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Multiculturalism or Assimilation? An Examination of a University International House through a Cultural Studies-as-Praxis Model¹

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This paper examines issues of social difference and justice in a university international student center through a "cultural studies as praxis" model, which had been developed in the field of cultural studies and/in education by Handel Wright at the University of Tennessee (Wright 2001, 2001/2002). The model blends and hybridizes three distinct fields of scholarship: cultural studies theory, an activist form of service learning known as service learning for social justice, and qualitative research. We further conceptualized our project through interpretive interactionism (Denzin 1989) to frame how international student identities are constructed and represented through programming in the International House (I-House). Modifying a traditional service learning model that emphasizes service outside of one's educational institution, we participated in and studied our own university's programming for international students. We focused on the everyday culture of the I-House, particularly how international students interacted with programming as a social object, and the boundaries constructed between domestic and international students and staff. Our inquiry was guided by particular questions concerning how forms of discrimination/marginalization based on socio-cultural difference manifested themselves, as well as how social justice could be realized in everyday discourse. Thus, our work at and evaluation of the I-House was focused through a prism that highlights social, cultural and political differences such as ethnicity, national culture, and gender.

We begin by describing our paradigmatic approach to the I-House, with emphasis on how the articulation of cultural studies literature, service learning for social justice, qualitative research,

and interpretive interactionism shaped our project. We then offer an overview of how we, as service learning students, worked in and around the I-House. After describing the I-House's history, organization and programming, and the explicit and implicit goals of the organization, we discuss issues of representation, cultural hegemony, and community outreach that became evident during our project. Finally we briefly address the ramifications of the cultural studies as praxis model, and conclude with a call for International student centers to critically reflect on their own institutional practices in light of our "findings."

A CULTURAL STUDIES AS PRAXIS MODEL FOR SERVICE LEARNING

The discourse of cultural studies has a multiplicity of its origins and histories, trajectories, and disciplinary affiliations (Grossberg, Nelson, and Trenchler 1992; Storey 1996; Wright 1998). Therefore, there are various, diverse versions of cultural studies that emphasize different aspects and degrees of theory, academia, performance, and activism. We take up one particular trajectory in this paper, which itself is tied to a conjunctural interpretation of what cultural studies is (Wright 2003). This trajectory envisions an activist cultural studies grounded at the intersection of three bodies of literature—cultural studies theory, service learning for social justice, and qualitative research. While not seeking to limit "openness" of cultural studies, we explicitly put forward some theoretical and methodological aspects that inform a reading of our project. Cultural studies is an endeavor which in part studies the everyday process of culture and intercultural relations. This endeavor is political rather than neutral in orientation and relies on various critical theoretical traditions, multiple methodologies, and a reflexive process of learning/acting. Cultural studies provides a critical theoretical and overtly politicized frame for service learning from which an examination of social difference and social justice issues, as they are experienced within institutional organizations, can occur. We see service learning as a key component in the successful training of students as social justice activists.

We aimed to understand how processes of social differentiation were articulated in programming for international and domestic students in an intercultural setting, with an emphasis on highlighting issues of social justice (Carson 2001; see also Mooney and Edwards 2001). Our view of the role of intercultural service was shaped by cultural studies and education theory (Benson and Harkavy 1997; Simon 1995) and by critical service learning methodologies (Harkavy and Benson 1998). Service

learning as a critical pedagogy is currently being utilized in several disciplines within the higher education system including cultural studies, sociology, and social work (Angelique 2001; Lowe and Reisch 1998; Wright 2001/2002, 2002). Service learning for social justice differs from other forms of experiential learning and community service in that it combines theory with practice in order to illuminate issues of social inequality that many students do not confront in their everyday lives (Everett 1998). An active engagement with issues of social inequality is encouraged because it furthers the goals of social justice, critical cultural studies and sociology, and multiculturalism (Fisher 1997; Gregg 1998; Harkavy and Benson 1998; Hironimus-Wendt and Lovell-Troy 1999; Myers-Lipton 1998). From this approach, universities are seen as active agents in their communities, with service learning activism partially mediating the formation of sustenance of town-gown collaborations. Our project differed from this ideal conception because we decided to work within the university itself. We thus articulate students as part of the community that the university (as institution) serves.

Unlike passive forms of learning or internships (Parilla and Hesser 1998) that do not have an explicitly articulated theoretical framework and are not overtly politicized, our service-learning project explicitly engaged a cultural studies theoretical framework and social justice. Conceptualizing our project within the cultural studies as praxis model proposed by Wright (2001, 2001/2002), we approached the everyday world as problematic to examine how mundane work within the target organization is linked to larger institutional processes and structures. The model's emphasis on blending critical ethnography with service learning offers "an approach to research that allows students to start from the individual as research co-participant and yet theorize about the links between individual and organization and between the organizational, the institutional and the social. It allows the reconceptualization of the everyday as the very stuff of both research and social justice work" (Wright 2002).

We further modified the model outlined above in order to frame our understandings of how international and domestic students and staff interacted within the institution of the I-House. Specifically, we merged the cultural studies model with interpretive interactionism (Denzin, 1999), which recognizes humans as active participants in constructing social reality, focuses on individuals' reports of experienced inequalities in everyday life, and takes actors as experts of their own lives. This perspective also understands that the world of experiences is a second-hand world, one that is mediated through symbolic representations "which

stand between the person and the so-called real world" (Denzin 1999, 124). These symbolic representations encapsulate, contextualize and institutionalize interaction between individuals, whether they are students, university staff, or faculty. The I-House, where our project took place, is a symbolic representation of the university's commitment to international students and education. People's experiences and knowledge therein are dialectically constructed and constrained by institutional and social structures, which mediate their experiences. It is within these structures that we studied how intercultural interaction between domestic and foreign students and staff took place.

OUR PROJECT AT THE I-HOUSE

It was our concern for and celebration of cultural diversity that brought us to the university's I-House, a place where intercultural interaction is promoted within the bounds of a US university. The I-House serves as a geographic and social space where oftentimes separate communities (e.g., Dee and Henkin 1999; Zhang and Rentz 1996) can come together and engage each other for mutual benefit. Or does it? We critically approached the site by asking: What is the purpose of the I-House? Whom does it serve and whom ought it serve? Should the I-House serve as a haven for international students, a place where they can "escape" US culture? Should it serve as a type of amusement park, a place where domestic students and staff can come to gaze at the "other"? Or should the I-House be a bridge, a server that links international and domestic individuals and groups together? Should it limit its activities, programs and services to campus, or should it provide for the needs of a larger community? And if the latter, how far would its responsibilities extend? Our service learning for social justice project enabled us to provide preliminary answer to some of these questions. But first we review our specific methods for service learning.

Our project was grounded in critical ethnography (Simon and Dippo 1988). To collect relevant and useful data, we conducted participant observation, document collection and analysis, semi-structured interviews, and a survey. In terms of service, we each worked at the I-House in various capacities throughout our semester-long project. One of us helped develop the "Coffee and Tea Night" and assisted in English conversation roundtables; the other helped develop the "International Friendship Program" and worked as an orientation leader at the University's orientation for international students. Although we were never treated the same as staff members by the administration, working with staff

members in teams to develop and implement programs allowed us to immerse ourselves and gain knowledge about the organizational culture of the I-House and provided us with various insights into power dynamics and issues of sociocultural difference, especially how gender and ethnic distinctions operated in programming.

We worked with the I-House director to develop an evaluation tool to collect critical feedback from people who used the I-House's programs and services and we assisted the director in developing strategies for getting more U.S. students actively involved in I-House programs. We also interviewed a stratified convenient sample of I-House staff members during the semester.² The purpose of these interviews was to retrieve subjective interpretations of how the I-House operated day-to-day, the programs and services that were offered, and the strengths and shortcomings of the current state of affairs. Because we interacted with students and staff during operating hours, interviews were structured to be approximately one-half hour in length. Interviews were audio recorded with the interviewee's prior consent and confidentiality was guaranteed to all participants. Interviews were then transcribed and the content analyzed according to emergent themes that we developed over the course of the project (see Charmaz 2000).

As participant observers, we gleaned numerous, revealing insights into the organizational culture of the I-House. We gathered information while working or relaxing in the I-House and while chatting with students or I-House staff over the course of the semester. By making ourselves known around the I-House, we became engaged in regular conversations with both staff and students. In addition, we were able to observe many of the interactions that took place between and among international and U.S. staff and students. We individually summarized our experiences in fieldnotes while at or directly after leaving the I-House. We then compared our conceptualizations of how and for whom the I-House functions, used those conceptualizations to direct the focus of our research (Strauss and Corbin 1998), and wrote summary notes that represented both of our experiences and interpretations.

Lastly, we analyzed institutional documents in order to help us contextualize our service-learning project. Underscoring the importance of textual analysis in ethnographic research, Smith (1987, 149) asserted that "...texts are seen as constituents of social relations, and hence, by exploring our own knowledge of how to operate the interrelations among them, we explicate both our own practices and a segment of the social relations in which

those practices are embedded and which they organize." Textual analysis not only informed us about the I-House's history, its formal organization, and ideal conceptions of the administration's purpose and goals but allowed us to unveil the ideological hegemony in which social relations occurred. We now begin our analysis with some of these documents.

THE I-HOUSE: HISTORY, ORGANIZATION, AND PURPOSE

Reflective of the broader social changes of the 1960s in the US, including the civil rights movement as well as intellectual and theoretical developments in feminism and post-colonialism, the University's first I-House was institutionalized in 1968 as the result of a Student Government Association-backed administrative decision to fund international programming and was located in a University-owned house, off campus. It opened in January 1969 but was relatively neglected by the University throughout the 1970s. The actual building deteriorated under the feet of international students and was legally condemned in 1983. A second, larger I-House was established later that year and marked the beginning of a more serious commitment to international education at the University.³ The third (and current) I-House opened in late 1995 in a newly dedicated on-campus building that cost \$1.3 million.

The I-House had a full-time directorship and four graduate assistantships, three of which were normally filled by international students and one by an American who, according to the I-House director, acted as a "cultural interpreter." Additionally, there were between ten and fifteen undergraduate student assistants. These jobs were filled primarily by international students because of the unique needs of the I-House, such as answering questions that require overseas knowledge and experience, but also included some US student-workers who dealt directly with questions from international students. These positions, both graduate and undergraduate, were filled by people who had overseas experience and desired to work within an explicitly multicultural setting.

Document analysis revealed that the I-House did not have its own formal mission statement. Rather it relied on the mission statement of its parent organization, the Center for International Education (CIE), which planned, coordinated and implemented activities that "promote[d] intercultural sensitivity and understanding in both the academic and civic communities" and provided "a full range of effective and supportive services to US and international students, scholars and faculty" (Center for International Education 1997, 7). Operating under the CIE umbrella,

the I-House assisted international students in adjusting to US culture and fostered interest in other cultures among domestic students. Thus, a primary goal was to promote intercultural appreciation between multiple groups.

Because the CIE's mission statement included the goal of promoting interest in intercultural interaction and understanding, we saw the I-House's work as particularly important. The I-House offered a multitude of programs, services and activities that catered primarily to the needs of students, and to a much lesser extent the local community. The majority of programs (e.g., language tables, cooking demonstrations, cultural and dance nights, coffee and tea anytime, and the international friendship and partner programs) were offered to all university students so as to facilitate interaction between internationals and Americans. Some programs and services, of course, catered specifically to international students: these include visa and immigration newsletters and workshops, English (ESL) classes, a support group for female international graduate students, and in general a place where internationals could come and relax. U.S. students could also benefit from the latter, as well as from weekly language tables, where international staff were able to offer Americans (or anyone else) the chance to practice a foreign language, and culture nights, where Americans could learn about foreign cultures. A small number of programs catered to groups outside of the student body, such as English classes for the spouses of international students.

Both students and staff perceived the I-House as an organization dedicated to catering to the entire university student body. Early on, we asked students and staff what they thought the goal of the I-House should be and then used their answers to construct an ideal type (Weber 1949) against which to measure the I-House's success. When asked, "What do you think the goal of I-House should be?" most staff members, both graduate and undergraduate, gave similar answers. According to a student assistant, the goal of the I-House is, "to provide students an outlet to come and visit the world. It's the perfect place for people to come and meet people." As another student assistant stated:

It should be to bring Americans and international students together to give international students the opportunity to take the first steps into American life.... It should be a place where people can just come in and begin to make a connection.... It's a good place for internationals to get acquainted with life here and make social contacts. And it's also a good place for Americans to come and get some exposure to foreign cultures without having to travel abroad.

These ideal views notwithstanding, staff members were divided about whether the I-House met its goals. Generally, graduate

assistants were more conservative than undergraduates in their opinions of whether the I-House met its goals, likely because they had more experience than undergraduate assistants working in a bureaucratic organization. Similarly, graduate students were better able to articulate both the reasons for the I-House's shortcomings and possible solutions to those problems. Below we provide analysis of three prominent themes that emerged during our research: issues of representation, getting Americans involved, and defining the limits of outreach; each of which is inextricably linked to cultural studies' mantra of class, race and gender (Nelson, Treichler, and Grossberg 1992; Wright 1998).

ISSUES OF REPRESENTATION AT THE I-HOUSE

Issues of social justice, diversity, and representation have been central to cultural studies since its early days in the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) at the University of Birmingham, England (Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies 1982; Women's Studies Group of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, 1978). Patrick Brantlinger (1990, 128-129) further argued that "while issues of class [in the U. S.] have seemed relatively 'hidden,' crises of representation concerning women, Afro-Americans, and various other ethnic 'minorities' have been dramatic and persistent since the 1960s." The idea of (mis)representation is closely related to power relations that are pervasive in the organization of everyday life and permeate all levels of social existence (Hall 2000; Smith 1987, 1990). Dominant groups have power to represent themselves and "others" in discourse. The significance of power hierarchy becomes evident in the misrepresentation of marginalized groups and construction of oppositional binaries. Specifically, during our project we found (mis)representation problematic on at least two levels.

First, textual analysis of the I-House's fliers, advertising different programs, indicated a pervasively patriarchal discourse rooted in the larger institutional context. This finding prompted us to examine issues of the place and representation of both men and women in the organizational culture. For example, the International Wives Program implicitly carried the idea that only men were students or scholars, and that only wives therefore needed programming. This point was missed by one graduate assistant who noted, "one thing that was forgotten was the wives. We forgot that international students come with family." The irony is that this program was intended to offer ESL classes for spouses of international students and scholars; however, the language used (i.e., "wives," not "spouses") suggested the exclusion of men. Even more

strikingly, the text exposed male hegemony and patriarchy at work such that men were already seen in dominant role and lesser role of a spouse was relegated to women. Various feminist theorists (e.g., hooks 1984; Millett 1970; Smith 1987) have recognized and addressed this process of constant narrowing of local/domestic sphere assigned exclusively to women and enlarging of public terrain appropriated by men. The historical misrepresentations of women as passive consumers whose very survival depends upon men is what a social justice project attempts to expose and deconstruct.

Second, we discovered that how students used certain I-House programs seemed to result from access to information gained by their association with particular staff members. The number of international students with similar cultural background who became involved in any particular program was often attributable to the nationality of the staff member(s) running the program. As one staff member pointed out, the I-House has "some problems with programming and getting things done that could get to all of the students in comparison to only the select few who know about it." Advertisements in the University Center, for example, were typically out of date or not comprehensive, while programmers were quick to spread word about upcoming and new programs through informal lines of communication (e.g., friends). As these examples suggest, the I-House was represented through narrow channels and to small audiences that limited its ability to serve its constituency.

We also noticed that some segments of the larger international community were rarely seen at the I-House (e.g., Chinese students, Muslim women, and international faculty members). This problem was already recognized by at least some of the staff, as we were told:

The I-House could strive to reach out a little bit more to the international community, but specifically to the Chinese students... This house could really serve well as a resource for international students to social services that they may need, because there are people who fall between the cracks... We pretty much only support the students and I think we could extend that to students and their families.

There were other organizations on campus, however, that competed in this role, such as the Muslim Student Association and various national student organizations. The I-House administration and staff may have felt that other organizations were successfully catering to these needs. Whatever the reasons, the I-House was not catering to all the groups listed above during our service learning project.

Furthermore, international students who were not staff members were not able to develop programs that might benefit them or other students (domestic or international) and there appeared to be no formal way for students or other non-staff to request specific programming. We talked to several students, both international and domestic, who wanted to use the I-House's resources to provide (multi)cultural programming but reported feeling that their ideas were not taken seriously. The power to "do good" was limited to those who worked at the I-House because of the lack of open channels for volunteers to come forward and offer additional programming. At the same time, staff members were able to provide programming according to their personal interests. For example, because one female staff member felt that female graduate students were in need of support, a program was developed and initiated for women without evaluating the needs of male or undergraduate students. Reflecting on the situation, one staff member intuitively noted: "... those programs are really good, but I also think that they could extend to other students and be good programs." There were no "bad" programs, but we believe they needed to be supplemented by programs that explicitly provided service for other segments of the university and local communities.

GETTING AMERICANS INVOLVED

The issue of representing international students was juxtaposed with representing domestic students as well. According to an administrator, one of the I-House's assumed responsibilities was to teach international students how to "survive" in the U.S. by representing "tips" about US culture as useful and relevant, which (it was suggested) would limit intercultural conflict by bringing various outsiders under a single cultural umbrella. Simultaneously the I-House was to be "a House where international students, can feel they have a home away from home." Messages of the necessity of becoming "culturally fluent" in the U.S. were sent regularly to international students through programming such as cultural orientations and mentoring programs with American partners (see also Meyer 2001; Shigaki and Smith 1997). One problem with such arrangements was how it assumed that U.S. culture could be quickly learned, and that it should be learned in preference to students' native cultural systems.

This assumption was realized in calls to domestic students for increased participation in everyday I-House activities. As a student assistant explained, most of the staff was on an assigned mission "to drag more Americans through the door." International students

who used the I-House told us that they desired an increase in opportunities to interact with U.S. students. The expectation was that U.S. students were more of an authority than other international students on U.S. culture, signifying to us a hegemonic process of enculturation. The push to bring more Americans into the I-House could be seen as a dominant/submissive relationship with the liminal international student placed in the role of "protégé" and the U.S. student as "mentor." The result was that many international students spent most of their time learning about U.S. culture while doing relatively little in the way of teaching Americans about their cultural traditions. Likewise, U.S. "mentors" and visitors alike reported being interested in the cultures of international students but putting little effort into learning anything significant about them.

The majority of graduate assistants and student assistants at the I-House placed great importance on attracting domestic students to the I-House. At the same time, some international students and staff felt that the I-House should be a private social space reserved just for them, perhaps as a site of resistance to U.S. cultural hegemony and assimilation, which we recognized as a legitimate concern. This was apparent to one author during his first visit to the I-House. Having just arrived to the University after a year abroad, he was eager to involve himself in intercultural work at the University. But when he entered the I-House and asked for information about its purpose and function, an international staff member told him that the I-House was "really just for international students."⁴ This is exemplary of how the meanings assigned to the I-House contextualized interaction between international and domestic students. Because the visitor and the staff member apparently interpreted the meaning of the I-House differently, and because the visitor deferred to the staff member's interpretation, the I-House was effectively losing a potential participant in its programming. It was only when the author met another international student that worked at the I-House that he returned and began interacting with others regularly. This was not an isolated incident, as another American who was an undergraduate assistant during our project reported a similar experience. Just as Kincheloe and McLaren (2000, 283) contended that "hegemonic consent is never completely established," various cultural minorities contested the hegemonic process of Americanization of subjectivity.

In the end we shared concerns regarding the consequences of bringing more domestic students into the I-House. During an interview with one student assistant, the question of why more Americans did not use the I-House was pondered. "I don't know

if it's ignorance—if they just don't know that we have the place here or if they're embarrassed to come in or if they're afraid—but I wish there was more American student involvement." This statement made us think about what it would mean for U.S. students to become comfortable at the I-House. If this were to happen, would that suggest that U.S. culture had come to dominate the I-House? People normally feel uncomfortable when first stepping outside their "safety zone" (Welch 2000), and just as international students feel uncomfortable about almost everything when they arrive in the U.S. (Williams 2001), U.S. students should feel that they are crossing into a new, truly multicultural "zone", one in which no culture has dominance over another.

THE LIMITS OF OUTREACH

A third theme of our analysis, which closely related to the issue of representation, is defining the boundaries of the I-House's service area. The I-House provided services and programs to a minority population in City and on the University campus. According to the director of the I-House, all students at the University are potential clients. More broadly, the "Statement of Function" for the I-House (Center for International Education 1997, 12–13) indicated that their outreach goal was to serve all the following groups:

- International community affiliated with the campus (domestic students, international students, student organizations, foreign national students as permanent residents, visiting international scholars, international spouses and families, and visiting dignitaries);
- Community of City (schools, civic clubs, private organizations, media, governmental and private groups seeking assistance with international activities, private individuals interested in cultural information, volunteer host families, and church groups interested in cross-cultural awareness programs);
- Campus affiliates interested in cross-cultural awareness programs;
- International community of City (permanent residents not affiliated with the University or City, foreign nationals, and visitors from other countries);
- Other Universities and individuals involved in international programming.

Yet, while the CIE had a mission statement that guided its broad and diverse activities, the I-House lacked such a guiding statement. As one worker commented, "If you don't have a mission statement,

how can you know what you are supposed to be doing?" During our project, the I-House lacked either the coordination or the person-power to implement regular community outreach that would be reflective of the CIE mission statement.

We wondered why programming did not reach out to the needs of larger, non-student populations. Because students spend a large majority of their time engaged in academic activities, it would not be exceptional to think that they would have relatively little interest in developing programs or services that cater to non-student segments of the community's international population. On the contrary, students who had contact with outside organizations reported enjoying such work. One graduate assistant explained how occasionally "the I-House is contacted by someone who really needs...translation—it could be someone from the Law School working on a case—then we contact the [appropriate] student association." A student expressed her keen interest in helping the larger community. "I like it if I get a call for a language tutor and I can actually find one. We get calls from [staff] in hospitals where they just need someone to tell them what's wrong [with a foreign patient]. It's really nice if you can do that." Student workers seemed dedicated to and excited about social work with the local community. They recognized that their work was an important part of meeting the needs and wishes of internationals in the local community.

While the expressed outreach goals of the I-House were commendable, the perceived inability to successfully provide programs and services to such diverse groups was apparent for three interrelated reasons. First, the I-House's daily programs and services were created, developed, and maintained primarily by graduate students, thus limiting the ability of the organization to serve so many diverse groups.⁵ Second, it could be said that the student assistants who provided the majority of the I-House's work force had neither the time nor the professional training necessary to cater to such diversity. One graduate assistant said, "I found myself working on my own—no direction, no orientation." As service learning participants we also felt that programming was at times thrown together with little critical feedback from the administration and there appeared to be a gap between student workers, graduate assistants and the administration in the CIE. As it was put to us by a staff member, "We are throwing programs for the sake of throwing programs, to be busy." This was starting to change during our project, however, as another staff member described,

I came to the point [where I] asked, "Are we a team or what?" Now we are working towards being a team. It's hard because people are not used to that.

It seems like many years ago they worked by teams, but then the concept disappeared. Right now there is a good spirit and we have just started [again] with the teams.

We were also aware that the staff members were only temporary workers who never stayed more than two or three years, and programming was often not retained after the staff member who developed it left. As a result, workers were constantly reinventing old programs every couple years. The I-House could and should collect and retain written records of programs that were implemented, including positive and negative results, changes made, and reasons for their cancellation when appropriate. Perhaps there was a good reason that a team approach was abandoned that could have guided its revival process. In the end, we found that the organizational structure of the I-House workforce made some of its outreach goals untenable.

CONCLUSIONS

International student centers such as the I-House can seem heaven-sent for international students who feel lost in the United States, for U.S. students who want to take the initial steps towards learning about other cultures, and for the larger local community who may need to draw on the diversity such a center can offer. But such centers should work diligently to facilitate multicultural and cross-community interaction and to ensure equity in service for all segments of the defined community. Here we offer five suggestions for international student centers based on our service learning for social justice project.⁶

First, an international student center should consider offering at least one multicultural workshop each semester that is either opened to as broad a range of participants as possible or focuses on reaching specific groups each semester. Because there are faculty members on campus who specialize in international interaction and education, an international student center could easily establish a network of interested parties to help coordinate such a program.

Second, such a center needs to be aggressive in its advertising and outreach campaigns and in disseminating information about itself. Spreading the word regularly and broadly is necessary on a college campus because of the transient nature of its population. An international student center could also work to co-sponsor international visitors and speakers on campus. This is a two-way street, however. Academic departments must have knowledge of and interest in using such a center to help facilitate international

guests, which leads quickly back to the center's need to advertise itself and its capabilities. One staff member in our study put it succinctly: "for the university to know what is really here, the faculty needs to know, and if the faculty doesn't know, then they don't tell the students."

Third, such a center must establish links with the local community if it is to utilize the academic knowledge that students are gaining in school. For example, students who are being trained in multiculturalism or social work could be helpful in identifying needs on campus and in surrounding communities and ameliorating them through a center's programs and services. These students must be given opportunities to bring their knowledge to bear in praxis.

Fourth, we suggest that such a center invest time in training a graduate assistant or staff member to search and apply for grant monies that would help fund its growth and involvement, both on and off campus. There is regularly grant money available for international programming, but the center itself would be most likely responsible for tracking down those funding opportunities and acting.

Lastly, such a center should write a formal mission statement that separates its goals from its affiliated parts within the University. This assumes two things: the goals of an international student center are unique; and, a specific mission statement would give staff members explicit goals to work toward.

An international student center is a wonderful place for students, both international and domestic, to share equally valid cultures and histories with "others." Future work should focus on how Americans specifically should fit into this frame. Through our service learning for social justice project, we have been able to highlight some of the problems associated with international programming. And while we hesitate to generalize our findings to other international student centers, we believe our project fits another piece within the puzzle of international education and intercultural pedagogy. Critical pedagogies like cultural studies and service learning for social justice, when combined with empirical research strategies that take into account the lived experiences of the people involved, have the ability to shake the existing foundations of education systems and to contribute to the development of more informed and involved individuals and groups. As Harkavy (1997, 20) rightly notes, "the university... can serve as an anchor, catalyst, and partner for local change and improvement in the quality of life in our cities and communities. Indeed, there may be no other institutions that can play so central a role." We believe that the I-House can and will develop a central role in

working for issues of social justice and equal representation not only at the University, but also at the larger community in which it exists.

We undertook a service learning for social justice project that was informed by cultural studies praxis, i.e., theory-driven practice and theory informed by practice. The theory and literature of cultural studies and service learning for social justice sensitized us to look for issues of sociocultural difference as they related to social identities such as gender and ethnicity, as well as to intercultural programming and communication. Moreover, its intersection with critical ethnography and interpretive interactionism, which helped us to locate ourselves and other participants within the everyday culture of the I-House, facilitated our understanding of the I-House's everyday problems and enables us to relate our analysis to the broader social structure. Through the cultural studies as praxis model we focused on issues of social difference and justice, specifically in terms of how international and domestic student identities were constructed and represented in text and everyday talk among students and staff, how culture was seen to play an important role in programming, and in defining the boundaries of service. The model presented here contributes to the production of praxis by blending cultural studies and qualitative research literatures with explicitly activist approaches to service learning. This model holds promise as an exciting new form of service learning that will invigorate more students each year to become activists for social justice.

NOTES

1. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the 4th Crossroads in Cultural Studies Conference in Tampere, Finland, June 29–July 2nd, 2002. The authors' names are listed alphabetically to reflect their equal participation in and contribution to this project.
2. The sample was convenient inasmuch as we interviewed staff members who were willing to participate and whose schedules we were able to accommodate. The sample was stratified inasmuch as we ensured that both males and females, international and domestic, and undergraduate and graduate staff members were included. In addition to student staff members, one author conducted a one-hour interview with the director.
3. Between 1980 and 1983, the University became a member of the Southeast Consortium for International Education (SECIE) and developed reciprocal student exchange programs. The faculty senate established the International Education Committee, and the University established the Center for International Education.
4. Although the words are not verbatim, they nonetheless purvey the meaning as the author interpreted them at that time.
5. This is not to suggest that only students control the I-House. Rather, the director indicated that graduate assistants are given a large degree of autonomy in developing programs.

6. We recognize that these suggestions are not generalizable and thus not necessarily transportable directly to other international student centers. We urge interested readers to consider carefully their own institutional situation and its similarities and differences to ours.

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Superseding Williams: Critical Literacy in Williams and Said In Memoriam Edward W. Said 1935-2003

John Higgins

Edward W. Said died on Thursday 25th September, at around seven in the morning, New York time. His death came after a long and courageous struggle with leukemia that had been diagnosed in 1991, a few months after Said had visited the University of Cape Town to give the annual academic freedom lecture.¹ He would have been sixty-eight in a few weeks' time and his death leaves a visible and painful gap in public and intellectual life across the world. This essay is written in the immediate shadow cast by his death. It is necessarily written in a spirit of mourning, as a respectful tribute to his work. At the same time, it is intended as an academic contribution to the discussion of the pedagogical and disciplinary implications of his work as a whole. My argument is that these implications are best grasped through a comparison between his work and that of his great predecessor, Raymond Williams.

Any act of comparison is, of course, always itself an act of representation. Comparison necessarily isolates and asserts as central one particular aspect or dimension of a body of work while marginalising others. One aim of this comparison is to challenge the received frame of existing comparisons. This is necessary because, in my view, the existing frame misrepresents the force of Williams's work and the deeper significance it had for Said, as well as working to inhibit an adequate understanding of the larger long-term significance of both bodies of work. It is intended as a now necessary highlighting of what is often quietly forgotten – perhaps, as is so often the case – in precise measure that it is unconsciously assumed.

In most of the immediate responses to Said's death, his great work, *Orientalism* (first published in 1978) understandably holds centre stage. If this were the only book Said had ever