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The Water In Which We Swim: The Influence of the Contemplative on Higher Education in American (Capitalist) Culture

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on Higher Education in American (Capitalist) Culture

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Abstract

The 20th century brought about the development of an increased climate of capitalist influence on every aspect of American life, including and especially on higher education. Simultaneously, as more and more purposes of higher education have come to reflect values of capitalist culture, a movement towards new ways of teaching and learning has begun to emerge in the academy. These new ways of teaching and learning value relationship, introspection, and inquiry based on critical reflection. Many of them have their roots in the contemplative traditions of Asia.

Guided by the framework of Paulo Freire and Parker Palmer's broad visions for the purpose of education, this multiple-case study, focused on six participants, explored the influence of traditionally trained Tibetan Buddhist teachers on American faculty members in American higher education. The study's findings illustrate this influence in the form of three major themes: Care For (Even Love) Your Students; Think Critically; and There Is Value in Authentic Voices from Other Traditions. This study informs practice for stakeholders in teaching and learning in higher education.

Keywords: capitalist, contemplative, Tibetan Buddhist, caring, higher education, scholarship of teaching and learning, critical thinking, critical pedagogy

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Like much in our world, this work is the result of a great and mostly joyful interdependence of the minds of many. I am honored to be a part it. Among all of those who played a role, a certain few arise for specific appreciation.

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Dedication

For Jim, who knew this already.

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Chapter One: Introduction to the Study

This research takes place at multiple intersections: the intersection of critique and possibility, the intersection of east and west, and the intersection of the teller and the tale. I take the final point first: the story of the storyteller.

To preface that intersection, I begin with a discussion of subjectivity. Traditional academic research is in constant conversation about the problematic role of the researcher in research. Qualitative researchers in general, and Sharan Merriam (1998) in particular (whose methodology informs this work), cite the researcher's "construction of reality" (p. 22) as a significant component of the research situation, which results in an "interpretation by the researcher of others' views filtered through his or her own" (p. 22). According to Allen:

> Subjectivity is generally conceptualized as the way research is influenced by the perspectives, values, social experiences, and viewpoint of the researcher. Traditional scientific discourse equates subjectivity with personal biases because, according to its empirical orientation, direct or indirect influence of the researcher on the collection, handling, interpretation, and reporting of data invalidates the research findings. For this reason, research reports from a scientific orientation make a claim to objectivity, a principle drawn from postpositivism that researchers should make every attempt to remain distanced from the phenomenon under investigation. This philosophical belief represents one way of managing subjectivity in research. (Allen, 2017, p. 1461)

My own epistemological perspective—and my understanding of myself as not only a scholar and researcher, but also as a human being—brings me to consider all of

these points. Borrowing from Kincheloe and Tobin (2009), the ontology, epistemology, and theory that drove their study shape my perspective; their identification and alignment are addressed in detail in Chapter Three of this work. Beyond that, in this section I invite the reader to learn a little bit of my story, in the interest of considering me, the researcher, as the primary instrument of data collection in this case (as is the norm in qualitative research). Underlying this study is an acknowledgment of the essential point that through telling stories, "humans narrate ways of knowing and being" (Lewis, 2011, p. 505). Since this work addresses, at its core, ways of knowing and being as they pertain to the lived experience of human beings (in the form of teachers and students), I begin with an introduction to myself, through story.

My educational experiences thus far have been conventional and esoteric, and this research reflects both. Superficially, I identify as a White American woman of European descent born in the 1970s. Having grown up in the United States with Bohemian parents, who, like many of their peers, mainstreamed into urban intellectuals as they (and I) matured, my sense of the norms around common elements of "surface culture", according to the framework of Hammond (2013) are representative of the era. We often had Bob Dylan or Peter, Paul, and Mary playing in the background at home, and one of my earliest memories is attending a Poor People's Campaign rally and parade in San Francisco in the early 1980s. I had an awareness of belonging to the cultural group of White Americans from a young age as I grew up in San Francisco and attended public school and was always one of two or three White children in Chinese-majority classes.

Borrowing further from Hammond's schema, my deepest cultural frameworks are composed of two primary elements. The first is education, especially through books, which were the most highly valued element in our home growing up (and trips to bookstores to read and browse were part of our regular leisure activities). The second element is the awareness of the inequity present in society and a corresponding sense of the need for social justice. This was partially unavoidable growing up in a diverse urban environment in the 1980s and was partially a result of frequent conversations at home relating to policies, behaviors, and habits (of ourselves and others) that contributed to inequity and the suffering of others.

I was educated in local public schools, and when I completed high school, I fled straight to the big city. In 1992, I enrolled as an undergraduate at New York University (NYU), in the heart of Manhattan. My motivation for choosing NYU was twofold: on the one hand, I desperately wanted to live on my own in New York City; and on the other, I wanted to study English literature in a well-established liberal arts environment. Therefore, in the Fall of 1992, I enrolled at NYU as a student matriculating to complete a Bachelor of Arts degree, with a major in English Literature and a minor in Creative Writing. I graduated in 1996 and moved to Paris six months later to further my language study and to work toward becoming a translator of French literature.

Fast forward a few years, and I had moved from Paris to a tiny Tibetan Buddhist monastery near Madison, Wisconsin, and was spending my days immersed in rigorous, daily philosophy and language studies from the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. I spent six years studying in small classes, along with engaging in intensive meditative practice in the tradition. Then, in 2005 I moved to Portland, Oregon, with one of my Tibetan

teachers to start Maitripa College, a Tibetan Buddhist graduate school. From 2000–2007 I lived and practiced as a Buddhist nun, which basically meant that I observed strict vows of physical conduct in an effort to work with the conduct of the mind. Since 2005 I have lived and worked in Portland as the dean of the college.

To return to the original aspiration of this dissertation: through this study, I hope to offer a critique of the extant shift in higher education to reflect the values and priorities of capitalism with greater consistency in our world. Further, I hope to offer a window into a possibility for future solutions and praxis, through the influence of some Tibetan Buddhist teachers, toward education for social change based in contemplative inquiry and love.

Intersections

In general, there are many kinds of Buddhism or "Buddhisms." In the United States, in particular, there has been over 50 years of serious scholarship on Tibetan Buddhism by Western scholars. The field is rich and prolific, and the work that has been done falls all along spectrum: from detailed textual analysis to discussions of operationalized ethics to soteriological discussions to anthropological analyses, and everywhere in between. Many intersections at which elements of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition meet contemporary American culture, norms, and/or assumptions have been explored in detail in preceding works, but one which has not been mined to its full potential is the intersection of the Tibetan Buddhist teachers and the students they guided, who went on to have long and successful careers in the Western academy.

This intersection is particularly notable for two reasons. First, one of the most prolific and impactful Tibetan teachers in the United States was Geshe Lhundub Sopa

(1923–2014), a highly respected and learned scholar who was educated in Tibet and became the first Tibetan *geshe* (holder of the highest degree in the Tibetan education system, roughly equivalent to a PhD) to hold a tenured position at a major American university (the University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1967–1997). Second, the school of traditional Tibetan Buddhism with which this research is concerned is grounded (among other things) in a rigorous scholasticism and philosophical approach, based on the ancient monastic learning centers of India. Both of these conditions, from my perspective, make the intersection of the Tibetan Buddhist teachers and their "faculty member" students particularly compelling.

In addition to this rationale, I offer additional justification. As this research proceeded, the question I heard most often from participants and colleagues alike was "why?" Why had I chosen this topic? Why was this of interest to me? What was I looking to glean from it? Thus, in addition to the explanation above, and in the interest of telling my own story, I offer the following

As a result of my own unique set of experiences, I was fortunate to find myself with a front-row seat to this unique intersection as it unfolded in the United States: a place where the ancient Tibetan Scholastic tradition and the modern Western academic tradition meet. I was compelled to this space by a bizarre set of circumstances that unfolded in my early twenties: having graduated from college in New York City, I found myself restless and uninterested in the path that was unfolding before me and decided to leave my life, family, and relationship to live in Paris to study, where I vaguely hoped the life of an intellectual (or something equally exciting) would claim me. The move was difficult; and, experiencing the self-imposed heartbreak of my own

intentional dismantling of what anyone else would have called "a pretty good life," I remember writhing in pain in the middle of the night, very much alone and untethered in Europe, calling out silently for someone or something to come explain things to me. My existential crisis was resolved nearly a year later when I attended my first Buddhist teaching about the Perfection of Wisdom with the Dalai Lama in New York. In his presence, I finally felt like I was home.

A couple of years later I moved to Madison, Wisconsin, where Geshe Lhundub Sopa was Abbot, and where my own heart teacher, Yangsi Rinpoche, resided. By the time I reached Deer Park, Geshela (as he was called) was emeritus and no longer actively working at the university, but the imprints colored the remaining years of his life. The following is from his 2012 autobiography:

> The university was a whole new experience for me. There were thousands of students, and when the class periods ended, they went every direction, like ants…when I would walk from place to place, people would stare, talk to each other, and sometimes laugh.…But most people were just interested and helpful. (Sopa & Donnelly, 2012, p. 270–271)

Due to the exceptional circumstances of Geshela's position, during his lifetime there was an unusual group of individuals traversing the "center" that Geshela called home. By the time of my arrival in 1999, there were already many well-established scholars and professors who sought out Geshe Sopa as a teacher and colleague. Deer Park Buddhist Center, where Geshela lived at that time, also hosted an annual summer course, during which a central text from the tradition would be studied in traditional manner, with the teacher (who was Geshe Sopa until his passing) reading the text line

by line (in Tibetan and in English) and providing detailed commentary according to the practice in Tibet for hundreds of years. The process was complex and painstaking, completely unlike anything I had ever experienced in any Western learning environment, where the goal always seemed to be to get right to the point and to "learn" the right answer as quickly as possible. In the context of the Deer Park teachings, getting to the final point seemed to be a vague objective at best, while exploring the many possible answers that one might arrive at, and the nuance of the literal and interpretive meanings for the student to mull over took far greater precedence. Teachings at Deer Park were usually given in this manner, and there was a running joke among the students that the real teaching was to be found in the student's ability to manage the teaching style, which, at least at first, required a level of patience and trust in the instructor that did not come naturally to most.

That being said, the intellectual aptitude and accomplishment of this group of Geshe Sopa's students who were able to persevere was and is, to an outsider, both inspiring and intimidating. Since 1978, Deer Park has hosted an annual summer course, a yearly four-to-six-week teaching event dedicated to the detailed exposition and study of classic Buddhist texts important in the Tibetan tradition.

Despite all of this, I did not find myself at Deer Park for purely intellectual reasons. Although the life of the mind has always played a strong role in my own experience, I came to Deer Park as a result of a strong connection made with the individual who would become my own teacher and closest spiritual friend, Yangsi Rinpoche. Yangsi Rinpoche is a renowned scholar himself, and I was fortunate to have six years of private, daily textual study and practice instruction with Rinpoche while we

were both at Deer Park, during which time we developed a close teacher-student relationship as well as a deep friendship. Once at Deer Park, I began to observe the other students and began to see—not only in the person of Geshe Sopa, but also in the example of these Western scholars—a living manifestation of the "scholar-practitioner," a term which arises in nearly every field of study. According to Charles McClintock's definition, "The term *scholar practitioner* expresses an ideal of professional excellence grounded in theory and research, informed by experiential knowledge, and motivated by personal values, political commitments, and ethical conduct" (McClintock, C., 2004).

"Scholar-practitioner" has taken on even further meaning in the context of the study of Tibetan Buddhism in the academy. In *Luminous Passage: The Practice and Study of Buddhism in America*, Prebish (2006) asks whether these scholar-practitioners are the new *sangha* (the formal community of Buddhist practitioners). Prebish is referring to the professors trained in Buddhist studies in Western academic settings who were then working in academia, in fields related to religious studies, with the label "Buddhist practitioner" a visible part of their identities. According to Prebish, "Now… it is rather commonplace for individuals teaching Buddhist Studies at universities throughout the world to be 'scholar-practitioners,' involved in the practice of trainings associated with various Buddhist traditions and sects" (Prebish, 1999, Kindle Location 2355–2357).

Prebish's (1999) work offers a masterful overview of some of the tensions at work (especially in 1999, but also now, in the 21st century) when one attempts to hold authority in the Western academy as both one who studies a tradition and one who practices it. Prebish's work gets closest to the matter at hand in relation to this study

when he quotes Malcolm David Eckel's 1994 "The Ghost at the Table: On the Study of Buddhism and the Study of Religion":

> It is not just students who are attracted to religious studies because they "want to know what it is to be human and humane, and intuit that religion deals with such things." There are at least a few scholars of Buddhism who feel the same way. For me the biggest unsettled question in the study of Buddhism is not whether Buddhism is religious or even whether the study of Buddhism is religious; it is whether scholars in this field can find a voice that does justice to their own religious concerns and can demonstrate to the academy why their kind of knowledge is worth having. (p. 1107)

This brings me to the second element of my general purpose in developing this study, and back to my own experience. Much to my surprise, at the age of 25 in 1999, having relocated to a "monastery" in the rural outskirts of Wisconsin and having been assured that here was a collection of monks living quietly, doing their best to maintain their tradition in exile, what I found was not only a group of individuals whose constant recitation of prayers and mantras charged the very air of their home, but also the head of the monastery, one of the greatest scholars of the tradition, whose full time occupation was not the recitation of mantras or prayers but rather teaching in the university, and whose main students were not only meditators or monastics, but also scholars.

Upon beginning my own studies and immersion into the traditional texts, I also discovered a highly sophisticated, intricately structured, faultlessly argued system of logic and reason that provided sterling intellectual justification for the essence of what I knew to be true: that it is of the greatest importance to function in the world with ethics,

and above all, to care for others, and that the way that things appear to exist in the world is not fully in line with how they actually exist. A similar revelation in regards to the faultless logic and reason that underlies this system is explained in the Introduction of Georges Dreyfus' (2003) *The Sound of Two Hands Clapping: The Education of a Tibetan Buddhist Monk,* which summarizes his motivation for his own work:

> By showing the importance of the life of the mind in this tradition, I present a picture of Buddhism that differs from standard representations. Instead of straining my ears to listen to the mystical sound of one hand clapping, I focus on practices such as debate, where the sound of two hands clapping can literally be heard loud and clear. In this way I make clear the important role played in Buddhism by the tradition's rational and intellectual elements. These elements have often been misrepresented as precursors of scientific inquiry or rejected as clerical corruption of an originally pure message. In *The Sound of Two Hands Clapping*, which examines the role and nature of rationality in Tibetan monastic education, I contend that each of these views seriously distorts the nature of rationality in traditional Buddhist cultures. (p. 3)

In my experience arriving at Deer Park in 1999, I found not only the loving, compassionate, embodied monks who typify the stereotype of Tibetan Buddhist practitioners, but also a group of formidable scholars and a philosophical tradition and system of logic and reason that far outweighed the rigor, precision, and elegance of any that I had seen up until this point. Additionally, this philosophical system itself was the very ground upon which the conduct of love, compassion, and ethics was played out, and offered stainless rationale for why it should be so. "How extraordinary!" I thought,

time and time again: a rational basis for religious belief and conduct! I was hooked from the onset.

The Intersection of Critique and Possibility

Paulo Freire, the Brazilian educator and philosopher, was famous in his work for at once articulating "a language of critique and a language of possibility" (Schugurensky, 1998, p. 4). My aspiration in this study is to do the same.

Higher education, like all elements of any society, is reflective of the social, political, and economic climate of the culture in which it exists. A prominent cultural lens through which American higher education can be understood is the lens of capitalism. Capitalism is the economic system that has governed the United States of America since the early 20th century. This study is structured around three elements of capitalist culture that all definitions agree are primary and that clearly permeate education: *competition*, concern with *private interest as opposed to the public good*, and a *profit-based motivation* for operation. This study approaches these elements in terms of, first, how one views others (competition); second, how one views oneself (private interest as opposed to public good); and third, one's operational motivation (profit).

Context and Culture

Anthropological research is grounded in context. The context in which a phenomenon is situated and the context in which the observers are located are fundamental considerations when attempting to research and fully understand a phenomenon (Trustees of Princeton University, 2020). Some contemporary educational research takes the same view and advocates a pedagogical approach with a focus on social justice. This involves considering, as a starting point, the sociopolitical context of

the society that creates inequitable structures in every area of human life and culture and recognizing, from the beginning, that individuals are both products of and functioning within those environments. According to some researchers, an awareness of context then unfolds easily into a consideration of culture, which, according to Hammond (2013)—who has written prolifically on the influence of culture on educational equity—"is the way that every brain makes sense of the world" (p. 22). In Hammond's work, attention to the "culture" (defined in the Merriam-Webster Dictionary as "the beliefs, attitudes, values, and practices of a specific group of people") of the teacher and the learner is meant to inform the educational process and inform pedagogy (*Definition of "culture,"* 2021).

Hence, between context and culture, we can infer the benefit of situating this research in a particular time and place and identifying some of the principal dynamics of the world in which the subjects of the study were living in order to more fully explore the cases that compose the phenomena. Robert Yin, whose case study methodology informs this work, is so convinced of the relevance of context to research that he refers to context *twice* in his definition of case study methodology: "…[a case study is] an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used" (Yin, 1994, p. 23). To take this a step further, I assert that a basis of this work is consideration of both the cultural context and my position, as researcher, within the research situation. In the words of Alan Peshkin (1988), "one's subjectivity is like a garment that cannot be removed" (p. 17). Peshkin and others have suggested that subjectivity can be leveraged in the

research process through a process of the researcher becoming gradually more self-aware and articulating their relationship to the subject matter. As a means to further elucidate this process, Peshkin (1988) recommends that "…the enhanced awareness that should result from a formal, systematic monitoring of self" (p. 20).

In an effort to manage my own subjectivity, part of the methodology for this research includes a version of a "formal, systematic monitoring of self" through reflection and regular entries in the research journal, in the form of "Notes on Habits of Mind" (see Appendix A for details).

Context and Culture: Capitalism

A principal element of American culture that frames this study is the culture of capitalism. Capitalism has risen to the forefront of this work for two primary reasons. First, capitalism is pervasive, particular, and commonly accepted around the world to be an indicator of American culture. Second, at least superficially, American capitalist culture appears immediately at odds with the essence of the phenomena I examine in this study: the turn toward contemplative knowing, teaching, and learning, not grounded in self-interest, but grounded in love and caring.

With respect to the development of capitalism over the past five or six centuries, Western Europe—and later, the United States—has developed from and within a cultural narrative governed by the certainty that trade, products, and consumption are "the source of well-being" (Robbins & Dowty, 2019, p. xiii). This belief has colored every facet of Western culture, such that almost every element of life is touched by a hallmark of capitalist concern—especially the fixations on profit and competition and a concern with individual interests over the greater good. These dynamics are noticeably

manifest in the economic system of contemporary American culture, capitalism, which has been the dominant fiscal schema of the United States since its founding. Capitalism endorses a culture of consumption through the accrual of wealth and the sale of products, and individuals in the society are primarily characterized by the role they play in the marketplace (Robbins & Dowty, 2019).

If we consider the early 20th century to mark the beginning of capitalism's dominance in America (Weinberg, 2003), the late 20th century in the United States may come to be considered a peak of American capitalist culture. In the context of the emerging "reign of global capitalism" (Sachs, 1999), the end of the 20th century brought a period of economic stability to the country, during which prices were steady, unemployment was low, the stock market was strong, and the American government posed a significant budget surplus (Moffatt, 2019).

Context and Culture: Teaching as a Public Good (?)

A broader analysis of the context of capitalism in the context of education in particular brings to mind the fact that the effects of economic market forces have been present in every element of public service in 20th century America—and that education has been no exception. To inform this section, it is important to return to the question that most informs this research: the question of the purpose of education.

Labaree (1997) subsumes all possible answers to this question in the context of American education into a framework of three alternatives: 1) schools might prepare students to be citizens (the purpose of creating "democratic equality"); 2) schools might prepare students to take their place in the extant economy of the taxpayer (the purpose of contributing to "social efficiency"); and 3) schools might prepare students to compete

for positions in society as an educational consumer (the purpose of preparing students for "social mobility"). Labaree's (1997) framework distills the work of many other researchers, and he further divides these approaches into two loose categories, the function of education as a "public good" and as a "private good." He also asserts that the differences between these perspectives lie in values ("what kind of schools we want") and interests ("who supports which educational values").

This study does not attempt to resolve this debate but contributes an understanding of it by exploring how teaching and learning in American universities have been shaped by the culture of capitalism in the experience of a number of American faculty members in the late 20th century. The research is idealistically framed by the assumption that education should serve the public good.

Context and Culture: The Movement Towards the Contemplative

Within the context of the economic intoxication and apparent well-being of the late 20th century, a contemplative movement was flourishing in American education. Although this focus neither began nor ended during this period, it was undeniably alive and continuing to emerge. The movement toward the contemplative in education in the United States was informed by many elements, including (but not limited to) the Eastern religious traditions, especially Buddhism (Morgan, 2015). On the macroscopic level, since the mid-20th century, American society has benefited from an influx of native Buddhist practitioners migrating to the United States largely as a result of trauma and catastrophe in their homeland, including World War II, the Vietnam War, and the Chinese invasion of Tibet (Bstan-'dzin-rgya-mtsho, 1991). As all immigrants do, these individuals entered American society in various waves according to their interests and

experiences. Some of them, known as great teachers in Tibet, became teachers in America both in and outside of the academy (Fields, 1992). Perhaps due to the rigor and intensity of the Tibetan monastic education system, which has its roots in the complex and sophisticated Indian dialectical education system, some of these teachers became connected with American intellectuals who would later become faculty members at some of the United States' most prestigious institutions of higher education. As a result, and as I have alluded to previously, a number of American faculty members in institutions of higher learning in the final decades of the 20th century were mentored by Tibetan Buddhist scholar-practitioners. As Eastern philosophical tradition holds the value of attention to one's internal landscape over material gain and the imperative of loving relationships with others as central tenets; these teachers were trained not only to know and understand these tenets, but to embody them as well. Thus, a unique intersection was formed, which is the basis of this study.

Purpose of the Study

At the intersection of critique and possibility is praxis, defined by Paulo Freire (1970) in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* as "reflection and action directed at the structures to be transformed" (p. 126). The specific purpose of this study is to explore the location of a unique form of praxis through the experience of faculty members who, on the one hand, worked in higher education and lived in the American climate of capitalist culture in the late 20th century and who, on the other, had formative relationships with mentors from a culture in which teaching, learning, and knowledge were based on valuing the community over the individual and the greater good over private interest. The grounding of these relationships and their impact on these faculty members in their own

teaching and learning—considered within the context of a simultaneous movement within the academy toward contemplative pedagogies, authenticity, and developing interiority—will add to the growing body of research on teaching and learning in higher education. For consistency with the working definition of *praxis* adopted here, this study frames the experience of these faculty members in terms of the influence of their Tibetan mentors on their own teaching. Thus, these individuals were queried to elicit a coherent *reflection* on their experience that may then be directed at the extant structures of higher education to elicit positive transformation.

The Research Question

This study asks, How do faculty members who taught in American universities in the late 20th/early 21st century perceive the effect of their Tibetan Buddhist scholar-practitioner mentors on their teaching within the context of American (capitalist) culture?

Significance

This study has educational and social significance from the perspective of both its results and its methodology.

The study's results will expand research on contemplative studies (and the evolving construction of the field) and their influence on pedagogical practices, as well as the understanding of what constitutes teaching and learning in American higher education. Additionally, the results further raise awareness of the interdependence of our educational institutions, courses of study, and relationships, along with the kinds of societies that we create, sustain, and live within. I hope, further, that the results of this study will begin to fill a gap in the literature that chronicles some of the extraordinary

contributions of the Tibetans and Tibetan Buddhism to American education. From a methodological perspective, this study applies contemplative inquiry and scrutinizes the place of subjective experience in legitimate research.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework draws largely on the works of Paulo Freire and Parker Palmer. Both of these scholars' writings provide an exploratory lens that informs the perspectives of critique, possibility, and praxis animate this work, with the intention to illuminate a new way forward and contribute to the study of teaching and learning.

The empirical review of the literature divides into sections investigating the general educational climate of the 20th century, the gradual turn inward towards contemplative ways of knowing and being, and a discussion of educational praxis.

Paulo Freire and the Banking Model of Education

This work draws on the interpretive lens of Paulo Freire, who understood true education as an act of freedom and viewed many of our extant educational systems as systems of oppression (Freire, 1970).

Freire was raised in Sao Paulo, Brazil, an enormous urban environment alive with some of the most dramatic results of systemic oppression, wealth, and income inequality in the world. Freire spent much of his life working to better the conditions of the oppressed through education. Freire saw liberation as "the awakening of critical awareness and the thinking process in the individual" (Kirylo & Boyd, 2017).As a contemporary American public intellectual and a leading voice in the field of critical race theory (whose foundations have been greatly inspired by Freire's work), bell hooks has described the formative influence of Freire's perspective on her own work and life:

"… I found a mentor and a guide, someone who understood that learning could be liberatory" (hooks, 1994).

Freire famously decried the contemporary educational models of his own country (whose educational model mimics the European educational models by which American schools are also inspired) as "banking education". Banking education processes pupils through classrooms to be filled with prescribed curricula of information defined as knowledge; at the end of this process, pupils are considered educated. In contrast, Freire offered a paradigm for education in which, instead of (consciously or unconsciously) reinforcing oppressive societal norms through a fill-and-deposit model, the instructor introduces new dynamics into the learning relationship, effectively upending the status quo not necessarily only through the *content* presented, but also through the *process* of teaching and, importantly, through the redefinition of the relationship between the teacher and the taught.

Students and Faculty Turn Inward: Seeking Authenticity

Like Paulo Freire, Parker Palmer has emphasized the value and importance of relationships and conversation in the educational process. Palmer's work is exceptional in that the alternatives he has proposed to the many problems of traditional approaches in higher education begin with a shift to an inward focus. Palmer's work is also notable in that he has adopted a clear position as a proponent of the purposeful integration of a search for meaning and authenticity in institutions of higher education (Schiller et al., 2003). Palmer's (1998/2017) articulation of his own philosophy of teaching is infused with a similar intensity:

I am a teacher at heart, and there are moments in the classroom when I can hardly hold the joy. When my students and I discover uncharted territory to explore, when the pathway out of a thicket opens up before us, when our experience is illumined by the lightning-life of the mind—then teaching is the finest work I know. (p. 1)

Palmer's (1998/2017) book-length contemplation on teaching and the interior landscape of a teacher's mind and motivation begins with a chapter entitled "The Heart of a Teacher: Identity and Integrity in Teaching" and ends with a section called "Divided No More: Teaching from a Heart of Hope." In the same way that Freire has managed to draw out critique and possibility, Palmer's (1998/2017) work presents both diagnosis and antidote

At other moments, the classroom is so lifeless or painful or confused—and I am so powerless to do anything about it that my claim to be a teacher seems a transparent sham. Then the enemy is everywhere: in those students from some alien planet, in that subject I thought I knew, and in the personal pathology that keeps me earning my living this way.…We need to open a new frontier in our exploration of good teaching: the inner landscape of a teacher's life. (p. 1)

A national longitudinal study of spirituality in higher education, subtitled "A National Study of College Students' Search for Meaning and Purpose" (Astin & Astin, 2010), analyzed data collected from 14,527 students who attended 136 colleges and universities across the United States over roughly a seven-year period, and found the following, along with other important results:

1. Educational experiences that help promote and cultivate spiritual development

have strong and consistent positive effects on academic success in college.

2. There was the greatest development of spiritual growth (as measured by the researchers' own valid instruments) in students if "inner work" was part of their learning process.

3. Students' exploration of meaning and purpose increases significantly as a result of their positive relationship with faculty (Astin et al., 2011).

Praxis: Contemplative Pedagogy

The frame of the contemplative pedagogy as described by one of the pioneers in the field, Arthur Zajonc (2013), is present and important in this study. Although not part of the formal theoretical framework for this study, it will be used as a lens in the final data analysis. In the words of Zajonc (2013):

During the last fifteen years a quiet pedagogical revolution has taken place in colleges, universities, and community colleges across the United States and increasingly around the world. Often flying under the name "contemplative pedagogy," it offers to its practitioners a wide range of educational methods that support the development of student attention, emotional balance, empathetic connection, compassion, and altruistic behavior, while also providing new pedagogical techniques that support creativity and the learning of course content. (p. 83)

Zajonc has explained, in his writings and elsewhere, that contemplative pedagogy can be used to fulfill a variety of educational goals (e.g., increasing focus, attention, and positive states of mind in classrooms), but that above all, contemplative pedagogies rely upon methods that integrate subjective experience and include the

consideration, analysis, and application of meaning making and ethics in education.

Thus, like that of Freire and Palmer, the work of Arthur Zajonc supports this research by offering a perspective based on tools to be implemented from *within* to affect the educational environment, process, and persons in the external world.

Praxis: Paulo Freire

One of the quintessential characteristics of the work of Paulo Freire in relation to education is his belief that education, at its best, is a practice of freedom that can either liberate students from systems of oppression or further shackle them to systems of inequity by reinforcing oppressive norms (Freire, 1970). Giroux (2010), quoting Aronowitz (2009), posits the following:

> Thus, for Freire literacy was not a means to prepare students for the world of subordinated labor or 'careers', but a preparation for a self-managed life. And self-management could only occur when people have fulfilled three goals of education: self-reflection, that is, realizing the famous poetic phrase, 'know thyself', which is an understanding of the world in which they live, in its economic, political and, equally important, its psychological dimensions (Giroux, 2010, p. 716)

Self-reflection as a basis for self-knowledge, which in turn acts as a basis for understanding the world and acting within it is a concept that is central to this work.

Also conspicuous in the telling of the life and work of Paulo Freire is the continuous reference to the affect of the man himself and his teaching, as suffused with love. Notably, in both anecdotal and formal narratives of his life and temperament, a commonly applied descriptor is "loving" (Darder, 2017; Kirylo & Boyd, 2017).

According to the sentiments of those closest to him, this sense of love functioned as an impulse for Freire's own teaching, and he famously held that "education is an act of love, and thus an act of courage" (Freire, 1990, p. 24).

The final element of Paulo Freire's work that directly informs this research is his commitment to dialogue, relationality, and communication. Freire developed a unique pedagogical method for working with students to promote their "critical consciousness" (*conscientização* in Portuguese) based on dialogic pedagogy, a pedagogical technique dating back at least as far as Socrates and Ancient Greece.

Although the specifics of Freire's pedagogy are not addressed here, the theoretical basis of dialogic pedagogy is central to this study. Freire's pedagogy is grounded in the assumption that knowledge is not transferred from the one who knows (the teacher) to the one who must learn (the student), but instead that knowledge arises in the space between them (Freire, 1970). This understanding is relevant to the question at hand.

Scope of the Study

This qualitative, multiple case study aims to understand the perceptions and practices of faculty members of late-20th-century American universities who were mentored by Tibetan Buddhist scholar-practitioner teachers, and to gain insight into the impact of these relationships on their own teaching. According to Robert Yin (2014), a "case" is "a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context" (p. 23). Case study research is a research approach often used in exploratory research of this kind, and, among other benefits, provides rich data for analysis and understanding. A case study methodology was chosen as the methodology for this research, due to its natural

application in studies that deeply investigate phenomena within their real-world contexts (Yin, 1994), as this study does.

A case study methodology focuses the scope of an individual's research by narrowing the parameters of the research to form a "bounded system" (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam, 1998). In the case of this research, the unit of analysis was tenured American faculty members with teaching responsibilities. The unit of analysis was defined by the time period in which the participants taught (1995–2005), the type of institution in which they taught (accredited American college or university), and the tenor of their relationship with a Tibetan scholar-practitioner trained in a traditional Tibetan Buddhist monastic university (a teacher-student relationship personal in nature). Excluded from this study were individuals who worked in other areas of higher education, individuals who taught as faculty during other time periods, and individuals who were influenced by the philosophical teachings and contemplative practices of Tibetan Buddhism but did not have a personal relationship with trained Tibetan teachers.

The scope of this study was bound by the three criteria stated above, as detailed here:

1. The participant had a relationship with a recognized scholar-practitioner from the Tibetan Buddhist tradition.

2. The nature of that relationship was personal: teacher and student.

3. The participant was employed as a faculty member with teaching responsibilities at an accredited American university sometime between 1995 and 2005.

Organization of the Study

       Chapter Two of this study reviews the literature over three primary sections: Context and Critique: The Educational Climate of the 20th Century; Possibility: Turning Inward; and Praxis: Contemplative Pedagogy, Critical Contemplative Pedagogy, and Education as an Act of Love. The literature review demonstrates work that has been done in the areas pertaining to the study and shows the knowledge gaps this research addresses. Chapter Three presents the study's research design: a qualitative multiple case study based on the research design principles of Sharan Merriam. In addition, Chapter Three discusses the ways in which data were collected and analyzed. Chapter Four details the findings of the study, and Chapter Five discusses them.

Chapter Two: Review of the Literature

Context and Critique

The empirical review of the literature is divided as follows. The first section is called Context and Critique, which encompasses sections on the Story of Education in America, Tibetan Buddhist Education, the Educational Climate of 20th Century America, and Tibetan Buddhism in American Society and Culture: Some Contributions to Knowledge. The second section of the literature review is entitled Possibility: Turning Inward, and discusses some of the literature on spirituality in the academy The third section of the literature review is entitled Praxis, and encompasses sections on Contemplative Pedagogy and Caring.

The Story of Education in America

The story of higher education in the United States cannot be divorced from a conversation about its intents.

In the 2015 book-length study *The History of American Higher Education*, Robert Geiger presents a chronological overview of the founding and flourishing of both the institutions and the evolving perceptions of higher education in American society since the colonial era. Geiger's presentation is grounded in both content and context, as he tells of the historical unfolding of events within the developing ideas and priorities of the times. In Geiger's (2016) telling, education's relationship to "culture, careers, and knowledge" (p. xiii) comprise the fundamental historical purposes of American higher education and are the legacy of the country's English heritage. In Geiger's view, these forces shape the telling of the story of the development of higher education in America, and he narrates the history using these lenses.

According to Geiger (2016), the cornerstone of the English educational legacy (itself rooted in European tradition) combined with the upheaval of the Protestant Reformation and the Puritan vision of (in the famed words of John Winthrop) "a city upon a hill" to lead to the founding of Harvard College in the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1636. In Geiger's telling, the English legacy of a high regard for a liberal, literary education brought by the Puritans to the colonies, as well as the need to train ministers to fulfill the covenant of the "social unit" of the Puritans and the desire to form a utopia of sorts in the Massachusetts Bay Colony, converged in the founding of Harvard.

At the 2013 annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association in San Francisco, Labaree gave a lecture entitled "College—What Is It Good For?" In this address, Labaree takes a slightly different perspective on this unfolding. The American educational system, he argues, emerged "without a plan and without any apparent promise that it would turn out well" (Labaree, 2013, p. 3-4). Yet, even in his telling "all the pieces" came together to create "an astonishingly strong, resilient, and powerful structure" (p. 4). The rest of Labaree's address details the competing aims that the university has historically supported: in Labaree's language, pursuing these aims has always been a juggling act between "the populist, the practical, and the elite" (p. 3). He details how the structure of higher education supports, and should continue to support, both free intellectual play and pragmatic knowledge production (p.11), but then offers a third option:

> These pragmatic benefits that people see coming from the system of higher
>
> education are real.…But it's important to keep in mind that these social benefits

can only arise if the university remains a preserve for free intellectual play. Universities are much less useful to society if they restrict themselves to the training of individuals for particular present-day jobs, or to the production of research to solve current problems. They are most useful if they function as storehouses for knowledge, skills, technologies, and theories—for which there is no current application but which may turn out to be enormously useful in the future. They are the mechanisms by which modern societies build capacity to deal with issues that have not yet emerged but sooner or later are likely to do so. (p. 11)

Labaree then further develops his point in a discussion of how the actual purposes of American higher education in contemporary times are not necessarily reflective of their original purposes:

The point I want make today about the American system of higher education is that it is good for a lot of things but it was established in order to accomplish none of these things. As I have shown, the system that arose in the nineteenth century was not trying to store knowledge, produce capacity, or increase productivity. And it wasn't trying to promote free speech or encourage play with ideas. It wasn't even trying to preserve institutional autonomy. These things happened as the system developed, but they were all unintended consequences. What was driving development of the system was a clash of competing interests, all of which saw the college as a useful medium for meeting particular ends. (p. 11)

Labaree's words clearly outline some of the major preoccupations of the debate over the purpose of American education in the 20th century and provide a pragmatic backdrop to the discussion of the next work, John and Evelyn Dewey's 1915 *Schools of To-Morrow*. This historic work was formative for the field of modern American education. The work was published to great acclaim at the beginning of the 20th century. Among other points, in *Schools of To-Morrow*, the authors expressed a theory of learning positing that children learn best when they actively engage with their environments and curricula. The Deweys argued against students being considered passive receptacles of knowledge and in favor of facilitating learning through cultural contexts. According to Lawrence Cremin (1959), "Nowhere is the faith and optimism of the progressive-education movement more dramatically conveyed" (p. 162) than in this text.

Schools of To-Morrow was referenced as a primary rationale for reform in the 1916 National Education Association bulletin "The Social Studies in Secondary Education" (Dunn, 1916), the document credited for "launching the field" of progressive education (Fallace & Fantozzi, 2015, p. 130). Additionally, the Deweys' work was (and continues to be) cited historically as a sort of guidepost for progressive education movements throughout the 20th century (Fallace & Fantozzi, 2015). John Dewey himself has been hailed as a "father" of progressive education.

Although the 20th century considerably advanced the progressive education movement in the United States—and indeed progressive education is considered today the most influential force in shaping modern American education (Labaree, 2005)—in the century since *Schools of To-Morrow* was published, Dewey has been criticized.

Although such a critique is not the purview of this work—especially in light of the focus on social justice issues in American culture in general and in education specifically—it would be remiss not to mention it, and some of the responses it has engendered, here.

Thomas Fallace and Victoria Fantozzi's 2015 work outlines a modern history of three primary critiques of *Schools of To-Morrow*, which they decry as an unabashed and "uncritical" allegiance to the French philosopher Jean Rousseau; a rejection of "recorded knowledge" in education; and a condescending curriculum unresponsive to the needs of Black students. The authors of the article sequentially refute these and assert that *Schools of To-Morrow* is an "undervalued text" and "warrants closer study" (Fallace & Fantozzi, 2015, p. 129)

Finally, Labaree's 2005 "Progressivism, Schools and Schools of Education: An American Romance" takes a distinctive narrative approach to the topic of progressive education in the 20th century:

> This paper tells a story about progressivism, schools and schools of education in twentieth-century America. Depending on one's position in the politics of education, this story can assume the form of a tragedy or a romance, or perhaps even a comedy. The heart of the tale is the struggle for control of American education in the early twentieth century between two factions of the movement for progressive education. (p. 275)

Labaree frames this struggle in terms of a battle between the administrative progressives, whose actions are defined by a strictly utilitarian vision—and who, according to him, won the battle—and the pedagogical progressives, who are bound by

a "romantic vision" and, although they "failed miserably in shaping what we do in schools," were successful in shaping "how we talk about schools" (p. 275).

This article reiterates the precarious polarization that, according to Labaree, personifies modern American education: the pedagogical progressivism that today means needs-based instruction, "child-centered instruction," and the constructivism that dominates educational discourse in modern American schools of education (Labaree, 2005). Labaree continues by discussing the worrying trend of contemporary educational reform, which has taken robust strides in the opposite direction.

Labaree furthermore mourns the space that education departments and scholars hold within universities: namely, that of pedagogical progressives giving ideological cover to institutions that value "social efficiency" models over robust practices of teaching and learning, and over educators' and researchers' own work in the field.

Labaree (2005) concludes his article with a return to its narrative frame, exhorting the reader to understand the history of American progressive education as "a series of overlapping stories, each in a different genre: tragedy, comedy and romance" (p. 287-288). He reframes the disagreements between the two camps of progressives into overlapping stories that follow the plot structure of a tragedy, a comedy, and a romance, and he connects them all through a final assessment of the field of progressive education as the ground of an endless "debate between constructivist education professors and standards-based reformers over the process and content of American education, and for the unwillingness of both sides to seek a middle ground" (Labaree, 2005, p. 288).

This conversation informs the study by illustrating a specific impact of capitalist ideals and priorities in higher education and the tensions that exist therein. Although none of the study participants were educators or were educated in schools of education, the tensions between the more constructivist camps and the "reformers" as outlined by Labaree pervade, far beyond schools of education, the academy in general and influence every aspect of teaching and learning in higher education.

Tibetan Buddhist Education

To shift the frame a bit, this section constructs a similar backdrop of the Tibetan Buddhist education system.

A modern telling of the story of Tibetan Buddhist education can be found in Georges Dreyfus's book-length work *The Sound of Two Hands Clapping: The Education of a Tibetan Buddhist Monk*. This story embodies the framework and context within which the Tibetan Buddhist mentors were educated. Thus, some of the themes that later emerge from this research can unsurprisingly be found within this narrative.

The book opens, "This work is an attempt to reflect on the fifteen years that I spent among Tibetan monks and the education I received from them" (Dreyfus, 2003, p. xiii). For context, the author is of Swiss descent and holds both the title of Professor of Religion at Williams College in Massachusetts and the *Geshe Lharampa* degree (doctorate in Buddhist philosophy with highest honors) from the Tibetan Buddhist monastic university Sera Je. This unique background lends Dreyfus an unusual dual authority, forming the platform from which he wrote this book. He is known and admired as a figure at the nexus of Western and traditional Tibetan scholarship.

Dreyfus' book is presented in three sections. The first section is called

"Context" and includes an overview of the Tibetan Buddhist educational tradition, the monastic tradition as followed in Tibetan Buddhism, and a section entitled "Becoming a Monk: Teacher and Discipline." In Dreyfus' telling, the depth and complexity of the Buddhist tradition of Tibet becomes apparent. He describes the foundations of the establishment of Buddhism in Tibet through the creation of the empire of Songtsen Gampo (*srong btsan sgam po*, 604?–650 C.E.) and the establishment of the Tibetan alphabet, which not only created a "literate elite" and "supported a new intellectual culture" (Dreyfus, p. 18), but also eventually became the basis of the scholastic tradition of Tibetan Buddhism. Dreyfus explains the course of events that led to the introduction of a monastic tradition to Tibet, and to Tibetan Buddhism. Similar to many ancient religious traditions, the in-depth study of the scripture, theology, and philosophy of a religious tradition became the purview of the individuals who had dedicated their lives to the monastic order; these people, in the case of Tibet, were mostly monks. This monastic order was unlike most traditions, certainly modern Western traditions. It has been estimated that, by 1951, between 10% and 15% of the entire population in Tibet, and 20–30% of all males, were monks. According to Goldstein (2010), "government has estimated that [in Tibet] there were 2,700 monasteries and 115,000 monks in 1951 or about 10-15% of the population, and 20-30% of all males" (p. 3). Thus, monasticism was a system of both great import and great power in Tibetan society, particularly in the context of education.

According to Dreyfus' account, it was during the mid-13th to 16th century in Tibet that the Tibetan scholastic tradition was systematized and realized:

During the third period (mid-thirteenth to sixteenth century), contacts with India

diminished and eventually almost entirely stopped because of the Muslim

destruction of Buddhist institutions of higher learning in India. This period,

which David Ruegg describes as "classical," was a time of systematizing the

newly implanted traditions. Tibetan thinkers concentrated their efforts on

organizing the material they had received from India. In the process, they also

started to develop their own voices and to create the intellectual culture. (p. 25)

Dreyfus then details how the Tibetans shaped their enormous catalogue of

canonical literature, collected from centuries of collaborative relationships between

Tibetan translators and Indian scholars, into the Tibetan Buddhist canon, which consists

of the "translated words" (kangyur, *bka' 'gyur*) of the Buddha and the "translated

treatises" (tengyur, *bstan 'gyur*). According to Dreyfus (2003):

Another aspect of this third period was the elaboration of a systematic

presentation of the whole range of Indian Buddhist material. Instead of just

reflecting the thoughts of Indian teachers, Tibetan thinkers started to produce

their own syntheses, in the process presenting Buddhism much more

systematically than had been done before. (p. 25)

Dreyfus (2003) elaborates how the scholastic tradition of Buddhism took hold

within Tibet in the form of "high scholasticism" (p. 25) and, in his telling, the

subsequent rise of sectarianism. The remainder of the first chapter of this work explores

the continuing evolution of sectarian trends within Tibet.

The next chapter of Dreyfus's work advances an intriguing invitation:

To understand Tibetan scholasticism, it is important to consider its institutional

context. Unlike medieval Western scholastics, who were weakly integrated into

the church as clerics and thus were obliged to follow few rules, the Tibetan scholars whom we study here are monks. (p. 32)

Most, if not all, Tibetan Buddhist mentors whose influence was felt strongly by the study participants were not only great scholars but also members of the Tibetan Buddhist monastic order. These teachers were fully ordained monks, holding (in most cases) more than 200 vows of conduct centered on the single ethic of non-harm. Dreyfus (2003) states:

The numerous rules that codify monastic life are also central to Buddhist monasticism. Four are fundamental: monks are barred from killing a human being, engaging in sexual intercourse, stealing, and making false claims to spiritual realization.…Monks also are subject to a host of less important rules, such as the obligation not to eat after noon and prohibitions against killing animals, against staying alone in a room with a person of the other sex, and so on. (p. 35)

From a practical perspective, the fact of monasticism nearly mutually inclusive to deep intense philosophical study meant many things and could certainly be viewed in many ways. Without a consideration of deep cultural analysis or an approach equipped with an interpretive sociological lens, the broadest point of awareness relating to this point is that the living practice of basic ethics was foundational to higher education in Tibet. Although exact figures remain elusive, very few, if any, institutions of higher education in Tibet were *not* monastic. The social implications of this ubiquity are too many and too complex to adequately treat here; most simply, however, it is fair to say that in Tibet, for the most part, it was not possible to get a formal higher education

without committing, at least for a time, to a monastic lifestyle, the conduct of which is grounded in the fundamental Buddhist practice of refraining from harming any other living being.

To be clear, since the invasion of Tibet and the re-establishment of the Tibetan community in exile, from 1959, secular education within the Tibetan community, both in Tibet and in exile, has developed and is thriving. However, before 1959 it was almost non-existent. Certainly, the elite education system based on the renowned philosophical systems of India was entirely monastic.

At this point, it is useful to recall that the "Buddhism" I speak of here is grounded in Buddhist philosophy and that the realization and teachings of the historical Buddha that formed the basis of the Buddhist religion were explored, debated, and elaborated for hundreds of years after the passing of the historical Buddha in India (around 400 BCE). In addition, it is helpful to remember that Tibetan Buddhism inherited this tradition and that the curriculum we see manifested today is the product of even further exploration, debate, and refinement that has been unfolding in Tibet since the 8th century. Unlike our modern Western classrooms and churches, in Tibet there was never any separation between "religion" and "education." The monasteries were elite institutions of higher education, and the supposed reason to study at them was to become educated, possibly "enlightened." Because Tibet had no culture of professionalization comparable to that of the contemporary West, there was no concept of attending university in order to get a job, although becoming a monk and joining a monastic community certainly was seen by most as an excellent and desirable way to spend one's life.

Relevant here is the experience of the "scholar-monks," who pursued their monastic life within the framework of Tibetan Buddhist higher education. Dreyfus (2003) devotes an entire chapter to the complex phenomenon of monasticism in Tibet, including a masterful explanation of its origins, proliferation, and the many social, soteriological, and other factors involved in its particularities. Interestingly, Dreyfus includes a section in this work entitled "Monasteries As Corporate Entities," where he suggests that the reader consider monasteries' institutional structure as a corporate entity, referring to them as "powerful self-governing associations with large financial assets" (Dreyfus, 2003, p. 43). He concludes this section with an institutional analysis of Tibetan monasteries and a nod to the fact that Tibetan monastic life, the role of the teacher, and the "nature of monastic discipline" form the "context in which Tibetan scholasticism takes place" (Dreyfus, 2003, p. 53).

This work discusses the context of Tibetan monastic education in many aspects, but the concept most relevant to this study is that which, in Dreyfus' (2003) telling, underlies all of monastic education: the "ethical goal of monastic education" as he calls it, namely to "develop goodness," defined as follows:

> Goodness involves making good decisions, relying not on theoretical reflection but on good character and the ability to discriminate between objects of desire. In most cases, the great challenge is not knowing what the good is but being capable of doing it. Our desires compel us to perform actions that we know to be bad. In order to remedy this weakness, we need to develop the ability to differentiate between mere compulsions and the inclinations we want to

encourage because we judge them to be good. Such ability requires training to strengthen the necessary habits. (p. 63)

Dreyfus (2003) then details the structure of the complete curricula to provide "a full view of Tibetan monastic intellectual culture" (p. 111). He offers a masterful presentation of the question of the role of critical inquiry in the pedagogy of Tibetan education, which relies heavily on memorization and debate. He then goes on to present the positions of two approaches to learning and debate. The first of these, in his words, "merely validates a pregiven religious conviction," while the second is learning and debate that brings about an "exhilarating sense of openness…as they use it as a mode of inquiry in studying the tradition's great texts" (Dreyfus, 2003, p. 268).

Dreyfus (2003) then defends the "limited but real presence of a Socratic element in Tibetan monastic education" (p. 275) and discusses, with erudition, some of the more subtle differences in both philosophical views and hermeneutic strategies among Tibetan scholars. Dreyfus' work presents a unique overview of some of the most relevant complexities of the Tibetan Buddhist intellectual tradition and is important to this study, as it supports both the context in which the mentors of the participants were grounded and gives some taste of the vast intellectual tradition from which they emerged. This understanding may allow us to enter into a conversation with the tradition from a position of humility instead of one of pride and reductionism, a point emphasized by the study participants (see Chapter Four: Findings).

Dreyfus' work connects to our story at its foundations and returns this discussion to its starting point: my proposal that a story of education might logically begin with a story of its intended purpose. As explored earlier in this chapter, the stories

of purpose may be many and varied, but the review of the literature clearly demonstrates a tension: the Tibetan Buddhist mentors of the Western faculty members were educated in a system whose context and purpose differed greatly from those of our own.

The Educational Climate of 20th Century America

Milton Friedman's *Capitalism and Freedom* (1962) was an influential missive establishing the groundwork for the shaping of American economic policy over the latter decades of the 20th century and, with it, some fundamental ideological principles that would color American culture—including its educational institutions and policy— in the years to come. Prescient among these principles is the presentation of "individual freedom" as the primary goal to be achieved and preserved in a life well-lived, along with the flourishing of a free-market economy as the primary means by which to facilitate such freedom (Friedman, 1962). Such priorities mark the beginning of a clear movement in American culture, policy, and ethos, in which actions and motivations in education shift from an origination in the concept of the public good (often through investment in "public goods"; Giroux, 2010) to a motivation vested in the success of the individual in pursuit of private interest. Such a shift demands that ethics and values (especially, and most relevant to this work, values of humanity, empathy, and love) be cast aside completely or reformulated in the language of the marketplace (Fish, 2009). This shift also positions the teacher as a "trainer," primarily responsible to externally imposed standards and stakeholders.

Two decades after *Capitalism and Freedom* was published, in 1983 the National Commission on Excellence in Education (convened by President Ronald Reagan's

education secretary, Terrel H. Bell), released a report about the American public education system: "A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform." This report presented a dire picture of public education in the United States, framing the current American school system as a failure when compared to "competitors" and directly tying the educational system of the country to its economic success. The rhetoric embedded in a "A Nation at Risk" produced shock and terror. The following excerpt is from the opening of the report:

> Our nation is at risk. Our once unchallenged preeminence in commerce, industry, science, and technological innovation is being overtaken by competitors throughout the world….If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war. (A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform, 1983)

> According to Terrel Bell, who, by his own admission, convened the commission largely as a response to the imminent threat of complete dissolution of the entire Department of Education under the Reagan administration—"such strong language had an electrifying effect on the American people. Commission members assured me that they wanted to produce a report that would rally the nation around their schools, and they certainly succeeded in doing that" (Bell, 1993, p. 593). The rest (as they say) is history.

The commission labeled its report "An Open Letter to the American People," and in many ways it was. The day after it was released, large portions were reprinted in newspapers across the nation, including the New York Times and the Washington Post.

Kurt Senske's study of the impact of Reagan's rhetoric on education policy at the state and local level reports: "The press clipping service for the Department of Education revealed that the commission's report made the front page of almost every major newspaper across the nation. Similarly, the evening news of the three major networks featured the release of the Report as their lead story" (McIntush, 2000, p. 420).

This report was so powerful that it is said to have brought to the forefront a new conversation on education reform and set the stage for policy deliberation, direction, and decision-making for decades to come. Importantly, the form of this shift was in the adjustment of the focus of the conversation around education "from education as a means of social and political equalization to education as a means to economic prosperity" (McIntush, 2000, p. 421). According to Caboni and Adisu, who wrote a retrospective on the impact of *A Nation at Risk* 20 years after its original publication:

> The report itself offered a number of recommendations to solve the problems it identified, and is generally considered to be the "mother" of the educational reform movement and the concomitant drive toward standards-based education that followed with vigor in the preceding decades in the United States. Most of the recommendations put forth by the report were couched in the language of accountability, quality, and standards, including recommendations within the report that colleges and universities be held accountable for the quality (and "competency") of the teachers they prepared. (Caboni & Adisu, 2004)

In combination with a great many other factors, the latter decades of the 20th century saw the influence of capitalist culture increase in every aspect of American life, including American institutions of higher education. The cultural response to the

political upheaval of 1960s America in combination with responses to global shifts in the world economy led to an evolution in discourse within the academy, including a movement away from the rhetoric of the Marxist revolutionary and toward the discourse of postmodernism, a push for the acceptance of rational scientific thought as truth, an insistence that education and politics be kept separate, and a new focus on standards-based learning (Heller, 2016).

This shift modeled a changing answer to the question of purpose that frames this study. Again returning to the framework put forth by Labaree (1997), discourse in American higher education in the latter decades of the 20th century clearly exemplified a movement away from education as a purposeful means of creating democratic equality, intending to prepare citizens to participate in their country and their world, and towards a "social efficiency" model, emphasizing training workers to take their place in the economy. According to Henry Giroux (2010), over the past century especially, the culture of capitalism has exerted a powerful influence on higher education, transforming it from a body that views itself as a public service into, too often, a body that considers itself either part of or responsible to a profit-seeking enterprise.

As a final note regarding this section on the influence of capitalism in education, I briefly discuss the term "neoliberalism." This term is often used by critics of recent shifts in educational discourse and is broadly defined. In the simplest sense, and for our purposes here, neoliberalism refers to the ideology that values the free market and competition, assumes that sustained economic growth is the best means for society to mature and progress, trusts the free market as the best way to allocate resources, and emphasizes minimal government intervention in any aspect of life (Venugopal, 2015).

In economic terms, it refers to an essential adherence to the laissez-faire economic policies of the 19th century. In the context of education, neoliberalism is most often considered an overreach of capitalism, and the critique is made that such ideology may or may not have a rightful place in the world's economic systems and discourses, but that certainly the application of such ideology to areas of our world that have traditionally been considered in the domain of the public good cannot lead to benefit (Eggemeier & Fritz, 2020).

A contemporary historical reference to the term as it has been used in the general public can be seen in relation to the economic policies of the military dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet in Chile in the late 1970s and 1980s. Pinochet's policies were pronounced "an economic miracle" by Milton Friedman, who educated many of Pinochet's advisors. However, Pinochet's regime was also responsible for the persecution, internment, torture, and execution of tens of thousands of dissenters or perceived critics to his rule in Chile at the time, and his rule is infamously remembered for its glaring human rights abuses and corruption (Kandell, 2006).

Tibetan Buddhism in American Society and Culture: Some Contributions to Knowledge

The United States of America is a relatively young country, and, like many other nations, it can be defined not only by what has arisen on its shores, but also by the startling pace of development and the influx of new ideas, protocols, and cultures in its short history. In recent decades, this pace has increased exponentially, and the increased interaction and integration of the now global marketplace, along with striking advances

in transportation and communication technology, have led to a period of unsurpassed growth in American (and world) culture. Despite the many concerns about the toll this accelerated growth may eventually take on our society and culture, as well as our humanity, among the benefits that can be understood is the influence of cultures that differ from our own on American life. In general, it is an accepted principle that exposure to cultures, ways of knowing, ways of being, and ways of interacting in the world that differ from one's own can stimulate thought and interrogation of one's normative ways of knowing, being, and interacting in the world, as well as the assumptions that one makes about how things are and how they should be. This process can eventually lead to positive growth.

Within such a framework, we turn to consider Tibetan Buddhism in American society and culture and some of the known contributions of this group to Western knowledge. The 1959 Tibetan uprising against Chinese rule resulted in the fleeing of the Dalai Lama into exile in India from Tibet and the dissolution of the formal Tibetan government and social structures. This uprising also (over the course of decades) resulted in the migration of (eventually) hundreds of thousands of Tibetans and the re-establishment of Tibetan communities sprinkled throughout the world. As of this writing, one estimate claims that approximately 300,000 of the total 6.5 million Tibetans today live outside of Tibet (which is now part of China). A natural result of resettlement in the United States has been the visceral impact on American culture of the Tibetan diaspora. Although it is far too early in history to assess the full impact—specifically of Tibetan Buddhism on American culture—we can begin to understand some trends that have emerged from this relationship.

Contemplative Practice and Mindfulness. There is certainly no term that brings the same amount of excitement, curiosity, self-satisfaction, wonder, and mockery to any conversation about Buddhist influence on American knowledge as the term "mindfulness." Although this work attempts no broad overview of the literature on mindfulness, a superficial review of the topic reveals that most of the academic literature on mindfulness falls into the broad category of "mindfulness-based interventions," which explore the role of mindfulness in mediating physical and mental health and education. These works define mindfulness as a secular philosophy and collection of techniques rooted in or inspired by Buddhist traditions (Kabat-Zinn, 2011).

In 2003, Lizabeth Roemer published "Mindfulness: A Promising Intervention Strategy in Need of Further Study," a review of mindfulness-based clinical interventions at the time, in the journal *Clinical Psychology Science and Practice.* The article emphasizes the need for further research. She notes, "Our interest in this topic comes from our current treatment development efforts, in which we are integrating mindfulness and acceptance elements into existing cognitive-behavioral treatments" (Roemer, 2003, p. 172). Subsequent decades have witnessed a plethora of related studies and therapeutic interventions designed to treat a variety of physical and mental ailments.

Similarly, throughout the early 21st century, mindfulness and broader contemplative practices have become popularized in education as an instructional strategy intended to facilitate student success. It is important to note here that although the Tibetan Buddhist tradition certainly was not singularly (nor likely even largely) responsible for the contemplative turn in some elements of American culture in the late

20th and early 21st century, it was part of the greater influence of Eastern traditions on the West.

Two important organizations facilitating research in these areas are the Mind & Life Institute and the Association for Contemplative Mind in Higher Education (ACMHE). The Mind & Life Institute was founded in 1991, and its stated mission is "Bridging science and contemplative wisdom to foster insight and inspire action toward flourishing" (Mind & Life Institute, n.d.). Among other initiatives, in 2019 the Mind & Life Institute established The Mindfulness Director Initiative, which placed "Mindfulness Directors" in five schools across the United States to implement mindfulness programs and complete a mixed-methods case study investigation of the sites reliant on both quantitative and qualitative data:

> Evaluating the implementation process is critical to successfully and ethically integrate mindfulness into school systems, in order to promote well-being for teachers and students, and foster healthy learning environments and life-long coping skills….Products of this project include a visual timeline of implementation across the first year of having a Mindfulness Director at each site, a conference abstract, and a scientific manuscript submitted for publication. (Acabchuk, 2020)

In 2000, a team of researchers associated with the Mind & Life Education Research Network, a part of the Mind & Life Institute, published "Contemplative Practices and Mental Training: Prospects for American Education." The article sources then-current research from a multitude of fields (neuroscience, cognitive science, developmental psychology, and education) and knowledge from contemplative

traditions to "highlight a set of mental skills and socioemotional dispositions that are central to the aims of education in the 21st century." This article relies heavily on the languages of science, medicine, and developmental psychology to analyze its case, and it concludes by asserting, "the research we reviewed here provides a substantial empirical warrant to investigate the potential of contemplative practices for enhancing the quality of American public education" (Davidson et al., 2000, p. 150).

In his 2010 article "Buddhism and Science: How Far Can the Dialogue Proceed?" Thupten Jinpa (2010) writes:

> On the stage of the religion-and-science dialogue, Buddhism, especially Tibetan Buddhism, is a late arrival. However, thanks primarily to the long-standing personal interest of the Dalai Lama, the Tibetan tradition he represents has come to engage deeply with various disciplines of modern science. (p. 871)

Jinpa's essay goes on to detail a history of the Mind & Life dialogues between modern Western scientists and the Dalai Lama that have taken place biannually since 1987 and some of the challenges these conversations embody and confront. A particularly relevant section in this essay is entitled "What Does the Tibetan Participation Bring to the Buddhism-and-Science Dialogue?" According to Jinpa, the Tibetan Buddhist tradition is rooted in the Indian Nalanda tradition, which values the combination of rigorous philosophical study, contemplative inquiry, and an altruistic motivation. Jinpa (2010) goes on to emphasize:

> From a historical point of view, just as modern science brings to its understanding of the world the rich heritage of Greek rational thought, especially what was once called "natural philosophy," Tibetan Buddhism brings

to its understanding the long history of ideas from within classical Buddhist

thought, developed and refined over more than two thousand years. (p. 874)

Founded in 1997, the mission of the Center for Contemplative Mind in Society

is "Transforming higher education through contemplative practice" (The Center for

Contemplative Mind in Society, 2015). As their website chronicles:

For the past two decades, the Center for Contemplative Mind in Society

(CMind) has been dedicated to supporting transformation and engaged action for

all through contemplative practices. Since 2010, we have focused our efforts on

post-secondary education. Our early efforts in this area, particularly the

Contemplative Practice Fellowship Program (1997–2009), fostered the

development and integration of contemplative approaches in higher education

teaching and learning.

The Association for Contemplative Mind in Higher Education (ACMHE) is an

initiative of The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society and is a multidisciplinary

academic association composed of educators, staff, students, researchers, and

administrators "committed to the transformation of higher education through the

recovery and development of the contemplative dimensions of teaching, learning and

knowing" (The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society, 2015). Among its other

activities, the ACMHE is concerned with being a resource and encouragement for the

emerging culture of contemplative pedagogy, methodology, research, and epistemology

in the academy. Members have access to an international member directory, a syllabi

archive, email lists, events calendar, and a peer-reviewed journal entitled *The Journal of

Contemplative Inquiry*, as well information about events on contemplative pedagogy.

Equanimity. An element that is currently lacking research but is slowly gaining traction is the role of equanimity in education. In their 2014 study "Moving Beyond Mindfulness: Defining Equanimity as an Outcome Measure in Meditation and Contemplative Research," Desbordes et al. (2014) define equanimity as "an even-minded mental state or dispositional tendency toward all experiences or objects, regardless of their origin or their affective valence (pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral)" (p. 356). In addition, the researchers proposed the inclusion of equanimity as an outcome measure in contemplative research, as it "captures potentially the most important psychological element in the improvement of well-being, and therefore should be a focus in future research studies" (p. 357). Desbordes et al.'s (2014) article also defines equanimity from the perspective of the contemplative traditions, details its use in Buddhist psychology, and describes some of the many methods derived from the Buddhist traditions for cultivating equanimity. The article elaborates equanimity as "a relation to one's perceived experience" (p. 361) and an "emotional regulation strategy" (p. 361). It concludes with a detailed section on the ways that an outcome of equanimity might be measured, both psychologically and physically. The article ends with a call for further research focus on equanimity, "an essential psychological element in the improvement of wellbeing" (p. 368).

Beyond concern for well-being, interest is emerging in equanimity and a great opportunity for learning in terms of equanimity as a solution to the problem of bias, which is an issue in our society on many levels: clinical, social, and academic, among others. Aside from acting as a support for well-being, as the previous article defines, equanimity may also offer solutions to problems of bias in these fields. A 2017 article

by Burgess et al. proposes meditation training in mindfulness (of which a known result is increased equanimity) as an antidote to implicit racial and ethnic biases among health care providers "that may contribute to health care disparities." Burgess et al. (2017) demonstrate how such practices can:

> ...reduce the provider contribution to healthcare disparities through several mechanisms including: reducing the likelihood that implicit biases will be activated in the mind, increasing providers' awareness of and ability to control responses to implicit biases once activated, increasing self-compassion and compassion toward patients, and reducing internal sources of cognitive load (e.g., stress, burnout, and compassion fatigue). (p. 368)

> The article goes on to state that mindfulness training:

> ...may also have advantages over current approaches to addressing implicit bias because it focuses on the development of skills through practice, promotes a nonjudgmental approach, can circumvent resistance some providers feel when directly confronted with evidence of racism, and constitutes a holistic approach to promoting providers' well-being. (Burgess et al., 2017p. 368)

Critical Inquiry. In the chapter on "Critical Inquiry" in his 2003 *The Sound of Two Hands Clapping,* Georges Dreyfus (2003) takes on the question of whether Tibetan Buddhist debate, a pinnacle of Tibetan scholasticism, is "merely an exercise to validate a pregiven truth" or "a genuine avenue of inquiry?"

He outlines the sophistication of the Tibetan dialectical tradition, explaining how they support the scholar in developing skill and scope in questioning and interpretation. He then expresses that a prerequisite to understanding a text is the

introduction of "a hermeneutics of suspicion that enables one to read it against itself" (Dreyfus, 2003, p. 269) and how "It is this kind of questioning that can be at work in Tibetan debates at their best" (Dreyfus, 2003, p. 269). Based on this process, according to Dreyfus (2003), the student realizes that theirs is just one understanding among many.

> On the basis of that understanding, the student learns to "confront" these differing perspectives, and consider how to undermine each by finding its weak spot. In doing so, they acquire the habit of looking at these other views with suspicion, seeking the proverbial chink in the others' armor. (p. 269–270)

Dreyfus (2003) then describes the delicate balance that must be maintained in a religious university that follows these practices as, ultimately, "the tradition aims at the closure necessary to create a religiously meaningful universe" (p. 270). According to Dreyfus (2003), this results in the "suspicion" employed being "ultimately subordinated to a strategy of retrieval" (p. 270) within the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. Regardless, according to Dreyfus, the fact that the tradition internalizes this hermeneutic of suspicion in its dialectical strategy means that it remains a possible "avenue for free inquiry" (p. 270).

Dreyfus considers how the tensions between the critical dimension and the limitations imposed by the tradition operate, and further identifies the differences in the approaches of Tibetan Buddhist scholars, which he likens to the distinction of two types of student by the Buddhist scholar Haribhadra: "the followers of faith, who approach the teaching by believing what they are taught, and the followers of reasoning, who rely primarily on the understanding gained through personal investigation" (p. 271–272).

The rest of the chapter details Dreyfus' personal experience as a trainee with teachers from different perspectives on this spectrum and the methodology by which critical inquiry is used in the classic philosophical inquiry into *Madhyamaka,* or "Middle Way," philosophy, the philosophy that underlies the tradition. Based on these elements, and on his own experience as a student in a Tibetan monastic university with his teachers, Dreyfus presents a lucid and compelling argument for the inclusion of a strong tradition of critical inquiry as a hallmark of Tibetan Buddhist training.

Compassion. Although compassion is a key component in the Tibetan Buddhist knowledge-system, the Tibetans do not have a monopoly on the concept. Indeed, the roots of the concept of compassion in our own culture far predate modern Western culture, and references to it date back to the beginning of civilization. Compassion has enjoyed waxing and waning success throughout Western culture and history, mostly in the context of religious and philosophical ideals. However, in modern times, the *virtue* of compassion in everyday life, while certainly admired, is not something that has been considered a particularly important quality; and it is certainly not something that most Americans learn in school that is imperative to their happy lives, their successful careers, or their fulfilling educations. On the contrary, many elements of American culture that Americans perceive as central to American identity (e.g., individualism and freedom) on their surface seem to imply the opposite of compassion in practice. In contrast, Tibetan philosophical education (which is inseparable from Tibetan religious education) depends fully on the concept of compassion for its grounding, and Tibetan secular culture wholly embodies this value as well.

Still, in the modern West, an increasing emphasis on the concept of "compassion" can be found in healthcare, communication, and many other professional fields. Recent studies on the role of compassion cultivation point to strong indicators of a direct correlation between "compassion" and "success" in all arenas.

In 2013, Jazaieri et al. published "A randomized controlled trial of compassion cultivation training: Effects on mindfulness, affect, and emotion regulation," a randomized controlled trial that measured mindfulness, positive and negative affect, and emotional regulation of participants in a 9-week secular compassion cultivation training program. Results from this study indicated that training in compassion not only increased the compassion of the individuals (which were the baseline preliminary findings of another study), but also resulted in "significant effects on mindfulness, affect, and emotion regulation in a community sample of adults" (p. 29).

Brooke Lavelle wrote on this matter in her chapter entitled "Compassion in context: Tracing the Buddhist roots of secular, compassion-based contemplative programs" in the 2017 *Oxford Handbook of Compassion Science.* Lavelle's analysis details certain Buddhist influences on compassion-based programs in the Western world through a positioning of programs that present an "innatist" or "constructivist" method for developing compassion, based on different understandings of how the mind works (Lavelle, 2017). Lavelle goes on to describe a number of modern compassion-based contemplative programs that are rooted in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition: Cognitively-Based Compassion Training (CBCT), developed by Lobsang Tenzin Negi of Emory University in 2005; Sustainable Compassion Training, developed by John Makransky of Boston College in 2007; and Compassion Cultivation Training (CCT) developed by

Thupten Jinpa of Stanford University in 2009. Notably, two of these programs were founded by traditionally trained Tibetan geshes, and the third was founded by a lifelong student and teacher of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition.

Possibility: Turning Inward

To return to the context of the climate of education over the course of the 20th century, let us look briefly at the discussion of neoliberal discourses of education such as those as propounded by Giroux (2010), among others, that emphasize the success of the individual, of competition, and of focus on private interest over the public good . Although the specifics are outside the scope of this work, here we broadly consider what kind of impact the flourishing of such a climate in the academy has had on academics—on those who teach and research within the academy. In the introduction to their collection Resisting Neoliberalism in Higher Education Volume II, Manathunga and Bottrell (2018) wrote:

> It is hard not to feel overwhelmed by the extent to which neoliberalism is crushing the lifeblood of inspiration out of academe. Vivid testimonies abound of the toxicity, barbarism and horrific psychological cost of neoliberal universities. This volume seeks to trace how we might prise open the cracks in neoliberal logic and find ways to follow Readings call to "dwell in the ruins". We draw on recent examples of managerial ruthlessness to expose the cracks or flawed logic that permit conditions of possibility for collegiality, creativity and activism and new counter-ontologies of critical resistance and radical hope. (Manathunga & Bottrell, 2018, p. 1)

At the same time the place of spirituality in the academy has become a topic of increasing interest in recent decades. As the term "spirituality" itself has been historically problematic, in order to communicate the meaning of the sentiment as cleanly as possible, I use the language and definition as put forth by Teasdale in Chickering's (2003) Encouraging Authenticity & Spirituality in Higher Education: "Being spiritual suggests a personal commitment to a process of inner development that engages us in our totality" (p. 7). I also rely on Chickering's definition of authenticity, which he proposes as concomitant with spirituality but "…a more straightforward and less loaded term. Being authentic means that what you see is what you get. What I believe, what I say, and what I do are consistent" (Chickering, 2003, p. 8). Hence, for the purposes of this work, "spirituality" refers to the process, and "authenticity" refers to the goal or result:

> Higher education in the United States famously began in the form of educational institutions focused on training young men for the ministry, and as places where a young man could go to get an education in theology and philosophy as a preparation for his life (Marsden, 2000). At no time in the early days of American higher education is there a record of a consideration that an education would be complete if it was separated from a study of the internal life of the mind or spirit. In the tradition of the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, religion, philosophy, and how such ideas functioned in the world through politics were very much a part of the discourse...(Marsden, 2000).

However, as time passed, in response to a host of mitigating factors, especially at elite institutions, professors began thinking of themselves as scientists and scholars

whose major task was to seek out truth, not propagate religious dogma. Under pressure from industry and the state to produce scientific breakthroughs that would result in technological progress and social reform, professors reconfigured themselves as researchers who specialized in their subject areas, published their findings, trained graduate students, established their own criteria for evaluating academic work, and demanded the freedom to pursue truth whether or not it offended religious or political authorities…academe has now become, in the words of historian George Marsden, "a haven largely freed from religious perspectives. (Gross, 2009, p. 1)

Research has indicated that most higher education faculty embrace religion and spirituality as a significant way of knowing (Lindholm & Astin, 2006). Moreover, many share a concern that the academy's narrowing focus on empiricism, scientific thought, and professional training is excluding too much (Chickering, 2003).

Although the majority of the research done on the topic of spirituality in higher education has regarded the student experience, there has been some significant exploration of the relevance of spirituality to faculty members in the academy as well. The first issue is that spirituality is customarily associated with the interior life of the mind and one's subjective experience, while most research on faculty in academia has focused on external conditions and the objective domain. However, American institutions of higher education, as (at their best) centers of knowledge and learning, have an important responsibility to respond to this split and to address the question of balance between the internal and external facets of life (Lindholm & Astin, 2006). The harmonious balance of the internal and external experience of an individual, as manifest in one's identification as a spiritual person, has been shown to affect how the individual

engages with the world and to cultivate within the person an increased awareness of the interdependent nature of the world and our existence, as well as a subsequent aspiration toward empathy, virtue, and social justice (Lindholm & Astin, 2006). The original rationale for a liberal arts education (essential for free citizens of Greece and Rome) held much in common with this explication (Parker, 1890).

In the literature on spirituality in the academy, a number of salient points emerge:

1. Faculty, like all human beings, have internal lives and seek spirituality as a meaning-making endeavor for themselves and their students (Astin et al., 2011).

2. There is a hunger and a need for the expression of subjective ways of knowing as valid ways of knowing in the academy, for faculty and their students (Simmer-Brown, 2019).

3. Faculty feel that the contemplative domain offers pedagogical tools for teaching (Bush, 2010).

Regarding the first point, an individual's spirituality (as distinct from their "religion") is a crucial lens through which they construct meaning and knowledge, and thus should be considered part of a complete education (Astin et al., 2011). As Astin et al, (2011) assert, faculty members who identify as "spiritual" are consistently more likely than those who do not to demonstrate behavior meeting the public's expectation for higher education. There is growing evidence that demonstrates that "good" (and effective) teaching depends on much more than teaching techniques alone (Palmer, 1998/2017). The sense of connection with others that facilitates the ability of a teacher to touch his or her students and thereby influence them is often considered a quality

apparent in teachers who strive for self-reflection, a part of a spiritual practice.

Second, since the traditional American academy does not presently consider subjective ways of knowing to be an important part of the educational process (Palmer, 1998/2017), a student's individual, subjective experience of education (as well as the subjective experience of their teachers) is left completely unacknowledged, undiscussed, and separate from discourse on research and education (Cozart, 2010). This neglect results in a textbook example of teaching a "null" curriculum (Eisner, 1979), in which students learn that the subjective world and their own subjective selves are not important; indeed, in many instances, not even real (Palmer, 1998/2017). This lesson is mistaken, and according to some authors, it distances students and faculty alike from important research, teaching, and learning strategies (Ng & Carney, 2017).

Praxis: Contemplative Pedagogy and Caring

The third and final point that arises repeatedly in the relevant literature is the premise that faculty feel that the contemplative domain offers valuable pedagogical tools for teaching and learning and that the introduction of contemplative pedagogy in the academy can be a natural complement of critical pedagogy. I offer this approach under the heading "Praxis," returning to the definition given by Paulo Freire in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*: "reflection and action directed at the structures to be transformed" (Freire, 1970, p. 126), anticipating that contemplative pedagogy, and especially critical contemplative pedagogy, may be used as the meeting point of reflection and action and directed at injustice with the aspiration for positive change.

Contemplative Pedagogy

Several authors, as Barbezat and Bush (2014), (Simmer-Brown & Grace, 2011) and Zajonc (2013), have offered specific techniques and practices that involve introspection, reflection, or self-reflection to be used in the classroom. Others have advocated for the intentional integration of contemplative practices in the formal scholarship on teaching and learning (Owen-Smith, 2018). All of this literature, and the literature of others, is grounded on the assumption that contemplative practice in education is not a trend or a fad, but rather an evolution of pedagogical and andragogical understanding that clearly represents how human beings exist and learn (Morgan, 2014).

Several authors, including Morgan, have analyzed the expanding juncture of contemplative education and transformative education and that of contemplative education and critical theory. Morgan (2014) identifies a natural point of intersection between the theoretical bases of the transformative and the contemplative, as well as instances in which contemplative practices have been used in transformative education, as presented by Mezirow (1991) to deepen learning.

In their work, Adarkar and Keiser (2007) draw on literature from contemplative traditions to recommend the awakening in students of an awareness of and attentiveness to issues of social injustice in the United States and elsewhere. They also evoke a corresponding compassion to motivate students to become agents of positive change. Ryoo et al. (2009) present the concept of "critical spiritual pedagogy," a framework based on the extant fields of critical theory and critical pedagogy, with the inclusion of a spiritual dimension to bring about the ultimate praxis of a truly liberatory education.

Thus, in an education that embraces the spiritual, we believe that teachers and

learners alike must use their spiritual knowledge – regardless of declared

religious background – to be critical of the world surrounding us. Many scholar-

activists mentioned in this article suggest how spirituality within the act of

teaching and learning can allow us to nurture an inner development while

simultaneously being critical of the world so that we can seek justice and

wholeness for both self and the community at large. (Ryoo et al., 2009, p. 142)

Other works have focused on practical and theoretical perspectives integrating

contemplative practices with anti-oppression pedagogy and have positioned the

combination in action as a tool to ensure that contemplative practices in American

higher education themselves become a "practice of freedom" and not a tool of

oppression.

In the same spirit as the preceding section, I offer this perspective on

connectedness and education as an act of love under the heading of "Praxis," again

referencing Freire's definition from *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*: "reflection and action

directed at the structures to be transformed" (Freire, 1970). In this case, the theoretical

understanding of "connectedness" combines with action in the form of love—in the

sense of love as a verb (hooks, 2018)—and is directed at injustice with an aspiration for

positive change.

This point leads us into a further area of consideration in this conversation about

this form of praxis: the position and role of the educator and what makes an individual

effective at that role. If we are to understand that education is fundamentally relational

(Daloz, 2012; Freire, 1970; hooks, 1994), we should understand the role of the effective

teacher as one who provides "support, challenge, and vision" for the student (Daloz, 2012). Effective teaching is seen as teaching motivated by passion for teaching and, above all, a sense of love and caring (Dardar, 2017; Daloz, 2012; Miller & Mills, 2019; Zajonc, 2006, 2019).

Finally, we consider the position and role of the student. Adult development theories reject the concepts of teaching and learning as solely cognitive acts (Knowles, 1988; Piaget, 2006). On the basis of this understanding, the emotional needs of the learner as part of a holistic approach must be considered, and ignorance thereof can lead to a dangerous seclusion of parts of the individual within the classroom or the academy and a dangerous tendency toward apathy, indifference, and an uncritical perspective (Darder, 2017; hooks, 1994;). Enacting a pedagogy of love as education in action is a direct antidote to such tendencies (hooks, 2017).

Caring

Many studies and articles direct us to a clear correlation between successful caring and successful students Among the most striking, a 2019 study by Miller and Mills found direct evidence of a positive relationship between successful students and the caring shown to them by their instructors in school. Taking this a step further, O'Brien (2010) suggests that caring may in fact be what makes learning possible. Additionally, he exhorted the reader to focus on constructing environments that support caring, even in the face of many challenges:

> Is it possible to construct college classrooms that are nurturing, thoughtful, and just in the face of curricular mandates, limited hours, never-ending committee work, and institutional demands to publish and write grants? Do our classrooms

address dialogically or otherwise what it means to be human? Are our students

engaged, passionate, and articulate? How do we stir our students to wide

awakeness, imaginative action, and a passion for possibility? (O'Brien, p. 109)

She closes with this suggestion: "Perhaps greater attention to establishing and

maintaining caring relationships with students can help us answer some of these

questions" (O'Brien, 2010, p. 114).

O'Brien and others suggest that the concern of educators should be less focused

on a successful transfer of information between the teacher and student and more

focused on the quality of the relationship itself. Such an ideal is rooted in an

understanding of education as far more than a transactional exchange from one who

holds knowledge to one who will attain it; rather, it is an understanding of education

that is dynamic, multidimensional, and developmental. Such an understanding, familiar

to us from the works of the progressive thinkers Dewey, Piaget, and Freire, to name a

few, is central to this study, which focuses on relationships and probes the influence of

mentors from a vastly different culture and belief system on the teaching of American

university professors.

According to Nel Noddings (2013), a fundamental element of the

formation of the person is *relationship,* and thus, as the student grows, education cannot

be separated from the *relationship* with the instructor. Thus, relationship in and of itself

is at the center of our learning. For Noddings, all education is concerned with the moral

development of the student, whether directly or indirectly. In her view, the caring

relationship is essential to education and is an education unto itself.

Chapter Three: Methodology

This chapter summarizes the study design for this research project, including the rationale for and discussion of its epistemological orientation and research approach, the purpose of the research, the study design itself, case selection and boundaries, data collection, trustworthiness, and ethical considerations.

To restate, the purpose of this study was to explore the experience of faculty members at late-20th-century/early-21st-century American universities who were mentored by Tibetan Buddhist scholar-practitioner teachers, and to discern findings in relation to that experience. The findings from this research are presented in three sections in Chapter Four, in the context of how these relationships affected the way the professor related to students; what the professor taught; and the professor's identity.

This study, rooted in a paradigm most closely aligned with constructivism and critical theory, used a case study methodology to explain faculty members' perceptions of their Tibetan Buddhist scholar-practitioner mentors on their teaching within the context of American capitalist culture in the late 20th/early 21st century. This chapter describes the research paradigm, approach, and design used to achieve the purposes of the study and presents a general discussion of the complex role that research design plays in the construction of new knowledge, especially in the context of works such as this one.

The Importance of Purpose

The particular purpose of this study was to understand the perceptions and practices of faculty members at modern American universities who were mentored by Tibetan Buddhist scholar-practitioner teachers, in the context of American capitalist

culture. The broader purpose of this research is in line with the broader common purpose of educational research, which is to improve teaching and learning. Hamilton and Corbett-Whittier (2013) argue that this point is crucial, such that research without the improvement of teaching and learning as its primary goal cannot be considered educational research. To this point, this study includes a detailed record of decisions made and data collected, as well as a detailed, rigorous description of all elements and interactions relating to the study and participants in the form of audit trails in the appendices.

Shenton's 2003 overview of Guba's 1981 work reviews a number of claims related to the feasibility of transferability in qualitative research, closing with the claim that it is the researcher's responsibility to give a "sufficient thick description of the phenomenon under investigation" (Shenton, 2003, p. 70) so readers may understand it well and completely and determine for themselves whether the phenomena they observe compare. Thus, they can discern whether the research findings may be applied to improve teaching and learning in their context (Shenton, 2003). It is my sincere hope that the systematic approach employed here and the attention to rigor in this study will contribute to the goal of improving teaching and learning across all domains of education. In addition, I hope that the dynamics, observations, and data gleaned from this study transfer to the contexts of many teachers and learners.

The Paradigm Wars and Qualitative Research

Among the issues that research design for this study has brought to the forefront is the issue of "paradigm wars," described by Hamilton and Corbett-Whittier, 2013, as "the, at times, hostile war of words over the quality and validity of different kinds of

research commonly grouped under the qualitative or quantitative paradigm" (p. 23). In this study, I subscribed to the perspective that there are multiple ways of researching education and bringing previously unconsidered knowledge to the field, and that the inclusion of such knowledge is relevant and important. In the case of this work, the new knowledge that emerged arose from understanding a particular set of experiences in higher education, specifically as they relate to the extant norms of capitalist culture as we know them today. As a result of this line of thinking, this study embraced the qualitative domain.

In the context of qualitative research, Hamilton and Corbett-Whittier (2013) propose congruence between the ontological perspective, epistemological grounding, and methodological approach of a study as the strongest foundations for qualitative inquiry. This study follows that line of thinking and aspires to reinforce trustworthiness in the research by, among other measures, adhering to rigor in the consistency of these approaches. In service to this goal, Sharan Merriam (1998) outlines four characteristics of qualitative research, which guide the research methodology of this study.

First, the phenomenon of interest (in this case the faculty members' perceptions of their Tibetan Buddhist scholar-practitioner mentors on their teaching within a specific context) was *emic,* reflective of the "insider's" view or understood from the perspective of the participant, not the researcher. The research question guiding this study was clear in its alignment with this goal as the knowledge that the study sought to uncover is based on the perspective of the study participants, and not on some external entity.

Second, according to Merriam (1998), in studies such as this one, the researcher is the "primary instrument for data collection and analysis" (p.163). This study adhered strictly to this qualification, as no other instruments were used for data collection. Also for this reason, with an acknowledgement of the role that the researcher plays in the construction of knowledge from research, a narrative recounting of the researcher's story and positionality is included in the first chapter of this work; it is intended to supply context.

Third, Merriam highlights the inclusion of "fieldwork" as (.a defining characteristic of qualitative research. According to the author, "The researcher must physically go to the people, setting, site, institution (the field) in order to observe behavior in its natural setting" (p. 163). In the case of this research, since physical contact with the participants was restricted due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and since the context of the teaching time period began, in most cases, over 20 years ago, the "observable behavior" as defined by Merriam is only anecdotal; it is therefore not considered to constitute a formal data set for this study.

However, after each interview, I completed an immediate brief reflection, in the form of bulleted notes, on my observations of the participant and of the interview process. The goal was to capture relevant ideas and connect the experience and impressions arising from the interaction to inform the findings of this study. Given my previous collegial history with the participants, our extant rapport, and my position as an "insider" to this particular intersection of their worlds and experiences, I found myself in a unique position to offer observations, some of which are included in the findings of the study.

Finally, according to Merriam's definition, qualitative research relies upon an inductive research strategy that "builds abstractions, concepts, hypotheses, or theories rather than tests existing theory" (Merriam, 1998, p. 165). This study was in alignment with an inductive research approach, as its goal was to share knowledge previously unknown rather than to evaluate existing paradigms.

The Insider-Outsider Debate

The issue of "insider" versus "outsider" is alive and well in academia. In qualitative research in the social sciences and in religious studies, in particular, this issue holds an important role and is perhaps a point of intersection where the two fields are in greatest concord. In religious studies, the insider-outsider dynamic is usually framed as a problem, as in, "How can one who is born, raised, and develops within the context of a given tradition offer a legitimate research frame to study that tradition? and, in contrast, "How can one who is NOT born, raised, and develops within the context of a given tradition offer a legitimate research frame to study that tradition?" (McCutcheon, 1999). Although these questions crudely oversimplify both of these complex and contested positions, the point remains: the insider/outsider dynamic is not new to the academy, and the positionality of the scholar and the context in which they exist has been a significant concern for scholars of religious studies in the 20th–21st century.

This intersection is variously important to this research. First, the lived experiences of all of the study participants are situated at this intersection: as professors of religious studies in American institutions of higher education with Buddhist teachers—and as self-identified as Buddhists themselves—they traversed this ground on

a regular basis. Second, this distinction speaks to the heart of the epistemological questions that drove this research: although not resolved with any finality, this research effort endeavored to interrogate the emic and etic roles of the researcher and how identification with these roles may or may not add to the body of legitimate research methods. Finally, this intersection is pivotal for me as the researcher, since I too occupy an intersection of experience between the worlds of both realities. In my case, this intersection birthed my research question, informed my relationships with the study participants, and uniquely positioned me to conduct the study and elucidate its results.

The Constructivist Paradigm

I have found the constructivist paradigm that underlies this research to be both troublesome and thought-provoking. On the one hand, as clearly spelled out in the work of Guba and Lincoln (1982), 1) an ontology of relativism, 2) an epistemology of transactional subjectivism, 3) a methodology rooted in hermeneutics and dialecticism, and 4) an axiology that rejects "objectivity" and centers the values of the researcher and the study participants as the four "presumptions" that underlie constructivism hold the greatest philosophical alignment with my personal position. On the other hand, I find that the extremes of the defined constructivist position go too far. Although a detailed explanation of why this is the case could be the subject of another work, as a foundational example, let me offer that I do not agree with the relativist ontological position in full and, in fact, agree with the broad critiques of relativism (especially moral relativism) that assert that it can easily digress into a position of indifference and paralysis.

At the other extreme, the extant paradigms of research in the social sciences in Western academic culture have long been the most resonant with positivistic perspectives (Kincheloe & Tobin, 2009). These, from my perspective, also go too far, relying on a construction of reality that holds empiricism as its "backbone" (Kincheloe & Tobin, p. 515) and thus rejects multiple ways of being and knowing in the world. Kincheloe and Tobin (2009) have expanded upon this argument, arguing that "many of the tenets of positivism are so embedded within Western culture, academia, and the world of education in particular that they are often invisible to researchers and those who consume their research" (p. 513) and that this view, in fact, supports a form of reason that engenders oppression, hegemony, and social injustice. Again, although a detailed discussion rejecting the positivistic framework that is the basis of most academic research methodology (among other things) is far beyond the scope of this work, I would be remiss if I did not illuminate it here. In the words of Albert Einstein, "Of what is significant in one's own existence one is hardly aware.…What does a fish know about the water in which he swims all his life?" (Einsten, 2015). With this in mind, I suggest with this work that perhaps positivism itself is the "water in which we swim."

The constructivist embrace of a reality and knowledge that is neither static, unchanging, nor external crucially informs this work and forms an important basis for a worldview that approaches an inclusive social reality. Therefore, the study design for this research most closely aligned with the work of Sharan Merriam, as already mentioned, and Robert Stake, both of whom ground their qualitative frameworks in constructivist paradigms. These paradigms are relevant to this study not only from the

perspective of the research paradigm, but also from the perspective of the cultural context in which the study participants lived and functioned and their worldviews.

Critical Theory, Transformative Theory, Emancipatory Research

A second epistemological orientation in which this study is grounded is critical theory, in which "education" itself is approached as a social institution that can reproduce or transform the society in which it abides (Merriam, 1998). This frame includes the work of Jack Mezirow on transformative theory. It also includes work in the field of emancipatory research, which, although more specifically focused on research that produces knowledge that can benefit marginalized or oppressed social groups, relies on the assumptions that (a) multiple realities exist and (b) valid knowledge is not created solely by the dominant elite (Pascale, 2011). These paradigms are relevant to this study because the study has its ontological footing in the view that reality does not consist of a single, external, empirical thing and because the knowledge that this study offers to the world is based on epistemologies from traditions outside of what we commonly understand to be the dominant elite in North American academic culture.

The Research Question

This study asked, "How do faculty members teaching in the late-20th /early-21st-century American universities perceive the effect of their Tibetan Buddhist scholar-practitioner mentors on their teaching within the context of American capitalist culture?"

This research question arose from my own close association with a number of native Tibetan Buddhist scholar-practitioners from Tibet and in exile in India and a

number of Western academics who were both their students and, simultaneously, tenured faculty at American universities. In the context of my interactions with these individuals, which began in passing and has developed into collegial associations over the years, I have often wondered about how perspective on teaching and learning from a culture and teachers so different might influence these American scholars and, in turn, shape them as teachers.

Research Design (and the Appropriateness of this Research Design)

Patti Lather (1986) proposes that researchers construct research design that, in and of itself, is inclusive of self-reflexivity and will "push us toward becoming vigorously self-aware" (p. 66). According to Lather, the reflexivity of the researcher within the research process is what transforms research from observation into praxis. Other work has outlined a similar perspective for integrating the contemplative. Valerie Janesick (2015), in particular, has suggested a process of cultivation and documentation of "habits of mind for qualitative research" (p. 22) throughout the research process, inclusive of reflective journals cataloging the development, analysis, and practice of such habits of mind, including habits of observation and interviewing, analysis and interpretation, and other activities in support of the research. This research is inclusive of such practice (See Appendix A).

The research design for this study was based on the framework presented by Merriam (1998), a multiple case study analysis. The theoretical framework (discussed further in Chapter One) formed the foundation, from which the research "problem" and purpose were determined (see Figure 1 for a graphic illustration).

Figure 1

Research Design: Theoretical Framework, Purpose, Research Question

Contemplative Pedagogy | Critical Pedagogy | A Pedagogy of Love

What effect did Tibetan Buddhist scholar-practitioner mentors have on teaching in American higher education?

Capitalism | The Banking Model

Seeking Authenticity | Buddha-Nature

Purpose:
Understand the perceptions and practices of four faculty members in late 20th century American universities who were mentored by Tibetan Buddhist scholar-practitioner teachers

Theoretical Framework (Paulo Freire, Parker Palmer)

Case Selection and Boundaries

According to Merriam (1998), "To find the best case to study, you would first establish the criteria that will guide case selection and then select a case that meets those criteria" (Merriam, 1998, p. 873). In this research, the two criteria that determined case selection were as follows. First, the participant must have been a tenured faculty member at an American institution of higher education in the late 20th/early 21st century. Second, the participant must have had a student-teacher relationship with a native Tibetan Buddhist scholar-practitioner who had completed the course of studies in a Tibetan Buddhist monastic university and was a recognized teacher.

According to Ellinger et al. (2005):

> A case study is a bounded study of an individual, a group of individuals, an organization, or multiple organizations. The phenomenon of interest is bounded through the choice of research problem and questions, which dictates the appropriate setting and/or sample from which to develop a rich understanding of that phenomenon. (p. 328–329)

Each case in this multiple case study was bounded by adherence to the specific delineations present in the research question, which dictated the time in which the participants were active in American higher education (from 1995–2005), the identity of the participant (a tenured, teaching professor in an American university), and the relevant relationship (with a native, traditionally educated, Tibetan Buddhist scholar-practitioner).

Participants

The purpose of this study was to explore the experience of faculty members who, on the one hand, lived and worked in American higher education in the climate of capitalist culture in the late 20th/early 21st century, and, on the other, had formative relationships with mentors from Tibet. This study asked, "How do faculty members teaching in the late 20th/early 21st century perceive the effect of their Tibetan Buddhist scholar-practitioner mentors on their teaching within the context of American (capitalist) culture?"

This study employed a purposeful sampling strategy, focusing on "studying information-rich cases in depth and detail" (Patton, 1999, p. 1197). According to Patton, rigor is ensured in this process through a concentrated effort to "understand and

illuminate" specific cases of significance, rather than an approach that works to generalize from a specific example to the larger population. This study did the same.

The study participants were faculty members who held tenured faculty positions with teaching responsibility in American universities between 1995 and 2005 and who also had close, significant, student-teacher relationships with Tibetan Buddhist teachers during that time.

Participant Descriptions. Participant One (P1): Doris. Doris was a faculty member at a small, private, prestigious university in New England from the late 1970s through 2013, where she is now emeritus. She continues teaching today at a small, women's liberal arts college in the southern United States. Her work as a translator, researcher, scholar, and teacher has focused on various topics in Buddhism and Buddhist studies, as well as issues specific to communities of color in American spiritual communities in contemporary times. Doris is a Black woman.

Participant Two (P2): William. William was a faculty member at a medium-sized, prestigious university in the Midwest United States from the late 1970s through 2010, where he is now emeritus. He is a prolific author and has been recognized nationally and internationally for his research and translation work. William is a White man.

Participant Three (P3): Frank. Frank has been a faculty member at a small, prestigious Jesuit college on the East Coast since the mid-1980s. He combines an academic life teaching comparative theology with work as a meditation teacher in non-academic settings. Frank is a White man.

Participant Four (P4): Carlos. Carlos teaches at a large, public research university on the West Coast, where he has been on the faculty since 2001. Before that, he was faculty at a mid-sized theology school in the Western United States. He has written and published extensively, been the recipient of a number of prestigious academic awards, and just completed his term as president of the world's largest association of scholars in the field of religious studies and related topics. Carlos is a Latin American man.

Participant Five (P5): Andrew. Andrew taught at a large, private, ivy league research university in the eastern United States from 1988–2019. He has written substantial scholarly works, including various academic series, as well as books for a popular audience. Andrew was among the first Western scholars to bring the Tibetan Buddhist tradition into mainstream academia and continues to be vocal in both worlds. Andrew is a White man.

Participant Six (P6): Carol. Carol is faculty at a large, private, ivy league research university in the eastern United States. She has served extensively in academic organizations in the United States and abroad, received many grants and honors, and is widely published. Carol is a White woman.

Role of the Researcher

Returning to the context of the "paradigm wars" from early in this chapter, I find the mandate of positivistic research paradigms in which the researcher is constantly exhorted to go out of their way to reassure the readers of a lack of "bias" toward the study query, processes, and results entirely confusing. On the one hand, in my experience it is completely impossible for any human being to "keep themselves out" of

any research (as can easily be demonstrated by the fact that the research data source and topic is *chosen* by the researcher, with intention and purpose); even if complete objectivity were possible, moreover, the details of what would remain once the human element was removed do not correlate with my view of reality. On the other hand, this question, and the anxious conversation it provokes, seems to imply that we, as researchers, are in grave danger of miscommunicating valuable information about our work and research unless we remove "ourselves" entirely from the process.

My discussion of epistemological orientation in the beginning of this chapter should clarify that I do not share this view. Rather, I follow the line of thinking of Guba and Lincoln (1994), who insist that the researcher *cannot* be separated from the research itself. However, in an effort to be transparent about my role in this work, and to offer a remedy to a possible concern that the *hidden* presence of the values of the researcher in a qualitative study may invalidate its findings, I offer the following.

Based on the narrative presentation from Chapter One, my personal background and history with this subject matter should be clear. To reiterate, the experiences of my education and life thus far that inform this project are the following:

- the question of the meaning and purpose of education, the place and the concern with capitalist values of competitiveness, individual interest, and so forth;

- an awareness of class inequity and a concern for social justice;

- exposure to epistemologies that fall outside of the traditional American academy;

- the role and importance of an education of "interiority."

The subject matter of this study—the intersection of teaching and learning within the context of a capitalist culture influenced by contemplative traditions—reflects two areas of great importance and interest to me in my own experience. The study participants have been colleagues of mine for a number of years—met first in passing as a student of Tibetan Buddhist philosophy, then as a founder of a small Buddhist college in Portland where they were invited to teach, and then crossing paths again as colleagues at academic conferences and other events. The relationships that I have with these individuals are collegial and warm but not especially close and not bound by any power dynamic that might lead to an unreasonable distortion in my perception toward them. Additionally, in the case of this study in particular, there is already a basis of rapport and trust that exists between me and the study participants, which contributed to the ease of conversation in the data collection process. The general assumption of goodwill between me and the participants was a significant asset to this study.

Equanimity

A further methodological element that informed this research, which I propose has a place in research methodology in general, is the element of equanimity. Juneau et al. (2020) completed two studies revealing significant correlations between the development of equanimity and "mindfulness" practices as defined in mindfulness-based interventions—in the case of their research, either an extant mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) program or a mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT) program at the Mindfulness Auvergne Association in France. The conclusion that can be inferred from their research, and from other studies like it—as well as from

thousands of years of traditional texts from many Eastern traditions on specific

meditation techniques that offer clear instruction on how to develop the mind in

equanimity—is that the human mind is actually capable of embodying a state in which

it can observe phenomena without being held sway to an intensity of either attraction or

aversion. According to these findings, the human mind itself is capable (with training)

of functioning as a research instrument with minimal bias.

Desbordes et al. (2014) propose a definition of equanimity as follows: "an even-

minded mental state or dispositional tendency toward all experiences or

objects, regardless of their affective valence (pleasant, unpleasant or neutral) or source"

(p. 357). They further explain, "Equanimity also involves a level of *impartiality* (i.e.,

being not partial or biased), such that one can experience unpleasant thoughts or

emotions without repressing, denying, judging, or having aversion for them"

(Desbordes et. al, 2014, p. 358). The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines it as

"evenness of mind especially under stress." Traditional Buddhist texts define

equanimity as an even-minded, calm, non-reactive state of mind toward all beings and

phenomena, characterized by lack of aversion or approval (Buddhaghosa & Namoli,

2010). Desbordes et al. (2014) propose a definition of equanimity that is at once a

mental state to be purposefully cultivated and a mental state that is the "end result" of

these practices. Their article has helped develop literature presenting possible positions

for equanimity in learning (Keen, 2010), leadership (Rozeboom et al., 2016), mental

health (Chan et al., 2014), and student well-being (Astin & Keen, 2006; Cordoves,

2018; Kiessling, 2010).

Data Collection

Data for this study, in accordance with the goal of triangulation in case study research to ensure rigor (Yin, 1994), was collected through semi-structured interviews and through documents and publications. The data were used to explore the participants' experiences and perceptions of the ways in which their interactions with their Tibetan Buddhist scholar-practitioner mentors affected their teaching in American universities within the context of the extant (capitalist) culture (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Data Collection: Interviews

Interview Questions. The questions for the semi-structured interviews with study participants were constructed based on the research question and reviewed with colleagues in the University of Portland doctoral program and with advisors from the University of Portland graduate faculty. The questions underwent several drafts, and in their final iteration they were divided into three sections: the first related to *the beginning* part of the participants' life as a scholar and teacher, starting with how they met their Tibetan teachers; the second section related to *the middle* of their career, the bulk of their time teaching and their interaction with students; and the third related to *the end*, consisting of a reflective query directing the study participant to consider the most significant effects that the tradition of their Tibetan teachers may have had or will have on American higher education. See Appendix C for the semi-structured interview question list.

A Word About Zoom. In their 2019 article, Archibald et al. (2019) explored specific benefits and challenges of using Zoom as a data collection method for interviews in qualitative research. In general, the participants in their study found Zoom

to be not merely *equal to* but even *a superior* data collection tool in support of qualitative research data collection. The authors cited "ease of use, cost-effectiveness, data management features, and security options" (Archibald et al., 2019, p. 1) as some of the characteristics found by their study participants that actually rendered this solution superior to in-person interviewing. From their study:

> Overall, there was agreement among researchers and participants that Zoom was a useful method for conducting qualitative interviews. The majority of participants (69%) identified Zoom as a preferred method compared to in-person interviews, telephone, or other videoconferencing platforms. Researchers and interviewees frequently reported the following points as key advantages of using Zoom for qualitative interviewing, reflecting impersonal, technical, and logistical considerations: 1) rapport, 2) convenience, and 3) simplicity and user-friendliness. (Archibald et al., 2019, p. 1)

A number of other studies have been conducted from a similar perspective in recent years, and likely even more so since 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic rendered in-person meetings of most types nearly impossible. In my personal experience, upon my original conceptualization of this study, I fully intended to conduct interviews with the study participants in person. However, once the pandemic became a constraining factor, and so much of my world (and the worlds of many others) became virtual, it was not difficult to pivot to reliance on a cloud-based peer-to-peer software platform for the purposes of collecting data for this study. My experience with Zoom has been extremely positive thus far; and I felt no limitation in the ability to gather data for this study due to the mediation of this tool.

Preparation for Interviews: A Pilot Interview. Following IRB approval, a pilot interview with a participant who did not meet the full requirements of the bounded system for the study was conducted. The pilot aimed to refine data collection methods and further develop questions. The pilot interview did not result in any significant changes to the interview protocol for this study, but rather reinforced the importance of maintaining a flexible approach toward interviews and a strong rapport with the study participant.

Preparation for Interviews: Contemplative Practice. To counteract any possible bias toward participants and to ensure that I, the researcher, as the primary instrument of data collection, was approaching the data collection with as balanced a mind as possible, before every interview I practiced three to five minutes of simple breathing meditation, with the goal of separating my analytical mind from exaggerated conceptualization (Tsoṅ-Kha-Pa & Dalai Lama, 1977/2016). Notes on these sessions can be found in the appendices to this work.

Transcription. Each interview was recorded using an internet-based recording service, and, upon completion, the audio file was transcribed word-for-word through the transcription service Rev.com. Following the transcription of the manuscripts, the transcripts were checked for mistakes and corrected.

Interview Analysis. My aim in this multiple case study was to answer the research question, "How do faculty members teaching in the late 20th century perceive the effect of their Tibetan Buddhist scholar-practitioner mentors on their teaching within the context of American capitalist culture?"

Data were collected as detailed above and analyzed using the constant comparative analysis method. Fram (2013) has argued for the use of the constant comparative analysis method outside of grounded theory research, in conjunction with reliance on a theoretical framework (which can emerge from the review of the literature) to drive the development of codes from data. She states that her use of constant comparative analysis is "explicitly pragmatic in nature" Fram, 2013, p. 11), instead of being used, as is common, as the basis from which theory is developed in grounded theory research. According to Fram, the constant comparative analysis method is a strong method to employ when seeking to maintain the emic perspective.

The analysis of interviews took the following form once transcription was complete:

1. First-cycle coding: For the first pass, I coded interviews using descriptive coding to develop the first categories of data for analysis. I found 25 total codes in the extant data during first-cycle coding.

2. Second-cycle coding: I coded each case as a single case and across cases using the constant comparative analysis method, prioritizing frequency and saliency of the material in line with the first two steps from Boeije (2002):

- comparison of codes within a single interview;

- comparison between interviews within the group.

In general, I coded the data until "saturation" emerged. Based on second-cycle coding, six codes were identified for case one, 10 codes were identified for case two, 10 codes were identified for case three, 11 codes were identified for case four, 12 codes were identified for case five; and three codes were identified for case six.

Based on the codes identified through these processes, I completed a third cycle of coding to consider the data through the lens of the research question. On the basis of third-cycle coding, I found two categories: (1) six final codes pertaining to the individual case analysis and (2) the overall themes for the data after the cross-case analysis, which I then further divided into the categories of (1) how the participant relates to students; (2) what the participant teaches them; and (3) how the participant positions themselves in their identity as a teacher.

Data Collection: Documents

Before each interview, I requested the study participants send me several documents that they had authored and that they felt were reflective of how they might answer this research question and reflective of how they viewed teaching in higher education. The response was immediate and generous; indeed, a couple of these individuals sent me upwards of a dozen documents or more. To maintain fair representation, I chose two pieces authored by each individual—in most cases articles or book chapters—and analyzed them according to the already determined themes as part of my data analysis. In some cases, although not all, I also had access to syllabi or to anecdotal detail about assignments or specific approaches to teaching methodology.

Trustworthiness and Rigor

In this study, I adopted the approach of Guba and Lincoln (1994) in moving away from research grounded in a positivist paradigm. This approach promotes internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity as hallmarks of trustworthiness in research. I used three of the five approaches to establishing trustworthiness that they recommend as detailed in the following table.

Table 1

Establishing Trustworthiness

General criterion according to Guba and Lincoln	Recommended technique	Technique used in this study
Activities that make it more likely that credible findings and interpretations will be produced An activity that provides an external check on the inquiry process	Triangulation, persistent observation, bracketing, peer debriefing	• triangulation through interview data, document analysis, literature review • coding checks with UP faculty advisor and peer group
An activity providing for the direct test of findings and interpretations with the human sources from which they have come-the constructors of the multiple realities being studied	Member checking	Coding checks with study participants

Confirmability: Triangulation

In 1978, Norman Denzin published *The Research Act: A Theoretical Introduction to Sociological Methods*, in which he argues for an approach to naturalistic inquiry that relies upon "triangulation" or the examination of research questions from multiple approaches. In a 1982 article on the same topic, Guba and Lincoln defined triangulation as a research method "whereby a variety of data sources, different perspectives or theories, different methods, and even different investigators are pitted against one another in order to cross-check data and interpretation" (p. 378). This study employed such a strategy, relying on the multiple direct data sources from study participants (interviews, documents, observation), as well as contextual data sources

(literature review and conceptual framework) to examine the data and determine study findings. In this way, further trustworthiness was established.

Verification: Audit Trails

A further verification of trustworthiness of the findings from this qualitative study was established through the careful attention to audit trails throughout the course of the data collection. In the case of this study, three audit trails were constructed and kept, based on a combination of the work of traditional qualitative researchers based in traditional disciplines (Carcary, 2009; Wolf, 2003) and on researchers working to connect the contemplative domain to educational research practice, especially Valerie Janesick (2015, 2016). In the case of this study, I developed three audit trails to support the confirmability of this study's findings:

- thought: the intellectual audit trail;

- contemplation: the habits of mind audit trail;

- action: the physical audit trail.

Verification: Expert Audit Review

In accordance with Patton (2002), I established further verification of the findings through analyst triangulation in the form of an expert audit review. This took the form of an interview with Yangsi Rinpoche, a traditionally trained *geshe lharampa* (Doctor of Philosophy with highest honors) from the Tibetan tradition, trained in the traditional monastic university system, who has lived in the west and worked with American scholars and teachers in higher education for over 20 years and thus stands at the intersection that this study represents. His comments on the study findings are interspersed throughout where relevant.

Ethical Considerations

Any possible ethical considerations related to this study are likely tied into the issue of the positionality of the researcher and my own place in the research. To mitigate such concerns, I have centered the issues of researcher positionality in the narrative of this study and have discussed my approaches to the concern with depth and transparency, anchoring the argument and my place in it in within known epistemological frameworks and research to the greatest extent possible. I employed rigorous, commonly known strategies of establishing trustworthiness in qualitative data collection and analysis according to the guidelines of Guba and Lincoln (1982), as well as the use and documentation of rigorous methods of contemplative inquiry to ensure that I, as the researcher, encountered the data of this study with a mental state as distanced from bias as possible.

Participant protection was validated through the Institutional Review Board process at University of Portland in August 2020. All standard protocols for protecting the identity of participants were adhered to in accordance with the IRB.

Summary of the Methodology

In summary, this qualitative study, grounded in a paradigm most closely aligned with constructivism and critical theory, used a case study methodology to explore faculty members' perceptions of their Tibetan Buddhist scholar-practitioner mentors on their teaching within the context of American capitalist culture in the late 20th/early 21st century. The purpose of this study was to understand the perceptions and practices of faculty members in American universities who were mentored by Tibetan Buddhist

scholar-practitioner teachers, in the context of American capitalist culture.

The research design was based on the framework presented by Sharan Merriam (1998): a multiple case study analysis. Cases were selected and bound based on strict criteria:

1. The participant must have been a tenured faculty member with teaching responsibilities at an American institution of higher education in the late 20th/early 21st century.

2. The participant must have had a student-teacher relationship with a native Tibetan Buddhist scholar-practitioner who had completed a full course of studies in a Tibetan Buddhist monastic university and was a recognized teacher.

Data for this study were collected through semi-structured interviews and documents. Once collected, each case was analyzed through an individual case study methodology and a cross-case study methodology, according to the constant comparative analysis method, in alignment with the theoretical and conceptual framework of this work.

Trustworthiness and rigor were assured through three of the five recommended techniques of Guba and Lincoln (1982). Finally, special attention to me, as researcher and as the primary instrument of data collection (as well as analysis) is considered, documented, and included as part of this study. In alignment with my own orientation and worldview, this study offers alternative explorations and understandings of the role of researchers in research.

Chapter Four: Findings

As stated in Chapter One, this study examined the perceived effect of Tibetan-Buddhist Buddhist scholar-practitioner mentors on American faculty members teaching within the context of American (Capitalist) culture. This chapter presents the results of the data analysis of interviews and documents that arose from the research question: How do faculty members who taught in American universities in the late 20th century perceive the effect of their Tibetan Buddhist scholar-practitioner mentors on their teaching within the context of American (Capitalist) culture? The chapter is organized in terms of two levels of analysis common to case study research (Yin, 1994): Individual Case Reporting and Cross-Case Analysis of the data. The themes and categories were derived through the use of Constant Comparative data analysis, as detailed in Chapter Three.

Individual Case Reporting

The themes that were found in the individual case reporting of study participants are presented in the categories as follows:

- how I relate to students;

- what I teach students;

- how I position myself/ my identity/ my motivation.

Each individual case study resulted in data that corresponded to each of these three categories, although the participants expressed unique interpretation of these elements, and the degree of salience varied from person to person. Among these, I identified three themes as most significant across the cases as a whole, determined to be so by the study participants, who told me so directly or indirectly, and by noting the

frequency of occurrence and the emphasis placed on them by the participant in speech and in writing in the interview and document data.

A comparative discussion of these individual cases composes the cross-case study analyses that composes the latter part of this chapter.

Doris: Listen and Be Kind

The themes that I identified in the data from the interview with Doris were "Listen and Be Kind," "Put Yourself in Someone Else's Shoes," "Be a Good Person," and "Learning Should Be Sweet and Joyous." The overall theme that was most representative of the data from this perspective was "Listen and Be Kind." In general Doris was most animated when speaking of the process of learning with her students. She mentioned that in her long career spanning almost 40 years, teaching in four different institutions of higher education, where she had taught many different kinds of students, one element remained a constant: "Mainly what I wanted was for them to turn out to be good people, which meant being a caring, compassionate human being," she said. Doris's way of facilitating this was through expressing care herself, which, in her interpretation was a largely receptive process, relating with being available and lending a "caring ear". To contextualize this, in our interview, Doris began her discussion about her own experience of being cared for by her Tibetan teacher with the following anecdote:

> …[When I was struggling with my advisor in graduate school, I talked with my
> Tibetan teacher.] I said, "Nobody's ever graduated from this guy." He said,
> "Tell me everything." At first when I was telling him, I was angry. I said, "Look
> at what you got me into." …I said, "It's just so miserable." He said, "Tell me,

dear."… He calmed me down and also washed away all of that. He said, "Tell

me everything…" (Doris, Interview, Fall 2020; Theme P1a)

Later in the interview, Doris reflected on her personal experience with students,

seemingly unaware way that, in her own telling, her relationships with them mirrored

the relationship that she experienced with her teacher. In the quote that follows, Doris,

who most highly valued "caring" in her conversation, tells a story of the way she

embodied that for her students:

> …I still get letters from my former students. They tell me, "I was in your classes
>
> and when you were away, I was devastated." But I never knew it…the reason
>
> they would come to me is they thought I would listen. They thought I would be
>
> a caring ear. (Doris, Interview, Fall 2020; Theme P1a)

Doris was a faculty member at a medium sized, private, prestigious university in

New England from the late 1970's through 2013 . She continues teaching today at a

"very small," (according to the Carnegie Classification Scheme) private Liberal Arts

college for women in the southern United States. Her work as a translator, researcher,

scholar, and teacher has focused on various topics in Buddhism and Buddhist Studies,

as well as issues specific to women and to communities of color in American spiritual

groups in contemporary times.

The following themes ("Listen and Be Kind," "Put Yourself in Someone Else's

Shoes," "Be a Good Person," and "Learning Should Be Sweet and Joyous") were

identified when analyzing the interview and documents from Doris in the context of my

theoretical framework.

Doris, Finding One: Listen and be Kind. The theme of "Listen and be kind" was the most evident in the data from this participant. She said:

> But we can be kind. I don't know if they can teach this…but even at a place like [where I taught] where students were so privileged, the reason they would come to me is they thought I would listen. They thought I would be a caring ear. The reason they would come and cry about this professor who demolished their world was they thought I could hear, I would listen. (Doris, Interview, Fall 2020; Theme P1a)

This quote emphasizes this participant's concern with receptivity and kindness as primary in her pedagogical approach to teaching in higher education. In the context of the research question, it is of note that what arose in the telling of this participant's experience when asked to consider the influence of her Tibetan teachers on her own work teaching in American higher education in a capitalist context were the twin edicts "Listen" and "Be kind." In Doris' telling, these were the most striking takeaways from both the relationship with her Tibetan teacher, and her relationship with her own students. In the interview process, Doris was noticeably most animated and engaged when speaking about her interactions with students, and her wishes for them to develop into caring and compassionate people. She contrasts her own position as a "caring ear" with that of her colleagues in American higher education, who (in her words) "demolished" their students' worlds on a regular basis. In her telling, this was done in the pursuit of developing critical thinking:

> At [my school], if you wanted to make a person who could think critically, to think critically was not equivalent to thinking compassionately….but [among

the Tibetans] there was real appreciation for reasoning and testing…developing

a sharp mind. *Critical* doesn't mean *criticism*, it means *sharp*…. (Doris,

Interview, Fall 2020; Theme P1a)

Doris' discernment of herself as a caring instructor in contrast to this approach

began with high school:

I always wanted to teach. I wanted to teach since the high school gym teacher

told me I was going to have to join the cheerleading squad. And I said, "Miss

Calloway, no! Those are rough girls. I'm going to have a hard time. I can't do

it." And she said, "Listen, you can do it. You know those things, you remember

them and you can teach them how to do it." And I'm going, "I don't think so."

But she made me. (Doris, Interview, Fall 2020; Theme P1a)

Doris told this story as a reiteration of her experiences with teaching, which

began somewhat unwillingly but ultimately resulted in a deep relationality, and

friendship: "Those girls became my best friends. [They told me:] 'Whenever somebody

says something to you, you tell us, and we'll take them.' They were rough, tall girls"

(Doris, Interview, Fall 2020; Theme P1a).

In Doris' telling, her success with that high school group solidified her love of

teaching for a lifetime, a love that was rooted in her genuine affection for her students,

relationality, and reflective of the love that her Tibetan teacher showed for her. "It's

amazing he loved me," she said. And even after she was disrespectful to him one day,

she says: "And he still loved me. Talk about compassion" (Doris, Interview, Fall 2020;

Theme P1a). A strong contrast can be drawn here between the values of Doris, for

whom kindness, relationality, and listening are teaching priorities, and those of her

colleagues in the Western academy, who, in her telling, regularly "demolished" their students as part of the teaching process.

Doris, Finding Two: Put Yourself in Someone Else's Shoes. The second iteration of "Listen and Be Kind" in Doris' experience is the theme "Put yourself in someone else's shoes," which is another iteration of relationality. In this context, the relationality is teaching students to view the world from a perspective different to their own, in order that their relationships with others might be better for it. Doris spoke of one particular element from the traditional Tibetan teachings that she always tried to implement with her students:

> …the equality of self and others: I think that's a really important lesson for human beings. I often give my students assignments where they have to place themselves in another person's shoes, tell a story from that point of view… I want students to think their way through another person's way of seeing things. (Doris, Interview, Fall 2020; Theme P1b)

In Doris' telling, time and again, the learning that a student gained from examining or experiencing a situation from a perspective other than their own was the most impactful, and the recognition of the equality of oneself and others a key moment in their education. She often referenced Shantideva, an eighth-century Indian philosopher, Buddhist monk, poet, and scholar from the university at Nalanda in India, who famously wrote:

> Since I and other beings both,
>
> In wanting happiness, are equal and alike,
>
> What difference is there to distinguish us,

That I should strive to have my bliss alone? (Śāntideva, 1997/2006, p. 160)

The Tibetan Buddhist practice of *tonglen* (*gtong len*), or *Exchanging Self for Others,* is also rooted in the verse and teaching of Śāntideva (Shantideva). In relation to the basic dynamic of this teaching as it came alive in her own approach to students, Doris recalls an evening when, as a teenager in the 1960's, a local Klan group came to her home in the Southern United States and burned a cross on her lawn. According to Doris, the Klan was retaliating against the news that she, a young Black woman in the Southern United States, was making great strides academically and was on her way to success as a scholar. Of her thoughts after that experience, she says:

I just wanted to talk to them, to teach the Klan folk that burned the cross. I wanted to show them that we were a family just like them…I thought it was, I still think it is, good if you can get a person to see some equality between themselves and others. (Doris, Interview, Fall 2020; Theme P1b)

This relational approach is further reflected in Doris' experience through her general approach to giving assignments to her students, about which she says: "I also always assign at least one essay in which students are asked to imagine themselves as an actual person in the Buddha's time and to create a narrative based on that" (Doris, Document, P1Db).

Again, Doris' emphasis was on relationality, and ways that she supports her students to experience a perspective that differs from their own, to see the world through a different set of eyes in order to equalize themselves with others. This technique is directly drawn from the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, in her own words:

That's why I love Shantideva so much, the equality of self and others. I think

that's a really important lesson for human beings. So I often give [my students]

assignments where they have to place themselves in another's shoes, tell the

story from that point of view. (Doris, Interview, Fall 2020; Theme P1b)

Finally, as an extension of this theme and in answer to the research question,

Doris recalls not only that one of the greatest influences from her Tibetan teacher on her

teaching in Western higher education was a focus on relationality, but also that she has

been formally recognized for it:

I take heart in remembering that when I won a prize for excellence in teaching in

2003, the plaque that I was given announced that it was due to my ability to

make learning a shared process and that I "open [the] eyes [of my students] to a

culture far different from our own." (Doris, Interview, Fall 2020; Theme P1b)

This sentiment speaks both to Doris' successful implementation of this dynamic

in her teaching and to the recognition of the academy that she was doing this.

Doris, Finding Three: Be a Good Person, Learning Should Be Sweet and

Joyous. Results of the interview and document analysis data from Doris show that her

general position, identity, and/or motivation reside most clearly within the locus of joy

and a genuine altruistic motivation. She credits this to her Tibetan teachers. She says,

"… It sort of didn't matter what the subject matter was…mainly what I wanted was for

them to turn out to be good people, which meant being a caring, compassionate human

being" (Doris, Interview, Fall 2020;

Theme P1c).

In the review of the themes that I found in her interview (member checking)

with Doris, she asked me to amplify this sentiment even further, and expressed:

[My Tibetan teacher] always said: approach any new learning experience or occasion with joy, thinking that [first] you learn this, and [then] someday you might be able to *help* someone with what you've learned. It was and is a lesson about how to approach and view learning and education, with a happy and eager mind. Learning should be sweet and approached with happiness…it is not something that is artificial or that can be bought. Learning should be both sweet and joyous. (Doris, Interview, Fall 2020; Theme P1c)

Both this sentiment and Doris' wish that I emphasize it more clearly in this research speak to her commitment to a learning process that is oriented towards the student developing a kind and compassionate mind, and not towards any other purpose. This is a common locus of motivation in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, from which her teacher came (where every class begins with a prayer meant to direct the mind towards the greatest good), but one that is almost completely unheard of in most formal higher education, where even the most noble of intentions are related to ensuring that the student has the skills to get a good job.

On the whole, in the context of the research question, the influence of her Tibetan teacher on her teaching in American higher education, which is framed by the context of American, capitalist culture is clear. Using the framework put forth by Labaree, instead of approaching her students with the goal of preparing them to participate in their communities as "citizens" (democratic equality), workers (social efficiency), or to take their place in the marketplace (social mobility), Doris chooses instead to teach with care for their well-being and development as holistic human beings, with the aspiration that they become "caring, compassionate human beings."

William: Question Everything. The themes that I identified in the data from the interview with William were "Teach as a Scholar-Practitioner (Embody Duality)," "Question Everything," "A Position on the Insider-Outsider Debate," and "The Value in Authentic Voices from Other Cultures." The overall theme that was most representative of the data from this perspective was "Question Everything."

By William's own admission, his natural point of approach to any subject matter is through the intellect, and he highly values critical thinking, so it is unsurprising that the most impactful pieces that he took away from his learning with his Tibetan teachers and into his own classrooms were elements related to those aspects of the mind. From 1989 through 2016, William was a faculty member at an institution qualified as "four-year, small, highly residential" in the Carnegie Classification Scheme, where he is now . He continues his research, writing, and teaching today in the field of Buddhist Philosophy. He says:

> Certainly the [practitioners of this school of Tibetan Buddhism] have a pretty serious scholastic side, as we all know. And, I think being fairly intellectually oriented is a baseline [for me]. I was fascinated by …questions like, is mind beginningless? And is enlightenment possible? ...But also just by the rigor of the scholastic system, the complexity of it. (William, Interview, Fall 2020)

The following themes were identified when analyzing the interview and documents from William.

William, Finding One: Teach as a Scholar-Practitioner (Embody Duality). William was particularly impacted by the manifestation in his Tibetan teachers of the elements of precise scholasticism combined with warmth and heart. About one of his

main Tibetan Buddhist teachers, he says, "Even though he had this spontaneous, warm, engaging style, he was sharp as could be" (William, Interview, Fall 2020; Theme 4A). About another, "He combined this sweetness, kind of ineffable sweetness with a very sharp intellect. .. for all that sweetness, there was iron at his core" (William, Interview, Fall 2020; Theme P2a).

William further elucidates this by drawing out his noticing of not only the powerful scholasticism of these individuals, but also of their embodiment of the system and methods that they taught, which include a complex philosophical tradition of dialectics grounded in "the method aspect of the path," which emphasizes altruism, love, and compassion. In this way, William took great inspiration from his Tibetan teachers as "scholar-practitioners:" "We were struck above all," he said, "by how these were people who practiced what they preached…it was like, 'Whoa, these people are the real thing'" (William, Interview, Fall 2020; Theme P2a).

In fact, this embodiment was such a prominent theme in William's experience that he wrote about the phenomena of the "scholar-practitioner" as it relates to Buddhist Studies extensively in his later work.

Especially in America, but also elsewhere, the members of this generation of Buddhist scholars were unlike any before them (and unlike their contemporaries in the fields of, say, Hindu or Islamic studies) in that most of them began as Buddhists, and had, in fact, turned to academia to learn more about a tradition that they practiced – often at the lay meditation centers. In this regard, they were reminiscent of scholars of Christianity or Judaism, who usually were Christians or Jews. Christian or Jewish scholars could profess (as well as study and

criticize) their traditions in theological seminaries, but the new Buddhist Buddhologists had no such settings into which to graduate. Rather, they were trained in the tradition of classical "objective" philological, historical, and doctrinal scholarship, and found their homes primarily in departments of Asian studies, philosophy, or, most commonly, religious studies; the latter were quite distinct from departments of theology out of which they had evolved, in that they insisted that their members be committed, both in research and pedagogy, to description rather than prescription. Thus, whatever their degree of personal commitment to Buddhism, the baby-boom Buddhologists had to (and many, in any case, wished to) keep their personal and academic lives quite separate – for only that way were employment, then tenure, possible. As these scholars moved through the academic system, they began to produce works that pushed Buddhist studies beyond where their mentors had taken it, providing ever more finely tuned explorations of a variety of texts and traditions, continuing to explore the classical philosophical material that had been at the core of the field since the 19th century, but also gaining a new appreciation for the insights into Buddhism "on the ground" that might be derived from epigraphic, archeological, anthropological, and sociological study. (William, Document, P2Da)

This framework is one that scaffolds the life and work of all of the participants in this study. Each of these individuals, in coherence with the boundaries of the study, can be identified as a "scholar-practitioner" using the definition above, and most of them of them faced the issue head on in entering an academy that was, at best, suspicious of, and at worst, hostile to, professors who taught religion in the Liberal Arts

who were themselves adherents to the traditions that they taught about. There were notable exceptions to this occurrence in the experience of three of the study participants, who taught (either briefly or for their entire careers) in schools with a "theological" or religious orientation.

       William, Finding Two: Question Everything. In relation to the second finding in the experience of William, the finding that was most salient in relationship to his feeling about which of the many tools of his scholarship were most influenced by his learning from Tibetan teachers was the tool of critical inquiry. In conversation with William, most apparent in his demeanor was his sharp intellect and questioning intensity, and his commitment to that same inquiry. William spoke fluidly and passionately of how his own commitment to critical inquiry arose as a result of his education in both Tibetan and Western contexts: "Certainly, those of us who were interested in philosophy," he said, "know Tibetans did not pull many punches in arguing with each other. There's a strongly critical spirit" (William, Interview, Fall 2020; Theme P2b).

> He then explained the way in which this same dynamic was operationalized within his own teaching in American higher education:
>
> I would say that in my own teaching…I had to recognize that I am primarily within the context of the Western academy and the critical tools and theories that have been developed there…and that still takes precedence and you certainly have to be willing to look at whatever is said within another tradition through that lens, but to actually come up with other lenses, counter theories, counter modes of critique is tremendously important. I think that's part of the

increased pluralism within the academy…(William, Interview, Fall 2020;

Theme P2b)

Upon further consideration of the activity of critical inquiry in William's own

teaching experience, he became somewhat self-reflective: "There's enough of this

teenage rebel in me to say nothing is sacred and everything has to be questioned," he

said, "but you've got to be able to question your own questioning too" (William,

Interview, Fall 2020; Theme P2b).

In this way William reiterated the import of critical inquiry in his own life and

work, and in exchanges such as the one proceeding, demonstrated that it is an active

principle alive in his mind and thinking today. In his writing, William also shows that

he is committed to critical inquiry, not only in his own application of such but also in

terms of framing the intersection of Eastern and Western cultures, applying such a lens

to this intersection.

> Whether in Asia or the West, modernity has challenged [Buddhist cultures']
>
> traditional ideas, institutions, and practices. Intellectually, the metaphysical
>
> materialism, epistemological skepticism, and the fallibilist view of human nature
>
> generally assumed in the Western sciences and social sciences tend cast doubt
>
> on many elements of the saṃsāra-nirvāṇa cosmology underlying traditional
>
> Buddhism. (William, Document, P2Db)

In this way, William proves himself true to the theme "question everything,"

being unafraid to bring a mind of critical inquiry to either the constructs of his own

experiences or to that of the traditions of his teachers.

William, Finding Three: A Position on the Insider-Outsider Debate, and the Value in Authentic Voices from Other Cultures. Lastly, the finding of the greatest significance in terms of the third category, the one most representative of William's position, identity and motivation, was his positioning of the Insider-Outsider debate that is endemic to Religious Studies, as well as his strong (and not unrelated) commitment to the value in hearing authentic voices from other cultures as part of his own scholarship. William spoke of the Insider-Outsider debate not only from the perspective of himself, as an "Insider" to the Buddhist tradition because of being a practicing Buddhist, but also brought an unexpected angle to the topic in the context of his own teacher, and the voices of other Tibetans, whose perspectives on their own tradition were not necessarily welcomed in the academy:

> We ought to allow people within a tradition to speak, and to speak from within the tradition and not expect them necessarily to have a handle on Western critical theory or Western modes of analysis and argumentation….there's a deep, deep value in hearing authentic voices that come from cultures other than our own. (William, Interview, Fall 2020; Theme P2c)

The excerpt exemplifies a tension between the academic world that William works within, and the worldview of the teachings that he holds. This tension was replicated in five of the six study participants, who each spoke in some way of the rigidity of the perspective of the Western academy as it pertains to the Liberal Arts, and the definition of what a "critical" approach might be. The exception to this was the experience of Frank, who has taught in a theological school for his entire career, and, in

the course of his career, was exposed to methods of critical analysis rooted in Biblical study that he found applicable to his own work.

Returning to William: William is a White male with a Western academic background, and his awareness of his positionality as a holder of these identities is a distinct part of the subtext of his Religious Studies scholarship, as is the influence he received from holders of the philosophical tradition with backgrounds very different to his own. In reference to the theme of "the value in authentic voices from other cultures," William recalled a specific experience in his teaching career when a renowned scholar in the Tibetan tradition who was trained in Tibet was actively discouraged from seeking a tenured position in an R1 University in North America because:

> …the style of education that [the Tibetan teacher] had received in Tibet was not a Western critical approach. And therefore, [others in the Academy argued that] he really wasn't qualified to be a tenured professor in the Western academy…again this is operating with a certain set of assumptions and a certain period of time. (William, Interview, Fall 2020; Theme P2c).

Eventually, this was happily overcome: "And obviously [he] had enough allies that this kind of opposition was overcome…." (William, Interview, Fall 2020). Witnessing this event, and thinking through the complex assumptions of identities and epistemologies that accompanied it, William came away from the experience with a visceral commitment to an inclusive perspective:

> They come out of systems that are themselves critically analytical and genuinely philosophical but maybe not in the way that we're used to. In whatever teaching

I did, that was ideally the perspective that I tried to, and still try to adopt. It's

this old insider-outsider thing; you have got to be able to deal with both, and

you've got to be able to shift from one to the other. (William, Interview, Fall

2020; Theme P2c)

William's comment here is indicative of a broader issue at work; in this context,

the Tibetan teachers acting as "authentic voices" for their systems of philosophy and

methodologies of critical analysis are not only acting as emissaries of the content that

their systems embody, but also acting as representatives of the epistemologies that those

traditions rely upon, which often are very different to our own. This brings a new depth

to the "insider-outsider" debate, which will be discussed further in Chapter Five.

Frank: Bridge the Worlds

Based on his answers to my questions (which were substantial and regularly

veered far beyond a superficial observation for an answer into a reply embodying not

only deep thought but deep feeling as well) and our conversation, Frank appeared to me

to be the most seamlessly fluid in traversing the worlds between the Western academy

and the Tibetan system. In his words:

…and what effect has that relationship [with my Tibetan teacher] had? Well, the

effect has been virtually my whole life since then and everything that I've done.

I mean, everything is somehow grounded in that, and that's so foundational that

it catches me off balance….It's just sort of everything. (Frank, Interview, Fall

2020)

Frank has been a faculty member at a large, prestigious research university in

the Catholic tradition that serves both graduate and undergraduate students from 1992

until the present. The themes that I identified in the data from the interview with Frank were "Bridge the Worlds," "Embody Freedom," and "Teach as a Scholar-practitioner." The overall theme that was most representative of the data from Frank's experience was "Bridge the Worlds."

Frank, Finding One: Bridge the Worlds. Frank spoke passionately and forcefully about the places where the modern world might find answers in the knowledge of the wisdom tradition of Tibetan Buddhism:

> There are many needs of the modern world that are crying out for this possibility of accessing these innate capacities and cultivating and bringing them forward and having those ways of being an understanding and together with those kinds of embodied qualities, then informing many issues of our time…that could have to do with everything like race relations and burnout by people in all areas of social service and social change work and on and on and on… (Frank, Interview, Fall 2020; Theme P3a)

This perspective is notable for two reasons. First, in this quote and elsewhere, Frank refers to accessing the "innate" capacity of human beings, which is an idea directly informed by Buddhism in general and particularly operationalized by the tradition of Tibetan Buddhism that Frank practices most (see notes on Buddha nature). The perspective of approaching learning with an eye towards the innate capacity of learners most closely resembles the recent turn in American education towards a "growth mindset" approach as opposed to a deficit-based model. This will be discussed further in Chapter Five; for now, it is sufficient to note its presence here as the framework and basis for education from Frank's perspective. Secondly, in this quote,

Frank references ways in which "issues of our time" may be positively impacted by knowledge from Asian Buddhist traditions. He elaborates further on this here in the context of higher education:

> …it won't serve higher education broadly in the modern world to then simply send (students) to ancient Asian Buddhist treatises. There's a bridge that has to be made. And the question then becomes how to make that bridge. And I think Tibetan teachers embody that possibility, but they also need partners and a lot of help to make that bridge between cultures….it typically takes a long, long time. (Frank, Interview, Fall 2020; Theme P3a)

> Implicit in this statement, and in his observation that the traditions of Asia have great potential to inform Western culture and that bridges need to be constructed to facilitate such, is a sense of responsibility for supporting this that was evident in Frank's responses. This sense of responsibility was evident to a greater or lesser degree in all of the study participants, although it was most evident and most clearly articulated in the findings relating to Frank.

Frank, Finding Two: Embody Freedom. When asked directly about the qualities that he noticed in his Tibetan teacher that were most impactful, Frank said: I think initially what connected me to them was something I was reading off of them, which is that they were embodying a quality… a way of being. It wasn't just the content of their teaching. It was what preceded anything that they might say…a deep inner-

> freedom, a freedom from being identified with and caught up in things. It's not any attempt to escape from things, but just not caught up in them….not a peace that comes from avoiding or trying to get away from troubling things. But a

peace within all the troubling things. (Frank, Interview, Fall 2020; Theme P3b).

Frank spoke repeatedly of his impression that his teachers carried with them a deep sense of peace, and inner freedom. In Frank's interpretation, echoing William's, this is proof of their lived experience of the Tibetan Buddhist philosophical teachings, which assert a freedom from gross levels of conceptuality grounded in compassion as an antidote to suffering, and a definition of liberation. Frank goes on to explain how he relies upon this very sense of embodiment in the Tibetan teachers to communicate the meaning of important Buddhist concepts to his Western students:

So I raised the question: … "Nirvana" is a real thing and very, very important…how is that actually communicated in Asian Buddhist cultures? It's not by these abstract discussions that we're reading back in our textbooks…It's embodied…through encounters with people within Buddhist Asian communities …there are unconditional qualities that spontaneously express the realization of an unconditioned nature of reality, deep freedom and so forth, deepest tranquility and also unconditional love and compassion and discernment or responsiveness. I'll tell stories about the Buddha and Buddhist teachers that communicate those qualities as actually embodied in people. That's how people come to take Nirvana and enlightenment seriously in Asian Buddhist cultures, it's through encounters with people like that. And the stories told about them. (Frank, Interview, Fall 2020; Theme P3b)

Frank, Finding Three: Teach As a Scholar-practitioner. The final theme arising from Frank's data is, in essence, his prescription for how the relationships between Tibetan teachers and Western scholars can best function into the future. Frank

was resolute in his positionality as someone who is able to serve both the traditions of Tibetan Buddhism and of the Western academy as a scholar-practitioner:

> What is needed? To meet modern cultures successfully, Buddhist traditions need Buddhist scholars who serve them in ways analogous to the ways critical, constructive Christian theologians serve their traditions—by incorporating insights of modern disciplines into Buddhist self-understanding and by learning to speak from their traditions in ways that newly communicate the transforming power of the Dharma in our time. Contemporary Buddhist scholars, like those of the past, need to discern and clarify for multiple communities what the path of awakening is here and now and what benefits it can bring to the contemporary world. Such scholars are needed to serve as public theologians who can respond knowledgably from Buddhist traditions about contemporary issues when requested to do so by public figures, journalists, and the general public. (Frank, Interview, Fall 2020; Theme P3c).

Carlos: Make Things Clear and Take Your Time

The themes that I identified in the data from the interview with Carlos were, "Care For (Even Love) Your Students: Make Things Clear, Take Your Time;" "The Value of Voices from Another Culture;" "Teach As a Scholar-Practitioner;" and "Teach to Learn." The overall themes that were most representative of the data from Carlos's perspective were Make Things Clear and Take Your Time. When asked to articulate the qualities he found moat impactful on his teaching from his Tibetan teachers, Carlos said:

> …what I got from my Tibetan teachers is this ability to think critically and also

think clearly. I think this is one of the gifts of the traditional Tibetan system…things are laid out in a logical manner and there is a kind of order to an exposition. You try to make things as clear as possible, rather than obfuscated through use of theoretical jargon or things like this… the goal is really to make things clear, to bring them down to their simplest forms rather than to complexify, and especially not to make them more complex unnecessarily, which happens a lot in higher education and especially at the graduate level in Academia (Carlos, Interview, Fall 2020).

Carlos also went on to speak at length about the significant amount of time that he spends reading student work, which, knowing the context of higher education in the late 20th/early 21st century to be significantly impacted by standards and quantitative measures (according to the theoretical framework of this result, at least partially as a result of capitalism), I asked Carlos how he made this work, in the face of all of the responsibilities that American faculty have in modern American universities that are not teaching related. He replied, "I don't know. I just make it work. It becomes a priority."

Carlos has been a faculty member and holder of a prestigious Endowed Chair at a large, public research university on the West Coast of the United States since 2001, and before that was faculty at a small theological school that offers graduate degrees. His work as a translator, researcher, scholar, and teacher has been extensive and well-received, and is inclusive of translations of traditional seminal works from the Buddhist tradition and explorations of contemporary phenomena relevant to Buddhist Studies today.

Carlos, Finding One: Caring—Make Things Clear, Take Your Time. The

theme of "caring" that arose from the data analysis of material from Carlos was among the most resonant and powerful that I found in the entire study. This is particularly notable (and somewhat ironic) because the word "care" did not emerge from the Carlos's mouth even once during our entire interview. And yet, in the answer to nearly every question in the interview, the reply was prefaced by a brief moment of deep thought, and a response that began, unfailingly, with a description of the Carlos's careful consideration of the needs of the student and the thought-process that he goes through to identify it. Noticing this, I extracted the two subthemes of "Make Things Clear" and "Take Your Time" to illustrate the larger theme of "Caring," as is illustrated here:

> By understanding where students are, I try to fill in holes depending upon what their needs are…Then also [teaching them to] read in a way that they learn to ask questions in the process of reading. What is this author really trying to say here? Why is he saying this as opposed to saying it in some other way? You know, critically asking questions, interrogating the text as you go through it…I think that's probably the greatest gift that I received from my Tibetan teachers; the ability to think critically about texts, not to take them at face value but to go deeper and try to understand what is really happening and why an author is saying something and what is being omitted that isn't being said…It's this idea of asking questions and thinking critically that is the main gift of the Tibetan scholastic tradition. (Carlos, Interview, Fall 2020; Theme P4a)

This quote exemplifies the watchful, attentive perspective that Carlos brings to his students and to their work. He begins his explanation of how he works with students

with assessing their needs, and "trying to fill in holes." In addition, Carlos works with students to support them in "thinking critically" about texts, and question them. This technique is one that Carlos credits to his Tibetan teachers, but it is also of note here that although Carlos did not articulate this, his methodical, careful, and detailed effort is greatly indicative of an ethic of care. This excerpt further exemplifies that ethic of care, in another form:

> I think I'm a very good reader of student work, at the graduate level. I give my
> students a lot of feedback on their written work and dissertations; I read very
> carefully, I edit as I go along…We (professors) have so many other obligations
> that we don't have the time for the most part to do something like this. I mean, I
> often times spend an entire week, 40 hours, reading one chapter of a student. For
> the most part, professors don't have the luxury of being able to do that. (Carlos,
> Interview, Fall 2020; Theme P4a)

Carlos, Finding Two: The Value in Authentic Voices From Other Cultures.
Finally, Carlos echoed the sentiments of some of the others, stressing the value of an educational approach grounded in a tradition foreign to one's own and emphasizing the way he feels this is most important to his own teaching. "What I like to do is at least open up a window so that [students] can see that other

people have different values than their own," he said. "And that [others'] goals can be very different than their own" (Carlos, Interview, Fall 2020; Theme P4b).

In further elaborating on this point, Carlos reiterates his feeling of the great educative value of exposure to other worldviews, especially, in his experience, for younger students:

It's very easy to have a kind of narrow view of the world. I sometimes think that if I were a king who had unlimited wealth, I would give scholarships for every undergraduate to spend at least a year in a very different part of the world. I think that idea of experiencing another culture, firsthand, is excellent. If you can't do that, then at least take my class and you'll at least get a window into another culture for a period of 10 weeks. (Carlos, Interview, Fall 2020; Theme P4b)

Carlos's commitment to doing this is powerful and intentional, and in fact, even more than the content of the material he teaches, makes up the essence of his pedagogy:

One of my goals for [students] is to get them for this short period of time to see the world through a different set of eyes. I tell them I'm not trying to convince them of the truth of [anything]. What I'm trying to do is get them to, at least, be open to putting themselves in this position and then having them judge for themselves whether or not this makes sense, whether or not this is a good worldview, whether you would rather live in this world than the world in which you live now. Often times, exam questions are of that form. You know? ... Somebody gives you the choice of transporting yourself to a Tibetan monastery and taking on this life. Why would or wouldn't you do that? (Carlos, Interview, Fall 2020; Theme P4b)

The results are palpable, and great, and, again, surpass a mere knowing of facts or content and expand into an influence in their worldview. "It gets them to think," he said, "that there are other worldviews different from their own, which many students

maybe know intellectually but don't really contemplate deeply enough to know what that means" (Carlos, Interview, Fall 2020; Theme P4b).

Carlos, Finding Three: Teach as a Scholar-practitioner, Teach To Learn. Although Carlos, as all of the study participants (and, arguably, all human beings), is an individual who holds multiple identities, the piece of his identity that I found most resonant with the research question is his identity as a scholar-practitioner, and one who teaches in order to learn. "There's so much to learn and it's so interesting," he said. He went on to elaborate:

> For me, teaching is a way of learning. Unless you can remain really interested, if you have a low boredom threshold, which I probably do, then you have to do something to keep up your interest, your intellectual interest….In a way, I teach selfishly…by which I mean that I teach in order to learn, which is kind of why I don't like rote teaching, teaching the same class over and over again…I don't think that I've ever really taught any (graduate-level) class more than once, which is amazing to think. I've had this 30 year career and I always try to pick new texts. (Carlos, Interview, Fall 2020; Theme P4c)
>
> Carlos also writes and speaks passionately and eloquently about the role of a "Scholar-practitioner" in the context of Religious Studies in the Western academy. He writes:
>
> …the discipline has also been reticent to take seriously the scholarship of believers, even, per impossible, were they to deal openly, critically, and rigorously with their subject matter, especially with normative questions. Because of the way it considers the object of research (doctrinal, ethical, and

practice-related claims as historical or cultural artifacts, and not as candidates for truth), the method used to analyze that object (descriptively, and not for their normative value), and the subject qua analyst (the objective, neutral researcher vs. the religiously committed, and therefore "contaminated," believer), Buddhist Studies has, whether consciously or not, banished Buddhist theology to a nether-land beyond the boundaries of what it considers true scholarship. (Carlos, Document, P4Da)

Andrew: Education Is the Purpose of Human Life

The interview with Andrew was rather like being taken along for a ride in an extremely warm, safe, and comfortable car while having absolutely no idea where one is going. In response to my opening question ("hello, how are you?"), Andrew spoke at length and with passion, until nearly the end of our time together, about the environmental crisis facing our country and the world, his role as a faculty member in a prestigious North American university, and his conviction that education of the human mind is the single most important task of the human being's lifetime, and that the educational systems' sole purpose is to support this growth:

> …the educational system of a society is not there to "service" the society, to produce its drone-"professionals," its workers, its servants. The educational system is the individual's doorway to liberation, to enlightenment. It is therefore the brain of the body politic. Society has no other purpose than to foster it. It is society's door of liberation. By giving others the gift of education, they gain freedom, self-reliance, understanding, choice, all that is still summed up in the word "enlightenment." Life is for the purpose of enlightenment, not

enlightenment for life. (Andrew, Document, P5Db)

Andrew was a faculty member at a large, Ivy League, Research university on the East Coast from 1988 to 2019, where he is now emeritus. He continues his activity today as a speaker, a scholar, a researcher, and a director of various projects related to Buddhism and Buddhist Studies, and especially issues specific to the Tibetan cause.

The themes that I identified in the data from the interview with Andrew were Education Is the Purpose of Human Life, Buddha was a Scientist, and Enlightenment Is Way Beyond a PhD from Harvard. The overall themes that were most representative of Andrew's data was Education Is the Purpose of Human Life. He writes: "…human evolution is consummated in transformative education. Society becomes meaningful when it fosters education. Life is worth living when it values education supremely" (Carol, Document, P6Da).

Andrew, Finding One: Education Is the Purpose of Human Life. This sentiment was so important to Andrew that I have not only extracted it as one theme among others in the findings related to him, but also I include it as the overall theme of his section. Andrew returned to this theme repeatedly in our interview, and does the same in his writings. In his view and language, education is spoken of in the broadest possible terms, and refers to a goal that is entirely personal, eminently practical, and nearly limitless. Nowhere in Andrew's articulation appears the concept of education as a means to any kind of a mundane end, even a mundane end that benefits the greater good, such as the goal of "being a good citizen," as referenced by Labaree and others.

Andrew said:

> [The Tibetans] have kept alive, and refined beautifully, further, tactically, the
> great Indian discovery by the Buddha that the human being not only *can*
> understand themselves and the world, but they *have to,* if they want to be happy.
> And therefore education is the purpose of human life. (Andrew, Interview, Fall
> 2020; Theme P5a)

Andrew expressed "Education is the purpose of human life" in many ways, using many different words, but the underlying theme was always the same: education of the mind is the purpose of human life, and the human mind has great potential to understand itself, and therefore, to be happy. From the interview:

> Education is … like faith in the people. It's like Buddha's faith that his
> mendicants can actually understand the actual way their mind works. And even
> that you can become conscious of your unconscious impulses and learn to ride
> them and control them and restrain them …so Buddha was an educator, because
> he had to be… (Andrew, Interview, Fall 2020; Theme P5a)

Again, this quote demonstrates an assumption of human capacity that can be traced directly to the Tibetan Buddhist tradition of buddha-nature, and positions this fundamental capacity as the basis from which education begins: "because the human being has this ability to understand themselves and (in order to do that), has to educate themselves" (Andrew, Interview, Fall 2020; Theme P5a).

Andrew, Finding Two: Buddha Was a Scientist. A point that Andrew wanted to ensure was included in this analysis was the point of emphasizing that the teachings of Buddhism are science (as has been popularly proposed in recent years), and that

"Buddha was a scientist" (Andrew, Interview, Fall 2020; Theme P5a). This constitutes a major finding in relation to the research question through the case study of Andrew:

…you could say Buddhism is five-sixths science….one-sixth religion….science because it is based on analytical scientific method….and karma…karma is Buddha's biological theory. It's just like Darwin…it's a relative theory of causality. The way of seeing Buddha as a scientist and his discovery of emptiness as a scientific reality…and his causality theory as a relational theory and therefore not absolute…(Andrew, Interview, Fall 2020; Theme P5b)

It was within such a framework that Andrew found his academic home, as a tenured professor in a prestigious Liberal Arts university for over 30 years. In his telling, in one way, Andrew found the climate of the Liberal Arts institution a supportive one for teaching as a Religious Studies professor:

[For example, Buddhist karmic] process is like biology theory. And those who can think that way about it feel very much at home in a liberal academic framework…a framework where there is no orthodoxy and you don't proselytize….[but] if you study as if it was a phenomenology of some weird bunch of religious people, world-rejecting…[those types] can be okay in a religion department. But maybe they feel a little awkward in a large scale university, dealing with natural science and social science people. (Andrew, Interview, Fall 2020; Theme P5b)

Andrew, Finding Three: Enlightenment Is Way Beyond a PhD from Harvard. The third finding from the single-case analysis of Andrew relates to his own positionality as, like the others, a professor of Religious Studies in a traditional

American Liberal Arts environment in a climate in which being a "believer" and being a "scholar" were seen as completely incompatible, and engendered ridicule, scorn, and antagonism. In this climate, according to Andrew:

> I experienced attacks from people… not many but a few outstanding ones, and there was a general attitude…that this person can't be objective, and they can't therefore be a proper scholar. And you mustn't give tenure, it'll ruin the field, and blah, blah, blah. There was a whole bunch of BS like that. (Andrew, Interview, Fall 2020; Theme P5c)

> Suffice it to say, Andrew *did* get tenure, and had a successful career as a scholar and teacher, always holding close the words of his own teacher who, according to him, said often, and publicly: "'I want to make again the statement that I always make: I have never taught anything of Buddhism to people who are not Buddhist with the intention to make them into Buddhists in my whole life'" (Andrew, Interview, Fall 2020; Theme P5c). This statement touches the heart of a theme that runs through this study, the theme of the purpose of education and the role of the scholar-practitioner. Andrew, like many of the other study participants, found inspiration in the identity that his teacher held as, simultaneously, a Buddhist monk and teacher and a great scholar. Andrew took inspiration from this embodiment in his own career as a teacher and a scholar, and argued that some of his colleagues really did not understand:

> If I can't do [Buddhist] scholarship because I'm a Buddhist, then they can't do scholarship because they're a materialist, or they can't do scholarship about a religion because they are Christian or Jewish or whatever they are. If they're capable of bracketing their worldview to look objectively at other world view

rationally, then why can't I? (Andrew, Interview, Fall 2020; Theme P5c)

Andrew's interpretation of the constant tension in the academy directed at individuals who were both professors of tradition and adherents to such was a form of ignorance and misunderstanding, a limitation that his peers embodied due to their lack of knowledge and respect for knowledge itself, and ways of knowing that surpassed the boundaries of their known world. In his words, "I liked to say to them, when I really wanted to provoke them, 'You know Buddha couldn't have been enlightened because he didn't have a PhD from Harvard.' You might laugh, but they didn't" (Andrew, Interview, Fall 2020; Theme P5c). The irony presented here by Andrew is deepened by the fact that he actually *does* have a PhD from Harvard.

Carol: Assume Humanity That Crosses Boundaries

Carol's interview began with her recollection of a course she had recently completed teaching, and how the themes of that course were most relevant to her response to the research question:

> I just taught a class now on "Women in Buddhism" and I told the class, this is going to be critical of certain things, and it's also going to be appreciative of certain things; it's going to be investigating "on what grounds do we have to be critical of Buddhism? And do you have to be a Buddhist in order to be critical of Buddhism?" The people in the class were quite diverse. I had everything from real *bhikshunis* [nuns] from China to students in the class who didn't do Buddhist Studies at all but were interested in Gender Studies. We talked a lot about what's the role of the scholar and what's the role of personal opinion and judgment and moral judgment and criticism. And is it appropriation of another

culture or are you allowed to appropriate other cultures? …And it comes down to, for me, assuming a certain humanity that is able to cross cultural boundaries to a certain extent and can talk to the other, and is not bound by, "Oh, you're from another culture so you'll never understand". (Carol, Interview, Fall 2020)

Carol has been a faculty member at a large, Ivy League, R1 University in the Northeastern United States since 2000, and has received numerous awards and honors for her teaching and scholarship. Her work as a translator, researcher, scholar, and teacher has focused on a wide variety of Buddhist and Tibetan topics.

The themes that I identified as most representative from Carol were "Assume Humanity That Crosses Boundaries," "There Are Alternate Ways of Being Human," and "Care For (Even Love) Your Students: Be Human in the Classroom."

The overall theme that was most representative of Carol's data was "Assume Humanity That Crosses Boundaries," which is also the heading for Finding One, below.

Carol, Finding One: Assume Humanity That Crosses Boundaries.
Throughout our conversation, Carol was adamant in her insistence that we, as individuals, approach the study of cultures other than our own from a point of commonality, instead of difference, and, when asked if she approaches students this way and if she was approached this way by her Tibetan teachers, said "yes." She continued:

Human suffering, that's not specific to any particular culture. Human suffering, human fear of death, human fear of impermanence, human fear of old age, human need for connection, those are foundational assumptions of Buddhism…capacity for error, capacity for conversation, imperfection, honesty,

need for human connection, family relations, interest in intellectual development…a lot of the human impulses that we have are not all that different. (Carol, Interview, Fall 2020; Theme P6a)

She credits her experience with her Tibetan teachers for giving her this basis, and recalls that in her many years of studying with them she never felt that they assumed she could not understand them because she, as a Western person, had a completely difference frame of reference and experience.

> [My Tibetan teachers] were assuming that we could understand what they were saying, and maybe that's how I took it… when I saw the kinds of arguments that people were making [in Western higher ed], which are very culturally bound and assuming that you can't really understand another culture and you're a foreigner here and stuff, I wanted to call that into question. That's been a kind of defining feature of what I've done. (Carol, Interview, Fall 2020; Theme P6a)

Upon deeper reflection, Carol further identified a similarity in her approach to students (respect on the basis of shared humanity), and, again, as we saw in the data from earlier participants, an assumption of great capacity:

> I guess my own development has been very much focusing on what I mean by being human, and being human in the classroom. The same kind of respect that the Tibetan teachers granted to me, I grant to my students in that I expect them to understand higher principles and I try to undercut the hierarchy between myself and my students. (Carol, Interview, Fall 2020; Theme P6a)

Carol, Finding Two: Humility; Alternate Ways of Being Human. Carol also spoke emphatically (as did many of the others) about the relative narrowness of the

epistemological foundations of the Western Academy, and the need to introduce

students to alternate perspectives. She makes a conscious effort with her students to

stoke "the recognition that the West is not the only place that had history and

philosophy and critical thinking" (Carol, Interview, Fall 2020; Theme P6b). Also:

> [Tibetans] have a highly cultivated history that's including early forms of
>
> medicine and standards of logic and rationality and principles of language and
>
> grammar and poetics and literature and ways of writing and using evidence that
>
> match and sometimes exceed Western European heritage. (Carol, Interview, Fall
>
> 2020; Theme P6b)

That being the case, part of the work, as Carol sees it, is to introduce those

systems of thought to Western students, and part of it, perhaps even more importantly,

is to elicit a deeper learning:

> More than anything, it gives you a sense of the possibility of alternate ways of
>
> being human. So you don't think that there's only one model, that there's a
>
> range of differences and it educates the imagination…a lot of what I teach my
>
> students is about how to approach other cultures and how to treat them like
>
> human beings and let them treat you like a human being. (Carol, Interview, Fall
>
> 2020; Theme P6b)

Carol, Finding Three: Teach As a Scholar-practitioner. Finally, as was

echoed by other participants, Carol was clear that: "Whatever you study in academia

should also have impact on yourself and your being, otherwise why bother? Not just

yourself, but other people as well, but it should be meaningful for personal cultivation

and flourishing as a human being" (Carol, Interview, Fall 2020; Theme P6c). In the

context of this study, this perspective is what gives rise to Carol's identification as a scholar-practitioner, an individual who not only seeks to study and learn academic content, but seeks to form and integrate that knowledge into a meaning making structure that can support their own life and practice. As further evidence for this position, Carol recalls her feelings of conflict when studying the same subject matter in graduate school and with her Tibetan Buddhist teachers (*lamas*):

> I really felt that it was much more valuable to study with the lamas than with the academics… [the Tibetan teachers] were personally experiencing it, they weren't just looking at it critically but they were more looking at it in terms of personal development and cultivation, and it was just far richer for me than the so-called objective critical approach that we were taught in academia. (Carol, Interview, Fall 2020; Theme P6c)

Cross-Case Data Analysis: Findings

The cross-case analysis of the study participants was based on the themes identified in the data analyzed from the semi-structured, one-on-one interviews with each participant, as referenced in the Individual Case analysis above, as well as themes that were derived from the documents authored by the participants. Again, the theoretical framework of context, possibility, and praxis was the strongest guide for the analysis of the findings from this study, although the inquiry was also informed by observation and reflective analysis as detailed in my audit trail.

The findings that I determined from the data when analyzed as a whole became apparent as a result of their frequency, saliency, and resonance as I spoke with each study participant, and read their documents. The findings that I identified as the final

from the multiple-case study analysis in answer to the question *How do faculty members who taught in American universities in the late 20th century perceive the effect of their Tibetan Buddhist scholar-practitioner mentors on their teaching within the context of American (capitalist) culture?* are as follows:

1. Care for (even love) your students.

2. Think critically.

3. There is value in authentic voices from other traditions.

Cross-case Analysis, Finding One: Care For (Even Love) Your Students

This finding was pervasive and unanimous across the responses to the research question during the data collection with the study participants. Even the participants who did not specifically reference "caring", "kindness," "compassion," or "concern," demonstrated a remarkable attention to care and concern for their students in terms of the time, rigor, and emphasis that they placed on the students' learning experience. Every single participant in this study referenced care as an integral part of their pedagogical approach, directly or indirectly.

Doris spoke to an active form of caring for her students in her simple suggestion, "We can be kind" (Doris, Interview, Fall 2020), in response to the query about what she has learned from her own teachers about how to teach students, and Carol speaks to "being human in the classroom" as a way to connect with students and overcome boundaries to communication and learning. Carlos, as mentioned in the Individual Case Reporting, gave detailed and deliberate replies to my questions about students, outlining his painstaking approach to their work and education, and Andrew referred repeatedly to his love for the students as one of the primary driving factors of

his decision to enter academia in the first place. His obvious affection for his students is evident in this quote:

> It turned out to be something I love doing and it turned out the students liked me too…the students (at the school where he taught for most of his career) were really bright, they're really hardworking, but they don't take themselves too seriously and they're not hyper competitive. …there's a kind of pliancy there, if you will, that I appreciated. (Andrew, Interview, Fall 2020)

> William also recalls a genuine affection for students on a genuine educational journey: "I remember the first time a student came up to me after a class and I noticed he had an earring; I just wanted to hug him….(he was) somebody who was a little bit different" (William, Interview, Fall 2020).

> Four of the six participants spoke to fond recollections of connecting with students on campus, and being well-liked: "I think students felt I was approachable and I tried to be helpful whenever I could," said William in his interview.

> Doris and Carol also spoke directly to feeling the most satisfied with their work as teachers if they saw evidence that their students were generally doing well:

> The best was if they could be happy and open-minded, and if I had any kind of subtext or motivation or something [when I was teaching them], it was that what I particularly enjoyed was when any student discovered that they understood things about themselves or the world that they didn't think they were supposed to be able to understand. (Carol, Interview, Fall 2020)

> Interestingly, in the expert audit review process, this finding evoked the strongest reaction in the "expert's" response. Yangsi Rinpoche's first reaction to my

presentation of the affection shown between teacher and student, which initially was the finding "Care for Your Students," was a sort of disbelief, and almost aversion, to the word "care". "Of course there is 'caring,'" he said with some amount of skepticism. "Of *course* there is! They might 'care' to get jobs for their students. They might 'care' to get them into a better position, or better connections. But the caring that I think is relevant is far beyond that, a much deeper level. It's not about you. It's not material and on the surface. It's compassionate caring." Rinpoche's point was that mere "caring" as in "attentiveness to" or "concern for" was not sufficient in a teacher-student relationship, and certainly was entirely superficial when contrasted with the "care" that the Tibetan teachers demonstrated towards their students, and the trust and communication it engendered.

In fact, Rinpoche was so emphatic on this point, and so insistent, that following our interview I returned to the study results and added "Even Love" in parentheses to the theme title, so that it now reads "Care For (Even Love) Your Students." Although further rumination on this point, is beyond the scope of this work, it occurs to me that one future area of research on this topic may be an exploration of the perceived and understood responsibilities of teachers to students in formal higher education, and another might be the visceral and distinctive discomfort that many Western people have with the concept of "love" in education.

Cross-case Analysis, Finding Two: Think Critically

The cross-case study finding relating to the importance of critical thinking as a takeaway from the Tibetan system into higher education was commented upon by all of the study participants. Interestingly, this finding was the one that I found to be the most

unexpected. When I began the data collection for this study, and even before that, when formulating the concept for this project, I assumed that the finding that would be most glaringly apparent was the finding articulated in Finding One: the sense of caring, love, and compassion that the Tibetan teachers embody and express. My reasons for assuming this were mostly experiential: in all of my years working with Tibetan Buddhist lamas and Western students, the observation that I have heard repeated most often about these teachers from Western people has been a sense of wonder, almost awe, at the way these teachers embody love, compassion, and caring for their students. Although there is no doubt that these teachers are remarkable scholars with extraordinary knowledge and intellect (and critical thinking skills), in my experience the place where they impact others the most is through the visceral sense of love and compassion that they carry. That being the case, it was surprising to me to understand, through this research, that while the finding of caring, love, and compassion was strong, the finding of "Think Critically" was almost equally as strong, was elucidated by each the study participants as an answer to my questions, and, upon analysis, was a powerful takeaway from this research.

> From Carlos:
>
> I think probably the greatest gift that I received from my Tibetan teachers is the ability to think critically about texts, not to take them at face value but to go deeper and try to understand what is really happening …you learn to think critically and you can apply that to anything, whether it's ritual, whether it's a Tibetan painting. It's this idea of asking questions and thinking critically that is the main gift of the Tibetan tradition. (Carlos, Interview, Fall 2020)

Carlos spoke of taking inspiration from the dynamics of analysis used by the scholars of the Tibetan tradition to work with texts, and of the applicability of such habits of mind to other areas of knowledge. Implicit in Carlos's esteem was an appreciation for the agility of mind that facilitates that, although he did not draw that out it detail. But "you can apply that to anything," he said.

Doris took this a step further, sharing her admiration for the reason and logic that is foundational to the tradition, and especially pointing out how that reason and logic was always coupled with joy:

> I always saw an appreciation for reason from the Tibetans. That appreciation for that dialectical tradition…[but] it's a joyful thing. Real appreciation for that reasoning and testing, and you know how debate goes. That's developing a sharp mind. Critical doesn't mean criticism, it means sharp. Discriminating. It's something to see. (Doris, Interview, Fall 2020)

In Doris' interview, and in the data from all of the other participants, although the participants' praise for the reason and logic of the Tibetan tradition was great, and although they saw such clearly embodied in their teachers and learned from it, in most cases this logic and reason was mentioned as being coupled with compassion, love, or kindness. In William's words: "He combined this sweetness, kind of ineffable sweetness with a very sharp intellect. And as we discovered, more over the years, a really strong will" (William, Interview, Fall 2020).

Cross-case Analysis, Finding Three: There Is Value in Authentic Voices from Other
Cultures

The third finding from the cross-case analysis was the finding of appreciation for authentic voices from other cultures and traditions, which, again, was echoed by all of the study participants. This finding took the form of two main perspectives. First, and most pervasive among the responses of the study participants, was the sense that the introduction of the pedagogy and content of the scholastic tradition of the Tibetans in particular was important for Western academics to see and recognize because "this notion that Western critical theory and thinking and analysis is the only possible approach to knowledge is simply itself a limited, colonialist, imperialist, hegemonic way of thinking about things" (Carlos, Interview, Fall 2020). A similar takeaway can also be gleaned from analyzing this exchange, from the interview with Carol:

> Namdrol: Can you think a little bit about what the most important value that the Tibetan teachers have to bring to higher education might be in your experience?
>
> Carol: The recognition that the West is not the only place that had history and philosophy and critical thinking. …That they have a highly cultivated history that's including early forms of medicine and other things, and rational standards of logic and rationality, and understanding of language and the principles of language and grammar and poetics and literature and ways of writing and using evidence that match and sometimes exceed Western European heritage. ..
>
> Namdrol: So if the academy was to glean an understanding of the developed philosophies and so on and so forth of other traditions, particularly of the Tibetan tradition, what might happen? What might the effect be?

Carol: Well, they might get some new ideas and might find their way out of certain conundrums that they're caught in…there's a lot to learn there. More than anything, it gives you a sense of the possibility of alternate ways of being human. So you don't think that there's only one model, but rather that there's a range of differences and it educates the imagination. (Carol, Interview, Fall 2020)

The second perspective reflected in the participants' responses relating to the theme of the appreciation for authentic voices from other traditions was the perspective of the value of examining alternate ways of knowing, or epistemologies, and ways of teaching, or pedagogies.

Again from Frank:

I raised the question (to my students), "How is it that *Nirvana* as a real thing is actually communicated in Asian Buddhist cultures?" It's not by these abstract discussions that we're reading about in our textbooks … that's not primarily what's happening on the ground in Asian Buddhism. It's embodied. It's through encounters with people who are understood within Buddhist Asian communities as embodying the qualities that are associated with Nirvana, which are the… unconditional qualities that spontaneously express the realization of an unconditioned nature of reality, deep freedom and so forth, deepest tranquility, and also unconditional love and compassion and discernment or responsiveness. And I'll tell stories about the Buddha and Buddhist teachers that communicate those qualities as actually embodied in people. That's how people come to take Nirvana and enlightenment seriously in Asian Buddhist cultures; through

encounters with people like that. And stories told about them. (Frank, Interview, Fall 2020)

In this quote, Frank references an alternate epistemology for gaining new knowledge, emphasizing that encounters with people that "actually embody" the qualities he is teaching about is "how people come to take Nirvana and enlightenment seriously in Asian Buddhist cultures." Frank stopped short of explicitly suggesting a similar approach in Western pedagogies, but the implication was clear. Voices from other traditions are valuable because they (a) expand our knowledge about how we know things, introducing us to previously unknown epistemologies and (b) those voices themselves come from a tradition that values such epistemologies, and may be embodying knowledge in this way themselves.

Cross-case Analysis, Finding Four: A General Response to Capitalism in Higher Education

Although the framing of the research question referred to the capitalist context of American education, for the most part the study participants did not *directly* refer to the way that they navigated such environments, with one exception (see below). As that is the case, the other findings of this study point to the ways in which the participants work within such context. The three major cross-case findings (Care for (Even Love) Your Students, Think Critically, and There Is Value in Authentic Voices from Other Cultures) point to influences of their Tibetan teachers that each of the study participants embraced in their own teaching and practiced, which are distinctly representative of values and principles that are not in accordance with capitalist values, although they were functioning within a capitalist system. See Chapter Five for further discussion.

In general, without being specifically asked, each of the six study participants expressed a similar frustration with the increasing capitalist influence on the institution of American higher education. All of the participants were affiliated with institutions that are identified as "Liberal Arts" institutions, all of them teach or taught in the fields of the Humanities, and four out of six of them referred directly to capitalist influences as a challenge to their work.

Doris said:

So if you just look at education, you can really see…how education is being taken over by corporations. If [educational institutions] want to exist, they have to take on this corporate model…[but] the Humanities is not a corporate model. A corporate CEO would say: "But does it produce things? Is it going to end up being for-profit? Is it quantifiable in any way?" All of those things are antithetical to the Liberal Arts' wide-ranging [perspective], [this way of] gathering knowledge. (Doris, Interview, Fall 2020)

Doris, whose scholarship in recent years has been significantly dedicated to the multiple intersections of Black communities and Buddhism, compared the encroaching influence of capitalism on spiritual centers in the United States to a dynamic she sees magnified in education:

They don't necessarily mean to do it, but that's the structural underpinning of undertakings in the US…you set up a center, you hope you have a program and a group of teachers that are going to bring in students. Why? Because they have to keep the enterprise going by dues and paying….and it costs money and it takes a certain kind of job position to be able to take off time and know that your

job is still going to be there in the end. It's not set up for working-class

people…[in general,] the structures are set up against folks who don't have

money and leisure time. (Doris, Interview, Fall 2020)

This perspective is reflective of the literature by Paulo Freire, whose work has

been used as a philosophical basis for exploring how education policy and practice

might be used to affect changes of structural inequities in society (Bolin, 2017).

Chapter Five: Discussion

The purpose of this multiple case study was to explore the experience of faculty members in late 20th/early 21st century American universities who were mentored by Tibetan Buddhist scholar-practitioner teachers, seeking to understand some of the impacts of these relationships on their own teaching. The research question that informed this study asked: How do faculty members who taught in American universities in the late 20th/early 21st century perceive the effect of their Tibetan Buddhist scholar-practitioner mentors on their teaching within the context of American (capitalist) culture?

The original frame for this study, using the scaffolding by which Daniel Schugurensky characterized the work of Paulo Freire in 1998, was to offer both *critique* and *possibility:* critique of the influence of capitalist culture extant in higher education and a window into a possibility for future solutions and praxis, through the influence of some Tibetan Buddhist masters, towards education for social change based in contemplative inquiry and love, as stated in Chapter One of this work.

In the end, the emphasis and tenor of this study leaned more heavily towards a focus on the latter, and thus the findings presented here are weighted more heavily on the side of possibility as opposed to critique. This is likely a result of both my personal proclivity towards a perspective that favors a focus on potential for growth over a focus on diagnosing weakness, and a result of the attitudes of the study participants, which were very much the same. In fact, in retrospect, it is of note that, despite my original framing of this study within the context of capitalist higher education, and despite the questions being well-communicated to the participants ahead of time, and despite my

intentional construction of the interviews as "semi-structured" in order to give latitude to the participants to speak and converse with as much freedom as possible, the vast majority of the information that the participants shared in our 60-90 minute interviews, and in their writings, was focused on what new knowledge they felt that they, as individuals in unique positions, had to contribute to the conversation, as opposed to offering broad critiques of existing norms. Although the research question of this study specifically referenced a capitalist context, the participants rarely mentioned it directly.

The in-depth findings of the individual case analyses of the six participants were reported in Chapter Four, following the research design recommended by Robert Yin (1994). The themes derived from the in-depth findings were then used as the basis for the cross-case analysis, the findings of which became the "cross-case conclusions" (Yin, p. 49) of the study, and are discussed in detail in the next section of this chapter, called "Critique and Possibility."

Discussion of the Findings: Critique and Possibility

One of the major concerns that I had with this research from the early stages was that it be transferable to disciplines beyond the world of Tibetan Buddhism, Buddhist Studies, or even Religious Studies. Due to the specific nature of the content I was working with, I was concerned that the gap between the lives, worlds, and educational experiences of the readers of this study and that of the study participants would appear too broad to peer across and search for meaning. In an effort to bridge this gap, and to support the applicability of these findings to the lives and works of as many as possible, I conclude each discussion of the findings with a summary that references extant literature or movements in the field in relation to the theme, and position the finding

therein. Following this discussion, the third section of this chapter is entitled "Praxis," and presents specific methodological recommendations that arose from this study and some recommendations for implementation based on this research.

The Purpose of Education

All of the perspectives embodied herein speak to the tensions referred to in the opening chapter of this work, and the question at the heart of it all, also alluded to earlier in this work: What is the purpose of education? David Labaree (1997) proposes that educational discourse has moved away from a democratizing element towards a "social efficiency" model, which emphasizes education as means to participate in the economy, while Giroux (2010) focuses on the influence of capitalism in specific as a transformative element for education, an ideological bent that, in his view, shifted the focal point in educational discourse from an emphasis on public service to a profit-seeking enterprise in the 20th century. Paulo Freire (1970) famously declares the purpose of education to be awakening critical consciousness in the student, so that they may liberate themselves from systemic social oppression. The design of this study is based on the premise that the environment of American higher education in which the study participants operate and the environment of Tibetan Buddhist higher education in which their mentors were trained have different purposes (see Chapter Two), and that the intersection of both of these perspectives in a single individual (the study participants) would reveal compelling findings.

Finding One: Care For (Even Love) Your Students

The first of the findings from the individual cases and the cross-case analysis that were most clearly responsive to the research were the findings relating to care;

specifically, the finding "Care for (even love) your students," which was found in both the individual and cross-case analyses. These findings supported the answer to the research question in that the participants communicated that they perceived the effects of these relationships as guiding them toward relationships that were of a quality that they did not see as the norm among their peers.

The finding "Care For (Even Love) Your Students" was identified specifically as a theme in the individual case analysis data from Doris, Carlos, and Andrew, and as Finding One in the cross-case analysis.

The metathemes within "Care For (Even Love) Your Students" ("Listen and Be Kind," "Take Your Time," and "Be Human in the Classroom") speak to slowing down and connecting with students and reference a sense of time and attention that is counterintuitive to the modern pace of things, and certainly to the common modern maxim: "Time is money," which was written by Benjamin Franklin in his essay *Advice to a Young Tradesman* in 1748. Similarly, E.P. Thompson's 1967 article *Time, Work-discipline, and Industrial Capitalism* references important changes in the apprehension of time in Western Europe, and outlines direct correlations between the shift in socio-economic systems and the systems and perceptions of time (Glennie & Thrift, 2017). Unsurprisingly, in Thompson's telling "time passed" becomes "time spent," concurrent with the shift from an agrarian society to an industrial one, in which the concept of time in general evolved from a relatively spacious entity into a rigid system of discipline and tracking.

This finding takes Thompson's analysis one step further. Finding One points to a focus ("care") discerned by the study participants that disrupts the mechanistic

measurement of time as part of a capitalistic enterprise, the mechanistic measurement of

the human being as a machine of production, and the mechanistic measurement of

higher education as a means to an end of profit. In specific, Doris spoke of an attention

to kindness and concern for each of her students in her teaching relationship with them

that was marked by a conscious attention to seeing the students as human beings with

thoughts and feelings and psyches. Carlos spoke in detail of the actual hours in a given

week or day that he spent on student work. Carol actually embodied an ethic of "care"

in her discussion of her relationship with students, asserting in our dialogue that

humanity is not only to be found in the cultures that we study, but also in the

relationship between herself as an instructor and her students (see Findings: Theme

P6c).

      Listen and Be Kind. As a continuation of the discussion of the theme of

"Caring," I especially want to return to the framework of the metatheme identified in

the work of Doris: "Listen, and Be Kind." In relationship to the second part of this

finding, "Be kind," Doris said:

> At [the University where I taught], if you wanted to make a person who could
>
> think critically, to think critically was not equivalent to thinking
>
> compassionately…[but] critical doesn't mean criticism, it means sharp. Like
>
> discriminating…. (Doris, Interview, Fall 2020)

Further, in response to what knowledge from the Tibetan teachers might be most

important to bring forward into higher education: "We can be kind," Doris said simply.

      Based on the data, on the participants; successful teaching careers, and on the

literature, this finding points to a need for reconsideration of the relationship between

teacher and taught as a most important condition for learning at all levels. According to Larsen, 2015:

> The most meaningful relationships in the lives of people are those relationships in which individuals know and understand each other. And in building appropriate caring relationships in college classrooms, time invested by professors in knowing and understanding their students pays great dividends. Students perceive care when their professors ask questions about the lives of their students, show interest in activities, background, and hobbies of students, and generally seek to know them better. (p. 97)

Also, Nel Noddings (1984/2013) famously proposed that the teacher-student relationship has the potential to support not only the student's learning in the classroom but also their holistic development as human beings. Partially based on her work, the construction of the field of "care ethics" has emerged in the past decades in the social sciences. Care theory is a normative ethical theory that holds that relationship and "care" are central to learning about and developing capacity for moral action in the student as a whole (Noddings, 2013). Although most of the study participants did not speak directly to the influence of college education on their students' minds in general (although Doris, notably, did, saying that the most important thing for her as a teacher was that her students become "good people"), implicit in their responses was an awareness of the student as a holistic human being, and a concern with their overall well-being.

Take Your Time. Carlos, in particular, referenced "time" with some frequency in our interview, and this became a subtheme of this data analysis (Theme P4a):

Namdrol: This concept of being a very close reader, paying a lot of attention to the students' work, and giving a lot of feedback, is that something that you see as a value in other professors in higher education?

Carlos: I don't think higher education is made for that.

Namdrol: Can you say a little bit more about that?

Carlos: Yeah. We have so many other obligations that we don't have the time for the most part to do something like this. I mean, I often times spend an entire week, 40 hours, reading one chapter of a student's work. For the most part, professors don't have the luxury of being able to do that. I don't think academia is built in that way. (Carlos, Interview, Fall 2020)

Carlos went on to express his ongoing frustration with the compressed structure of college classes and curricula in American higher education in his experience, especially in the context of trying to teach Buddhist philosophical texts (which are traditionally taught in a curriculum that takes an average of 15-30 years to complete and within which a student frequently spends a full year learning a single text), discussing how he tries to incorporate close reading of texts inspired by his Tibetan teachers and presenting, again and again in his telling, a careful, methodical, conscious attentiveness to detail in his work with students. "I don't know," he said when asked how he manages. "I just make it work. It becomes a priority. I know that I have to do it. I just schedule it." And, "I don't think many professors read their students' work as carefully as I read my students' work. I don't know. Maybe I'm wrong. I mean, I read every s single word and I edit as I go along and I make substantive comments" (Carlos, Interview, Fall 2020).

This finding ("Take Your Time") became a subtheme of the theme "Care For (Even Love) Your Students," which was identified as one of the three themes from the individual case analysis of Carlos. "Care For (Even Love) Your Students" was also identified as one of the three themes from the individual case analyses of Doris and Carol, and these themes became part of the basis of Finding One from the cross-case analysis, also labeled "Care For (Even Love) Your Students."

Although research on the relationship between caring and time was beyond the scope of this work, and no relevant explorations became available to me during the course of this study, a dictionary definition of care is "painstaking or watchful attention" (*Definition of "care"*, 2021), which is inclusive of an assumption of a slowing down of time, and corresponds with this analysis. Further research could likely determine deeper relationships.

Be Human in the Classroom. "Being human" was a theme articulated by most of the study participants, who, in their interviews, emphasized an approach towards their students grounded in connecting with them as human beings. Doris, in particular, framed her approach to teaching as de-centering the role of instructor as the sole knowledge-holder in a classroom. This is reminiscent of Freirean pedagogy, among others, which emphasizes relationships between teacher and student that challenge traditional power structures (Freire, 1970). Carol also discussed her approach towards students as being grounded in "the same kind of respect that the Tibetan teachers granted to me" and in her intention to "undercut the hierarchy" in the classroom when she teaches (Carol, Interview, 2020). Carol, in particular, referenced her Tibetan teachers as well as scholars of Western feminist pedagogies as being influential here.

Summary of Discussion on Finding One: Echoes of Paulo Freire's work on deconstructing power dynamics within classrooms to facilitate learning (in Freire's context, learning that leads to liberation from social oppression) were evident in the takeaways from all of these participants, and especially in the context of Finding One: Care For (Even Love) Your Students. Also, as referenced in the review of the literature (Chapter Two), the study participants seemed clearly aligned with the understanding that the ground of the educational process is the relationality between teacher and student (Daloz, 2012; hooks, 1994; Freire, 1970), and that effective teaching is motivated by a sense of love and caring (Dardar, 2017; Daloz, 2012; Miller, 2018; Noddings, 1998, 2013; Zajonc, 2006, 2019). Whether consciously or unconsciously, the sense of care that these participants embedded into their teaching approach echoes the work of care theory (Noddings, 2013) as well as approaches to teaching that focus on consideration of the student as a holistic human being and enactment of a pedagogy that is responsive to this (hooks, 1994, 2017; Darder, 2017).

In practice, there are considerable implications to relying on an educational process that does not include a component of caring, love, or compassion, or even a basic sense of relationality and awareness of the humanity of other living beings as part of the learning. It is widely known that despite our "advanced" culture and society of the 21st century, our world is pervaded with policies, systems, and norms that do not take the basic humanity of individuals into account. It is possible that this can be at least partially attributed to a lack of teaching students how to care for others, or at least that caring is a value. Arthur Zajonc (2015) writes of the highly educated Nazi scientists and doctors whose research resulted in the determination that certain ethnic groups of

human beings were in fact subhuman. And Lise Meitner and Otto Hahn's discovery of nuclear fission, which later to become the basis of Weapons of Mass Destruction, resulted in such realization of dismay and regret that they devoted the remainders of their lives to the creation of the Nobel Peace Prize. How, we might ask, might all of these stories have been different if the people involved *began* them with a genuine feeling of care for others? Noddings (1998) writes:

> I think the ethic of care has something in common with the ethics of alterity (otherness) described by Jacques Derrida and Emmanuel Levinas. Both call for respect of the other as other…A new child is not just "flesh of my flesh" but a genuine other whose appearance may or may not mirror mine, whose interests may be different, and whose fate is tied up with yet somehow separate from mine. I look at her face not as a reflection but as a genuine, unique subject who gazes back at me. (p. 133)

Yangsi Rinpoche, in the expert audit review, reiterated this finding, and advocated further for the inclusion of care (love) in teaching:

> [I think] what is going to degenerate in future education is the warm-heartedness and the humanity part. The intellectual part may increase… in the future what will be lacking is the heart and compassion, which will produce students who lack compassion, but have lots of information.... I think mostly it's about humanity, the heart connection….that's the fundamental thing; not the philosophical logic and reason, but the heart. (Yangsi Rinpoche Interview, 2020)

Finding Two: Think Critically

The finding "Think Critically" was a powerful result of this study, articulated in some form or another by every single study participant. It was also a finding that, in and of itself, was of surprise to me as the researcher. At the outset of this study, the influence I anticipated being greatest from the Tibetan teachers towards Western faculty was the influence of love and caring, which did indeed prove to be significant (see preceding section). I did not expect to discover the finding "Think Critically" with such force within the study results at all. This is attributable to my personal experience, in which I have been most greatly moved by the compassion and kindness personified by my Tibetan teachers, and in fact, this is how I personally recall them. In retrospect, and through the work of this study, it is clear that the fact that this kindness and compassion is manifest in these individuals *in combination with* formidable intellect and analytical agility is part of what makes it so impactful.

To contextualize, the concept of "critical thinking" is flexible, much used, and varies in application according to discipline, circumstance, and many other factors. Historically, the origins of critical thinking in Western thought can be found in the "trivium" of logic, rhetoric, and grammar, combined with the "quadrivium" of arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music, which together composed the seven liberal arts of the ancient world (Haber, 2020). As the field of liberal arts evolved, logic remained key among them, in spirit, at least. In practice, although "logic" and "critical thinking" are not synonymous, critical thinking, by definition, relies on logic to evaluate material and experiences (Glaser, 1941).

The definition of critical thinking as presented in this study can best be thought of as an umbrella phrase, under which related but distinct ideas can be grouped. In this study, critical thinking was most clearly defined by the study participants and the literature as (1) a psychological disposition, mental tendency, or habit of mind characterized by a questioning approach, (2) an unwillingness to be satisfied with platitudes, and (3) an openness to changing their minds (A. Eshleman, personal communication, March 17, 2021). Additionally, in the context of this research, "critical thinking" may be considered (4) the faculty of mind that is most concerned with breaking an idea or phenomena down into its constituent parts, in order to clearly and precisely characterize and present these ideas (Carlos, Interview, Fall 2020). More generally, it is used in this research (5) to refer to the faculty of mind that constructs and evaluates reason as a basis of logic (Doris, Interview, Fall 2020).

William, Carlos, and Andrew in particular spoke specifically and at length about the great influence of the powerful systems of critical inquiry present in Tibetan Buddhist education, and which they were exposed to through their Tibetan teachers. William, in particular, named "critical inquiry" as foremost among the learnings of value that he brought from the Tibetan tradition to the Western academy. Carlos and Andrew echoed his perspective.

As was stated by the study participants themselves, and as is well known in Western higher education, critical inquiry is no stranger to the Western academy, nor to Western culture. In modern times, in his work Critical Thinking, Jonathon Haber (2020) references several recent calls for a widespread, deepening focus on developing critical thinking in contemporary American education, including direct calls to action by

Presidents Obama and Bush, during their tenures. Haber goes on to elaborate on calls

for the same within the framework of understanding and contributing to modern global

economies, such as in a 2018 research project by the Organization for Economic Co-

operation and Development (OECD), an international economic development body

made up of the world's most economically advanced nations. Finally, he references the

US elections in 2016 and the tone that emerged in the country in its wake, leading to, in

his words: "a sense of crisis regarding voters' ability to make choices through reason

rather than through the emotional judgments and/or tribalism that characterize so much

of US and world politics today" (p. xiii). A basis for overcoming such a crisis, Haber

asserts, is further education in critical thinking.

Along these lines, in a 2011 article, Watts et al. present a case for using Paulo

Freire's construct of critical consciousness in the specific application of youth civic

development. According to these authors, Freire's construct of critical consciousness is

inclusive of three core components: critical reflection, political efficacy, and critical

action (Watts et.al, 2011). The first of this triad, critical reflection, is directly parallel to

the critical thinking that the study participants referenced in their interviews:

> I think that the way that they read and the way that they teach provides one with
>
> the type of tools that are exportable to a number of different areas. You learn to
>
> ask questions. You learn to think critically and you can apply that to
>
> anything...it's this idea of asking questions and thinking critically that is the
>
> main gift of the Tibetan scholastic tradition. (Carlos, Interview, Fall 2020)

The analyses of these authors in the context of this study's findings exemplifies

the reality that the lens of "critical thinking" has taken on a prominent role in the

modern global educational conversation. In service to this reality, surpassing the impact that critical thinking may have on teaching and learning in and of itself, the goal of creating critical thinkers can now be seen to directly inform major global initiatives, including but not limited to regional, national, and international academic standards and economic policies and practices (Haber, 2020). Examining the history of the past decades, and heeding the call of contemporary scholars such as these, we might assert that acquiring and applying the skill of critical thinking is vital to our survival as a society, if not a species, today as much as ever. All of this being the case, the presence of this theme in the findings of this study, and in the experience of the study participants, is relevant.

Question Everything. William, in particular, claimed the edict of "Question Everything" as a most important takeaway from his Tibetan teachers. He cited his own natural proclivity towards intellectual engagement with the material as an entry point to understanding anything, and claimed that when he learned that the Tibetan tradition mandated rigorous study and analysis as a pre-requisite to realization or embodied knowledge, he was "hooked." William, as well as a number of other study participants, referred to the following oft-cited quote reportedly spoken by the historical Buddha himself in the Ghanavyāha Sūtra (Sūtra of Dense Array): "O bhikshus and wise men, just as a goldsmith would test his gold by burning, cutting, and rubbing it, so you must examine my words and accept them, but not merely out of reverence for me" (as cited in Rinpoche, 2020).

This exhortation emphasizes the weight of critical inquiry in the Tibetan Buddhist educational system, which, as discussed in Chapter One, draws its roots from

the dialectical tradition of ancient India. Unsurprisingly, this finding echoes a place of shared commitment between the traditions:

> The use of reasoned arguments to understand the workings of the world—especially cause and effect and especially the way cause and effect work on the spiritual path—is particularly refined in the Tibetan tradition. This commitment to reasoning—a willingness to entertain and respond to challenges—is shared by much of the modern West, and is an important basis for the conversation between Buddhism and Contemporary Society. (Rinpoche, p.153)

Make Things Clear. The finding "Make Things Clear" as part of "Think Critically" was also a finding that was echoed across the conversation with the study participants, especially in the responses of William and Carlos. Both of these participants spoke to the emphasis on sharpness, and to the organization of their Tibetan teachers teaching and learning styles (Adams, 2007) as affecting their own approach to teaching. Indeed, the textbooks (*yig cha*) that support the Tibetan Buddhist geshe program are themselves rigorously structured in highly organized, compressed frameworks of subject matter (Germano, n.d.) called "topical outlines" (*sa bcad).* These outlines are composed of an intricate arrangement of sections and subsections of the text, and can be composed of levels well into the double digits, with individual sections numbering into the hundreds *(Germano, n.d.)*. It is on the basis of such topical outlines that the foundation of the learning of the textual tradition begins in the monastic universities: memorization. As a result of this process, many traditionally trained Tibetan scholars rely on intricate outlines and organizational schemes to recall material, and often to teach it. In their interviews, William and Carlos recalled this organizational

framework and clear outlining as a main learning from their Tibetan teachers, and described how it inspired them to organize their own lectures and class presentations in order to make them accessible to students.

Buddha Was a Scientist. The finding "Buddha Was a Scientist" is a direct quote from the interview with Andrew, who expressed that this finding was among the most important learnings from the tradition. He referenced conversations with his Tibetan teacher that confirmed this. In this context, the finding refers to both the methodology of the Buddhist approach (analytical, methodical, rigorous) and the nature of what is found upon analysis, which, according to Andrew, was a "scientific reality,… a relational theory,…and a process."

Summary of Discussion on Finding Two In the examination of Finding Two: "Think Critically," and the theoretical framework of this research, these findings reflect especially strong echoes of Freirean calls for the inclusion of strong critical thinking elements in education. A central tenet of Freirean educational philosophy is the principle of *conscientization,* defined as the process of developing a critical understanding of one's social reality through reflection and action (Freire, 1970). This process relies heavily on the engagement of critical thinking, and critical inquiry. Following on this, another core pillar of Freirean pedagogy is problem posing education. He writes:

> In problem-posing education, people develop their power to perceive critically the way they exist in the world with which and in which they find themselves; they come to see the world not as a static reality... (Freire, 1970, p.83)

Paulo Freire employs the use of critical thinking skills as a necessary prerequisite to the ability to assess one's social situation and liberate oneself from systemic oppression. However, the study participants reported using the model afforded by their Tibetan teachers of clarity, sharpness, and critique as a pedagogical support for their own students learning specifically *in the classroom,* and not necessarily as a tool to dissect their own social realities or their place in them. It is worth mentioning that there is exciting work being done in the very young field of contemplative critical pedagogy, in which specifically Buddhist techniques of analysis and contemplation are applied to issues of social justice in an effort to bring about individual transformation and (eventually) systemic change. A review of this field is beyond the scope of this study, but the mere fact of its fledgling emergence is relevant here.

Finally, in the expert audit review process, Yangsi Rinpoche's response to Finding Two: "Think Critically," points to dialogue, another important element of critical thinking. In his commentary Rinpoche referenced the role of critical thinking in teaching to be most important because it is the first step in engendering the "two-way communication" between teacher and student. He said, "… the habit of analyzing, not taking anything at surface value…becomes the opposite of indoctrinating: it opens the dialogue between teacher and student…it empowers the students because it is not one-way communication" (Yangsi Rinpoche Interview, 2020). Other study participants as well as the literature (Dreyfus, 2003) reference the power of dialogue in education. This is reminiscent of the "dialogical pedagogy" of Freire (1970), who claims that the use of dialogue in the classroom is much more than mere "technique," but rather

"characterizes an epistemological relationship" (p. 17) that serves as a basis from which students may reframe their understanding of reality and their place within it.

Finding Three: There Is Value in Authentic Voices from Other Cultures

Finding Three: There Is Value in Authentic Voices from Other Cultures was also a finding that I had not considered in my original approach to this research. At the beginning of the project, I was focused on the research question largely in the context of pedagogy, with less consideration for the nuanced aspects of the personal relationship of the individuals with their teachers from different worlds, cultures, ontological groundings, and epistemologies. I sensed that there were some tensions, and that there would be some findings related to this relational element and culture, but I assumed that they would be somewhat more specific, perhaps relating to differing views of community learning, or perspectives on family versus monastic life, or something along those lines. What I found instead was that this finding "was a powerful one. To qualify, the use of the word "authentic" in this context is a direct quote from a study participant (Carol), and was meant to refer to native Tibetan voices from within the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, which is how it is being used here.

Across the board, this finding was articulated by all of the study participants in some way or another. In this research, the very fact of learning from an "authentic voice" from within another tradition was a powerful learning for the study participants, and one that they endeavored to bring forward into their own classrooms in various ways.

Interestingly, in relationship to this finding, in the expert audit review process, Yangsi Rinpoche spoke anecdotally with noticeable compassion for the shifts in

worldview of individual professors he witnessed who once held a very fixed view about the centrality (and implicitly, the importance) of their own knowledge among knowledge systems of the world, and their surprise and shock when they became aware of the complex, multidimensional, sophisticated knowledge systems of the Tibetans and other traditions of the east. It is remarkable in retrospect to recall that similar stories were told by some of the study participants in this research, but that the frame of their anecdotes was not compassion for the collapse of the worldview of the instructor, but rather disbelief, irritation, or a sort of rueful concern.

Bridge the Worlds. Frank was among the most articulate about the finding of the value in authentic voices from other traditions and expressed a strong desire to "bridge the worlds" of the Tibetan Buddhist and the Western Academic traditions. He said:

> The tricky part is how to bridge the cultural worlds involved... all that needs to be translated into forms that would be newly accessible to people with extremely different patterns of cultural conditioning and social conditioning… it won't serve higher education broadly in the modern world to then simply send them to ancient Asian Buddhist treatises. There's a bridge that has to be made. And the question then becomes how to make that bridge. (Frank, Interview, Fall 2020)

This sentiment was echoed by the other participants, in direct and indirect ways. However, a clear takeaway for all of the participants was that the intersections formed by these particular relationships were unique and important. Also, they emphasized that each had much to offer the other, and that their own partnership with their Tibetan mentors was conscious and intentional.

Enlightenment Is Way Beyond a PhD From Harvard. The value in authentic voices from within other traditions was expressed through the metatheme Enlightenment Is Way Beyond a PhD From Harvard explicitly through Andrew's interview, although it was echoed by all participants, as can be seen here.

"The West is not the only place that had history and philosophy and critical thinking," said Carol, with some frustration, when asked what in specific the Western academy might learn from the Tibetan tradition (Carol, Interview, Fall, 2020). Andrew took this a step further, and expressed, tongue-in-cheek, that his colleagues among Western academic Religious Studies scholars and professors often questioned him about the concept of whether the historical Buddha was truly enlightened. "According to them," he said, "Buddha couldn't have been enlightened because he did not have a PhD from Harvard."

Although this was said (mostly) in jest, the issue it refers to is real, and points to unquestionable differences in the understanding of what constitutes valid knowledge and a means of comprehending such knowledge between the traditions. Lamenting this gap, Carol said:

> [They complain:] "Oh, Buddhism can't be philosophy because they didn't have Descartes, they didn't give up their religion," but that's really a misunderstanding and it does a disservice to our understanding of what philosophy is. So for higher education, that would be the main point. (Carol, Interview, Fall 2020)

A more detailed discussion of this issue is far outside the scope of this work, but its import is present regardless, and thus the finding "There Is Value in Authentic

Voices From Other Cultures" refers in this context not only to the actual value of bringing diverse voices into conversation in the academy, or to the knowledge they carry, but to the epistemologies the carry along with it.

Assume Humanity That Crosses Boundaries and There Are Alternate Ways of Being Human. The final metathemes within Finding Three (There Is Value in Authentic Voices from Other Cultures) are the dual metathemes Assume Humanity That Crosses Boundaries and There Are Alternate Ways of Being Human. Both of these metathemes were articulated most clearly by Carol, although they, too, were echoed by the other participants. The first took the form of the participants' resolve that by connecting with the innate human-ness of the Tibetan teachers and focusing on that, cultural barriers and things that seem impossible to understand disappear. This is reminiscent of some approaches to teaching tolerance and racial equity, in which one begins with the exploration of race as a social construct (Khanna & Harris, 2009) as opposed to a physical reality, which is so insignificant that race is actually not considered a "biologically meaningful category" (American Association of Physical Anthropologists, 2019). The "assumption of humanity," in the language of Carol, is a condition that allows for a perspective that recognizes that we all have "…suffering, compassion…capacity for error, capacity for conversation, imperfection, honesty, need for human connection, family relations, interest in intellectual development," and that "a lot of the human impulses that we have are not all that different" (Carol, Interview, Fall 2020). Again, although not explicitly stated, this finding points to an assumption in the minds of the participants that the goal of education surpasses the mere acquisition of knowledge of a particular subject matter.

Summary of Discussion on Finding Three. Although Finding Three touches

essential points from both aspects of the theoretical framework for this study, indirectly,

this finding does not correlate directly to either the work of Paulo Freire or of Parker

Palmer. However, insofar as this finding embodies a yearning towards connection

across disparate backgrounds, regardless of superficial conditions, it can be said to be

resonant with both. In the work of Paulo Freire, this manifests in terms of its

assumption of common humanity at the core of every person, and its indisputable

(though often unarticulated) faith in the potential of the human being to rise to the

occasion. Similarly, Parker Palmer's work speaks to the need to connect human beings

at their "core" levels in order to return to what he perceives as the "central mission" of

higher education, and focus on the "intentional integration of meaning, purpose, and

spirituality within our institutions" (Palmer, 2009, p. 1).

Finding Three from this study articulates a profound awareness of the

multidimensional capacity of a human connection to transcend boundaries. This is a key

finding from this study, and from the lives and experiences of the study participants.

Praxis: Implications for Practice, Contemplative Inquiry

The contemplative research methods that supported this research were

composed of 5-10 minute contemplative sessions before each interview focused on

quieting the mind, a simple meditation on equanimity, and notes reflecting on these

meditations, as well as reflective journal entries regarding my observations of the

participant and the tenor of our conversation that I completed immediately following the

interview. The findings from the implementation of these research methods confirmed

the propositions from Janesick (2015), who proposed including processes of cultivation

and documentation of "habits of mind for qualitative research" (p. 22) in the research process in order to develop and strengthen research skills. Also, as referenced in Chapter Three, Patti Lather (1986) and others advocate for creating research designs inclusive of self-reflexivity in order to transform research from observation into praxis. In accordance with their suggestions, I found the practices of reflective journaling after each interview to be very similar to the practices of analytical meditation that, as a practitioner of meditation for over 20 years, I have engaged in on a regular basis. The experience was a deepening, focusing, and clarifying of the object of focus, a gradual peeling away of layers of assumption and first impressions, to arrive at an impression of the experience with the research participant that was removed from my personal biases and expectations, if not entirely, then certainly significantly. These impressions are at the root of this research, and are expressed in the title headings for each study participant in the section entitled "Individual Case Reporting." See Appendix A for a simple Contemplative Research Protocol for Qualitative Research.

Praxis: Implications for Practice, Buddhist Theology

Based on the preceding research, an unexpected implication for practice from this study was both the unearthing of a call for alternate ways of studying Buddhism in the academy and the existence of a framework for the field of Buddhist Theology. At the completion of the research, I found that the answer to my research question—"How do faculty members who taught in American universities in the late 20th/early 21st century perceive the effect of their Tibetan Buddhist scholar-practitioner mentors on their teaching within the context of American (capitalist) culture?"—could be likely answered indirectly through a curricular proposal for the development of this field.

Although a detailed treatment of Buddhist Theology is beyond the scope of this work, I have laid out some ideas for places to begin in Appendix E. In general, I propose that the three main findings of this study be situated as focal points in the development of this field, based on this logic proposed Rita Gross in 2016:

Buddhism is a major intellectual and spiritual force in the messy contemporary world of political chaos, environmental degradation, and social-economic injustice, not merely a set of philosophical texts and artifacts from times past. Therefore, study of Buddhism need not be limited to historical and philological questions, as if Buddhism were irrelevant in the contemporary world and its confusion and pain, or did not participate in them. (Gross, p.54, in Jackson & Makransky, 2000/2013)

All of the study participants articulated a version of this observation, calling for further work in the field of studying Buddhism that surpasses the mere acquisition of knowledge solely on the cognitive level, and an aspiration to eschew "value-neutral" scholarship and teaching (Frank, Interview, Fall 2020) in favor of meaningful, relevant, applicable engagement with the subject matter and students. The faculty members credited their Tibetan teachers with this learning, and saw in them the ideal of the scholar-practitioner (as in the definition by McClintock referenced in Chapter One of this work). In the words of Frank, from the study:

[By "Buddhist Theology"] I guess we just mean exploring ways that Buddhist understandings and ways of being and practicing could inform many areas of modern concern and need on the one hand, and how some modern social disciplines, including certain forms of social analysis and political analysis,

economic analysis, and so forth…[might be] important learnings for Buddhists and for institutions from the knowledge of our time. (Frank Interview, Fall 2020)

In this quote, Frank expresses an aspiration that knowledge from the Tibetan Buddhist tradition might inform contemporary Western scholarship. This aspiration denotes a recognition of the knowledge traditions of the Tibetans, and the unique learnings that the tradition might contribute to higher education.

A Note on the Word "Theology"

In response to the likely cognitive dissonance that may arise in the minds of some readers when first coming across the term "Buddhist Theology," I present a summary of the defense of the term based on the work of Roger Jackson, Rita Gross, and José Cabezón, who are all respected and prolific scholars of Buddhist Studies.

To begin, as Jackson points out, although the word "theology" in modern times has "been deeply interwoven with theistic traditions, originally it referred *not* to talk about the one God, but, rather, to discourse (logia) about the divine (theo), however that might be conceived" (Jackson, p.1). Jackson references the origins of the term as being found in Plato's *Republic*, where, he states, "it refers to poetical narratives about the gods" (p.1). Jackson goes on to explore other diverse uses of the term in scholarship throughout history, and to further reflect on those, and advocates for using the term "to describe conceptual activity within and about a particular religious tradition, without thereby implying that such activity is itself an avenue to the ultimate. (p.3)"

In the same volume, Rita Gross echoes many of the study participants (or perhaps they echo Gross?):

Buddhism is a major intellectual and spiritual force in the messy contemporary world of political chaos, environmental degradation, and social-economic injustice, not merely a set of philosophical texts and artifacts from times past. Therefore, study of Buddhism need not be limited to historical and philological questions, as if Buddhism were irrelevant in the contemporary world and its confusion and pain, or did not participate in them. (Gross, p.54, in Jackson & Makransky, 2000/2013)

Secondly, Gross proposes that the label "theology" is most appropriate for the following reasons. First, Gross puts forth that any other term for this particular iteration of the field is problematic as a result of being based on the scholar holding an "outsider's" perspective. Second, she asserts that the word "theology" is culturally familiar and thus applicable, and that the activity of what Buddhist theologians actually do is "the discipline and the practice of studying and commenting on the Dharma and coming up with dharmic solutions to twentieth century issues" (p.58), which is closest to the ideal practice of contemporary theologians in the academy.

Also in this volume, José Cabezón proposes that, in using Buddhist Theology, we do not restrict our understanding of the context of "theology" to its etymological meaning (as Buddhism is actually *a*theological), but that we employ the use of "theology" when modified by "Buddhist" as referring to it rhetorically ("a kind of discourse with certain formal properties" p.25) and functionally ("having certain applications and purposes in the context of culture" p.25).

Praxis: Further Implications for Teaching Practice and Recommendations

Outside of the scope of contemplative education and theology programs, the following recommendations can be derived from the study results for the broader educational community. I recommend the implementation of these as effective teaching practices in general. None of practices are specific to foreign pedagogies, and none of them require a background or knowledge base outside of Western methodologies. Although this study shows that each of these practices can be connected to a tradition that is "foreign," and thousands of years old, happily, each of them also have direct correlates within our own, contemporary American tradition of teaching and learning. They are as follows:

1. Advocate for care (from the theme Care For (Even Love) Your Students).

2. Teach and model critical thinking (from the theme Think Critically).

3. Incorporate authoritative voices from many places (from the theme There Is Value in Authentic Voices from Other Cultures).

Advocate for Care

The social-emotional components of teaching and learning are an area of important future development. The results of this study demonstrate that an ethic of care (even love), was a key impact of Tibetan teachers on faculty in American higher education. This impact, although compelling within the parameters of this study, is by no means exclusive to this group of educators. In an era where the push of a button or the use of a carefully situated algorithm can reveal endless answers to endless questions, an era where most information is no longer solely the purview of the very few, but is broadly accessible to all, and an era when almost anything can be "learned" online, the

role of the teacher in learning demands renewed interrogation (E. Anctil, personal communication, April 1, 2021). This study result suggests that one avenue of examination and development in future might be a focus on the role of the relationship between teacher and student in learning. Further research is recommended.

Teach and Model Critical Thinking

Similarly, the second finding from this study, "Think Critically," should be examined and applied within the context of 21st century education. As previously mentioned, in this age of technology, modern people are besieged with information at every turn. Indeed, there is almost no respite from the information that is available in response to any given question or problem posed. Despite the indisputable benefits such availability brings, there are also many studies that demonstrate that people, young people and students, in particular, are experiencing "information overload" (Al-Kumaim et al., 2021, Fu et al., 2020, Koltay, 2017), and suffering because of it. In response to such overload, the teaching and practice of critical thinking may have significant bearing, when considered in the context of one of the working definitions it subsumes in the context of this study, which is the faculty of mind that is most concerned with breaking an idea or phenomena down into its constituent parts, in order to clearly and precisely characterize and present these ideas. If students were taught to hone and apply this faculty of mind to the vast collection of information that comes their way in the course of an hour, a day, or a lifetime, with the intention and ability to apply their own discernment as to what to take up and what to forsake, it follows that they would then be able to navigate this world with much more grace, ease, and, hopefully, success. Further research is recommended.

Incorporate Authoritative Voices from Many Places

Finding Three, ironically, speaks at once to the most specific and the most widely applicable aspects of this study. In its original context, this finding speaks to the value of native insiders to a tradition lending voice to elucidate that tradition. The impact on the study participants of these voices, however, while encompassing such, also surpassed this dynamic. The essence of finding 3 was a comprehension of the value to the teaching and learning process in the experience of the study participants not only because of the specific perspectives on the material that these participants could give, but also because of the very fact of these individuals embodying a worldview and culture outside of the dominant culture of American higher education.

One study participant said: "This notion that Western critical theory and thinking and analysis is the only possible approach to knowledge is simply itself a limited, kind of colonialist imperialist, hegemonic, *blah, blah, blah* way of thinking about things" (Andrew, Interview, Fall 2020). Time and time again, the study participants pointed to the value of including diverse voices, epistemologies, and worldviews in their teaching, explaining that the inclusion of such has the effect of broadening the view of the students. From the study interviews:

> Namdrol: You were talking about when you teach undergrads, the underlying
> purpose of the course is to introduce them to a completely different worldview.
> Why is that important?
>
> Carlos: I think because Americans are very provincial... It's very easy to have a
> kind of narrow view of the world. I sometimes think that if I... had unlimited
> wealth, I would give scholarships for every undergraduate to spend at least a

year in a very different part of the world. I think that idea of experiencing

another culture, firsthand, is excellent. If you can't, then at least take my class

and you'll at least get a window into another culture for a period of 10 weeks.

(Carlos Interview, Fall 2020)

The extant movement towards increasing equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI)

in higher education is one avenue through which this study finding might be

immediately relevant to educators in general. In particular, in response to the

contemporary national dialogue investigating and seeking to uproot systemic racism and

other forms of bias in our institutions, including schools, many educators, fields of

study, and institutions are committing to creating more equitable and inclusive teaching

environments by developing tools for decolonizing syllabi across disciplines (Misra,

2020). Fuentes et.al (2020) offer considerations for "rethinking" course syllabi informed

by theoretical frameworks and best practices in order to provide faculty with resources

to promote EDI in the curriculum or the classroom. This study finding points directly to

the relevance of such work, and adds a valuable nuance to the rationale for including

EDI in curriculum work and development.

Implications for Future Research

In addition to the areas of possible future research I have outlined in the

preceding sections (Contemplative Research Methodology; Buddhist Theology;

Advocate for Care; Teach and Model Critical Thinking; Incorporate Authoritative

Voices from Many Traditions), a point that stands out as being of specific import is the

recommendation for replication of this study, in the form of a comparative research

study with a different population of higher education professors. Such a study could

explore the prevalence of the viewpoints expressed by these participants in different contexts. Although clearly it would be impossible to replicate the exact parameters of this study in terms of the influence of Tibetan Buddhist mentors, it would be relevant to examine the influence of other types of mentors/teachers/guides on faculty in higher education, perhaps both with and without the inclusion of relationships predicated on spiritual contexts. Such a study (or studies) has great potential to further explore the dynamic and influence on "caring" in higher education, in accordance with Finding One.

Limitations of the Study

The first possible limitations to this study that I assumed was the situational limitation of the COVID-19 pandemic, which affected this study by upending my planned research design significantly, when in-person interviews became an option no longer in Spring of 2020. COVID was also a limitation in that it restricted my access to other in-person data collection, research, and peer review along the course of putting the study and its pieces together. However, I am happy to say that the limitation of COVID, in the end, did not in fact prove to be a significant barrier to this research, as I am fortunate to be in a situation with excellent internet access and tools, and a strong family system at home to support the solitary research process. Likely due to previous relationships with study participants, I also did not find significant challenges in establishing rapport and communicating with them via Zoom interviews and emails.

In addition to the concern of COVID, my greatest concern with what might appear as a limitation of this study was the applicability of the findings to a broad group of educators, outside the world of Buddhist Studies or insiders to the Buddhist tradition.

It was important to me that the findings of this study be not only understandable to those outside of these domains, but be useable by them as well. The small size and narrow scope of the study's subject matter, and the specific epistemologies, ontologies, and contexts that the study participants and their mentors were operating and speaking within, in my mind, posed an unusual conundrum. On the one hand, knowing, speaking, and understanding this "insider" language and being previously connected to the study participants, their fields, and their mentors allowed me great versatility as a researcher and an interviewer, and, importantly, allowed me a necessarily informed perspective by which to guide this research. On the other hand, I perceived an immediate challenge to the transferability of the findings that I found, and to my own ability as a researcher to communicate them to educators outside of this very small world.

I have mitigated these possible limitations in two ways. First, I have sought to be diligent and cognizant of them, and checked the conceptualization, design, implementation, and reporting of this study and its results with my peer groups, critical friends, and faculty advisors at regular intervals along the way. Second, I have endeavored to expand upon my study results in the preceding section, which outlines a brief iteration of the study results here in the form of general implications for teaching practice. It is my hope that further research may expand the significance of these findings to teaching and learning in general.

Final Thoughts

In closing, I invite the reader to return to consider the frame of Zajonc's "quiet revolution," which he posits is emerging slowly, subtly, from the contemplative traditions into our modern world, and offering new pedagogical tools for learning and

integration of course content in modern higher education. A gap it may fill, exemplified by this study, may be understood through the lament of Parker Palmer:

> …that is why we train doctors to repair the body but not to honor the spirit; clergy to be CEOs but not spiritual guides; teachers to master techniques but not to engage their students' hearts—or their own. That is why our students are cynical about the efficacy of an education that transforms the inner landscape of their lives...academic culture dismisses inner truth and pays homage only to the objective world...students as well as teachers lose heart. (Palmer, p. 20)

We can also consider the frame of Paulo Freire, who grieves modern schools in practice as the "banking system," yet speaks of the great potential of education in general as liberation and liberatory, and advocates for dialogic (relational) pedagogy, "pedagogy of the heart," and teaching grounded in love (Freire, 1970).

Finally, we consider the voices of some of the individuals who stand at the intersection of these worlds: the study participants as well as a voice from the tradition, the themes that were found in their experience, and the emerging light of a new path forward to close this work. Each of these threads can be combined into a tapestry that weaves content and context, deep analysis and relationality, authenticity and a vast perspective on capacity against a backdrop of care, compassion, and a harmony of voices to answer the question "How do faculty members who taught in American universities in the late 20th century perceive the effect of their Tibetan Buddhist scholar-practitioner mentors on their teaching within the context of American (capitalist) culture?" And, once the polyphony of responses is expressed, consider: where do we go from here?

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Appendix A: Contemplative Protocol for Qualitative Research

Goals of this protocol:

- to prepare the researcher as the primary research instrument in qualitative research by quieting and stabilizing the mind so that the researcher may transcend the shackles of bias, judgement, and reactivity in order to engage with the research participants and/or material as an instrument of research;

- to deepen and clarify the research findings, peeling away of layers of assumption and first impressions, to arrive at a concept of the experience with the research participant that was as removed from my personal biases and expectations as possible, and, eventually, possibly, to transform the research into praxis

Protocol:

1. Before every interview session, sit in contemplation for 10 minutes and complete the "Meditation for Cultivating and Strengthening Equanimity" (Appendix B).

2. After every interview, make notes of your observations, thoughts, impressions of the interview in a journal entitled "Notes on Habits of Mind."

3. When compiling research, refer to your journal and integrate your observations into your findings.

*Based on Janesick (2016)

Appendix B: Meditation for Cultivating and Strengthening Equanimity

(in 12 steps)

1. Find a comfortable position in which to sit and allow your breathing to be natural. You may close your eyes or leave them open, whatever feels most natural.

2. Breathe in and out for a few moments, bringing your attention to the breath moving in and out of your body. Allow your thoughts to settle, and calm. If your mind wanders, gently bring it back to the breath.

   [3-5 minutes]

3. Visualize someone in your mind's eye who has benefitted you or been especially kind to you. This may be a loved one, a friend, a teacher, or a mentor. As this person comes to mind, think about your natural desire to see this person happy, free from suffering, and at ease with life.

4. Think: "May you be happy, may you be loved, may you be joyful, may you be at ease."

5. Focus on feeling your good wishes for your loved one for a few minutes.

   [3-5 minutes]

6. Slowly allow the image of that individual to dissolve, and bring to mind a neutral person. This is someone you see, maybe regularly, but don't know very

well. It may be somebody who works somewhere you go a lot, a coworker, a person you've seen at meetings, or a neighbor. Although you don't know this person well, you can recognize that just as you wish to be happy, this person wants to be happy as well. You don't need to know what their happiness looks like.

7. Think: "May you be happy, may you be loved, may you be joyful, may you be at ease."

8. Focus on feeling your good wishes for the neutral person for a few minutes.

    [3-5 minutes]

9. Slowly allow the image of that individual to dissolve, and bring to mind someone you consider an adversary, or a troublesome person in your life; somebody whom you find difficult, or towards whom you feel a resentment, hurt, or jealousy.

10. Think: "May you be happy, may you be loved, may you be joyful, may you be at ease."

11. Focus on feeling your good wishes for the difficult person for a few minutes.

    [3-5 minutes]

12. Finally, letting go of all thoughts of others, return your focus to your own body, mind, and heart. Notice what you are feeling: any discomfort, tension, or

difficulty, or possibly lightness, warmth, relaxation, or joy. Then, whenever you are ready, open your eyes and gently return your attention to the space around you.

*Based on Śāntideva. (2006/1997).

Appendix C: Interview Consent Form

You are invited to take part in a research study about the influences of Tibetan Buddhist scholar-practitioner mentors on faculty members working in American higher education in the late 20th century. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you were a faculty member at an American university during this time frame who had a relationship with a Tibetan Buddhist teacher.

This study is being conducted by Namdrol Miranda Adams, who is a doctoral student at University of Portland. This form is part of a process called "informed consent" to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether or not you wish to take part.

Background Information

The purpose of this study is to understand the perceptions and practices of faculty members in late 20th century American universities who were mentored by Tibetan Buddhist scholar-practitioner teachers, and to develop insight into the influence these relationships may have had on their own teaching.

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to:
- Give minimal practical, demographic information to inform the context of the study
- Share a few relevant readings, publications, notes, course syllabi, or course assignments that reflect your faculty role and influences of your teacher during this time
- Participate in two 1-hour conversational interviews with myself, the researcher, over Zoom. This conversation will be recorded so that a written transcript of our conversation can be made. Once the transcript has been checked against the recording, the video recording will be deleted.

A copy of the questions that I would like to discuss with you is attached here for your review.

Voluntary Nature of the Study

This study is completely voluntary. If you decide to join the study now, you may change your mind later without any negative consequences. Choosing to end your participation will not affect your relationship with the researcher, Namdrol Miranda Adams, or the University of Portland.

Privacy and Confidentiality

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission. I ask that you consent to my right to publish all or parts of our interviews, but not before I share my interpretations with you for clarification and further discussion. You will be provided the option to choose your own pseudonym. Only the researcher will know the link between an individual's name and their pseudonym; this record will be kept in a separate file on the researcher's home computer.

Transcriptions of our interviews will be made so that you cannot be identified by your voice and any identifying information will be replaced in the transcript with generic descriptors such as "university name" or "person's name." To ensure that you agree that your confidentiality has

Appendix D: Interview Questions

Beginning

1. Please tell me how you met your Tibetan teacher and a little bit about that relationship.

2. The role of professor is multi-dimensional. When you first made the decision to enter higher education, what were your thoughts and feelings about taking on the teaching expectations that are part of the professorial role.

3. To what degree, if at all, would you say your decision to enter higher education/become a teacher reflected a blend of theory (principles) and action/practices?

4. What influences shaped these principles?

5. Do you see teaching as primarily a practical endeavor (skills/strategies/tactics), a theoretical endeavor (theories/principles), or a blend of the two? Teaching is shaped by an individual's guiding principles/theories and also by their actions/practices. How would you characterize how these two dimensions have been blended in your career (equal? more guided by theory? more guided by action/interaction?) Can you give an example?

6. Follow up: has this blend remained stable or changed over your career? If stable, what sustained this focus? If changed, what guided the change?

Middle

7. To what degree did you explicitly draw on what you'd learned from your Tibetan teacher?

8. What did you understand to be the most important values of your colleagues/the people you worked alongside in academia?

9. Are there any experiences/tensions that stand out to you about the context of being a teacher in American higher education and having a mentor from a culture with such different ways of understanding teaching and learning? Think back… is there a story of a moment that captured your experience of exposure to the two worlds…Tell me about an experience or situation when you felt a tension between these two (worlds/perspective)… To what degree were you able to resolve this tension?

10. Tell me about an experience or situation when you found a surprising alignment or agreement between these worlds?

End

11. Reflecting back on your experiences in higher education and your experiences with your Tibetan teacher: what would you identify as your key insights that others could learn from? How might your unique experiences shed light on teaching for others? What role could (your positionality) serve in strengthening learning in US higher education and what do others have to learn from you and your experiences navigating these different worlds?

12. Is there anything else that you would like to share?

Appendix E: Buddhist Theology

As the literature reveals, there is a resonant history of both the proposal for the field and the complexities around the use of the term "Buddhist Theology" over the past decades (see the discussion in Chapter Five for more details). Beyond that, historically, the proposal for the field of Buddhist Theology has its roots in the way that modern Buddhist Studies has unfolded in the Western academy since the 20th century. As many scholars outside the scope of this study, as well as the study participants involved here, have noted, contemporary Buddhist Studies is now mainly composed of scholars trained in Religious Studies in Liberal Arts institutions, where the educational emphasis has been not only on critical analysis of the doctrine of the tradition but also on establishing *distance* from the tradition. This has resulted in scholarship that is superlative but potentially problematic on two counts. First, as is stated by John Makransky in the edited volume *Buddhist Theology*:

> The "value neutral" method of religious studies was of course never value neutral. Rather, it implicitly established a value in religions divorced from the normative interests of their own religious communities: a value found exclusively in their capacity to fulfill the intellectual, social, and economic interests of the Western academy. (p.15)

José Cabezón presents a similar perspective:

Suffice it to say that I believe that the banishment of Buddhist theology from the discipline of Buddhist Studies has its roots in a positivistic ideology that pervades the discipline even to this day. Imbued with the secularist ethos of the Enlightenment, and entrenched, albeit subtly at times, in the now passé world-

view that scholarship in the humanities is to be modeled on that of the natural sciences, the discipline has too often been content to focus on the linguistic aspects of texts to the exclusion of seriously engaging their doctrinal and practical content. When it has taken doctrine and practice seriously as objects of study, it has too often sought to engage these at most descriptively, eschewing attempts to treat them normatively. (p.26)

Among the prominent voices in the field today, and separately from this work, Makransky and Cabezón reinforce a theme that was presented early on in this study, which is another take on the claim to an "objective voice" in scholarship. In my earliest discussion of this phenomena, I critiqued this concept, and asserted that the researcher's voice is always subjective, but that being so should not necessarily imply "bias" (defined in the Merriam-Webster Dictionary as "a personal and sometimes unreasoned judgment: *prejudice*").

Makransky's complete discussion takes this observation a step further, asserting that the "value-neutral" approach of religious studies in the academy in which he and most other contemporary Western scholars were trained does, in fact, itself "establish a value in religions divorced from the normative interests of … religious communities: a value found exclusively in their capacity to fulfill the intellectual, social, and economic interests of the Western academy" (p.15, Jackson & Makransky, 2000/2013). So, in essence, by claiming "objectivity" in the academy when it comes to approaching the Humanities, scholars are, in fact, imposing a bias of detachment to one of the historically most important functions of religious discourse, which is its application and effect on the world in which it functions.

This issue directly parallels the concerns of this study, which explores the intersection of learning from individuals whose worldview and context is driven by very different interests than those which drive contemporary Western culture, and the influence of such on teaching on American higher education. The concern of the field of Buddhist Theology, it should be noted, is not solely about how religion might be studied in the Western academy, but rather about how Buddhism, a tradition grounded in cultural values so different to our own, might be studied.

In answer to that question, as a direct result of my reading for this project and my conversations with the study participants, all of whom have spent most of their adult lives trying to "fit" the teaching of Buddhist philosophy, history, and culture into Western academic norms, I put forth a skeletal proposal for future development of the field.

A final note: definitions and usage of the term "theological education" are many, complex, and often stridently defended, and a review of the literature on such is beyond the scope of this work. As a basis for this conversation, I take the definition of "theological education" to be a fairly general one: an education informed by a particular faith, occurring within the context of the norms of that faith tradition, and responsible to what Gilpen (1996) terms the three publics: the religious tradition itself, the academy, and society.

Specifically, the following recommendation is based on the aspiration that the emerging field of Buddhist Theology transcends the descriptive study of the linguistic aspects of the texts and the descriptive approach to doctrinal and practical content, and

approaches the study of the material in a practical way (Cabezón, in Jackson & Makransky, 2000/2013).

Spiritual Formation as a Foundation of Theological Education

Spiritual formation is one of the most important elements of traditional (Christian) education, and its place and measure in Christian theological education is a point of much discussion. Also, like "critical thinking," "spiritual formation" is a term that is at once universally understood and accepted and inclusive of countless, varied definitions, and also one that is considered to be of varying levels of importance to religious faith and practice. In general, it is agreed that the term "spiritual formation" originated in the Roman Catholic Church (Teo, 2017), although in contemporary times it is far, far more broadly used. Although this is an intriguing area of possible further research, the scope of this work does not allow for an extensive analysis of such. Therefore, I posit that the development of "Buddhist Theology" might begin with the same question that drives the discussion of spiritual formation in Christian theological education, namely: "What is the place of spiritual formation in theological education? (Wood, 1991; Cetuk, 1998)". Determining the answer to this question might be driven, as suggested by Naidoo (2008), by further research on adult development theories, by further exploration of the role of "formation" in religious education programs (Cetuk, 1998; Steubing, 1999; *The Association of Theological Schools*, 2020), and of course, by the literature from within the tradition that details the process and practices by which a person progresses in their spiritual life (the most general definition of "spiritual formation").

Spiritual Formation in Buddhist Theology: Qualitative Research Methods

In addition to the elements I have referenced above, I recommend two additional pieces under the category "Formation," which is a traditional part of a Theology degree: (1) Qualitative Research Methods and (2) Contemplative Practice of Care (Love).

In regards to the first, the use of qualitative research methods are currently undergoing something of a renaissance in theological education (Moschella & Willhauck, 2018; Mittwede, 2012), and the practice of qualitative research is beginning to emerge in the sight of theological scholars as an endeavor in the service of "formation," which takes many forms, but has at its core the progression of one's worldview in order to be of service to others. Moschella and Willhauck, in *Qualitative Research in Theological Education: Pedagogy in Practice,* explain, "When qualitative research methods are introduced at an early stage of the degree programme, they have the potential to fundamentally shape how our students think about the world, create knowledge, and theologize" (Moschella & Willhauck, p. 253). As such, I propose the inclusion of reliance on and study of qualitative research methods as part of a curriculum for Buddhist Theology.

Spiritual Formation in Buddhist Theology: Caring (Love)

The second part of the "Formation" recommendation is the integration of the contemplative practice of care (love) into a Buddhist Theology curriculum. I make this recommendation on the basis of the study results, the conversation with Yangsi Rinpoche (one of the "authentic voices" that informs that research), my own observations over 15 years of working and teaching in Buddhist education, and finally,

as a recognition of what appears to be a foundational principle of a Buddhist Theology

curriculum: that it should strive not only to connect and inform the principles and

practices of east and west, but also to apply them in practice to our contemporary world.

The form this should take must be in the realm of developing care (love) for one

another, and for our world. Traditional Tibetan Buddhist practice is rich with step-by-

step instructions and practices to bring about a sense of care and loving-kindness in the

students' minds through simple contemplative practice, tested over centuries,

scientifically documented through rigorous self-reflection, writing, and commentaries.

Also, such practices are still visible in the embodied personhood of some Tibetan

practitioners trained in these systems. The inclusion of this element of the lived tradition

of Tibetan Buddhist practice is vital to the development and study of the field of

Buddhist Theology.

　　　As a reminder, it is the aspiration of the emerging field of Buddhist Theology to

transcend the descriptive study of the linguistic aspects of the texts, the descriptive

approach to doctrinal and practical content, and to integrate the engagement of such

practically (Cabezón, in Jackson & Makransky, 2000/2013). In order to do so, the field

will be best served by integrating an ethic of care into its pedagogical approach.

　　　The implications of such could be considerable, and, if effective, could certainly

support learners in transcending a merely descriptive understanding of the tradition,

and, likely, support their goals of spiritual formation and development as well.

　　　To take this a step further, this research points to a recommendation of the

integration of the contemplative practice of care (love) into a Buddhist Theology

curriculum. I make this recommendation on the basis of the study results, the

conversation with Yangsi Rinpoche (one of the "authentic voices" that informs that research), my own observations over 15 years of working and teaching in Buddhist education, and finally, a foundational principle of a Buddhist Theology curriculum, which should strive not only to connect and inform the principles and practices of east and west, but apply them in practice to our contemporary world. The form this might take could be in the realm of developing care (love) for one another, and for our world. Traditional Tibetan Buddhist practice is rich with step-by-step instructions to bring about a sense of care and loving-kindness in the students' minds through simple contemplative practice, tested over centuries, scientifically documented through rigorous self-reflection, writing, and commentaries, and still visible in the embodied personhood of some Tibetan practitioners trained in these systems. The inclusion of this element of the lived tradition of Tibetan Buddhist practice is vital to the development and study of the field of Buddhist Theology.

In the words of Yangsi Rinpoche:

What is going to degenerate in future education is the warm-heartedness and the humanity part. I think the intellectual part may increase…[but] in the future what will be lacking is the heart and compassion, which will produce students who lack compassion, but have lots of information. (Yangsi Rinpoche Interview, 2020)

Critical Inquiry as a Foundation for Teaching in Buddhist Theology

The second of the three main research findings in this study was "Think Critically," further elaborated by the metathemes "Question Everything," "Make Things Clear," and "Buddha Was A Scientist." I propose that these themes be integrated into

both teaching and learning of a Buddhist Theology curriculum specifically through an expansion of the first and second of these: "Question Everything," and "Make Things Clear," beginning with "questioning" and "clarifying" around the role of the scholar themself.

As Cabezón (in Jackson & Makransky, 2000/2013) notes, the direct pronouncement of the scholar's subjectivity is already at play in the field of modern academic theology in general, and thus Buddhist Theology scholars would be well served by engaging in this task. Also, in the parallel feel of Contemplative Pedagogy, there is a strong narrative and conversation about the use of first-person voices in scholarship as opposed to third-person voices (Simmer-Brown & Grace, 2011). In the context of a Buddhist Theology curriculum, I propose that the topic of "subjectivity" be managed under the general category of "reflexivity," which is a description of the same that can be found in academic qualitative research (Macbeth, 2001). The work of reflexivity should be not only taught but also modeled by the instructor, and learned by the students.

In addition to a commitment to disclosure of subjectivity, in accordance with the norms of academic theology, and with the broadest definitions of critical inquiry, I propose that a Buddhist Theology curriculum, and its instructors, would follow the norms of academic scholarship in general (Cabezón, in Makransky & Jackson, 2000/2013). In particular, this could be demonstrated through an articulated commitment to (in the words of Cabezón): "breadth of analysis," "the double movement [of]…the critical spirit…freedom of inquiry," and "the use of a formal [scholarly] apparatus" (Cabezón, p.36, in Makransky & Jackson, 2000/2013). In accordance with

Cabezón, I propose taking these elements as the basis for a Buddhist Theology curriculum, in alignment in particular with the second and third cross-case analysis themes from this study: "Think Critically," which supports the activity of critical thinking that is at the forefront here, and in alignment with the theme "There is Value in Authentic Voices from Other Traditions," which supports sourcing these traditions (Tibetan Buddhist and Western academic) for ways of knowing in the spirit of freedom of inquiry.

Authentic Voices from Within a Tradition as a Foundation for Teaching in Buddhist Theology

A point that became glaringly obvious throughout the course of this study was the sheer enormity and richness of the knowledge and wisdom that is available to Western culture, and the academy in particular from not only the Tibetan tradition, but also from many other Asian traditions as well, whose knowledge, until the 20th century, was largely inaccessible to us in the Western world. The situation of Tibet is unique, as the country was literally broken open in the middle of the 20th century after centuries in relative isolation; but in addition to Tibet, the knowledge cultures of many, many other Asian countries are now freely available for us to learn from. Ironically in the context of this research (which generally positions capitalism as a problematic force) the development of the global marketplace in modern times has also fueled the growth of greater global communication and facilitated the cross-pollination of such knowledge.

With that in mind, as a final recommendation for the development of teaching in and the field of Buddhist Theology itself, I point to the richness of the Buddhist traditions of Asia, and especially Tibet. In these environments, unhindered by the

Western scientific (and academic) devotion to "objectivity" (which itself is certainly a worldview), the deep philosophical roots and understanding of the tradition are firmly embedded in the society and cultural norms, and also in the voices that are rooted in those cultures and traditions. As a final recommendation for teaching in higher education, especially in the context of a Buddhist Theology curriculum, I propose the deliberate inclusion of authentic voices from within the tradition. Although in the context of this study, this recommendation is most directly applicable to Buddhist Theology, further research might take up the question of the value of introducing varying epistemologies and ontologies into the study of lived traditions. Very broadly, we might consider the significant impact of the introduction of "alternate ways of being human" (Carol, Interview, Fall 2020) to the mind of a college student, beyond the merely descriptive.

A Final Note on Buddhist Theology

As can be seen from the data collected from this study: the richness of the tradition from which the teachers of the study participants originate, the impact of these teachers and this tradition on these study participants alone (all of whom were fundamentally shaped by their relationships with their Tibetan teachers), and the knowledge and tools of the traditional Buddhist systems which are now becoming available to Western scholars are extraordinarily vast. Simultaneously, the tools and knowledge of the contemporary Western academy are rigorous and effective. The development of the field of Buddhist Theology has the potential to link these disciplines, "bridging the worlds" (Finding P3a, Individual Case Analysis) in a very real way.