasha Visits Hong Kong* (Flint, 2006b), were found, but I was not able to include the books because they are picture books.

After finding several books for the text set, I used Amazon.com to locate relevant books. I typed in the titles of the books that I found from the websites and used the search engine on Amazon.com to find other relevant books. One feature for the search engine on Amazon.com is that it will put several relevant books together. It might be books written by the same author or books with similar plots. The search engine on Amazon.com helped me find several series, such as *Tino Turtle*, *Eloise*, and the *Charlotte* series. But, they are not included because they are picture books.

In the end, nine young adult novels are included in this study. The region of the culture covers each continent. In the nine books, only one book has a male protagonist and other eight books are female protagonists.

Book Summary

In order to familiarize readers with the books for this study, this section provides a brief summary for each book. The summaries are organized according to the authors'

backgrounds, from insider authors to outsider authors. Details of the authors' backgrounds and their connections to the cultures they wrote about are explained in Chapter four.

- *Habibi* by Naomi Shihab Nye (1999)



Liyana Abound is a fourteen-year-old Arab-American girl living in St. Louis. But her world is turning upside down as her father decides it is time for the whole family to move back to his hometown in Palestine so that Liyana and her brother will be able to learn about the culture. As Liyana's grows up, she does not know much about her heritage. During the preparation of the journey, she is stressed out by the potential changes such as not wearing shorts, no kissing in public, not able to speak the language, and not knowing anything about her relatives. Thus, Liyana is reluctant to go on the journey.

As expected, Liyana feels confused and anxious when the family arrives at Palestine. Political tension, conflict between Muslim and Jews, and racial prejudice are real issues that Liyana witnesses. Social expectations of females in Muslim culture seem conservative to the Western teenager and Liyana feels it is hard to accept. In addition,

although her grandmother and the relatives in the village welcome Liyana and her family, Liyana is homesick as Palestine is an unfamiliar place to her.

Throughout the trip, Liyana gradually navigates the new environment. She finds that language is not the only way to understand each other. By staying and watching her grandmother, Liyana learns her grandmother's wisdom and love of peace. She also learns about the life in the village culture. In addition, her cross cultural friendship with a Jewish boy, Omer, helps Liyana reflect on her understanding of prejudice, peace and justice. Their friendship is forbidden because of the hostility between Jews and Arabs. But Liyana challenges the rule. She convinces her father to accept the friendship. She even invites Omer to her grandmother's village. Her intention to help Arab and Jew, Muslim and Jewish, understand each other and connect to each other shows a humanistic worldview. The cross cultural experiences influence her to show concerns beyond her own needs.

Even though Palestine is a strange place to Liyana, gradually her connection to the place develops. With shops, bus stops, and people, her memory makes the place become unique for her. She starts to feel Palestine is home as well.

- *Monsoon Summer* by Mitali Perkins (2006)



Fifteen-year-old Jazz Gardner is a California-born girl with a Caucasian father and Indian mother. One summer, Jazz accompanies her family to an orphanage where her mother lived in India before adapting to America for her mother's project to establish a local pregnancy center. Jazz is reluctant to go because she does not want to miss her life in California: her childhood friend, Steve, also her secret crush, and the postcard business that she and Steven run together. But she has to go as her family always supports each other to pursue their dreams.

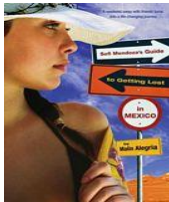
During her stay, Jazz befriends three Indian girls at the school she goes to and a girl, Danita, from the orphanage who comes to their house to help Jazz's family. Because of her mother's fame as a social activist, Jazz feels pressure. She does not think she has the ability to help others like her mother does. So, when Danita approaches her for advice to establish her own business, Jazz hides herself from Danita even though the area is her expertise.

Jazz feels uncomfortable when she arrives in India because of her fair skin color. The stares from local people trouble Jazz. Also, Indians have mistaken her mother as her

maid as they think Jazz is from a higher social class. Danita also feels embarrassed by her body size because it is relatively big.

As the journey proceeds, Jazz learns about Indian values, food and dance. The cross cultural experiences change how Jazz perceives herself and help her discover her strength. By participating in a Kathak dance, Jazz comes to appreciate the physical strength of her body. She learns to like it from a local's perspective. Especially the friendship with Danita pushes Jazz to step outside of her comfort zone to discover her ability to change other people's life for the better. The journey to India allows Jazz to develop self-esteem, ability to help, and to appreciate her heritage background.

- *Sofi Mendoza's Guide to Getting Lost in Mexico* by Malin Alegria (2007)



Sofi Mendoza was born in Mexico but she stays with her parents in California. The closest experience she has with people south-of-the-border is to eat at Taco Bell. She is very Americanized and does not know she is an undocumented immigrant in the States. Thus, when she sneaks off with her friends to Tijuana to chase her secret crush on a boy, she gets into big trouble—she is detained in Mexico.

In the meantime, her parents arrange for her to stay with her father's sister who lives in a ranch in Baja until they figure out how to bring her back. Sofi's journey to learn about Mexico and her heritage background begins from his arrival at the ranch.

At the beginning, Sofi is bitter. She cannot believe the ranch is so inconvenient—no internet or proper sewer system, and electricity only half the time. After experiencing the tourist spot in Rosarito, Sofi has a hard time accepting the other side of Mexico. In addition, she is troubled with her cultural identity because people around her assume she should know Spanish and Mexican culture but she is Americanized enough to not realize this aspect of her cultural identity.

During her trip, her aunt, uncle, cousins and people she encounters all influence her but her friendship with a boy, Andres, changes her the most. He challenges the sheltered Americanized girl to accept real life struggles and to learn about her strength to deal with hardship. In addition, he challenges Sofi's taken-for-granted idea that Americans deserve better service to help Sofi realize her privilege and pride. The challenge also pushes Sofi to discover her connection to her birth country, Mexico, and to reflect upon her multicultural identity.

At the end of the book, Sofi defends Mexico when she overhears American girls slander the environment and the clothes Sofi wears which were lent kindly from her cousin. The action shows her connection to the place and she does not allow anyone to disparage the people or the place. Hence, she also recognizes herself as a cultural bridge to connect Mexico and America. She wants to take her classmates to Mexico to help people in need and to experience the great culture there. The trip has allowed Sofi to better understand her cultural heritage and who she really is. She no longer is a privileged and innocent teenager.

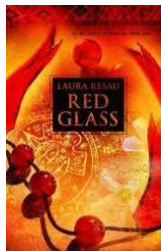
- *Hannah's Winter* by Kierin Meehan (2009)



Hannah, twelve years old, is staying with her mother's friends in Kanazawa, Japan as her mother, a horticulturist, visits Japan to write about gardens. Her mother believes it will be a great opportunity for Hannah to polish her Japanese language that Hannah has studied in her home country, Australia.

Because of her mother's close relationship with Japan, Japanese culture is not totally foreign to Hannah. During her stay, she is open and enthusiastic to new cultural experiences in Japan, the physical environment, history, art, daily life practice, and food. Hannah's adventure with her Japanese friend, Miki, and a neighborhood boy to figure out an ancient message in order to help a ghost boy is interesting. Hannah has fun with the adventures and, at the same time, deepens her understanding about Japan.

- *Red Glass* by Laura Resau (2007)



One night, Sophie, her mother and his stepfather receive a call from hospital. The call is for a five-year-old Mexican boy, Pablo, whose parents died of thirst when crossing

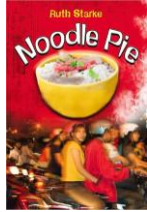
the border to the United States. Immediately, Sophie's aunt, Dita, who stays with Sophie's family after experiencing the war in Bonita wants to help Pablo.

Sophie loves Pablo but the fact that Pablo loses his loved ones points out the deepest fear in Sophie's heart—abandonment. Sophie thinks that one reason that her birth father left them is because she was a premature baby and ugly. She feels she has no power to handle losing someone again.

A year later, Sophie's parents decide to adopt Pablo, but they think it is important to have the permission from Pablo's relatives. The adoption depends on Pablo's decision regarding whether he wants to stay in Mexico or the United States. Thus, Sophie volunteers to cross the border with Dita, Data's boyfriend, and his son, Angel, to visit Pablo's family. Angel is born in Guatemala. One mission of the journey for Angel and his father is to go back to Guatemala to figure out if his mother is still alive and to find the red jewel she has buried.

At the beginning of the journey, Sophie is worried. She is worried about hygiene, food poison, and the unpredictable things on the road. She learns how to handle police and strangers through watching Dita's interactions with them. Sophie and Angel fall in love with each other. A big portion of the book describes Sophie's journey alone to bring identification to Angel and his father after they are beaten and robbed at Guatemala. The journey frightens Sophie but her love for Angel urges her to take on the challenge. Through the journey, Sophie finally comes to find confidence in herself. The people she encounters during the journey make her strong.

- *Noodle Pie* by Ruth Starke (2010)

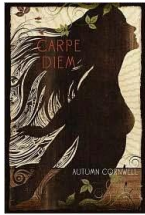


Even though Vietnam is his parents' birth country, Andy is not personally tied to the place. Thus, since the book is depicted from Andy's point of view, Vietnam is encountered as "the other" and a "strange" place. During his stay, Andy is homesick and experiences a great amount of cultural shock. Even though Andy is a second generation Vietnamese Australian, the book did not focus much on his cultural identity. He is described more as a tourist. However, the description of Vietnamese culture and Hanoi is balanced with three perspectives: Andy's father who shares his childhood experience of the place before leaving Vietnam, the cousin, Minh, an insider of the culture, and Andy, the foreigner's point of view.

At the beginning of the trip, Andy does not understand the value of the family restaurant for the local people. For him, the place is just a stall. He cannot believe that his father calls it a restaurant. Because he was naïve to the political history in Vietnam, he judges the place according to his values learned in Australia. This story centers on Andy's discovery of his ignorance toward others. Through his journey in this place, he learns to appreciate cultural differences from a local's perspective. In order to help his cousin earn enough money to find her mother, they help each other to transform the home restaurant into a place that would attract foreigners.

Andy's relationship with Minh helps him to become mature. After visiting some tourist restaurants, Andy has an idea to change the family restaurant in order to attract foreigners who are able to spend more money. Working together with Minh for the plan helps Andy to be more active. The plan is successful but Andy has to rethink the value of the restaurant for the local people. As Andy and Ming raise the price for the foreigners, they face a moral struggle: whether or not is it fair to charge a different price for foreigners and local people for a same produce? Andy, at the end, values their family restaurant as a successful business when he stops judging it according to his assumptions. He also feels sorry for his misunderstandings about the family. He appreciates what the family has helped for his father.

- *Carpe Diem* by Autumn Cornwell (2007)

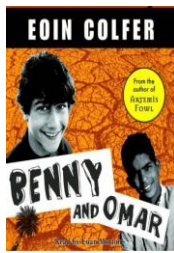


Vassar Spore is a sixteen-year-old overachiever. She has all of her life planned out including a PhD degree and Pulitzer Prize. However, her plan is interrupted when her grandmother forces her parents to let Vassar backpack with her through Southeast Asia.

On her journey from Singapore, Malaysia, Cambodia, and to the remote jungles of Laos, Vassar faces adventures that she is not prepared for: the cultural shock, dangers, superstition, food, weather, and relationship with her unpredictable grandmother.

Along the trip, she finally learns to loosen up and to LIM (Live In the Moment) as her grandmother encourages her to do. Her romance with a Malaysian cowboy, Hanks, brings Vassar out of her bubble. At the end of the book, Vassar totally changes her planned life goals to be a one that allows her to LIM.

- *Benny and Omar* by Eoin Colfer (1998)



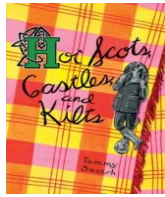
Benny is an Irish boy and a player on a hurling team. He is surprised when his family announces their move to Tunisia due to his father's change in jobs. Feeling foreign to the place and disappointed that he will not be able to play hurling, Benny guards himself through sarcasm to whoever he meets.

In Tunisia, he meets a local boy. Omar can speak English words that he learns from TV programs. However, the two of them are able to communicate with each other. Even though they are friends, Benny's parents do not like them to hang out together because they think Omar will have a bad influence on him. However their friendship remains as Benny finds Omar is the only outlet for his homesickness.

Benny learns real life struggles in Tunisia. Omar takes him to visit his drugged and hospitalized sister. He then realizes how lucky he is compared to the hardships in Omar's and his sister's life. Also, he is exposed to both poverty in Tunisia and the

luxurious life that the expat families live. The contrasting situations allow him to reflect on the privilege he has. The friendship with Omar helps Benny to realize that many things are more important than his hurling sports. The journey in Tunisia also helps Benny to realize the importance of his family. At the end, he becomes sincere and gentle to his family and others he meets.

- *Hot Scots, Castles and Kilts* by Tommy Swoish (2008)



Sixteen-year-old Sami Ames travels to Scotland with her mother to help their cousins save MacKensie Manor. MacKensie Manor is a castle in a rural area of Scotland. Her cousin plans to transform the old castle to a working farm and tourist attraction. Sami cannot appreciate the idea as she thinks the place is primitive. From her perspective, no one would spend their vacation to make soup, milk cows, and dye wool. Therefore, Sami has a hard time adjusting her materialistic life style to live on the farm.

Sami's friendship with her cousin, Fiona, allows her to experience life in the Manor. Even though their interests and values are different, Sami enjoyed taking care of errands with Fiona. Sami also develops a romance with a Scot. The romance helps her to appreciate Scotland. At the end of the book, Sami and her family plan to come back again at Christmas.

Coding Process of this Study

This study involves two approaches to look at the data. For question one, I looked at each author's information and drew patterns across the data. For questions two and three, I went through the whole procedure of doing qualitative content analysis of the books. In the following sections, I present the steps regarding the data analysis process.

Question One

- **Process to Understand the Perspectives of the Authors**

Question one focuses on the authors' perspectives on intercultural learning. In order to understand their ideas about cross cultural experiences, I collected information related to how the authors share their thoughts about culture and their writing processes. The information is gathered from the authors' personal websites, blogs, interviews, and their books. Specifically, authors' notes and acknowledgments from their books are resources for this question.

When reading the information, my attention was on two areas. I focused on the authors' writing experiences and their cross cultural experiences. For the first area, my purpose was to understand their beliefs through their words. I believe that authors' intentions affect the ways they present their stories. Therefore, I paid attention to the relevant information when the authors share their journeys to become writers, purposes of writing, words to fellow writers, beliefs, and other experiences and interests..

When reading the information, I highlighted the ideas that related to my focus and made margin notes. These notes were my reactions, questions, agreements, and

inferences about what I read. For example, when reading about Mitali Perkins' search process for Jesus, I found that the words such as suffering, silence, and struggles occurred many times in the four page reflection. I wrote my observation that she is concerned about spirituality. She took time to write the details about her thoughts. Social justice and compassion to the poor are the burden in her heart, thus she incorporates these elements in her stories.

For the authors' cross cultural experiences, I gathered information related to their travel experiences, the ways they see themselves as cultural beings, views on others' cultures, and responses to cultural differences. I also paid attention to information regarding the authors and their books where authors reflect directly on a variety of issues. For example, why did they decide to write the book, how did they decide what information to include, their research process, the purpose of the book, how the authors' personal experiences influence the book, authors' relationship to the places they write, etc.

During my reading about the authors' cross cultural experiences; I also highlighted key words and wrote my responses in the margins. For example, when reading Naomi Shihab Nye, I learned about her father's refugee experience to escape from Palestine to the United States. The experiences have greatly influenced her concerns on exile and place. When reading the information, I wrote down "Nye is sensitive to the sense of belonging. How human beings live peacefully with each other is important for her. She understands the feeling of being uprooted when staying at an unfamiliar place.

Also, the idea of multicultural identity is a part of her experience of growing up.” These notes helped me to develop ideas and to write a summary for each of the authors.

- Finding Patterns among the Authors

Some patterns emerged during the process of analyzing and writing a summary for each of them. I wrote down key words of these patterns as soon as I discovered them so that when I continued analyzing, they reminded me to find out if the patterns occurred for other authors. For example, when reading Namoi Shihab Nye and Mitali Perkins, the first two authors I started with for the question, the topics related to heritage background and cultural identity were constantly discussed. Therefore, I wrote down “heritage writer” and “cultural identity” as key words. When I continued analyzing, I did not find that the topics were relevant for Eoin Colfer and Tammy Swoish. Instead, the key word was “travel experience as an outsider”. When analyzing Autumn Cornwell, her experience seemed to speak to the pattern of “travel experience as an outsider” initially. However, since she did not really talk about the sense of being an outsider, I had to create another key word, “expat,” to capture her experience of growing up in New Papua as a missionary kid. The key word later were expanded to “long term stay in another country” when I discovered Ruth Starke and Kierin Meehan had connections to the places they wrote about.

The patterns evoked and combined into themes throughout the process. At the end, the themes were used to draw conclusions. Throughout the whole process, I read the information at least three times. The first reading was to develop a general idea of the

author with my personal response. The second reading was more purposeful to identify the authors with the key words (patterns). Key words were adapted into themes at this step. The third reading was to check the appropriateness of the examples gathered from each author and the themes were appropriate and to ensure that I did not miss any valuable information.

Question Two and Three

The research questions two and three are the focus of this study to understand how intercultural learning is presented in the text. Both questions went through the same analysis process but with different focuses. For question two, the focus is to understand the protagonists' initial response to the new cultures to which they travel. Question three looks at the influence of the cross cultural experience for the protagonists' processes of intercultural learning.

After my first reading of the books, I learned that the timeline of the plot in each book follows a specific pattern. They all began with the protagonists' departures for the trips, their stays in the host countries and then their reflections on the past experiences to summarize the trips. As the timelines of each book are clear, it allowed me to divide the books into two sections. The first section of each book starts with the beginning of the trip until the end of the first day of the travel. The first section is used for question two to understand the protagonists' initial responses to new cultures. The second section of the book goes from the end of the protagonists' first day of their stay to the end of each book. This section covers about two-thirds of the text in each book. This section of each book is

used to answer question three which addresses how cross-cultural experiences influence the protagonists' intercultural learning.

- Sampling/Code

Before analyzing the whole text set, I chose three books for sampling in order to develop codes to analyze the texts. The decision regarding which of the three books is based on my first reading experience. I realized that the protagonists approach the new cultures differently. Some of them take actions to help others, some transformed through the journey and some just take the journey as leisure. Therefore, I chose three books that represent the three types so that broader codes could be found. The initial codes were not fixed when applied to coding all the texts. I adjusted them along with the coding process. Also, I reanalyzed the initial three books as the codes changed.

After typing the meaning unit on the coding sheet, I highlighted the key point of the meaning unit. The condensed version helped me to focus on the most critical element in that meaning unit. The same strategy was applied throughout the coding process. The condensed sentences help me to think purposely, while at the same time keeping the longer plots on the coding sheet to represent the whole events.

- Category

After coding all the texts, I re-read the books again to make sure that all the relevant passages were included. Also, I went through each of the meaning units to make sure that they were placed under appropriate codes. The next step was to group similar codes into a category or subcategory. Krippendorff (2004) said that a category answers

the question of “what”. Therefore, I looked at the codes from the perspective of “what”—what kind of cross cultural experiences were presented by the codes. During the process, I grouped the codes to subcategories first and then to find commonality for categories. The subcategories are the types of the experiences. I then adapted names of the category from the theoretical framework as subcategories related to ideas in the theories.

- Theme

A theme is created according to the underlying meaning of categories. Researchers look for a thread that links the categories together. The theme helps to look at the data from a perspective of “how” (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). When grouping the categories for this study, I adapted the perspective to consider “how” the categories speak about the influence of the cross cultural experiences for the protagonists. I identified that the categories present the protagonists’ learning of cognitive, affective and critical perspectives. I grouped the categories into three themes that describe their cultural knowledge, change process and critical understanding regarding the cross cultural experiences.

- Interpretation-- Making Sense of the Texts through a Critical Lens

Interpretation asks “what now” after the coding process. What are the underlying messages of the texts? Critical literacy is a major context of this study. As I intended to look at the protagonists’ intercultural learning experience through the framework of critical literacy, I needed a tool to help me to think about and infer the data. Therefore, I

adapted Stephanie Jones's (2006) method which she uses to teach her girls who live in poverty to interpret writing in a writing workshop.

Jones (2006) uses two aspects to examine textual resources. The two aspects stretch textual analysis to its depth and width. In terms of width, she introduces the three tenets of critical literacy, including deconstruction, reconstruction and social action. For the depth, three layers of critical literacy are introduced. They are perspective, position, and power. In the following, I will explain the two aspects and how I used them to infer from data.

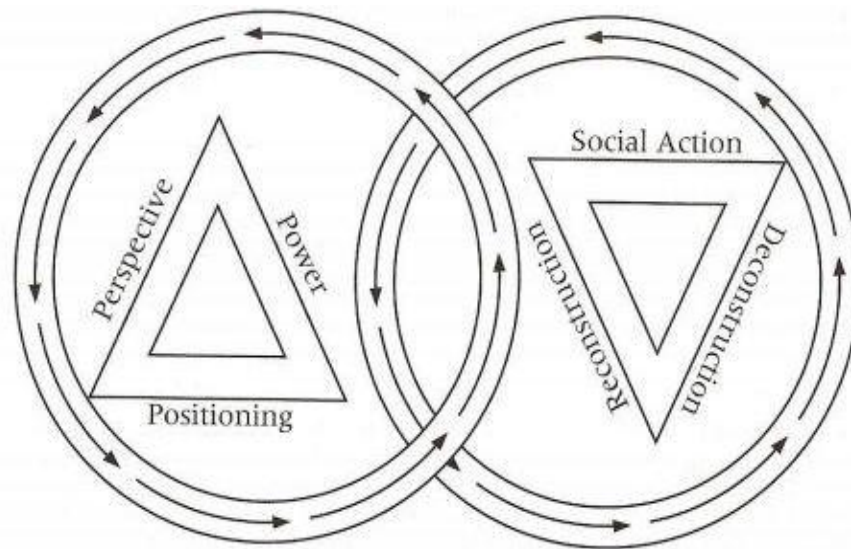


Figure 3-1: Critical Literacy. (Jones, 2006)

In terms of critical literacy, the first element is deconstruction. Since all texts are constructed, they are able to be deconstructed. For deconstructing texts, readers pay attention to the disconnection between their experiences and texts. An example of using deconstruction in this study is to understand whose voices are valued more in the books.

Besides my attention to the disconnection in the texts, some questions I kept in mind when reading are:

- Do the protagonists always look smarter than the locals?
- How are the local cultures described?
- Do the protagonists' reactions to new cultures seem reasonable to me and why?
- How does being a visitor affect the way people look at the protagonists?
- How do the local people treat the protagonists?

The second element is reconstruction of texts. Jones (2006) explains that reconstruction is about challenging or questioning the status quo and the development of new perspectives. I used reconstruction to consider the protagonists' identities and changes of perspectives on the new cultures. Some questions I used to examine texts include:

- What does it mean to be a privileged person?
- What does it mean to be an outsider? To belong to the cultural group?
- How do the protagonists perceive their roles in making changes for themselves and others?

Social action is shown in various formats (Jones, 2006). It might be a type of personal change, development of new identities, actions to help others, critical reading on power issues and many other shapes and sizes of long term and short term changes. In this study, I adapted the perspective of social action to look at the actions taken in the

texts to understand the protagonists' change through cross cultural experiences. Some examples of the questions I asked include:

- What actions are taken?
- How are the actions taken?
- Why are the actions taken?
- Who benefits from the actions?

According to Jones (2006), all texts are embedded with multiple meanings. By peeling out the layers through perspective, power and positioning, readers are able to perceive the real intentions embedded with the meanings. Perspective refers to readers' thinking outside of the frame of which the texts are set. In this study, in order to understand the presentation of intercultural learning in the texts, I needed extra resources that help my understanding. Thus, studying authors is one way to look at the texts from a different perspective. The questions below are examples that helped me explore the author's intentions of writing while reading the books.

- Who created the text?
- Who are the authors' intended audiences?
- What are the author's perspectives on cultures?
- How do the authors perceive their relationships with their writing cultures?

Positioning is concerned with the plots, structures, and styles in the author's work (Jones, 2006). Language has the power to present someone as an outsider or insider, good or bad, or centralized or marginalized. I adapted positioning to try to understand how the

characteristic of culture, local people and the protagonists are positioned in the texts.

Some questions to assist my thinking are:

- What perspectives are valued or devalued in the texts?
- Do the protagonists think they are more civilized than local people?
- What cultural values are praised in the texts?
- How do the protagonists react to cultural differences?

The layer of power is prevalent as it exists in every aspect of human relations.

Through this perspective, I tried to understand how power plays the role between the protagonists and their local friends. In addition, I adapted the perspective to understand if the protagonists recognize their privilege as well as responsibility in the world through exposing to people around the world. Some questions I asked are:

- Do the protagonists identify with the social/global issues that they experienced during their trip?
- How do the protagonists react to the issues?
- Do they recognize their assumptions about other cultures?
- How do they negotiate power relationships with local friends?
- Do authors invite readers to reflect on their privilege/entitlement?
- Do the protagonists criticize injustice?
- Do the protagonists challenge their own stereotypes?

Conclusion

Within this chapter, I elaborated the methodology of this study. I described the history of critical content analysis as a methodology to intentionally explain the difference between content analysis and literacy analysis. General procedures to explain how to conduct a content analysis research are provided. I also reviewed related studies that have adapted qualitative content analysis to evaluate children's literature related to international traveling experience in order to first present the studies related to my topic and, second, to point out the nature of qualitative content analysis. In order to highlight the meaning of "critical" in the methodology, I provided several studies that have adapted theoretical frameworks to understand issues of power in children's literature.

This chapter also provided detailed explanations regarding the data collection process of this study. Book summaries are included to familiarize readers with the text set in this study. This chapter also provided examples of the coding process for the three research questions to explain how I coded and organized patterns into themes and categories. Examples on how I make inferences from patterns are given to illustrate my thinking process substantially.

Chapter Four focuses on answering the first research question of this study that seeks to understand the authors' perspective on culture and intercultural learning. The chapter begins with summaries to introduce each author's thoughts on cultures and then discusses patterns found from the summaries.

CHAPTER FOUR

AUTHORS' PERSPECTIVES ON CULTURAL EXPERIENCES

This chapter explores the first research question of this study that seeks to understand the authors' perspectives on culture and intercultural learning. The question asked is, "What are the authors' understandings of intercultural learning?" In order to answer the question, I collected information from book reviews, personal websites, interviews, book covers, and other resources and summarized the information for each author. The information includes the authors' preparation process for their writing, intention of writing, goal of their writing, travel experiences and concept of culture as well as of people outside their own culture. A discussion to elaborate the patterns that I found from each author is included at the end of the chapter.

The Experiences and Perspectives of Authors

After reading information regarding the authors' writings and cross cultural experiences, I summarized my findings. This section is organized according to the closeness of each author to each country/culture presented in the books. Starting from Naomi Shihab Nyb, who has the strongest insider perspective, to Tammy Swoish, who wrote as an outsider author with limited connection to the local culture, the order of the author indicates the authors' relationship to the cultures they presented in the books.

Naomi Shihab Nye

Naomi Shihab Nye is a Palestinian-American poet. She wrote *Habibi*, the story of a Palestinian American teenager girl whose family goes to live in Palestine for a year. The story is written from the girl's perspective which is according to Nye's personal experiences when she traveled back to Palestine with her family during her teenage years.

Nye started writing for publication at an early young age of seven years old. She does not have a personal website but information from her interviews is rich in finding about her beliefs. For Nye, "selecting and arranging words seemed comforting" (IMEU). She sees writing as her calling to help spread stories that news does not present. She explains, "I think as a Palestinian-American that's part of my job-to tell the stories the news does not take time to tell. We have to tell what we know". She thinks that it is her responsibility to help Arabs and Americans understand each other and to help Americans perceive Palestinians as real people with human connections. One of the examples of her active citizenship is her writing of an open letter to terrorists. In that letter she spoke against violence. She highlighted that Islam is a peaceful religion and also that people should not use religion as a reason to harm others. Because of her passion to help Western society understand more about Palestine and Middle East countries, many of her stories and poems focus on peace, place and sense of connection. She wrote intensively about Middle East before 9-11; however, she felt the responsibility to write even after the turmoil. She said that her grandmother urged her to write more to present a good image for the religion and the culture which she learned from her grandmother.

Nye's father, Aziz Shihab, was a journalist. He has been a great influence on Naomi Shihab Nye's work. He published two books related to Palestine. In the interview with Nye together by Ann Helmke (2008), Aziz Shihab talked about his purpose of writing the book, *Does the Land Remember Me? A Memoir of Palestine*. He wanted Americans to truly understand Arabs, Muslims, and the Middle East from real experiences, not from superficial news. Naomi Shihab Nye follows her father's footsteps to present real life experiences of Arabs and to pursue peace in her books. Nye wrote a book, *Transfer*, after her father's passing. In the poetry, Naomi merges her father's words with her words in her poem. For her, her father is intellectual. From her description and work, I see the connections between the father and the daughter. In *Habibi*, the relationship is also significantly described.

Habibi is written based on Nye's personal travels with her family to Palestine when she was a teenager. The cultural shock, identify conflicts, distance and connectedness to Palestine, and cultural experiences are not made up. They are real from her observation and reflection. Unfortunately, I was not able to find an interview about the book. However, in Nye's interviews with Bill Moyers in 2007 and Rachel Barenblat, she shared more about her grandmother and her influence. Even though the interview is for another book, her comments explain her stance and thoughts for writing *Habibi*.

First, she acknowledged that her poetry and story is political. For her, politics is about people and she says that people and human life are her reason for writing. In *Habibi*, the protagonist was not afraid to learn about others, to challenge boundaries and

to promote peace. Nye incorporated the voice of justice in her story. Her writing is not merely for entertainment but for peace and justice.

Second, Nye identified herself more as an American than Arab in her views. Her experience as Palestinian American living in the United State helps her to write about the identity struggle that the protagonist faces. Also, her Palestinian father's experience as a refugee and the sense of exile in their house help Nye describe her father's complex emotions toward the country.

Third, Nye thinks that ordinary life is powerful to help people understand and connect to each other. Because of this belief, her poetry and story is full of careful description of daily life experiences and cultural practices. In *Habibi*, one chapter carefully describes the protagonist's experience of staying with her grandmother in the village to learn about life and work in the culture. Even though the protagonist and the grandmother cannot communicate with each other through a common language, they connected to each other by learning and experiencing each other's daily experience. Nye intends to encourage readers to see beyond their current understanding.

Nye writes with the purpose of promoting understanding of the Middle East and to promote peace. She tries to help Westerners, especially Americans, connect to the uniqueness of the cultures in the Middle East. My understanding of Nye is that she tries to present the culture and peaceful thinking of the Middle East in her writing. She writes about life and real people. Therefore, even though *Habibi* is a fiction, many of the ideas are inspired by Nye's personal concerns and experiences.

Mitali Perkins

Perkins is the author of *Monsoon Summer*. The story is told from an American girl's perspective to describe her trip to an orphanage in India with her family. Perkins personally connects to India because she was born in Kolkata, India. However, since her family left India when Perkins was very young, her writing about India are not her direct experiences from childhood. The resources come from her later travels, family experiences and other resources.

Before immigrating to the United States, her family lived in Ghana, Cameroon, England and Mexico. When the whole family finally settled in California, Perkins was the new kid in the neighborhood and had to deal with transition to a new place as well as the balance of Bengali and American cultures. Due to her personal experiences with cultural identities and heritage, these two topics are her focus in writing. In addition, her background with political science at the Stanford University and public policy at the University of California, Berkeley influences her to blend social and political content into her stories. For example, *Bamboo People* is set in modern day Burma describes the political conflicts and prejudice.

Perkins is a skillful writer. It is easy to find information about her on line as she is active on social media. She has personal website called Mitali's Fire Escape (<http://www.mitaliblog.com/>). The blog contains her book reviews and personal responses on picture books and novels relating to cultures and between cultures.

Perkins cares a great deal about heritage identity because of her own experiences being a minority in the United States. She is reflective and willing to share her experiences with a younger generation who are experiencing identity conflicts. Therefore, in many of her stories, identity is common theme. To be more constructive in her action, she wrote articles to encourage minority teenagers to maintain their heritage and to feel confident about themselves.

In an interview by Primary Source in 2012, Perkins shared her belief in the power of story. She encouraged children from a very young age to read stories about different people and places. She stated that children are like sponges. If they are fed with rich multicultural stories, their imagination and connection to different cultures grow as well.

Perkins said that she never thought that writing would be her career even though she loves to read. She studied political science and policy making because she wants to have an influence in the world. Writing books for children and young adults was just an experiment but she soon realized story is powerful enough to change people's hearts and minds and thus she decided to pursue it as her life career. As she is compassionate, her story always has a theme of justice or making a difference for the poor. She claimed that her family's chance to leave India for a better life is a privilege and she wants to use her influence to help those who live in poverty.

Perkins' view on her book is humble. She reflects on her work even after the books are published for a long time. For example, even though *Monsoon Summer* was published in 2005, Perkins still answers questions and is willing to have discussions. On

her blog, one person disagreed with the poverty that she described about India in her book. He argues that the situation of beggars and the traditional value of dowry no longer exist. Perkins responded to his question. She first found the news from Dallas Morning News that describes the strong emergence of the middle class in India.

In the decade from 1993 to 2002, the poverty rate among India's 1.1 billion people dropped from 41 percent to 29 percent. Every year, 30 million to 40 million Indians cross into the middle class.

Below is Perkin's personal response to him.

I'm so grateful for news like this, and it makes me wonder if the heartbreaking urban poverty described in *Monsoon Summer* still exists. Especially in a city like Pune, an epicenter of the economic boom. I'd love to hear from someone who has visited there recently—are there still beggars on the streets? Children who are going hungry? Girls who have to worry about dowries, caste, and too-early marriages? I hope not. I hope I have to tell my readers that the book simply isn't accurate as a portrayal of urban India today, but paints a picture of how Pune used to be before it changed. Wouldn't that be wonderful? (Perkins, 2005a)

I appreciated that Perkins did not delete his post and pretend that the issues had not been raised. Instead, she researched the topic and found the news that described the booming power of the middle class in India. She started to wonder if the book should become historical fiction. Her humble attitude to accept people's challenges is responsive for an author because authors do have influence on the public.

Later, Perkins (2005b) wrote a post to clearly explain her thoughts on the matter. I knew the love couldn't last. I've just read a post by an Indian blogger who accuses me of being "anti-Indian" in *Monsoon Summer* because I talk about India's poverty, the caste system, and dowries. This guy seems to ignore that there's still a huge gap in India between the rural poor and educated people who live in the fast-changing booming urban economies. I'd like to ask him this: "Have you spent time in India's poor communities, getting to know the women who live there and hearing their stories?" I have, and am so thankful for the friendships I made there. I hate to be cynical, but isn't it often poor, uneducated women in a country who suffer the most, and wealthy men who forget all about them? I don't blame the dude; part of me is jealous of his strong, starry-eyed defense of India, however misguided. The problem is that nobody likes to hear truth about their own country, land that they love. Americans call us unpatriotic when we write about the good *and* the bad, the beautiful *and* the ugly. Indians do the same when it comes to their society. And we immigrants, who aren't equipped for passionate national allegiances, are caught between cultures once again.

As the *San Jose Mercury News* put it, in *Monsoon Summer*, I tried to provide "a clear-eyed look at my native India." The blogger worries that American teens will get a bad impression of India. Au contraire, my friend. I, too, love India and strive to introduce young American readers to the beauty of it. As a *Kirkus* reviewer put it, "*Monsoon Summer* enlightens readers not familiar with

the richness of Indian culture." And, along with trying always to tell a truthful, good tale, that was my goal.

This post clearly indicates Perkin is realistic about social issues. Hence, the words show her sincere concerns about India and her heart as well as her effort to change poverty through her work. It is not that she did not consider the negative impression that American readers might develop toward India because of the way she described India. In fact, she tried to portray both the beauty of India's culture and the social issues that the country faces. These two posts help me understand that Perkin is a thoughtful writer. She writes with a mission to help readers understand cultures and to help minority readers value their own cultural heritages.

Malin Alegria

Alegria wrote *Sofi Mendoza's Guide to Get Lost in Mexico*. The story is told from a Mexican teenager girl's perspective who does not know that she lacks the documents to be a legal resident of the United States. During her detainment in Mexico, she stays with her relatives and learns about her background and heritage.

Alegria grew up in a historically immigrant community in San Francisco. She was surrounded with rich Latino culture, colorful murals and leftist politics. Her parents were active in the community and the Latino movement in the seventies. Also, her parents tried to immerse Alegria and her siblings with rich cultural heritage and language. Alegria said she liked her family culture until she was a teenager. Then, she started to feel

embarrassed and did not want her school friends to know about her family, community and background. Feeling different from others, she also did not like her dark skin color. She wanted to be like the blond cheerleader and girls on TV shows because she thought these girls were how Americans should look like. She did not feel comfortable with her own appearance. Deep inside, she wanted to be accepted and feel that she belonged.

Her experience with insecurity and cultural and identity struggles became the themes in her story. Her experiences drive her to write for the Latino community. Also, since she is aware of the lack of books that reflect Latino community experiences, she sees it as her mission to write for that community. She hopes that through reading her books, more Latinos/Latinas will feel comfortable about themselves and value their own cultures and backgrounds. Thus, the major themes in her stories are about coming-of-age, cultural identity, and transitions.

Malia Alegria was inspired to be an author since high school when reading Rudolfo Anaya's novel of *Bless Me, Ultima* (1994). She said that *Bless Me, Ultima* was the first book that she read where the protagonist had brown skin like her and it indeed was comforting to see someone like her in a book. On the back jacket of this book, Anaya shared that writing is hard work. Authors need to rewrite a book many times to make it right. The process gave Alegria permission to perceive herself as becoming a writer because she was not a good speller in her class. With her love for making-up stories, she knew she could use her imagination to create.

Before publishing her first novel, she submitted many short stories. With over thirty short stories submitted, only two stories were accepted for publication. However, the rejections did not discourage her at all. She knew the process as it is supposed to be. She is realistic about her writing career.

The idea of *Sofi Mendoza's Guide to Getting Lost in Mexico* came from a real event in a Central Valley paper about two girls who voluntarily deported themselves to Mexico without knowing it (California readers.org). They went down to Tijuana for some tacos and were not able to return to U.S. The racist and hateful letters in the section of the Letter to the Editor section of the newspaper made Algeria angry and she felt the need to write the novel.

In order to capture the issues and culture at the border, Algeria spent eight months in Rato to research and write. For her, setting and culture are very important. She said that the element of place is just as important as character. Therefore, she does not mind spending time at the place she will write about. Her observation of details and value for authenticity could be due to her background in cultural anthropology in college. But her parents' influence when she was young is indeed crucial for her work.

On the NPR interview (Kurwa, 2011) teachers and librarians praised Algeria's works as reflecting Latino culture and having the power to touch their bilingual students. In addition, they felt that the border culture described in several books that Algeria has published accurately captures the tension and life of teenagers on the border. A library coordinator in Texas, Galvan said that ""Every other word is Spanish, English, Spanish,

English: 'Mama, *voy a mi* house,' 'I wanted to go *en mi carro*,' "Galvan said, "The way [Alegria] writes is the way we speak in this area." Galvan also said that the words that Alegria used in her book reflect the language proficiency of the Latino students in her area, therefore, students are eager to read Alegria's books and are inspired by them.

Two years ago, when I started researching Malin Alegria and her books, I was not able to find much information. However, two years later, she has become a full time author and devotes her work to reflecting teenage life on the border. From her interviews, I feel her energy and passion to the Latino community. From my perspective, she is an emerging star writer for the field.

Laura Resau

Resai wrote *Red Glass*. The story is told from an American girl's perspective to learn about courage and self-identity through her interactions with people from other countries. Resau is not a second generation American as are the previous authors, but she is full of international experience because of her interest in travel. She shared that, "I loved the idea of always immersing myself in a new culture, learning a new language, and having new adventures." On her websites and blog, she talked about the places she has visited with photos. Because of her background in anthropology and her international teaching experiences, she is able to view her travel experiences through a careful lens that goes beyond the surface of the cultures in the places she visits and lives.

She has published seven novels. Four of them receive awards from many places. Some awards are the International Reading Association (IRA) young adult fiction winner for *Red Glass*, a School Library Journal best book of 2007 for *Red Glass*, 2001 for the *Queen of Water*, and Best book for young adult by American Library Association of 2008 for *What the Moon Saw*. The recognition of her work suggests her dedication to writing and the quality of her storytelling.

After getting her college degree in Anthropology and French, she decided to be certified in teaching ESL so that she could fulfill her dream to travel. The first opportunity she obtained was to teach in a small university in Huajuapán, Oaxaca, Mexico. During the two years, Resau participated in Mixtec and Mazatec healing ceremonies and formed friendships with healers. These experiences later were integrated into her stories such as *What the Moon Saw* and *Red Glass*.

The way Resau described her experiences in the community is positive and appreciative, for example, she said: “thanks for their patience, I became fluent in Spanish and learned some of the indigenous languages.” “Every day was so stimulating I carried my notebook everywhere and wrote voraciously, desperate to capture every detail, every bit of dialogue, every smell and sound.” The two years in the community must be memorable for her because she later decided to go back to Oaxaca to research healers to complete her first novel, *What the Moon Saw*, when she was working on her Masters in Cultural Anthropology at the University of Arizona.

Resau does not write stories from her own imagination, especially the description of culture in another country. She wrote according to the people she meets and the places she has visited. On her website, she listed the places she has visited and the influence these places have on her. She also wrote where the original idea of each book comes from in her journey. For example, *Red Glass* is inspired by her ESL students and immigrant families in the ESL course she taught in Colorado where she currently lives. She hopes the story can encourage the society to understand undocumented immigrants with compassion and empathy. In her acknowledgments, she first thanked several cross-cultural friends who shared their stories with her. Her personal connection, interest and embrace of diverse cultures provide the means for her to present human life vividly.

Resau's understanding of culture as a way of living is demonstrated in her writing. The way she describes culture in her story reflects different values and life styles. Resau does not talk about things such as cultural identity, multicultural value, or open-mindedness but through presenting how other people live, she brings readers a wider worldview. With training in Cultural Anthropology, she is observant of cultural details. She is also careful to withhold personal comments and judgments to cultural differences. The protagonist in the *Red Glass* experienced some transitions when facing cultural differences, but she observed, immersed, accepted and appreciated the elements that brought nutrients to enrich her own views. In my perspective, Resau does not want to use culture as a superficial icon. She presents diverse cultures as alternative ways of living so that her readers have the opportunity to appreciate the beauty of culture.

Kierin Meehan

Meehan is an Australian author who wrote *Hannah's Winter*. The book is told from an Australian girl's perspective in Japan. Meehan's books all have a theme of adventure or mystery. I was not able to find her interviews and her talks about books on line. However, from her personal website, Kierin Meehan's Space, she has interactive resources for each of her books that she has published.

Meehan has published four novels. *Hannah's Winter* is her first publication. Each of her books has received nominations or awards from the children's literature field. In terms of *Hannah's Winter*, it is listed on the USBBY outstanding international booklist in 2010, NSW Premier's literacy award in 2002, and CBC Australian notable book in 2001. These acknowledgements recognize the quality of her work.

Meehan likes to set her stories in Japan. Among the four books, three of them are set in Japan and one is in a northern city in Queensland where she spent much of her childhood. Her choice of place shows that she wrote of a place where she has a relationship and has knowledge about that place.

The idea of setting a story in Japan is not random. It also is not exotic. Meehan has a close connection with Japan and its culture. From the University of Queensland, she received a degree in German and Japanese. She later taught both languages, and lived in Japan for several years. Currently, she still teaches Japanese language and culture in primary and secondary schools in Australia. The Asialink website sponsored by University of Melbourne indicates that Meehan is creating a game package to teach

Japanese culture for primary schools in Australia. Her experience with Japan might explain why she likes to write stories set in Japan. Her work reveals her passion and knowledge about Japan and its culture.

Meehan started writing in 1995 while living in Esashi, Hokkaido when she wrote Kierin's Esashi Diary for the town magazine. She spent February of 1999 in Kanazawa which is the setting of *Hannah's Winter*, and then wrote the story in Australia. Meehan wrote an interesting letter to Mr. Hayao Miyazaki, a famous Japanese animation movie producer, on *Carp Tales*, about her hope that he would be interested in making an animated movie for Hannah. *Carp Tales* is the bi-annual newsletter of the Tokyo chapter of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators (SCBWI). The group of SCBWI Tokyo features children's literature in Japan and provides support, information and community.

On the letter Meehan wrote for the *Carp Tales*, she shared her writing process of *Hannah's Winter*. I learned about her personal connection to Japanese culture and her attention to cultural authenticity. For example, her confidence was shaken as she wondered if she had the ability to write a book when she was in Kanazawa (*Hannah's Winter* is her first book). Her host mother urged her to go out to work and she followed her suggestion. When she was boarding a bus, a sudden shower of rain fell. The rain and sunshine together is a lucky omen in Japan. The sign caused her depression to disappear. Her confidence to be encouraged by the culture showed her acceptance to the culture.

Her attention to cultural authenticity is evident in her acknowledgments to the people who she consulted before, during and after the manuscript was written. They brought her to visit the places she describes, to understand the cultural icons in the story, to read her manuscript to insure the content reflects both Japanese culture in general and Kanazawa culture. Interestingly, Meehan did not mention words such as cultural shock, cultural identity or international learning, but her work naturally presents Japanese language and culture in a way that allows English speaking readers to glimpse the beauty of Japan.

Even though the information I could find about her and her work is not rich, I have an idea that she does not want to present Japan in a superficial way through the way she talked about Japan. On her website, especially for the book of Hannah, she used videos along with some FAQ to introduce readers to Japanese culture. Meehan does not have heritage background with Japan, but her love of the place and the culture is shown through her work in both writing books and teaching students.

Ruth Starke

Starke is an Australian author. Her book, *Noodle Pie*, is told from an Australian boy's perspective. The national background matches Starke's and her role as a tourist to the place.

Starke has published twenty-five novels for children and young adults. In the past, she has worked in public relations, travel marketing and other side jobs. Her working

experience is diverse. She started her writing career in 1992. Currently, she holds a PhD from Flinders University. Now, she teaches English and Creative Writing at Flinders University. She is an active member in the circle of children's literature. Besides writing and teaching, she reviews for book review magazines. She has been a judge for the National Festival Awards for Children's Literature since 1995.

Some of her books have been recognized in Australia and internationally. *Noodle Pie* was nominated by the Library Association of America as an Outstanding YA Novel of 2011. Also, the book was recognized as book of the year in 2009 by Speech Pathology Australia for language development. Other awards include winner in 2004 for *Muck-Up Day* with Best Young Fiction Crime Novel, Honour book by *NIPS XI* by UNESCO children's Literature Prize in 2002 and others.

Starke visited Vietnam in 2003 and 2004 and it was at the time when she started thinking about the story of *Noodle Pie*. She later came to write the story during a Varuna Retreat Fellowship and a three-week Brisbane residency Fellowship program in 2005. In the acknowledgements, she thanked many Australian and Vietnamese friends to help her accomplish the book. Looking at the people she dedicated, many of them are local to Hanoi which tells me that Starke has connections with locals during her visits. Even though she was a tourist to the place, she formed closed relationships with them.

Starke tried to keep herself up-to-date with information. Her idea for the story came from reading newspapers, radio, and people's stories. She said that she keeps an 'ideas' file for the inspiration when she came across. For example, the refugee storyline

in the *Noodle Pie* is based on a real Viet Kieu (Vietnam refugee) experience shared when Starke took a cruise with that person at the Ha Long Bay. Another of Starke's popular books, *NIPS XI* is based on the racial barriers in sports that she heard from a radio program. With a background in public relations, I found that Starke is sensitive to the kind of issues and information that will catch people's attention. As she mentioned on the FAQ on her website, the trick of getting good ideas to write is to be able to recognize those ideas when they appear. From my observation, Starke identified the elements that will intrigue people and uses these elements in her stories such as the refugee and racial barriers mentioned earlier. Also, murders and a feminist perspective on debutante balls are some examples of controversial topics in her stories. In her stories, she tries to write with important messages for readers.

However, Starke does not have depth in her understanding of culture and so struggles with cultural authenticity. In her talk about *Noodle Pie*, she said "the two basic ways a tourist absorbs a foreign culture are through buying and eating." She integrated the popular food in Vietnam, Pho, also a well-recognized dish by Westerners when thinking about Vietnamese food, in her story. At the end of the book, she had recipes for readers to try to cook some Vietnamese dishes. Even though the protagonist tried to understand the meaning of the food to local people through his journey, Starke did not integrate or explain other elements of culture in her story. In addition, *Noodle Pie* has its own website which Starke could use to share her writing process with the book, but I cannot find any information where she talked about her cultural experiences in Vietnam

besides food. Also, she did not mention if she has consulted people who are experienced with Vietnamese culture to read her manuscripts. The lack of information tells me that Starke is keen to popular topics but the authenticity and accuracy of culture is not a major concern in her writing.

Although Starke did not present Vietnam at a deeper level, she tried to present modern Vietnam in her book. In addition, even though the local people in her story seem desperate for a better life, the place and people she described are active and positive. Starke portrayed issues with street kids in Vietnam. She could have described the issue with a tone of pity but she did not. Instead, she integrated the training restaurant Koto – Know One Teach One-in the story to show the improvement and people’s hard work in Hanoi. Koto is a café that is funded by a Saigon-born Australian. The place is run by Vietnamese staff and trainees, who are former street kids, to train the kids for skills that will allow them to work in the hospitality industry. Starke spent a page describing the history and function of the place. The identification of social issues and the integration of Koto in her story show me that Stake is realistic about creating problematic portrayals and careful not to discredit the place.

Autumn Cornwell

Cornwell wrote the book of *Carpe Diem*. The story is told from an American teenager’s perspective whose background is close to Cornwell’s own. Neither she nor her character has a relationship to the visited countries in the book. In the book, the

protagonist visits several countries in Southeast Asia for a summer. Cornwell was born in the States and lived in Washington. When she was six years old, her family moved to New Papua, Indonesia for missionary work. The three to four years of experience in New Papua is memorable for her. Staying abroad during childhood allowed her to experience a different culture, but at the same time, it made her to feel like a “fish out of water” after returning to America. She said she had struggled in the States and always felt home in Southeast Asia. “Once an MK (missionary kid), always an MK” is how she described the impact of her family’s expat experience. So far, she has traveled to twenty-three countries. The large number shows her passion to travel and interest in diversity.

Cornwell loves adventurous types of trip. From her sharing about her favorite places she has been to and the places she wants to visit, she never talks about luxurious travel in well developed countries. Instead, she shares about Laos, India, China, Malaysia, Tibet and Southern America where material life is not easily accessible. Cornwell has an upbeat spirit. Listening to her interview on the program of Great Day by KMPH, she talked with gesture, high speed, and a bright voice. Her body language fulfills the image that I developed from reading her information and interview. Like the slogan of LIM (live in the moment) she used in the *Carpe Diem*, Cornwell is a real life representation of living the motto. She is positive and likes differences, changes, and adventures.

Although Cornwell has rich travel experiences, I found that her idea of culture stays at a surface level. I noted that she only mentions events and objects when describing Southeast Asia countries and New Papua. She does not talk about friendship with local

people but only cultural icons. For example, when talking about her experience in New Papua, she said:

[The experience was] awesome. I ate guavas from our own trees, played in waist high mud on river banks, visited tribes of reformed headhunters and cannibals, lived through an 8.0 earthquake, cavorted outside during monsoons almost drowned three times (not so awesome, but interesting), watched my sister fall into an open sewer in Jakarta, kept my own pet fruit bat—and loved (almost) every single minute of it. (Trisha, 2007)

Even though she enjoyed the experiences in New Papua, her description has nothing about local people. It seems like she had no connection with them. Also, it seems like Conwell did not know about lifestyles in New Papua. She seems closer to nature than to culture during the time in New Papua.

The same pattern is seen in her interview by Garsee (2007) about her first impression of Southeast Asia. She said:

Some sensory memories; the smell of lumpias (eggrolls) from the street vendors; the imported Hershey's bars that turned white because of the heat, wearing saltwater sandals every day; lush green vegetation everywhere; nice locals who always wanted to pinch my cheeks; the guy who climbed the palm tree to bring me coconuts; the smoky smell that seemed to pervade the interior villages; the tribal men wearing nothing but gourds; and watching in fascination as the

villagers ate grubs. (I honestly can't remember if I ever tried one...I like to think I did!)

In this description, she seems very positive about different life styles. She does not judge and say negative words about the differences. She indeed embraces adventure. However, similar to her previous statement, she mostly mentions objects and food when describing the place. Therefore, I developed the impression that Cornwell's idea of culture stays at a surface level. She loves to learn about difference but she is not interested in the deep culture which composes the way in which a group of people value, think, and behave.

In Cornwell's work, *Carpe Diem*, her first and only book so far, she portrayed the protagonist's cross cultural experience in a similar way as to how she talked about Southeast Asia: with fun and exotic events and objects. Even though she loves the places she has been to, without a deep connection to the cultures and places, she wrote the story from an outsider perspective.

Some examples that show Cornwell was not careful about culture are found from her writing about her work. For example, she said that she decided to write the book because of the many "quirky" life adventures that she experienced in Melaka, Malaysia. The word "quirky" implies the message that other people are odd. It is very interesting that with many cultural experiences in Southeast Asia that she could write, she decided to present the bizarre parts.

Another example of her lack of understanding on culture and its uniqueness is seen when she said one of her goals with the book was to "expose readers to the

Southeast Asia culture and to show how much we all really do have in common.” The last part that “how much we all really do have in common” reveals Cornwell did not try to understand the places from local’s perspective.

The last example about Cornwell’s idea of culture relates to Cornwell’s talk about Hanks, the local friend that the protagonist fallen in love with in the story. Cornwell said that the inspiration of Hanks dressing in cowboy style was from a “Korean cowboy” who her husband met at his company. Cornwell never met this person herself but she developed the idea of an Asian cowboy. Later she heard about a group of guys in the Philippines who love dressing up cowboy style and she decided to let her imagination take the lead to create Hanks. Even with rich travel experiences, Cornwell does not distinguish between differences regarding country and ethnicity. It is sad that for her, Korean, Asian, and Philippians seem to be the same. Cornwell generalized different culture groups and seems to only see the sameness in them.

Cornwell did not say much about her writing process for the book. She did not mention about her research or preparation for the content of the story. From the information on her website and interview, a great portion of her book is based on her personal experience and imagination. She seems to have written the book to present fun, entertaining and exotic adventures. In her view, *Carpe Diem* is about “a journey of transformation. Vassar’s (protagonist) physical journey mirrors her interior journey.” Cornwell did not try to write about a culture, but the focus of the book is about the personal transformation. Thus, it seems that place and culture are not important to her.

She appears to have written about the countries in the book simply because she had been to those countries.

Autumn Cornwell's life is full of adventures. She does not mind going to extreme and remote areas to experience unusual life styles. She does not judge and exaggerate differences. She is open-minded to diversity. However, it might be due to her role as a missionary that led to the way in which she interacts with local place and people by giving materials and help. She wrote the story as an outsider.

Eoin Colfer

Eoin Colfer is an Irish children's and young adult author. He published the book of *Benny and Omer* which is about an Irish boy's expat experience with his family in Tunisia for a year. The book is inspired by Colfer's teaching experience in Tunisia before he turned his career to become a full time writer.

Colfer has published more than twenty books since 1998 when his first book, *Benny and Omar*, was on the market. Colfer is a worldwide recognized author because of his most famous series, *Artemis Fowl* books. The eight books of the series are all recognized as New York Times best-seller books. Besides the series, his other works also received great attention. In 2011, his publishing scopes extended to an adult book, which he wrote as a crime novel. The book also received positive responses.

Before turning himself to be a full time writer, Colfer was an elementary teacher. After graduating in Dublin University, he traveled between Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and

Italy and then returns to Ireland to teach. He has loved to write since a young age but never thought about becoming a professional writer. In 2001 after his wife and brother read his first *Artemis Fowl* book, they urged him to find an agent because the book was great. Colfer described how his life changed and has not changed back as soon as he gave the book to his agent. I found that Colfer is better at the futuristic fiction and criminal fiction that are the genres of the majority of his fiction.

The story of *Benny and Omar* is borrowed from Colfer's experience in Tunisia. Thus, I assumed that the description of the physical environment and culture is based on Colfer's personal impressions of the place. *Benny and Omar* also has sequel, *Benny and Babe*, which focuses on Benny's friendship with Babe who he met after returning to Ireland from Tunisia. There was not much information regarding Colfer's interviews about *Benny and Omar* as the *Artemis Fowl* series is much more famous, I had to study interviews and talks for the series and his other publications in order to gather his views on culture and concerns in writing.

A feature in Colfer's writing is that he blended humor and complexity in his story. He does not present black and white, either-or thinking. Therefore, Benny is not portrayed as a role model type in Colfer's story. He is bitter, mischievous and gets into trouble but he learns from his mistakes. He tried to present a real twelve-year-old Irish boy.

The cultural shock that Benny experienced relates more to behavior and communication. Colfer shared that from his teaching in Tunisia, he found Irish boys have

a hard time accepting sincerity. They tend to think there is something behind a sincere comment. Thus, Colfer decided to use Benny's cross cultural encounters for personal transformation and it became a focus of the story. As expected, Benny discards his guard and learns to accept other's good intentions. Same as Cornwell, the elements of local culture are not a focus in Colfer's book. International travel and cross cultural experiences are used for personal transformation and so, the culture of Tunisia is not critically important for the book. The storyline could have happened in any less developed place.

Tammy Swoish

Hot Scots, Castles and Kilts is the first and only book that Tammy Swoish has published. The book is about a Midwest American teenager's summer trip with her mother to Scotland to visit their distant relatives. Swoish is the only author for whom I cannot find information besides a short entry on a WPF writer's blog and a self-introduction in the back of her book.

With the limited information about her, I know that she is a teacher in Michigan. She began writing shortly after graduating from college. While waiting for a full time English teacher position to open, she decided to pursue her dream of writing without knowing how difficult it was. Ten years later, she had three manuscripts in the attic and learned that writing is a hard work. However, the publication of the book is the outcome for her hard work.

I was not able to find out why she chose to write a story in Scotland and her relationship with the place. However, in the dedication page of the book, she dedicated the book to Samantha. She claimed without her, she would not have a character to send to Scotland. Therefore, I inferred that the idea of the story is according to Samantha's interest or experience of the country but not Swoish. In addition, part of her author's introduction in the book said that Swoish never left her home town except going to Georgia Southern University for college. She returned back to her hometown after finishing her degree. Thus, she had never been to Scotland not even to visit for the setting of her story. In addition, the idea of traveling to another country is not an experience she was familiar with.

Discussion

The Influence of Personal Backgrounds on the Authors' Writing

Writing is unique and private from my perspective because each writer's personal experience influences how they interpret an event and describe it in words. Rosenblatt (1995) claims that "literature is not a photographic mirroring of life but a result of a particular socially patterned personality employing particular socially fostered modes of communication" (p. 238). Literature is a social product which contains authors' thoughts, experiences and ideologies. It is impossible to write without a particular ideology because everyone is influenced by the values and experiences around them. However, the hidden ideologies that are based on the normalized social value reinforce readers' prejudices.

Scholars such as Nodelman (1996), Bank (1991), Hollindale (1998), and others have argued for the need to look at hidden ideologies in children's literature.

When examining the information on these nine authors, some overlapping patterns that occurred indicate the influence of personal background on a writer's work. What I found from this information is that some authors look at their past experiences critically and thus, they try to challenge social norms through their works while others seem to write out of mainstream values and thus to present intercultural learning from their own worldview. The first influence on the authors' writing comes from the authors' professional and scholarly degrees that guide their concerns in their books. And the second influence relates to the authors' heritage backgrounds.

Looking at the authors' academic backgrounds, I found that what they learn from college and advanced degrees influences what they think is important to include for cross cultural experiences. For example, with an anthropology background, Alegria and Resau care about cultural elements in their books. Both of them spent time in the places they wrote about in order to understand the culture and people's daily experiences. In their perspectives about cross cultural learning, they value how human beings live in a place rather than presenting only cultural icons. Their training in anthropology enables the two authors to present the daily lives and values in the cultures they write about to their readers.

Perkins represents another example. With her background in political science and public policy, she embeds social issues in her work. In *Monsoon Summer*, she wrote

about poverty and social class prejudices. In the *First Daughter* series, she wrote about the conflicts between Christians and Muslim. In her newest book *Bamboo People*, she addresses the political tension in Burma. All of these indicate Perkins' active role in social justice and peace. Through her words, she tries to highlight issues and problems in the world while, at the same time, encourages her readers to actively engage to change the world to be a better place. Perkin's worldview is critical in the sense that she encourages active participation in the world and it guides the purpose of her writing.

Meehan has a background in Japanese in college and many of her books involve a theme in Japan. As she has the knowledge of Japan and its language, the protagonist she portrayed in the *Hannah's Winter* also has a certain level of language skills and knowledge about Japan before the trip. She does not rely on her own knowledge about Japan to write the story, but as she understands the cultural differences between her own culture and Japanese culture, she consulted experts to work for cultural accuracy in her books. Meehan's own cross cultural experiences help her to be humble and to be respectful to the culture she writes about because she is aware of the cultural differences even though she is an expert with Japan.

Besides professional backgrounds, authors' heritage backgrounds also influence the focus of their writing. Although even authors describe a same theme—the protagonists' cross cultural experience in a foreign country—their works present different concerns about those places and cultures. Heritage authors tend to integrate the message

of justice and action in their books while non-heritage authors often present the journey as a personal adventure.

For example, when reading the interviews and information, I found that heritage writers put more value on cultural identity, social justice and world peace. For instance, Nye intends to promote peace through her writing. Following the footsteps of her father to bridge the conversation between Muslims in Palestine and Americans, Nye is committed to improving cross cultural understanding. In her interviews, she values diverse cultural experience and intends to present them through her poetry so that American readers will have a chance to develop alternative understandings about cultural differences, particularly, Muslims.

Algeria was disappointed that she was not able to find books written for Mexican Americans when she was young. Growing up as a minority, she was eager to read books that have the protagonists like her; however, it was not easy to find at that time. She acknowledges the importance of reading a story that reflects Mexican Americans' cultures and struggles. Therefore, in her work, she intends to address cultural identity for heritage readers to find their identities reflected in a book. Particularly, because she understands the border cultures of Mexicans and Mexican Americans, she sees it as her mission to write stories for teenagers on the borders.

Regarding non-heritage authors, issues with identity, social justice and world peace do not seem to be their concerns for writing. Among the other six authors in this text set, Starke is the only exception who writes as a non-heritage writer but incorporates

social action into her book. Besides Starke, this group of authors pays most attention to cultural facts and travel information in their works. The way they approach and present culture seems to focus on enjoying foreign countries and cultures. Therefore, their idea of intercultural learning is more to explore cultural information. Aspects such as individual responsibility do not seem to be their concern as these issues are for heritage writers.

Examples are also seen in Meekan and Resau, two careful writers when it comes to the portrayal of cultural differences. They have shared their learning process related to local people's values and living experiences. They all talk about voluntarily learning about the places and their care to present the true life experiences of the local culture. For them, intercultural learning asks individuals to be humble and willing to learn about others. Although they are so careful on the details of cultures, their views on intercultural learning do not seem to be critical.

Some other non-heritage authors' views on intercultural learning are not only not critical, but also seem to be surface-level. For them, intercultural learning or international travel seems to be about presenting popular cultural icons to readers. Therefore, famous buildings, weather, food and other cultural icons are what they talk about when preparing for the writing. These authors' views on intercultural learning are obviously not critical as they have no concerns about individuals' responsibility in the world. Moreover, they have no intention to present local cultures from local's points of view but to describe local culture using a foreigner's perspective.

For example, Cornwell, who is an experienced traveler, has limited connections to each country in *Carpe Diem*. My observation comes from her discussions about her foreign experiences that focus more on sensation. She talks about food, weather and physical environment. As she said, she intends to present the fun and exotic cross cultural experience to inspire people to be adventurous. Swish is another example who tries to present the fun part of international travel to her readers. These authors' cultural understanding lay on the exploration of differences and feelings of excitement and exoticism. In addition to Swish's writing, her idea on Scotland seems to come from her imagination regarding what Scotland is like. She did not personally visit the country she wrote about. The reason she decides to set the story in Scotland is due to an inspiration from a person. As I was not able to find out why from the limited information about her, I assume the cultural details about Scotland comes from the friend as well as from her own research.

The significant difference between the authors' heritage backgrounds affects the purpose of their writing. The more personal connections with cultures, the more the writers try to depict cultures authentically and accurately in their work. In addition, the closer they are related to the cultures, their understandings of intercultural learning are more critical. The relationship between the authors and the local people seems to help the authors understand their own responsibility in the world. Because of their cultural awareness, the messages they convey through their works are different.

These two discussions show that authors' personal histories influence their perceptions toward others and concerns in the world. Author's own experiences with cultural differences and the depth of their cultural understanding influence how they present the stories in their works. The influence of their personal backgrounds is evidence that no one writes merely with imagination. Every piece of writing has a purpose based on the author's experiences and intentions that provide readers with different ways of seeing the world.

Conclusion

This chapter focuses on the author's information. I have described each author's personal background, views on culture, intercultural learning and international travel, personal experiences and connections to the places they wrote about in their books. In addition, I also describe the author's intention and preparation to write the books.

This chapter intends to answer the first research question that seeks to understand the authors' views on intercultural learning. The patterns found from author's information indicate the authors' personal backgrounds influence their worldviews. As a result, their perspective on culture influences what they include in their books. I found that authors with heritage backgrounds related to the place they wrote about included critical views on injustice. They consider it their responsibility to help readers develop active citizenship through their works. I also found that authors with direct and close personal relationships with local people care about cultural authenticity. They tried not to present 'what they

think about local culture and people', but to present 'the real life' in the local place.

Personal relationships motivate authors not to "speak for" others but to present accurate and authentic cultural representations to their readers.

Chapter five focuses on the second research question on the protagonists' initial responses to the new cultures. The chapter presents the categories that show the protagonists' response to cultural differences.

CHAPTER FIVE
INITIAL EXPERIENCES OF INTERNATIONAL TRAVELERS
WITH NEW CULTURES

This chapter reports the findings from a qualitative content analysis regarding nine novels in the text set to examine the protagonists' initial responses to new cultures encountered during their international trips. The research question of this chapter is: How do the protagonists respond to the new cultures?

After the first reading of each novel, I noted the plot in each book follows a longitude timeline. They all began from the protagonists' departures for the trips, their stays in the host countries and their reflections on the past experiences to summarize the trips. As the timelines of each book follow a clear pattern, I was able to identify the examples of the protagonists' initial responses toward the host countries. Thus, for answering the research question about how protagonists respond to the new cultures, I listed the text examples from the beginning of the trip until the end of the first day of the travel. Usually, this part of plot consists of one third of a book.

My criterion for examining the text examples was broad at the beginning stage of the analysis. Besides the protagonists' experiences with the new cultures, I also listed other people's ideas and responses toward the places. However, I decided to exclude others' perspectives for the second research question because the examples are not relevant to the protagonists' ideas. One example would be from *Monsoon Summer*.

Grandma gathered Eric close as she ushered us inside. “Taking my precious grandchildren to that unsafe country. Think of those diseases in that orphanage. Sarah ! How can you take a risk like that?” (p. 23)

In this excerpt, Jazz and the family visited their grandparents in order to leave some of their belongings before their India trip. It was not included because the opinion of the host country was from her grandmother’s view but not the protagonist’s. This criterion was applied in selecting excerpts in other books.

After listing all the appropriate examples for the protagonists’ initial responses, I identified 19 themes across the examples. I sorted the themes to create subcategories and categories to explain the protagonists’ initial attitudes toward cultural difference. After this process, I coded all the examples again for confirmation.

Overview on the Definitions of Categories

When people leave the place they are familiar with to travel to an unfamiliar place, they become anxious. In international traveling, the anxiety is usually caused by the unknown due to cultural differences. A common term to coin the anxiety is culture shock. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, culture shock is “a sense of confusion and uncertainty sometimes when feelings of anxiety that may affect people exposed to an alien culture or environment without adequate preparation”. The definition points out the feeling of disorientation when people are exposed to an unfamiliar environment. Culture shock happens in various environments. It is not limited to international travel; however,

the international travel of the protagonists in this text set opens a strong possibility of experiencing anxiety. Bennett (1998) uses a different term, transition shock, to describe the positive outcomes that this feeling of disorientation and anxiety might bring to travelers. In her perspective, culture shock is one of the visible reasons for transition shock. Bennett (1998) claims transition shock occurs when “our adaptive processes fail to meet the needs of the moment and we find ourselves overwhelmed by the stimuli we are forced to assimilate. Therefore, if transition shock is a state of loss and disorientation precipitated by a change in one’s familiar environment that requires adjustment then culture shock may be characterized as transition shock in the context of an alien cultural frame of reference” (p. 216). In this state of loss, individuals feel frustrated, withdrew, helpless, and might be overly concerned about cleanness and health.

Pedersen (1995) also considers cultural shock as positive as part of a process of one’s initial adjustment to an unfamiliar environment (p.1). Individuals might feel excited about the new place but at the same time feel hostile to particular cultural behaviors that they are not unfamiliar with. In this text set, the protagonists demonstrated many ways to adjust to the new cultures. Many of them face multiple emotions toward their new cultural encounters. Along with these two scholars, I consider cultural shock as positive rather than negative to understand that the discomfort will help people become aware of cultural differences.

Four categories were created from the data: Hostility and rejection, Embracing a new culture, Reflection on identity and Awareness of a new socio-cultural context (Table:

5.1). These four categories depict the protagonists' different responses to cultural difference during their initial trips. *Hostility and rejection* represents the protagonists' resistance toward the host cultures. *Embracing a new culture* captures the examples when the protagonists intend to understand the host cultures. *Reflection on identity* focuses on the protagonists' exploration of who they are through their cross-cultural experience. In this category, the protagonists start to explore the other possible identities they might identify with. The last category, *Awareness of a new socio-cultural context*, focuses on the protagonists' exposure to social and global issues that are beyond their home experiences. This is the category in which the protagonists have the possibility to develop critical understandings about the world.

Category	Subcategory	Theme
Hostility and Rejection	I vs. Them Oppositions	Personal assumptions about others
		Personal relationship with the host country
	Sense of Alienation	Disapproval of new cultures
		Discomfort in the new cultures
		Struggles between cultures
Embracing the New Culture	Cultural Exploration	Natural environments
		Daily life
		Value system
		Material culture
	Connections to Local Cultures	Desire for cross-cultural experience

	and People	Cross-cultural friendship
Reflection on Identity	Initial Exploration of multicultural Selves	N/A
	Global Identity	Anxiety toward the unknown
		Problem-solving in global positions of contexts
Awareness of New Socio-Cultural Context	Awareness of Global Issues	Exploring the idea of privilege
		Discovering global issues
		Experiencing issues of power
	Development of New Perspectives	Challenging personal assumptions
		Moving beyond personal perspectives

Table 5-1: Overview on Categories, Subcategories and Themes of Initial Responses.

In the following, I present examples and subcategories to elaborate on the content of each category. There will be definitions for each category and subcategory. Inductive themes and text examples will be used to explain the subcategories in order to illustrate the protagonists' initial responses to their new environments.

Hostility and Rejection

According to Audre Lorde (1984), human beings handle cultural differences in three ways. She explains “We have all been programmed to respond to the human differences between us with fear and loathing and to handle that difference in one of three

ways: ignore it, and if that is not possible, copy it if we think it is dominant, or destroy or if we think it is subordinate. But we have no patterns for relating across differences as equals” (p.114). From what she explained, it is normal for human beings to compare and judge cultural differences in order to make sense of these differences. The three ways she mentioned reveal the common responses of people toward difference.

In this category, the protagonists employ at least two ways to react to their new experiences: ignore and destroy. In this text set, ignoring refers to a neglect of cultural difference. Destroy does not mean that the person takes substantial action to damage cultural differences but involves denigrating cultures that are perceived as less important in the world. Moreover, the protagonists in this category demonstrate hostility and resistance toward new cultures. As they are not used to the cultures and environment in the new places, the protagonists miss their home country. They are anxious and do not know how to function in the new places. As a result, negative responses to new cultures are a self-defense mechanism to help them stay balanced within themselves.

After analyzing and sorting the examples from the text set, two subcategories are used to present the types of resistance that the protagonists demonstrate. The two subcategories are I vs. them oppositions and a sense of alienation in the new places.

- I vs. Them Oppositions

To compare what we familiar with to what we are not is a kind of human defense mechanism in order to make sense of the world. In international experience, travelers also engage in this mechanism to help themselves deal with new cultural experiences. In this

subcategory, the protagonists adopt the defense mechanism to help themselves deal with cultural shock.

In these excerpts, the protagonists resist the diversity of local cultures in different ways. The three types of ethnocentrism that Hammer, Bennett and Wiseman (2003) describe are shown in the protagonists' attitudes. The first one, denial of cultural differences, presents individuals' attitudes to either eliminate difference or to understand it from their own worldviews. The second type of ethnocentrism is called defense against cultural difference. At this stage, people think their own cultures are the only valuable one; therefore, they recognize cultural differences but disagree with others' ways of living. The last type is minimization of difference which explains individuals' preference for similarity in cultures. Individuals try to rationalize cultural differences according to universal rules. They judge and correct others' "inappropriate" behaviors according to universal values without recognizing the influence of history and society on cultures. The three types of attitude are seen in the excerpts in the following subcategories. I explain how the protagonists' attitudes relate to the Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (1986, 1993, 2004a, & 2004b) to illustrate their struggles in their initial cross cultural experiences.

Personal assumptions about others

The theme of personal assumptions about others focuses on assumptions that come from the protagonists' own cultural backgrounds and popular media but are not how local people and culture really are. In the seven examples, most come from *Hot*

Scots, Castles, and Kilts. I chose two examples to present how the author used assumptions to illustrate the teenager protagonist's self-centered viewpoint toward others.

The first example shows Sami's generalization that all girls are like her no matter what their family and cultural backgrounds. Thus, regardless their differences, Sami assumed the Scottish girl, Fiona, likes boys and shopping and they would have a lot to talk about.

HSCK-2-P.3 I guess Fiona and I should get along since we're both in our mid-teens. And I have a lot to say on the topics of guys, makeup, and shopping. Trust me.

Like the honeymoon stage that Adler (1975) proposes to describe cultural shock experiences, Sami is excited about the unknown in Scotland. Before her departure, she is looking forward to meeting Fiona. However, Sami assumes Fiona will be the same as her because they are the same age. This statement reveals Sami's neglect of cultural differences. She is excited to visit the new country without recognizing cultural differences. Her naïve thought about Fiona later creates barriers for their friendship. The next excerpt is another example regarding Sami's assumption about the cultural icons in Scotland. From her statement, distant connections that she has with the culture and people are evident.

HSCK-2-P.4 (...) I did not buy anything plaid. ...and second, what if I mistakenly bought a rival clan's plaid? I've read about clan feuds, and I don't want to be on the receiving end of some medieval revenge feudy thingy.

It is common that human beings use prior knowledge to make sense of their surroundings. Sami used this mechanism to prepare herself for the upcoming adventure in Scotland.

The following example from *Benny and Omar* illustrates the protagonist's assumptions about Africa. Benny and his family have just arrived at Tunisia airport. In this excerpt, Benny assumes that children can be sold as slaves in Africa.

BO-2-P.21.1 Da glared at him. "Don't stare on me, Benny, I'm still not over all those delays in customs. You and that hurley! I feel like breaking it across your behind."

The one thing about Da was that he never bluffed. Benny hugged his hurley protectively. They were in Africa now. The threat of having your children removed by social services was no longer valid. It was even conceivable that they could sell you to slave traders!

First, it is interesting that Benny did not mention Tunisia but generalized to Africa when associating the place with slave traders. His statement indicates that all the African countries may be the same him. Second, Benny related Africa with slave traders. The association is influenced by the history of African slavery. Benny's comment shows that his understanding about Tunisia is limited. He does not even know where the place is. In addition, due to the influence of the media he automatically associates Africa with negative and dangerous images.

The protagonists in this subcategory recognize there are cultural differences; however, they are only interested in the aspects that they feel comfortable knowing. Ironically, their interest is based on false information that limits the possibility of cultural adjustment.

Personal relationship with the host country

This theme focuses on the protagonists' ideas regarding their relationships with the host country. These ideas relate to why the protagonists go on to a trip and what they think about the places and themselves. Among the fifteen collected examples, the following four excerpts are used to represent the protagonists' relationships with the local cultures.

The first type is the protagonists' reluctance to participate in the trip because the protagonists are forced to embark on the journey by their parents or relatives. This excerpt from *Hannah's Winter* shows Hannah's unwillingness to leave her house to visit Japan. Because of her mother's job and Japanese friends, Hannah is asked to come in order to refresh her speaking of Japanese.

HW-2-p.3 She (mother) insisted on bringing me to Japan, even though I didn't want to come. It would have been logical to leave me behind. After all, she'd be traveling most of the time.I want to stay home with in Brisbane with my dad and my older brother, Joel. Well, I didn't really want to stay with Joel.

Although Hannah's mother has a close relationship with Japan, Hannah does not personally feel the same way. Although Hannah visited the country only once when she

was little, she can speak the language and knows some of the culture. However, even though she has prior knowledge of Japan, she does not voluntarily join her mother for the journey. If she could choose, she would rather stay home with her father.

A similar situation of a parent's job led to Benny's whole family being sent to Tunisia. This excerpt is about the moment when his father announces the news about the family's move to a new place. It illustrates Benny's surprise at the big change in his life as well as his ignorance toward Tunisia.

BO-2-P. 10 “This Tunisia place. Where is it?” “Ah...Ah...North Africa.” The Crawler began to cry. Benny, alarmed, blinked back a few tears himself. Tunisia was one of those obscure little counties on the globe that he'd heard of but couldn't quite pin down. He'd been thinking maybe Eastern Europe, one of those places that used to be in Russia.

Benny is not like Hannah who knows the country before her trip. Tunisia for him is a totally unknown place. He does not even know where it is on a map. His reaction shows that Tunisia is way outside of his expectations. It is a bewildering place. This excerpt shows Benny's limited relationship with the place he is going to visit.

Several protagonists in the text set share a heritage background with the place they visit. It is interesting to see how they relate with the visiting countries and if their reactions differ from others. The following example indicates Andy is not familiar with Vietnam from the book of *Noodle Pie*. Andy accompanies his father to his father's birth place, Vietnam. Although Vietnam is his father's home country, for Andy, it is a tourist

country. As he reveals in this excerpt, the trip is going “to” Vietnam but not going “back” home.

NP-2-p.1 According to Andy’s father, they were going home...the first time Andy had heard that story, he’d imagined the kind of pirates he’d read about in books or seen on the screen: dashing dudes wearing frilly shirts and brandishing cutlasses.

For him the trip wasn’t a going back, it was a going to.

Andy’s example reveals his unfamiliarity toward the place. Even though his father has told his childhood story in Hanoi, Andy does not have a substantial personal connection with this place. While in his own home country of Australia, Andy did not learn much about Vietnam from his parents. Therefore, although he is supposed to connect to the place more than a random visitor, Andy does not feel he belongs to this place. The trip for him is only going to his father’s home.

Sofi in *Sofi Got Lost in Mexico* has a similar emotion toward her parents’ birth country—Mexico. For her, Mexico is where her parents are from and has no direct relationship with her. She is irritated when people assume she should know a great deal of the place.

SMG-2-P2. ...but Sofi didn’t understand why they kept asking her questions. ...the idea of traveling to Mexico brought up a series of uncomfortable mixed emotions that left her feeling confused. And itchy.

Comparing Andy's response to Sofi's toward their parents' birth countries, I found that Sofi has more lingering feelings about the place. Andy is clearly aware that the country is just a place to visit and that the place happens to be his father's birth country. Even though both books were about the heritage of the protagonists, they presented different degrees of connectedness toward the host countries. In these stories, the two different attitudes lead to different learning about who the protagonists are in the countries.

This set of excerpts presents the protagonists' personal feelings toward the places they meet. A common response is a sense of disconnection with the places. No matter if they are from that heritage background or purely a visitor, the protagonists are portrayed as reluctant to embark on their journey. They believe that they and the local people have nothing in common that would lead them to be interested in each other.

- Sense of Alienation

When people come to a new environment, a feeling of anxiety is a common response. Without knowing the cultures, people feel lost and disconnected. In this subcategory of sense of alienation, I included excerpts in which the protagonists feel uneasy in the local culture. The uneasy feeling comes from their disapproval of local cultures, feeling like an outcast in the place as well as their struggles with cultural differences.

Disapproval of new cultures

The first theme, disapproval of new cultures, highlights the protagonist's blunt disagreement and questions about cultures in the host places. The protagonists do not

appreciate the cultural differences. Instead, they use their own viewpoints to judge and compare the two cultures. The eleven examples collected from the data relates to the protagonists' judgments about art, lifestyles, courtesies, traffic rules, and gender roles.

The following excerpt shows a protagonist's struggle with the concept of vacation. In *Hot Scots, Castles, and Kilts*, Sami is used to modern conveniences. Thus, when she hears that her relatives want to change their manor into a working farm for tourists, she can't understand why it would be a good idea. In this excerpt, her questioning is presented.

HCK-2-P.13 Before we'd left home, Mom had hinted that we'd be helping Molly and Fiona prepare MacKensie Manor to be a working farm for tourists, where people could step through time and into the life of a medieval Scottish family. (...). Now that I'm here, I'm really wondering, who would go to a working farm for a vacation? People should go to the beach for vacations. I should be at the beach checking out guys, or at the mall buying clothes...and checking out guys.

The most difficult cultural experience for Sami is to stay at this cottage. Because she is used to a convenient and comfortable environment, country living is beyond her comfort zone. Her dislike of the new place and assumptions about other people's preferences show her monocultural idea about how life should be. Based on the developmental model of intercultural sensitivity (Bennett, 1986, 1993, 2004, 2009), Sami denies the existence

of cultural differences. Rather, using her own standards, she judges the idea of a working farm as primitive.

The next two excerpts from *Noodle Pie* provide examples illustrating a protagonist's disapproval of local people due to conflicts with his own cultural values. The first example depicts Andy's experience in the airplane from Australia to Vietnam. When the flight is landing, many Vietnamese do not wait until the flight is fully stopped but rush to get ready to leave. From Andy's perspective, these people neglect issues of safety and have problems with following rules.

NP-2-p.3 Andy looked at them disapprovingly. Didn't they realize this was the most dangerous time of the entire flight? Hadn't they read the safety and emergency evacuation guides in their seat pockets?....."They should stay in their seats until we come to a complete stop," ... "They excited to be coming home," his father said, "And for some, maybe first time in airplane."

"It's my first flight, too" Andy said. "But I still know the safety rules."...

Even though the behavior may not be appreciated, Andy's response that, "it's my first flight, but I still know the safety rules" speaks about his concerns with rules. Growing up in a society in which individual responsibility is highly valued, Andy has difficulties accepting what he views as disorderly behavior. In addition, following his own worldviews, he assumes what he believes should be universal. Therefore, he uses the standard to judge others' behavior as wrong.

In the next excerpt, Andy's cultural values are challenged again. Andy's father brings lots of gifts for a big crowd of family members. Andy notices that everyone loves the gifts but they do not say thank you. From Andy's perspective, these people are not grateful.

NP-2-P. 35.1 Minh's eyes sparkled, and she reached out for the box of pens. As her turn to go, Auntie Mo snapped something at her. Minh colored, lowered her eyes, and recited a formal thank you to Andy.

Andy was annoyed at his aunt. Nobody else, including Auntie Mo herself, had thanked them, not even in the most casual way, so why was she making Minh do it? At home, he was rapped over the knuckles if he didn't say thank you when someone passed him the bread, let alone gave him a present, but nobody here seemed very concerned about expressing their gratitude. It must be one of those cultural differences Mrs. Gowdie went on about at school.

Andy does not understand why they should bring gifts for the family. He is confused by local people's expectations of his father. In addition, as Andy does not know the family history regarding his father's escape from communism in Vietnam, he just sees how well his father treats the family but not the other way around. Moreover, without knowing the culture of showing appreciation in his local family, he generalizes the response as an ungrateful attitude. Similar with the previous example, Andy adapts a universal value to evaluate his cultural experience. It is difficult for him because his cultural adjustment is due to his sense of superiority that his way is the right and appropriate way.

Discomfort in the new cultures

This theme depicts the protagonists' feelings of discomfort toward the host countries. This discomfort comes from feeling themselves as outsiders, as inadequate in the place as well as feeling overwhelmed by the numerous cultural interactions.

A common thread in the twelve examples is the protagonists' sense of themselves as outsiders. Particularly, they feel awkward because of local people's blunt stares. In *Monsoon Summer*, Jazz was annoyed by local people's direct stares at her. Since she looks more like her father with fair skin and a strong body, her appearance is distinct in India. For this reason, she receives lots of attention from strangers. This excerpt records Jazz's question on politeness about looking at people in India.

MS-2-P.37 "Mom," I whispered. "Why is everybody staring?" "They're curious, I guess," she whispered back. "It's not considered rude to stare here."

Great. A whole summer in a country where people thought it was normal to ogle you. I shrank down in my seat and turned my face away from the interested eyes.

In some countries, it is common to directly stare at people. However, growing up in the United States in which the idea of personal space is highly valued, Jazz never felt awkward. Without criticizing the cultural difference, Jazz's mother explains the culture to Jazz to ease her discomfort. However, people's reaction really makes Jazz become conscious about her differences from others.

In this excerpt from *Carpe Diem*, Vassar not only feels as an outsider due to people's stares, but she is also overwhelmed by the foreign environment, smell and language. This excerpt describes her observations about the local street scene and her questions.

CD-2-P.78 I followed Grandma Gerd down the uneven cement pavement past endless colonial architecture; many buildings had been painstakingly restored and painted bright colors. The upstairs were used as residences. Laundry hung over the balconies, the louvered windows and shutters closed for privacy. The downstairs were used as shops—everything from tailors to fortune-tellers.

I am not only in a foreign country, but in a completely different world. Every sight, sound, and smell was unfamiliar. I felt muffled. Was it culture shock? Or just jet lag? And nothing had prepared me for all the stares. At 5 feet 10, Grandma Gerd and I towered over every Malaysian—woman or man—who jostled past us.

The words reveal Vassar's encounter with new cultural experiences in Malaysia. As everything is very different from her own cultural background, she is overwhelmed by the differences. In addition, because she is taller than most of the local people, she is more noticeable. All the attention from strangers increases her anxiety.

The following excerpt represents the protagonist's sense of loss in communication. When Liyana, in *Habibi*, is in Palestine with her family, she is not able to speak the language. Even though her father translates what people say to her into English, she

cannot understand why people laugh in the conversations. The inability to understand cultural context makes her feel awkward.

HA-2-p.57 Sitti stood beside Liyana. They were exactly the same height. Sitti took both Liyana's hands in her own. She said, through Poppy, "I hope you will come back tomorrow and stay for many many days." Sitti said they would teach her how to sew and pick lentils and marinate olives and carry water from the spring on her head and speak Arabic. Poppy said, "She'll teach you how to give a weather report by standing on the roof and licking one finger and holding it up in the wind." Everyone laughed when he translated this. Was it a joke? Were they making fun of her?

Even though the conversation occurs in a safe environment, Liyana still feels anxious and confused. To make the communication worse, Liyana cannot understand the humor embedded in the conversations even though her father translates the words for her. Her discomfort about the unknown makes her suspicious.

The following excerpt presents a protagonist's discomfort with his mistakes in a new place. As Andy has limited information and understanding about Vietnam, he needs to rely on other's help. In this excerpt, he asks others if the place they are passing is Hanoi, however, his curiosity is not rewarded but laughed at by others sitting in the same car.

NP-2-p.22.2 "Is this Hanoi?" Andy asked. Everyone in the minibus laughed uproariously. "Ha-ha! He thinks this is Hanoi!"

Andy felt his cheeks grow hot. Well, how do I know? This is the Third World, Isn't it? I bet girl at the back's killing herself.

Andy is irritated by people's laughter, and so calls the country a third world place and says his cousin might kill herself. His exaggerated response shows his frustration with the new cultural experience as he is not able to control the situation. Andy's response is typical when a sojourner is overwhelmed or made fun of in an unfamiliar culture. They feel a sense of being an outcast because they do not understand why people react in a certain manner, and so they develop negative attitudes to handle their cross cultural experiences. Janet Bennett (1998) describes intercultural encounters and the use of self defense mechanisms. According to Bennett (1998), people try to find a way to survive when their old frames of how things should be done is challenged. As the old frame of reference loses its function in assisting in the comprehension of a new environment, people become furious at their inability and lose interest in learning about new cultures.

This subcategory addresses the protagonists' discomfort in the new places. The discomfort comes from the protagonists' consciousness that they are different from the local people not only in appearance but also in culture.

Struggles between cultures

This theme particularly focuses on the protagonists' struggles when they face the contradiction between their own cultures and the new culture. The protagonists' cognitive and emotional challenges with the new experiences are highlighted. The examples in this

theme focus on the protagonists' struggles with language, lifestyle and the way to address others.

This excerpt is used to present the protagonists' struggles with languages. When Benny's family arrives at the airport, they feel frustrated because the English they speak does not work in Tunisia. For the first time, Benny realizes his father's Wexford English accent makes communication even harder.

BO-2-P.20.1 Pat Shaw was embroiled in a frustrating discussion with a customs man and the EuroGas driver. One spoke mostly French, the other only Arabic and Da had just English in a Wexford accent. It was a linguist's nightmare.

Language struggles are common when traveling abroad. When staying in Wexford, Benny did not need to use another language, not to mention listen to people use other languages. Thus, linguistic struggle is Benny's first encounter in the new environment. Later, Benny faces more miscommunication with local people because of his English accent. These struggles frustrate him and slow him down in terms of adapting to the local place. Benny's worldview is challenged to realize that his language is not the only way to communicate in the world.

This category, hostility and rejection, addresses the protagonists' sense of being an outcast in new places. All the excerpts show the protagonists' challenges due to cultural differences and their frustration in the new places. Depending on the degree of the lack of cultural awareness that the protagonists experience, their negative and

defensive attitudes toward cultural differences influence their adjustment to the new cultures.

Embracing the New Culture

The category of embracing a new culture focuses on the protagonists' emerging interests and positive attitudes toward the cultures in the host countries. Under this category, two subcategories are used to explain the protagonists' exploration of the new culture and their desires to connect to local places.

- Cultural Exploration

Cultural exploration highlights the protagonists' acceptance of new cultures. When listing examples, I found that the authors of this text set provided background information of a place and culture through the protagonists' explorations in order to facilitate readers' comprehension of the text. This type of example is not included for analysis because they do not reveal the protagonist's attitude but are included to aid readers' cultural knowledge. An example of this type of excerpt is from *Hannah's Winter*. It is about bedtime and Hannah sleeps in the same room as the Japanese girl, Miki. In this excerpt, she questions the sound in her pillow and Miki tells her that the reason is the use of husks in her culture.

HW-2-P.20-31 Mine was comfortable except for the pillow. "Miki, there's something wrong with my pillow."

"What sort of something?"

"It's making a scratching noise. Like mice."

“Wheat husks,” said Miki.

“Pardon?”

“The pillow’s full of wheat husks. To make you clever.”

“I’m already clever.”

“Maybe you’ll get cleverer. It’s ever worked for me.” She giggled, then yawned.

“Sleep well, Hannah.”

The excerpt is used to demonstrate the examples that are not included in the data. Even though Hannah asks questions, there is no further discussion and personal response that indicates Hannah’s reaction to the culture. The purpose of this kind of dialogue is to facilitate readers’ understandings of the culture.

After gathering and examining excerpts, they were sorted into four themes to demonstrate the protagonists’ cultural experiences. These themes present the protagonists’ interests in the natural environment, daily life, cultural value, and material culture in the host country.

Interestingly, all the examples used in this subcategory are from the same book, *Hannah’s Winter*. With the few examples found, *Hannah’s Winter* provided the most positive attitudes toward the culture and detailed descriptions of the culture.

Natural environment

The first theme, natural environment, depicts the protagonists’ awareness of the local environment such as weather and natural resources. I found several examples in

which authors used the protagonists to describe the foreign country. However, only two examples included in this theme also included the protagonists' interest in the text.

In the following excerpt, the protagonist, Hannah, was unfamiliar with snow since her hometown, Australia, has no snow. From the local people's experience, she learned the reason for roping trees for snowy days. Because of cultural differences, she found Japan to be an interesting country to visit.

HW-2-P.20-30 “What are you looking at?” Miki had come back from cleaning her teeth and was standing beside me. I didn't want her to think I was nosy. “The garden,” I said quickly. “Why are the trees tied up?” “That's Yukitsuri. We rope the trees because of the snow. Here on the Japan Sea coast our snow is wet, so it's very heavy. If the trees aren't roped, their branches break under its weight.”
“Snow?”

I hadn't thought of snow. Not much snow falls in Tokyo, but I had a vague memory of seeing it once when I was little. Zigzags of excitement ran around the back of my skull. Snow. Castles. Exotic temples. Yellow boxes. Japan was getting more and more interesting.

The example reveals Hannah's interest toward her new cultural experience. Even though snowy days can be inconvenient, she accepted the weather with a positive attitude. Her positive attitude about the natural environment reveals a protagonist's embrace of a new place.

Daily life

This theme presents the protagonists' realization of the daily life style in the host cultures. I was able to gather many examples that address the protagonists' exploration of new culture. However, they did not show an interest or response to the explanation of the culture. Rather, the information is used to introduce cultural information to readers. Only three examples are included to reveal the protagonists' cultural exploration of their experiences in daily life. The examples relate to art, views of the street and food.

This excerpt from *Hannah's Winter* describes Hannah's experience with Japanese food—Jibu—which the host cooked to welcome Hannah and her mother. This excerpt describes the food: its look and taste. Even though this is the first time Hanna tries it, she likes it.

HW-2-P.19 Mrs. Maekawa cooked Jibu—a Kanazawa specialty— in honor of our arrival. It's got this special ingredient called sadarefu. That's a wheat gluten paste unique to Kanazawa. Sounds gluey, but it isn't. It's delicious. As well as fu, jibu is made with duck meat, bamboo shoots, spinach, mushrooms, and lily roots. They look like little white shells and taste like potatoes.

The idea of foreign food can be challenging to travelers. If the texture does not seem familiar, it can be challenging to accept. Jibu is a traditional dish of Kanazawa.

According to Japan National Tourism Organization, it is a rare and expensive dish that is made using thinly sliced duck meat, fu, mushroom, bamboo shoots, and Japanese parsley. (http://www.jnto.go.jp/eng/attractions/dining/food/jfood_06.html). Even though Hannah

has not tried “fu” before, Hannah retains an open mind to appreciate the food. Her description of the ingredients shows her acceptance of the unknown and appreciation of differences. The way she responds to the food also encourages the readers’ interest toward food in Japan.

Value system

This theme is about cultural values that the protagonists experienced in the host cultures. The examples collected all relate to the cultural traditions of social greetings. The following example shows Hannah’s experience with bowing in Japan.

HW-2-P.18 As soon as she saw us sitting on the floor around the table she stopped laughing and put on a serious face. It made her look vague and innocent and a little bit sad. She came just inside the room, sank to the floor with her legs tucked under her, and bowed. “I’m Mikiko. Nice to meet you.”

I couldn’t resist bowing back but I went a bit too low. I was sitting close to the table and the thwack of my head as it made contact was deafening. And it hurt. I sat gaping, knowing I was turning strawberry red. Visions of black eyes and broken nose ran across my brain. Miki started to laugh. Everyone did. Mrs. Maekawa giggled. My mother hawed. Mr. Maekawa, just coming in from the shop and looking sleepy and worried, cheered up instantly. Granny chortled the longest. Bowing to someone is unique to Japan. It shows respect to the people to whom one is bowing. Therefore, the situation, depth and length of holding a bow are important. For a foreigner who does not know how to properly respond to bows, it might be a nervous

experience. Hannah is aware of the bowing culture in Japan. Therefore, she does not shake hands to greet new friends but follows their cultural tradition. Hannah's interest toward the culture is shown by her action of bowing back to the family. Even though she makes everyone laugh, her action shows her open mind and readiness to learn about the new place. Later in the story, she is comfortable with bowing. She comes to know how long to bow when she stays longer in Japan.

Material culture

Material culture relates to the value of cultural artifacts in a culture. In the examples from these books, the artifacts relate to a culture's history and art. Only three examples were collected from the data. All of them are from the same book, *Hannah's Winter*. This example relates to Hannah's connection with Japanese paper. The Japanese home where Hannah stays has a paper shop. As soon as she comes to this shop, she loves the smell of the papers and the patterns on the papers. In this excerpt, Otasan explains to Hannah the importance of paper in the Japanese culture. From Otasan's analogy, paper is given new life.

HW-2-P.23 "Paper is the source of history and wisdom," said Otasan, gazing at his hoard like a proud father. "Without it, nothing would ever have been written down." Miki straightened a warrior mask. "Dad says paper's like a person," she said. "Tough and long-lasting, but easily hurt if it's not treated well. What do you like best, Hannah?"

I gazed around at all the lovely shapes and colors. "I like everything!"

They both laughed.

“So do I, Hannah,” said Ootosan. “That’s why I don’t sell much from the Old Corner. I can’t bear to part with my treasures.”

I understood. I would have loved them too if they were mine.

It is hard to imagine how well designed Japanese paper can be if one has not seen it in person. One time when I was flying through the Narita Airport, I saw an origami exhibition. The delicate and creative creations of beautiful papers were breath taking. I could not move but could only look at the art in front of me. Beautiful patterned papers show how the Japanese value paper in their culture. Even though, in this excerpt, the author does not mention the purpose of the paper, she indeed increases readers’ interest in Japanese paper. In addition, Hannah’s positive attitude toward the shop and learning about paper culture brings her to a deeper understanding of Japan.

This subcategory, culture exploration, presents the protagonists’ positive responses to their new cultural experiences. The aspect of the exploration includes nature, art, food and others. Most of the examples come from the same book; however, by reading the author’s descriptions of the cultures, readers from Western culture are brought to understand cultural experiences that they might not have opportunity to directly learn about. Even though Meehan uses several cultural icons to present Japan, the culture in her description is interesting. She did not try to exaggerate and eroticize the culture.

- Connections to Local Cultures and People

This subcategory has some similarities with the previous subcategory. However, they are different in a way that this one features more of the protagonists' substantial connections to the local place and culture. Beyond appreciation of culture, the protagonists perceive local people's good intentions and have the desire to make connections with the places and people. The interest in each other becomes mutual.

Desire for cross-cultural experience

The first theme presents the protagonists' interest in their cross cultural experiences and their desire for friendships in the new places. Among the eight examples gathered for this theme, the following one represents the protagonist's excitement to learn about a visiting country.

The excerpt is from *Carpe Diem*. After arriving at Singapore, Vassar takes a bus to Malaysia. While in the bus, she is excited about the upcoming adventure.

CD-2-P.69 "How do you know my grandma?" I asked Haney Lee, Sr. But he was already asleep. I looked around: The entire van was sleeping. How can they sleep when they're in an exotic foreign country!?

Even though Vassar is not voluntarily spending her summer in Southeast Asia, she accepts the fact and starts to quickly prepare herself for the journey. In this excerpt, Vassar initiates the conversation with the driver who is arranged to pick her up from the airport. The action shows her desire to talk to local people and not to wait passively. She does not hide herself from all the unknowns. Rather, she tries to talk to Mr. Haney Lee.

She is surprised that everyone is asleep in this exotic foreign country. Her response is an example demonstrating a protagonist's desire to experience adventures of what lays ahead of her.

Vassar in *Carpe Diem* provides another example of a protagonist's interest in learning about another culture. Without any background in Malay, she uses language books to help her understand and conduct simple conversations with servers at a local hotel. This excerpt describes her initial language encounter with the receptionist.

CD-2-P.72 “Selamat malam,” said the jovial Malay owner, salaaming me—her hands pressed together at chest level. Her permed black hair was pulled back in a purple hedhand that matched her purple blouse, purple eye shadow, and purple nails. She waved her hand with a purple flourish. “Good evening and welcome to The Golden Lotus. Have a seat, please. You must be Cik Vassar, correct? I am Paun Azizah. My son will bring you some refreshment shortly.”

I momentarily perked up, recognizing that Paun meant “Mrs.,” Cik meant “Miss,” and selamat malam meant “Good night.” Look how fast I was picking up the culture!

The long flight and transit on the bus make Vassar very tired. However, as soon as she hears Malay words that she can recognize, she cheers up. She is excited that she has started to pick up and learn about the culture. Furthermore, in a different paragraph, she even prepares herself to say thank you in Malay when a server brings breakfast to her. Her willingness represents a protagonist's desire to connect to local culture.

The next excerpt from *Habibi* reveals a protagonist's interest in making real cross-cultural friendships. After arriving at Palestine, Liyana's family is invited to have dinner at the village where her father was raised. This excerpt shows that she tries to restrain herself in order to fulfill people's expectations of her. Also, she tries to hide her real thoughts in order not to offend anyone. However, in her heart, she wonders when local people can know the real her.

HA-2-p.55-56 Liyana tried to be polite to everyone by smiling tipping her head over to one side so they couldn't tell if she were saying no or yes. How long would it take till they knew one true thing about her?

Liyana is a sensitive girl. She cares about sincere human relationships. Thus, even though she is concerned about how to properly behave in the village, she cares more about her openness in front of these people. She does not like to fake relationship. She wants local people to know the real Liyana for meaningful human interaction. Liyana comes to the country with a humble attitude. She does not think she is superior to others. Therefore, she is eager to have real friendships where she can share and exchange thoughts with others.

Cross-cultural friendship

The theme of cross-cultural friendship addresses the development of friendships between the protagonists and their local friends. The eight examples included are the positive interactions. In some cases, even though the protagonists could not communicate

with local people, they perceive their kind intentions and care for them. The excerpt describes Liyana's interaction with a big crowd of people.

HA-2-p.42 Liyana was being kissed by so many people whose exact indent was unknown to her, though Poppy tried to clarify names of aunts, cousins, and wives of cousins, to help his family out. Even he had trouble. He gave two different names for the same woman and everyone laughed. Liyana kept nodding and trying to kiss people back, even when she missed their cheeks. She kissed Aunt Lena on the scarf and felt silly. Still, after all that flying, the enthusiastic welcome was nice. At least Liyana knew they had landed in the proper hemisphere.

It seems like Liyana is busy with the fast pace of the welcoming team. She tries to learn and greet all the relatives that she meets for the first time. Even though she does not know them, she is comforted and feels welcomed because of the relatives' hospitality. The relatives' welcome eases her anxiety of this new place.

Another example is from *Monsoon Summer*. Jess is reluctant to visit India. She would rather spend her summer time with the boy she likes in California. However, since her whole family is going to India, she has to join them. This excerpt describes her family's arrival at an orphanage in India where they come to help during the summer time. Sister Das tours them around the place where they will stay.

MS-2-P.46 The apartment was furnished Indian style, with bamboo furniture and batik slipcovers. "Have a look around," said Sister Das. "I know it's not what you're used to, but welcome home anyways."

Home? I thought. Home is where the heart is. And mine's with Steve.

In fact, as I finished my tour, I couldn't help noticing that someone had tried hard to make us feel welcome. ...For one mixed-up, jet-lagged second, as we gathered around the dining table, this strange new place did feel a bit like home.

Due to Jazz's unwillingness to go on the trip, she is not very open to the place initially. In addition to the stares that she receives from local people, she feels like an outcast in India. However, in this excerpt, even though she does not want to come, she is touched by Sister Das's hospitality and understands that the local people spent time to make them feel welcome. Her ability to perceive the good intentions from local people encourages deeper cross-cultural friendships later in the book.

Connection to local people and cultures is a crucial transition in cross cultural experiences. It implies individuals' change from an egocentric attitude to be more open minded. Although the protagonists in the excerpts have not adjusted to local cultures, they set aside their own frustration and homesickness and look for more connection with local people and cultures. The positive attitude will help them to better handle cultural differences later in their journeys.

Reflection on Identity

This category highlights the protagonists' exploration of who they are in the world after experiencing different cultural experiences. Particularly, I looked at the protagonists' multicultural identity. I also observed their reactions toward international

travel because how people respond to the unknown during the trips reflects their identities.

In order to answer question two, I particularly looked at the protagonists' initial ideas of their identity. I tried to understand what they think about themselves. After sorting the data, the examples are divided into two subcategories to present the protagonists' general perspectives on who they are and their global identity.

- Initial Exploration of Multicultural Selves

This subcategory explores the protagonists' initial exploration of their multicultural identities. Multicultural identity here is defined as ethnicity as well as nationalities and gender. Besides the protagonists' original understanding of who they are, they become conscious about the existence of others. In terms of ethnicity, some protagonists face situations in which they are forced to reflect on their heritage backgrounds and their relationships with the visited countries. In example from *Noodle Pie* reveals Andy's exploration of his Vietnamese background and his unfamiliarity with it.

This excerpt starts in the aircraft from Australia to Vietnam. When the flight attendant asks Andy about his name, his father answers with Andy's Vietnamese name. For Andy, this name does not mean anything to him. Thus, he answers the attendant with his English name, but emphasizes that he is from Australia in Vietnamese. His intention in doing so is not understandable to him at this point. However, it actually is the moment when Andy starts to be aware of his multicultural identity.

NP-2-p.7.1 Before he could reply, his father told her. “Nguyen Cuong Anh.” We haven’t even landed in the country, but already he’s calling me by my Vietnamese name. Fastening his seatbelt, Andy said, “My name is Andrew Nguyen.” And then he added, in Vietnamese “I’m Australian.” He wasn’t sure why he wanted to tell her that. Perhaps it was just to let her know that he could speak Vietnamese.

The excerpt clearly shows that Andy is resistant to his Vietnamese connection. However, even so, he wants others to know he is capable at speaking the language. The mixed emotion can be explained as Andy’s confusion with his heritage background which he has never explored deeply before. Before developing a bicultural identity, Andy at this point is starting to be aware of his heritage background and is being pushed to think about his relationship with Vietnam.

The next example relates to a protagonist’s general self-identity: what and how she thinks of herself. In *Red Glass*, Sophia has a low self-image. This excerpt shows her idea of her appearance, social relationship and personality.

RG-2-P.9 I already thought of myself as a free-floating one-celled amoeba, minding my own business. The other kids at school were all parts of a larger organism. The soccer girls made up on organ—a set of coordinated, interdependent cells. They always dated the soccer guys, another organ, connected to them by veins and arteries. The speech team, student government, animal rights club—everything was part of the whole. Even the hoodlums’ gold chains and graffiti tags added sparkle to the organism. Me, I was a shapeless amoeba, something that

didn't belong. Not particularly noticed, definitely not appreciated, just an amoeba swimming around aimlessly.

From her words, she sees herself as someone who people do not usually pay attention to in a group. Because of the way she thinks of herself, she is uncertain about most things. Even though she lives in a stable environment with her parents; she does not feel that she belongs to any group. It seems like her existence in the world does not matter to anyone.

- Global Identity

Global identity focuses on the protagonists' perceptions about their international travel experiences. Global identity is different from the previous subcategory in that it focuses more on the protagonists' perceptions of who they are as international travelers. I identified examples in which the protagonists talked about their emotions toward the upcoming trips. Hence, I also looked for the examples regarding how the protagonists prepared for their trips and handled problems during their travels.

Anxiety toward the unknown

While analyzing the data, I gathered those examples to examine what factors make the characters feel anxious. The ten examples include lifestyles, friendships, unpredictable risks, possible changes, and communications.

Red Glass, Sophie always feels fearful toward the unknown. Paulo, a Mexican undocumented immigrant, has experienced losing his parents and that doubles her worries and uncertainty. In this excerpt, she talks about her worries.

RG-2-P.8 To tell the truth, he scared me. He was living proof of one of my worst fears: Your parents really could die and leave you alone in the world. For the first seven years of my life, it was just Mom and me. No father, no grandparents, no aunts or uncles. Early on, I figured out that if anything happened to Mom, I would be alone on this planet. Then, when Juan came along you'd think I'd have felt safer, but my fears of a parent dying were must multiplied by two.

Sophie is forced to face issues with death before she is ready. Therefore, meeting Paulo increases her level of fear because his experience reinforces her tendency to worry. At this stage, Sophie worries about everything from minor to major issues because her inner self is too fragile to handle uncertainty.

Sophie's example reveals a protagonist's anxiety toward herself and how it affects her idea of people around her. The next excerpt addresses a protagonist's anxiety toward new friendships and privacy. In *Hannah's Winter*, Hannah stays with a Japanese family while her mother is away for her research. Hannah has to sleep with her new Japanese friend in the same room. In this excerpt, Hannah talks about her worry of sharing a room with Miki and building a friendship.

HW-2-P.11 The one right at the end was the guest room where my mother would sleep that night. I'd be sharing the room next door with Miki. I was a bit nervous about sharing. I'm not one of those kids who like bunking in which everybody else at sleepovers or school camps. I've always had my own room at home and I

like privacy. I mean, what do you say to someone you've only just met?

Especially someone a year older.

Even though Hannah can speak Japanese, she is still worried about the predictable and unpredictable changes during her travel, especially when she needs to share a room with her host's daughter. Without a private space for herself during her stay, Hannah needs to confront every discomfort caused by cultural differences. Hess (1994) recognizes the difficulty for hosts and guests to find a common cultural ground between them if neither one have the desire to make the connections.

Problem-solving in global positions of contexts

This theme focuses on the protagonists' ability to solve problems occurring during their trips. For example, they want to take care of their own belongings, protect themselves at a foreign place, and find correct transportation. Their awareness and ability indicate the influence of the trip on them. The ways they handle the problems reflect how they perceive themselves. Among the books, four excerpts were identified for this theme.

In *Carpe Diem*, Vassar is portrayed as a serious person who loves to plan ahead to control her life. However, during the trip, many unexpected events occur. One of the examples is the loss of her money belt. Fortunately, someone picks it up and returns to her. Learning from this experience, she becomes very alarmed about taking care of her belongings.

CD-2-P.63 I couldn't believe my money belt had slipped right off me! It must have been all that physical exertion with Bags #1 through #10. In the future, I'd have to clinch my money belt extra tight. Thank Goodness it had happened in a relatively safe environment. I pushed the record button on my PTP: "Note to myself; Buy safety pin for money belt clinching."

This example demonstrates a person's learning about how to take care of themselves during the trip. They develop the ability to solve problems rather than doing nothing and waiting for other's help. This subcategory implies an important skill for international travelers that they need to plan, execute and solve problems occurring during their trips. Their ability to work independently is crucial as they leave their hometown that they are familiar with and start to navigate in a totally new environment.

Awareness of new socio-cultural context

This category focuses on the protagonists' explorations of new cultural experiences that are beyond their personal backgrounds. It highlights their exposure to and interest in global reality which means life that differs from what they are familiar with before the trips. I collected the excerpts that describe their awareness of lifestyle, social issues, ethnicity, and cultural values. Among the collected examples, two subcategories present the different levels of understanding. First is their emerging awareness of global issues and second is their development of alternative perspectives.

- Awareness of Global Issues

This subcategory focuses on the protagonists' awareness of the social reality in the world. Since for all of the protagonists, the trip is their first experience to learn about life outside of their regular experience, their assumptions and worldviews are challenged. In addition, some protagonists are exposed to difficult life circumstances and so the discomfort lingers in their hearts and challenges their understanding of what they believe in 'real life'.

Even though the data for question two only covers one third of the text in each book, some interesting changes are found with the protagonists' exposures to international experiences. These themes were created to examine the protagonists' learning about global issues. The themes relate to their personal reflections on privilege and awareness of power as well as new learning about global issues.

Exploring the idea of privilege

The theme covers two aspects of reflection. Some examples relate to the protagonists' inward reflection on personal privilege while others focus on the idea of privilege in general. Six examples were found for this theme. The topics relate to economic disparity, ethnic injustice, and sense of superiority.

The first example presents the protagonist's learning about his own privilege from local people's perspectives. In *Benny and Omar*, Benny is yelled at by a Tunisian guard because he waves a stick on the green lawn in the community where the family stays. For Benny, the action is normal with no harm intended. It is just what he did in Ireland.

However, the action irritates a guard who blames him for damaging the field. Benny's defense shows that he is confused by the blame.

BO-2-P.30 "Earth!" he said. Benny nodded. "Uh-huh." There was earth in Ireland. "You break the earth," grunted the guard, trying to swallow some inexplicable anger. Benny plucked the mucky blob from his huge hands and stamped it into the ground. "Workers make this field," he said in a throaty voice. "It takes two years to make Europeans happy. Now you beat it with a stick." Benny balked. "This is not a stick. This is a precision instrument."

In a different part of the story, Benny's father explains to him how hard it is to plant and maintain green lawns in Tunisia due to the weather. Even though Benny did not intentionally destroy the lawn, the incident makes him start to think about his assumptions. Up until this point, Benny has not reflected on his privilege, however, this incident plants a seed in his mind to start thinking about his definition of normal.

The next excerpt presents a protagonist's challenge of her arrogance. Even though Sofi in *Sofi Mendoza's Guide to Getting Lost in Mexico* has a Mexican background, she is not aware of this as her parents have intentionally raised her as an American girl like her peers. Although her facial features show her family roots, Sofi has never really thought about this relationship. In addition, like many teenagers, she is self-centered and self-absorbed.

In this excerpt, she and her group of friends go to a bar on the first day of their trip to Mexico. They wait for a long time and it makes Sofi angry. Finally when a

bartender comes to help them, Sofi conveys her dissatisfaction. From her words, she thinks they do not deserve this kind of service because they are Americans.

SMG-2-P49-50. “ Finally.” Sofi huffed in annoyance. “I was starting to wonder if there was any decent service around here. We need a bucket of beer? And quick, ’cause my head is banging.” ...” Cer-ve-za, por-fa-vor.” Olivia grabbed Sofi’s wrist. “We should go, Sofi: But Sofi shook herself free. He couldn’t talk to them like this. We were Americans!

This incident exaggerates Sofi’s pride and arrogance. Yet it clearly shows Sofi’s idea that Americans deserve better. At this point, Sofi acts as if the world is turning around her as an American. Mills’ study (2005) points out the same arrogant attitude from one of her protagonist. Because the protagonist in Mill’s study believes America is the best country, she does not understand why people would like to stay at other places. In this excerpt, Sofi feels superior to Mexicans and the servers at the local restaurant due to the wealth of her country. The author uses this excerpt to foreshadow Sofi’s change of her cultural identity and reflection on privilege later in the book.

This theme, discovering the idea of privilege, focuses on the protagonists’ awareness of the concept of privilege. This kind of awareness is crucial because when individuals are able to critically reflect upon on their privilege, it is more possible that they will be willing to use this privilege in order to create a more just environment for other people. The examples in this subcategory do not show any critical understanding

regarding privilege, but they are exposed to the situation in which they have to think about why it is that people's attitudes are different.

Discovering global issues

Several protagonists travel to a poorer country than their own and so are exposed to hardships and issues in the host countries. Many of the issues are beyond their own life experiences. In this theme, the examples relate to the protagonists' discovery of social and global issues. These issues include poverty, economic difference, child labor, and marriage at a young age. The protagonists not only learn about issues that they see firsthand but the experiences simmer in their minds and wait to transform the protagonists throughout their journey.

The example from *Monsoon Summer* explores poverty and the importance of financial independence for females. This excerpt is just one of the examples that describe Jazz's learning about poverty and injustice in India and her observations on living conditions.

MS-2-P. 35 I knew India was a poor country, but it was still a shock to see it with my own eyes. A lot of the children wore rags, and very few of them wore shoes. How did their makeshift houses survive the heavy rains? The walls were made of everything from old crates to rubber tires. One hut was covered with paper bags from a fast-food chain. Somebody had carefully pasted a pattern of golden arches around an entryway.

In this description, Jazz points out her concern regarding home safety. With heavy rains, how could the shaky house survive and how could people live safely? Even though Jazz does not come from a wealthy household and her parents do not value material life, her life is comfortable. Hence, she has her own business in California. Poverty has never been her concern as she is independent. Thus, her firsthand witness of poverty in India is an awakening for Jazz. This awareness later drives her to help other females become financially independent.

Experiencing issues of power

This theme focuses on the protagonists' learning about the issues of power and corruption. The topics in the examples cover corruption by government officers, communist government systems and conflicts in Palestine.

This example is from *Noodle Pie* in which Andy experiences corruption in person. When he and his father arrive at Vietnam airport, the officer asks his father for money for coffee. Andy is very confused by the act.

NP-2-p.15 “ What was that all about? Why did he want money to buy coffee?” ...”Is he allowed to do that?” His father shrugged. “ People warned me it would happen. Many people here trying to make extra money. Especially from tourists and Viet Kieu.”

In the conversation with his father, Andy tries to understand why a government officer would ask for money from other people. This public dishonesty is new for Andy.

However, later in the story, Andy starts to understand how poverty affects local people's

life and their different expectations of foreigners and immigrants. Even though corruption is not appropriate, Andy begins to realize that the world is running with many kinds of rules and, sometimes, these rules are not fair or just.

This subcategory of awareness of global issues does not have ample examples to be included in the data as the stories are about the beginning of a developing awareness. However, from the examples, I learned most of the protagonists start to care about the situations they face. They do not compare their original life to the life in the place they are visiting. In addition, none of them feel thankful or lucky that they live in a better situation as compared to the others' situation. Although their reflection is not critical at this point, the way they reflect on hardship foreshadows the possible actions and transformations of the protagonists in their journeys.

- Development of New Perspectives

This subcategory focuses on the protagonists' development of alternative perspectives through cross-cultural experiences. Due to the fact that the data only covered one third of the story in each book to explore the initial response, there are no substantial changes in the story. More of the changes are found and discussed in question three. However, in this section, many examples address the protagonists' curiosity about differences and I believe their questions are the first step to lead to the development of alternative perspectives. The examples are ones where protagonists start to wonder if there are other alternative possibilities. They are not stubborn to hold onto their own

perspectives anymore and their willingness to explore something new stirs new voices in their minds.

Challenging personal assumptions

This first theme, challenging assumptions, describes the protagonists' questions regarding what they already know about the world. This theme is important as it allows individuals to realize their own bias and prejudice. Byram (1997) mentions that "attitudes which are the pre-condition for successful intercultural interaction need to be not simply positive, since even positive prejudice can hinder mutual understanding" (p. 34). It is important for individuals to recognize their false assumptions and prejudices toward others. The topics that the protagonists are challenged to consider in this set of data are their ideas of gender roles, host culture and people.

This example involves Andy's surprise on how clean the Noi Bai airport is. He sees Vietnam as a third world country in which everything should be messy and dirty. Therefore, the excerpt reveals his surprise when seeing a neat place in Vietnam.

NP-2-p.11.1 Both of them were surprised at how clean and modern Noi Bai airport was. It wasn't like a Third World airport at all, Andy thought. Not that he'd seen any others, but he'd imagined sheds and open tarmacs and beggars, maybe even a cow or two. No, that was India.

Influenced by the popular media or just the lack of information, Vietnam, in Andy's perspective, is a negative place. Throughout the book, he uses the term third world country to describe Vietnam. Even though he never specifically describes the meaning of

the term, it is negative in his perception. Same for India, although he has never been to the country, he already pictures a primitive image. The example above shows Andy's awareness of the false information he holds onto regarding to Vietnam. The example is important to discuss as many protagonists continued to carry their own prior assumptions toward their visiting countries. Whether or not they are able to learn from their own prejudice is important for their intercultural learning process.

Moving beyond personal perspectives

For other themes in this subcategory, I did not find many examples. However, it is still worthy to document so that I will have a clear comparison to understand how the cross-cultural experiences change the protagonists' perspectives.

This theme in general focuses on the protagonists' consideration of other's points of view. Only seven excerpts were found and three of them are from *Red Glass* and address the same topic—taking care of others. The topics include to understand others' past experiences, accept that people are different in the local place, and to consider alternative viewpoints of things.

I use two examples from *Red Glass* to present how a protagonist learns from others to be more considerate and thoughtful. The first one relates to Sophie's learning on how to take care of others from watching how her mother does it. In this book, Sophie is portrayed as a sensitive and timid girl. She is afraid of the unknown and losing her loved ones. At the beginning of the story, she watches how her mother takes care of undocumented immigrants and her post-traumatic distant relative. From her perspective,

her mother represents courage and strength. This excerpt describes Sophie's observation of her mother's interactions with undocumented immigrants.

RG-2-P.15 Mom appeared, her arms filled with boxes from our pantry. Instead of telling me to go back to bed, she handed me crinkly packages of crackers and peanuts. "Pass these out, Sophie. To tide them over till the beans are ready."

They politely accepted the bags from me. "Gracias, senorita."

Mom returned with our best blue towels and sheets, the ones only guests could use. She looked like an angel in her long white robe that trailed behind her like streamers. She distributed glasses and went around with a pitcher, pouring water like a gracious hostess. "Mas agua, senore?" She breezed through the yard, touching women's shoulders lightly, smoothing her hands over children's hair.

People lined up by the hose to wash the dust off their faces and legs and arms, and Mom made sure they each had a washcloth.

Taking an alternative point of view sometimes comes from observation. It is important to see how others handle things in a different manner. In this excerpt, Sophie carefully observes how her mother serves people without judgment. Legal issues do not matter a great deal for her mother when she decides to help the people as they are thirsty and hungry from crossing the border in the desert. What attracts Sophie is her mother's attentive care and gentleness. No coldness or judgment. Sophie absorbs all she has seen and uses the ability in the later of the story.

This next excerpt from *Red Glass* demonstrates Sophie's intention to understand her war-traumatized distant relative, Dika. It is hard for Sophie to understand Dika's behaviors because the way she talks and works on things is different from Sophie. However, Sophie's mother keeps telling her to be patient with Dika so that she will be able to understand her.

RG-2-P.5 For Dika, being woken in the middle of the night meant bombings and attacks. She came from Bosnia and she'd materialized in our lives six months earlier. Dee-da is how she said her name. Trying to understand Dika was like deciphering a code: va were really ws, ds where ths, rolling rrrs were rs. ... Be patient with her, Sophie, Mom kept telling me, the woman barely survived a war. "Seven Mexicans died crossing the dessert. He spoke in Spanish, as he always did when he felt deeply about something. "One boy survived. They found my business card in his pocket."

Sophie could have chosen to reject Dika and refuse to communicate with her. Instead, she follows her mother's suggestion to try to understand her. Later in the story, Dika takes on an important role in inspiring Sophie to be courageous, to believe in herself, and to develop strength. This example shows how the transition of this relationship began early in of the story and that Sophie's connection to people with different cultural backgrounds allows her to develop her personal potential.

The next excerpt presents a second generation immigrant attempting to understand his father's anxiety that is caused by something beyond the protagonist's

personal experience. This excerpt depicts an example of a protagonist's empathy. As the idea of being a refugee is unfamiliar for Andy, especially because his father has not discussed this when they were in Australia, the image of a guard is neutral for Andy. In the conversation, Andy's father explains his anxiety when seeing uniformed guards at the airport. The conversation allows Andy to connect to his father's past experience and to consider his father's needs.

NP-2-p.13.2 "What are you worried about then?" Andy asked in a low voice. Had his father packed something he didn't know about? His father gave a little laugh. "The Customs and Immigrant officers in their green uniforms remind me of soldiers, that's all. I keep expecting to get arrested."

Andy thought of another reason it was important for airport officials to smile and look welcoming: so returning refugees like his father didn't feel nervous or threatened.

The idea of a soldier is not the same as what Andy knows in Australia. Experiencing war in Vietnam, Andy's father did not live in a peaceful era. Therefore, his memory comes back as he sees the officers at the airport. For Andy, officers are just officers. He does not have a particular emotional relation to them. However, he tries to understand his father's anxiety from an alternative perspective. In his mind, he suggests that the officers should be friendlier so that people will not feel threatened. The suggestion indicates his ability to relate to his father's anxiety and to think beyond his personal experience. This incident influences Andy's understanding of his family history.

This theme, moving beyond personal perspective, addresses the examples that present the protagonists' attempt to understand the experiences and events from alternative perspectives. Although not many examples were found in this data set, the examples have already demonstrated some protagonists' tendency to see beyond their own personal understanding.

Discussion

This chapter explores the protagonists' initial responses to the new cultures. The data was gathered through reading and analyzing the texts. After each step, I observed the patterns across the excerpts. I then organized the themes into subcategories and categories. When doing the inferences to make sense of the data, it became apparent that the depiction of the protagonists' initial responses is diverse.

Peter Adler (1975) uses stages to represent cross cultural encounters' experiences. The process includes a honeymoon stage where individuals feel excited about the new environment, a disintegration stage when the individuals are overwhelmed by all the new cues in the new culture, reintegration is when individuals start to integrate new information and to function in the new place, and reciprocal interdependence means individuals develop bicultural identities. In this set of data, many of the protagonists' responses to the new environments match Adler's description. It is not only Adler's, but also, Hoopes' and Bennett's models. Hoopes (1979) focuses more on the change of individuals' perceptions of others. He talks about the process as a continuum from ethnocentrism, awareness of other cultures, understanding of others, acceptance,

appreciation and selective adoption. Bennett's (1986, 1993, 2004a, 2004b) model provides two orientations—ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism—to present the cross cultural encounters' changes of attitudes. The three scholars all present the excitement, confusion and anxiety experienced in the initial cross cultural contacts.

The reason I believe the representation of the protagonists' initial response is diverse is because the representations in excerpts show various emotions and reactions toward their new experiences. For example, the honeymoon stage is seen in the Vassar's excitement when she prepares herself for the journey and tries to use the local language for communication. In her perspective, the cross cultural experience is precious. She even records her journey in order to write a book. Although soon she struggles with cultural experiences, her excitement toward the journey is the only example of this perspective among the other books. Therefore, it is also the only one that matches Adler's description of a honeymoon stage in intercultural learning.

Other types of responses are also located in the egocentric orientation that Hoopes and Bennett describe in their theories but at different levels. First, many protagonists struggled with their initial experiences because they used their own assumptions about other cultures and people to understand their experiences. As Hoopes (1979) explains, personal perception is what determines how individuals interact with the unknown. Besides many of them struggled due to their own close mindedness toward cultural differences, their personality and readiness for the trip affected how they perceived their new experiences. For example, as Benny moved reluctantly to Tunisia, he used hostility

to defend himself. His lack of readiness for the journey aggravated his cultural shock and delayed him from taking on an alternative perspective to interpret his experiences.

In this data set, the lack of critical reflection and thinking is predictable as the authors are just preparing the story lines for the books. However, I was glad to find that at least two protagonists are not portrayed as naive teenagers. These two protagonists, Liyana and Jazz, are sensitive to justice and peace although they do not want to take the trips. Of course, both of them have their own cultural shock and learning from the cross cultural experiences, but with a caring attitude, their responses to cultural differences and injustice issues allow them to connect to local cultures and people in a deeper way. When reflecting upon injustice they see in the visited countries, they are able to more quickly think beyond their own needs and to consider issues from a wider framework. This kind of depiction is worth encouraging so that more sophisticated readers are able to relate to the books.

Conclusion

This chapter uses excerpts from the text set to discuss the protagonists' initial responses to the new cultures. I listed excerpts to present the strategies and attitudes regarding the protagonists' reactions toward their new cultural experiences. These excerpts speak about the protagonists' cultural shock, adaptations and identities. At the end of the chapter, I looked at the data to discuss general patterns. I discussed the connections between the protagonists' attitudes and the theories of intercultural learning scholars. In general, the protagonists are overwhelmed by differences and cultural

stimulations. For most of them, it is their first oversea experience and feels that they are very different from local people. The sense of being an outcast makes them feel lonely and then resistant more to the cultural differences.

I also found that the protagonists rarely took a critical stance to understand their surroundings as they were more occupied with processing the information around them. As most of the protagonists are portrayed as novice travelers, it is difficult for them to set aside their prejudice and to care beyond their own needs. A critical stance that encourages individuals to care for others who are in need is still too early for the protagonists at this point in their journey. However, some authors did touch on social justice issues in the books.

The next chapter explores the influence of the cross cultural experience on the protagonists' intercultural learning. I look at whether or not the cross cultural experiences influence the protagonists and if so, how the experiences change them. The patterns are organized into themes, subcategories and categories.

CHAPTER SIX

CHANGES OF WORLDVIEWS THROUGH JOURNEYS

The third research question addresses on how the cross-cultural experiences influence the protagonists' intercultural learning. The text examples were selected from the end of the protagonists' first day of stay to the end of the stories. Normally, question three covers two-third of the text in each book.

Similar with the coding process for the question two, I listed examples that I thought related to the protagonists' learning processes after first reading through the books again. After listing the examples, I sorted them out according to themes. I then, created subcategories and categories in order to understand the influence of these cross-cultural experiences to the protagonists.

Overview on the Definitions of Categories

Three categories emerged from the data. They are: developing cultural knowledge, developing alternative cultural perspective, and critical intercultural competence (Table: 6:1). The category of *developing cultural knowledge* includes the examples regarding to the protagonists' observation and learning about cultural information. *Developing alternative cultural perspective* describes the protagonists' learning processes toward new cultures. The last one, *critical intercultural competence* focuses on the protagonists' critical awareness about injustices in the world. In addition, it highlights their ability to take action to change injustices. Under the three categories, several subcategories are organized to explain the protagonists' intercultural learning experiences.

Category	Subcategory	Theme
Developing Cultural Knowledge	Knowledge of Surface Culture	Symbolic presentation
		Place and history
		Daily life
	Knowledge of Value and Belief	N/A
Developing Alternative Cultural Perspectives	Egocentrism	Naïve and optimistic views
		Materialism
		Perception of local lifestyles
		I vs. them opposition
		Perception on local people and place
	Awareness and Understanding	Expectation of relationship
		Language exploration
		Ethical and social values
	Acceptance and Appreciation	Interest in the local culture
		Exploration of local culture
		Connection to local culture and people
	Change	Exploration of multiple interpretations
		Local perspectives of self
		Cross-cultural communication and competency
	Critical Intercultural	Connection between Self

Competence	and the World	Awareness of social issues
	Courage to Change	N/A

Table 6-1: Overview of Categories, Subcategories and Themes on Changes of Worldviews.

The following paragraphs will present detailed definitions of each category and subcategories. Examples from the texts will be presented to demonstrate the themes under each subcategory.

Developing Cultural Knowledge

This category focuses on the protagonists' learning about cultural information regarding the host country. It includes the cultural information that is offered to the protagonists as well as the protagonists' self-observation about the place. An important feature in this category is that the protagonists do not reflect on the cultural information. In other words, the cultural information is designed by the authors to facilitate readers' understanding toward the host countries.

Under this category, two subcategories are adapted to explain the data. They are knowledge of surface culture and knowledge of value and belief.

- Knowledge of Surface Culture

The knowledge of surface culture is adapted from Fennes and Hapgood's (1997) iceberg model of culture (see Figure: 2.1). In this model, they claim that surface culture is the cultural artifacts that people tend to notice while getting to know a place. Some

examples of these cultural artifacts include art, cooking, dress and so forth. While these cultural artifacts are important information to aid people's cultural understandings, Fennes and Hapgood (1979) explain that these cultural artifacts are at a surface level and lack of understanding about deeper levels of culture.

This subcategory collected cultural artifacts in the texts. After sorting the twenty eight examples, three themes are adapted to explain the data. These themes include symbolic representation, place and history and daily life. In the following, I will use the examples to demonstrate the relationship between the themes and the knowledge of surface culture.

Symbolic presentation

Culture is presented through a set of symbolic forms to reveal the story of a place. Some examples of the forms are music, folktale, and arts. These symbolic forms are apparent and easily identified for cultural encounters as Fennes and Hapgood (1997) describe in the iceberg model of culture. In this theme, the cultural artifacts include language, dance, music and dress.

The excerpt is chosen from *Hannah's Winter*. In this book, Meehan carefully portrays the features of Japanese culture. The storyline in this excerpt happens on the second day of Hannah's stay in Japan. During her trip, she stays with the family of her mother's Japanese friend. The family owns a paper shop which Hannah finds fascinating. Because of Hannah's mother's interest in Japan, Hannah has learned Japanese since she

was young. She has no problem communicating with local people. In this example, Hannah describes the feature of Japanese language that uses gender to describe objects.

HW-3-P.37 We sauntered on towards the river. There are two rivers in Kanazawa, the masculine Sai and the feminine Asano. The Japanese often say things are masculine or feminine. Black pine trees are masculine, red pines are feminine. Mulberry paper is masculine, but paper from the mitsumata tree is feminine. I think it's weird, but my mother told me NEVER TO SAY THAT TO A JAPANESE PERSON. So I didn't mention it when Okaasan told me about the rivers, even though I would have liked to ask for an explanation.

The excerpt introduces Japanese without a deeper explanation of the nature of the language. In addition, Meehan reveals a cultural rule that people should not proclaim the language is strange. It is no way to know if it is Meehan's personal experience that led her to comment on this social rule. However, the rule sends a message to readers that Japanese does not accept comments and questions. Hence, since Hannah is aware of the social rule, she withholds her question on the gender of river in the language. Hannah's response shows her awareness of cultural differences. In the description, Meehan raises readers' interest in the language while, at the same time, she tries to create an image that Japan is mysterious to fulfill the aura of the storyline.

The following excerpt is collected from *Monsoon Summer*. It was the protagonist's second day in the India. She was strolling down the street. From her observation, Indian woman wear sarees and sawar kameez. The clothes are colorful and

patterned. From the protagonist's observation, Indian woman's dresses are various and functional.

MS -3-p.52 I slowed to a walk as soon as I reached the small market at the foot of the hill. The stores were more crowded than I'd thought they would be.

Sundays were obviously big shopping days here. Indian women moved easily in their flowing sarees which were six and a half yards of cloth they wrapped and tucked around their bodies. Some of them wore sawar kameez, a matching set of baggy pants, long tunic, and scarf. Brilliantly patterned cloth swirled and rustled around me. A few girls had fragrant white blossoms woven into their braids.

In Perkins' words, sarees were not an exotic dress for Jazz. Instead, Jazz was able to appreciate sarees. Rather than being seen as a way to show female figures, sarees and sawar kameez are functional in the Indian women's daily life. The author uses the clothes as a cultural icon to help readers create visual images of India.

Place and history

The theme of place and history relates to historical information and the influence of history on the development of a host country. The information is presented to the protagonists without the protagonists' deeper reflection. There are thirteen examples in this theme. In the following, I list two examples to explain this theme.

The first example is from *Monsoon Summer*. The example illustrates Jazz's learning about Pune. While the whole family's arrival at India, they took the train toward

their final destination. In the train, Jazz was observing the city of Pune. In her observation, Pune is mixed with complexity.

MS -3-p.48 Not all of Pune was poor. Five-star hotels towered over tiny tents where families cooked and slept. Fat, rich businessmen bargained with bony women carrying heavy baskets of mangoes on their heads. Expensive, shiny cars honked at children with matted brown-yellow hair. “Why is their hair yellow, Mom?” Eric shouted over the roar of the engine. “Sign of malnutrition,” Mom yelled back.

In this excerpt, Pune in Perkins’ description is complex; it is not simply an outdated place or a prosperous city. Instead, like many other cities, Pune has its bright side and failing aspect. Poor and rich are coexisted in the city. Readers are able to see Pune from various aspects. In addition, through Perkin’s words, she leads readers to see the social issues in this place and the excerpt provides a glimpse of the social concerns described in the book.

Next example highlights the influence of an historical event on a city’s formation and changing its modern culture. The excerpt is from *Noodle Pie*. In a coffee shop, Andy’s father explains to Andy about the influence of France on food during its occupation.

NP-3-p.46 His father, smiling in anticipation, lifted the lid and showed Andy the ground coffee inside. “We can thank the French for breakfast,” he said. “The French? Why?” Andy asked. “Coffee, bread, cheese, croissants . . . all from French. They ruled Vietnam for seventy years, you know.” “but people still eat

pho for breakfast.” His father nodded. “Every Vietnamese eat Pho for breakfast, rich or poor, French or not French.” He finished his coffee.

Even though Andy has a relationship with Vietnam, the country is very unfamiliar. He had no idea on its history, culture, and people. It seems like Vietnamese culture has no trace in his home in Australia even though it is his father’s birth country. Starke uses Andy to facilitate the understandings of readers whose knowledge about Vietnam is not much better than Andy’s. Thus, Vietnam’s past and food traditions are presented as information through Andy in order to help readers to develop cultural knowledge.

Daily life

Daily life covers regular living experiences in the host culture. In the data, the protagonists learn information regarding schooling, weather, and spirituality. The following excerpt represents authors’ intentions to provide readers basic information about the host cultures in the stories. As the authors’ intended readers are generally someone who does not have direct background with the host countries, it is important to provide description of the cultural differences to bridge readers’ comprehension.

The excerpt is chosen from the story of *Monsoon Summer*. The conversation in the excerpt happens after a home visit that Jazz’s mother participated in during her work day. She shares with her family what she saw in a Muslim family and explains to them marital expectations in Hindi, Christianity and Islam.

MS -3-p.101 “...I had tea this morning with two girls who seemed like sisters. It turned out they were wives of the same husband.” “What!” Dad and I exclaimed

together. Mom reached over to take Dad's hand. "Hindu and Christian men can only have one wife at a time. Muslim men, on the other hand, can have up to six. They're subject to their own Islamic law when it comes to families."

In Perkins' story, India has multiple faces. Besides Hinduism, Perkins tried to include other religions in her story for readers to understand India. In this excerpt, Islamic law regarding marriage was not discussed and the three religions are presented as cultural facts. The action of Jazz's mother toward her husband shows that Perkins favors a single wife policy. Without broader and deepen information regarding Islamic law, the description of cultural information is on the surface.

- Knowledge of Value and Belief

Value and belief are crucial elements for individuals to understand a culture from a deeper perspective. However, they tend to be abstract for cultural encounters to grasp as they are harder to describe than the cultural artifacts discussed in the previous subcategory. The knowledge of value and belief in this subcategory describes cultural information regarding the cultural values and beliefs that are embraced in the host country. These values and beliefs include gender perception, human relationship, social hierarchy, idea of politeness, and sense of cleanliness.

The first example relates to the perception of gender. In *Monsoon Summer*, Jazz's mother is explaining to the family about the role of female and early marriage in India. The protagonist, Jazz, and her family do not know the concept of dowry and why their helper, Danita, has to find money to pay for marriage. In addition, it is very hard for Jazz

to accept the fact that Indian girls are married at her age. As an independent female herself growing up in Californian, Danita's situation is indeed shocking to her.

MS -3-p.62 "Isn't fifteen sort of young to have a full-time job?" I asked.

"Not really. Danita's finished Asha Bari's academic program. She speaks excellent English. Working for us is a chance for her. She needs to earn money for a dowry."

"What's a dowry?" Eric asked,.... "It's the money a bride's family agrees to give the groom's family when they get married," Mom explained. "Danita doesn't have parents, so she'll have to come up with the money herself."

"Doesn't the groom's family have to give anything?" I asked. "Besides, this girl's too young to be thinking about marriage."

"Not in India," Mom answered. "Girls from poor family don't have much choice. They're considered a liability because they can't earn money. That's why they pay dowries. Sister Das asked us to hire Danita as a favor to the orphanage. They simply can't afford to pay dowries for all the girls."

Through the words, it is clear that Perkins provides the cultural information for her Western readers who live in a similar culture as Jazz. Perkins assumes that her readers do not understand the gender inequality in India so that she has to provide the information to bridge their cultural comprehension.

The next excerpt is an example to describe cultural information regarding expectations of males in a traditional Chinese family. In *Carpe Diem*, Vassar carried a

high expectation for herself and her parents. In her life before the trip in south Asia, she eagerly pursued academic achievement. In her dictionary, academia promises a bright future. Even though her parents expect her to follow the path, Vassar is aware that she has the choice to do something she likes.

However, it is not the situation for her Chinese descent Malaysian male friend, Hanks. In the excerpt, Cornwell describes traditional Chinese expectation for males through Vassar's conversation with Hanks. Vassar connects with the boy through high expectations from families; however, their situations differ as the Malaysian boy rebels against his family and societal expectation.

CD-3-P.186-187 “You’re really serious about this novel business.” “It’s my only chance at valedictorian, which means Vassar, which means a lot to Mom and Dad.” “But not you?” “Of course it does. But it means more to them. It’s only natural. They’ve been looking forward to me attending? for years. For years.” In front of me, Grandma Gerd made a sound like a “harrumph.”

“But it’s your life, not theirs.”

What was the use arguing with someone who didn’t know a Latin suffix from a prefix.

He offered me a Chupa sucker. I shook my head. He popped it into his mouth.

“I know how you feel. My parents pushed me for years. No grade was good enough, no score high enough. They kept comparin’ me to my cousin, a

nuclear physicist. But I'm no physicist. The fact I was good at sports didn't count. Finally I got fed up and told them I wasn't going to college. Period."

"What happened?"

He shrugged, then laughed flatly. "Dad disowned me."

"Really?" it was obviously a wound that still marked.

"Yep. Wouldn't talk to me for months. Acted like I wasn't there. Wrote me out of his will. Keep in mind, I was 'dishonoring' the entire family. To the Chinese, there's nothin' worse than that. Mom, my aunties, my grannies, even my cousin, all went to temple day after day to light joss sticks, hopin' our dead ancestors would change Dad's mind."

In this excerpt, Cornwell tried to describe family tension in traditional Chinese culture. She intended for her readers to grasp a sense of hierarchy and family values in a Chinese family through Hanks' words. In order for her readers to understand why it is a big issue for Hanks to give up on college for his interest in sports, Cornwell has to provide cultural information for western readers. Same as previous examples, the cultural information in this theme is used to facilitate readers' comprehension.

Developing Alternative Cultural Perspectives

This category focuses on the protagonists' developmental process of intercultural learning. It covers the different aspects of intercultural learning processes that the protagonists experience. After listing and sorting the examples of individual attitudes toward new cultures in the texts, four aspects were identified for the subcategory. The

four subcategories include Egocentrism, Awareness and Understanding, Acceptance and Appreciation as well as Change.

At the egocentrism stage, the protagonists believe their cultures and worldviews are the correct ones to follow. They tend to use their own cultural background to judge other cultures. In acceptance and understanding, the protagonists begin to be aware of cultural differences. They have not yet taken others' perspectives but, they start to question whether other possibilities exist. Acceptance and Appreciation is the stage when the protagonists show interest in cultural differences. They might not like other cultures but they are willing to try and develop closer relationships with local people. The last stage in this category is change. It means that the protagonists adapt the local lifestyle, local way of thinking and multiple interpretations to understand themselves and the world. In their minds, the world is not black and white anymore. There are many possibilities worthy to explore.

- Egocentrism

Egocentrism refers to individuals' conservative attitudes toward new cultures. For Hammer, Bennett and Wiseman (2003), egocentrism means individuals perceive their own cultural is central and the only reality. As a result, individual might not be able to differentiate cultural differences or deny cultural differences by judging the new cultures they encounter.

In sum, the definition of egocentrism indicates the protagonists' self-centered perspectives on cultural differences. In some cases, they are not aware of cultural

differences. They show no interest and intention of understanding cultural differences they encounter. Moreover, they judge and interpret local cultures according to their own cultural backgrounds.

Naïve and optimistic views

Naïve and optimistic views explain the protagonists' skeptical perspectives on the issues they encounter in the new culture. An important factor to note in this text set is that most protagonists come from a wealthy and safe country such as America and Australia. Therefore, they are less familiar with issues such as war and racial conflicts. Moreover, since they are from a middle class or wealthy family, many of them never experience poverty themselves. The lack of exposure to complicated issues causes them to simplify problems. In sum, the protagonists in this theme adapt a naïve and optimistic perspective to interpret complicated issues in the host country. As a result, their skeptical perspective prevents them from developing deeper understanding.

The first example is from *Habibi* in which Liyana and Omer, her Jewish friend, talk about the idea of being chosen. Because of Liyana's support of world peace, she judges Omer's perspective. The whole conversation centers on Liyana's belief in an equal chance for all human beings.

HA-3-p.178 The Abbouds did not believe in the devil, except the devilish spirit inside people doing bad things. They did not believe in hell, or anybody being “chosen” over anybody else---which Liyana had to ask Omer about. He looked

sober. He told her the Jewish idea of being “chosen” meant more than he could explain. “Maybe Jews are also chosen to suffer. Or to be better examples.”

Liyana said, “It seems like big trouble any way you look at it. I’m sorry, but I don’t like it. Do you believe you’re chosen? It sounds like the teacher’s pet.” He didn’t know what that was. “It’s not a question of believing,” he said.

“What do you mean?”

Omer said, “It’s more like—history. A history way of —looking at ourselves—and things.”

Liyana felt gloomy, “And it’s history that gave us all these problems,” she said. “I think as long as anybody feels chosen, the problems will get worse.”

Liyana believes that whole human beings should be the same because of her belief in world peace. Therefore, she interprets the issue from a humanistic perspective. However, for Omer, the idea of chosen has connection with his identity. The history is about his identity and how he understands himself. Nevertheless, in their conversation, Liyana bluntly judges the idea of chosen as teacher’s pet and history. In this conversation, there is no true dialogue that allows both of them to understand each other. The author, Nye, simply used Liyana’s role to express her concern about peace without further description on Omer’s thought in order for a deeper cross cultural experience exchange.

The following excerpt is also from *Habibi*. While their initial stay in Palestine, Liyana experienced a great deal of different gender expectations from America and Palestine in which she struggles and objects to the treatment of females. Before the whole

family leaves for Palestine, her father asks her not to bring any clothes that expose her body parts. Liyana is not happy about this request. From her western perspective, the rule is not to protect her but to deprive her of her rights. In the following excerpt, a similar gender request is made by her father again while they are in Palestine. She is asked not to comb her hair on the balcony. Liyana soon defends herself through her western perspective in which she supports choices for female. In this excerpt, it is clear that Liyana is struggling with two cultural expectations: one is from her upbringing while the other one is from her heritage.

HA-3-p.125 The minute Poppy told her to stop combing her hair on the balcony, she toppled onto the American side, thinking, if I were at home on a beach I could run up and down the sand with just a bathing suit on and no one would even notice me. I could wear my short shorts that I didn't bring and hold a boy's hand in the street without causing an earthquake. I could comb my wet hair in public for a hundred dumb years.

The issue with combing hair in public is a lot more complicated than personal preference. It is the expectation of females in Palestine. It involves local people's perspective on how females should behave in that culture. In the description, the author, Nye, appropriately captures the American teenager's rebellion to support her choice when she is asked to constrain herself. However, she neglects to help her readers understand the consequence of inappropriate behavior in a Muslim culture. In the story plot, there is no description of Liyana's attempt to understand the danger or reason of why she shouldn't comb her hair

in public. The lack of explanation leaves readers with a gap to fill in by themselves or they might develop a skeptical impression of female oppression without deeper understanding. In sum, this example indicates Liyana's naïve views on females in Palestine. She did not intend to explore the complicated issues behind the role of females but hopes to behave the same way as in America.

Materialism

Capitalism is referred to as an economic system in a society which favors ownership of wealth by individuals or corporations. In this subcategory, capitalism indicates the protagonists' favor of money, production, and economical activities. The protagonists' values system is guided by material satisfaction.

For example, in *Hot Scots, Castles, and Kilts*, Sami was not able to understand why people want to come to Scotland farmland for a vacation. From her perspective, it is impossible that people want to experience medieval life instead of enjoying themselves in a modern society. The example below reveals her thoughts that American eagles are more interesting than farmland. Moreover, dressing up in a certain way is meaningful for her. It represents tastes and life style. It is obvious that her attitude of value is influenced by capitalist society. Money and economic activity are significant events in life. This attitude prohibits her from understanding the life style that she is not familiar with.

HCK-3- P.70 MacKensie Manor is beautiful. Back home we live in a rural community and I see farmland every day, but here it's different. The land rolls, and when you reach the top of a hill, there are small valleys waiting below.

It's like the green pastures, trees, and lakes are inviting you into their magical world.

Okay, enough of the magical mushy6 stuff.

We stopped and Fiona spread out a small wool blanket. "This is it," she said. "My favorite place in the world."

Do I have a favorite place in the world? Maybe the American Eagle store back home. Fine-I'm shallow. But at least I dress well.

Another example about capitalism is from *Noodle Pie*. Growing in Australia, Andy is more familiar with restaurants that are well-decorated and clean. Because of his idea of how a restaurant should look like, he does not agree that the family restaurant his Vietnam family manages should be called a restaurant. From the first day he sees the place, he wonders how this place could be popular as others' claim. For him, the place is unclean. As shown in the excerpt, even after seeing guests coming nonstop and trying the food himself, he still insists that this place is only an eating joint.

NP-3-p.57 "Good food, good cooking," his father said. "Now you see why this places so popular. I didn't exaggerate, did I?" Not about that, But it was still a little local eating joint, not a swanky restaurant. There'd been a heap of exaggeration about that!

Andy's attitude about the family restaurant explains the influence of corporate business in western society. A restaurant for him should be more than functional. It not only provides food for customers. In fact, the atmosphere is crucial. He brings his own cultural ideas to

judge this family restaurant. This attitude prevents him from understanding the value of the place from local perspectives.

Perception of local lifestyles

This theme of perception of local lifestyles explains the protagonists' idea of local life. In this data set, the story plot touches on the living experience of food, hygiene, schooling and ways of thinking. The protagonists react to the local lifestyle with negativity. They reject differences and think their own life styles are the valued and better one.

In the example of *Carpe Diem*, Vassar likes routine and things that she can expect. However, her travel companion, her grandma, is a vibrating person whose personality is totally different from her. Their difference allows Vassar to try something new that she would never try if she traveled on her own.

The following excerpt relates to the rejection of food. Vassar's grandma knew that Vassar would not try durian; she puts a bite of durian into Vassar's mouth to taste without Vassar's permission. Immediately, Vassar hates the taste. She goes to clean her tongue and mouth.

CD-3-P.85-86 "Here, taste." Before I could dodge her, Grandma Gerd shoved a chunk of white into my mouth. The assault on my nostrils and the conflicting savory-sweet-onion-dip taste propelled me into the bathroom, where I deposited my mouthful into the toilet. When I emerged, Grandma Gerd was still chewing contentedly. Savoring.

“Not your cup o’ tea, eh?”

“What was that!?”

“Durian. The most popular fruit in Malaysia. A delicacy. You just don’t have the palate for it. Yet.”

I shuddered and scraped every last bit off my tongue with a Kleenex. She would be waiting a long time. I’d never encountered a worse flavor in my life—and that included the time when I was five and ate Dad’s antiperspirant deodorant stick.

In the excerpt, Vassar refuses the food immediately. She does not even try to feel the texture or smell. In addition, her comparison of the food to nonfood items reveals her rejection of this new experience. The example implies Vassar’s egocentric attitude toward unknown living experiences.

Moreover, Autumn’s description of Vassar’s attitude toward the food provides her readers with an inappropriate impression for cross cultural understanding. In her description, readers have no way to imagine how the food looks or tastes. The lack of information prevents readers from creating a positive impression toward the new cultural experience as well.

The next example relates to the protagonists’ perception of hygiene in the host culture. These hygiene problems usually involve the use of a toilet and food sanitation. In this excerpt from *Sofi Mendoza’s Guide to Getting Lost in Mexico*, Sofi faced the challenge of flushing toilet paper in Mexico. One day, her aunt is angry at her because

Sofi threw toilet paper into the toilet bowl and clogged it. For Sofi, it is natural to throw toilet paper into the toilet as her old habit in America. She never thought there would be a place where you should not do it.

SMG-3-P.114 “We do not put paper in the toilet. That’s what this bag here is for.” She picked up a plastic bag full of paper wads. Gross! Sofi thoughts as she tiptoed around trying not to ruin her shoes. “ I want you to unclog the toile with this.” She handed her the hanger. And don’t put paper in there again.” Luisa turned and noticed Yesenia watching from the door. “Let’s go, Let’s go,” her aunt said in a heavy accent. She clapped her hands together.

Sofi heard the back screen door slam shut. The sound of running water filled the air. With the coast hanger in hand, Sofi broke down quietly by herself.

What had she done to deserve this?

From Sofi’s perspective, she feels unfairness at being treated rudely by her aunt. Her cultural shock experience limits her ability to adapt to a new way of thinking in order to understand the cultural difference. Moreover, she does not try to understand why the toilet in Mexico is different from America and what difference in piping or swage system design causes different life styles.

Instead, she judges the difference and pities herself for having to stay in such a place. Her negative perception of the place without a second thought indicates her egocentric attitude in the cross cultural experience.

I vs. Them Opposition

The theme of I and them opposition explains the protagonists' attitudes to distinguish themselves from local people. In the fourteen examples in this theme, some protagonists distance themselves from local people by acknowledging they are superior to other. In addition, homesickness is also included in this theme because it is a sign indicating that the protagonists are outsiders of the local places.

The first example is from *Noodle Pie*. It presents protagonists' disconnection with the new place and culture. In the excerpt, Andy wants to know why they have to stay in the family house which is small and uncomfortable. The conversation shows Andy's concept of house and personal space which are what he is more familiar with in Australia.

NP-3-p.39 If this was the best house in the street, as Auntie Mo had said, what could the others be like?

“Dad, why didn't we stay at a hotel?” he asked.

His father climbed into his side of the bed. “everybody would be hurt and offended. Family home is for family. Parents, sisters, brother, nephews, nieces all live here. They the people we come here to see. Why would we leave them for hotel?

We'd have more room. And your own bathroom.”

“We already have more space than anyone else in house,”

Her father said (...). Andy felt greedy and ungrateful. He changed the subject.

Moreover, he asks his father why they cannot stay at a hotel. His statements indicate that, first, this place is frustrating. A house in his idea should be bigger with more privacy. Second, a cozy place is Andy's concern rather than the family. It is clear that at this point, Andy think he and his father are one team and the family member is another. It is the "us and them" binary. However, his father, who grew up in Vietnam culture, understands it is important for them to stay with the family. Their stay indicates family bond, trust, and pride.

This excerpt represents protagonists' refusal to engage with local people even though they are relatives. They have not yet developed a sense of togetherness, but are merely temporarily visiting the place.

The second example relates to the protagonists' sense of superiority. The protagonist thinks that her culture or her own group is more important than others. An example would be in the book of *Sofi Mendoza's Guide to Getting Lost in Mexico*. During Sofi's initial trip in Mexico with her classmates, she enjoyed all the luxurious activities designed for tourists. In her idea, Americans deserve all the good things. They have money to spend for enjoyment. In an occasion at a bar, she and her friends wait for a long time to be served. She is very angry and demands quicker service, shouting that she is an American. Her words indicate her sense of superiority as an American who is different from the local people.

Sofi retains this idea of superiority even after she is denied entry to the United States American due to her visa issues. During her stay in Mexico, she has to live with

her uncle and uncle's family. In this excerpt, her cousin, Yesenia, is touring the house with her. She explains to Sofi how to use water in the home because some water is not clean. Sofi is surprised to learn that the family does not drink the water directly from the faucet as Americans do. Her questions irritate Yesenia.

SMG-3-P.88 Yesenia walked over to the faucet and turned it on and off. “We use this for washing dishes and cleaning. We use that”—she pointed to a freestanding water dispenser in the corner—“for cooking and drinking.” The drinking-water container was draped with a canary-yellow crocheted cover.

“You mean you don’t drink the water, either? I thought that was just for Americans,” Sofi said. Uncle Victor watched their lips, trying to follow the conversation.

Yesenia rolled her eyes. “Anyone can get sick from the water. Not just Americans.”

Sofi flinched, felling like she’d somehow insulted Yesenia without meaning to.

Sofi’s question is naïve. She dismisses the needs of local people. However, more importantly, she sees Americans as desiring cleaner water than Mexicans. Her question not only shows the disconnection between her and the local people, it only demonstrates her careless regard of local people’s needs. Coming from a wealthy country, poverty is a distant issue for Sofi. At this stage during her trip, she still thinks of herself as deserving everything. Subconsciously, she thinks she is different from the local people. .

The next example reveals the protagonists' awareness of themselves as outsiders. They are aware that they are different from local people. They are different in many ways, such as languages, value systems, eating habits, and so forth. Because they are aware they are different from local people and not unfamiliar with local culture and contexts, they feel they do not fit in the place.

An excerpt that describes the protagonists' feeling as an outsider is in *Habibi*. It is their family's first dinner with relatives in the village in Palestine. Liyana already feels awkward because of cultural differences. One of her father's brothers even asks his father's permission to marry Liyana to his son. Liyana feels shocked. In this excerpt, it shows Liyana's discomfort in being with her relatives.

HA-3-p.60 Liyana wished Uncle Zaki, Poppy's elder brother, had not asked "for her hand" for his son on their second trip to the village. Poppy got so furious, he actually hissed, and translated his answer for them later. "We do not embrace such archaic customs, and furthermore, does she look ready to be married? She is fourteen years old." In the village everyone seemed to be staring at her now as if she were an exotic animal in a zoo. She felt awkward around her relatives, as if they had more in mind for her than she could ever have dreamed.

The experience of herself as an outsider puts Liyana in an uncomfortable place. It seems like she is losing control of her life. After this dinner, she is worried to come to the village alone even though her grandmother invites her many times. This example shows

the distinction between themselves and the local people. Being self-consciousness, the protagonists disconnect themselves from local people and culture.

Perception on local people and place

This theme includes the protagonists' impression about local places and people. The examples collected represent two types of perceptions. The first type relates to the protagonists' prior knowledge and stereotypes toward their host country and local people as influenced by public media. The second type of examples relate to the protagonists' own perceptions of local people and place. Specifically, their idea is often that local people like to take advantage of others. In this theme, the protagonists hold a self-interested attitude to interpret their cross cultural experiences.

The first example shows the protagonist's stereotypes toward the host country. In the book, *Hot Scots, Castles, and Kilts*, Sami avoids buying clothes that have plaid before leaving for Scotland because she is concerned about clan wars. Her words reveal her own ideas toward the place as influenced by information from her surroundings.

HSCK-3- P.36 There people were insane. Medieval reenactments, clan wars, family crypts in the basement, blood of Satan... What had Mom gotten us into?

This example indicates a stereotype toward Scottish culture. Because of the influence of media, each individual holds certain stereotypes toward certain groups. Without identifying our own stereotype in order to provide a fair perception toward others, individuals are restricted to their own egocentric thoughts. Those stereotypical thoughts prevent opportunities to understand others who are different.

In the following example, the protagonist thinks local people like to take advantage of others who have the ability to offer more. In *Noodle Pie*, Andy is struggling with different cultural values from strangers and relatives. It seems like everywhere he goes, people are rude or greedy. In this excerpt, he goes sightseeing with his father. They encounter several incidents where people, who they either know or do not know, ask for money or help from his father. Andy is struggling with their demands and does not understand why people think they can take advantage of Andy and his father.

NP-3-p.76 (take advantage from whoever can offer) He frowned. Why was he concerned about appearing rude? Greed and bad manners surrounded him on all sides, at the airport, on the streets, and even here in his own family's home. Nobody did anything or offered anything without demanding a price, and an inflated price at that. The three-dollar map, for instance. Andy had later spotted identical ones on sale in a kiosk for a third of the price. His father must be fed up too. Every local who crossed their path seemed to demand money from him. Andy thought it had something to do with the gold watch and diamond ring. You might as well hold up a sign for the beggars and street vendors, *I'm rich, come and hassle me!* And being Viet Kieu conferred no advantages. If anything, it was worse than being an ordinary tourist because people expressed more from you. *You have so much and I have so little.*

The annoyance Andy feels is a sign of cultural difference. He does not understand local people's idea of property, ways of showing appreciation, and concept of sharing. Other

examples in the data set also indicate misunderstandings of cultural differences. It is hard for the protagonists who come from self-sufficient cultures that highlight individualism to interpret local people's behavior and so they the protagonists judge others through their own values.

The following example also demonstrates the protagonist's negative attitude toward local people. In *Monsoon Summer*, Jazz believes that local people use their circumstance to demand help from her family. Jazz rejects the orphanage in India because of her personal struggle with her ability to help. In order to make herself feel comfortable, she decides not to join any activity in the orphanage. This excerpt shows Jazz's disappointment when her father decides to join the rest of the family to help at the orphanage. Her attitude towards her father's motive for participating at the orphanage and helping/Sister Das are negative.

MS -3-p.49 What? My Father-spending an entire summer inside an orphanage? I would have doubted what I'd heard if Mom and Eric weren't gaping at Dad, too....what in the world did he mean by "Payback time"? it sounded like a phrase in one of those old Western novels he read on vacation. I studied Dad's face and noticed all kinds of new lines and wrinkles I'd never seen before. Maybe that monsoon madness Sister Das had told us about had already begun to affect him. If so, she was certainly taking full advantage of it.

The next day when Jazz passes the orphanage, she rushes away. In the following excerpt, her running away again shows her perception and rejection of the place.

MS -3-p.52 I passed Asha Bari's gates and heard children singing inside the orphanage. Crossing the street, I jogged even faster. Come Wednesday morning, those gates were going to suck the rest of my family inside. There was no way they were getting me, too.

Jazz's perspectives toward the orphanage are not influenced by public media or other's information. It is actually her denial of herself because she does not believe that she has the ability to help. This excerpt shows another reason for the influence of perceptions about local people and culture.

- Awareness and Understanding

This subcategory refers to the protagonists' initial awareness of cultural differences. Janet Bennett (1998) uses the term cultural shock to explain individuals' loss and unfamiliarity within their new cultural experience. The experience with cultural shock provides the potential for personal growth and the development of intercultural competence.

For analysis, I collected the excerpts which indicate the protagonists' acknowledgment of cultural differences, their anxieties, and their questions about the new experiences. Different from the previous subcategory, egocentrism, the protagonists' attitudes in this subcategory do not involve bluntly judging or resisting cultural differences based on their past experiences. Rather, they are confused and wonder about different cultural experiences.

In all the excerpts for this subcategory, three themes are organized to explain the types of cultural awareness that the protagonists developed and cultural understandings that they have come to comprehend. The three themes include the expectation of relationships, language exploration, and ethnical and social values.

Expectation of relationships

Hofstede (1997) uses the idea of power and distance to explain people's acceptance of authority in different cultures. He explains that in a large power distance culture, people accept authority and order. They also expect inequality in relationships. In contrast, in a small power distance culture, decision making is decentralized. People tend to share responsibility. Moreover, they question inequality in relationships. Hofstede's theories reveal a fundamental idea for human relationships in which human beings relate to each other in different ways according to their cultural backgrounds. When people move into a culture that favors a certain communication style, it is normal for them to struggle with the differences.

Thus, this theme is used to explain different expectations of human relationships in the texts. The excerpts include the protagonists' awareness of gender expectations and communication styles.

An example for the difference in communication style is in the book about Benny and Omar. During his stay in Tunisia, Benny went to an international school in which the communication style is different from his hometown. The principal and teachers are Americans. In the story, the American educators like to maintain a warm and harmonic

atmosphere among peers. The teacher studied psychology and likes to have students talk about their feelings. However, Benny has a direct and sarcastic personality. It is very difficult for him to accept this communication style. The following excerpt presents Benny's reflections on different types of relationships and his perceptions toward them.

BO-3-P.72 Zoe splurged out a mouthful of brown banana mush. "C'mon, Benny boy. You're the one making everyone, like, nervous." Benny blinked. "Me?" He looked to Grace for support. "It's true, Benny. Every time you open your mouth it's to tease someone." "It is not." Ed and Heather nodded over their cups. "Gang up on me, why don't you?" muttered Benny. Grace sighed. "Here we go again."

Benny opened his mouth to object but he couldn't. For a split second, he grasped how simple it would be for him to fit in. All he had to do was to accept everyone here at face value. No more smart aleckry, just be nice for a change. His brain was about to unfold this revelation, when he noticed a mosquito straddling his shinbone.

Benny's sarcastic communication style is acceptable in his own family and culture.

However, it is perceived as teasing by his peers in Tunisia. Even though he is aware of the communication style the peers encourage, he does not agree with it. Hence, he thinks that harmonic communication is fake and superficial. Benny's awareness of different communication style and his refusal of this type of relationship is a sign of cultural shock. Before he is able to adapt to difference, he struggles in the mix of the two cultures.

Language exploration

This theme includes the protagonists' wonder and exploration of different languages. They recognize language differences. In this theme, there are only two examples found in the data that express the protagonist's experience with language difference.

The following example is from *Hot Scots, Castles, and Kilts*. Sami was having a hard time understanding her Scottish friends' English. But the longer she stays there; she becomes able to communicate better with them. Besides English, Scotland has local dialects. One is Gaelic and is primarily spoken by local people. In this excerpt, Sami and her friends are strolling in a local festival and she finds herself lost in people's communication because many vendors speak Gaelic.

HSCK-3- P.161 As we walked, people shouted out, barking their goods, trying to get passersby to stop. I'd just gotten to the point where I could understand Molly, Adan, Fiona, and Shane. But I was lost here. Molly said a lot of the vendors were speaking Gaelic.

When visiting a country, language conflict is one of the factors that people need to deal with. No matter if people can understand the local language, just by listening to the different accents and usages, the unfamiliarity adds to the difficulty of adjustment to the new environment. Sami's emotional transition in the text presents a great case to explain cultural shock. The language barrier prevents her from integrating into the local cultures. The feeling of being lost in the language shows her exposure to the language.

Ethical and social values

Ethical and social value system focuses on the protagonists' value systems which drive their behaviors. In this theme, the protagonists identify different value systems from their own cultures that clash with the values of the host countries. The nine excerpts collected for this theme relate to philosophy of life, privacy and ownership, and gender and gender equality as well as ways of grieving.

In the *Sofi Mendoza's Guide to Getting Lost in Mexico*, Andres helps Sofi find her uncle's place after she was denied entry into the United States at the border. In one conversation at her uncle's place, Andres suggests Sofi do some housekeeping as a way to thank him. He assumes a girl is obligated to do errands and work in the house.. From his cultural perspective, females should know how to do house work. However, as Sofi grew up in the United States and is educated in a western perspective, the idea of gender equality is planted in her mind. She doesn't believe females should take over all the housework.

SMG-3-P.79 He smiled. "Don't think I've forgotten. You still owe me."

"what do you mean?"

"I just saved your butt from that taxi shark. The least you can do is help me with some housekeeping."

"Housekeeping?"

"You're a girl." He shrugged. "You should know that kind of stuff."

“I don’t know how they do things in this country. But in the United States, there’s a thing called equal rights.”

Their conversation shows different cultural expectations toward gender. Besides learning female roles in Mexico, she experiences others’ expectations for her. This excerpt not only shows gender values in Western cultures and Mexico culture, but also demonstrates the protagonists’ reorganization of cultural differences. Moreover, it shows other’s expectations of the protagonists during their visits.

The following example relates to the protagonist’s awareness of local behavior and his attempt to follow it. Andy went to a nice ice cream shop with his father after sightseeing. When enjoying the delicious ice cream, he licks his spoon. For a person who is concerned about sanitation and good manners, his behavior cannot be simply explained as childish. In fact, it shows that he is learning the casual lifestyle of locals. However, even though his father encourages him to appreciate local culture and to learn the lifestyle, he disapproves of Andy’s behavior. In his father’s perspective, Andy needs to follow his Australian customs. He is expected to behave appropriately according to the cultural values he has learned in Australia.

NP-3-p.68 He finished his ice cream – certainly one of the best he’d ever tasted, a real luxury – and licked his spoon clean. His father frowned at him. “What?” said Andy. “People here throw bones and stuff on the floor when they’re eating. They reach across the table front of you and chew with their mouths open.” “Different customs. Anyway, you’ve been taught good manners.”

This example presents the protagonists' struggles between two cultures. Andy identifies different cultural behaviors. Sometimes, he is expected to act in a local way while other times, he should maintain his original values. In addition, this example also shows the expectations of different culture groups that international travelers experience.

The next example explains Andy's idea of honesty in different cultures. In *Noodle Pie*, Andy faced a great amount of cultural shock. Originally, his worldview is clearly black and white. Things all have clear answers. However, he is very confused in Vietnam because of different ethical standards. First, the change of his father's behavior makes him wonder about the meaning of lying. His father pretends he is rich in Australia to his own Vietnamese family so that he will not disappoint them. He dresses up and loans money to buy an expensive watch. All the material luxury is just not how he lives in Australia as a gardener. Andy questions his father's intentions. His father tells him he is not lying. Instead, it is just a stretching truth a little bit. This change of ethical value simmers in Andy's mind until the time when he is working with Mihn to create an ad for the family restaurant.

In the excerpt, Mihn wants to put Nicole Kidman on the ad to increase the restaurant's reputation even though Kidman has never been to the place before. For Mihn, it is not a lie. Instead, it is more like a business strategy. In her view, this action is appropriate as long as there is no harm to people and so it is fine to stretch truth a little bit. Her intention is good which is the same as his father's intention. In the last two sentences

in the excerpt, it shows that Andy is aware of the different expectations in Vietnam and Australia. What is appropriate to do is different in the two places.

NP-3-p.125 She screwed up her face in thought. “Nicole Kidman!” she exclaimed suddenly. “Nicole Kidman? The actress?” “Yes, and that she say good very good. Best food in Hanoi, number one.” “But she’s never been here,” Andy protested. Minh shrugged. “Maybe she been here and nobody notice.” Andy thought that was a bit unlikely. “Well, even if she did she didn’t say all those nice things about the food. If we say she did, that’s a lie and she could sue us.” “What that mean, sue us?” Andy explained as best he could. Minh seemed mystified. “Why famous rich person care about little lie that not hurt anyone? We no say bad things about her.” Andy suddenly heard his father’s voice in his head. Is not really lying, just stretching truth a little. “Well, maybe ...” he said cautiously.

This excerpt demonstrates the protagonist’s awareness of different cultural values. He came to recognize different ways to deal with things in different cultures even though he is still confused by the differences. The three examples presented above reveal different cultural values that the protagonists experience in the text set. As Bennett (1998) argues, cultural shock is people’s reorganization of complexity in cultures. Cultural shock is perceived as a positive mechanism in intercultural learning because it allows individuals to step out of egocentrism and become aware of other possibilities in global cultures.

- Acceptance and Appreciation

Acceptance and Appreciation means that people gradually merge into another culture in which they are interested and how they come to relate to another place. Cultural assimilation and cultural adaptation, by Fennes and Hapgood (1997), can be used to explain the idea of cultural integration in this study. From their perspective, cultural assimilation indicates a person adopts language, habit, and patterns of behavior of another culture. It means a person abandons his original culture background to accommodate the new culture. A common case for assimilation is seen in immigrants. Different from cultural assimilation, cultural adaptation focuses on a person's adaptation of cultural behaviors in order to function in a new place. However, this person does not internalize or take on these new cultural behaviors as their own. The adapted culture is used to function in the place, although some of the new cultural values and behaviors do also gradually become part of their world views. In this study, cultural integration includes both cultural assimilation and cultural adaptation. It focuses on the protagonists' intention to integrate into local culture. They are aware of cultural difference as the previous subcategory discussed and have the intention to learn about difference.

After sorting the examples, three themes from the data set are organized to present the content of cultural integration. They are showing interest in the local culture, integrating into local culture and making connections through various means.

Interest in the local culture

As the title indicates, this theme focuses on the protagonists' development of interest in the local cultures. They appreciate cultural differences that they find in the local places. At this stage, they no longer automatically resist the cultural differences they encounter. Instead, they hold their own bias first for the sake of understanding others. Some examples collected for this study include the protagonists' interest in physical environment, food, dance and their interest to learn about local customs.

Among the fifteen examples collected, the protagonists' appreciation of local food represents the most cases. Most of the examples related to food come from *Monsoon Summer*. The protagonist not only likes the taste of the local food, she is also interested in learning how to make these foods for her family. In this book, local food is not presented as a superficial cultural artifact but as a bridge that connects the cross cultural relationship between two friends and a learning tool about the local culture. The following example describes Danita and Jazz's conversation in the kitchen while Danita is preparing 'poori' for Jazz's family. Danita was hired by Jazz's parents to prepare meals while they are in India.

MS -3-p.97 Danita flattened each ball of dough into a thin circle with the rolling pin. A pan of oil sizzled on the stove, and she tossed one of the circles into it. After a few seconds, the dough inflated like a balloon. She flipped it until it was lightly golden on both sides, put it on a plate, and set it in front of me.

As soon as it was cook enough to touch, I took a bite. The poori was flaky but light and just salty enough to balance the sweet tea. One after another, three more flat pieces of dough puffed up into small spaceships and landed on my plate. ...”They are delicious,” I answered, trying not talk with my mouth full. “Everything you make it?”

This excerpt demonstrates Jazz’s love of poori. She observes how Danita flattens, folds and cooks the dough. Her observation indicates that food preparation is a type of art in the culture that reflects people’s daily life. Jazz’s compliment also shows her connection to the food culinary. Growing up with western food, she opens her mind to the differences.

The following example shows Jazz’s intent to learn about how to cook. Danita is cooking lamb vindaloo for the family. Jazz takes the initiative and asks Danita to show her how to mince the garlic.

MS -3-p.98 I watched her chop a huge slab of meat into neat chunks, carefully slicing away the fat. “What kind of meat is that?” I asked. “Lamb,” she told me. “Lamb vindaloo tastes wonderful with a little lemon juice squeezed on top. I just need to add some garlic and mix the spices.”

Almost without thinking I stood up. “Show me how to do the garlic,” I said. Although minced garlic is a common ingredient in many cultures, Jazz’s intention to learn how to cook shows that she wants to work and integrate into the culture. It is possible that she never learned how to cook when she was in California before traveling

in India. However, because of Danita, Jazz takes the first step to learn about Indian food. Instead of having Danita serve her, she takes an active role in learning the local cuisine.

The following example provides another theme of protagonist's interest in local culture. It relates to the protagonist's interest in local dance. In *Sofi Mendoza's Guide to Getting Lost in Mexico*, Sofi hates everything about Mexico at the beginning after she is detained at her uncle's place which is located in a remote area. However, as the time passes, she starts developing deeper understandings of the people and their lifestyle. In this excerpt, Sofi goes out with Andres, her Mexican friend, to a street plaza where they enjoy the music and food. Andres's knowledge about the music and ballad make Sofi enjoy the music. Furthermore it is the first time that Sofi starts to realize how it feels to belong to a community. Surprisingly, the community she likes now is the one she hated a great deal at the beginning.

SMG-3-P.183 (...) Just then, a group of singing mariachis in matching white outfits came out from behind the stage.

The musicians were joking with one another and the audience in a jovial manner. They made Sofi loosen up and want to participate, hollering and clapping along to a song. Andres sang along with the mariachis. He knew every ballad. He taught her the chorus of "Cielito Lindo." Sofi couldn't remember ever laughing so hard. Everything in Mexican was over the top, she decided, and celebrated in a community. She'd never realized how nice it felt to be part of a community. It made her heart swell with joy.

This excerpt presents Sofi's change of perspective toward the Mexican community. The interaction with her friend and the dance and music enables her to let go of her negative views of Mexico. Moreover, the experiences allow her to discover the beauty within the culture. Sofi's example shows how friendships and direct contact promotes personal interest in intercultural relationships. It is crucially important that individuals have the motivation to explore cultural difference so that they will develop deeper understandings of each other.

Exploration of local culture

The protagonists in this theme are more active as they not only show interest in the local culture, but also take the initiative to learn about local cultures when they have a chance. They explore how locals live their lives in daily experiences. Some examples include that the protagonists learn how to cook local food, participate in local traditions, explore every day routines, and attend local schools. Through these direct experiences, the protagonists develop deeper understanding of local cultures and learn different ways of living.

The following excerpt is from *Hannah's Winter*. While traveling in Japan with her mother, Hannah stays in the house of Japanese friends of her mother. One of the cultural differences that Hannah encounters is with shoes. In Japan, particularly in homes, people wear different shoes in different places for various purposes. In the excerpt, the grandmother kept reminding Hannah about the shoe rules. Hannah never learned to wear

or not wear shoes inside the house. However, because of the grandmother's teaching, she becomes able to recite the shoe rules for the household.

HW-3-P.42-43 But I wasn't used to thinking much about shoes, and I made a few mistakes. The second day, walked on the tatami in my slippers. Granny spotted me and from that instant appointed herself captain of the shoe police. Any time I was close to making a shoe boo-boo, Granny would materialize like a tiny bent conjuring trick. I don't know how she did it. She didn't talk much but she liked her shoe lecture. I heard it so many times I soon knew it by heart.

“At the house door, outdoor shoes off, house slippers on. Entrance to a tatami room, house slippers off, socks of bare feet only. Toilet, special case. House slippers off, toilet slippers on. Go to the toilet, toilet slippers off, house slippers back on.”

It was more complicated than a quadruple bypass. The day I wore my regular slippers into the toilet nobody saw me, but I suffered terrible guilt for hours.

Hannah's attitude toward shoes is very interesting. It is obvious that she does not have so many shoe rules at her own home. Therefore, it is not a natural thing for her to change shoes at home. In the text, Hannah does not complain about the rules. Neither does she claim that the Japanese culture is superstitious. Simply, she takes the advice and learns to cooperate with it. Her attitude shows that Hannah respects cultural differences and is

willing to learn about it. She does not resist the cultural differences. Alternatively, she enjoys these differences.. She learns to integrate into the local life.

The next example relates to how to survive in busy traffic. In the *Noodle Pie*, Andy feels Vietnamese life is disorganized. Its people, street, food, and relationship are not ordered as his own life is in Australia from his perspective. After days of observation, Andy learns how to survive in this place. The excerpt is about a time when he and his father are on the street. They try to cross the street but it is not easy for them since traffic rules are not the same as in Australia. Andy watches how the locals cross the street and teaches his father.

NP-3-p.62 He watched how the locals did it. “The trick is to step out, walk slowly and keep going,” he told his father. “If you walk steadily the traffic sort of weaves around you.”

His father hesitated. “Just walk into it?” An ancient woman in black trousers and slippers shuffled past them and without hesitation stepped off the sidewalk, her eyes fixed on her feet. Andy seized her father’s hand. “C’mon, we’ll follow her.” Staring resolutely ahead and keeping so close to the old woman that Andy could smell the fish sauce she’d eaten with her lunch, they plowed into the speeding throng. It turned out to be not really speeding at all, but traveling at a pace slow enough to be able to anticipate their movements and, as Andy had foreseen, take evasive action. Even so, it was a scary transit. The old woman shuffled away without glancing at them.

This example reveals a protagonist's active role in the cultural integration process. Andy does not give up when he faces the challenge. Instead, he slows down to observe the cultural difference and learns how other people handle the situation. His initiative is positive to help him adapt to local life.

Connection to local culture and people

The protagonists in this theme develop a deeper understanding of local culture and stronger connections to the people. The examples focus on the means and ways of how the protagonists become close to the local cultures. The examples include the protagonists' connections through the development of friendships, sense of belonging to the place, and mutual value.

The first example is from *Monsoon Summer*. Jazz is visiting the orphanage where her family came to help in India. In the pregnancy clinic at the orphanage, there are some paintings on the wall. Danita's sister, Ria, tells Jazz that these painting are from the children at the orphanage. They drew those pictures for the children who came with their mothers to the pregnancy clinic. Danita stands in front of the painting that Ria drew. She studies the bright yellow sun and three ladies holding hands in the photos. Ria tells Jazz that the three ladies in the photos are herself and her two sisters when they grew up. The painting reminds Jazz of the values that she and her family embrace. At this point, through the same family values, Jazz and Danita are connected to each other. Their understanding of each other is enhanced.

MS -3-p.161 Danita lingered in front of her sister’s painting. I would have bet anything that she was reminding herself of her own family code—the same one as ours: Family Sticks Together, no matter what.

People from various backgrounds connect with each other through different ways. This example shows how similar values allow cultural encounters where people come to understand that they have something in common even though they come from different cultural backgrounds. Value systems bridge people’s understanding of each other.

In *Red Glass*, Sophie has a timid personality. She is anxious about unfamiliar things. She is afraid of losing people who are close to her, accidents and disease and more. As soon as the group leaves Tucson and enters Mexico, she starts to squeeze lime into all the food and drink she receives in order to kill germs. Her action is a sign that she feels uncomfortable in Mexico. In the excerpt, she and her travel group are in a restaurant. People recognize they are visitors so that they stop and ask them lots of questions. They stay at the restaurant for a long time to talk. Suddenly, Sophie realizes she has not squeezed lime in her food.

RG-3-P.90 Our food came, and Pablo pounced on it. As we ate, a few furious people stopped by our table, full of questions. “What are you doing all the way down here? Are you from el Norte? Do you speak English? How long will you stay? What do you think of our pueblo? I have a brother working in Chicago, a sister in L.A., a son-in-law in Washington,” and on and on and on. We got an invitation to two weddings and a fifteen-year-old’s birthday party, all of which we

declined since we'd be leaving for Pablo's village the next day. Angel had a second beer, and then I did too, and then Pablo licked the last bits of grease off his fingers and slumped asleep in his seat. The streets grew emptier, and we were the only customers left. We sat in the smoke, talking.

I realized, all of a sudden, that I hadn't squeezed any lime on my picaditas, but my stomach felt fine.

The implication of Sophie's forgotten act is her trust and sense of comfort in Mexico. Because the local people are friendly and curious about their backgrounds, she feels welcomed in the place. The friendship is the means that help her integrate into this unfamiliar place. Friendship bridges people from different places to each other.

In *Habibi*, Liyana and her grandmother do not speak the same language but they are still able to connect with each other through cultural experiences. When the family has just arrived at Palestine, Liyana's grandma invites her to stay in the village so that they can do things together. In that experience, they bake, retrieve water, enjoy scenery, and visit neighbors. Even though, they cannot speak with each other, Liyana feels she connects more to her grandmother and the place. The following excerpt describes their experience together.

HA-3-p.86-87 She (Grandmother) pitched Liyana another ball of dough, inviting her to try it. Liyana copied her motions, kneading, slapping, and swinging the dough high in the air as she'd seen pizza makers do in Italian restaurants back

home. Sitti's loaves were perfectly round, but Liyana's bread looked like Australia. Sitti helped her shape and reroll.

By the time the hot breads were placed on a white cotton towel on the table to cool, Poppy had fallen asleep on top of Sitti's bed like a boy. Sitti leaned over him for a minute, as if she were examining her baby closely. Then she whispered to Liyana and gestured that they should leave him alone. Liyana was thinking, *So much for my translator.*

But it turned out she didn't need him so badly after all. Sitti lifted a tall clay jug onto her head and motioned Liyana to hike with her down the dirt road. They charged off into the breeze. Sitti kept glancing at Liyana's face as if to check on her. *Was she happy? Did she like this?* Sitti waved her arm at the expansive view across the valleys and hills. She blew a kiss to the air, which helped Liyana take a deeper breath herself. Liyana could skip if she wanted to. She could twirl in a circle with her arms out to feel dizzy.

No one watched them or acted normal. Liyana felt as invisible and happy as she used to feel coasting on her bike.

They passed the telephone operator's house and he waved at them through the open door. He had a switchboard in front of him with wires and holes, just like the switchboards in old American movies. They passed a few lone houses sitting off by themselves under gnarled trees. They passed cemetery and Sitti turned her face away. Liyana noticed there were no words on any of the white gravestones.

Then they came to the spring, where water gathered in a shining pool by the roadside. Sitti filled her hand and left Liyana drink from it. She'd never drink from anybody else's hand before. The water tasted crisp. Then Sitti filled the jug slowly from a pipe jutting out of a ledge. Poppy had said the women still preferred this fresh "earth water" to the water that came from faucets. Sitti placed a thick cloth pad on her head and heaved the full jug back up there, to carry back to the house. Once the jug was in place, she balanced it without using her hands. She motioned to Liyana. Did Liyana want to try carrying it? Liyana jumped back. She couldn't even carry a peach on her head.

After delivering the water home and snapping green beans into a big pot to steam with a cinnamon stick, Sitti took Liyana to meet a neighbor who was stringing orange beads on nylon thread. The woman opened a cupboard to show Liyana dozens of lovely necklaces hanging on nails. She urged her to choose one. Liyana didn't wear necklaces herself, but selected a turquoise one strung with antique Palestinian coins. She could hide the necklace till her mother's birthday. The woman kept song sparrows in small wicker cages and gave Liyana two fat olive oil soaps to take home to her mother, too. She hugged Liyana good-bye.

Later Liyana realized how many things they had all communicated without trading any words.

This description is a great example of the protagonist's transition within a cultural experience. At the beginning, Liyana is anxious to be alone with her grandmother. She

does not know what to do with her grandmother since they have not met each other before and they do not speak each other's language. However, Liyana soon realizes language is not the only way to communicate. By watching her grandmother, Liyana feels her grandmother's care for her. Through enjoying the moments together, Liyana is able to appreciate the local place and her grandmother's guidance. The experience of working with her grandmother allows Liyana to develop understanding of the life in the village as well as a relationship with her grandmother.

Change

Change focuses on the protagonists' ability and intention of adapting local values to understand their lives. Instead of using the cultural values that they learn from their own cultural backgrounds, the protagonists consider cultural differences and events from an alternative perspective. Moreover, they tend to be more flexible about ambiguity. The Council of Europe (2012) proposes that tolerance of ambiguity is a crucial ability for intercultural learning because it allows individuals to hold their own opinions and to explore various possibilities.

Exploration of multiple interpretations

Because of what they have experienced in the local place, the protagonists start to explore multiple explanations for an event or issue. Multiple interpretations play a significant role in intercultural learning as they allow people to step into other's perspectives and to learn about other possibilities. This subcategory includes a theme that focuses on protagonist's alternative perspectives about relationships and currency.

In the *Red Glass*, Angle was robbed and Sophie was able to help him find the gang member and get his money back. This excerpt is the conversation between Angle, Sophie and the gang member, Mercurio. Mercurio's experience with the gang helps Sophie understand why people join a gang and how a sense of belonging in a gang attracts people to join.

RG-3-P.239 Tentatively, Mercurio asked, "You got gangs where you live?"

"Yeah. I don't mess with them."

"They don't recruit?"

"They do, but you can say no."

Angel and I thought, suddenly, how easy it would have been for to join a gang. A gang was like a family, and all he had was his dad. Violence had touched his life too, and taken his mother from him. That must have injected a giant dose of anger into his heart.

Mercurio's experience helps Sophie understand a life that she did not know before. At the same time, Angel's words that he does not mess with gang members when they recruit helps Mercurio see another possibility in the world. The excerpt reveals how cross cultural experiences allow the protagonists to develop multiple explanations.

The next excerpt shows a protagonist's new perspective on his relatives and the role of women in Vietnam. As soon as Andy arrives in Vietnam, he learns that women do not have the same social status as men. In addition, both gender and age are factors that determine social hierarchy. In the excerpt, Andy notices that Vietnamese females seem to

be the breadwinner in a household. In his first day after arriving, he is surprised to see many females working on street construction jobs which is rarely seen in Australia. In this excerpt, he wonders how come males do not have to work but have fun on the streets. He comes to understand through his father's comment that Vietnamese females provide economic support for their families. Andy then comes to think about whether the same situation applies to his Nguyen family.

NP-3-p.167 What Andy had noticed, and it was evident around him now, was that the streets were always full of men sitting on or tinkering with motorbikes, congregating in groves to smoke, drink, chat, or read newspapers. His father was right. Vietnamese women seemed to be the powerhouses of the economy. Was it the same in the Nguyen family?

Andy's last question regarding the female's roles in his family shows that he started to reflect on how a family dimension really functions despite social biases on gender role. Coming from a society where promotes gender equality, Andy did not give much thoughts on how gender can be a factor that involves in a family and society. The experience in Vietnam gave him the chance to explore inequality as well as female strength.

The next example is also from *Noodle Pie* in which Andy explores the value of currency in Vietnam. Since the Australian dollar is stronger than the Vietnamese dong, Andy finds that everything in Vietnam is very cheap to afford. For example, Andy thinks the ice cream shop sells high quality ice cream to foreigners even though the price is

considered high for local people. The accidents allow him to reflect on the meaning of expensive and cheap, as well as how the value of currency is involved in the process.

In this excerpt, Andy wants to take his relative to the ice cream shop, however, she told her the shop costs too much. Andy tried to defend the shop but as soon as he opened his mouth, he realizes that the idea of cheap is relative..

NP-3-p.87 “Café cost too much.” “Nah, it was cheap.” Andy stopped, remembering that “cheap” was a relative term.

Andy’s experiences with currency allow him to develop real understanding of the value of money. In the book, Andy feels uncomfortable when people say he is rich because he knows he is not. Gradually, he comes to understand the value of currency and people’s expectations of living standards. He later understands that his life style is wealthy in comparison to his Vietnam relatives.

Developing multiple perspectives requires individuals to think from other’s perspectives so that they can develop deeper understanding toward another culture. This subcategory provides examples that show protagonists’ development of cultural awareness and connection to the local culture. As they start to develop alternative perspectives on local culture, they become more integrated into the places.

Local perspectives of self

This subcategory focuses on the protagonists’ self perceptions. Specifically, it emphasizes the perspectives of self through the lens of local cultural value. The examples include in this theme relate to self perspectives, self identity and cultural identity.

The first example relates to Jazz' learning about herself from a local perspective. When in the United States, Jazz was unsure about her value. She thinks that she is average. Her body size is too big and strong for average. However, her friend, Danita, is surprised to know about her idea because, in India, the way she looks means that she comes from a higher-class wealthy background.

In the excerpt, Danita explains the caste system to Jazz. Jazz does not understand why people are divided because of skin color. It is the first time she realizes that her lighter skin color inherited from her father can represent social status.

MS -3-p.152 “Why do you look so surprised?” Danita Asked.

“It’s just that nobody ever told me I was beautiful before,” I sad. “At home, I’m just average. No, scratch that. I’m too big to be average.”

Danita stared at me. “What are you talking about? Jazz Didi? You have a lovely figure. You’re tall, womanly, full of health and strength-those are signs of prosperity in India. You have fair skin, not dark like mine. That is highly prized here, because it usually means you come from a higher caste. And your nose is nicely shaped and prominent. You have big eyes with dark, full eyebrows. All in all, you are a beautiful girl, jazz Didi. Certainly beautiful enough for this Steve to fellow.”

The change in perspective was making my head spin. And Danita had brought up caste, too. I might have inherited low-caste genes from Mom, but the way I looked qualified me for high-caste treatment? I didn’t get it.

The conversation allows Jazz to look at her body through another point of view. In addition, the experience allows her to reflect on the relationship between racial background and social status. Looking at herself through local values, Jazz realizes that there is more than one way to look at beauty. In addition, the conversation stirs her awareness of racial inequality.

The following excerpt is extended from the previous one because it is about a protagonist learning about herself through local values. One of the cultural experiences for Jazz is to learn how to dance *Sawar Kameeze* for a charity event at the orphanage. The Indian dance values body strength and is more like an exercise from Jazz's perspective. In America, Jazz did not like to dance because she cannot remember all the steps. She thinks that she is clumsy. Dancing *Sawar Kameeze* enables her to concentrate and enjoy the moment. The excerpt shows that Jazz appreciates her own body figure and discovers her inner strength because of the dance. She adapts local value to look at herself from another point of view.

MS -3-p.177 I decided to wear the purple *salwar kameez* home. As we walked up the hill, I made myself meet the eyes of the people who passed us. Sure enough, they were staring. This time, though, I saw something new in their eyes. Something I hadn't noticed before.

“Why do Indian people start at me?”

She turned to me, her eyes round with surprise, as though I'd asked the easiest question in the world. "I told you already, Jazz. You are a big, strong, beautiful girl. They are admiring you."

Danita's words rang with truth. She was right! I did look big, strong and beautiful in my regal, flowing salwar kameez, and that was admiration I'd seen in their eyes. I straighten my shoulders and left myself enjoy being inside my body for the first time in what felt like years.

The next excerpt confirms again Jazz's alternative perspective of herself after the cultural experiences in India. As soon as she arrives in India, she keeps writing letters but never dares to send them in order not to give away her secret crush. Every time she talks with the boy, she feels she is not enough for him. After Dania's words and the dance experience, Jazz gains confidence through local perspectives about her body. In this example, she makes the decision to send all the letters to the boy, Steve, she likes in America.

MS -3-p.218 I picked up the packet of lavender-scented love letters I'd written, opened my big umbrella to shield them, and splashed through the puddles to the post office. Just before the packet left for American, I glanced at my reflections in the window. *You're big, strong, and beautiful*, I told myself. *Now you have to wait and see if Steve agrees.*

These three examples reveal the change in a protagonist of the way she perceives herself through considering local perspectives. What is worthy to consider through the examples

is that readers might be more open-minded to different cultural values through these examples. When individuals grow up with certain cultural values, it is hard to switch to other possibilities because they are used to their established ways of thinking. It is through input from other groups that individuals are able to look at themselves and events in a new lens.

The theme of local perspectives of self also includes protagonists' development of cultural identity. In *Sofi Mendoza's Guide to Get Lost in Mexico*, Sofi is not aware of her Mexican heritage because her parents intentionally raised her to think and live like white Americans and Sofi's classmates. They want her to completely integrate into American life. As a result Sofi cannot speak Spanish and has very limited understanding of Mexico and no relationships with her relatives. However, deep down in Sofi's heart, she never feels she is completely the same as her other classmates. She does not know what is missing until her trip in Mexico.

In this excerpt, Sofi's cousin, Liliana, tells her the ethnic backgrounds of people in Mexico. She explains that Mexicans are a mix of many ethnic groups. The cultural backgrounds that each ethnic group brings enriches Mexican's cultures. Sofi is very happy to know the diversity in Mexican society. She finds comfort in the explanation as she looks at herself as a part of a changing cycle.

SMG-3-P.167 "That's good." Liliana waved the dark-colored incense in Sofi's face and used the loosely tied bundle of herbs to fan the smoke. "I'm giving you what we call a *limpia*, a cleansing. It's to take away the bad energy, feelings, and

memories that hold you back from like a full life.” She reached back and grabbed a bottle of clear liquid and dabbed her fingers with it. Her touch felt cold on Sofi’s forehead.

Sofi asked, “what was that?”

“Holy water?” Liliana noticed the question in Sofi’s eyes. “We Mexicans are truly a mestizo. We’re a mixture of Native, Spanish, and African, a blending of different bloods, traditions, and knowledge.” Sofi smiled. She liked the idea that she was part of an ever-changing culture. It was alive, evolving like her. She thought about what it meant to be a Mexican who’d lived most of her life as an American. Maybe she was just a link in this evolutionary cycle.

Liliana’s words help Sofi reflect on her own identity. Sofi develops a new lens to appreciate her own background. She does not have to choose to be a white American like her classmates or a Mexican like her parents. Instead, she is diverse. She is changing and is a link between the two cultures. This understanding of self from local perspectives fosters Sofi’s confidence in herself.

Cross-cultural communication and competency

This theme, cross-communication and competency, refers to individuals’ ability to obtain cultural information and apply this knowledge. Individuals at this stage need to understand their own view points and those of others so that they can communicate with people from different cultural backgrounds. Individuals become confident in their cross-

cultural ability. They feel comfortable to stay with local people and work on different cultural elements. They enjoy the diverse cultural experiences and think these experiences enrich their lives.

Among the twelve examples collected for this subcategory, the following three excerpts represent the protagonists' connection with others and their ability as well as confidence to work on cultural practices.

The first example is from *Habibi*. Liyana does not know how to speak the local language and is not able to communicate with her grandmother who eagerly wants her to stay at the village for a couple days. Before she agrees to stay, Liyana relies on her father for translation. Liyana is very nervous when her father is not around. She feels lost around her relatives because of the new environment, language, behavior and life style. However, things are not as difficult as Liyana predicts they would be.

HA-3-p.87 By the time the hot breads were placed on a white cotton towel on the table to cool, Poppy had fallen asleep on top of Sitti's bed like a boy. Sitti leaned over him for a minute, as if she were examining her baby closely. Then she whispered to Liyana and gestured that they should leave him alone. Liyana was thinking, thank so much for my translator. But it turned out she didn't need him so badly after all.

This excerpt goes on to explain her anxiety when her father falls asleep and is not able to translate for her and her grandmother. However, without a shared language, Liyana observes what her grandmother wants to teach her and learns to follow her lead.

Even though both of them still cannot communicate through a shared language, they are able to understand each other through gestures and thoughts. Liyana's tension is eased. She feels happy and comfortable to be around her grandmother.

HA-3-p.88 Later Liyana realized how many things they had all communicated without trading any words.

Liyana becomes independent as she realizes she is capable even though her father is not around. This example indicates a protagonist's challenge and how the challenge influences her to become more competent in a foreign place. Hence, it also describes the growth of her confidence at building relationships with her relatives.

The next example shows a protagonist's ability to cook local food and her confidence in her ability. In *Monsoon Summer*, Jazz's family loves Indian food. Her family hires Danita to help prepare food for them so that they can focus on their own work. Jazz usually stays with Danita in the kitchen and gradually they become good friends. In the excerpt, Jazz tells her mom how to make milk tea successfully. She feels proud at her ability that she can cook several Indian dishes. She even has the interest to learn more dishes.

MS -3-p.167 (...) I took another sip of the bitter tea Mom had made, keeping my face expressionless, but Mm sighed.

“Nobody makes tea like Danita,” she said. “I’ve got to learn how before we leave.”

“You have to add the leaves just as the water begins to boil, Mom, “I told her. And then turn the gas down. It’s also much better when you heat the milk before you mix it in.” Mom raised her eyebrows. “Maybe I don’t need to learn. You can be the family tea maker, Jazz.”

I grinned. “I think I can handle more than tea. How about lamb vindaloo, chicken masala, lentil soup, fried eggplant, and pooris? By the end of the summer, I’ll have those down for sure. And I already know how to make a spicy India omelet.”

This excerpt presents the protagonist’s confidence at her ability to practice local culture. It is clear that the protagonist enjoys the culinary culture. She is able to seeing herself cooking the food for her family. Her cultural experiences has built up her confidence.

In the *Hannah’s Winter*, Hannah joins a public school during her stay in Japan. Before coming to Japan, Hannah already had basic Japanese ability. However, it still is not easy when she has to introduce herself to her new classmates through a foreign language.

HW-3-P.71 It’s hard to think in a second language when you’re having a nervous breakdown, but I got my story out.

The excerpt shows the protagonist’s effort to integrate into the new place and her confidence to try something new. Even though Hannah has not fully mastered Japanese, she tries to use the language to communicate with local people. Her attempts and courage to try enable her to integrate into local life faster in the story.

The development of cultural identity is also a significant part of cultural competence. Through cross cultural experiences, many protagonists develop multicultural identities. Some of them develop a sense of belonging to the local place while others identify with their original culture and the local culture.

The excerpt from *Habibi* shows her sense of belonging to the local place after her cultural experiences in Palestine. Originally, Liyana feels lost in the new place. Homesickness, cultural shock, and loneliness are what she felt before. As time passes, she starts to develop connections to the place. Her memories of the people and place change her perceptions toward the place. In addition, she identifies with the place.

HA-3-p.245 One day Liyana was trying to say “Excuse me” to somebody and she said something like “monkey’s heart.”

The sea. One wave running into another. But they had lived beside the Mississippi River, not beside a ward to pour into the Gulf of Mexico she’d never visited. Now, from this great distance, she felt closer to everything than she ever had before.

She did not feel like a foreigner in the Old City anymore. Now she had her own landmarks and scenes to remember. She had Hani, the banana seller, Bilal, the fabric seller, and Bassam, the spice man. She knew where a certain stone corner was chipped away. Maybe a vendor had bumped it with his cart long ago. She knew where the cabbages were lined on burlap in front of a radiant old woman who raised one hand to Liyana as if she were blessing her. She knew the blind

shopkeeper who sat on a stool in front of his shop nodding and saying, “Sabah-al-khar-Good morning”-to the air. The Old City was inside of her already.

Liyana changes through her journey to Palestine. As she stays longer, she understands the beauty of this place. The Old City becomes part of her as well. She no longer is the American girl who knows little about this place. She develops a multicultural identity that helps her employ broader perspectives to see the world.

Critical Intercultural Competence

Critical intercultural learning focuses on individuals’ connections to the world and to global issues. Specifically, they develop critical perspectives to examine issues and take a stand for equality. Through intercultural experiences and critical reflections upon cultural experiences, individuals learn to perceive the connection between local and globe events, as well as between selves and others.

In this study, two subcategories were developed from the data including the connection between self and the world as well as the courage to make a change.

- Connection between self and the world

This subcategory is based on McLaren’s (2003) idea of critical multiculturalism as discussed in the methodology chapter. It is crucially important for individuals to understand cultural differences through social and historical lens so that they will develop a comprehensive understanding in regard to human life and behaviors. Thus, this subcategory employs the lens of social and historical aspects to understand the protagonists’ awareness of privilege and social issues.

Critique of privilege

There are seventeen examples identified for this theme. In general, the theme describes the protagonists' awareness of their privileges in the world. All of the protagonists grown up in wealthy countries and travel to a less fortunate country and so the cross cultural experiences allow them to learn about their privileges.

In *Benny and Omar*, Benny does not realize the privilege he enjoys in his own country as well as in the host country, Tunisia. As his family is middle class, they have enough money for their needs. He never worries about the necessities of daily life until his family considers going to Tunisia. His father's company asks them to move or he will lose his job. Benny starts to be aware of financial burden in his family.

At the beginning of their stay in Tunisia, a security guard yells at Benny when he hits the grass with a stick in their apartment community. It is Benny's first encounter with privilege. He never thought about grass as luxury. However, in the hot climate of Tunisia, grass requires extra money to take care of. It is a privilege only for European visitors to enjoy.

After befriending Omar, Benny has a chance to explore the poor side of Tunisia. He goes to see Omar's sister with Omar. When they are at his sister's orphanage, Samir asks Benny to come to outside so that Omar and his sister have a chance to talk. The following conversation is between Samir and Benny. When Samir asks what he, as a rich person, is doing in the local orphanage, Benny defends himself but soon he realizes he is rich compared to the people in the orphanage.

BO-3-P.160 Samir puffed away on his cigarette. After a minute, he knocked off the tip and stashed the butt behind his ear. “Well?” he said. “Well what?” replied Benny, stalling.

“Don’t give me that. What’re you doing here?”

“ I came with...that other boy.”

“Omar, you can say it. I know all about him.”

“Yeah...I came with Omar.”

“What’s a rich white boy doing hanging around with a Tunisian orphan?”

“I’m not rich!” objected Benny.

“Compared to whom?”

Benny thought of what he had just witnessed and said nothing.

When Benny saw the orphanage, it was a very simple place. Omar’s sister was all skinny lying in the bed. Benny tried to imagine his sibling lying in the bed. However, it was really hard for him to do so. The experience stuck Benny to reflect on what he had. Even though he knew friends who were really rich, he did not say anything to Samir. He realized the things he had were already more than enough.

The next excerpt shows more clearly Benny’s change of perspective. It continues with Benny’s conversation with Samir. Samir is telling Benny about Omar’s story. Benny soon learns that Benny is already fourteen years old but he does not believe it because Omar’s size is small. Benny’s reaction irritates Samir. Samir starts to list the privileges

that Benny enjoys. After seeing the orphanage, Benny does not object anymore. He accepts Samir's observation of his privilege.

BO-3-P.164 Benny blinked. "What age is he?" "Fourteen." He'd be fourteen now." "Fourteen!" Benny couldn't believe it. "I mean, I'm not huge, but he'd tiny!" Samir flicked the end of his cigarette over the wall. "This is Africa, Benny. We don't all have the luxury of an ideal diet! Don't you even watch that color TV EuroGas provided for you?"

"Sorry."

But Samir was wound up now. "You Europeans are all the same. You come over here and expect to be fawned over. You stay in your Marhaba villages and tell everyone that you live in Africa. Well, you don't! You live in a little antiseptic bubble where everything is brought in especially from home!"

"You're right."

Benny had not previously thought about what he had. Or he only saw what he did not have. The experience in Tunisia, his contacts with people who are richer than his family and who are poorer, allows Benny to reflect on his privilege. Benny feels sorry for comparing himself to Omar as he did not realize the scarce resources in this place.

This excerpt shows a protagonist's critical understanding of his own privilege. Even though he is aware that there are richer people, he knows he has enjoyed a lot more than some groups of people.

Besides an understanding of personal privilege, the following excerpt shows a protagonist's intention and sympathy toward others. In *Sofi Mendoza's Guide to Getting Lost in Mexico*, Sofi is a spoiled girl who can have everything she wants. When in Mexico, she is struck by the living condition.. One day, her aunt asks her to join the local church to pass out clothes for who are in need. The following description shows Sofi's self reflection on the privilege she has when seeing the needy people.

SMG-3-P.152 Sofi realized that this was another world, one she never knew existed. Was this how the rest of the world lived? Sofi thought about her family's town house and the immaculately kept yard, her state-of-the art school, and her comfortable bedroom. *Why do I live there and have everything and money? Why do some children go hungry while others pick and choose what they want on a whim?* Sofi thoughts about the Taco Supreme she'd thrown out the other night because she was full.

A group of kids who were playing a game on the dirt road with sticks and rocks stopped and watched them pass. It was cold outside, yet they were not wearing shoes. Sofi wondered what they were thinking as they looked her group. Where they wondering about what kind of life she lived or if they'd ever leave this poverty. The more she watched, the more questions she had. What about the Mexican government, how could they let this happen? And where were the kids' parents?

Seeing poverty first hand is a turning point for Sofi to start to question her own privilege and to figure out her role in society. Often, donations are people's reaction when seeing the poor. Not everyone would examine their own position in society. The value of Sofi's experience is that she starts to examine her own behavior and her sense of entitlement. Moreover, Sofi perceives poverty as an issue more than a personal affair. Instead, she questions about the government and adults' involvement in terms of taking care of children. Sofi's reflection on privilege shows that she has started to think about causes of poverty.

The next excerpt follows from the previous example. In a conversation with her friend, Andres, he asks Sofi about her experience with the clothing distribution. Sofi's response is very positive. In this excerpt, she plans to involve her friends and school to do charity as well.

SMG-3-P.157-158 "So what did you think about San Quintin?" Andres asked, pulling her out of her thoughts.

"Oh, my God. It was great. I loved it. You should have seen the look on those kids' faces when we handed out gifts. They were so happy. I'd love to get all my friends at school to do something like that. It kind of made me think about my own life and how much I take for granted."

Comparing to the old Sofi who only thought about her own needs, the cross cultural experience causes her to become aware of an individual's responsibility. By inviting her

friends and school to take possible action, Sofi is no longer the spoiled American girl that she used to be.

The cross cultural experiences in this theme allow the protagonists to identify their taken for granted assumptions and personal privilege. By comparing their life to others who are in need, they started to pay attention to social-economical difference. Moreover, some of them start to care about other's needs. The critique of privilege in the books has the potential to invite readers to examine the advantages they have and to develop alternative perspectives on their roles in the global world.

Awareness of social issues

This theme focuses on the protagonists' learning about social issues in the world. During their trip, the protagonists start to identify issues around them. For example, in *Monsoon Summer*, Jazz does not know that the human race has such a great effect on social status. She is not aware that people can be categorized by a system. In the following excerpt, Jazz realizes that it is unfair that Danita is not able to decide her own future because of her background. The issues of prejudice and race bother Jazz. .

MS -3-p.120 “What makes you think Danita’s from a lower caste?” Dad asked. “You don’t know anything about her birth family, do you?” “Mostly because of the way she looks. She has the dark skin, the small build, and the flat nose lower-caste people tend to have. Sister Das sighed heavily. “How I wish we no longer needed to have a conversation like this!”

I looked sideways at Mom. Dark skin, small build, flat nose. What kind of system divided people up based on who their ancestors were? It seemed to narrow your whole life before you had a chance to widen it. And why was everybody planning Danita's future for her? Didn't she have any say about her own life? Coming from a society where females have equal opportunity to choose their own futures, Jazz is surprised to learn about the inequality in India society. Because she understands why it is important for females to be independent, she questions a great deal about why Danita cannot decide her own future. Her ability to identify unfair treatment in a society allows her to help Danita become self-sufficient.

Another example is from *Habibi*. Liyana is full of passion for peace. She believes that all human beings should be treated equally and wars should not exist. In this excerpt, she tries to understand the causes of violence and to understand victims and their relatives' thoughts. From her words, she connects to the victims from the bombing at the market. She realizes that these people are the same as her. They are just regular people in daily life.

HA-3-p.235 Liyana went downstairs to ask Abu Janan more about the bomb in the market. He shook his head. "People dead." Old men and women. Innocent, everyday people who had as much to do with people as Liyana did. Shopping bags. Corn. Purses. Stockings. Shoes. Kleenex. Teeth. Earrings.

How could anyone do that? Liyana thought. Maybe it was done by the Arab father whose ten-year-old son was shot by Israeli soldiers last week. Maybe it was done by the brothers of the tortured prisoners Poppy met all the time, or the

cousin of the mayor who lost both legs when the Israelis blew up his car. Did people who committed acts of violence think their victims and their victims' relatives would just forget?

Didn't people see? How violence went on and on like a terrible wheel? Could you stand in front of a wheel to make it stop? What if Khaled had been killed when he was shot? Would that have made Liyana or Nadine do something violent, too? It was better, as happened with Khaled's own grandparents and himself, if you were able to let the violence stop when it got to you. But many people couldn't do that.

Past experiences with bombing are very unlikely for Liyana as the country she grew up in has no current war. This excerpt shows her connection to the conflicts in Palestine. She starts to move beyond her experiences and to critically examine the causes of violence and how violent action creates a chain of continued violence.

The next example shows Andy's exploration of poverty in Vietnam. The example takes place when Andy and his father are sitting at a café where the targeted guests are foreigners. In this café, the two of them talk about local people's expectations for Viet Kieu (Vietnamese who immigrant to other country) and child labor issues in Vietnam. Andy tells his father what he learned from his cousin about child labor. The children who live in the country side are sold to people who promise their parents to take good care of the children but do not fulfill their words. These children are actually sold to sell

souvenirs to tourists on the streets. Andy's father is surprised to learn about Andy's information for the social problem in this country.

In their conversation, Andy's father tells him the history of this café and the vision the founder held to help street kids through the café.

NP-3-p.108 Andy frowned. "Meaning that those kids ought to be swept off the streets, or that they're as unimportant as dust?"

"Either way, it is a sad name."

It was, Andy agreed. It made him angry, too. No child deserved to be described as dust. How could it possibly be a kid's fault if he or she had to live on the street? He looked again at the pretty girl who had served them. She was now tending to a customer at the front desk, and the boy next to her as mixing drinks like a professional bartender. "Did you know that people buy those kids to work for them?" he asked. "They go to poor villages and buy them from their parents. Then they make them beg and sell stuff on the streets and they keep the money for themselves."

His father looked at Andy in surprise. "Who told you that?"

"Why? Isn't it true?"

"For some of them, unfortunately, I think it is true. Who told you?"

"Minh."

"Ah, Minh." His father turned again to the brochure.

“An Australian Viet Kieu started this place. I knew it couldn’t have anything to do with government. So far it’s trained over a hundred and twenty street kids. They live here, train here, work here and earn good salaries, then move on to jobs in top hotels and restaurants. Pretty impressive, en, Andy?”

“ They train kids to be cooks?”

“Cooks, yes. Also waiters, bar staff, front of house. Bill Clinton came here, look.” He pushed the brochure across the table. “You know that saying about teaching a man to fish?”

“No.”

“ Give a poor man money and he buys fish for one day. Teach a poor man to fish and he has food all year round. You understand?”

Andy nodded. It really has nothing to do with fishing. It was about teaching people skills so they could be independent and support themselves. Like the street kids who would graduate from Koto.

In this excerpt, Andy shows his awareness of social inequality and his learning about the independence that people need for self-sustaining themselves. This conversation shows Andy’s change of thinking about the ideas of local people. Originally, local people in his perspectives are greedy. But through experiences in Vietnam, he starts to understand that they are not greedy. What they need are education, skills, and opportunity so that they can become independent. The children at the café, Koto, are eager to learn in order to sustain their own lives. Andy’s connections on privilege, opportunity and social

inequality allow him to understand what local people really need besides monetary support.

- **Courage to Change**

The subcategory of courage to change focuses on the examples where the protagonists challenge taken-for-granted ideas and take action to make the world a better place. Under this subcategory, examples are included such as when the protagonists speak up to change injustice and when they work with/for others to promote a better life. Freire (2000) points out that reflection and action are equally important for personal empowerment, stating, “Human beings are not built in silence, but in word, in work, in action-reflection.”(p. 88). The process of taking actions allows individuals develop confidence and courage to make a difference in the world.

Action can take different kinds of forms. It can be a big action such as to protect someone, but mostly it happens in individual interactions with others on a daily basis. The purpose of action is to promote justice in the world. In this text set, four examples were found when the protagonists are involved in actions that intend to promote justice and a better life for others. The first example is from *Habibi*. In the book, Liyana befriends a Jewish boy during her trip in Palestine. This boy has never been to an Arab village even though he is interested to know more about Arabs. Being a friend with this boy worries Liyana’s father because of the tension between the two groups. In this excerpt, Liyana tries to convince his father to invite her friend to their village. However, his father is angry because he does not think it is a proper time to have him come over.

He thinks that Liyana is just innocent enough to overlook the issues. However, for Liyana, her father is refusing to make the move for peace.

HA-3-p.240 She dove in. ‘Could my friend Omer-Mon’s met him-come to the village with us someday soon? He’s never been to—an Arab village. He invited me to a poetry reading the other evening, but I wasn’t able to do, since my father was just getting out of jail—so I thought it might be nice to invite him somewhere, too.’ Poppy’s hand went up to his forehead. “Right now? Oh, Liyana. He’s curious about us? He wants to know how we do things? He likes our food?”

“You don’t have to so defensive!”

Poppy was silent for a moment. That’s what he always said to her. “Our family-wouldn’t appreciate it. They wouldn’t –understand. It would seem suspicious-or unsettling to them. The peace isn’t stabilized enough yet.”

“Understand? What’s there to understand about having a friend?”

“Liyana—you know. You’re just acting innocent on purpose.”

“ I don’t know! I don’t want to know! What good is it to believe in peace and talk about peace if you only want to live the same old ways?

“ If his family orthodox?”

“No. He doesn’t seem orthodox—anything. He seems very universal.”

The longer Liyana stays in Palestine, the more she supports the importance of peace in the world. In this excerpt, she no longer suppresses her ideas in her mind. Instead, she proposes to invite the Jewish boy to the village. Liyana is aware of the tensions between

Arabic and Jewish people. But she intends to change the situation by bridging the two groups to know more about each other. The conversation with her father shows her courage to speak up for her own beliefs even it means she has to challenge her father.

The next two examples present the protagonists' plan and action to help others have a better life. In *Noodle Pie*. Andy learns from his observations that foreigners are willing to pay more to eat in Vietnam. One day, in a restaurant, he overhears some foreigners saying that they want to know what they are eating when they order. He reads the restaurant's menu and realizes the dishes are the same as the one at his family restaurant. However, the restaurant is able to charge more because its business strategy focuses on the foreigners' needs. According to his observations and experiences as a foreigner himself, he quickly forms an idea regarding how to change his family restaurant's business focus in order to increase its income.

The following excerpt indicates Andy's observation and his decision to plan and take actions for others.

NP-3-p.96 He took another look at the menu on the wall in front of him.

“Steamed rice pancake with minced port” he read. Well, that was just banh cuon, a dish served at every second street stall in Hanoi. And what were “Noodle soup with chicken” and “Crispy noodles with meat and vegetables” but ordinary dishes like pho ca and mi xao? They'd been sensational at the Phuong Nguyen. ...An idea was forming in his mind.

The rest of the book of *Noodle Pie* set the plot around Andy's and his cousin's progress on the new plan for the family restaurant. Andy learns a great deal from the whole process. Not only does he utilize his own experiences as a foreigner, but also he learns to appreciate the value of his family restaurant for local people.

Another example comes from *Monsoon Summer*. Jazz and her friend had a photography business in California. Their business was abundant. However, Jazz is disappointed at her judgment and ability because she made a mistake on her business before leaving for India. She hired a homeless lady to work for her business but the lady stole money and ran. This incident caused tension for Jazz. As a result, she refuses to help Danita set up her business in India.

However, the cross cultural experiences in India allow Jazz to understand her own talent. She also regains her confidence in her business ability. The following excerpt indicates Jazz's argument to defend Danita. In addition, she declines her friend's invitation because she decides to talk to Danita and help her to start her own business.

MS -3-p.147 "She works for us. And no, she doesn't have a brother. She has two younger sisters." Sonia shook her head. "She's your servant? Oh, no. You're in trouble now, Jazz. Let me guess. She's asked you for help in some way, right?" I nodded reluctantly. "I knew it," Sonia said. "Watch out. She'll keep asking. They're all like that."

I could feel myself getting irritated. Why should Sonia assume that she knew more about Danita than I did? "Danita's not a beggar, Sonia."

Evan as I said it, I knew I was right. Danita's goal was to stand on her own two feet, with her beloved sisters beside her. All she needed was a little encouragement. I could certainly offer her that.

Sonia shook her head. "Mark my words, Jazz. Once you get personally involved, people like that start taking advantage of you. That's why they elected my father to be chairman of Asha Bari's board-he knows that the best way to help poor people is through a good charity."

"My mother's been personally involved for years, and nobody's taken advantage of her. Even if one or two people do, she still thinks it's worth it." I hesitated, then continued. Steve was right. I had to put the Mona fiasco behind me once and for all. "And so do I. I'm sorry I can't come tomorrow. Or join you again on Friday."

In this excerpt, two actions are taken for others. First, Jazz finally defends Danita in front of her upper class friend. Second, she declines her friend's invitation and decides to use her talent to help Danita. These two actions show Jazz's caring about equality and her concern about poverty. She understands how the caste system affects Danita's life in India even though the system was abandoned years ago. Therefore, she decides to help Danita to become independent. Like *Noodle Pie*, the rest of the book depicts how Jazz and Danita work together for the business.

The three examples show active participation in actions in cross cultural community. The protagonists do not merely enjoy the privilege of traveling abroad but

take a stand to help others. Their action has the potential to encourage readers to reflect on their own roles in the global world.

When examining the types of actions in this text set, Cammarota's idea of "white saviors" and "white allies" allows me to critically understand the influence and effect of an action on both the action provider and receiver. Cammarota (2011) states that white saviors refer to someone who provides help through a "saving" position to individuals who might need help. The problem with this kind of action is that it tries to save individuals from a situation but does not transform oppressive structures. Normally, an action that is in the form of saving someone does not address privilege and does not intend to challenge structural injustice from a historical and societal perspective. The one example of white savior syndrome is Sofi's distribution of clothing in *Sofi Mendoza's Guide to Getting Lost in Mexico* discussed on page 268 (SMG-3-P.157-158).

In that example, Sofi helps her aunt distribute clothes to a local shelter. The experience makes her feel good and she wants to help more in the future. Although Sofi surely develops critical consciousness and care for others later in the book, the single incident in this excerpt explains the idea of white savior. The position Sofi employs is to "save" the local people but not to help them become independent. In addition, Sofi did not try to understand the shelter and issues with poverty in Mexico from a broader societal perspective and that limits the effect of her action on local people.

In contrast to white saviors, white allies refer to someone who works collaboratively with local people to fight against injustice. White allies' position is

humble as they do not intend to “help” local people but to “speak against injustice” (Cammarota, 2011, p. 253-254). What they intend to do is to redirect resources even though it means that they need to share power with the oppressed. The position that a white ally takes to support the oppressed allows the transformation of structural injustice and the empowerment of oppressed. The previous two examples from *Noodle Pie* and *Monsoon Summer* in this subcategory present the characteristics of a white ally. Here I will focus on the example in *Monsoon Summer* as the process and the action of the protagonist truly fulfills the image of white allies discussed by Cammarota (2011).

The support that Jazz provides for Danita is not due to her pity about Danita’s situation. Instead, she understands the strength of Danita and intends to use her own privilege as someone who has the knowledge and freedom to establish a business to help Danita become independent. As Jazz comes to understand the continuing effects of the caste system on Indian society and on females, especially an orphan, her action to help Danita to establish her own business is actually to fight against the structural injustice in the society. By helping Danita, she resists social inequality of females. In addition, as Jazz realizes the freedom that she enjoys as a female in the United States, she is willing to give away her saving to establish a revolving business fund for other girls in the orphanage to start their own businesses as well. As Jazz comes to understand the privilege she enjoys, she tries to provide opportunities to others. Furthermore, the revolving business fund indicates that she has started a chain of help among the girls as they will contribute financially to the fund when their own businesses start to profit. This

fund differs from a charity that intends to provide materials to the oppressed. Jazz's help enables Danita use her strength and eventually be strong enough to help others in the orphanage. Local people are able to empower themselves creating a different result that grows from the different intentions and purposes of white saviors and white allies.

This subcategory of courage to change discusses the protagonists' actions to promote justice in the world. Only three books in this text set address the protagonists' involvement in promoting a better life for others, while the other six authors' interest in international travel and intercultural learning targets personal growth. The low number of books that include action limits the possibility of readers engaging in critical learning from the cross cultural experiences in these books.

Discussion

In the previous section, the categories explain the aspects of intercultural learning that the protagonists experience and grow into. In comparing to the findings in the question two, I found some interesting patterns.

Reading this text set has been an enjoyable experience. One reason is due to my own personal experience as an international student studying abroad in a foreign country. When reading the books, many times I could relate to the protagonists' excitement, cultural shock and struggles. When they feel a sense of being an outcast because they are different from others, I can relate to the experience. When they are debating within themselves regarding what they have believed and what they have just learned in a new culture, the confusion and wonder are real. What I found from this set of data is the

significant influence of cross-cultural friendships on the protagonist's intercultural learning that allows them to become more open-minded toward diversity and honest to who they are.

Question three intends to understand how the cross cultural experiences influence the protagonists' intercultural learning. Here I discuss the importance of relationship in the text and the development of multiple identities to summarize the findings.

Relationship is a Key Element for Bonding with Local Culture

The text set highlights cross cultural friendships in the books so it is important to look at how relationships develop and influence the protagonists' intercultural learning process. First, across the nine books, cross cultural friendships are all positively portrayed. Even though many protagonists refuse the contacts with local friends initially, they gradually accept their differences and come to appreciate their friendships. For example, in *Hannah's Winter*, Hannah works with her Japanese friends to solve the ocean boy's problem. Through the journey, Hannah learns more about Japanese arts and language. The friendship allows her to connect with Japanese culture more closely. A similar friendship occurs in *Monsoon Summer* as well. In Jazz's mind, her body size is huge which makes her unpopular. However, from her Indian friend's perspective, body size indicates strength and health. The friend encourages Jazz to learn a local dance. Though the activity, Jazz learns to appreciate herself. The friendship opens her mind to alternative perspectives and to understand herself from a local point of view.

In *Benny and Omar*, friendship also plays a significant role in helping the protagonist adjust to local life. Even though Benny and Omar cannot speak the same language, they do many things together. Omar's friendship and the activities they do together are outlets for Benny to release his frustration of moving to a new country. In addition to the frustration of leaving his hometown, Benny also finds it stressful to get along with his new school friends. His sense of humor and bitterness is rejected by them. With Omar, Benny finds comfort. Through all the activities they engage in together, Benny overcomes cultural shock and homesickness. In this case, friendship with local people is a positive influence that positively influences their cross cultural experiences.

The importance of relationships in the development of intercultural learning is recognized by scholars in the fields of intercultural communication and international education. Intercultural friendship provides support for cross cultural understanding. In this text set, I discovered that the presentation of the benefits of intercultural friendship in several areas that have mutually helped the protagonists and their friends. I also found that the way the authors present the development of the intercultural friendship matches the studies of the intercultural communication that it believes through various activities, intercultural friends are able to connect and understand each other.

For example, in Lee's study, she shows the number of ways through which the participants come to make sense of their intercultural friendships. Lee (2006) interviewed seventeen students who were participated in a yearlong study to interact with their cross cultural dyad in a university. From her findings, she identified the activities that help the

participants understand their intercultural friendships. These themes include positivity/providing assistance, rituals, activities, roles, self-disclosure, networking, and emphasizing similarities and exploring differences. Lee explains that the development of intercultural friendship requires mutual and intentional effort between the intercultural friends. It is through the activities that they were able to deepen understanding toward each other. In the friendships in the books, I also found that the effort and diverse methods that bond the protagonists and their friends together are presented constantly in the books. In addition, each pair of intercultural friends all adopts many activities in the books.

For example, in *Habibi*, Liyana and Omer spend time with each other to talk and share (rituals, activities, and roles). When Omer comes to meet with Liyana's extended family (networking), his action conveys a message to Liyana that he values the friendship. In return, Omer feels respected and trusted by being able to cross the racial/religion boundary between Jews and Arabs to explore the sameness and differences between the groups. By engaging in self-disclosure about what they believe and their questions about peace and religion, the two of them develop deeper understanding about each other.

Not only in *Habibi*, but also in the other eight books, there is a focus on the ways in which intercultural friendships develop and help develop mutual understanding. The differences regarding what and how the activities are engaged in by the characters affect the depth of the friendships. In addition, it also affects the intercultural learning that the protagonists develop.

In my opinion, Swoish's *Hot Scots, Castle and Kilts* does not present sophisticated content in terms of the protagonist's cross cultural experience. This might be because the book is intended for light romantic reading for teenagers. However, since the description of the intercultural friendship is more superficial, the influence of the intercultural friendship is limited as well. The influence is more on a personal level. Sami and Fiona also engage in several types of activities such as spending time with each other, self-disclosure, and the learning of similarities and differences between each other, and the engagements help their friendship. However, as their discussion is centered on boys and self-identity, the friendships does not push them to perceive topics and issues beyond themselves.

One thing is interesting and real regards the conflict between intercultural friends. Gaines and Liu (2000) argue that intercultural friendship is more vulnerable is because of stereotypes and challenges with cultural differences. Yet, even though the conflict is real, how intercultural friends deal with it determines whether the friendships will be positive or negative. Sias, Dizewiecka, Meares, Bent and Konomi (2008) found in their study that cultural differences actually enhance intercultural friendships which are different from common understanding. If people feel excited and interested in learning about differences, they are able to negotiate the conflicts.

In Lee's (2006) study, the participants prove the same point. Because they expect cultural differences and are willing to try a different way, even though they find the differences are challenging to their own personality, they manage to negotiate the

differences. The whole process of negotiation builds the shared identity between the friends that result in the blossom of their friendships. Thus, conflict becomes positive in intercultural friendships.

In this text set, the conflicts between the intercultural friends also occurred frequently. The authors present the tangible feelings and challenges that occur in the friendships. I found that the authors did not try to present a peaceful image to misguide readers that cultural difference is all fun and that the protagonists do not have to deal with the conflicts. Instead, many books carefully describe the protagonists' struggles and thoughts when facing the cultural differences between themselves and their local friends. I appreciate the fact that the books allow readers to see how the protagonists negotiate the friendships and the transformation of the protagonists from close-mindedness to open-mindedness.

However, one thing about friendship in the texts that might catch the attention of some adult is Omar's behaviors. Omar in the *Benny and Omar* always is the one who initiates 'inappropriate' behaviors, such as smoking and riding motorcycles underage, and so readers or adults in the United States might develop a negative connection toward Omar.

Every culture has its perspectives on children and rules regarding how children should behave. Thus, what is considered right might not be the same in other places. For example, the legal drinking age in the United States is twenty-one years old while many countries around the world adopt a different rule; mostly eighteen years old in most

countries but places like Australia and New Zealand is sixteen years old, nineteen in south Korea and twenty in Japan. If we look at the legal age driving, we also see the differences. In the United States, it is sixteen years old while we can see seventeen and eighteen in other places. In Taiwan, because the land is not big and thus, a motorcycle is considered a very convenient transportation in every household. I do not know anyone whose household does not have a scooter. Since it is very convenient, riding a motorbike underage is not considered a serious deal even though the law claims the age is eighteen. My parents and many of my friends' parents let their kids ride motorbikes in the neighborhood to get things done. I started riding a scooter when I was in junior high school in our neighborhood to get sugar or salt for my mother. My point of listing the differences is not to prove that what Omar does is right but to show that the ways people live differently are influenced by the environment and societal beliefs. Thus, even though the author did not intentionally portray Omar as a trouble maker, the one sided initiative portrayal of his 'inappropriate' behaviors as perceived in Western society can convey a stereotype toward foreigners. Readers might develop a perception that the people and culture in other countries are chaotic.

In analyzing the types of friendship in the books, I found that even though the protagonists are all paired with a similar age friend; many different types of cross cultural friendship are presented. For example, Liyana in *Habibi* has her grandmother, Andy in *Noodle Pie* has his aunt, Benny in *Benny and Omar* has Grace and other classmates, Jazz in *Monsoon Summer* has her Indian schoolmates, and Sophie in *Red Glass* has a Bosnian

aunt and Mexican little brother Pablo to travel together. The relationships are diverse. It includes different genders, ages and social backgrounds. The relationships might not directly help the protagonists bond with local culture like their local friends do, but they provide vivid pictures of diversity in local cultures. I appreciate that the authors provide such diverse description and thus, for readers, through these relationships, they are able to understand a different place from multiple points of views.

However, when looking at the types of relationships in the text set, I found an overlapping thread in which the cross cultural friendships tend to be associated with romance. For example, in *Red Glass*, Sophie falls in love with her friend, Angel. In *Hot Scots, Castles, and Kilts*, Sami is in love with a Scottish boy. Besides the two books, romance with local people also occurs in *Habibi*, *Carpe Diem*, and *Sofi Mendoza's Guide to Getting Lost in Mexico*, not to mention the case in *Monsoon Summer* which deals with Jazz's love for a boy in her hometown. While it is understandable to have a romantic theme in adolescent literature as the topic is most teenagers' concern, the association of international travel and romance reflects people's idea of foreignness from the popular media. The issue with cross cultural romance is not the relationship itself but the depth of the relationship. The concern is when international romance is illustrated exotically; local people are positioned as objects in order to satisfy readers' imaginations. Other examples regarding exoticism are found in other parts of analysis. I will discuss this issue further in the next chapter.

Intercultural friendship is crucially important and beneficial to help sojourners adjust to a new environment. In this text set, relationships show a great influence on the protagonists. The influence not only eases their homesickness but also opens their minds to understand another place. This text set purposely collects books that highlight intercultural friendship with an assumption that connections with local people would benefit the protagonists' intercultural learning. The findings in this study emphasize that friendship is important to help the protagonists bond with local culture. Unlike the picture books that only focus on sightseeing in a foreign country, relationships enhance the protagonists' cultural adjustment and intercultural learning.

Conclusion

This chapter explores the influence of cross cultural experiences on protagonists' intercultural learning processes. The patterns show great benefit in direct interactions with local people and cultures that change the protagonists' perspectives of self, others and the world in various ways.

In the next chapter, I conclude the study by reflecting on the data analysis presented in chapters four, five and six to summarize the representation of intercultural learning in the text set. I also provide suggestions for the implications of this study for future research, publishers and teachers.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

When I left Taiwan to study in the United States, a coworker told me not to waste what I learn and to contribute back to education based on the opportunity to study abroad. Although working in an education-related field has always been my plan, I did not quite understand why it is my responsibility to ‘contribute’ to the field as I thought to study abroad was a personal decision.

Rizvi’s (2009) idea of cosmopolitanism explains my coworker’s request. Because each of us is connected to others in different ways, what I think is a personal decision actually is a privilege that I did not realize. Intercultural learning helps people see beyond their own needs and helps them understand their role in the world. The text set in this study depicts different kinds of intercultural learning processes and the influence of cross cultural experiences on individuals. This chapter presents a summary of the study, findings based on the patterns across the three research questions, implications for teachers, teacher educators, and publishers, and suggestions for future research.

Summary of the Study

The purpose of this study was to understand the representation of intercultural learning in children’s and adolescent literature that is distributed and published in the U.S.

The research questions were:

1. What are the authors’ understandings of intercultural learning?

- What are the authors' backgrounds and cross cultural experiences?
 - What do the authors state are their intentions for writing about a particular culture/country in their books?
 - What are the authors' research processes for writing their books?
2. What are the protagonists' initial responses to their cross cultural experiences?
 3. How are the protagonists influenced by their cross cultural experiences?

This study focuses on nine children's and adolescent novels that met the selection criteria for the text set. The criteria highlighted contemporary realistic books that feature protagonists' visits to another country where they have significant interaction with a least one local friend. I also studied each author's background in order to understand their views of culture and intercultural learning.

Critical content analysis was used as a methodology for this study. The methodology examines what texts are about using particular critical frameworks in order to develop interpretation. In-depth reading of each book and coding were engaged to find patterns across the texts.

The theoretical frameworks for this study include conceptual understanding of culture, intercultural learning, intercultural sensitivity, global perspectives, intercultural communicative competence, cosmopolitanism and critical literacy. Critical literacy also was used as a tool to help me analyze the data. Specifically, I adapted Jones' (2006) six tenets of power, perspectives, positioning, deconstruction, reconstruction and social action to interpret the data.

Discussion of the Findings

This section discusses overall findings across the chapters to answer the main question of this study about these presentations of intercultural learning in this text set of children's and adolescent literature.

Exotic Portrayals of Cultural Differences

Issues with stereotypes in children's literature have been a major focus for many years. According to Cai (2002), "representation in literature is never a purely literary issue, for literary works are both aesthetic and social constructs. Such representation reflects the values, beliefs, and attitudes of those who produce literature" (p. 69). Many studies (Harris, 1999) have found stereotyped portrayals of certain groups of people in children's literature. These studies focus on various ethnic groups, gender, parents, grandparents, social class, etc. The findings from these studies indicate that children's literature is not an innocent material but an ideological product that requires careful examination.

When examining the three research questions of this study, the use of stereotypes to present exotic images of cultural difference was a reoccurring issue. Foster (1982) argues that

"the meaning of the exotic is assigned to the unfamiliar, derived from what is close at hand. The unfamiliar implies an openness that invites symbolic associations and articulations. In the process of making the unfamiliar

comprehensible, what is familiar is defined anew by being associated with the remote, and so a relation, however, erroneous, it set up between the exotic and the common place.” (p. 23)

Foster’s statement indicates two important points for this discussion. First, a focus on the exotic is part of the process that individuals often use to understand unfamiliarity as they develop their own interpretations of different cultures. As cultures are symbols that invite interpretations, perceiving other cultures as exotic is one frequent aspect of the intercultural learning process.

The second important point in Foster’s statement is the binary opposition of the exotic and common place. An author’s use of exoticism as a writing technique to present different cultures causes bias and false cultural understandings. Examples of exoticism of this text set are various. One is that foreign food is used as an exotic and strange cultural icon in some of the books. Surprisingly, despite the existence of cultural icons about dress, weather, language and physical environment, foreign food is frequently described in many books in this text set. For instance, *Noodle Pie* surrounds the story with the family pho restaurant; *Monsoon Summer* has an Indian orphanage girl to prepare local dishes for the expat family, *Red Glass* describes Mexican food, and Cornwell includes foods in the three countries she presents in *Carpe Diem*.

It is not that food is not valuable to be portrayed in children’s literature; food is a big part of daily life. Yet, how and why a certain food is presented in the text is worth some attention. The problem is that some authors use cultural icons to present exotic

images of a culture. Through the protagonist's eating experience, the authors try to deliver cultural information to their readers. In this case, food creates stereotypes to their readers. Other authors who connect the emotion of food and daily life present the food culture in a deeper sense; so that food does not stand merely as a culture icon but allows readers to understand local people's ways of living and thinking. In addition, when authors only choose the food that is well known to the targeted readers because these dishes are more popular in Western countries such as Sushi and Pho, without a deeper presentation of the dish, authors actually limit readers' exposure to learn about difference.

Hapgood and Fennes (1997) in the iceberg model of culture propose that people tend to focus on the surface culture such as language, cuisine and dance that they describe as primarily in conscious awareness. The surface culture is easy to observe in cross cultural experiences but it's hard to develop deep authentic cross cultural understanding from only surface cultural connections. Furthermore, surface culture tends to produce or reinforce stereotypes towards other cultures because it limits a deep and open understanding about the heart of a culture that highlights local people's values and feelings.

Hapgood and Fennes use the iceberg model to encourage people to explore the culture that is primarily out of consciousness. Some examples include the understanding local people's concept of self, leadership, family relationships and so forth. Even though these deep cultures are not easy for foreigners to figure out during their initial visit to a country, they present the real story of the identities and values of local people.

Mo and Shen (2003) argue for the importance of cultural authenticity in children's literature. They explain that authenticity is not limited to accurate presentation of cultural information in text or avoiding presenting stereotyped images of a cultural group. In fact, cultural authenticity in text requires the presentation of cultural values that are accepted as a norm at the heart of a social group (p. 200). In addition, while it is important to depict accurate cultural information, cultural authenticity requires authors to have a close relationship with the culture they write about. When Mo and Shen (2003) explain cultural authenticity, they analyzed the book of *Mei Li*, written and illustrated by Thomas Handforth, a Caldecott winner in 1939. The book describes Mei Li's refusal to accept a girl's inferior position as influenced by Confucian ideology. Mo and Shen agree with Handforth's description of Mei Li's rejection because the value matches the social value of the Qing Dynasty at that time. However, they point out the problem of Handforth's illustration of Mei Li's mother's bound feet. From their explanation, people in China have viewed bound feet as a symbol of a humiliating tradition in the past and so females with bound feet would wear regular shoes by stuffing cotton balls inside to hide the deformity of their feet (p. 202). It is also not polite to mention bound feet as it is not something to be proud of and would never be portrayed in literature written by Chinese authors. However, from a foreigner's perspective, bound feet catches Handforth's attention. "Only outsiders would go to China and enjoy the exotic flavor of bound feet," state Mo and Shen (p. 203).

Mo and Shen's statement reflects my concern for exoticism in the texts. What would a cultural outsider want to see about the culture described in the book? Are the cultural icons used in the books intended to entertain cultural outsiders or to present authentic cultural experiences? In *Carpe Diem*, Cornwell uses many cultural icons to describe every culture mentioned in her book. For example, bitter and sweet Malaysian coffee, local fruit, such as durian, or a squat toilet in Cambodia. The cultural icons that Cornwell presents do exist in the cultures but the significance of these icons are missing from the books; therefore, Cornwell does not help readers to develop deeper understandings toward the place but portrays the locales as exotic places to entertain her Western readers. In contrast to Cornwell's writing, Ruth in *Noodle Pie* presents a more sincere and authentic description of pho. Even though she is an outsider to the culture, she intends to capture the meaning of pho for local people through the protagonist's eyes. The different stances from which to describe local foods reveal two different attitudes to readers. One is more superficial while the other is more adventurous and contextual. Both of them show readers possible ways to face cultural difference.

In addition, another interesting aspect in cultural difference is the depiction of squat toilets that often seem to bother Westerners. Characters in *Carpe Diem*, *Red Glass*, and *Hannah's Winter* mention or describe their troubles with squat toilets. Their response reminds me of a Caucasian friend, who took pictures of a squat toilet in China to share with other friends in the States because he found it really strange. I understand that a squat toilet might be inconvenient as are other new cultural experiences to travelers, but

the attention and exaggeration of it in books creates a sense of exotic toward cultural differences. Like my Caucasian friend, the experience did not draw him to connect to China because he did not develop an alternative perspective to understand it. He did not explore or try to understand the possible reasons that a squat toilet is more hygienic in some areas. By his sharing, other friends develop stereotypes and exotic impressions toward China. The problem with exoticism relates to the decision making process regarding which part of a culture was selected to share and how it is shared.

Said's (1978) theory of orientalism explains the "otherness" images toward cultural differences in this text set. Orientalism is a way of seeing that imagines, exaggerates, or distorts cultural differences as exotic and uncivilized. Rizvi and Lingard (2006) explain that

Orientalism is best understood as a system of representations, a discourse framed by political forces through which the West sought to understand and control its colonized populations. It is a discourse that both assumes and promotes a fundamental difference between the Western "us" and Oriental "them." It is a manner or regularized interpreting, writing about and accounting for the Orient, dominated by imperatives, perspectives, and ideological biases politically marshaled to self-justify imperial conquests and exploration. In this sense, the Orient is an imagined place that is articulated through as an entire system of thought and scholarship. (p. 296)

As Rizvi and Ligaud argue, orientalism is not at a personal level but it is a discourse and ideology that Westerners adopt to imagine how the other lives. Orientalism influences their beliefs about family, friends, public institutions, and society. I questioned critiquing the exotic images in the text set as it is impossible and unfair to judge how people learn from their own journeys. Personal experience is interpretable by individuals and thus, feeling exotic and unfamiliar is a part of the learning process that might gradually lead to cross cultural competency. Therefore, the focus is not whether or not the protagonists should respond to the surface culture in the books, but why and how the authors present the culture in a certain way and if there is change over time in a protagonist's perspectives on surface culture.

Besides the presentation of surface culture in the text, the connection between international travel and romance also creates exotic images toward cultural difference. Among the nine books, six of them have romantic relationships. The reason might be because the targeted readers are adolescents, but the emphasis on love, especially with local people, might be a misleading perception that comes from mass media. Just looking at travel websites, the words of travel and romance are constantly put together. 'Romance in Bahamas' and 'the most romantic country in the world' are just some examples that I saw on online travel websites. International romance is also a popular topic in movies. For example, a classic movie, *Roman Holiday*, cast with Gregory Peck and Audrey Hepburn, depicts the romance between a princess and an American reporter in Rome. The foreigners meet accidentally in Rome and fall in love with each other. Another

example is *French Kiss* with Kevin Kline and Meg Ryan in 1995, which depicts the love between a Canadian tourist and a local person in Paris. The two sit next to each other on an airplane to Paris. Originally, Kate, played by Meg Ryan, is annoyed by the French guy sitting next to her. She thinks he is arrogant, impolite and not hygienic. However, as the movie goes on, Kate is able to tolerate their cultural differences and fall in love with him. The intercultural learning process that Kate experiences and the romance is similar to many of the books in this text set.

I was curious to know if people really connect international travel and romance. Therefore, I searched the two phrases online. The website, *The Expeditioner* (Thompson, 2010) actually has a post about 8 types of travel romance. This excerpt describes the fourth type of travel romance:

4) Well, Hello There

Crushing on a fellow traveler is not only normal, but honest to goodness reasonable. They're interested in the whole travel culture, and they have similar experiences and goals. You meet in some romantic, exotic locale and you instantly feel a certain kinship for meeting this person so far from home.

Can it work? I think so. One of my friends and co-workers met her Scottish boyfriend while he was traveling in New York City. Their first kiss was at midnight on New Year's Eve two years ago and they're still together today. Even though they live in very different places, they make an effort to spend time together at least once a month. While they don't have any big plans as of yet, I bet

they'll be telling that story to their grandchildren one day. Another couple I had the pleasure of traveling with were from the United Kingdom and Argentina. They met in New Zealand, fell in love, and are now living happily in Buenos Aires.

The Expeditioner is an online travel magazine, not a random website but one that has several editors. The website is well-developed. With 4291 followers on Twitter, I believe that the editors chose a post that will attract their readers' attention. Therefore, I believe that the post reflects some people's perceptions. International romance is not wrong. It is not my intention to judge, especially when I believe that cross cultural friendships and romantic relationships provide the opportunity for people from two cultures to understand each other more. However, I am concerned about the danger of associating the two together especially when "romantic and exotic locales" are visited with the intention of starting a relationship. When international romance is portrayed in a superficial way, it actually creates a sense of otherness instead of building mutual understanding.

In the text set, although six books in this text set depict romance, not all of them describe it in a superficial way. Several examples illustrate the situation when international romance becomes an exotic representation of local culture and people in contrast to the one that shows sophisticated description.

I discussed the author's exotic image of Vassar's local friend in the chapter four, but there's also her grandmother's one night relationship with a local person in the *Carpe Diem*. The grandmother is a totally free-spirit person. She became pregnant from

someone she did not know and had no connection with after the night together. She sent Vassar to her own daughter to be raised and claimed she is her grandmother. The author makes the connection of international travel and irresponsibility.

The following two books show the contrast between exotic and sophisticated descriptions of relationships. *Hot Scots, Castles, and Kilts* begins with Sami's preparation to go to Scotland. Before her departure, she writes in her dairy that "it'd be so cool to go back home and tell all my friends that I'd dated a hot Scot. If it happens, I'm taking a ton of pictures and plastering them all over my Web page" (p. 5). As expected, she meets a Scottish boy, and her description of the boy is that "Although I'm still not crazy about history and romance novels, I now understand why Mom sets so many of her stories in medieval Scotland. The guys here—Adan mostly, in his medieval noble clothing—are so hot. Like streaming hot, as in I'd let them sweep me off my size nine peasant feet and drag me to their castle to make out with me" (p. 156). The book has no description of the tradition or culture related to that clothing. In addition, there is no illustration of how the two young people come to know each other deeply besides Adan's appearance. Adan is portrayed like a Barbie doll with an exotic foreign dress and without a personality.

In Contrast to *Hot Scots, Castles, and Kilts*, *Sofi Mendoza's Guide to Getting Lost in Mexico* portrays cross cultural romance in a more meaningful way. The first is that the author has more development of Andres' personality and knowledge about his own culture. He seems like a real person. Second, Andres and Sofi's relationship is more than a sudden spark. They talk, argue and get to know each other more and more through the

journey. In the book, Andres's mellow personality helps Sofi reflect upon her ignorance towards Mexico and personal privilege. The cross cultural romance in this case allows the protagonist to develop multiple perspectives and to understand herself.

These contrasting ways of describing romantic relationships in a foreign country provide readers with different images of local people. Using exoticism as a writing technique might set the content of the story close to readers' expectations if they are unfamiliar with the cultures in the books, but the effect of the exotic image might enhance readers' stereotypes and misunderstandings toward others.

This section highlighted the images of exoticism in the representations of culture and relationships in the text set. Orientalism focuses on individuals' "orienting" perspectives in terms of their interpretation of others (Said, 1978). Authors need to pay attention to their own thoughts of the cultures they write about because their thoughts are influenced by people and society around them. Even though they visit or stay for long periods in the cultures they write about, authentic portrayal is not guaranteed. Authors need to engage in an in-depth study of the cultures they write about, but they should also seek confirmation from insiders' perspectives. Books such as *Hannah's Winter* and *Red Glass* that try to describe cultures from insider's perspectives allow authentic representations of cultures to readers.

Cultural Insiders and Outsiders

A great number of researchers have discussed the issues of cultural authenticity especially for outsider writers who write about a culture they are not familiar with. I was

debating if the issue of cultural authenticity is applicable to this research question because the authors do not simply write about another culture as do many global children's authors. Their focus is about a protagonist's exploration process of another culture. From my perspective, an exploration process is subjective as the protagonists have the right to explain their cultural encounters according to their personal histories. However, I soon realized that cultural authenticity in this study does not relate to the protagonists' cultural encounter experiences, the focus is on how the authors present cultural details and their research process in order to write about the cultures. With this understanding, I focus on examining the authors' preparation and research to understand the cultures they are writing about. As a result, I found that how much time the authors spend in researching the local culture influences the authenticity of cultural details in their work. The previous discussions of exoticism look at the issue across the nine books in this text set. This section reflects on the importance of cultural authenticity.

According to Bishop (2003), cultural authenticity means how well authors are able to reflect the cultural perspectives and lives of people so that insiders recognize their own cultures. In order to ensure cultural authenticity, intensive research is required by the authors

Woodson (2003), an experienced critical children's book writer, claims that outsider writers need to sit around the dinner table with local people to develop deeper understanding of local people's lives and feelings. What she meant by sitting around the dinner table does not only mean to have meals together but to participate in the life of the

people that the authors intend to describe. When writing about a culture that is different from Woodson's own, she asks herself questions such as "why do I, as a black woman, need to tell this story?" and "what do I have to offer to this group" (p. 44)? As she argues, sitting around the table is to connect with how the people of different cultures and race "feel" in their daily life. The better the authors are able to connect with the groups they intend to write about, they better they will be able to authentically describe them.

Nikola-Lisa (2003) extends Woodson's point to discuss how personal past experiences and prejudices will hinder how authors write about another's story. Nikola-Lisa shares that past negative intercultural experiences can bring personal confrontations to help people understand what they think about other people. Sustaining good relationships with others is definitely not enough for authors to write about others' stories. Nikola-Lisa's honesty and comment reminds authors to confront their own baggage. Authors need to be humble to examine their personal beliefs and values to unpack their prejudice and misunderstandings.

The perspectives from Woodson and Nikola-Lisa are reflected in the authors' ideas as they write the stories. In this study, most of the authors write about their own international traveling experiences. However, it is interesting that none of them talked about their own cultural shock and struggles during their trips. When they shared about why would they want to write the story and what would they decide to present to the readers, the authors' personal relationships with locals affect the way they perceive cultural authenticity.

For example, Cornwell and Colfer wrote about foreign cultures according to their personal experiences during their travels. Due to missing personal connections with local people and their own cultural views, they tend to present local culture from their personal perspectives. Since they do not personally have close connections to the local culture, they are not able to present uniqueness in the cultures. As a result, the cultures they describe in their works can easily be replaced by another culture. Moreover, because of the lack of connection to local culture, they present international travel as self-discovery and personal transformation which does not necessarily occur. The superficial address of culture is also seen in Swoish's work. Unlike the previous two authors, she did not personally visit the place or consult people who have connection to the culture. As a result, cultural authenticity does not seem to be her concern in writing. She also used international travel as a means of personal transformation.

In contrast, the authors who spent time doing research to understand the cultures they write about present cultures at a deeper level. For example, Meehan has no heritage background with Japanese culture that she wrote about in *Hannah's Winter*; however, she consulted local people and professors who are familiar with Japanese culture. Even though she has studied and taught Japanese and lived in Japan for many years, she did not only rely on her personal experience to present Japanese culture. Resau is another example of an author who has done intensive research to understand the culture she wrote about. Living two years in the Huajuapán community in Mexico, she built relationships with local people. With her anthropology background, she studied and documented the

community values, rituals, and beliefs. These intensive notes later become a resource for her writing. However, her hard work to ensure authenticity and accuracy in her writing did not stop there. Since she wrote the book many years after her stay in the community, she later went back to confirm with local people that the culture she presents in the book is authentic.

Bishop (2003) argues that outsider writers need to find ways to deal with the limitations of their experience and knowledge when writing about a culture different from their own (p.36). Because of these two authors' efforts to overcome the limitations of their experiences, the cultural details in the books are unique to the cultures. Readers will not develop a sense that the foreign culture is strange but they are able to glance at the beauty of cultural difference.

Even though authors write an international travel story according to their own experiences, they need to be concerned about why and what they want to present a particular aspect of culture. Even though travel experiences are personal, the attention authors devote to diverse cultures influences the quality of their work. Authors need to recognize that international travel in books should not be taken lightly for amusement. It is an opportunity for readers to engage in experiencing cultural diversity through the experiences that authors present in their books. Therefore, authors who are writing books that focus on cultures outside of their own need to engage in intensive research and consult with insiders to respect cultural authenticity.

The Absence of Critical Consciousness

The work of Paulo Freire has greatly influenced me in the way I perceive people's ways of being in the world. Freire (1987) values the importance of personal experiences that are able to lead people to understand their roles in the world. Freire (2008) explains the difference between critical consciousness, naïve consciousness and magical consciousness. The first one considers "things and facts as they exist empirically, in their causal and circumstantial correlations" (p. 39). It is integrated with reality. Naïve consciousness considers itself, "superior to fact,..." and thus does not work to understand reality. Magical consciousness is fatalism. There is awareness of the power that influences people's lives along with a belief that it but is impossible to do anything to change life. The three types of consciousness lead to different actions: to do nothing or to work for change to promote equality. Freire encourages people to move from naïve to critical consciousness to see their situations in the world and respond critically.

In this study, being critical means to discover real situations in life and to take action to change inequality. The process of becoming critical increases individuals' subjectivity through the realization of their relationships with others. The critical aspect in intercultural learning as portrayed in this text set relates to the protagonists' awareness of how real life functions in the world and whether to take an action to make life better for everyone. Even though critical consciousness develops from individuals' reflection of who they are, the action moves beyond self. It is the decision and action taken to make the world a better place for others as individuals realize the connection between

themselves and others. Botelho and Rudman (2009) follow Freire's footsteps by encouraging individuals' development of subjectivity through literacy. They believe that literacy provides a way for deconstruction and reconstruction regarding how people perceive their roles in the world. The development of subjectivity is a process of becoming (p.119). Through self-reflexivity, individuals start the process of awareness. How individuals understand their roles in society changes the way they act in the world. It is based on this perspective that I noted the lack of critical consciousness in this text set.

Among the nine books, the protagonists are engaged in different levels of reflection. Every kind of reflection leads to different ways of acting in the world as noted by Botelho and Rudman (2009). The forms of naïve, magical and critical consciousness are presented in the texts. Among the nine books, five of them focus more on the naïve consciousness. The intercultural experiences reinforce their ideas of who they are as individuals but they do not make connections with others. One of the examples is Vassar from *Carpe Diem*. Through the cross cultural experience and cultural shock, she is able to embrace the idea of diversity. She starts to think it is good to learn more about other cultures and be willing to be spontaneous to possible plans for her future. Her reflection on her cross cultural experiences allows her to recognize the existence of others. However, this understanding of diversity does not connect to her perceptions about relationships with others. Her understanding the world is from the angle of herself. Even though she experiences different living circumstances, witnessing poverty and pitying a

village girl, the journey abroad is to benefit her life. The experiences at the end of the journey lead her to recognize that she needs to enjoy diversity and to live for herself.

The protagonists' naïve awareness toward the world is not unusual even in a real life. Multicultural education and international education intend to educate people to accept and embrace diversity. When these approaches do not teach students to challenge the existence of power, multicultural education and international education only promote the celebration of diversity.

Hade (1997) argues that "tourist's conception of multiculturalism" is not enough to understand diversity. Unfortunately, the five books in this text set adapt a tourist perspective to understand cross cultural experiences. As Cai (2003) argues, this understanding of diversity is based on a single standard which believes mainstream lifestyles are essential and as long as mainstream people have the chance to learn about cultural differences, they will naturally be respectful of cultural difference. Even though this statement is used to discuss multiculturalism, it is applicable to explain protagonists' naïve consciousness in this text set. Global literature needs to challenge power in the world. Especially for the people who have the privilege to travel abroad to experience cultures and learn social as well as global issues first hand, taking on a tourist perspective to celebrate diversity as an outcome for the journey is not enough. "Diversity must be framed within a politics of cultural criticism and a commitment to social justice" (Estrada & McLaren, 1993, p. 31). This goal is the aim of global children's literature.

Protagonist's active reflection and engagement in social justice is what readers need to

experience in books so that they will have a chance to move beyond celebration of cultural difference.

Magical consciousness is presented in books such as *Benny and Omar*. Through his experiences with Omar and expat families in his school community, Benny discovers how social class affects the way people live. Even though he recognized inequality, Benny did not go ahead to take action. His realization of his own privilege led him to appreciate his family. Examples like Benny and Omar show people's sheltered experiences in life. Because they do not or have not yet understood their own strength and responsibility in the world, they are not able to act on inequality in a way that will benefit others. Even though they have seen the needs of others, they do not think it is relevant to them. Children's literature of this kind introduces social reality to readers but does not provide a mirror for readers to learn how to critically respond to inequality.

Regarding critical consciousness, three books in the text set describe the protagonists' transformation process from knowing self to recognizing others. Reflecting on their cross cultural experiences, they start to challenge how power is exercised in different ways in a society. For example, the protagonist, Jazz, in *Monsoon Summer*, realizes how she can use her knowledge to help an Indian girl establish a business in order to be independent. During her trip, she critically reflects upon inequality toward females, social statues and poverty. With her thoughtful reflection on her perspectives and her experiences in India through the journey, she learns to empower herself as well as to provide help to others.

Action is demonstrated through various forms. Sometimes it is not to do something directly for others in need, but to raise others' awareness and to work together to make changes. Sofi in *Sofi Mendoza's Guide to Getting Lost in Mexico* is an example. In her journey in Mexico, Sofi sees the contrast with living conditions in the United States. Visiting Mexico as a tourist when she gets to enjoy all the luxuries in the tourist area, she enjoys her privileges to be a consumer in a place with little money. When she is not allowed to reenter America due to her visa issue and has to stay with her relatives, she comes to understand the culture and real life struggles. Sofi keeps reflecting on her arrogance and privilege. Instead of pitying people in need, she understands her taken-for-granted privileges. Through her critical reflections, she develops compassion and decides to act on people's misunderstandings of Mexico. The storyline ends with Sofi's plan to introduce her classmates to real Mexican culture. It is not the resort that mainly caters to foreigners, but the local daily life that she has experienced. Because she was once blinded by prejudice, she comes to recognize her important role in helping her classmates understand the real beauty of Mexican culture. The development of Sofi's subjectivity allows her to see beyond her own needs. Her sense of self as a social agent urges her to do something that will limit prejudice.

When examining the level of reflection in the books, I found an association between the author's background and the concern for social justice. I found that the authors who address critical consciousness either have a heritage background related to the country they portray or have stayed for an extended period of time in those countries.

The other five authors who have no direct relationship with the place they wrote about tend to relate international travel stories only as adventure or personal accomplishment. I was surprised to learn how much an author's background affects his/her concerns and care about the portrayal of that country.

The role of global children's literature is to serve as a mirror and window for characters to understand who they are and their relationships with others. I think it is problematic when the benefit of a long term overseas experience is only considered at a personal level. Ravzi (2009) argues the major contribution of international travelers is to bring new perspectives back to their home town. In addition, studies (Monard-Weissman, 2003; Kiely & Nielson, 2003) in the field of international education and service learning have also shown the benefit that international travelers can bring to others. The scope of global children's literature will be limited if the description of international experiences only focuses on merely exposing readers to different cultures. Writing to promote readers' active participation in the world, however, provides readers with new lens to understand the world and explore their responsibilities.

The Writing Formula for International Travel Story

After reading and analyzing the protagonists' overseas experiences, it is clear that there is a writing formula to follow to compose storylines to describe a protagonist's international travel experience. The formula starts with a protagonist' egocentric attitude toward cultural differences and then they start to develop cultural awareness and finally,

develop a more multicultural identity. Within the process, the protagonists experience cultural rejection, cultural shock, cultural appreciation and cultural adaptation.

The adolescent book, *Hot Scots, Castles and Kilts*, is a classic example of using this formula. In the beginning, Sami is surprised that she has relatives in Scotland and hates the idea of visiting them. She sees Scotland as an undeveloped country according to her standard of living and cultural values. Later in the book, Sami starts to build relationships with local friends and then comes to love the place. She is happy that her family will come back to visit Scotland for Christmas. The whole flow of the story matches the writing formula in which Sami moves from cultural rejection to cultural awareness and then to cultural adaptation.

This same formula is used in *Noodle Pie*. Even though Andy is a second generation Vietnamese immigrant, he has no understanding about his father's birthplace. Throughout his journey, he judges local people as rude with no manners according to his values and cultural background. As the story develops, he befriends his cousin and observes how locals live their lives. In following the writing formula, Andy discards his bias and wholeheartedly accepts his relatives and the family restaurant. His changing attitude from ethnocentrism to cultural awareness and to cultural acceptance conforms to the writing formula for international travel.

In *Carpe Diem*, the same path is used. Vassar changes her attitude from egocentric to open-mindedness. She initially is reluctant to travel in southern Asia. Her initial contact with local food is negative. Because her personality is conservative, she

does not like unplanned and unexpected events. The whole trip with her grandmother who frequently challenges her comfort zone opens up Vassar's attitude toward cultural difference. At the end of the story, Vassar decides to live her life for herself instead of trying to fulfill others' expectations. One of her life goals at the end of the book is to research Thailand which indicates her interest in the world. Again, the story plot moves from egocentricism to cultural awareness and then to appreciation.

Even though the protagonists' distinct differences in attitude before and after their trips enrich the books so they are more interesting to read, the protagonists' lack of knowledge about their host country is not realistic. My concern is that when limited numbers of protagonist show knowledge of other countries, the readers' diverse backgrounds is not reflected nor is their ability to find information. Authors need to use the writing formula in a more sophisticated way so that diversity in traveler's backgrounds is reflected. In the three examples, Vassar is the only one who has no heritage background with the host country, but she is also the only one in the whole text set to use travel resources to prepare her for the trip even though she does not want to go. As technology becomes more prevalent, international travelers have access to information beyond travel guides. People are also exposed to international news and information more frequently. Authors should consider creating a protagonist who is more active in preparing for the travel journey.

The findings in this study conclude that the representations of intercultural learning related to international travel in global children's literature are limited and more

books are needed to portray the intercultural learning experiences in a more sophisticated way. In this text set, intercultural learning in the context of international travel is portrayed more towards personal enjoyment and personal growth. When presenting local cultures, many authors used cultural icons and exotic images to depict cultural differences. The exotic presentations prevent readers from developing a deeper understanding of other cultures. In addition, the ideas of critical consciousness and social action are not prevalent in the text. Although some protagonists become critically aware of social issues in the host country and decide to engage in some forms of action to help, most of the protagonists are impacted only at a personal level throughout the journey. Their experiences help them overcome personal fears and become independent but do not raise their concerns toward others.

Implications

This study examined nine global children's and adolescent books regarding their presentation of intercultural learning. I examined authors' perspectives on cultures and the protagonists' cross cultural learning processes. The findings suggest the need for more global children's literature that addresses intercultural learning experiences in a deeper and more critical manner. Global children's literature is a useful resource to introduce readers to diversity and bridge their connection to the global community. After conducting this study, I recommend the following for educators, publishers, and

researchers in order for global children's literature that focuses on international travel to be more useful and high quality.

Implications for Classroom Teachers

Due to increasing globalization, universities and schools are now active in developing students' global perspectives. Global literature that focuses on international travel experience and cross cultural friendship is useful resource to aid students' learning. The findings from this study suggest the need for books that have more diverse cross cultural experiences, critical thinking and social action. As Case (1993) suggests, intercultural learning that only focuses on learning about different cultures is not enough. In the future, cooperation among different global communities is essential. Not only for economic cooperation, but also for organizations that connect global communities, people with global awareness and intercultural ability are needed to work together.

When teachers use global children's literature that features international travel experiences and cross cultural friendships, they need to pay attention to the quality of a book as well as the use of book in the classroom. Below are my suggestions for book selection for classrooms.

- How is the new culture portrayed in the book? Is the local culture portrayed in a complete and sophisticated way?
- How does the protagonist benefit from the intercultural learning experience?
- Does the protagonist show interest in learning about local culture?

- Does the protagonist develop an alternative perspective from the travel experience?
- Are there any forms of social action taken in the book? If so, what kind of action is taken? Who is taking the action? How is the action taken? Who benefits from the action?
- Does the protagonist develop critical consciousness regarding who they are in the world? How do they perceive their relationships to others and responsibility in the world?
- Is there an equal relationship between local people and the international traveler? Is the protagonist portrayed as superior to local people?
- Does the international traveler always look smarter than local people?
- Do the local people and international travelers both benefit from their relationship? In what way?

Rosenblatt (1995) argues that human beings “must also develop the capacity to feel intensely the needs and sufferings and aspirations of people whose personal interests and distinct from our own, people with whom we may have no bond other than our common humanity”(p. 178). Children’s literature serves as both mirror and window and so can help readers understand themselves and connect to the world. Even though readers’ life experiences might be very different from the story in a book, through reading, they are able to connect to the experience beyond their own lives and to develop different perspectives. The content of this text set might not be relevant to some readers as not every reader has the opportunity to travel abroad, However, as Rosenblatt notes,

reading provides the opportunity for readers to move beyond their own experiences and to connect to people they might never have the chance to know. Through reading and sharing ideas with others, students are able to learn from other's experiences.

As teachers, we need to be aware that children's literature can to promote thinking. When I was a novice teacher, my understanding of children's literature was to help students gain literacy skills as well as to learn proper behaviors. However, my perspectives on books and reading have changed. Mainly through critical literacy and transactional theory, I came to understand the important role of literature for personal enjoyment and to promote critical thinking. The role of book should not be an authoritative product. Books are stories—stories that are able to enrich readers' thoughts and inner strength. In order for books to be transformative to readers, teachers need to create a democratic environment in which readers can freely reflect and construct their responses to the books both emotionally and intellectually (Rosenblatt, 1995). Readers are active in their reading experiences. In addition, as Case (2003) proposes, global education needs to focus on the perceptual dimension that serves as a lens for students to explore the 'knowledge-base', the substantive dimension. Students' emotional connection to what they read enhances the development of perceptual thinking. In order for children's literature to be effective, the following are some suggestions for teachers.

1. Teachers need to reflect on their own perceptions on intercultural learning and their goals for integrating global cultures into their classrooms.

International travel is not a common experience for every teacher. Teachers who only learn about the global world from their own school experiences might have limited interest in integrating international elements into their classroom. In addition, teachers who have negative experiences with global cultures might also convey negative information to their students. It is important that teachers reflect on their own experiences and viewpoints on intercultural learning; therefore, their personal bias will not affect what they teach in the classrooms. Furthermore, teachers' interest in exploring global culture will also increase students' interest. If teachers can create an environment in which the exploration of the world is emphasized, their students will greatly benefit.

2. Literature discussion can help students construct meanings of intercultural learning for themselves.

Literature discussion is a way in which students engage in purposeful talk with others to construct their understandings about books. Noe and Johnson (1999) support the idea that "literature discussion provides a way for students to engage in critical thinking and reflection as they read, discuss, and respond to books" (p. ix). International experience might not apply for every student, but through literature discussion, students are able to exchange their ideas and to develop their own understanding about the world.

According to Tyson (1999), "reading, writing, and discussing literature can help them [the students] to make sense of and negotiate their life experience" as well as "empathize with other people, and see the complexity of human interaction" (p. 156).

Global children's literature that focuses on international travel and cross cultural

experiences exposes readers to experiences beyond their own. Through discussing the cultures and intercultural learning experiences in texts, students can challenge cross cultural interactions but also learn to be flexible with differences.

Literature discussion not only helps students construct meaning for themselves but also highlights critical thinking and social action, which are the elements that need to be addressed more in global children's literature. Through discussing the protagonists' intercultural learning experiences in this text set, teachers can encourage readers to look at the development of a global identity that encourages caring for others. In addition, in order to help students develop up-to-date understandings about a particular country, teachers can engage students in research on the place. Another way to help students to learn about another country is through paired books (Short, 1998). Teachers can pair a novel and an informational book about a particular country or culture to help students understand the background in the story.

From my own experience I learned that no book should be read alone because readers will not be able to develop perspectives if they are exposed to single point of view. In order to provide different perspectives, a text set is a useful strategy to use. Short, Harste, & Burke (1996) point out that a text set is a collection of books that are chosen according to a theme. The purpose of a text set is to provide multiple perspectives for students to explore. In addition, the selection process for a text set is accorded to a theme but not a topic. The difference between the two is that theme looks for diverse perspectives while a topic is a fixed subject. For example, a text set about cats would be a topic. The purpose is

for readers to learn everything about cats. In this case, teachers might include informational books about different kinds of cats, how to take care of cat, fictional books about cats that highlight children's relationships with cat, and many others. The topic is to help students learn about cats. When reading children's literature as a topic, it is easy to fall back to authoritative lessons.

In contrast, a theme highlights conceptual thinking that leads to a wider and deeper understanding. According to Short and Thomas (2011), conceptual thinking "includes, but goes beyond, topics and information to seek an explanation, to understand why in order to develop broad abstract mental constructs that serve as organizing ideas for a range of examples" (p. 159). A text set based on a theme looks for books and reading materials that present an issue from multiple aspects. An example of an issue is a text set on prejudice. Teachers can look for reading materials related to how prejudice happens, why prejudice happens, differing responses to prejudice, and the influence of prejudice.

The global children's literature used in this study has the potential to be used in different ways. It can be combined with other books to compose thematic text sets such as facing fear, stepping out of comfort zones, cross cultural experiences, developing global awareness, or critical thinking and social action. Because I gathered the text set according to the purpose of this study, it is assembled by topic but not theme. If teachers can use them with other books, I believe these books can encourage purposeful talk through students' engagement with literature discussion.

Global literature has the potential to develop cross cultural understanding and is a great resource to introduce readers to cultural differences. It helps readers to connect and understand people around the world. I encourage teachers to include global literature in their classrooms so that students will have the opportunity to learn beyond their current experiences.

Implications for Teacher Educators

While many suggestions regarding how to choose quality children's literature and the use of literature in the classroom are similar to the suggestions for classroom teachers, in this section, I highlight the importance of preparing service-teachers for international experiences.

As universities are now realizing the impact of globalization and the need to connect pre-service teachers for global perspectives so that they are able to help students to be more open minded, many education departments have established various programs such as teaching abroad experiences to prepare their pre-service teachers. Willard-Holt (2001) agrees with the positive benefit of international teaching experiences for pre-service teachers. In her study, 27 pre-service teachers in Pennsylvania traveled to Mexico for a week to teach in an elementary school and to do some sightseeing in Mexico. The pre-service teachers recognized their own stereotypes toward students in Mexico. After the trip, many of them became more globally engaged and decided to instill the attitude in their students.

A similar conclusion regarding the benefit of international field experiences to help prepare pre-service teachers to be more globally engaged is shown in many research studies, such as, Pence and MacGillivray (2008) and Merryfield (2000). I think it is important for education departments to provide international field opportunities for pre-service teachers. However, one thing to be careful is the depth of discussion after the trip. Several students' comments in Willard-Holt's (2001) study relate to their appreciation of the resources they have in the United States after seeing the disparity between the two countries. This kind of attitude actually creates more prejudice toward others. I suggest follow-up course such as teaching students to use global children's literature in classrooms will allow them to keep developing their international perspectives.

Implications for Publishers

The nations of the world have connected with each other more closely than before. Topics such as intercultural learning, global citizenship, and diversity are popular and important in the generations to come. Publishers need to realize the current trend of globalization and its influence on the field of publication.

When conducting my initial search for books in this study, I was surprised to find the lack of picture books that have a theme of cross cultural friendship during a protagonist' journey experiences. When deciding on the novels to use for this study, I was disappointed by the quality of some of the books because many present international travel experience superficially. The S.A.S.S. series (Students across Seven Seas) is the

biggest collection that I could find initially. I did not include any of the books from this series. Yet, I used a similar material, *Hot Scots, Kilts and Castles*, to be the representative of this type of book. This series is very popular as it already has eight books and so almost outnumbers the total books I could find to include for this study. What this situation implies is the need for more high quality global literature that encourages readers to step out of their comfort zones to learn about cultural differences. Readers need to read books that show how people from different places and cultural backgrounds learn to appreciate and work with each other.

In addition, publishers need to be more proactive. In order to provide high quality books for readers, they need to look for manuscripts that present respectful and authentic depictions of a culture. Although books such as this text set center on the protagonists' journey experiences, the descriptions of cultures are important. Although protagonists can have their own interpretations of cultural differences, whether or not the content of other cultures is accurately and authenticity presented matters. Publishers need to be careful with author's perspectives on cultures and their goal of writing a book to avoid stereotyped presentations of cultures. Questions such as whether authors write to promote only enjoyment in international travel, or to promote a particular culture, or to write to promote critical consciousness through cultural experiences helps publishers determine the focus of a book.

I also suggest that publishers need to be more realistic to the changes that technology has brought into people's lives. Because of the internet, people can easily

access travel information. In addition, websites that introduce how to prepare for foreign cultures are numerous. In this text set, many times the protagonists' culture shocks are due to their lack of information about other cultures. Publishers should look for books that do not limit or exaggerate protagonists' ignorance because this does not reflect some readers' backgrounds. Books that portray travelers with rich cultural experiences and interest in learning about cultural differences encourage readers to know more about the world. Through reading books that present protagonists' exploration of their relationships with people in other cultures encourage readers to step outside of their comfort zones and to develop cross-cultural friendships.

In addition, more books that highlight social action and protagonists' learning about their roles in the world are necessary. It is important that global literature is entertaining to read but also it does not mean it cannot be socially-minded. Short and Thomas (2011) state that students' ability to demonstrate strategies for making a difference in the world is important to developing their intercultural understanding. Publishers need to provide books that encourage readers to see beyond their own needs in order to be more socially and globally involved.

Further Research

This study examined the representation of intercultural learning in global children's literature. The findings show the need for more high quality global literature that presents cross cultural experiences and friendships. As multicultural literature also

aims to promote cross cultural understanding, how intercultural learning is presented in this body of literature is valuable to explore, particularly to examine a main character's intercultural learning process through cross cultural friendships in the United States.

This study employed critical content analysis. Even though critical content analysis is a systematic research method, it is applicable for teachers to use in their classrooms with students. Critical content analysis helps students to read texts from a particular lens. Through the experience, they are exposed to how to read and interpret books from a critical lens. Research that examines the benefit of using critical content analysis with students is an important area of study for literacy education.

Conclusion

My own experiences as an international student have inspired me to learn more about intercultural learning. During my years in the United States, studying at different universities and living in an international community in a small Midwest town, I have benefited greatly from friends who have totally different cultural backgrounds. They help me understand myself and expand my own worldview at different levels. In addition, many friends demonstrate their caring for other people through their actions. They are motivated to do things for others for the benefit of helping them to live a better life. Actions come from different motivations but one that strikes me the most is the desire to promote justice.

Growing up in an authoritarian environment with sheltered family experiences, I was naïve to reality. Politics belonged to politicians. I, as a regular citizen, only needed to make sure myself, my family and my job were lining up properly. However, studying critical literacy really opened my mind. I came to understand that politics is a daily action. As long as there are people, there are politics. As a teacher, I came to understand that schools need to help students to explore real life issues through the lens of why and how in order to develop deeper perspectives. Moreover, taking action to challenge injustice is extremely important for students even at very young ages.

Intercultural learning should move beyond learning cultural knowledge and foreign languages. Students' ability to think critically and socially helps them understand their roles in the world. Compassion for people who are in need is important. When people are willing to ask for less for themselves and more for others, the world will have the chance to be more just. In order to foster a globally minded student, global children's literature is a useful and wonderful material that allows students to explore and learn about cultural differences. In addition, engaging in literature discussion about these books has the power to help readers expand their worldviews and connect to the global world.

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