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WHO AM I?: THE REFLEXIVITY OF SELF-IDENTITY THROUGH TOURISM

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Hospitality, Recreation and Tourism Management

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In Partial Fulfillment

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Master of Science

by

Matthew L. Milde

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WHO AM I?: THE REFLEXIVITY OF SELF-IDENTITY THROUGH TOURISM

By

Matthew L. Milde

APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF
HOSPITALITY, RECREATION AND TOURISM MANAGEMENT

SAN JOSÉ STATE UNIVERSITY

May 2010

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ABSTRACT

WHO AM I?: THE REFLEXIVITY OF SELF-IDENTITY THROUGH TOURISM

by Matthew L. Milde

This study has set forth to close gaps, explore innovative methods, and create a better understanding of "Who am I?", in tourism research. Few studies in tourism research focus on how experiences gained from traveling shape self-identity through personal biographies. Building on the work of seminal authors on self-identity, personal narrative, and tourism, this study explores the reflexivity of self-identity as represented in travel narratives. The lived experiences offered through narrative condition spontaneous instances of self-discovery allowing for the (re)creation of new self-identities.

Participants were selected through a snowball sample; in-depth interviews were held with fifteen (15) adults born and raised in the United States who have traveled abroad for leisure purposes. Two, ninety-minute, digitally recorded and empirically observed interviews were held with each participant. These interviews, thirty in total, were transcribed verbatim and a member check was conducted.

The qualitative design of the research triangulates grounded theory with narrative analysis, which is insubordinately unique in the field of tourism research. The principal results of this research uncovered tools, not yet applied in tourism research, concerning self-identity: e-mail, online applications (e.g., Skype, blogs, etc.), journals, diaries, scrapbooks, and self edited DVDs. Moreover, the narratives reveal how the "Other" becomes a venue for reflexivity in generating a range of dimensions of the "Self," further exploring, "Who am I?"

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are not enough pleasant things to say about Dr. Ranjan Bandyopadhyay who has been a constant source of inspiration and motivation in driving this thesis forward. The degree to which he has necessitated a high level of scholarly thought, judgment, and detail within this paper is of leaps and bounds beyond contemplation. The mere fact that this paper is a nominee for the "Outstanding Thesis Award" is a direct reflection on his esteemed intellect, enthusiasm, and leadership.

An essential component in ensuring a well-rounded manuscript was the time and effort afforded by the thesis committee: Dr. Tsu-Hong Yen and Dr. Kim Uhlik. Their assistance, comments, and sponsorship through this process has been greatly appreciated. Sincere regards to Dr. Gonzaga da Gama, a former member of the thesis committee, who was laid to rest during the progression of this paper. It is hard to illustrate the exemplary fidelity his genuine character has played in this researcher's educational endeavors. Suffice it to say that the essence of his passionate nature lives within these workings.

Over a year has been spent meticulously designing, implementing, and writing a quality thesis. The Milde family, all SJSU alumni, have supported the development of the thesis during this time, and I offer my sincere appreciation to them for understanding the importance of this endeavor. In addition, superb recognition goes out to the research participants who offered their personal travel narratives to make this study possible. Thank you for all of the wonderful stories; it was a true pleasure to hear them all.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

"A lovely family photograph [of a holiday] changes meaning when life turns into death and love transforms into hate; backstage, alone, a photograph can make one cry" (Larsen, 2005, p. 431). Tourism, currently, is purely a twentieth-century phenomenon which has grown significantly in economic and social importance (Theobald, 2005). The enigma of defining tourism has plagued scholars and academics alike since the 1960's (Hom Cary, 2004). Tourism is problematic due to the term encompassing a diversity of connotations (Tribe, 1997). Many scholars have provided tourism studies with a multiplicity of definitions to explain the multifaceted essence of the term (McIntosh & Goeldner, 1990; Methieson & Wall, 1982; Ryan, 1991; Tribe, 1997). Tribe (1997) offers a broad perspective, which allows for the term to embrace many of the stakeholders involved, by defining tourism as, "the sum of the phenomena and relationships arising from the interaction in generating and host regions, of tourists, business suppliers, governments, communities, and environments" (p. 641).

However, tourism cannot be confined to standard definition due to its crossing of several interdisciplinary boundaries no matter how broad. Hom Cary (2004) indicated that when tourism studies emerged it was quickly regarded as spanning across the disciplines of anthropology, sociology, economics, art history, psychology, and political science, among others. Furthermore, tourism studies have neglected the humanities for academic credence that had been supported by scientific method and economic statistical analysis, the new custom (Tribe, 1997, 2001). Recently, Tribe (2001) maintains that "a

curriculum for tourism needs to develop a tourism society not just as a society for business but one of society for all its stakeholders" (p. 447).

The stature of the tourist is hard for tourism researchers to seize, which many scholars have typologized (Cohen 1979; Mo, Howard & Havitz, 1993; Redfoot, 1984; Wickens, 2002), attempting to differentiate tourists' characteristics, experience, motives, activities, among others. The tourist has been generally seen as an object for consumption (Bolla, 1990; Hom Cary, 2004; Palmer, 1999; Pi-Sunyer, 1989; Pritchard, 2001) rather than a subject capable of providing rich data filled with representative experience (MacCannell, 1976, 2001; Urry, 1990). "In journal entries, postcards, photographs, storytelling, etc., the moment is clearly (re)presented, (re)produced, and (re)created through narrative" (Hom Cary, 2004, p. 64). Narrative allows for the "object" to be transformed into a linguistic construct packed with representation, subjectivity, and ideology where the label of "tourist" vanquishes and the "subject" materializes along with the individual within it (Hom Cary, 2004).

<center>Statement of the Problem</center>

One of the effects of tourism is retreat from the routine of life, allowing for the unexpected, taking pleasure in refreshment and play, and to escape from work and responsibility which allows the individual to let go, thus exposing a more "authentic" self (Edensor, 2000, 2001; White & White, 2004). Desforges (2000), while conducting in-depth interviews on tourists from the United Kingdom, was able to draw from empirical data to explain touristic consumption through exploring the investments made in shaping individual identities. To accomplish this, Desforges (2000) investigated the investments

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that tourist's place in their travel arrangements by focusing on two pivotal moments in which travel is used for self-identity; the decision to travel and the homecoming. McCabe (2005) indicated that tourist studies have neglected the broad perspective in determining individuals' versions of their experiences. Although there is an abundance of theoretical and empirical research as to the tourist experience, there is little understanding as to how this experience relates to the individual as a momentous facet in their life. Wang (1999) indicates that tourists are not only searching for the "Other", but are also on a quest for self-identity and that tourism is a vessel for self discovery. This is very true in the case of photography and tourist identity.

John Urry's (1990) seminal work has advocated the, "tourist gaze" of the "Other", which according to him is central to the touristic experience. However, recently scholars "have emphasized on the corporeality of tourism practices to threaten the hegemony of the 'tourist gaze'" (Bærenholdt, Haldrup, Larsen, & Urry, 2004; Coleman & Crang, 2002; Edensor, 2000, 2001; Franklin, 2003; Franklin & Crang, 2001). As Bærenholdt et al. (2004) opined movingly, "personal photography works via sentimentality, through love and death: it is an order of loving" (p. 118). Recently, Larsen (2005) eloquently pointed out, "performances of tourist photography are a fusion of presence and absence, actuality and imaginations, the dreamed-of and lived-in orders of reality" (p. 417). Furthermore, tourists' identity formation is continued upon their arrival home through the use of photos, postcards, and writings (Anderson, 1999, as cited in Elsrud, 2001).

Tourism is a vessel for shaping the existential question, "Who am I?" although few studies in tourism research focus on tourist narrative and how experiences gained

from traveling shape self-identity (Desforges, 2000; McCabe, 2005; Palmer, 2005). Although tourism research has been showered with an abundant of additional scholarly studies over the years covering the topic of identity (Halvaksz, 2006; Kim & Jamal, 2007; Kneafsey, 2001; Medina, 2003; Noy, 2004; Papageorgiou, 2008; Salamone, 1997; Scott, 1995; Taylor, 2001; White & White, 2004), a vast majority of research on the subject has focused on areas that have neglected "self-identity" that is derived from narrative including cultural identity (Cano & Mysyk, 2004; Gamradt, 1995; Light, 2007; Preston-Whyte, 2001; Wood, 1984), national identity (Bandyopadhyay, Morais & Chick, 2008; Cheung, 1999; Cohen, 1995; Graml, 2004; O'Byrne, 2001; Palmer, 1999, 2003; Pretes, 2003; Rea, 2000; Teo & Li, 2003), gender identity (Pruitt & LaFont, 1995), ethnic identity (Callahan, 1998; Van den Berghe & Ochoa, 2000), and more recently, place identity (Jeong & Santos, 2004; McCabe & Stokoe, 2004) and local identity (Rekom & Go, 2006).

Bandyopadhyay (2008) has indicated that identity is a very individual notion. Regarding touristic experiences, "both remembering and forgetting also underlie a "subjective sense of identity" that is only inadequately reproduced in language. In the case of the tourist moment, memory and forgetting are filtered through narrative and together, they may tend toward a simplification and schematization of the discourse that interpellates the tourist" (Hom Cary, 2004, p. 68). While an abundant of theoretical and empirical data exists on the experiences of tourist activities, the social interactions on the part of the tourist are scarce; even still, the notion of self-identity is an enigma (McCabe, 2005). How tourists experience self-identity through their social interactions while

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traveling has yet to be explored extensively in tourism research. As Palmer (2005) correctly opined, "what will really move tourism studies forward is its ability to contribute to the understanding of one of the most important concerns of contemporary society: identity as a social construct" (p. 24). Moreover, the innumerable studies on tourist motivation and experiences center upon the demand for leisure and the subsequent escape from boredom and anxiety (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975; Pearce, 1993; Ryan, 1991). As a sacred journey, tourism incites the optimum conditions for experiencing a heightened state of being or for experiencing "flow". According to Csikszentmihalyi (1975), flow is "a feeling of being truly autonomous and truly connected with the world" (p. 191). The "tourist experience" represents this feeling.

Therefore, to attend to this considerable lacuna in tourism research, this paper will seek the individual essence of "Who am I?" in an attempt to add to the current body of tourism literature. More specifically, building on the work of Giddens (1990, 1991), Desforges (2000), Hom Cary (2004), McCabe (2005), and Palmer (2005), this study will explore the experiences of tourists as represented in narratives.

Structure of the Thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter 1 is the introduction, which includes the purpose of the study, and statement of the problem. Chapter 2 contains a literature review of the theoretical background of this topic. Chapter 3 introduces the research method, data collection, and data analysis. Chapter 4 presents the findings from the data collected for this study. Finally, Chapter 5 discusses the results, limitations, and conclusions of this study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

What happens when disenchanted or alienated individuals become
growingly aware of their state of alienation, and the meaninglessness and
fatuity of their daily life, as many younger members of the middle classes
in "postmodern" society have become? One direction in their search for
meaning might take is the attempt to transform their society through
revolution; another, less radical alternative is to look for meaning in the
life of others – tourism. The renewed quest for meaning, outside the
confines of one's own society, is commenced (Cohen, 1979, p.11).

The Diversity of Tourist Experiences

Without any limitations, tourism is infinite activity, wherein travelers can go

everywhere and experience anything. Due to this ideology there can be no simple

elucidation of tourism or the experience of the tourist. Although increasing in coverage,

the research on tourist experiences is shamefully limited in tourism research (Smith,

1989; Wang, 2000). There has been a congestion of tourism as a product, and to tourism

operators and host populations, yet the perceptions and feelings of the tourist are

overlooked. The tourist is more than a contrivance for product development.

Respectfully, it has been suggested that the overall experience of the tourist is

disconnected in that the ailing of the world only confirms the comfort of home (Nash,

1989). However, this perspective is amateurish and constricted, since the tourist

experience is unrepresentatively vague, as described earlier. Experience is thoroughly

associated with the individual quest for identity and self-realization. Through tourism a

person is momentarily detached from everyday living and placed in extraordinary

surroundings, soon to return to everyday life. This transition has led to the portrayal of

tourism as a ''sacred journey'' (Graburn, 1989). Experiences are highly individual,

subjectively interpreted, intangible, ephemeral, and inestimable. An experience is by its

very nature something individual or as Ryan (2002) would declare, "a subjective

process". Therefore, "tourism practices and the ways in which they are imagined and

enacted, become central to the construction of the self" (Desforges, 2000, p. 930).

<center>Reflexivity of Self-Identity</center>

The identity of the "Self" assumes reflexive awareness (Giddens, 1991; Taylor,

1989). Desforges (2000) articulates that reflexivity is the capacity to generate an

understanding of events that have happened in the past in order to normalize future

action. Elsrud (2001) suggests that identity is a process of reflexive communications

among the subject, the world, and the people around him or her. "Self-identity is not a

distinctive trait, or even a collection of traits, possessed by the individual. It is the self as

reflexively understood by the person in terms of her or his biography" (Giddens, 1991, p.

53). Desforges (2000) indicates that reflexive biography assists in the preference of

lifestyle by envisioning a gratifying sense of self for the future. Additionally, the process

of "self-actualization" is the fundamental purpose driving this allowing for life

fulfillment through life-planning (Desforges, 2000; Giddens, 1991). Individuals use their

current reflection of past experiences to guide them on their life plan. As we plan our life

direction we envision a brighter future for ourselves which concludes in personal

fulfillment. The flexibility to modify this path is inherently mandated as we are

encountered with choices, experiences, and life-phases. These future lifestyle alterations,

through personal reflection and choice, allow new identities to be renegotiated and

compromised. Thus, transitions in life allow for new autobiographies that are fashioned

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toward a new path shape self-identity. Autobiography in the broad sense of self-history produced by the individual, written or not, is at the core of self-identity (Giddens, 1991).

Importance of Tourist Narratives

> Narratives are neither true, nor false, but simply forms of 'reality representation.' The language chosen by the individual, via which they relate their narrative, reflects how that individual sees the world. The individual's construction of past events and actions serves to enable them to claim identities and construct their lives (Bryant & Lasky, 2007, p. 185).

Elsrud (2001) uses travel narratives to look at the risk creation among long-term backpackers. Risk is seen as an apparatus for story making rather than taken as fact. Backpacking is generally seen as an adventurous living offering knowledge and experience or "social capital" to the individual, which provides him or her with a stronger sense of identity. Elsrud (2001) also looks at how gender, mythology, and social construction are used for narrative survival. Discussions within the backpacker context are used to approach risk and adventure in the manifestations of narrative from the individual perspective. Thus, the narrator becomes a vessel of "capital" of which is disseminated through stories to form self-identity. These stories are transmitted through clothing accessories, professions, musical taste, and personal relationships. Moreover, the language in which one uses tales of travels in addition to journals, books, and articles are meshed into a "life-story" where the teller is the protagonist overcoming obstacles. "In telling about an experience, I am also creating a self–how I want to be known by them" (Riessman, 1993, p. 11). These stories of identity are real in the sense that they are disseminated by the narrator and therefore valid as an empirical observation.

Desforges (2000) focused on the in-depth interviews of British tourists, part of a larger research, using biographies. Desforges (2000) argues that there needs to be more research of tourists "in the flesh" to gather empirical data rather than the reliance on brochures, guidebooks, and newspapers. Even where ethnographic methods are put in place, pointing out the works of Cone (1995) and Kohn (1997) the tourist is neglected, rather the individuals living and working in destinations are focused upon. According to Desforges (2000) drawing from the work of Giddens (1991) indicates that biographies, narratives, and story sharing are important for the tourist in creating a sense of self. "The process through which biographies provides the opportunity to listen to tourists arranging a narrative of the role of travel in their lives and the ways in which they use it to present themselves to other people" (Desforges, 2000, p. 932).

Like Elsrud (2001), Noy (2004) examined how self-change is communicated through the travel narratives of Israeli backpackers, looking at how self-change are culturally and historically rooted in the Romanticist and semi-religious genres. Recently, Noy (2007) asserted that "touristic stories" or personal biographies are dramatic episodes that are used in identity formation. "Narrativitzation tells not only about past actions but how individuals understand those actions that is, meaning" (Riessman, 1993, p. 17). Through narrative, the tourist can probe experiences which (re)produce their sense of self. "Representation in *narrative* is a crucial and heretofore unexplored approach to the poiesis of both tourism and … the "tourist" (Hom Cary, 2004, p. 62). Noy (2004) would agree that narrative is not only crucial, but essential for the formation of one's identity. Similarly, Cone (1995) drew upon the narrative of two Mayan craftswomen and found

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that they had reshaped their relations, their crafts, and their perceptions of themselves and how others perceive them through their interactions with ethnic travelers indicating that the "Self" become a reflexive project. "Self-identity, in other words, is not something that is just given, as a result of the continuities of the individual action-system, but something that has to be routinely created and sustained in the reflexive activities of the individual" (Giddens, 1991, p. 52). It is through narration that allows tourist to reflect on their travels and form self-identity (Desforges, 2000; Elsrud, 2001; Galani-Moutafi, 2000; Neuman, 1992; Noy, 2004, 2007; Tucker, 2005; White & White, 2004).

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

The Literature Review suggests that narrative is a suitable approach in discovering "Who am I?" McCabe (2005) believes that there is a lack of attention placed on the language used by tourists to depict their social interactions because naturally occurring data is difficult to acquire. With this in mind, narrative generating in-depth interviews along with personal observations will be used. In-depth interviews were chosen because they offer the opportunity for storytelling in a casual and flexible way. As Elliot (2005) suggests, the role of the researcher is central to narrative production and in turn produces valuable data. Theory was generated inductively through the utilization of the Grounded Theory Method which will be explained further in the subsequent passages.

Data Collection

Fifteen (15) adults born and raised in the United States of America (US) who have traveled abroad for leisure purposes were recruited to provide empirical data through personal narratives. In-depth interviews were held with seven (7) males and eight (8) females. The goal of the in-depth interviews was to allow for spontaneous personal narrative of the interviewee so stories are not concealed. Elliot (2005) believes that the interaction between the researcher and the interview subject is fundamental in qualitative in-depth interviewing. Giddens (1991) stated, "The existential question of self-identity is bound up with the fragile nature of the biography which the individual supplies' about herself. A person's identity is not to be found in behavior, nor – important though this is

– in the reactions of others, but in the capacity to keep a particular narrative going" (p.54).

Strauss and Corbin (1998) suggested that there is no exact guide for sample size in grounded theory. The subjects were selected through a snowball sample, a non-probability sampling method, since interviewees were considered to be difficult to locate. "The idea is not so much to capture a representative segment of the population as it is to continuously solicit and analyze representative horizons of meaning" (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995, p. 74). For this reason quota sampling and probability sampling techniques were ruled out. While purposive sampling could have been utilized it has been omitted since snowball sampling allowed for a more random selection of subjects. To minimize the possibility of undue influence, all potential subjects were told that they have been asked to participate in a research study investigating how US tourists perceive the essence of who they are through their travel experiences abroad. Once research participants were confirmed each was given a consent form that indicated their voluntary participation in the study, informed them that all interviews would be digitally recorded, and that their names would be changed in data reporting for purposes of anonymity. Once signed and returned, a copy was given to the subject and the first interview was scheduled. Two interviews were conducted for each participant and ninety minutes was allotted for each, as recommended by Elliott (2005) and Seidman (1998). The purpose of the first interview was to gather the specifics of the subject's travel experience and the majority of the narrative, whereas the second interview was used for the purposes of gathering additional data not collected in the initial interview, insuring consistency, and

gaining rapport with the subject (Holloway & Jefferson, 2000). After the first interview and prior to the second, the responses from the subjects were reviewed carefully and transcribed verbatim. "Taping and transcribing are absolutely essential to narrative analysis" (Riessman, 1993, p. 56). The notes taken from this procedure then lead to the accumulation of additional questions to ask the research participant in the second interview. Additionally, prior to the second interview, the participants had an opportunity to read their individual transcript. This member check allowed the research participant to clarify any data that might have been inaudible in the recordings and verify that their narrative was accurately represented. Once the subject has confirmed that the transcripts were accurate, a second interview was scheduled. Again, all transcriptions of the second interviews were sent to the subjects for a member check ensuring that the transcripts accurately reflected the subjects' narratives.

All interviews were digitally recorded with observational notes taken by the researcher. Given the focus of in-depth interviews, for the purpose of gaining detailed narratives, recording devices are a useful tool (Elliott, 2005; Holstein & Gubrium, 1995). Interview questions included: Describe your most recent tourism experience abroad; How did you come about selecting your destination?; How did people feel about you traveling to your destination?; What was going through your mind as you began upon your journey?; What specific activities did you engage in while traveling?; Explain the reasons for these engagements; Describe your feelings being away from home; Explain any situations of discomfort through your entire travel experience; How were you received upon your return?; Did you come back the same person?; Has this travel experience

changed your personal life perception, attitudes, or routines in anyway?; What does

traveling mean to you?; Have you ever traveled anyplace based off a recommendation

from another individual?; Is there anything that you find yourself engaging in when you

travel that you would not otherwise engage in at home?; What do you personally get out

of travel? It is important to note that these questions were used to facilitate the search for

narrative and guide the interview process and not necessarily forced upon participants.

For the purposes of generating detailed narrative, it is important not to impose a strict

structure on the interview by asking a standardized set of questions in the interest of

giving more control to the respondents (Elliott, 2005; Riessman, 1993). Topics such as:

decision to travel; self as traveler; leisure experiences; travel challenges; the

homecoming; stories of experiences; effects of travel were used as the primary direction

of the interviews. Elliot (2005) provides strong support for the utilization of narrative in

qualitative interviews by stating, "For some authors, internal validity is therefore thought

to be improved by the use of narrative because participants are empowered to provide

more concrete and specific details about the topics discussed and to use their own

vocabulary and conceptual framework to describe life experiences" (p. 23).

<div align="center">Human Subjects</div>

This research was approved by the Human Subject Institutional Review Board of

San Jose State University prior to the data collection. The study maintained

confidentiality of all participants. Each participant was given the consent form to be

signed. Once the consent form was signed and returned, a copy was given for their

records prior to the conduction of the interviews. Participation in this research was

completely voluntary. Every participant was allowed to refuse to participate in the entire study or in any part of the study, and reserved the right to not answer questions they did not wish to answer.

<center>Data Analysis</center>

> Carrying out narrative research is doing both art and science: making art is a creative act concerned with generating an effect – be it beauty or surprise. The artistic goal in narrative research adds creative, aesthetic, and craft elements, but it also enhances practice. Its main strength lies in its communicative power and its immediacy. Researchers participating in it also engage their emotions, and they are not neutral or distant but empathic and close to the narrators. This research is also science – albeit social or human science (Holloway & Freshwater, 2007, p. 3).

The Grounded Theory Method, a systematic set of procedures to develop an inductively derived grounded theory about a phenomenon, was implemented for the analysis and understanding of all the in-depth interview transcripts (Babbie, 2009; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Trochim, 2009). "The major advantage of grounded theory over other qualitative methods is that it provides guidelines for rigorous data analysis with explicit procedures and research strategies" (Decrop & Snelders, 2004, p. 1013). The Grounded Theory Method utilizes the constant comparative method which allows the researcher to discover patterns and develop theory from the data. "Using the constant comparative method makes possible the achievement of a complex theory that corresponds closely to the data, since the constant comparisons force the analyst to consider much diversity in the data" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 113).

The qualitative design of this research triangulates grounded theory with narrative analysis, which is uniquely innovative in the field of tourism research. Riessman (1993) indicates that narrative analysis allows for a systematic study of personal experience and

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argues that, while challenging, qualitative analysis can be combined with narrative methods. The work of Bryant and Lasky (2007) articulate how the grounded theory and narrative analysis are beneficial:

> In transcribing and coding data using strictly orthodox grounded theory methods, the researcher runs the risk of 'stripping' the research story of some critical dimension(s). However, combining a narrative approach with that of grounded theory, the paper allows for the representation of an atypical 'Maverick' case, along-side other more typical cases (p. 179).

Through the constant comparison of the self-constructed "reality representation", offered through narrative, concepts can be derived and a robust research outcome is enacted. The resulting concepts are explored in how they relate to the reflexive "Self" in identity construction.

Coding of Data

Open coding was used to expose the thoughts and ideas that were derived from the data collected. The data was read and reread vigilantly to formulate key concepts. The concepts resulting from this process included Transformation of Self; Ego Factor; Self-Actualization; Self-Congruity; Self-Esteem; Nostalgia; Self-Consumption; Opportunity. Upon completing the initial read-through and discovering the concepts to be used, passages of text were grouped based on similarities and assigned to sub-categories within each particular concept. During this process the data was broken down, examined, and then compared and contrasted with other events, emotions, and actions that were related.

The sub-categories that were derived from the initial concepts included: Transformation of Self: Intentional and Unintentional; Ego Factor: Idiosyncratic

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Differentiation , Self-Enhancement, and Anecdotes; Self-Actualization: Morality/Spiritual and Self-Fulfillment; Self-Congruity: Perceived Adventure and Adventure Experience; Self-Esteem: Perceived Freedom/Independence and Escape; Nostalgia: Personal History and Family History; Self-Consumption: Physical, Mental, and Experiential; Opportunity: Attainment of Others and Recreation/Enjoyment. For the purposes of dependability and trustworthiness, the Chair of the thesis committee provided feedback on coding and the verification of results and reflections.

Through axial coding the core concepts of the study were formulated. The initial concepts completed in open coding were reorganized to form more logical concepts. The concepts of Self-Consumption and Opportunity discovered in the open coding process, with respective sub-categories, were discarded. The data coded under these concepts were either merged into the remaining concepts or abandoned because they were found to be irrelevant to this study.

Selective coding established the central code in the study. This study overlapped with the opinions offered by Glasser and Strauss (1967) in allowing coding to continue beyond a saturation point because the policy of accurate evidence require full treatment to accomplish the most accurate explanation as possible. Once the concepts and sub-categories were determined, the interview data was then reread a second time to ensure the passages of text were properly labeled and to make certain that no concepts and sub-categories were left unaccounted. Memos were used for explanation and establishing links between concepts. To organize the data each concept was assigned a numerical value and each sub-category was assigned with a letter. If a passage of text represented,

for instance, an "Adventure Experience" under the concept of "Self-Congruity" then it was labeled, "4B". The "4" indicating the concept number and the "B" indicating the sub-concept. Concepts were highlighted in the text and the code was written in the margins. To allow for archival of the codes, a small strip of a Post-it note was attached to the top of the page and the respected code was written on the front. Once the coding process was completed all of the codes were placed in their own individual Microsoft Word document corresponding to their particular concept. For instance, all passages of text labeled, "1A" and "1B" were placed in file titled, "1A_1B Transformation of Self". The individual document separated the passages of text that were labeled "1A" and "1B". The Word documents were found as a useful digital tool in allowing for quick access to the coded data during reporting.

Credibility

> It is important to recognize, that there are two different levels on which to discuss authenticity (or validity) in narrative inquiry: the original story of the participants, as well as the narrative in which the researcher re-presents their stories; not only do participants tell stories but the account of the researcher who carries out narrative inquiry is also a narration (Holloway & Freshwater, 2007, p. 105).

In a qualitative paradigm, a study has credibility if it is reasonable, reliable, transferable, and has a diversified quantity of recognized information sources that can be verified (Babbie, 2009; Creswell, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Maxwell, 1996). To provide strong groundwork for constructing a credible qualitative study, several steps were taken in the planning, implementation, data recording, coding and analysis, reporting, and confirmation phases of this study. These steps involve flexibility, revision, and ethical and moral reflection on the part of the researcher in (re)presenting the

findings in a way that would not compromise the trust and rapport afforded to the researcher by the research participants (Creswell, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Wolcott, 1999). However, it is understandable that the "truth" of the researcher's narrative may be sometimes in conflict with the story of the participants. As Phillips (1997) argued, "the researcher's perspective alone does not necessarily have 'authoritative status' but neither does the stories of the participants" (p. 104).

<div align="center">Researcher's Bias</div>

Lofland and Lofland (1995) suggest that the researcher adopt the role of "socially acceptable incompetent" when interviewing. The purpose for this was to limit the bias involved when probing the research subject. Bias is, "that quality of a measurement device that tends to result in a misrepresentation of what is being measured in a particular direction" (Babbie, 2009, p. 260). Recognizing the potential for social desirability due the sensitive nature of self-identity, the guiding questions were written in a way as to not allow the respondent to feel uncomfortable, yet free to convey any perceptive narrative. Probing questions such as, How so?; Why is that?; What do you mean?; Can tell me more about that?; etc., were used to prevent researcher bias. Lincoln and Guba (1985) stress the usage of an internal audit (eg., member check) for the purposes of credibility and confirmability. Through a member check, this research allowed each respondent the ability to review their transcripts to ensure that the data they provided accurately represented what they articulated in their interviews. "The purpose of qualitative research is to describe or understand the phenomena of interest from the participant's

eyes, the participants are the only ones who can legitimately judge the credibility of the

results" (Trochim, 2009, p. 3).

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

The general concepts derived from data analysis included Transformation of Self;

Ego Factor; Self-Actualization; Self-Congruity; Self-Esteem; Nostalgia; Self-

Consumption; and Opportunity. The sub-categories that were derived from these

concepts include: Transformation of Self: Intentional and Unintentional; Ego Factor:

Idiosyncratic Differentiation, Self-Enhancement, and Anecdotes; Self-Actualization:

Morality/Spiritual and Self-Fulfillment; Self-Congruity: Perceived Adventure and

Adventure Experience; Self-Esteem: Perceived Freedom/Independence and Escape;

Nostalgia: Personal History and Family History. Full descriptions of the findings from

the composed categories are articulated hereafter.

Transformation of Self

> We are, not what we are, but what we make of ourselves. It would not be
> true to say that the self is regarded as entirely empty of content, for there
> are psychological processes of self-formation, and psychological needs,
> which provide the parameters for the reorganized self. Otherwise,
> however, what the individual becomes is dependent on the reconstructive
> endeavors in which he or she engages. These are far more than just
> 'getting to know oneself' better: self-understanding is subordinated to the
> more inclusive and fundamental aim of building/rebuilding a coherent and
> rewarding sense of identity. The involvement of such reflexivity with
> social and psychological research is striking, and a pervasive feature of the
> therapeutic outlook advocated (Giddens, 1991, p. 75).

Noy (2004, 2007) offers a look into the narratives of Israeli backpackers in

understanding the "Self" as a transformative vessel shaped by tourism. This section

seeks to explore the concept of "Transformation of Self" and how reflexivity is used to

form new self-identities. Two sub-categories are outlined: (1) "Intentional", meaning

that the traveler intended for a transformation to occur before departing on the travel

experience. (2) "Unintentional", meaning that a transformation of "Self" would occur

unbeknownst to the traveler during the travel experience. "The great journey, they

enthusiastically admit, supplies more than mere recreation and even more than a

profound experience per se: rather, it is downright transformative" (Noy, 2007, p. 173).

Intentional Transformation of Self

An interesting feature of the narratives is that most of the individuals, upon

traveling abroad previously, came back with an alternative vision of what it means to

travel. The notion of self-identity is not only present, but emerges naturally through the

course of the narrative. To illustrate this point, Dan provides a clear account of his

thoughts upon returning from his first trip abroad in Europe. Prior to leaving, Dan knew

that by going to Europe he would be able to experience things that he could not

experience at home, but through his narrative Dan comes home with more than just

experiences.

> Dan: It's too easy just to stay in Sacramento and to stay in California.
> There are too many things you can see that you can [Pause] you can
> probably go somewhere every weekend and you can be busy in California
> for a year and half to two years, but by putting yourself out of your
> element you are going to learn more about yourself and the traveling that I
> have done in Europe and when I did a road trip around the states, I learned
> more about myself and that's combined maybe two and a half months.
> Probably more than I learned in ten years prior so I know that once I get
> the next experience to be able to do a trip like that I'm going to probably
> learn more about you know [Pause] what's really important to me. Umm
> [sic] [Pause] I'm going to learn what's not important to me so, I think by
> traveling, I can help realize things about myself that I wouldn't have
> known if I had stayed here and didn't put myself out of my element.
> That's really the most important thing to me when traveling. It's not

taking pictures of, you know, this monument or that waterfall; it is putting myself out of a place that is comfortable for me (Dan, personal communication, Saturday, August 8, 2008).

Through Dan's narrative he conveys his intensified erudition of self that was formulated from his travel experiences abroad. Furthermore, the narrative shows how his perception of travel has changed; a casual perception of new experience to a continually renewed sense of self. This intentional transformation of self directly relates to Giddens (1991) in which he discusses that self-identity in not an idiosyncratic attribute or trait, but rather "the self as reflexively understood by the person in terms of his or her biography". It is important to note that the word "intentional" refers to the individual's self-awareness and not necessarily his or her action system. For instance, upon traveling abroad for the first time, Dan's self-conscious is now intending to change as the result of another travel experience in the future. "In order to have a sense of who we are, we have to have a notion of how we have become, and of where we are going" (Taylor, 1989, p. 47).

In the case of Mary, who had traveled abroad previously, she talks about her sense of self change as a result of her trip to Tanzania. This voyage instilled an appreciation in her for the circumstances in which she was raised even though she knew what she would encounter before she left. Her initial reason for traveling was not to anticipate change for herself, but hopefully instill self-change on her daughter.

> Mary: That was a big motivation for us to go to Tanzania and take my daughter, she was about 12-13 years old thinking 'Oh my life stinks' not depressed, just sort of pre-teen sort of rebellious sort of not feeling like your life is everything you want it to be and we're like, let's just go show you how the rest of the world lives. That was a big motivation for us to take her and she came back with a big dose of 'Oh my gosh', we had a really easy year and really lucky because of the poverty levels and the

crime the things that we saw (Mary, personal communication, Tuesday, July 28, 2009).

Mary's experience in Tanzania, while allowing her daughter to see how a part of the world lives, also allowed for her own personal reflection:

> Mary: Really seeing that was, 'Wow'. It made me want to do more. It made me want to help with other efforts and donate to those kids of causes. You see the UNICEF funds and the commercials on TV and it's really like that in a lot of those places that we went. I felt traveling sometimes even a little embarrassed going through these countries and being part of a group because they would just rush us begging for money. People would just rush us. It made me feel guilty in some cases what I do have compared to what people don't have, you know, just enough food and the ability to go to school. There if you go to school you have to have a uniform and if you can't afford a uniform you can't go to school. I remember thinking, that's pathetic, you know, the poorest kids can't go to school and they just keep getting poorer. It is a good insight. I knew all of that, but I came back from that trip with a whole other feeling of how fortunate I am to have what I have and be born where I was born and in the circumstances that I was (Mary, personal communication, Tuesday, July 28, 2009).

White and White (2004) indicate that the reformulation of identity occurs as a result of an experience and Mary's story transmits that notion. Mary's narrative naturally flows to comment on how her experience in Tanzania affected her sense of appreciation, of her circumstances and how she wanted to do more as a result. She knew of the living conditions of the natives she would visit, but upon her encounter with them, she would reflect upon her sense of self, which the narrative conveys.

Similarly, Doris discusses the reflexivity of "Self" upon returning from abroad. Doris (personal communication, Friday, October 23, 2009) asks, "What can I do differently to get more balance?" which provides her a new sense of self as she reflects

upon her social relationships, toleration, ability to embrace change, and her handling of situations.

> Doris: How much I love to play and how much I love adventure and that when I am in my day-to-day life it always reminds me of how to strive to get more balance back in my life. When I return I say, 'What can I do differently here to get more balance?' That is how I see things because there are always people that you are meeting or experiences that you are having that is just so different from how we do things here in this country. It gives me an opportunity to look at how tolerant I am and how embracing I am in terms of change or, you know, how I respond to people in my life, my relationships when I am traveling, and you know when things don't pan out the way I thought they were going to pan out. Dealing with disappointment and how I handle it in that situation versus how I handle it in my day-to-day, those kinds of things (Doris, personal communication, Friday, October 23, 2009).

Doris is consciously aware that she is reflecting on a travel experience upon her return home. Giddens (1991) and Taylor (1998) would agree that in this situation Doris is reformulating her self-identity since the "Self" assumes reflexive awareness. In her narrative Doris talks about the growth, relaxation, adventure, fun, and intellectual stimulation that comes out of travel. She indicated that traveling offers her personal growth through learning how she responds to particular situations and cultures, in addition to changing the stressors of travel from her ability to "roll with the punches". Furthermore, this shows how Doris's transformation of self is intentional and aware.

In several of the narratives the perception of the "ugly American" was conferred and always in a negative light. Travelers noted that the ugly American was the epitome of everything they did not what to become themselves. Encountering the ugly American allowed for individuals to consciously reflect on how they were perceived themselves and in many cases they tried to respectfully distance themselves from any encounters. From

the narratives, the perception of the ugly American was that of individuals who are rude,

obnoxious, naïve, and who are representing the United States in a poor manner when

traveling. Wes shares a story of one encounter:

> Wes: We were in France in a small café and there was an American couple
> that sat next to us and he ordered two beers. He wanted some local beers;
> he was with a family of five people. And they delivered the beer and he
> had the beer and the waiter came over later and asked what he thought of
> it. He said, 'It is ok, but it's not as good as at home'. You don't have to
> do that. What you say is the beer was good then you shut up. He wasn't
> there to compare, he was there to enjoy the local beer and the waiter
> wanted to know how the beer was, not how it related to something else.
> That's the ugly American. You don't need to do that (Wes, personal
> communication, Tuesday, August 25, 2009).

Wes's encounter with this particular individual allowed Wes to consciously reflect upon

his own personal identity. From this experience, and similar ones, Wes has created a

renewed sense of self in that he now intentionally tries to be better than he normally is

while at home. Wes's reflection comes naturally through the narrative he provided after

describing the ugly American:

> Wes: What you say is the beer was good then you shut up. If you had a
> beer, any beer would be okay if you are not comparing it to the best one
> you ever had. And a lot of people who travel, especially on cruises,
> compare their trip on that ship to all the other ones. Unfortunately they
> take the best of the other ones and try to compare it and that's not fair. It's
> just, things aren't the same [Pause] food isn't the same [Pause] things just
> aren't the same and that's the way it is. But the ugly American really
> bothers us and I think we have tried over the years to be better than normal
> wherever we travel, public transportation, in a group, whatever (Wes,
> personal communication, Tuesday, August 25, 2009).

Similarly, Karen describes her encounter with a group of ugly Americans. Through her

encounter she describes her sense of self through questioning the actions of the

individuals' food preferences and then contemplating why the group even travels.

Karen: Then the other lady says, [In southern accent] 'Well, the tour guide said that there is good food around here. Where can I find a Mac-Donald's?' [*sic*] [Laughs] I thought, 'Oh Jesus a McDonald's?' I said, 'Down by the main post office' [In southern accent] 'Oh good, then that's where we are going to eat' and I'm thinking, 'Why come? You are in Geneva and some of the best food in the world is in Geneva and you want to eat at McDonald's and have Corn Flakes for breakfast?' [Laughs]. Go get yourself a gorgeous pastry and have a coffee. [Laughs] I met a few people like that and it is like, 'Why are you traveling?' (Karen, personal communication, Monday, October 19, 2009   ).

The perceptions of, and encounters with, the ugly American allows the on goers to step back from the situation for (re)evaluation which, in turn, shapes their self-identity. Existential questions such as, "Who am I?", "What sort of person am I?", or "How am I to live?" as posed by scholars (Desforges, 2000; Giddens, 1991; Taylor, 1998) is the underlining question of the individual in shaping their self-identity. However, the negative experiences encountered through the ugly American raises other questions that has yet to be posed by scholars, "Who am I not?", "What sort of person am I not?", and "How do I not want to live?" The opposite of "Who am I?" can be just as valuable in the reflexivity of the "Self" to shape self-identity. Situations and encounters with others can provide a visual and experiential setting for the person to reject particular characteristics as to not hold them as their own, thereby reformulating and clarifying their self-identity. The "Self" internally decides that they are not to act or be a particular way and makes a reflexive effort to change one's self in a positive way from their perception of the other.

The intentional transformation of self, while noted earlier, refers to the individual's self-awareness and not necessarily his or her action system can be influenced by personal actions and the actions of others as seen in Wes and Karen's narratives of the ugly American. Doris (personal communication, Friday, October 23, 2009), in her

narrative, recounted "What can I do differently here to get more balance?" after returning

from a trip which is a direct account of her reflecting on her self-identity. Dan's narrative

shows that self-identity is not an idiosyncratic attribute, but rather a reflexive project that

is ongoing and continually changing. Dan predicts that another change will occur in the

future as a result of another travel experience. These individuals have all exposed the

intentional transformation of self through their narrative. "Therefore, the information we

allow into consciousness becomes extremely important; it is, in fact, what determines the

content and the quality of life" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, p. 30).

Unintentional Transformation of Self

Many of the narratives discussed a transformation of self that occurred as a result

of traveling. These occurrences of self-change where unknown to the individual prior to

their travel experience allowing for them to reflect naturally without any preconceived

notion of how they might change as a result of the experience. Individuals left home with

the thought of adventure, traveling to experience another country, and to see how others

lived without any indication that they would transform as a result. The narratives,

ultimately positive, showed a profound change of self and the formation of a new self-

identity initially unbeknownst to the traveler.

On Nick's trip to China, he talks about learning about the culture and other

people's feelings. He shares how he got a whole new perspective on things pertaining to

how the stories Americans hear about China are different than what you see when you are

there. He then conveys how this travel experience, and others like it, has affected him:

> Nick: But I learned about life, I learned about my own life. You wonder,
> 'Who has it better?' You know like when you travel, some people, even

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though their country may be in poverty, they would not want to exchange places with me or things like that. They are tied to their heritage and things like that. See, but I have learned from the attitudes of the people and it has certainly affected my mind too, in different ways. One of the ways is how I live (Nick, personal communication, Friday, July 17, 2009).

Nick left for his trip without the expectation of learning about his life, but through his narrative his shows how his self reflects on what he saw. He ponders, "Who has it better" or in layman terms "Who am I?" compared to "Who are they?" and those existential questions are key in shaping self-identity.

A common thread among the narratives was how travel opened their eyes to the political beliefs and national perceptions of others. Two different stories show how travel played a role in personal change of the individuals on this basis:

> Jeff: Then there are other times where you get to meet with the actual people who live and work there, so we made a point to stay with a family in New Zealand [Pause]. We could stay at either a sheep farm, a cattle ranch, or one other place [Pause] I think it was a deer ranch. So, we picked the sheep farm for our stay. We stayed at their house. They cooked us a nice meal for that evening we stayed in their guest bedroom. We had dinner with them, they started to talk politics, and we were amazed at how little we knew about international politics. We barely know anything, at all. And these people were talking about how this affects that and this and we're struggling to keep up and before this dinner we thought we were pretty cool, very well knowledgeable and now we realized that, well we should just go play with the sheep tomorrow morning [Laughs] (Jeff, personal communication, Wednesday, September 2, 2009).

> Lisa: Probably the best trip we ever went had was going to Russia because it was so [Pause] we got to see what the Kremlin looked like. We got to see what Red Square looked like. We got to see how the people in Russia were living, you know. Based on our preconceived notions, I went shopping for all dark clothes, black shoes because I thought that they would be very depressed and wearing babushkas in Russia and it was so absolutely the opposite. They are very capitalistic, they wear very bright colors, and they're conspicuous consumption. It was very eye opening to see that. Again, every trip that I have is, it opens my eyes to something

that I had previously conceived that was not true. I found out that what I had thought was not true. One of the biggest things for me in traveling is I've learned getting outside of the United States is how selfish and self-centered the United States Americans are (Lisa, personal communication, Friday, August 7, 2009).

Jeff talks about his experience on a sheep farm in New Zealand and getting the chance to stay in the home of a native where his initial perception did not allow him the opportunity for self reflection. Little did he know his experience on a local sheep farm in New Zealand allowed his "Self" to reflect on the familiarity of international politics displayed by the residents.

Lisa's narrative displayed strong elements of how travel has shaped her political beliefs and worldview. Through her narrative she describes shopping for the occasion, which she later referred to as "dressing down", wearing dark and depressing clothes based on preconceived thoughts. She tells of the eye opening experience that she had seeing people dressed in bright colors describing it as, "capitalistic". Through the narrative, she allows herself to reflect back at other instances of self-change and sums up by offering her newfound options of Americas based on the cumulative of her experiences. Additionally, Lisa's narrative goes on to elaborate on specific experiences that she had in Canada, Italy, Prague, and London indicating how the media coverage is different than that of the United States. She mentions how in some cases she was embarrassed to be an American and refers to viewing the news in other countries as "looking at the United States from the outside". As with continually changing political climates Lisa's experiences abroad continually open her eyes and alter her preconceived

notions. This continuous reflection of "Self" transforms her on each trip and creates a new self-identity.

In her narrative Lucy articulates how change affected her when traveling. Lucy (personal communication, Thursday, August 6, 2009) discusses becoming more sensitive, conservative, and confident as a result, "So it was a very strange [Pause] I mean it made a massive change in me because I got a lot of self-confidence and feelings that I had all these unique experiences. It was definitely a change." She shares a story of visiting a home in Costa Rica:

> Lucy: There is a while after I come back that's sort of a [Pause] I'm more sensitive about all of the stuff around me because more of the places I travel [Pause] this home in Costa Rica that has a four person family; a mother, a daughter, and a daughter who is in her 20's probably a son who was probably an early teenager, and their house was probably 1000 square feet and they all lived in it and seemed that they were comfortable in it (Lucy, personal communication, Thursday, August 6, 2009).

Lucy's experience traveling to this particular residence in Costa Rica serves as a reflexive example to the "Self". Lucy had no expectation of transforming as a result of her travels, she knew she would gain experiences, but upon returning home she is able to reflect on her experience visiting this residence which shapes her self-identity. She continues:

> Lucy: When I come home and my house is twice that size and it's like, 'God, I just have a lot of stuff, don't I?' I'm just very aware of how much Americans, and myself included, sort of consume and then it takes me a while to sort of say 'okay', you know (Lucy, personal communication, Thursday, August 6, 2009).

Lucy's transformation of "Self" occurred as a result of traveling. This particular story only offers one occurrence in forming a new self-identity for Lucy. In her narrative many

more occurrences, such as visiting the home in Costa Rica, are present. Lucy admits that it was hard to share her experiences upon returning, particularly with her academic colleagues, but views this self-change in a positive manner.

Lucy's experience in Costa Rica was detailed and specific in terms of how she transformed. However, some of the narratives were less specific, but still offered a genuine encounter with depth of meanings to the individual. Ed shares his experience of being on an African Safari in contrast to watching the same event on his television:

> Ed: I think you have to experience and take it all in [Pause] maybe it changes you, you know when you watch it [Pause] you know I have a high-def television, I love to watch the travel programs. You know now on an African Safari I can see the fur on an elephant, you can see the life in the eyes and it's beautiful to watch, but I went on an African Safari and when you look into a lion's eyes or you look into those wild animals it changes you. I mean there is an aliveness there that I have never experienced (Ed, personal communication, Monday, September 1, 2009).

Through Ed's narrative he is able to recount looking into the eyes of a lion uttering, "It changes you" as a contrast to merely watching the same thing on a television. While Ed does not elaborate any further on this specific experience his words were filled with profound conviction and connotation of his sense of self. Ed had no indication that this experience would have a profound effect and it has changed him as a result. As Ed goes back to his television and watches the safari programs he can continually reflect on his past travel experience in Africa and restructure his self-identity.

<div align="center">Ego Factor</div>

"The ego is the bedrock of every identity project" (MacCannell, 2002, p. 148). The ego is neither positive nor negative; rather a reflexive entity useful in identity construction. The "Ego Factor" category is divided into three sub-groups: (1)

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"Idiosyncratic Differentiation" in which the traveler sets themselves apart as being unique or different to create a sense of "Otherness". (2) "Self-Enhancement", meaning to experience, gain knowledge, or travel for the purpose of self-improvement. (3) "Anecdotes", where stories of travel experiences are shared with acquaintances before, during, and after the journey. Through the use of travel narratives, this section will explore how the ego is used in the formation of idiosyncratic differentiation, self-enhancement, and anecdotes to formulate self-identity.

Idiosyncratic Differentiation

Many of the narratives made mention of jealousy they encountered from friends and family, never in great detail, but none-the-less, a common theme among the subjects. This feeling of others being jealous created a sense of otherness or separation from acquaintances as a traveler. This caused almost a clash among separate self-identities where travelers found it hard to explain their excursions, but genuinely tried to solve and reflect why others do not travel themselves again shaping their sense of self. At times the narratives show a perception of superiority or as MacCannell (2002) would say, "self-exaltation" as related to the ego, which further sets them apart as "Other". One cannot say whether these thoughts are intentional, meaning the desire to be different, unique, or exclusive. However, the point remains that the feelings of otherness are apparent in the narratives.

> Lisa: I always have stuff to share. It's not [Pause] people aren't as
> interested, you know, in [Pause] as I am, you know. For my girlfriend and
> I to talk about it is one thing, but [Pause] and somebody else might be
> interested in Europe, you know, or that kind of travel. Most people I
> know aren't interested. It is like, 'Why are you going to Europe?, Why
> would you want to live in Europe?, Why would you want to go outside the

United States?' you know. So, most people don't get it (Lisa, personal communication, Friday, August 7, 2009).

Lisa feels she can share her experiences openly with her girlfriend because her girlfriend is her travel partner. Lisa's sense of self is built almost inconspicuously through inquires of acquaintances since Lisa's self-identity is seen as "Other" from their perspectives. Whether her sense of self is viewed as stubborn or solid is regardless of the comment made by Lisa saying, "Most people don't get it" which can be translated into, "I know who I am, I am 'Other'" thus turning away any reflexive awareness on a previously reflected thought. "The ego is the site of authority, mastery, and control" (MacCannell, 2002, p. 148).

Some of the narratives show signs of travelers trying to make sense of why others do not travel, meanwhile setting themselves apart from these associates as "Other". This is defiantly apparent in Nick's narrative:

> Nick: I told you that my friends they don't have the same interests that I have. They don't want to travel for several reasons. Maybe they can't afford it, maybe it is not their priority, or they just don't want to travel because it takes them out of their comfort zone. So when I leave here I travel alone and I hook up with a vendor when I get there and then I meet a whole group of people. Some of the people I am still in touch with (Nick, personal communication, Friday, July 17, 2009).

Nick (personal communication, Friday, July 17, 2009) commonly focused on the differences between himself and others, generally using his "Self" as a pivot in shaping his self-identity, "But that is the difference between me and my family and my friends. I want to travel and they are afraid to travel" and "Because he prefers to live within his own comfort zone. He would never take any chances at all. That is the difference between him and me", which were common in the interviews. Likewise, Doris's

narrative used the "Self" as a pivot, but rather in a way that was encouraging to those

who she perceived as not experiencing the "Other":

> Doris: Because there is like this [Pause] because I have such a love of
> traveling and I have learned and just [Pause] it is just so exciting for me to
> have that experience that I want others to have that and it saddens me
> when I meet people who have never left the state of California. I don't
> even understand that concept. Life is so juicy when you travel and you
> can experience it in such a different way. It's so [Pause] I don't know
> how else to describe it. It is like I really feel like people are missing out if
> they don't get the experience of traveling. I think everyone needs to travel
> to a Third World country to understand how much gratitude we in this
> country need to have [Laughs]. People in other countries don't have what
> we have here. I think it's really an eye opener. It's an eye opening
> experience and the reality of it is that there are many people who don't
> ever leave their home state and who don't ever travel (Doris, personal
> communication, Friday, October 23, 2009).

Doris finds it hard to understand and pinpoint why others do not travel. By sorting

through this internal inquiry she is (re)evaluating her sense of self. MacCannell (2002)

would defend that in Doris's case the egos coerce is to keep itself complete because the

ego is nothing more than a reflexive mental construct. In addition, Doris's identity feels

the need to share that "Self" with others who have had similar experiences. Although

encouraging, she is setting herself apart as "Other" from her associates. As stated earlier,

the ego factor in tourism is not a good or a bad thing, it is just apparent in the narratives

and idiosyncratic differentiation is a way of exploiting that notion.

Many of the research subjects commented that their differing interest played a

role in finding it hard to encourage people to travel with them on various trips. As Karen

(personal communication, Tuesday, July 21, 2009) said, "I was traveling by myself. I

could never find anybody that wanted to travel or who had the same interests. I don't get

to do what I want to do or not do." Nick has had similar experiences with others

regarding his particular interests when traveling.

> Nick: Because I know that where I prefer to go, not everyone is interested
> in what I am interested in. I mean, who wants to go see the killing fields,
> or some ghetto archeological sites to see old, old ruins? I mean, who
> wants to go see ruins? (Nick, personal communication, Friday, July 17,
> 2009).

Karen and Nick's self-identity played a role in the types of excursions they would go on

and the feedback from others would strengthen their sense of self. For Nick (personal

communication, Wednesday, October 21, 2009), traveling is very personal for him;

"Satisfaction [Pause] that I've seen a lot of the world most people haven't. It's not a

matter of giving me satisfaction or anything, it is the satisfaction for my own self. I don't

travel to brag about my trips." Additionally, Lucy's narrative was able to capture her

sense of self in contrast to others setting her "Self" as different or unique. She describes

in detail the type of locations that her associates enjoyed versus her own.

> Lucy: I have friends that just went to Italy and they did [Pause] and they
> were naming the cities that they were all in and that wouldn't be a trip for
> me. I would lose interest very quickly, you know. I could see the city
> very quickly and then I would want to get into the mountains or down on
> the shore or something like that where it's much more interesting. Fact is,
> I have a trip planned for next June that goes to Mongolia and China and I
> can't find anybody that even remotely interested in [Laughs] going to
> Mongolia. They say, 'What's in Mongolia?', 'It's different, I don't know
> what is there and that's the reason you go, to find out was is there'. So
> they think I'm a little nuts (Lucy, personal communication, Thursday,
> August 6, 2009).

Lucy's self comes through in her narrative by differentiating herself in the variety of

other situations that she would rather find herself from that of her constituents. She

justifies her position by indicating that she would lose interest and how a particular trip

would not be for her. In her narrative Lucy is saying, "This is what I am not, but here is what I am".

The narratives also indicated a sense of otherness within the narrators from how their perception of their "Self" contrasted to that of a "tourist". It seems that the word, "tourist" is almost a derogatory term for travelers in the context of tourism studies. Most of the narratives made a claim that the "Self," when traveling, was separate from that of a "tourist". Doris (personal communication, Sunday, July 26, 2009) indicated that she would rather blend in, "I try to go into a culture and community not wanting to like, if you will, stick out as a tourist". In Karen's narrative she indicates that she is a tourist, but then immediately rejects the notion by indicating herself as a tourist by playing an alternate role.

> Karen: I had just become so relaxed and seen so much and everything that I wanted to do I did that I don't really think of myself as a tourist, you know. Aren't you always a tourist? You're just not the typical tourist, you don't have to run to see that cathedral and you don't have to stand there in front of that statue and have somebody take your picture (Karen, personal communication, Tuesday, July 21, 2009).

The "Self" seeks to set itself apart from the tourist and this concern may be an indispensable element of identity (Galani-Moutafi, 2000, p. 222). The feelings of "Self" as different to that of a "tourist" were generally justified through narrative as to why they were not a "tourist". "I think it significant that people who are actually in accord are struggling to distance themselves from themselves via this moral stereotype of the tourist" (MacCannell, 1999, p. 9). Karen uses experience as a vice for making her claim which was common among the other narratives. As the "Self" builds upon its identity

through repetition, constantly seeing and experiencing, it sees itself as something more than what it is through traditional terms and definitions, it becomes "Other".

Another theme that was common among the narratives was the idea of a fleeting moment that will never have the opportunity to be expressed again. As stated earlier these experiences were so powerful and personal to the individuals that it was hard for them to fully articulate what exactly they experienced. Both Janet and Dan offer strong narratives of this point and they both convey how that moment could only be felt under the circumstances of that particular time and place.

> Janet: Umm [*sic*], and I think for a lot of them they hadn't really done a backpacking trip, or done something spontaneous like that so I think most people didn't know how to relate. Umm [*sic*], or maybe it was just such a special experience for me, it was something that I couldn't really share in words. It was kinda [*sic*] like, you had to be there, you had to be with me, had to experience it to really understand how really unique and wonderful and just surreal it was the whole time. Umm [*sic*] [Pause] so to share it with people, I could share pictures and I could share stories, but, it was still more like I couldn't really verbalize so much like, the true, meaning of it that it was to me at the time. It was more just like, 'This is what we did, this is what we saw' but I couldn't really capture the feeling of it when I saw what I saw because I guess in the moment that I saw it, it was just so like, stupendous. How do you share with other people? They weren't there they just didn't get that (Janet, personal communication, Tuesday, August 4, 2009).

> Dan: Yeah, it's always exciting, always like a [Pause] I always have a story for the pictures so I can remember what happened on the trip and kind of how I was feeling or why we did certain things, but every time I've shown the pictures, I've gotten really excited and part of it is probably just, you know, desire to go back and have another experience like that and I think part of it is because I know I'll never have an experience like that, you know, I'll never be in a place, I mean my buddy is now married and he would never be able to go back and do half the things that we did, you know, so knowing that this was a once in a life-time type of experience it keeps me really motivated when I'm, you know, excited when I'm talking (Dan, personal communication, Saturday, August 8, 2009).

Dan and Janet's experience creates an "Otherness" when trying to convey and relive their experiences. They create a "Self" from their experiences that is very personal to them, one that can never be duplicated under the exact same conditions. They hold this "Otherness" close to them because it is theirs and no one else's. From this differentiation of themselves from others they can hold their self-identity as exclusive and unique. "Differentiation implies a movement toward uniqueness, towards separating oneself from others" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, p. 41). Using "Otherness" to relive experiences allow for the "Self" to be reflexive as a new self-identity is formulated. Reflexivity is a result of their relived experience (Galani-Moutafi, 2000, p. 222), which they now use for identity (re)creation.

<div align="center">Self-Enhancement</div>

MacCannell (2002) questions what tourists consume and notes that tourism studies knows little about this subject. People will spend thousands of personal dollars to consume something that is intangible. However, what they do take possession of, in a spiritual sense, is the "Self". The ego can gain knowledge, experiences, and social capital which can then be reflected upon to form self-identity. Albeit intangible, a possession that can never be thrown away, returned, or discarded except as a reflexive thought continually morphing into a stronger self-identity. "The ego claims to have an identity, and it demands of others that they respect that claim. With its every gesture, the ego is saying, in effect, 'Look at me. Look up to me'" (MacCannell, 2002, p. 148).

> Lily: I want to do everything, I want to see everything, I want to go everywhere, I want to walk the streets and see the color of the buildings and I really want to get immersed and feel like I'm part of that particular

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community that I'm staying in right that minute. I want to get to know what they are like. I don't always have the opportunity to get to know what they, I say they meaning people, because it's not always easy to really make those kinds of connections. You are connecting with people based on your interactions whether in restaurants, hotels, or in these museums, these venues, but you still get a sense of what people are like (Lily, personal communication, Sunday, August 9, 2009).

Lily's ego is in effect saying, "I want" as a vice for creating her self-identity. Again, this use of ego is not used in a positive or negative account, but as a building block of identity. In Lily's narrative, her ego's reference to saying, "I want" is in essence saying, "This is who I am or will become" thus, a self-identity is being constructed. A more specific example of the ego saying, "Look at me. Look up to me." was provided by Dan while he was discussing keeping in contact with friends and family while traveling in Europe. His narrative talks of his feelings of independence, yet still feeling compelled to e-mail his family to make sure that they are ok. Dan (personal communication, Saturday, August 8, 2009) says afterward, "Part of it was kind of a, 'Wow, look at the cool things I'm doing', you know, maybe try to insight." As discussed prior, Dan's ego or "Self" presented through the narrative is reflected upon and (re)created by declaring "Look at me. Look up to me." as justly stated by MacCannell (2002).

A common theme among the narratives, such as Lily's, was the social capital gained for self-enhancement through travel, "Your connecting with people based on your interactions", as she describes. Wes shares a story of where social capital was gained through a fellow traveler on a cruise ship:

Wes: Cancun we met a woman who was a couple doors down from us who was traveling with her children, she goes back every year with her grown children. She invited us to have dinner with her one night. She didn't have to invite us to have dinner we could have gone on our own.

She said, 'Come down we are eating at the restaurant' just people who travel just seem to be friendly. I think I remember more of the people sometimes than even the sights where we were (Wes, personal communication, Tuesday, August 25, 2009).

The enhancement of the "Self" through social capital was acquired initially from learning about people and not just the natives, but other travelers such as in Wes's case. Jane also discussed talking with other travelers while waiting in line for various tourist attractions.

Jane: Number one, going to places I have never been to before and I talk to people. I drove my kid's nuts when they were young. We would stand in line and I'd start talking to people and I learned so much about other people, other ways of life, other thoughts, other philosophies, you know, not just mine, it's so broadening (Jane, personal communication, Sunday, October 18, 2009).

In Nick's narrative he talked of learning from other travelers, but he focused on the education gained from traveling through encounters with the people he was visiting. He indicated that traveling was a form of education and that that was a passion of his because if offered firsthand experiences.

Nick: I'd like to say that I have a passion for learning and traveling is a way of learning things, more or less, firsthand. As I grow older, if I don't have any passion for anything then my life is over. That's why my passion is to learn so I'll travel as long as I am able to. That sort of summarizes why I travel. I do enjoy traveling even though that it's a hectic and sort of full of anxiety, but I still love to travel despite all the discomforts and things like that (Nick, personal communication, Wednesday, October 21, 2009).

The topics of education, learning, and knowledge were all too common among the narratives. Everyone interviewed discussed or elaborated on how travel offers the "Self" opportunities to learn. From these various opportunities comes new knowledge to be reflected upon in the formation of self-identity. Nick's description of traveling to learn was passionate and genuine in his narrative. Lucy also has a similar outlook on travel.

Lucy: The more I travel the more I learn, the more I learn the more I have to keep my mind active, and it means that I have another learning opportunity. It means that I get to see other cultures and I don't know what it is about other cultures that fascinate me (Lucy, personal communication, Thursday, August 6, 2009).

In her narrative, Lucy talks of the education and learning she acquires form traveling in addition to all of the preparation of research before departing. She talks of travel as enhancing and stimulating her mind and how that keeps her interested in the world. Learning for her is of high importance and she associated travel as another way of learning and described it as a special experience.

The importance that travel has on the "Self" cannot be understated. Many individuals talked of how traveling brought a sort of balance to their lives that influenced their overall health or individual wellness. Ed talked of his late wife and was convinced that her experiences later in life through traveling prolonged her life. As for Ed himself, he talks of health and balance succinctly as was common among the other narratives.

Ed: I worked for…and they had a management benefit where you got six weeks of vacation, but you could sell back four. Most of the people sold those four weeks back. I never sold one hour. If I could have bought the other people's hours I would have done that. That's how important it was to me. There is a balance wheel when I think of wellness. Set time aside for you personally, set time aside for your children, set time aside for you and your spouse, and set time aside for the educational things. Recreation, travel, and trips are an important part of that pie. I think it is part of being a healthy well balanced person. It certainly got me through some tough things (Ed, personal communication, Monday, October 19th, 2009).

Ed elaborated on how doing and experiencing things while traveling was completely different from just looking at it or seeing it on television. This instilled a sense of health from the energy he obtained through traveling creating "aliveness" within his "Self". Others commented on the notion of seeing and experiencing as well.

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Dave: You know, all of them would like to go and see it. They think it's [Pause] that it's great to go experience and see different things for yourself as opposed to just seeing pictures or movies, you know, especially the Monet Gardens (Dave, personal communication, Sunday, August 9, 2009).

Jane: And it's interesting because you are not going to get it out of the newspaper and you are not going to get it on TV and the only way you are really going to find out how the other half lives or how other people are doing is to go there and see it (Jane, personal communication, Wednesday, July 15, 2009).

Dan: I knew it was going to be a learning experience more than anything else and the best way [Pause] I've always believed the best way to learn something is not to read about it or have someone explain to you about it, but do it yourself (Dan, personal communication, Saturday, August 8, 2009).

Dave, Jane, and Dan bring us back to the notions of experience and learning as stated earlier. The "Self" is enhanced by firsthand encounters with newfound localities that provide a very real and personal experience for the individual. It takes more than just reading, hearing, or viewing other places on television for the "Self" to fully reflect. The "Self" needs to be physically taken away to experience the essence of a place and feel that "aliveness" for it to be enhanced.

Anecdotes

"Leaving home and one's immediate circle of family and friends, then coming back, and returning as the same person, even an improved version of the same person, is perhaps the best standardized test the ego has devised for itself" (MacCannell, 2002, p. 148). Upon returning home to go back to a circle of family and friends is a prime opportunity in presenting new self-identities. Desforges (2000) focuses on two key moments in which travel is useful to self-identity; the decision to travel and the homecoming. While elements on the decision to travel where offered in the narratives,

this paper will focus on the homecoming since that is where the narrators focused their attention. In addition, as with the rapidly changing technological climate the narratives show how opportunities for new self-identities are created through the use of tools yet explored by researchers on self-identity. Furthermore, this paper presents an additional third moment, expanding on Desforges' (2000) two key moments, in which travel is useful in the reforming of self-identities.

To follow along with current research on self-identity the narratives showed strong cases where the homecoming was used in the forming of self-identity. It is important to remember that whether or not the narratives reported by the research subjects are entirely accurate is of no concern. What is of concern is how the narratives are used in how the individuals describe and interpret their story. With each tale of experiences, adventures, and happenings comes new imagery where the story continually evolves into a new "Self" that is being reshaped into a constructive whole. Photos provided one opportunity for telling stories and shaping identity.

> Janet: Yeah, I know that my mom, well, my family was very relieved that I was home and excited to see the photos, and pretty much my whole family, they're really big on travel. They may not have traveled many places but are really all about it. Like, see as much as you can, umm [*sic*], so they were really excited to see the pictures, and a few of them, ya know [*sic*], were like, 'Oh, I wanna [*sic*] go there, I wanna [*sic*] fly there' (Janet, personal communication, Tuesday, August 4, 2009).

Photos are used in the creation of self identity almost as a currency; the experience itself would be the printing press of sorts. Others look upon these tangible reproductions as a visual queue for making sense of the stories being shared. It is one thing for a traveler to say, "I have been there", but a much stronger self-identity is created when the individual

can say, "Here is where I have been and let me tell you about it." Janet describes what

traveling means to her:

> Janet: It means seeing new things, learning about the culture that's within
> the city or the country that I'm in, and umm [*sic*], taking really good
> pictures to share with others to encourage them to go back to where I had
> been because I feel like, if there's somebody in my life that goes back to
> where I've already been then a part of me gets to relive that experience
> through them when they share their stories of what they did there, like I
> did that too, or this is what I did. So part of each travel is like sharing
> what I've done and encouraging others to do, to go there as well and to go
> to their own places that they wanna [*sic*] go so that we can talk more about
> it (Janet, personal communication, Tuesday, August 4, 2009).

> Dave: Yeah, when you look at the pictures that you have taken it kind of
> takes you back to the moment that you were in them. If you take a picture
> of the Vatican, if I see it [Pause] it is not something I think about all the
> time, but when you look at the pictures, 'Oh, I was there'. I don't know if
> I mentioned, but when we were there, I think it was a Wednesday, but
> there was actually a mass outside and the Pope was there. So, you
> remember. It does take you back so you remember more detail as opposed
> to if you are just talking to somebody. Yeah, it does take you back a little
> more (Dave, personal communication, Sunday, October 25, 2009).

Janet and Dave use pictures and storytelling as a way of reliving and recreating their

identity. Urry (1990) discusses that photos offer, in essence, proof of reality wherein

individuals can back-up their claims. Additionally, Ken shares photos as well, but in an

entirely different manner.

> Ken: We always had a party, luncheon afterwards about two to three
> weeks after our trip, we'd come back, make arrangements for a luncheon
> and everybody can bring their pictures, books, and exchange pictures and
> things like that. We kind of top that off with that post-trip luncheon. Puts
> a little icing on the cake (Ken, personal communication, Monday,
> September 1, 2009).

These luncheons are used as a way to relive the travel excursions and reconfirm

experiences that each "Self" encountered. In his narrative Ken made mention that each

person describes particular encounters a little differently. This was particularity evident in the different angles that photos were taken and each person has a different take or story of the same occurrence.

In addition to photos other tools can be used for storytelling. The different kinds of tools brought up in the narratives ranged from postcards, journals, diaries, e-mails, blogs, scrapbooks, to DVDs.

> Mary: Yeah, I put together an album of photos, told people about it, collected postcards, and that one I did a journal. I'm not a diary person or a journal person, but I thought someday I might to look back on this and remember what I did and I collected bits and pieces of things to stuff in there. I wrote down what we did everyday if it was something that I wanted to remember. I shared that and I shared photos (Mary, personal communication, Tuesday, July 28, 2009).

> Nick: I usually buy an album that has an edge where I can write things on it rather than write it on the photo, but the photo album that I purchase now has a place to write something about each picture. When I came back she says, 'Wow, that was very interesting' you know, because of the narratives (Nick, personal communication, Wednesday, October 21, 2009).

> Lucy: Once I've created a movie out of it which is mostly still photos, but it flows through and it has music to it, it makes it kind of fun. Most people that I shared it with say, 'These are great' you know, it moves through, it's quick and it gives me a flavor of what you saw and did. For me it is rewarding in that they seem to enjoy it (Lucy, personal communication, Tuesday, October 27, 2009).

Mary, Nick, and Lucy offer different ways in which they use aids as a way of telling stories to create their identity. In her narrative Lucy talks about how she enjoyed the opportunity to share her trip through her movies and how she enjoyed other people's comments and questions about the environment and the trip itself.

As mentioned earlier, this paper presents an additional third moment, expanding

on Desforges' (2000) two key moments, in which travel is useful in the reforming of self-

identities. The third moment that will be discussed in the moment in which the traveler

takes time away from their trip to communicate with others back home. Most of the

narratives talked of times where individuals find opportunities to write letters, send

postcards, e-mail, write blogs, journal, make phone calls, and send video messages. This

paper argues that these moments, in between the decision to travel and the homecoming,

are useful in forming new identities. In his narrative, Dave talks about the ability to say

that, "I'm here" when he sends his postcards and how that serves as a representation of

his trip. Not only that, but the ability to show people that he traveled someplace that they

would have liked to experience as well knowing that when he returns home others will be

sure to ask about what he saw. While postcards, journals, phone calls, and letters where

mentioned in the narratives, this paper will focus more on e-mails to better show how the

third moment is useful in identity creation.

> Jane: I knew I was giving her closure and that I was interacting with her.
> One, because when we are not on a cruise we would e-mail at least twice a
> day. We'd talk on the phone maybe three times a week. It was that kind
> of a close thing so it just kind of kept that thing going. She would get so
> excited about what we saw and everything. It was just really fun telling
> her things she hadn't seen or hadn't been and how we experienced it
> because she was always glad for us that we could go and do these things.
> I got the pleasure of knowing that I was giving her pleasure (Jane,
> personal communication, Sunday, October 18, 2009).

> Janet: Umm [*sic*], the e-mails that we would send out about every seven to
> ten days, they really did a very big narrative of what we were doing, and
> my mom had printed them all out for us, for me, so when I got home I
> kinda [*sic*], I took those e-mails and I developed the pictures and I just
> made a, kind of a scrapbook album, and with my friends that umm [*sic*],
> wanted to see, and my family that wanted to see, and I just showed them

the album and I talked about my experiences with them. Umm [*sic*], but I think because I was there for so long, I mean I was gone for about two months, a lot of what I was sharing was done via e-mail, kind of in the moment when I was writing it, and when I got home, pretty much everyone knew what I had been up to and so they just had some follow up questions. And so that's what I was able to share and when I gave them the pictures to look at they had maybe some other questions (Janet, personal communication, Tuesday, August 4, 2009).

Jane and Janet both provide detailed descriptions on how they were able to create their identity through narrating e-mail to friends and family back home. Jane talks of e-mailing her sister knowing that she was giving her pleasure while conveying her experiences of her trip. Likewise, Janet talks of e-mail during her trip while being "in the moment". Later on in her narrative, Janet talks of an advantage to e-mailing her family and friends; she has copies of her e-mails. While admitting that she has yet to read the e-mails back to herself, Janet (personal communication, Tuesday, November 10, 2009) did reveal one other thing, "I've always kept them in my nightstand so I know exactly where they are". This brief comment shows how personal her experiences in the e-mails are and how much part of her self-identity is placed within them.

Lastly, two other tools for the creation of self-identity during travel excursions will be briefly looked into; blogs and video messages. Similar to e-mails, blogs offer narratives of experiences and happenings during the trip. While on a domestic trip Jeff talks of writing blogs during the course of his trip so other back home and follow along with him.

Jeff: We do blogs. We started with our Route-66 trip we wanted to sort of document it so we would write up what we did that day, some of the history of what we were seeing and so on. Photos went with it and so we sent that back to a list of people. They seemed to enjoy it so we kept it up [Pause] the funny things that would happen, the places and people we saw.

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Plus it gave us a detailed day by day accounting of that trip so if we ever wanted to look back on it we could. We did the same thing with the trip to Canada and with this one to Arizona (Jeff, personal communication, Monday, November 2nd, 2009).

Personal blogs offer a new opportunity for self-creation during travel excursions, where narratives are accompanied with photos. Jeff provided the only account of using blogs as a way of documenting and sharing his trip. Additionally, Lucy provided the only account of using Skype, an online real-time videophone application that she used for sharing her trip with others while still physically present in her travel experience.

Lucy: When I went down to Cabo San Lucas last January I took my laptop down and they had wireless at the hotel. I called a friend up here and said, "Okay, here is where I am" and you hold the laptop and you show them around the pool and the sun and all of that stuff. It is fun. I was a fun way to share where I was with somebody (Lucy, personal communication, Tuesday, October 27th, 2009).

The use of blogs and applications like Skype provide a venue for other researchers to look into and how that venue relates to the "Self" on a more in-depth scale then what this paper presents. Nonetheless, these tools, through this paper, are believed to be valuable in creating new self-identities while still present during the travel experience.

Self-Actualization

Flow helps to integrate the self because in that state of deep concentration consciousness is usually well ordered. Thoughts, intentions, feelings, and all the senses are forced on the same goal. Experience is in harmony. And when the flow episode is over, one feels more 'together' than before, not only internally but also with respect to other people and to the world in general (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, p. 41).

As Maslow (1943) argues, the physiological, safety, love, and esteem needs, through his hierarchy of needs, must first be satisfied to reach the state of self-actualization. The regard to which each of these prerequisites is met, is irrelevant to this

study. A spiritual experience can be of many kinds. While most people do not reach the stage of self-actualization, many travel to experience a sense of inner bliss and self-fulfillment. This section looks at moments of self-actualization, obtained through personal narrative, in self-identity creation. Two sub-categories are outlined: (1) "Morality/Spirituality", where moments of deep reflection and pure being are reflected spontaneously through narrative. (2) "Self-Fulfillment", where travelers set out to achieve a personal goal/challenge and reflect upon accomplishment. "A musician must make music, an artist must paint, a poet must write, if he is to be ultimately happy. What a man *can* be, what he *must* be. This need we may call self-actualization" (Maslow, 1943, p. 383).

Morality/Spirituality

Contemplating "Who am I?" is an existential question deeply rooted in the morality and spirituality of the "Self". Moments of self-actualization in the narratives are generally brief, but very powerful for the individual. Self-Actualization provides opportunities for the "Self" to deeply reflect upon encounters and experiences. The reflective thought of self-actualization allows for the forming of new identities within the individual. Ed's narrative provided numerous instances of deep reflective thought in his travel experiences.

> Ed: You can stand up on the top of a 13,000 foot mountain and look out over there and it's just different than the picture. I mean, you just get this [Pause] to me it really has an inspirational quality to it. For me I like to ski because nature is a fantastic energizer. I sort of feel that [Pause] that the world is a much bigger place than me. You know, I'm just part of all this stuff and how could you create something that splendor? It is just gorgeous and you know you just feel your skis drop over the mountain and

it's as close to flying as you could possibly do (Ed, personal communication, Monday, September 1st, 2009).

In his narrative Ed ponders his morality in a spiritual context. On numerous occasions he talks of travels in the past from him being action oriented to being more observant of the world around him, "Now, I have really slowed down and I'm willing to just sort of watch things….". Ed describes in detail waking up early on a cruise ship and walking the track to lookout over the water watch the clouds and sun describing it as a lightshow. Through his narrative he reflects on want travels means to him.

> Ed: Number one, it's exciting. Number two, it makes me think, you know, it expands [*Pause*] umm [*sic*] [*Pause*] the world's influence on me. Often it's fascinating. It increases my appreciation of the complexity of the world. It gets me out of some of the sad things I am dealing with. Probably the most important thing is; it sort of gets me in touch with my true authentic self. I see that I'm really part of this planet. I'm not somebody who lives on it, there's a relation. It's a synergistic relationship with the planet (Ed, personal communication, Monday, October 19, 2009).

The spirituality that Ed is able to consume from his travel experiences, in many different settings, is important in the reflexivity of his "Self". Whether skiing on the slopes, looking over a deck of a ship, or on vacation at Sandals, he talks of pondering, thinking, contemplating, and meditating on the world and the relation of his "Self" to it. Maslow (1943) accurately conveys the meaning of self-actualization as the affinity for a person to become actualized in what they are potentially (p. 383). This is apparent in Ed's reflections of him getting in touch with his "true authentic self", in a spiritual sense, while traveling.

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For Karen, self-actualization in her travel experiences is somewhat similar to that of Ed. In her narrative she conveys many instances of spiritual reflection. More specifically travel, in the broad term, is a spiritual experience for her.

> Karen: For me traveling [Pause] I love to view, I love to sit back and watch life and watch people interact with each other and see what they have done and you know I'm an artist and I love to draw and I like to sit back and just view the world. You just watch how things go on and think, 'My we are all just the same aren't we?' [Laughs] I guess that's it and also still being able to say, "See, I can do this by myself" (Karen, personal communication, Monday, October 19, 2009).

Karen talks of being fully present in the moment while traveling indicating that all other worries, desires, and challenges fade as she engages the here and now of what the experience is offering. Her narrative shares a story of her visiting a cathedral that was partly built of bones from a graveyard. Looking upon the pillars made of skulls she speaks of the beauty, loveliness, and calmness of the experience which are elements she seeks while traveling. What Karen in describing is a spiritual aspect of her travels which she reflects upon in relation to the "Self". She seeks opportunities for a spiritual connection where she is completely immersed in the moment. This emersion of the "Self" seeking spirituality provides Karen with occurrences of self-actualization which is then reflected upon in the reformation of her self-identity.

Self-Fulfillment

Maslow (1943) indicates that self-actualization is also the desire for self-fulfillment (p. 383). Instances of self-fulfillment found in the narratives are generally found through the completion of an unwritten or declared goal set out by the individual. These goals are typically undisclosed to friends and family before departing on the trip.

In some cases, ambitions are unidentified within the individual until feelings of fulfillment, completion, and achievement arise from peak experiences through their narrative.

When Janet (personal communication, Tuesday, August 4, 2009) set out for South America one of her goals was to immerse herself in Spanish speaking cultures to improve her language skills, which she eventually achieved, "I can be a go-getter and do it and I think the thing is I did meet my goal, I got fluent in Spanish". However, upon returning from her trip she talks of her self-fulfillment in unexpected ways, "I think it really helped me feel like, umm [*sic*] [Pause] I think like, when I was there, and I'm looking back like, look what I can accomplish, look what I can do, umm [*sic*], I'm very self sufficient" (Janet, personal communication, Tuesday, August 4, 2009). Janet describes forever being able to protect her memories of her time in South America and reflects on it as "liberating", "empowering", "freeing", and how this "once in a life time experience" made her feel "happy" and "grateful". One specific excursion to Patagonia provided Janet with a peak experience that she was able to deeply reflect upon:

> Janet: And, umm [*sic*], again, how lucky I was to be here and oh my gosh I cannot believe I am seeing this, and when I bought my ticket to come down here I did not think I would be seeing this at all, and this is way better than I ever imagined. Umm [*sic*], my friend and I were taking as many pictures as we could cause we were like, 'We are probably never gonna [*sic*] come back here, ever again' Umm [*sic*], and if we do it is gonna [*sic*] be with somebody else, probably not with her again. And so it was just a real moment, a real treasure, it was very special. Very bittersweet cause it was so surreal, and you wanted the moment to last for a long time, and then you realize, it is freak'n [*sic*] cold and the sun is going down and we need to turn around and go. So, there is always that little bit of enjoy the moment and then like, oh my gosh you have to get back (Janet, personal communication, Tuesday, August 4, 2009).

Janet's narrative of recounting her experience to Patagonia brought out a deep

sense of self-fulfillment not otherwise expected before departing on her trip. Yet,

this experience was instilled in her memory as something special. Janet's

moment of self-actualization was fleeting, yet provided an important piece of her

self-identity.

In Dan's narrative, he uses the analogy of a mountain to illustrate his profound

experience of traveling to Europe and the self-fulfillment that surfaced as a result. The

significance of reflecting upon his experience instead of rushing to the next one is clearly

articulated.

> Dan: So, I look at it as a little mountain that I climbed and you don't what
> to get back from climbing a mountain and just go climb another mountain
> because then that first mountain wasn't as important or maybe it wasn't as
> meaningful to you as climbing that next mountain [Pause] so and because
> climbing the mountain is really expensive and it's time consuming and
> most people just can't take two months off and do whatever they want to
> do. I couldn't do that now and I won't be able to do that probably next
> year. It will be years before I will be able to be in a position where I can
> do something like that so I'm very grateful that I had the opportunity to be
> able to do it, but it also, you know, I saw more benefit by spending more
> time reflecting then if I had just jumped on the next [Pause] the next crazy
> adventure (Dan, personal communication, Saturday, August 8, 2009).

Dan wants to take the time to reflect on his experience because it was a significant

accomplishment to him. In using the analogy of a mountain, he is creating a path and

destination in terms of his personal journey to Europe. He articulates the value of

reflecting upon the experience, which is reshaping his self-identity. Furthermore, by

indicating he is not going to "climb another mountain" in the immediate future and

assumes intentions to travel again he is in essence, life-planning. Dan's life-planning is

making a reflexive stance toward the future by allowing for self-fulfillment through a

rewarding sense of "Self"; the motivating force of self-actualization (Desforges, 2000; Giddens, 1991).

Mary, who had determined her peak experience from childhood, set out to achieve her life goal. She provides a full account of her self-fulfilling experience from beginning to end which was unique in the narratives. Mary (personal communication, Tuesday, July 28, 2009) recounted, "I always dreamed of going on an African Safari all my life I thought that would be the pinnacle of a travel experience." Mary explains in detail how this life goal of traveling to Africa and going on Safari originated.

> Mary: As long as I can remember I have just been enthralled with African animals. As a kid going to the zoo that is what I wanted to go see. I used to watch Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom I would watch anything from a little kid. I used to call myself Marla Perkins after Marlin Perkins from Mutual of Omaha. My mom has pictures of me at age three dressed up like Marla Perkins, that's all I wanted to be [Pause] those people who went to Africa and did wildlife research and learned about these animals. I have no idea where it started, how it started, it's just always been. So, it was always on the top of my list growing up as far back as I can remember that if I get anywhere in my life I have to get to Africa (Mary, personal communication, Tuesday, October 20, 2009).

Because of her interest in wild life, particularly African animals, Mary went on to college and majored in Zoology to get into wildlife research. It would not be until many years later that Mary would have the opportunity to finally realize her dream. "That is what I wanted to do and I dreamed of going to Africa" (Mary, personal communication, Tuesday, July 28, 2009). When Mary got her chance to travel to East Africa she describes that experience was like a "dream come true" for her. She talks about the amazing and surreal experience of watching a lion take down a zebra and being in the Serengeti to view the wildlife migration.

> Mary: It was unbelievable to be in a jeep in the Serengeti at the migration of wildebeests and zebras were going by and you hear nothing but the sounds they were making and at night waking up in the lodge and you could hear that sound of thousands and thousands of animals running. It was just so neat. It was the neatest thing and that's kind of what I thought it would be like and could be like so I was glad I got to see that (Mary, personal communication, Tuesday, October 20, 2009).

Many of the other narratives talk of self-fulfilling experiences, but none quite as in-depth as Mary's. The ability for Mary to realize her dream from childhood and being in the lodge listening to thousands of wild animals running freely was a self-actualizing experience for her. Mary's account offers a look at a lifelong aspiration that was attained. This allows for the opportunity for Mary to reflect on what that achievement was like and how it has affected her, which she does in her narrative.

> Mary: In other ways it was a little bit of a disappointment because it was something I always wanted to do and now I did it and it's like, 'Okay, shoot' I always wanted to do this and I had all these dreams that I wanted to do this and I wanted to go there and built it up in this big expectation and now I have done it and it's kind of like, 'Okay, wow, what am I dreaming about, where am I dreaming about going?' and I don't really have that next place. So, that's sort of the negative part (Mary, personal communication, Tuesday, October 20, 2009).

This particular indication, while negative in way, opens up a new account in tourism research on self identity. After dreaming traveling to Africa since childhood, living the dream, and now reflecting by stating, "Okay, wow what am I dreaming about, where am I dreaming about going?" shows that, while self-fulfilling, the "Self" seeks new horizons. Even Maslow (1943) indicated that "the average member of society is most often partially satisfied and partially unsatisfied in all of his wants" (p. 396). With this in mind, Mary's shares her newfound travel desires:

Mary: I want to see more of the wild and how the people live, how the regular people live, but I always come back with a really strong appreciation of when I was born, where I was born and the opportunities that I had. I don't feel like a terrible adventurous person so maybe that is something I get out of it too, when I'm here I'm not really adventurous I'm pretty conservative and not that I do anything crazy when I'm vacationing, but the whole sense of adventure and accomplishment that I went somewhere and did something like that, tried something exotic, unknown [Pause] so I think I get personal fulfillment after traveling because of that. Just seeing more of the world, it's so diverse and I really like seeing what else is out there, how people live, what they eat, what they do, what kind of animals [Pause] the animals are always a big thing for me, they are, they always have. I always enjoy learning about different environments (Mary, personal communication, Tuesday, October 20, 2009).

Mary states that she desires to see more of the wild and how other people live which corresponds with the notion of the "Self," continually, seeking new horizons. Furthermore, through her narrative she reflexively depicts how her experiences offered her a sense of adventure and accomplishment. Moreover, Mary's narrative draws to the conclusion that, for her, travel offers self-fulfillment which supports Maslow's (1943) perspective as "the tendency to become actualized in what he is potentially" (p. 383).

Self-Congruity

Tourism research has found that the experiences of long-haul backpackers fall into "Romantic" imagery and that they are on a quest for authentic and adventuresome (Cohen, 1989; Desforges, 2000; Elsrud, 2001). Dann (1996) and Urry (1990) agree that other types of tourists also seek Romanticism and authenticity in their travels. MacCannell (1976) believes that the motivation for tourism lies in the search for authentic experiences. "The search is construed not as a matter of leisure, but as a

meaningful, existential desire that may endow the individual's identity with a richer and fuller experience of being" (Noy, 2004, p. 85).

Determining whether a travel experience was an adventure is purely subjective upon the individual regardless of potential risk or harm. Narratives of "Self-Congruity" provided a useful concept in confirming existing data as it relates to the "Self". Two sub-categories comprised: (1) "Perceived Adventure", where the internal assumption of adventure before engaging in travel was conveyed by the traveler. (2) "Adventure Experience", where the self-perception of adventure throughout or concluding the travel experience was declared. Conveyed through narrative identity work on backpackers, Noy (2004) and Elsrud (2001) assert that travelers seek adventure, risk, and authenticity. This section asserts that adventure narratives in travel can stimulate reflexivity of the "Self" in the creation of new identities beyond that the backpacker; the tourist, in a traditional sense, is a now a consumer of adventure.

Perceived Adventure

Elsrud (2001) and Dann (1999) agree that in order to discover a true 'self' the adventurous traveler seeks break away from the familiarity of life. Before even departing on a travel excursion, many individuals spoke of the "adventure" they would encounter on their trip. Narratives on adventure also talked of risk, venturing into the unknown, expectations of uncomfortable situations, and danger. Yet, many followed up with their perception of adventure with that of excitement, anticipation, and eagerness to seek the "Other". In some instances, the perceived adventure might seem more self-effacing than others. However, it is important to remember that the degree to which something is

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adventurous is purely subjective and differs between individuals. Nick provides in his

narrative the adventure he would encounter while traveling:

> Nick: But you meet people all the time. This is another part that makes
> traveling so intense. It is the people you meet, the names you have to
> remember, things like that. It is a challenge, and it is good for me to do
> that. It takes me out of my own comfort zone and to do things instead of
> taking the safe path (Nick, personal communication, Friday, July 17,
> 2009).

Nick's perception of adventure rests mostly in that of social situations. To interact with

numerous people, remember names, stories, and encounters is intense for Nick as he

describes in his narrative. Additionally, Nick talks of accommodations and travel

comfort as "part of the game":

> Nick: Well, some people just do not travel well at all. Because the only
> place they can sleep is in their own bed, not in some hotel bed, but I can
> sleep anywhere. They talk about jet lag, yeah I get jet lag. But sometimes
> jet lag will last a week, which when you make a trip in the middle of the
> night and you cannot go back to sleep, but that is part of the game (Nick,
> personal communication, Friday, July 17, 2009).

Nick is comfortable in his realization that adventure is a part of traveling. Part of this

comfort comes from the control that Nick displays, rather than an extreme sense of thrill

from engaging in potentially dangerous situations, he enjoys a positive emotion of being

able to control his perception of risk (Csikszentmihalyi, 1993). Furthermore, in his

narrative Nick talks of traveling to India after a particular terrorist incident in Mumbai

and his reflexivity thereof.

> Nick: This is why other members of the family wonder why I take such
> risks; I tell them I am no safer here than I am there. And the other thing is
> that I cannot let terrorists and other things like that keep me from what I
> want to do (Nick, personal communication, Friday, July 17, 2009).

Not everyone has the same perception of adventure and risk as Nick. Zell (1997) views

adventure travel as the change in reaching remote locations where safety and personal

protection are of concern. However, this viewpoint is null when it comes to researching

the "Self" for adventure travel is a perception from within the individual. Respectfully,

characteristics provided by Zell (1997), such as lack of modern comforts, potential life

threatening situations, fear of unexpected injury or illness, worries of environmental

hazards, and poor food quality, maybe considered adventurous by some. Ken (personal

communication, Monday, September 1, 2009) provided his overall opinion of what travel

provides for him, "Well, it's adventurous, I think. I've always wanted to see different

parts of the world."

Elements of trips providing the travel with the sense of the unknown were

particularly apparent in regards to adventure. Doris (personal communication, Sunday,

July 26, 2009) stated that when she thinks of travel, that adventure is the first thing that

comes to mind and describes her initial perceptions of staying in backpack hostels as,

"the sense of adventure and not really knowing". Moreover, Mary spoke of adventure as

part of why she was traveling to Belize and chartering a boat.

> Mary: Sense of adventure, something I hadn't done before. My husband
> loves this kind of a trip, I mean this is a kind of trip he has wanted to do
> for years and the other couple had wanted to do this kind of a trip for
> years, the ones that put it together. Their excitement about doing it got me
> excited about doing it and being an adventure something I've never tried.
> I've traveled, but I've never done something like that before and I'd never
> been to Belize, you know, south of Mexico or never been to, other than
> Mexico, South or Central America. That was exciting to go to a different
> place (Mary, personal communication, Tuesday, July 28, 2009).

What all of the narratives have in common is the perception of adventure before

departing on trips. The mere notion of adventure, risk, or encountering the unknown

"Other" has a direct relationship on the self. Elsrud (2001) found that the "Other" was a

foundation for adventure narratives and that the image of otherness was able to establish

stories of self-identity.

It is fair to say that images of adventure and risk are formulated in the mind of the

traveler in anticipation of what to expect. The mind is full of unanswered question and

the sense of adventure is what fills the gaps. Janet provides an excellent example of this

in a trip to South America.

> Janet: So, it was just kind of like, 'Am I really gonna [*sic*] do this? Am I
> gonna [*sic*] be ok?' Umm [*sic*], definite hesitation, but not to the point
> where I didn't wanna [*sic*] go, it was like I always knew I was gonna [*sic*]
> go, and I knew I really wanted to, but I would take a deep breath and I
> would have like little butterflies in my stomach, like 'Phew, is this gonna
> [*sic*] be ok? Where am I gonna [*sic*] end up? What is gonna [*sic*]
> happen?' (Janet, personal communication, Tuesday, August 4, 2009).

Janet offers a genuine account of what is going through her mind before one of her travel

excursions describing feelings of nervousness and concerns for her safety. Janet's

mindset was influenced by that of her mother who told her not to go by warning her of

gangs, guns, violence, and kidnapping.

> Janet: And so, I think that whole trip, because my mom had been saying.
> "That's dangerous!" and things I always had that little seed of danger, that
> feeling of danger in me, like "Oh there's something to be scared of" so I
> was really cautious (Janet, personal communication, Tuesday, August 4,
> 2009).

The external influences that Janet received before her trip from her mother internally

shaped her perceptions upon arrival and into the journey. The instilled danger, now on

Janet's mind, made her "Self" reflexively aware, "Oh there's something to be aware of". This experience continually changed Janet's self-identity as she continued on her excursion. As Janet continued along with her trip, never being harmed, her mother's exclamations emanated throughout her trip, "That's dangerous!"

This section has looked into the narratives of several travelers who had anticipated a sense of adventure prior to their excursion. Csikszentmihalyi (1993) refers to individuals, such as these, as "sensation seekers" with whom enjoyment is created through flow. This section had argued that not only backpackers can experience reflexivity of the "Self" through the consumption of adventure, whether expected or enacted. While, this sub-category of self-congruity has looked at the perception of adventure and not necessarily the experiencing of adventure; the subsequent section will explore the latter to further explore the reflexivity of the "Self".

Adventure Experience

To get away and discover true sense of "Self" is what the adventurous traveler seeks (Dann, 1999; Elsrud, 2001). Nearly all of the interviews spoke of moments of adventure and risk in their travels. Many individuals thought adventure would be inherent in their travel experience, while others found themselves in situations of adventure unwittingly. Karen spoke of experiencing a sense of adventure in her first time traveling abroad. She describes in her narrative as the experience being both exciting and scary, admitting:

> Karen: Well, when I left I put on a really brave face, I was scared to death.
> I started crying while I was on the plane, 'What the hell am I doing? I
> can't speak any language. I've never met the relatives' (Karen, personal
> communication, Monday, October 19, 2009).

Karen's experience provides her with a reflexive awareness by asking, "What the hell am I doing?" while en-route. Although Karen would soon become more comfortable with traveling, it was not until getting on the plane for the first time that her excitement turned into something scary.

Similarly, though not her first time traveling, Janet describes an adventurous experience to El Salvador and the feelings of determination and confidence she felt until walking on the place to leave.

> Janet: And that was probably the first time we realized, 'Maybe this isn't safe. Too late now, we're on the plane' So we spent that whole flight, it was a red eye, we were supposed to be sleeping, we spent that whole flight reading our Lonely Planet book about El Salvador, and 'What are we gonna [*sic*] do?', 'How are we gonna [*sic*] be safe?', and 'Oh my gosh, how quickly can we get out of that country?' So we were nervous. But I don't think we were trying to let each other know how nervous we were cause we were trying to be like, 'Ok, this is gonna [*sic*] be fun!' like a little unsure, and it turned out to be really great. It turned out to be really, really fun. And it turned out we didn't even want to leave we ended up staying in El Salvador like three extra nights cause we were having such a great time (Janet, personal communication, Tuesday, August 4, 2009).

Janet reflects upon her decision to travel to El Salvador while on the airplane. She talks of the nervousness she felt and how she tried not to let her traveling partner aware of how she felt. Jeff (personal communication, Wednesday, September 2, 2009) sums up part of this point brilliantly as he describes from his recent trip to Canada, "Part of the adventure is just getting there and getting back [Laughs]." The sensations of adventure in many of the narratives dealt with the experiences of travel through transportation and not necessarily any single event or locale. The adventure is the process, the essence of the travel experience.

Additionally, there is some caution in some of the travel narratives. Mary (personal communication, Tuesday, July 28, 2009) indicated, "It is a sense of adventure, but cautious adventure. I don't just put on a backpack and go to a far off land. I'm not quite comfortable with that much adventure", in regards to her travel experiences. Likewise, as Jeff (personal communication, Wednesday, September 2, 2009) stated, "So it's an adventure, it is not for the faint hearted [Laughs]" articulating later:

> Jeff: It's enjoyment, yeah. It's going on an adventure without being shot at [Laughs]. It's not that big of an adventure, it's controlled. We can determine where the edge of the envelope is. We've expanded our envelope because we feel a little bit more comfortable (Jeff, personal communication, Wednesday, September 2, 2009).

In the instants of what Jeff and Mary refer to as adventure they have a reflexive awareness of the level of adventure to which they are both accustomed. They know that the likelihood of them surviving is high, yet they are still venturing into the unknown where there are some risks involved. Elsrud (2004) argues that risk is a socially constructed device used in the development of stories. In addition to Jeff and Mary's narrative, Lisa provides a positive outlook on adventure:

> Lisa: There is always, and this is the fun part of it, that there is always stuff that comes up. We get lost or something is closed or something like that so we always consider it part of the adventure. It is always the part we get to laugh about. 'Remember when this happened?' (Lisa, personal communication, Friday, August 7, 2009).

Lisa's narrative provides one excellent example for how the self is reflexive in forming new self-identities through adventures experiences. Not only is Lisa able to reflect back on a particular adventurous incident, but through her reflection, "Remember when this happened?", and sharing the encounter can she further use the experience in identity

formation. As Noy (2007) states, "Hence the experience of self-change is located in narrative, or narratability" (p. 184).

<div align="center">Self-Esteem</div>

Iwasaki (2008) indicates that leisure-like pursuits, in this case tourism, can provide a context for people with different cultural customs to improve self and social identities which are strongly liked to self-esteem and spirituality. Tourism presents an opportunity for self-discovery just as freedom from household constraints allows tourists to develop a stronger sense of self (Hottola, 2004; O'Reilly, 2006; Tucker, 2005). Throughout all of the topics discussed in this paper, none sparked the masses more than occurrences of where independence and escape were found. All of the participants in the in-depth interviews expanded and elaborated on stories, rich in spontaneous personal narrative, that contained these elements duly titled, "Self-Esteem". Two sub-categories emerged: (1) "Perceived Freedom/Independence", relating to the "Self" as one making decisions on his/her own terms and the perception of being solely responsible for one's self. (2) "Escape" where individuals create self-identity through disconnect from life, home routine, job, and mental state. When asked about what travel means for his sense of self, Wes (personal communication, Tuesday, August 25, 2009) declared concisely, "It's independence; it's getting away from here". This section will explore how independence and escape reflexively shape the contours of self-identity through travel narrative.

Perceived Freedom/Independence

Despite of what it means to be "free" or "independent" is of little concern for the purposes of this section. The feeling of the reader and the researcher on what constitutes these terms must be negated. What is of value is how the narrator, of their own volition, describes their sense of self through freedom and independence. The "Self" is driven through their experiences, definitions, interpretations, and reflections thereof. With this in mind, perceptions of freedom and independence and how they relate to the "Self" can now be explored.

In his narrative, Dave (personal communication, Sunday, October 25, 2009) provides his perspective on the freedom of travel, "The beautiful thing about being on vacation is you are not set to that schedule". Similarly, Lily talks of how the freedom that is offered through her experiences while traveling was more purposeful in terms of having an itinerary in contrast to being at home. She referred to her travel itinerary as a "luxury" because it offers her "flexibility" instead of having a "fixed agenda". Additionally, she discussed how her sense of self is affected through her travel freedom:

> Lily: Intellectually I have been learning a lot more and it's relaxing at the same time because you have the freedom to schedule your time in a leisurely way. You can choose to do things on whatever schedule you choose to so, you know, coming home feels like I'm just really taking advantage of everyday and every minute (Lily, personal communication, Sunday, August 9, 2009).

Through Lily's narrative, she able to reflexively pronounce her sense of self as "taking advantage of everyday and every minute". Interestingly enough Mary had a contracting view, as it relates to schedules, than Dave or Lily had. However, from her perception a

feeling of freedom remained particularly in her description of a customized package trip

to Thailand through, "smarTours".

> Mary: I don't know enough about Thailand or how to get around. We
> wanted to do some jungle stuff so we found a package that we wanted to
> do. I really liked that, I know some people like planning it all out. I like
> having it taken care of, it takes the worry out of it, the stress out of it.
> Where are you going to stay and how are you going to get there? As long
> as the stops along the way are stops I want to go, you know, that's fine I'll
> let somebody else take care of the worries (Mary, personal
> communication, Tuesday, July 28, 2009).

While Lily sees her schedule as something of a luxury, Mary would rather see her

schedule prepared by someone else so she has the freedom not to worry. For Lily, her

freedom comes from the ability to pick and choose in a flexible matter where she gets to

go next. In Mary's case, her sense of freedom come from the ability to not have to worry

about all of the details, as Mary (personal communication, Tuesday, July 28, 2009) said,

"As long as the stops along the way are stops I want to go, you know". Mary's reflexive

awareness comes from the act of deciding where she will go and what she will do,

leaving the arrangements to smarTours. When asked her reasoning for traveling to

Thailand Mary (personal communication, Tuesday, July 28, 2009) seriously chuckled,

"We love Thai food [Laughs]" and later continued:

> Mary: I was like, 'Thailand, wow, I hadn't really thought of Thailand'.
> I've never really been interested in traveling to China or anywhere in the
> orient or anything like that. I don't know enough about them to be
> interested. So somebody recommended Thailand actually through this
> tour company and so I looked into it and the price was unbelievable so I
> mentioned it to my husband and said, 'Well we love Thai food, we can
> spend a week eating Thai food, let's give it a try' and we looked at the
> itinerary, where they went and things they saw and it just sounded really
> interesting. The price was a huge factor on that one as well, it was $999
> for 14-days including airfare. We stayed in first-class hotels, all of the
> accommodations were taken care of, most of the meals, all the traveling.

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So we said, 'Well for a $1000 and highly recommended by two other couples' so we went (Mary personal communication, Tuesday, July 28, 2009).

Mary's narrative shows how she was able to reflect on her sense of self, "Thailand, wow, I hadn't really thought of Thailand". Although having no interest to visit initially, once she reflected on the idea and the freedom in having the food and travel accommodations taken care of she decided to travel to Thailand.

Throughout many of the narrative the notion of spontaneity came up in regards to freedom and independence. Unlike Lily, who maintains a flexible schedule, and Mary, who preferred to have everything planned, Doris favored neither:

Doris: New Zealand, I was really open and spontaneous and didn't have designated places that I absolutely had to see while I was there. So, I let myself be more open to, you know, where the wind blew. Like, I thought I was going to end up doing the Milford track and I ended up doing the Rathburn track because I met some people at a backpacker hostel that were doing the Rathburn track and I decided to do that one instead (Doris, personal communication, Sunday, July 26, 2009).

Doris's narrative conveys her sense of freedom through spontaneity and having no agenda, plan, or schedule. She mentions that there is nothing particular she wants to see allowing herself to be open. Janet's sense of freedom is similar:

Janet: Mmm [*sic*], my family's reaction was, was that I was crazy and that it was not safe and that how do I not know what I'm doing and I do not have a plan, and my mom kept asking for an agenda because she wanted to know what I would be doing, and I kept having to reassure her that 'No mom, there is no agenda, this is the whole point of going backpacking, that we're gonna [*sic*] go where the wind takes us and we will be safe and that I just kept reassuring her that I was going to be very smart and do my best to be safe, and be aware and I was never gonna [*sic*] be alone, my friend was gonna [*sic*] be with me the whole time (Janet, personal communication, Tuesday, August 4, 2009).

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For Doris and Janet to feel the freedom and independence to go "where the wind blew"

allowed for a reflexive awareness of the "Self". In these cases the "Self" is created

through the interactions with family in addition to venturing into an unknown territory.

With internally deciding, "Where do I go now?" by having a sense of freedom, the "Self"

is in a continual mode of reflexive awareness. The mind is actively seeking, considering,

rejecting, and deciding where it will take the self. Janet's narrative made this notion clear

when she was describing her experience when backpacking in Central America. "Once I

was there, there wasn't really a plan, we just kind of landed and then were like 'Okay,

what do we do? What time is it? Where should we go, what do we feel like doing?'

(Janet, personal communication, Tuesday, August 4, 2009). It is important to note that

this paper is not claiming that the perception of freedom and independence must be

inherent in all identity creating cases. It is merely arguing that that the accounts of

perceived freedom and independence of the narrator offer a venue for reflection in

forming new self-identities.

Escape

"Travel provides a way of postponing the assumption of adult responsibility"

(White & White, 2004, p. 201). The notion of escape, briefly explained earlier as

"disconnect", is again defined on the assumptions of the narrator as with "freedom" and

independence". It is not to imply unhappiness with particular lives, although it may be

assumed, it is meant in regards to the "Self" doing and seeing something out of the

ordinary through travel. Jane (personal communication, Sunday, October 18, 2009)

eloquently put it, "Traveling is great, but nothing beats your own bed, neighborhood,

friends, being with family and daily activities". Additionally, Mary (personal

communication, Tuesday, July 28, 2009) stated, "It's not a getaway from my life, that

something it doesn't mean" regarding travel. The purpose of this section is to articulate

how the "Self," through escape, allows identity creation.

Throughout many of the narratives, escape was used almost as an antonym for

vocation. Lisa offered prime examples of her experiences which displays the contrast

between work and escape. In her first time traveling to Italy she shares of an experience

talking to her tour guide:

> Lisa: When I was in Italy the first time, because I have been back to
> Rome, our tour guide said, 'You Americans you live to work, us Italians
> work to live' and I went, 'Oh' I never thought that is what we did, but at
> the time I went back in 1998 I was upper management for a software
> company working my butt off, you know, seven days a week and ten hour
> days and it was the first time that I really disconnected from my life (Lisa,
> personal communication, Friday, August 7, 2009).

Lisa has traveled back to Europe several times since and he ingrained travel into her life's

routine. While talking about her job in the Real Estate business Lisa's narrative became

clearer as to how her sense of self is influenced through escape:

> Lisa: I was happy to be out of touch, you know, I was happy to be unable
> to answer my cell phone. In Real Estate you are on twenty-four seven so
> that is one of the reasons I travel so that I can have a good excuse not to
> answer the phone. You can't get phone calls over there, so (Lisa, personal
> communication, Friday, August 7, 2009).

Additionally adding later:

> Lisa: I was telling my mom I was really stressed out over how hard it is to
> do Real Estate and I'm not making the money I need to and I said I don't
> know how I will be able to go to Europe this year and she's like, 'So, oh
> well'. 'No mom, I work to travel. That's why I work. I work hard so I
> can travel'. For me, if I can't travel I just get really depressed (Lisa,
> personal communication, Friday, August 7, 2009).

To escape through travel is fully embedded in Lisa's sense of self, "That is why I am on vacation, it is to get away" (Lisa, personal communication, Tuesday, November 10, 2009). Part of Lisa's past experiences with the tour guide had a reflexive affect on Lisa, as she ponders working to live versus living to work, then further reflecting on her current occupation for a software company. These reflections have altered Lisa's self-identity and will continue to in the future. Lisa (personal communication, Tuesday, November 10, 2009) further reflects, "It is a completely different mindset and I'm in a different world so home just kind of makes me [Pause] umm [*sic*] [Pause] not as in my world as I need to be."

Similarly, Dave (personal communication, Sunday, October 25, 2009) also identified travel as a venue for escaping work in his narrative, "I relax more that is for sure [Pause] because you don't have to go to work". Dave articulated that he works a lot of longs hours and for him travel was something he always looks forward to so he can enjoy the sights, relax, and visit museums. Additionally, he talks of travel as getting away from home:

> Dave: Travel, to get away from home, relaxing, going to places that you may not have been to, or going to places you like to go back and just enjoy whatever activity you like to do. If you enjoy the beach, go to the beach. If you enjoy dancing you go dancing (Dave, personal communication, Sunday, August 9, 2009).

Likewise, Ed also shared his experiences with travel and how it allows him to escape from both work and the daily routines of home. Ed talks of getting on a plane and his capability to not even think about home. Ed talks of travel in a general sense:

> Ed: It's wonderful. You know, I love to travel abroad or anywhere and to let go of the day-to-day kinds of things and all the things you have to do

with living and just be able to do things in the present time and to experience what is going on. Going to places like Europe there is something that is exotically exciting. I spent my birthday on a riverboat in Paris eating and going by the Eiffel Tower. That's pretty exciting. When you take a European trip or you go to Australia or someplace like that, you have this unbelievable luxury of first of all getting away from all the routines (Ed, personal communication, Monday, September 1, 2009).

In addition to disconnecting, as above, Ed mentions several times in his interviews that travel allows him the ability to live in the present and not worry about anything else. He then reflects on his views of doing things in the present and how that relates to his encounters with others:

Ed: It's not what I used to do, it's not what I'm going to do in the future, it's what I'm doing right now and you can be totally present. That is the best thing about vacations, you know. If you go somewhere and you're doing something and you are really in the present time of doing it, it has a totally different quality. I found so many people who I went on vacations with who couldn't even be present. They were worried about their jobs; they were worried about what was going to happen next week or something. Of all the things I do, vacations allow me to be in present time the most (Ed, personal communication, Monday, October 19, 2009).

Ed continues to narrate how merely looking forward to trips offers him the opportunity to take the stress out of his daily living and offers him energy. "I like the fact that it allows me to disconnect from all the things I'm doing" and "It just reenergizes me" (Ed, personal communication, Monday, October 19, 2009). Ed's narrative is similar to that of Dave, in escaping home and work, and Lisa, where travel is ingrained in the practice of living.

Correspondingly to Ed, Janet also talks of how travel was able to reenergize her and how it allowed her "live in the moment" when she traveled to South America. Janet shares her story by explaining that she had just graduated from graduate school, was

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"burnt-out", and felt that it was time to take a break to relax prior to job hunting as a

"change of pace". She continues:

> Janet: When I travel I'm more reckless and I think that's because I'm
> relieved of all of my responsibilities that I would typically have at home.
> At home you have to be somewhere at a certain time and you are expected
> to be a certain way like at your job you have to be professional or at home
> you are expected to, I don't know, cook or do whatever. So, when I'm
> traveling I think I'm just more carefree and I'm more spontaneous and I
> just kind of live in the moment. I try not to have too much of an agenda
> and I definitely have a huge agenda in my real life at home (Janet,
> personal communication, Tuesday, November 10, 2009).

In the narrative provided the "Self" has shown how it allows for the formation of self-

identity as focusing on escape. The "Self" does not want to literally flee, but temporarily

step back to gain new experiences for reflection. Escape provides the "Self" to "live in

the moment" and offers feelings of "disconnect" without completely disregarding life and

the responsibilities thereof, just momentarily so the "Self" can reflect and rejuvenate.

White and White (2004) would agree that travel offers escape from one's home to seek

experiences in the reformulation of self-identity.

<p style="text-align:center">Nostalgia</p>

"Remembering the past is not only instrumental in the creation and preservation

of a personal identity, but it can also be a very enjoyable process" (Csikszentmihalyi,

1993, p. 132). Goulding & Domic (2009) have indicated that nostalgia is more than just

recollection or memory; it is reminiscing without the implication of personal pain. Davis

(1979) views nostalgia as a painful condition whereas a yearning for home is applied.

"Nostalgic feeling is almost never anchored in those sentiments commonly thought of as

negative-for example, pain, unhappiness, frustration, despair, hate, abuse, etc." (Davis,

1979). For the purposes of this paper, nostalgia will be used in its appropriate sense; longing, yearning, absence, and homesickness. Through the narratives obtained, in this research, two sub-categories of nostalgia emerged: (1) "Personal History" which relates to the "Self" in terms of personal background/history. (2) "Family History", relating to "Self" in terms of one's ancestry. This section will articulate how the "Self" is (re)created, through nostalgia, in the creation of new self-identities provided in the travel narratives.

Personal History

Many of the narratives produced experiences that where nostalgic for the individual through reflecting back on their personal history. Generally, this reflection was on how the travel experience reminded them on teachings learned in school as a youth and in some cases a young adult in college. Nick talks of his interest in western arts, culture, and architecture that grew through his general education. Further adding:

> Nick: All the cultural things, the history, arts, architecture appreciation and all of that stuff and foreign languages. But most of the arts and civilization was about Europe and with that background, everything in Europe fascinated me. And so I made many trips to Europe (Nick, personal communication, Friday, July 17, 2009).

As mentioned, Nick has traveled back to Europe on many occasions from his fascination with several disciplines through his personal past edification. He further describes how his personal experiences in school affected his life:

> Nick: There are other things that really affected or brought a lot of joy to my life; seeing world class art exhibits like visiting some museums like the arts and churches. World class things, of course I know about them because I had taken the courses when I was in school (Nick, personal communication, Friday, July 17, 2009).

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Nick additionally articulated that his diverse education allows him to become more aware during his travels. When Nick travels and views the things he learned in his youth and young adulthood he is able to employ those memories in a reflexive way to form self-identity. As shown, traveling back to Europe and seeing the exhibits he had learned about brought joy to his life and may serve as reasoning for Nick to travel frequently. Similarly, Lisa (personal communication, Friday, August 7, 2009) also mentions in her narrative that she was very interested in experiencing new things that she has always heard about in her history classes, further sharing, "We like impressionist art and that's what we gravitate to as far as museums. The things that we always read about in history books are the things that we want to see." Like that of Nick's nostalgic experience, Lisa also looks to travel to areas she learned in school which allows for a reflexive "Self".

Nostalgia involves a bittersweet craving for a romanticized past which no longer survives (Dann, 2005; Davis, 1979; Goulding & Domic, 2009). Nick and Lisa's narrative also have another commonality; both share past experiences that are seemly apathetic in terms of their relation to the future. Their travel narrative allow for the forthcoming of past events that are nostalgic, yet on the surface do not appear consequential as an idealized experience. Lisa was describing how she is looking to travel to Europe in the future to explore its past and current history briefly concluding:

> Lisa: I want to go to Berlin and see the Berlin Wall, all this stuff I heard of as a kid, you know, we were under the desks with the sirens and that kind of a thing. I lived through that kind of thing to see it completely different now is a trip, absolutely a trip (Lisa, personal communication, Friday, August 7, 2009).

Nick offers an account of returning to the Anasazi sites on a domestic trip to the

Southwest:

> Nick: On one of those trips I went back to one of the camps I was interned
> in during the war and I took pictures of that and there is nothing there now
> except the concrete pedestals that the buildings sat on, but they are
> scattered all over. I could make out where the barracks were and the
> landscaping that my father put in. He had a lawn on each side of a gravel
> walkway in front of the house and the bender boards were still there and
> some of the gravels were still there. The pit that we dugout underneath the
> house to stay cool on those hot summer days, that was still there. It
> brought back a lot of memories, but while I was there we couldn't have
> cameras or binoculars or anything like that. The only recollection that I
> have is what I remember when I was in the second or fourth grade. It was
> good to go back and take pictures (Nick, personal communication,
> Wednesday, October 21, 2009).

Through Lisa and Nick's narratives they were able to reflect on a moment of personal

history. These moments were able to uncover a past memory that both of them were able

to reflect. Lisa's memory, although brief, flows from her narrative as she recalls a time

in school when she had to hide under her desk. While seemly apathetic, inherent in the

nature of the situation, Lisa sense of nostalgia comes from memories of childhood while

commonly have a more free, fun, and joyful connotation. Nick provides a more detailed

account of visiting a Japanese-American internment camp while on one of his many trips

to the Southwestern United States. Again, a seemly unfortunate experience, yet Nick

reminisces the details of his house, the pit he dug, and how it brought back more positive

memories of his youth. Traveling to the site offered Nick the opportunity to more readily

recollect his past experience then just trying to merely remember. Nick did not have

pictures from his childhood during that time, but through returning many years later he

was able to reflect on his past history. Nick's narrative of his nostalgic experience

brought this occurrence back and further reflected on his "Self".

It is acknowledged that nostalgic experiences, such as Nick and Lisa's, were not

at the forefront of this research, but interestingly became apparent as a theme in the

narratives. Many interview subjects recounted past experiences of nostalgia that were

used for the reflection of a new "Self". Nostalgia allows for the reconstruction of our

identities, therefore it is implicated prominently in the continuities and discontinuities we

experience in our new sense of self, dealing more with the present than the past (Davis,

1979).

Family History

> Having a record of the past can make a great contribution to the quality of
> life. It frees us from the tyranny of the present, and makes it possible for
> consciousness to revisit former times. It makes it possible to select and
> preserve in memory events that are especially pleasant and meaningful,
> and so to 'create' a past that will help us deal with the future
> (Csikszentmihalyi, 1993, p. 133).

Many terms are used as a way of describing family history, "roots", "heritage",

"decent", "lineage", "ancestry", and "genealogy" are among the numerous examples.

"As we face the future from the early years of a new millennium it is worth reflecting on

the meaning of the past and its role in the present" (Goulding & Domic, 2009, p. 87). In

the interviews narratives of nostalgia, in terms of looking back on one's ancestry, were

visibly present. This following will describe how self-identity was created as a result of

the personal narratives pertaining to family history. In our sense of who we are, what we

are about, and whither we go, nostalgia is deeply ingrained within us as one of several

ways we have for relating our past to our future (Davis, 1977).

As described in the preceding piece on personal history, the emergence of a sense of the "Self" through narrative on nostalgia allows for the reconstruction of new identities. In terms of family history, over time people are disconnected from their roots through standard change as life progresses and certain radical change can result in and individual to be stimulated by a need for the discovery of self-identity of the precedent (Davis, 1979; Dann, 2005). In addition to sharp change, a reflexive awareness through narrative can also spark the individual with reflecting on their past for the discovery of self-identity. As with Ken who shared where he would like to travel in the future:

> Ken: I would like to travel to Germany because that is my decent [Pause] is German. I'd also like to see the beaches of Normandy [Pause] I have a lot of relatives that fought in WWII. I had an uncle that jumped on D-Day into Normandy; actually they jumped the day before D-Day so they were behind enemy lines even before the invasion. I had a lot of relatives, uncles that were in the service. So, things like that [Pause] I am interested in that (Ken, personal communication, Monday, September 1, 2009).

While Ken has never been to Germany he longs to go there and experience the areas where his ancestors resided. When asked to elaborate Ken shared:

> Ken: My family background is German. My great grandfather came from Germany in 1872. My wife and I do some genealogy work and we were able to find out even what ship he came over on, when he left, when he got to the United States, where he went, who he married and of course the progression from there to our family, but I have never been to Germany and just wish to go back and look at some of the roots of where my ancestors came from. There are still family names of people of our last name that still reside in a couple of these little towns. In fact we want to go back and just kind of explore that. I don't know if these people know how to speak English, we don't know how to speak German, but it would be kind of fun just to go back and see somebody with your own last name. You know to see any connection. It might surprise them and it will definitely surprise us. Some friends of ours went to Germany and found a store with our name on it, it was a shoe store. It just said, '…Shoes', you know, 'Wow, that is kind of neat, I need to go there' [Laughs]. You know,

more to go back and look at family research (Ken, personal communication, Wednesday, October 28, 2009).

Ken's narrative is very personal as he reflects on the opportunity to visit Germany and see the German shoe shop bearing his last name. The works of Chhabra, Healy, & Stills (2003) can very well be applied to Ken's story since "not every component of the experience needs to be authentic (or even satisfactory) so long as the combination of elements generates the required nostalgic feelings" (p. 705). Wang (1999), MacCannell (1999), and Olsen (2002) would agree that perseveringly authentic experiences occur where authenticity relies on the idea that modern society creates and alienation that has resulted in yearning. Heritage operates as a kind of physical proof, or authentication, of identity (MacDonald, 2006). In the narrative he says, "Wow, that is neat, I need to go there" reflexively allowing his "Self" to change. This reflexivity of the "Self" through nostalgia comes from self-imagery, fantasy, and visualization. Moreover, this particular narrative also displays his desire for authentication as a physical proof of identity.

Some narratives spoke of visiting various parts of the world solely because of their heritage. Nick mentions that when he first started traveling he was going to Europe two or three times a year because of his cultural background. Similarly, Karen was partly motivated to travel to Italy because she was working on a family history book. "It has pictures and family stories and newspaper articles and 'Why did they come here?'" (Karen, personal communication, Tuesday, July 21, 2009). Karen's narrative conveys a story of her trying to find more about her ancestors while traveling:

> Karen: I met up with an extremely interesting priest in Taranate. He wouldn't give me the information because he said it had to do with privacy. I said, 'But they have been dead for 200 years. What does

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privacy have to do with this?' and 'They are my family', but he still wouldn't do it. But, I did get the information; I hunted down tombstones (Karen, personal communication, Tuesday, July 21, 2009).

Karen's personal encounter with the priest conveys how important her family history is to her. While the priest would not give her the information she still was determined to locate tombstones regardless. Even Karen says, "Why did they come here?" which pinpoints her curiosity. Karen continues:

Karen: The only photographs I really do is every year whenever I go back to the village I always take pictures of everybody and do a book and send it back to them because so many of the older generations the ones that went through WWII are now gone and you know their stories are gone, but at the time I was able to get them (Karen, personal communication, Tuesday, July 21, 2009).

In her narrative Karen describes making the effort to take pictures and talk with family when traveling to Italy. She talks of her book with passion and genuine interest in capturing the events, stories, articles, and photos of the family. Karen's communal experience with her family in Italy is what Palmer (1999) refers to as "national identity", a very personal concept, which allow the person to depict upon the differing identities accessible in order to "construct their own sense of who they are and how they fit in" (Palmer, 1999).

What Karen is experiencing, in her desire for creating her family history book, is nostalgia. Karen shares that when she goes back to the village by taking photos and sending a book back. She reflects on the stories that she was able to recover before the older generations had passed away. This reflection on her family's history conveys her desire for authentication, a physical proof of her identity, as Ken displayed in his narrative describing the shoe shop bearing his last name. These stories confirm that the

past, in this case family history, plays an important role in self-identity and the reflexivity thereof.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Discussion

This study has explored, as represented in travel narratives, the reflexivity of self-identity addressing several gaps in tourism research. Tourism research seriously lacks the in-person empirical meetings with tourists spotlighting the practices in which individuals experience self-identity through tourism and meanings imposed (Desforges, 2000; McCabe, 2005; Palmer, 2005). As White and White (2004) convey, "A promising avenue for future research is an examination of the connection between people's identity prior to travel, their experiences, and the extent to which identities are created" (p. 216). The combination of techniques used to gather personal narrative through in-depth interviews provided a veritable ensemble in the research design to tackle these gaps, as found by numerous authors (Cone, 1995; Elliott, 2005; Galani-Moutafi, 2000; Holloway & Jefferson, 2000; Hom Cary, 2004; Holstein & Gubrium, 1995; Noy, 2004; Riessman, 1993; Seidman, 1998). Finally, as mentioned earlier in this paper, Palmer (2005) expressed, "what will really move tourism studies forward is its ability to contribute to the understanding of one of the most important concerns of contemporary society: identity as a social construct" (p.24). With the help of personal narrative, this research has contributed to that notion: Wes in his transformational encounter with the "ugly American"; Dan in communicating to his friends and family, through his self-enhancing ego, "Wow, look at the cool things I'm doing"; Ken in exchanging anecdotes and photos on his pre-trip luncheon; Janet's self-fulfilling fleeting moment with her friend in Patagonia; Lisa's adventurism in her ability to reflect with her travel partner, "Remember

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when this happened?"; Doris in her freedom of choosing a different track to join some

backpackers she met in New Zealand; and Karen's nostalgic experiences in creating a

family history book.

Moreover, this study attempted to understand a critically important area

untouched in tourism research; the importance of culture in the discussion of the social

construction of identity. The discussion shows that narratives are used differently and

"vary in content across cultures as cultures also vary in the existing possibilities for

identities and in the kinds of available stories used to create those identities" (McLean,

2008, p. 1691). As McAdams (2006) argued, "People select and interpret certain

memories as self-defining, providing them with privileged status in the life story" (p.

104). Pillemer (2001) and McLean (2008) describes the research of McAdams (2006)

who studied extensively the general symbolic functions of autobiographical memories in

America and commented that some memory narratives contain themes of "redemptive

self" – a powerful narrative in which negative events or experiences are transformed into

positive which he implies is a "life story made in America" (p. 3). In this study Mary

talked of her trip to Tanzania where crime is of serious concern:

> Mary: We had a really bad experience with muggers there and I was
> actually, thank goodness my daughter wasn't with me at the time I was
> with two other women, and one of them got attacked and cut very badly
> and wound up changing the whole focus of the trip into being very
> cautious about what you do, where you are, who you're around, what your
> surroundings are, you know, after dark through the jungle two-hour ride to
> a Third World hospital, you know is quite an experience. I went with the
> other woman and her husband. Two of the women I was with, one got
> hurt very badly and her husband saw this attack in process and he came
> running down the beach, well he wound up being in the middle of a knife
> fight and got cut up too. The two of them had to be stitched up basically,
> so I went to the hospital with them and so that was a whole traumatic

experience that changed my awareness of who is around me and what's around me. It's actually kind of sad, but good because it had made me much more cautious of people and my surroundings and how close they get to you and what their motivations might be and I'm sure it will and has carried to my travels into faraway places as well being much more heightened awareness, which is a good thing. That was quite an experience though (Mary, personal communication, Tuesday, July 28, 2009).

This supports McLean's (2008) opinion, "Narratives that reflect cultural norms provide a structure that may ease the emergence of identity because individuals have an acceptable story structure in which to construct their experiences, thus, cultures provide us with possibilities for who we might become and the story structures to create those identities" (p. 1691).

Grounded theory, as presented by Glaser and Strauss (1967), allows for the constant comparison of narrative to assist in the unambiguous presentation of theory which aided in conveying credibility. As noted in the Literature Review, many other authors have pointed out the advantages of using grounded theory as well (Babbie, 2009; Bryant & Lasky, 2007; Charmaz, 2005; Decrop & Snelders, 2004; Glaser, 1998; Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Trochim, 2009). The linking of grounded theory with narrative analysis provided a unique, yet powerful design in generating theory from the data. As Bryant and Lasky (2007, p. 191) point out, while grounded theory and narrative analysis involve epistemologically disproportionate paradigms, the mixture allows for an atypical 'Maverick' case resulting in the enrichment and insight of the process. Bryant and Lasky (2007) further justified, while grounded theory runs the risk of "stripping" critical proportions of the research, combining it with narrative analysis allows for a "continuous collaborative act" of ideographic representations of the biographies. Therefore, a more

robust research outcome is provided through the combination of grounded theory and narrative analysis, which this research employs. The concepts derived from this merger and how they relate to the reflexive "Self" in identity construction are further discussed.

Transformation of Self

Seeking to explore the concept of "Transformation of Self", in relation to reflexivity is used to form new self-identities, two sub categories were discovered: "Intentional" and "Unintentional". Whether one expects a transformative experience or is broadsided by one spontaneously is irrelevant to this study. What is relevant is that narrative allows for the discovery and rediscovery of self-changing experiences that shape our identity. "From their perspectives, which apply to travelers and non-travelers alike, identity is not given or static, but rather experienced as a dynamic and time-dependant outcome of an ongoing creative process. It is a process of reflexive communication among the subject, the world, and people around him or her" (Elsrud, 2001, p.600).

This study stresses upon the notion that the "Self" is reflexive. The narratives collected indicate that the understanding of lived travel experiences can enable the direction of the "Self" to the future (Desforges, 2000). In other words, travelers reflect on travel experience, and the basis to which they reflect on those experience, change their self-identity. Since the "Self" is reflexive, the transformation of the "Self" is continual, yet narrative brings out the moment in time that their "Self" transformed into a new self-

identity. The future will bring more experience for the "Self" to be (re)reflected upon, but the basic point is: through personal travel narratives, the "Self" transforms.

Ego Factor

Ego factor showed how the "Self" is used in the formation of idiosyncratic differentiation, self-enhancement, and anecdotes in the formulation of self-identity. Through idiosyncratic differentiation in the narratives, the "Other" becomes a venue for reflexivity in generating a range of dimensions of the "Self" further exploring, "Who am I?" It is here that the travelers set themselves apart as being unique or different to create a sense of "Otherness", a useful tool in self-identity construction. Self-enhancement, usually in the form of social capital, learning, and experience allows the ego to reflect on these encounters to (re)create identity. Lily's narrative, for example provides and instance wherein the ego is essentially saying, "This is who I am or will become," consistent with MacCannell's (2002) view that the ego claims identity. Anecdotes like Lily's were found to be extremely powerful in the creation of self-identity. When stories of travel experiences are shared with acquaintances before and after the journey new identities are formulated (Desforges, 2000).

This research found that the (re)creation of self-identity is not only limited to pre and post-trip, but throughout the travel experience. This viewpoint is an expansion of Desforges (2000) who stated, "If the decision to go away is about investing in tourism for self-identity, then coming back home again should be one way of reaping the rewards of the experience" (p.933). What he is referring to is the story sharing through travel experience that is used to shape self-identity. Elsrud (2001) also poses that the

biographical whole of the individual is created through their verbal stories, in addition to diaries, articles, and books. The works of Desforges (2000) and Elsrud (2001) is consistent with the finding of this research, yet this research goes beyond to offer additional ways that the "Self" can construct identity. The use of e-mail, online applications (ie. Skype, blogs, etc.), journals, diaries, scrapbooks, and self made DVDs as described by the narrators are yet to be explored in tourism studies. The research found that these tools can and are used in construction of the "Self". For instance, the use of e-mail was prevalent in many of the narratives in communicating with friends and family, sharing photos, and reflecting on the travel experience. In these instances, the "Self" is constructing its self-identity revealing only what it wants to reveal. "The ego tries to stand outside of language. Words can only build it up or tear it down" (MacCannell, 2002, p. 148).

Finally, Noy (2007) recently claimed that although self-transformation is commonly constructed as a theme within personal narratives on identity, he proposes a different viewpoint whereby it may be the "only" or "primary instance" of identity. While this notion is partly consistent with the argument of this paper, it is argued here that Noy (2007) may be false and premature in the assumption that self-change may be the *only* instance of identity. Indeed, self-change occurs and could very well be construed as "primary", as of now. Research on self-identity through touristic experience is still in its infancy; there is still much to explore. Further, the "Self" assumes reflexive awareness, but "reflexivity" is not synonymous with "transformation." Granted, this paper shows strong support for transformation from the reflexivity of identity through

tourism, yet time should be allowed for more research to accumulate before making such hasty and direct assumptions.

Self-Actualization

Concentrating on moments of self-actualization obtained through personal narratives, this research pointed out how self-identity is constructed in these instances. Few works in tourism studies remotely explore the notion of self-actualization, especially as it relates to self-identity. The notion of "Self" is vibrant when exploring new territories such as self-actualization. Maslow (1943) laid down strict guidelines to explain how the "Self" is actualized, yet this study looks at moments in which a sense of actualization was attained. Regardless of achieving the state of self-actualization, people still seek spiritual experiences and self-fulfillment. To some degree, although debatable, a state of mind is reality. In the case of self-identity, a state of mind is all it takes. Feelings of a "synergistic relationship with the planet," figurative mountains climbed, and realizing childhood dreams, all of which exhibit the reflexivity of the "Self" at its core; deep-rooted, personal, and divine.

Self-Congruity

Adventure narratives in travel, in this research, stimulate reflexivity of the "Self" in the creation of new identities. Not only backpackers display the perception and experience of adventure. The degree to which adventure is experienced and supposed is purely subjective on the narrator. Giddens (1991) discusses how the engagements of danger and risk, or for these purposes adventure, burrow deeply into the core of self-identity. For the purposes of self-identity, the narrative guides the reader through an

undertaking of risk and adventure. The examples of self-congruity provided by Karen and Janet display this undertaking through their scary and nervous experience before leaving on an airplane. There reflexivity in their undertaking also shows how self-identity through tourism experiences is not limited just visiting a monument, town, or attraction in the present. As discussed previously, Desforges (2000) articulated two pivotal moments of identity creation; departing and the homecoming of a travel experience. This paper expands his work to argue that moments of reflexivity and (re)construction of the self are also available during the travel experience and not solely before or after. It is the whole essence and process of tourism from deciding to travel, to engaging, to returning home to reflect on it in the years to come that allows the "Self" to take shape and form new identities. It is the presentation of an adventurous lifestyle that empowers the traveler with a stronger sense of identity (Elsrud, 2001).

Self-Esteem

This research found that personal narratives that exhibit escape and perceived freedom/independence allow for the reflexivity of self-identity. The narrations of independence, like escape, were saturated with stories, reflections, and desires that offered a setting for the reflection in forming new self-identities. Wes (personal communication, Tuesday, August 25, 2009) said it so perfectly when asked what travel meant to him, "It's independence; it's getting away from here". The "Self" seeks reflection through temporary moments of escape. In creating a path to self-growth, travel offers escape through the postponement of routine and responsibility (White & White,

2004). The "Self" does not want to literally flee, yet feelings of "disconnect" and living

in the moment is what fuels the "Self" in the (re)creation of identity.

Nostalgia

Through the travel narratives, participants expressed feelings of nostalgia through

the reflexive "Self". Through the works of Davis (1979), Dann (2005), and Goulding &

Domic (2009) in conveying that nostalgia involves a bittersweet craving for a

romanticized past, it is safe to assume that reflexivity of the "Self" in inherent in

nostalgia. Nick's account of traveling to the internment camp was rich in personal

narrative as he recalls and reflects upon part of his childhood. He offers a prime example

of nostalgia and the reflection of the "Self" and the reconstruction of identity. The

examples presented in this paper on family history articulated how individuals were able

to reflect upon their own narratives in the (re)creation of their self-identity. Thorough the

personal narratives of Ken and Karen, while reflecting on their travel experiences abroad,

instances where the search for authentication shapes self-identity were offered.

Nostalgia, as discovered through travel narrative, offers an inherent reflection of the

"Self" in further seeking the existential question; "Who am I?"

Limitations and Future Research

First and foremost, the Literature Review revealed that the amount of research in

tourism exploring how experiences gained from traveling shape self-identity through

personal biographies is scarce. Secondly, the time investment involved on this particular

topic is vast which is partly due to the former, but also as a result of the research design

of numerous in-depth interviews, transcribing, coding through constant comparison, and

of course data analysis. Third, the financial obligation to travel to all of the participants,

the furthest being a two hour drive, on two separate occasions was in and of itself a

burden which instituted a smaller sample. Finally, the use of a snowball sample as

Babbie (2009) indicates, "results in samples with questionable representativeness" was

used (p. 193). However, due the exploratory nature of this study, merging grounded

theory with narrative analysis and the mere fact that participants were difficult to locate, a

snowball sample was found useful.

An advantage to this research was the ability to have a published author and

researcher on identity in tourism assist in the dependability in the representations of

reflections offered from the result. While all coding results, and reflections were solely

done by the researcher, having the Chair of the Thesis Committee available for inter-

coding, verification of results and reflections, and general feedback was useful in the

dependability and trustworthiness of the study.

Future studies should pay more attention to understand the complex links between

the individual differences in narrative identity construction and culture. "While each

story is unique, commonalities in stories often reveal something about the culture from

which they originate, or put more eloquently, narratives provide unique and culturally

anchored meanings" (McAdams & Pals, 2006, p. 210 as cited in McLean, 2008, p. 1695).

"Indeed, the manner in which the individual negotiates the construction of his or her own

story within his or her culture tells us about the person, the culture, and their intersection"

(McLean, 2008, p. 1695).

Future research needs to explore the "Self" as a reflexive project as it pertains to tourism research. This research alone cannot cover the dynamic, multi-facet, and inherently reflexive concept of the "Self" in the tourism domain. As this study was strongly designed to fill several gaps in tourism research, the amount of topics spawning from the "Self" alone is far from fleeting. Additionally, this study has uncovered additional tools for the (re)creation of identity which should keep tourism researchers busy for years to come. Upon mere intuitiveness, resulting from the personal narratives, it is pondered what might be in store for the future self-identity in tourism studies. As advancement in technology ensues, more resources will be available for the use of "Self" construction: e-mail, YouTube videos, Skype, web 3.0 applications, social networking sites, blogs, etc. While travel journals, diaries, scrapbooks, and home movies are still neglected as they pertain to the "Self," tourism research would have a bounty of material to explore in the future.

Implications

The findings of this study, which clearly articulate how narrative can be used in the reflexivity of the "Self" in forming new self-identities, will offer tourism research a deeper understanding of "Who am I?" Travel allows for high reflexive thought in which the individual views him/herself from the outside looking within. Self-identity is a reflexively structured undertaking whereby, "the reflexive project of the self which consists in the sustaining of coherent, yet continuously revised, biographical narratives, takes place in the context of multiple choice as filtered through abstract systems" (Giddens, 1991, p. 5). Additionally, the discovery of new tools, yet explored in tourism

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research on self-identity, are provided. These tools (e.g., e-mail, blogs, Skype, etc.) allow for the (re)creation of the "Self," which expands upon the work of Desforges (2000), by offering additional "pivotal" moments where travel is useful to self-identity.

Another important implication that this research has on tourism studies is the qualitative research design. The merger of grounded theory with narrative analysis, which has yet to be utilized in the exploration of self-identity through tourism, provided a sturdy design in the discovery of valuable data. This design will not only serve as a model for future research for it is easily replicable, but its flexibility will allow for future improvements if deemed necessary.

This research encourages future researchers to elaborate, explore, alter, defend, and debunk the findings of this research because that is what will help progress tourism studies in the understanding of the "Self". While keeping in mind that the concepts presented and explored in this research are by no means meant to be finite in the understanding of self-identity in tourism research. Quite the contrary, the hope is that this research serves as a steppingstone for the interest, exploration, and discovery of future research on the "Self" as it relates to tourism. In summary, not one research alone will ever be able to capture the full essence of self-identity in understanding, "Who am I?", but research can be used as a resource in exploring this vast and enthralling topic. As Randall and McKim (2008) stated, "Because the meaning of text is so arbitrary and multiplicitous, and because neither author nor reader can be the final arbiter of meaning, the question "Who am I?" loses all relevance, just as the notion of meaning itself" (p. 13).

Conclusion

This study has set forth to close many gaps, explore innovative methods, and create a better understanding of "Who am I?", in tourism research. Narrative was found to be an extremely useful method to capture the stories of individuals in their experiences traveling. Although narrative research has become increasingly popular in several disciplines such as literary theory, linguistics, historiography, psychology, psychotherapy, ethnology, sociology and philosophy, very few tourism scholars have used the method. There is no doubt that many of the narratives provided by the participants will change overtime. Trips will become longer, experiences will be added on to, and the sense of adventure will be conveyed more thrillingly or perhaps less. "Mythology is vital to narrative survival" (Elsrud, 2001, p. 600). Narrators will continue to reflect upon their experiences in their stories and as the stories evolve, so will the "Self". As Elsrud (2001) so eloquently states, "Individuals are left alone to create their own identity stories through the means they are offered by society" (p. 600).

The concepts of "Self" and "Identity" have puzzled philosophers for centuries, and recently to psychologists, sociologists (Randall & McKim, 2008), and very recently to tourism researchers. The question "Who am I?" have become an essential question in one's life, and represents an enduring philosophical concern. Similar to prominent scholars like Anthony Giddens, Pierre Bourdieu and Jerome Bruner; it is imperative to tourism research "to investigate the narrative construction of self and identity without losing sight of the entity who is doing the constructing" (Holloway & Freshwater, 2007, p. 11). "We can only know ourselves in so far as we are narrativised, it is through

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narrative that we know ourselves as active entities that operate through time" (Porter

Abbott, 2002, p. 123). Moreover, travel experiences and how it shapes individual

identity is a stubbornly interdisciplinary experience. As Freshwater (2002) aptly noted,

"the concept of the 'Self' has been variously described in psychological terms, modernist

terms, spiritual terms, biological terms, sociological terms, and latterly postmodernist

terms" (p. 1). Thus, for such reasons, tourism researchers should approach future similar

studies from a perspective, that, itself is inherently interdisciplinary; a narrative

perspective. It is important to note here, "narrativity and interdisciplinarity go hand in

hand if for no other reason than those stories themselves typically tackle a wide range of

topics at once" (Randall & McKim, 2008, p. 19). As further justified by Randall and

McKim (2008):

> The narrative means by which we perceive and comprehend experience
> is not simply a linguistic tool that we use to describe our lives after the fact.
> Nor is it merely a social phenomenon by which we are constructed. Rather,
> it is an innate quality – both pre-linguistic and linguistic – that is integral to
> human existence (p. 18).

Finally, tourism researchers should understand, despite the limitations of narrative

research, it is the charm of narrative that no discipline on its own can effectively account

for the power of narrative. As Holloway & Freshwater (2007) movingly describes,

"Human lives are lived through narrative, and the history of humankind is littered with

stories" (p. 9). Indeed, narrative is "a basic and universal mode of human expression"

(Smith, 2000, p. 327). As such, it is a holistic way of looking at everyday life.

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