Reviewing the Situation

The Changing Landscape of Education Abroad

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REVIEWING THE SITUATION:
The Changing Landscape of Education Abroad

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

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He started out in the field as a Program Assistant at the Florida State University London Study Center. He has served in professional volunteer positions with NAFSA and the Michigan Association of International Educators (MAIE). Max holds an M.A. in Strategic Communication with a certificate in Organizational Communication for Leadership from Michigan State University, and a B.S. in Economics and Political Science from Florida State University. He is based in Lansing, Michigan.

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Chris Gray serves as academic advisor at University of Illinois at Chicago College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Chris earned a B.A. in Political Science with a concentration in International Relations at Rice University and an M.A. in Higher, Adult, and Lifelong Education at Michigan State University. Chris previously served as an assistant language teacher in rural Japan via the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Program, then as senior JET Program coordinator at the Embassy of Japan in the United States; he returned to Rice as a study abroad advisor and later assistant director of academic advising. Chris's academic interests lie in the intersection among campus internationalization, higher education access and opportunity, and preparing college students for active citizenship. His prior scholarly work includes Chan, R. Y., Gozik, N., Gray, C., and Reinig, M., *Reflections from the Global Studies Literature Review: advancing inclusive excellence* (Conference presentation, May 31, 2023, NAFSA, Washington, D.C.) and "A critical approach to global citizenship and responsible internationalization," [Book Review of R. Rhoads and K. Szelényi *Global Citizenship and the University: Advancing Social Life and Relations in an Interdependent World*, *NAFSA Global Studies Literature Review* (2022: 12, 6–7)].

Anthony Gristwood is Faculty Chair, Principal Lecturer, and Chair of the Global Faculty Advisory Council for CEA CAPA Education Abroad in London. He has been teaching in higher education since 1994 and has specialized in the field of education abroad for the last twenty-five years at CEA CAPA, Bader College of Queen's University (Canada), and the University of Connecticut in London. He holds an M.A., PGCE, and Ph.D. in Geography from the University of Cambridge and is a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society. His current research and teaching interests include globalization, global cities, and modern London; politics, identity, and culture in modern Europe, particularly Spain; and the use of digital mapping in teaching and learning. Publications include "Engaging with

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Martha Johnson is the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost at CEA CAPA. Martha has worked in education abroad since 1991, including onsite at Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland, and as the Study Abroad Coordinator at Leeds Metropolitan University in Leeds, England. She managed institutional relations for several U.S.-based educational organizations and consortia, including Regent College in London and AustraLearn, previous to going to the University of Minnesota in 2001. From 2009 to 2022, Martha served as the Assistant Dean for Learning Abroad at the University of Minnesota and oversaw one of the largest education abroad offices in the U.S., sending over 4,000 students abroad annually. She played a key leadership

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Julia Miller teaches courses in Australian History and Environmental Studies for CEA CAPA Education Abroad where she is the Sydney Academic Director. Dr. Miller has more than a decade of experience in the international education field. She has a special interest in designing for learning and has applied her expertise in this area to her teaching in Sydney. Dr. Miller's research area is climate history. Her monograph *La Niña and the Making of Climate Optimism: Remembering Rain* was published by Palgrave Macmillan in 2019. Dr. Miller holds a Ph.D. in Modern History from Macquarie University.

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Christina "Chris" Thompson (she/her/hers) is noted for her influential work in global education and her dedication to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Her recent achievements include receiving the Go Abroad Award for Innovation in Diversity in 2022 and the NAFSA Region 7 Award for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advocacy in International Education in 2021. She was also notably recognized for her "Global Respectful Disruptor" webinar series in 2020, which gained international acclaim from the PIE Innovation Awards for its impactful content and approach. Chris founded COMPEAR Global Education Network, leveraging nearly 20 years of experience to enhance international education and promote inclusive practices. She is also the Founder of an annual Global Respectful Disruption Summit (in partnership with GoAbroad.com)

that focuses on respectful disruption in global education, advocating for innovative and diverse educational strategies. Her specialization in intercultural learning has been pivotal in advancing diversity and equity in educational settings. Her career includes significant roles in developing global diversity programming and leading education abroad and international student services. Chair of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Subcommittee for NAFSA, Chris is often a notable speaker at various industry conferences and other international platforms. She holds an M.A. in Liberal Arts with a Global Studies concentration from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and is pursuing a Doctorate in Disruptive Leadership Practices at Marymount University.

Christopher Trimby is an Assistant Professor of Biological Sciences at the University of Delaware. He holds a Ph.D. in Physiology from the University of Kentucky, where his passion for teaching began. This led into a career that has included teaching a wide variety of biology courses, and leading professional development in teaching for future faculty. Currently, he mainly teaches human physiology courses, while also being Director of Undergraduate Advising for his department. He first became involved in study abroad by leading a program in Paris in Winter 2020 and, despite those inauspicious beginnings, has kept leading programs. Taking this recent experience leading science-focused study abroad programs and combining it with his unmet desire to study abroad since when he was an undergraduate, Chris has developed a scholarly interest in science study abroad.

Floarea Vîrban is a scholar with a trans-disciplinary profile who has taught courses in History, Philosophy of Language, Cultural Anthropology, Political Science, and Political Economy at CEA CAPA Florence since 2006. She also serves on the CEA CAPA Occasional Publications Editorial Advisory Board and Global Faculty Advisory Council. She is Invited Professor at CET (Vanderbilt in Florence and University of

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Michael Woolf is Deputy President of Strategic Development for CEA CAPA Education Abroad. Mike has had much of his career in an international context. Prior to working in mainstream international education, he completed a Ph.D. in American Studies and taught Literature at the universities of Hull, Middlesex, Padova, and Venice. For four years, he worked as a researcher-writer for BBC radio. He has held leadership roles in international education for many years and has written widely on international education and cultural studies. He serves on several boards and was a member of the Board of Directors of The Forum on Education Abroad from 2006 to 2012. He was the recipient of the

Peter A. Wollitzer Advocacy Award (2020) from the Forum on Education Abroad. "Thoughts on Education Abroad" is a monthly column of his short essays: https://www.ceastudyabroad.com/cea-capa-directory/ dr-michael-woolf-content-creator—-blogger.

FOREWORD

Martha Johnson

CEA CAPA EDUCATION ABROAD

As CEA CAPA's Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, I take great pleasure in inviting you to join our conversation as a reader of this publication. At CEA CAPA, we are driven by our mission to "empower students to become thoughtful and thriving leaders through living and learning abroad." We take great pride not only in our programs, but also in our role in influencing and professionalizing the field of international education.

For more than a decade, the Occasional Publication series and complementary symposia have held a unique space in the field of international education. In 2010 the leadership of the organization that was, at the time, known as CAPA International Education, began a discussion about a radical idea...about ideas. The notion was that ideas should be a more intentional propellant for our work as educators. The ideas should be provocative, collaborative, inclusive, and controversial.

It was proposed that there should be more forums and occasions designed to generate, test, and challenge each other's ideas. It was agreed that these spaces should include new voices, dissenting voices, and voices from those who think differently.

The foundation for what became a series of highly successful symposia and Occasional Publications was established, and the first CAPA Symposium, on the pedagogy of the global city, took place in Vancouver in May 2011. Since then, a total of ten volumes and more than a dozen symposia have been held on a wide variety of topics

related to the practice and pedagogy of international education, from cosmopolitanism to decolonization, from migration to civil rights.

While much of the credit goes to then-President and CEO of CAPA, John Christian, for his belief in the importance of the endeavor and commitment of resources, the critical role of Dr. Michael (Mike) Woolf cannot be overstated. Since the beginning of this endeavor, Mike has acted as the lead editor, champion, and provocateur. He has also enjoyed the support of many colleagues, notably Catherine Colon and Dr. Anthony Gristwood.

Mike has had a long and remarkable career in education abroad. While his professional accomplishments are many, it is his impact in the intellectual space that ultimately will be his most important legacy.

Mike has never considered himself to be on the inside of the "field" of study abroad and has, in fact, embraced his identity as an "inside outsider" in many facets of his life. It is, perhaps, due to the perspectives he gained from growing up Jewish in London's East End— and then entering into British academia— that affords him insights into the layers of complexity, duality, and fissures in educational systems. His belief in the power and imperative of the potential of international education is unwavering, matched only by his insistence that the work be undertaken with seriousness and that nothing may be taken for granted.

To this end, he has spent much of his career quietly (and at times loudly), speaking truth to power. He amplified voices before such a phrase existed or was acknowledged as an ethical responsibility for those with power.

Mike seeks the opinions of those of all gender, racial, sexual, class, and religious identities. Much of his scholarship has focused on marginalized communities such as the Roma, and those of Appalachia,

past and present. If there is someone he notices is not at the table, Mike will intentionally make space and set a place for them.

This publication is thus both one of a long line, and also the first in what we hope will become many iterations that continue to celebrate this tradition of dialogue, debate, and discourse. Mike, as well as Anthony Gristwood and Shawna Parker, remain on our editorial board, but we have also brought in new voices from across our organization.

At CEA CAPA Education Abroad, we have woven our commitment to "making the popular provocative" into our mission and values and we feel it is a privilege to support spaces and publications that continue to drive both inquiry and excellence in higher education in general, and in international education specifically.

This publication is the end result of ideas presented at the first official Woolf Symposium in Washington D.C. in May of 2023, generously hosted by Craig Rinker at Georgetown University. At the Symposium, colleagues representing multiple generations, identities, and a rich diversity of experiences came together to foster scholarship and participate in a workshop for professionals seeking to add their voice to the conversation and publications.

Ideas are iterative, and often best when reactive. Our goal is to provide space and an optimal environment for thought leadership. In international education we discuss the notion of the scholar/practitioner, but provide few opportunities for the true cultivation of original thought. Even in the academic programs designed to develop expertise in the endeavor called international education, there can at times be an echo chamber effect that is perhaps an unintended consequence of the isolation of the scholarship.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines a legacy as "the long-lasting impact of particular events, actions, etc. that took place in the past, or

of a person's life." Our continuing Occasional Publication and Symposia series is much more than this. The series represents a unique space in our field and a deep commitment by CEA CAPA to honor Dr. Michael Woolf's vision and role in establishing institutional structures and platforms that will continue to serve and challenge our ever-changing landscape and community of professionals.

Defenceless under the night

Our world in stupor lies;

Yet, dotted everywhere,

Ironic points of light

Flash out wherever the Just

Exchange their messages:

May I, composed like them

Of Eros and of dust,

Beleaguered by the same

Negation and despair,

Show an affirming flame.

     -W. H. Auden

     "September 1, 1939," *From Another Time*

INTRODUCTION: CRISIS, OPPORTUNITY, AND THE DYNAMIC LANDSCAPE OF EDUCATION ABROAD

Anthony Gristwood

CEA CAPA EDUCATION ABROAD

Michael Woolf

CEA CAPA EDUCATION ABROAD

In the midst of every crisis, lies great opportunity.

- Attributed to Albert Einstein

Like it or not, we live in interesting times. They are times of danger and uncertainty; but they are also the most creative of any time in the history of mankind.

- Robert F. Kennedy, Day of Affirmation Address, University of Cape Town, South Africa, June 6, 1966

Besieged

This volume was conceived in times of crisis that were, for most of us, unprecedented. The environments in which education abroad functions have become more complex, unstable, and less hospitable to our endeavors. Forces of nature, technological upheaval and the politics of humankind appear to conspire. COVID-19 shut down almost all student mobility and called into question many of our deeply held assumptions about pedagogy, curriculum, and education as a collective enterprise. At the same time, driven by ideologies hostile to cosmopolitanism and internationalism, radical forms of nationalism and xenophobia became resurgent in many parts of the world. The imperatives of the pandemic accelerated our use of technologies of remote communication, which alongside growing global consensus about climate change has forced

us to re-examine the sustainability and intrinsic value of student mobility. The ideals that we aspire to—however we chose to define them—appear to be under siege.

Initially, popular reactions to COVID-19 enforced distrust of foreigners, a sense that outsiders were a threat to community health. Thus, some all too quickly identified the "Chinese" virus and the "Indian" variant, re-enacting a prejudice that was at least 700 years old. The Jews and Roma (also known as "Gypsies") were blamed for the spread of plague in Europe from the fourteenth century onward. That tradition of fear of outsiders was re-enforced by the "Spanish" Flu of 1918 and refined by Nazi theories of ethnic purity. Thus, for nearly a millennium, we have learned to fear the foreign as literally the purveyor of disease. Ethnic cleansing is not a metaphor. Aliens have long been regarded as bringing literal infection as well as subversive ideas and lifestyles that seek to dilute the ethos of "Western civilization."

The impact of the pandemic also magnified the implications of post–Cold War geopolitics, which continue to unfold in the early twenty-first century. The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 were cataclysmic events that remade Europe and resonated across the globe. Populations and countries were liberated. Fifteen independent countries emerged out of the wreckage of the Soviet Union. In the aftermath, the neoconservative political scientist Francis Fukuyama published his highly influential book *The End of History and the Last Man* (1992), which championed the idea that liberal democracy and market capitalism were triumphant and represented the ultimate and utopian form of human government—bringing history literally to an end.

Indeed, it seemed to some that liberation was breathed in air fresh from totalitarian repression. Yet, the optimism of Ronald Reagan's

famous speech at the Brandenburg Gate in the summer of 1987 was far from prophetic:

> After these four decades, then, there stands before the entire world one great and inescapable conclusion: Freedom leads to prosperity. Freedom replaces the ancient hatreds among the nations with comity and peace. Freedom is the victor.[1]

Reagan was wrong, but he was far from being alone in his misplaced optimism. In the heady days of post-Soviet Europe, ancient hatreds among nations were also liberated. The collapse of Yugoslavia, for example, let loose horrific inter-ethnic conflict and bloodshed. There is no single country in post-Soviet Russia which has fulfilled Reagan's or Fukuyama's naïve expectations. The Soviet Union had repressed and restrained the dark dynamics that lurked beneath surface cohesion. For example, in September 2023, more than 13,000 ethnic Armenian refugees fled Nagorno-Karabakh after the military interventions of Azerbaijan. Russian territorial intrusions, culminating in the invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, threaten to destabilize the geopolitics of Europe.

These conflicts have resonated within and beyond the former territories of the Soviet Union. Freedom to hate and the re-emergence of traditional nationalisms have spread militant xenophobia in many parts of the world. Such dynamics validate prejudice against outsiders from abroad and minorities from within. Totalitarian governments enforce myths of national identity. Fear and hatred of foreigners creates an ideology of walls, intended to keep out the unfamiliar, be they ideas or people.

International education is in direct collision with these beliefs and, implicitly or explicitly, is rooted in political ideas that are anathema

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1 Speech at the Brandenburg Gate, 12 June 1987, West Berlin.

to radical xenophobia. More broadly, the forces of neoliberal globalization that Reagan championed and that have underpinned the expansion of U.S. education abroad in recent years have slowed and, in some contexts, gone into reverse with the impacts of COVID-19 on global supply chains, social mobility, and economic growth. We can therefore no longer assume that we function in a benign environment. Our commitment is to the building of metaphorical bridges across which ideas and strangers freely move and, in return, we too cross those borders, real and imagined, that separate us from the "Other." Walls are obstructions that we seek to demolish. The implications are profound. The danger is that, in failing to recognize these dynamics, we may sleepwalk into irrelevance, myopically peer into hostile shadows, and fail to discern the presence of powerful enemies.

This is evident in a number of contexts. For example, decolonizing curriculum remains a widespread aspiration in education abroad. This, of course, makes sense insofar as the locations in which our students study have histories that in one way or another have been shaped by empire and colonization. At the heart of decolonization is the notion that dominant narratives obscure the experiences, and silence the voices, of the marginalized. The tools through which these alternative narratives emerge are drawn from history, literature, anthropology, sociology and so on. Teachers and students engage in a form of archaeology, unearthing that which is hidden.

However, those disciplines perhaps more relevant to decolonization are those designated as of secondary importance in the prevailing ethos. External political forces, rather than those from within academia, have created a hierarchy of knowledge in which humanities are seen as less relevant than science, technology, engineering, and mathematics—the STEM disciplines. The liberal arts are under siege from a new utilitarianism in which the purposes of higher education are narrowed;

it exists to serve the needs of industry and commerce. Enrichment of the mind, widening of consciousness, the creation of civil societies—so much more difficult to enumerate—are dismissed as vague, liberal frippery. In that environment, the humanist objectives of education abroad are given little credence.

Instead, training for employment is a priority. That functionalism obscures the distinction between training and education. Rats and dogs may be trained but cannot be educated. Education abroad has wider purposes. It is designed to challenge and disrupt assumptions—to expose learners to unfamiliar ideas in unfamiliar locations, a process that inevitably transcends simple functionalism.

In this uneasy environment, the authors of this volume have invited readers to reexamine philosophical significances and theoretical interpretations underlying our work. The essays in "Part One: Through Other Lenses" remind us that what we do is not only driven by practical imperatives. Anna Kraczyna and Floarea Vîrban use *The Adventures of Pinocchio* to resonate with the experiences of students studying abroad, offering "the critical note that is often missing from study abroad narratives."

Christopher Gray and Julia Miller respectively draw attention to the ways in which neoliberal and colonialist assumptions persist, and, sometimes, intertwine to constrain our field, highlighting the political dimensions of our work. Others explore new ways of unlocking its transformative potential. Christina Thompson and Ebony Ellis focus on the imperatives of inclusivity and diversity as model principles, while Keshia Abraham, Andrea Custodi, and Anna Kelly reorientate us towards broader, embodied and holistic forms of knowledge and experience, reasserting the significance of non-Western, spiritual, and humanist approaches.

There are theoretical implications that, if made explicit, create a field of debate that ultimately informs and enriches the academic contexts within which we function. That is the context in which we might read the essays in "Section Two: Curriculum and Change." Christopher Trimby draws attention to the ways in which "Studying Science in Context" melds STEM studies with social science and the humanities. Where we see a movement to re-prioritize the needs of the physical body in Section 1, we see an extension of this guiding principle outlined by Emily Resnevic in her meditations on slowing down program pacing to promote rest of mind, body, and spirit. Necessary relationships between theory and practice also underlie the arguments offered by Max Chappuis, Hannah Feinberg, and Andrew Solem. The rethinking of assumptions impacts on both principles and practices, what we think and what we do.

In the closing sections, Michael Woolf, Andrew Palmacci, and Brian Henry draw upon personal experiences and histories. They seek to remind us that beyond professional obligations and practical imperatives, many of us are in this field because of a commitment to collective benefit. Ideals are sometimes lost in the daily pressures that preoccupy us all.

Self-Inflicted Wounds

In the rhetoric of American higher education at home or abroad, there is a tendency to adopt mechanistic, industrial models of learning. The notion of "outcomes," for example, derives from a process in which inputs move along the production line, at the end of which a defined set of outputs—outcomes—emerge. As a metaphor for learning, this represents the opposite of the principles of liberal education. In Socratic models, for example, process is unpredictable; a habit of skepticism means that the end (if there is such a thing) cannot be defined by the

beginning. In education abroad, individual encounters with unfamiliar locations add another level of unpredictability. The context of students' learning is indivisible from its content, complicating, sometimes contradicting, and always enriching. To paraphrase the late, great feminist author Ursula K. Le Guin, in the end it is the journey which matters more than the destination.

In short, learners may not necessarily learn the things their teachers decided for them. They may learn more, less, or something entirely different. Certainly, educators may have aims and objectives, hopes, aspirations. Those will become manifest in curriculum and syllabi, but there is a necessary humility that should expose the misconceived metaphor of outcomes.

In neoliberal times, education abroad has similarly drawn upon an inappropriate financial metaphor. In efforts to market individual benefits to students and parents, the idea of a return on investment has gained some credence. Buying experience abroad will, this fallacy implies, give students access to a global elite, even transform them into "global citizens," a state of grace which distinguishes them from the lumpen rest. This is at best naïve and at worst snake-oil salesmanship. It ignores other key determinants of social mobility and employability such as the status of institutions at which students study, the socioeconomic class from which they come, inherited privilege, and so on and so forth. The myth of definable outcomes and return on investment are examples of the self-inflicted damage through which educators promise more than can be delivered and less than may be achieved.

Centuries ago, Marcus Aurelius (AD 121–180) established educational principles that are entirely relevant to how we should teach and learn today: "Learn to ask of all actions, 'Why are they doing that?' Starting with your own" (Aurelius, 2021 [161-180]: 120). That principle

of active curiosity offers a pathway to real benefits of studying in a country other than your own.

We might also revise the language of expansion. There is a tendency to congratulate ourselves on increasing participation. Certainly, there has been an increase in the number of those participating in education abroad, but this has more or less aligned with the growth in U.S. higher education as a whole. For the most part, growth rates in education abroad hover around and below 4% per annum. African American participation rarely moves beyond 6% of the whole (*Open Doors*, n.d.).[2] The argument for international education has not been decisively won in the wider context of academia. Parity of esteem between domestic learning and education abroad is a critical factor in growth of participation. Unambiguous endorsement at home of teaching and learning abroad is a necessary precondition.

However, a problematic commitment to vague notions of intercultural learning has weakened our credibility. The unexamined implication is that going to another country is to engage with another "culture." This sustains the illusion that countries and cultures align, which is the rationale of ultra-nationalists who seek to defend their country/culture from foreign contamination. Moreover, "cultures" (always plural) are never fixed categories: instead, they are mobile, contested, and dynamic, ripe with complexity and contradiction. Historical reality demonstrates the simple fact that countries are not built upon cultural cohesion. Instead, they are social and political constructs of collision, emerging through accident, war, colonialism, ideology, not "natural" products of reason, logic, or—crucially—geography.

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2 These figures and others related to this discussion are found in the Institute of International Education's annual *Open Doors* Report see: https://opendoorsdata.org.

Furthermore, the emphasis on engagement with other cultures tells students to anticipate difficulties in negotiating differences. Concepts like "comfort zone," "culture shock," and "re-entry" enforce an assumption that students are necessarily entering a problematic place. We create the expectation of unease and discombobulation rather than emphasizing opportunity or serendipity.

There is little to suggest that the arguments for the benefits of education abroad have moved opinion in academia and in the wider political environment. Instead, dynamics not of our making have combined to challenge our actions and beliefs. In the face of a difficult environment, we are obliged to review the situation.

Points of Light

These arguments, however, need to be seen to be seen in a wider context. The model of education abroad with which we are familiar developed out of, and in response to, the cataclysmic consequences of World War II. In that dark space, there were pioneers who took an idealistic stance that educational interactions across borders could lead to greater empathy between young people across the world. This was the real meaning of "exchanges" before that term morphed into a financial arrangement. Senator William Fulbright was a prime mover. Long serving president of CIEE, Jack Egle, was one of a number of idealistic entrepreneurs who created significant opportunities for generations of students.

However, there was never a time when the ideologies of education abroad were unchallenged. The McCarthy era created a particular challenge in that "international" was synonymous with alien. For others, Henry Ford in particular, the term was related to Jews and was a symptom of all that was wrong in his virulently anti-Semitic view of the world.

The founder of the University of California Education Abroad Program, Bill Allaway, argued that the "culture" emphasis emerged in that environment.[3] It offered a safer, more anodyne notion than more controversial, challenging concepts of global politics, religious difference, ethnic conflict, cosmopolitanism, internationalism, and so on. It was, in that view, essentially a defensive posture that morphed into orthodoxy.

Within political, social, and economic limitations, education abroad gained credence and strength through the development of strategies to facilitate student mobility. The consortial approach allied to the deregulation of air travel created an environment in which growth became possible, despite the indifference and skepticism of some sectors. We have, then, to look at the past and imagine a future wherein the barriers to our endeavors may be further breached.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion are, perhaps, principles on which the field may further develop. There is, however, a need to create a more inclusive vision that is less vulnerable to critique from right-wing insularity. Inclusivity must reach beyond those constituencies with which we feel most affinity. Reaffirmation of the value of the humanities and social sciences, and their emphasis on critical thinking and creativity, may also offer a pathway for development of educational enrichment abroad. These are not easy choices to make but with the courage of our convictions, there are pathways available along which we may engage with and challenge some of the negative, politicized narratives which confront us.

We must also reconsider and rebalance the ways in which we describe benefits. Self-interest will remain part of the narrative, of course. We need to recognize the power of political utilitarianism.

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3 Conversation between Jack Egle and Michael Woolf, Kiawah Island, 1989.

However, the idealism of the young, and of Generation Z in particular, presents an imperative to enhance and restore our commitment to collective goods, both social and environmental. A shift in the language of improvement (individual to collective) may well engage students who, like many before them, are attracted to the values of internationalism, sustainability, and cosmopolitanism. Words matter.

There is, then, no cause for despair, and every cause for hope. Every dominant system of thinking contains the seeds of its own transformation. This collection of essays demonstrates that our field recognizes the challenges posed by utilitarianism, xenophobia, and neoliberal ways of thinking and offers a diverse array of alternatives to the status quo. Together, they showcase bold, creative visions of the future of our field, and they are testament to the energy and dynamism of education abroad in the third decade of the twenty-first century.

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SECTION ONE:
Through Other Lenses

In this section, authors invite us to reperceive education abroad through a variety of alternative perspectives, both in theory and practice. There are, as these essays demonstrate, underlying assumptions that shape the work with which we are engaged. The authors meditate upon and deconstruct ways of understanding. The daily demands of education abroad are underpinned by a rich diversity of philosophical and ideological narratives.

> *Led by my hand, he saunter'd Europe round,*
>
> *And gather'd ev'ry Vice on Christian ground;*
>
> *Saw ev'ry Court, hear'd ev'ry King declare*
>
> *His royal Sense, of Op'ra's or the Fair;*
>
> *The Stews and Palace equally explor'd,*
>
> *Intrigu'd with glory, and with spirit whor'd;*
>
> *Try'd all hors-d'œuvres, all liqueurs defin'd,*
>
> *Judicious drank, and greatly-daring din'd;*
>
> *Dropt the dull lumber of the Latin store,*
>
> *Spoil'd his own language, and acquir'd no more;*
>
> *All Classic learning lost on Classic ground;*
>
> *And last turn'd Air, the Echo of a Sound!*
>
> -Alexander Pope (1728), from "The Dunciad" IV

STUDY ABROAD AS *IL PAESE DEI BALOCCHI?*[4]

Anna Kraczyna

CEA CAPA EDUCATION ABROAD

Floarea Vîrban

CEA CAPA EDUCATION ABROAD

To Pinocchio and to our students[5]

Captatio Benevolentiae[6]

[Floarea Vîrban: FV] Last spring, listening to Anna Kraczyna and John Hooper's presentation of their new annotated translation of *The Adventures of Pinocchio* (Collodi, 2021; cf. Hooper and Kraczyna, 2021), I immediately thought that Pinocchio has something in common with our students and that one could draw a parallel between Pinocchio's adventures and American students' experience abroad. I discussed this with Anna and we came up with the idea of a guest lecture by Anna about the similitudes between study abroad and Collodi's *il Paese dei Balocchi* within the framework of my new course, *Critical Perspectives on Italy: Contemporary Culture and Society,* at CEA CAPA Florence, where we both teach.

[Anna Kraczyna: AK] I was thrilled at the idea of a talk that would connect my two passions: spreading awareness about the true messages of *The Adventures of Pinocchio* and helping study abroad students gain the most from their experience in order to develop their personal and professional lives.

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4 English translation: "Playland"
5 To all study abroad students!
6 *Editors' note: Captatio benevolentiae* is a rhetorical technique associated with Roman and Chivalric oratory, aiming to capture the goodwill of the audience at the beginning of a speech or appeal.

[AK and FV] Seeing the students' interest in the talk, we felt this was an important opportunity to work together to write an article sharing our thoughts and the feedback we received from our students.

Besides being a complex tale with multiple layers of meaning, *The Adventures* is also a satire on nineteenth-century Italy, ridiculing shortcomings and contradictions of the time's power system and drawing attention to social inequalities among other aspects of the newborn country.[7] We feel that it is precisely the critical note that is often missing from study abroad narratives. When it is included, criticism most often targets students. Although such an approach makes sense to a certain extent, it is too easy and unilateral a way to embed criticism in the study abroad discourse.

We have been teaching for American universities and programs in Italy since the 2010s. Working closely with American students, the first thing we notice is their fragility. The more we think about it, the more our students remind us of Pinocchio.

But Who is Pinocchio? And What is the Tale About?

Pinocchio is the character of a nineteenth-century Italian tale, *Le avventure di Pinocchio. Storia di un burratino* (*The Adventures of Pinocchio. Story of a Puppet*), written between 1881 and 1883 by Carlo Collodi (Carlo Lorenzini), a Florentine writer, humorist, and journalist, who had played a prominent role in the unification of Italy as well as in the formation of standard Italian language. *The Adventures of Pinocchio* is about a wooden puppet, Pinocchio, who comes to life while he is being crafted by woodcarver Geppetto and immediately starts to misbehave. The two get separated early on in the story, and the *Fata Turchina* (Blue-haired Fairy) takes care of Pinocchio as if she were his

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7 Most Italian territories were unified in 1861. Unification was completed in 1870.

mother. The plot of the tale revolves around the puppet either going to school or not going to school, which is when he gets into all sorts of trouble. Towards the end of the story, Pinocchio and his friend Lucignolo (Lampwick) run away from home and go to a wonderful land where children never have to go to school and spend all day every day playing to their heart's content. This land is called *il Paese dei Balocchi* (Playland)*.* But after five months in Playland, they turn into donkeys and begin to live the life of donkeys: one of brutal toil and hardship. Lampwick, in fact, is worked to death, and Pinocchio narrowly escapes being killed for his hide. After countless more adventures, Pinocchio finally finds his father, Geppetto, and, at the very end of the story, earns the right to become a real little boy. The tale of Pinocchio certainly fits into a *bildungsroman* format. His adventures are initiatory and formative, full of obstacles to be overcome in order to grow up, and to ultimately become a human being (Dorfles, 2018).

Some have speculated that the name Pinocchio is a compound of *pino* (pine tree) and *occhio* (eye), underlining that the word *eye* can be connected to the main symbol of freemasonry, yet there is no evidence at all that Carlo Lorenzini was a freemason (Marcheschi, 1995: 1003). The name of the wooden puppet simply comes from *pinocchio*— the word that in standard Italian used to refer to a pine nut, and which has been replaced by the Tuscan term *pinolo* since the publication of *The Adventures of Pinocchio* (Tempesti, 1972: 110). A *pinocchio*, therefore, is a seed. This is a relevant detail since another tree may grow from a seed—or maybe not. And if a tree does grow from it, it may either grow to be a beautiful one or a wry one, though the reason is not necessarily to be found in the seed since the environment may also play a role. This is an aspect that must be duly taken into consideration, and that we think had a particular relevance to the reflections we are making.

Why is Pinocchio So Famous? And Famous for What?

The Tuscan wooden puppet with a long nose, who eventually turns into a real little boy, could not but attract sympathy from all around the globe. *The Adventures of Pinocchio*, the world's most read and sold non-religious book (Marcheschi, 1995: XI) as well as the second most translated one, is a story that, 140 years after its first publication, remains a universal inspiration for artists of all kinds. Just to mention a few examples, in 2022 three films were released,[8] and in 2023 an exhibition at the MOMA in New York City on the craft behind the film by Guillermo del Toro was on show for four months before moving to the West Coast. Pinocchio has become an icon of our times, recognizable by people of all ages in every corner of the planet. Nevertheless, the tale has been widely misunderstood: this is not simply a cautionary story against lying. Collodi's masterpiece, which was not, in fact, written only for children, has many layers of meaning—it is similar in that way to *Alice in Wonderland.* These layers reiterate several points Collodi made also in his countless journalistic articles and in his rich literary production.

On the surface, *The Adventures* is a satire on many defining characteristics of the Italians, which are as true today as they were when the tale was written. But just below the surface, the story is a satire on social injustice, and going even deeper down, it touches on themes that are of the essence in every time and place—like the relationship between parents and their children, or the importance of making mistakes in order to grow up. Among these themes, particular relevance goes to the importance of education as an essential humanizing factor. These multiple strands of meaning, especially the universal messages, together with the misunderstanding that the tale is about mendacity,

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8 *Pinocchio, a True Story,* by Vasiliy Rovenskiy, Sony Pictures, Russia, 2022. *Pinocchio*, by Robert Zemeckis, Walt Disney, U.S., 2022. *Pinocchio*, by Guillermo del Toro, Netflix, U.S., 2022.

may explain why Pinocchio, in this age of fake news, is still growing in popularity after 140 years from the first publication of his *Adventures*.

Current Trends in Study Abroad

Besides being a real phenomenon, study abroad is also generating an ever-growing discursive tradition, shaped by theoretical debates about best practices, models to follow, principles to observe, forums, conferences, and publications. Some of these theoretical models are truly interesting—and even fascinating (Jacoby, 2014; Gozik and Barclay Hamir, 2022). However, they seem to be designed for an ideal world: Ideal American students are offered an ideal opportunity to study abroad, in an ideal environment. Well, this does not fully reflect the world we are working in: neither are our students perfect (and we would add: thank goodness!) nor are the programs we are teaching for flawless, nor is the local Florentine context optimal, nor are we impeccable educators.

Florence is an amazing city, one of the most beautiful in the world, and so is Rome—the Eternal City. They are the two main destinations for Americans studying abroad in Italy and among the most popular in the world. A fascinating overview was offered in *A Tale of Two Cities: Florence and Rome from the Grand Tour to Study Abroad* (Prebys and Ricciardelli, eds., 2017; for Florence, see in particular Ricciardelli, 2017: 1–19). However, this does not automatically mean that the two cities are ideal study abroad frameworks. Indeed, study abroad is becoming an ever more controversial subject in the contemporary Italian public debate. Beyond the narratives of community engagement, community-based learning, cross-cultural experience, full immersion, and the like, the local Italian environment and the study abroad universe are parallel, rather than interconnected, worlds. As Michael Woolf recently put it in "Chasing Shadows: Myths of Engagement in American

Education Abroad," "In the rhetoric of education abroad, however, we propagate a myth that proximity will empower students to engage with communities. Such expectations fail to recognize the fragmentation of the social structures that students will encounter" (Woolf, 2023: 180–191). Indeed, the way we depict study abroad often creates false expectations.

> The relationship between host and guest does not describe the manner in which education abroad is constructed. The student may well be welcome, and we hope does not experience hostility or aggression, micro or otherwise. However, the transaction enacted between the foreign country and the education abroad student is not accurately represented in host-guest terms and may generate misleading expectations. Students abroad are individuals who by personality and curiosity might become welcome guests. They may also generate resentment by inappropriate forms of behavior. Welcome and hostility are at the extreme ends of a potential spectrum of response but either, and all points along the spectrum, are conditional upon both the nature of the people encountered and the way the student enters the unfamiliar environment. The collocation of host and community distorts the nature of encounters. Students studying abroad are not exceptional guests entering into space in which they will inevitably enjoy privileges and unconditional welcome (Woolf, 2023: 188).

While American students are welcome, their presence is often associated with economic gain. Italian universities show little interest in the study abroad world, though many faculty members from these very same universities also teach for American universities and programs in Italy. Some bars, restaurants, and shops formulate their offers to attract American students. Even host families may often see an

additional source of "revenue" in the presence of American students. They pay high rents and are "precious guests." In their turn, students may improve their Italian and be happy to have somebody cooking and keeping the house for them. Thus,

> The idea of a host family creates further ambiguities and exacerbates potential misunderstanding. Living with a family in a second-language environment might aid language acquisition. There are mutual benefits from the arrangement, but the relationship is based on a commercial transaction in almost every case. Responsible education abroad organizations will ensure that the family treats the student well and that the environment is clean, safe, and comfortable. The family will, in all likelihood, be friendly as that is both a natural human response and a means of ensuring repeat business. Over time, a friendship may well develop but it is not a requirement on either side of the transaction. The relationship is better thought of as that between landlord/landlady and lodger. However enjoyable and successful the experience is for both parties, it is essentially based on buying and selling services (Woolf, 2023: 189).

It is also true that since COVID-19, fewer study abroad programs require students to live with host families, thus reducing even further the possibility of interacting with locals in a protected environment. We feel that, though the host family–student relationship may not always be perfect, it still enables students to burst the protective bubble of the English-speaking-only environment they risk getting "trapped" in and create relationships in the host language and culture within a safe setting.

While each program exceeds norms and rules, there is no formal frame for Americans studying abroad at an Italian and European Union

level; we are acting in a sort of "no man's land" where everything is possible. Local administrators are rarely present and not in a relevant way. Also, some managers treat study abroad as a mere business. The academic core and the role of faculty are sometimes overlooked if not purposely diminished.[9]

In Italy, there is an Association of American College and University Programs in Italy (AACUPI) as well as an Association of Scholars at American Universities in Italy (ASAUI), but although they should ideally work together for the benefit of our students, the two associations sometimes speak slightly different languages. However, there is a growing awareness about the importance of academic offerings and the role of local academic staff and faculty. An attempt to propose a faculty-supportive leadership was made in Alan Earhart's *The Lived Experiences of Directors Providing Leadership to Part-time Faculty at Study Abroad Centers in Italy: A Phenomenological Analysis*. His concluding remark is encouraging and gives hope:

> Leadership is difficult to describe and even more challenging to study. Yet, it has enormous potential to improve the lives of individuals who, through fate or choice, find themselves working together to accomplish a goal. Providing excellent study abroad experiences for students is a just and noble goal that has the power to shape the future of our interconnected world. May the findings from this study spark an interest in its readers to be better leaders. The sincere hope of the researcher is that this research might shed more light on the importance of the PT faculty, not only in Italy but around the world, who educate so many young people on study abroad programs. The PT

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9 A survey on the faculty of American Universities in Tuscany was conducted by a group of researchers from Piccolo Opificio Sociologico (Gasparo, et al., 2019).

faculty are often the heart and soul of a study abroad program based in a foreign country (Earhart, 2021: 130).

From a different perspective, but still related, see also Monica Francioso's considerations in "Reframing Cultural Expectations: The Role of On-Site Academic Staff and Faculty," with a particular attention to JEDI (justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion) issues. In her view, the role of onsite academic staff and faculty is crucial in this respect:

We need to understand, examine, and present to our students our local contexts of inequality and oppression, and reflect with students on more equitable and just actions by exploring examples of change. We approach our offerings and our experiential learning activities in a reciprocal way, so faculty, staff, and students are aware of the social injustice we all face locally and globally. Then we can learn to see what is not always visible and find ways to adapt and change (Francioso, 2023: 19).

For their part, American students come to Florence in search of an adventure—the adventure of a lifetime—living out a sort of echo of what the Grand Tour used to be. Although they arrive through university/academic channels and their first purpose should theoretically be to study (which is also what they state upon arrival), many of our students get lost in the landscape. Traveling, having fun, and drinking soon become the priorities of many of them, while academic achievement turns into a secondary goal.

So, what is wrong in the landscape? Is it simply our students' fault? Does this happen because they are "ignorant"? Or is this perhaps a bit more complex an issue, which is sometimes more about innocence than ignorance?

Study Abroad as "Il Paese dei Balocchi"?

Il paese dei balocchi (Playland) may manifest itself in at least three forms. In its most blatant form, Playland may correspond to a way of living study abroad. This is not geographically conditioned but simply shaped by the behavior of our students during their term in a foreign country. One issue that is especially perceived as negative—also by the city's population—is that of American students sometimes drinking too much.[10] Indeed, the difference between legal drinking age in the U.S. compared to that in Italy poses an important question that needs to be addressed in a new, constructive manner. In its second form, Playland may have to do with the host environment, which may provide too many distractions. In our case, what does Italy (Florence, Rome, or any other location) offer to American students? Third, Playland may correspond to a format—when study abroad managers may sell American students more opportunities to have fun than to study.

There is intersectionality between these three forms; they are neither alternative nor parallel constructs. Students may behave as if in *il paese dei balocchi* because this is what they think study abroad is or should be. After all, study abroad ultimately tends to be presented in these terms. Moreover, the so-called host cities are also selling them a package of attractions and distractions. Thus, for this series of reasons, the land of study abroad might be assimilated to *il paese dei balocchi*.

Hilary L. Link writes about something similar in her essay suggestively entitled "From Hawthorne to Bakhtin: Study Abroad in Rome as

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10 This problem has also been addressed by some newspaper articles, as, for instance, can be seen in a letter sent by a Florentine citizen to *Corriere Fiorentino* and published on October 9, 2023: "I ragazzi Americani (ubriachi) che urlano sotto le finestre: Firenze è diventata un parco giochi troppo rumoroso" [Young (drunk) Americans shouting right under home windows: Florence has become too noisy a playground] ([Florentine citizen], 2023).

'Carnival.'" Two points she makes are relevant for our discussion. First, she sheds light on striking similarities between

> how students describe their experiences abroad and how the twentieth-century Russian literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin describes the medieval and Renaissance Carnival, particularly but not exclusively in *Rabelais and His World,* where Bakhtin stresses the importance of folk humour and laughter in the Middle Ages and Renaissance cultures (Link, 2017: 109).

Parallelisms between Collodi's *il paese dei balocchi* and unrestrained Carnival celebrations have been drawn by several authorities on *The Adventures of Pinocchio* (Marcheschi, 1995: 1012). We see an additional parallelism between Bakhtin's (Rabelais') Carnival and study abroad Playland. However, while folk humor and laughter are an organic part of a genuine popular medieval and Renaissance culture, study abroad Playland is a sort of parallel—and to a certain extent artificial—world, suspended between two cultures, the home American one and the host one.

Carnival was also part of Hawthorne's Grand Tour in Italy. But there is another aspect of the way Hawthorne experiences Italy that we must consider as well: the visitors' non-immersion in the host culture. And this is the second relevant issue raised by Link:

> For the fairly contained, New England-raised Hawthorne, Italy represented the exotic, endless layers of history and art piled atop one another, chaos and lack of structure. And this contrast may have contributed to his fairly frequent rejection of what he finds in Rome. As we see throughout his last novel, *The Marble Faun,* Italy proves to be too overwhelming for Hawthorne, too confusing and too uncontained, from its paintings and sculptures to its architecture, to its annual ritual of

Carnival. . . . So, while in many ways *The Marble Faun* is a wonderful reflection of a "Grand Tour" experience and of an American's time in Rome in the late 1850s, it is also a heavy-handed warning to himself and others not to stray too far into the dark, exotic warmth of Italy, and the odd creatures that inhabit this ancient, overgrown land.

In teaching and working with students arriving in Rome, I often use *The Marble Faun* as a lesson in how not to approach one's time in Italy. For Hawthorne, in my mind, Rome tends to appear as either an endlessly tedious series of museums and sites to visit or a sinister background to sinister dark people who threaten the purity of his protagonists. Hawthorne's time in Rome was spent with other Americans and expatriates, dutifully viewing the antiques and ruins of Rome that he was supposed to view, and dryly writing everything down in his *Notebooks;* this is all evident throughout the novel, as both his protagonists and narrator do the same (Link, 2017: 112-113),

As Link observes, study abroad may fit into the Carnival paradigm:

Hawthorne's appreciation for Rome is therefore mixed with a disdain for a Rome that felt a little too out of control for him, especially during the Carnival. And just as Bakhtin's text emphasizes, and as Hawthorne makes clear in his *Notebooks,* Carnival represents a fixed time that ends and then begins again the next year, just as our students' time abroad is (usually) a fixed time, with a cyclical nature to it. It is somehow the knowledge that this time has an end that allows our students, Hawthorne's fictional crowds, and real Carnival participants, to be carried away by what that time represents – freedom

from constraints and hierarchies, humor and festivity, physical immersion in a parallel life (Link, 2017: 115).

And, as already stated, Hawthorne was in Rome, without effectively being in Rome; there was no immersion:

> For Hawthorne, the line of distinction between his New England home and Rome is too sharply drawn; there is no immersion, no real interaction for his protagonists with Romans, not even (it appears) any kind of internal processing of his own experience in ways that might have somehow bridged the gap the novel describes between his life in New England and the life he experienced in Rome. Far from perceiving his time in Rome as a parallel life, or from seeing himself on the threshold of his regular life while in Rome, or experiencing his time in Rome as part of an opportunity to evolve as a person, we seem to see from Hawthorne only a whiff of relief that he and his protagonists have "survived" their Italian adventures and "escaped" without having been sullied by them (Link, 2017: 115–116).

This mixture of self-evaluated superiority and tendency to not mix with Italians is a risk that foreigners have run in Italy for a very long time. In his autobiography, Franco Zeffirelli describes the group of British women who brought him up—they led their lives completely detached from the Florentine community where they resided:

> They were excruciatingly snobbish. Although they adored Italy, they constantly made us aware that the Italians were unworthy of our country and had, when ever possible, to be shown a better way of behaving. Peasants would be upbraided for mistreating their animals and mothers scolded for failing to keep their children's noses wiped. We Florentines tolerated them

because they were part of our city. But behind their backs we always called them the *scorpioni* (Zeffirelli, 1986: 18).

It is something that can be observed even today by simply engaging with foreigners who have spent decades in Italy: interacting mostly within the Florentine anglophone community, after a lifetime in Italy, many barely speak the language.

What Do Our Students Think About Their Experience Abroad?

We asked a group of just over sixty students from different programs (CEA CAPA, CET, and AEF) to mention three pros and three cons of their study abroad term, and they all responded.[11] We highly value our students and their feedback because without them there would be no study abroad at all. To paraphrase Protagoras' famous statement that "man is the measure of all things," we think that *in study abroad, students are the measure of all things.* Their voice should therefore be an essential part of the debate. The majority of our students identified the most exciting aspect of their semester abroad with the chance to travel as they never have before in their life. Although this seems to confirm what we think is the main trend and generally is seen as a

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11 We are very thankful to all students who agreed to give us a feedback: Stepanie Aiello, Cooper Ash, Jackson Alvord, Surina Arora, Baldwin Barnes, Julia Benjamin, Shannon Berry, Samuel Blakley, Coulter Bordonaro, Ann Bosche, Taylor Brandenburg, Cassidy Brock, Tyler Brown, MacKenzie Caffo, Jeison Calle, Mary Carli, Ryan Chang, Clare Connolly, Audrey Copeland, Perry Cosgrave, Hayden Critchell, Yazeed Dahleh, Amanda Dalimonte, Cameron Daniels, John De La Cruz, Shreya Desai, Ava Diegidio, Jules Faerber, Cristopher Farinacci, Gianna Fernandez, Patrick Fitzgerald, Adam Fuller, Augie Galun III, Gabrielle Gerken, Rachel Glasser, Bradley Gillen, Lauren Anne-Marie Glover, Lexi Greene, Katherine Haab, Jack Hepp, Liam Houchin, Parth Lagu, Major LeGoullon, Dylan Lepore, Jared Lucich, Emma Mulligan, Alex Masini, Katherine McCormick, Lucy Nelson, Amelia Novitch, Amanda Partrite, Arush Puri, Callison Reing, Piero Rodolico, Kahryn Salvatiera, Sarah Schwartzberg, Maryanna Shnitser, Sophie Shuman, Evalena Sparano, Erin Stoff, Charlotte Turner, Maddy Tipton, Mia Witt, and Alexandra Zarr. All students, except for Maddy Tipton and Katherine McCormick, who were study abroad students in 2017 and Spring 2023, respectively, were studying in Florence during the Fall 2023 term and were enrolled in our classes in the following programs: CEA CAPA Education Abroad, CET Academic Programs, and Accademia Europea di Firenze. Also, Yazeed Dahleh was in none of our classes but also wanted to share feedback.

problem, it is worth acknowledging that many students see traveling as a chance to see many places in Italy and in Europe, and thus to explore new cultures, live new experiences, meet new people and, in general, navigate diversity. Second in popularity came food. In this case too, besides the Rabelaisian's dimension (of simply enjoying eating), many students praised the quality of food and learning about sustainable and slow food philosophies. Living in a new country and meeting new people was the third positive aspect. Some talked about learning new things (a new language included) and about having the chance to immerse themselves in a new culture and learn about the art and history of Florence. They particularly praised courses linked to the Florentine, Italian, and European contexts, along with enjoying experiential learning. A few students saw their semester abroad as a unique chance to be independent and free in managing their time and life.

Although they all enjoyed the time spent abroad, many felt at times overwhelmed, guideless, even lost. Homesickness, loneliness, and language barriers were some of the critical issues our students had to deal with when abroad. Some students did not like how certain faculty and staff members handled specific political and personal issues, and expressed the wish that study abroad programs be more considerate of their students as individuals and not so much as a group.

A few students lamented overlapping courses in some programs or a limited academic offering in others. A few others would have welcomed more academic rigor and grades that would count for their GPA (though some think the grades should not count). Some thought that class visits or weekend mandatory travel seminars could have been better organized and structured. Others mentioned the lack of connection with local universities. They would have loved being part of joint projects with Italian students. While traveling and living abroad were highly

praised, there were also financial concerns, as for some students the experience abroad turned out to be expensive.

A very few went a little bit deeper in their considerations, reflecting on the overall impact of such an experience on their life, seeing it as an exercise in self-knowledge. The following feedback by Baldwin Barnes,[12] for instance, is a beautiful example:

> Well, as I reflect on the past few months of being abroad, I have learned a few significant points that I would like to reflect on. Some of which I would like to continue as I go into my next chapter, others I would wish to leave here. I have found that traveling has provided me with a sense of who I am while understanding that there is so much more to understand. I know that is overtly philosophical, but it is a true theory, "The Dunning-Kruger Effect is a cognitive bias in which people with limited competence in a particular domain overestimate their abilities. Some researchers also include the opposite effect for high performers: their tendency to underestimate their skills." So, I find the more time I spend experiencing different things the more I learn.
>
> While on the same philosophical wavelength, I realized there is a sense of me not mattering in the grand scheme of things (and, no, that is not a call to help) because what I also realized is that I matter so much to the people I genuinely care about, and that's all I could ask for. I also reflect more on a lifestyle that I have observed and grew more accustomed to in Italy, and that would be the enjoyment of time as a gift rather than as the cutthroat inevitable 9–5 job, in which we see

12 He is not the only one who saw in study abroad an opportunity for self-reflection; many other students did as well, though in a less explicit way and without elaborating on the point.

time as a monetary function. What I want to look forward to is taking time for what is valuable to me rather than creating false wants in a crushingly capitalistic society. I have found that while I have been here, it is 100% up to me if time holds value, or if it is simply passing me by. I am not sure whether I have ever felt this feeling to this extent. If I did not want to do anything, time would simply pass me by. But the moment that I aspired to take hold of my time, it seemed I had so much more of it. Another thing that I don't know if I learned here or have just continued to think about is my choice to try to be less attached to my phone and just have experiences. Being abroad has made that thought process easier because there is always something I could choose to do.

But as much as all of this has revealed to me how valuable time is, I have understood to stay grounded within who I am and allow my brain and soul time for growth: sometimes doing nothing is exactly what is needed. Now, I do not mean mindlessly scrolling or watching TV. Rather it is time in which others would call being bored – simply breathing. It is healthy for the soul.

I understood how fortunate and appreciative I am that I grew up in such a loving, caring household that I wish to carry with me in the future. I also acknowledge my desire to continue to fortify relationships with friends who will be there for me for the good, the bad, and the ugly.

Other messages lay at the heart of the tale. As Daniela Marcheschi notes in her monumental, annotated edition of a selection of Collodi's works, Collodi was a great believer in the "university of life"—children learning from their mistakes and building up a stock of experience with which to cope with the perils and opportunities of life. But at the

same time, when schooling was only just starting to become compulsory in Italy, he was also an advocate of the need for formal education. Pinocchio's reluctance to go to school is the driving force behind the plot of *The Adventures*. It is what leads him from one disaster to the next. Ultimately, it results in his being turned into a donkey. In Italian, the words for "donkey" (*asino, somaro,* and *ciuco*) all have several meanings in addition to the literal one: they are applied to those who do not do well in school (and not necessarily because they are stupid, but because they fail to apply themselves) and to those who are worked to the point of exhaustion, or even to death. Collodi's message to children, at a time when life of an unskilled laborer was one of unremitting hardship, was that if they insisted on being "donkeys" at school, they risked living the life, and maybe dying the death, of a donkey in adult life.

> A second deeper theme is the growth to maturity via the acquiring of a sense of responsibility. It is only after Pinocchio starts to care for his "parents," Geppetto the carpenter and the Blue-haired Fairy, that he earns the right to be a human being. The twin morals of the story, it can be argued, are that education is vital and, more important, that a sense of duty to others is at the core of our common humanity (Hooper and Kraczyna, 2021: IX–X).

What is to Be Done So That Our Generation Z and Generation Alpha Pinocchios Don't Get Lost in *Il Paese dei Balocchi*?

We believe that study abroad should be redesigned in terms of a complex formative experience of which the hardcore should be academic. While integrating co-curricular and even extra-curricular activities is welcome and necessary in a study abroad educational framework, these events should never become the main or, even worse, the only scope of this experience. First, reviewing all courses to restore high

academic standards is imperative. At the same time, education abroad means moving beyond the classroom and traditional frontal lectures. The task of study abroad educators[13] is therefore complex and challenging, as they should integrate theoretical content with experiential learning.

Study abroad might also be a unique opportunity to address complexity. One way to do so is to open a dialogue among disciplines and, even more so, to integrate a transdisciplinary approach. This may give students the opportunity to develop a small research project, integrating knowledge from two, three, or even all courses taken abroad. Bakhtin, mentioned above for his contribution to research on Carnival, is also the main theoretician of *dialogue* and a strenuous theoretician and promoter of a *heteroglot discourse* (*multi-voiced discourse*). Bakhtin's dialogical philosophy concerns dialogue between persons, languages, ideologies, and worlds, etc. Compared to previous thinkers (Hegel, Husserl), who highlighted dialogue as inter-individual communication, "Bakhtin stressed the social dimension of dialogue. This is a significant step forward, because it introduced the idea of a common world, of a community" (Vîrban, 2006: 410). Against the philosophy of an "absolute knowledge and truth," Bakhtin introduced the idea of "situated knowledge and relative truth." It follows that "[t]he heterogeneity of contexts opens up the possibility of a 'multiplicity of truths', and subsequently, of a plurality of discourses" (Vîrban, 2006: 410). This also implies a multiplicity/plurality of consciousnesses (cf. Vîrban, 2006: 411).[14] Thus, Bakhtin is the promoter of a new humanism where otherness matters. As Mayerfeld Bell and Gardiner noted:

> . . . Bakhtin's social thought holds considerable potential for the development of a new humanistic outlook that is not centred in the monologic, self-contained subject but on the

13 We prefer the term *educators* to *teachers* because of its etymological meaning.
14 These ideas are further articulated in (Virban, 2023).

boundary between self and other, or what Augusto Ponzio has usefully termed a *"humanism of otherness"* (1991: 3). In focusing on the realm of the "interhuman," Bakhtin's thought displays numerous affinities with Martin Buber, Emmanuel Levinas, and many feminist approaches (Gardiner, 1996) (Mayerfeld Bell and Gardiner, 1998: 6).

Other scholars also see in Bakhtin "a man whose philosophy leads us to new ways of thinking and to the constitution of a new human being, full of alterity and surplus of seeing the others," and "[a] thinker who insists on the constitutive action of the language" (Miotello et al., 2023).

Back to our point, there should be more room for dialogue among all parts involved in our study abroad transversal community, and scope for a multi-voiced discourse should be created. Thus, renewing study abroad requires joint work by all parties (home universities, study abroad managers, faculty, students, and host cities/countries). The newly created CEA CAPA Global Faculty Advisory Council (GFAC)—an unprecedented initiative in study abroad—may be a way to open a debate and invite reflections on how to innovate and revise the academic offerings. Other programs take similar initiatives. To address third-millennium challenges, Accademia Europea di Firenze, Elon University's study abroad program in Florence, formed a series of transversal groups, such as the Sustainable Action Group (SAG) and the Curriculum Innovation Group (CIG).

In 2022, in their *Study Abroad in Florence. Everything You Need to Know to Enjoy the Experience of a Lifetime,* Marco Bracci and Marco de la Pierre aim to provide an overview of the Florence study abroad paradigm. They involved students, faculty, study abroad Florence program directors, local political institutions, the American Consulate in Florence, *The Florentine*—the local English language magazine—and other relevant organizations. The volume was presented at the 2022

NAFSA meeting and at various study abroad programs in Florence.[15] These are a few small but relevant steps towards a heteroglot (multi-voiced) discourse on study abroad.

We also feel that one way to help students gain insight and grow both personally and professionally thanks to their study abroad experience is to guide them, through a specific course or a few workshops, to reflect upon the experiences they are living in a way in which they can understand what is happening around them, why things are done differently in the host culture, and at the same time recognize what soft skills they are acquiring through both positive and less enthusing experiences. This would allow our students to utilize study abroad to gain an awareness and a set of tools and competencies that would give them more than one advantage in their future paths, whichever those may be. In particular, we strongly acknowledge the importance of language classes.

Learning a new language is not simply about learning new words but may turn into a useful tool to navigate diversity in a new culture, as Francesca Calamita and Chiara De Santi suggest in their *DiversITALY: Elementary Italian with Inclusive Language and Gender Equality* (Calamita and De Santi, 2021; 2023). As European citizens, we see multilingualism as one of the underlying pillars of European identity. We share the views of Guido Reverdito and Sarah K. St. John, who, in "Breaking the Language Barriers: Free Movement and Language Learning in the European Community," noted that language learning and teaching in general, and the promotion of multilingualism, are having an overarching role within the context of European integration:

> People would not be able to move freely and integrate into new member states, their cultures and societies, cross-border

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15 A second, slightly revised edition was just issued (Bracci and De La Pierre, 2023). Leading study abroad programs in Florence will soon receive ten copies for free.

> cooperation would be hampered and meetings among EU offi-
> cials would be at a standstill without foreign language knowl-
> edge or interpreters. Moreover, the ability to speak languages
> fosters the fundamental necessity of an attachment to
> European culture and identity, and hence solidarity. It is seen
> that knowledge of languages in fact holds the ship together,
> and for this reason, it has been crucial to develop a compre-
> hensive framework to recognise, teach and manage the lin-
> guistic diversity of the European Community (Reverdito and
> St. John, 2019: 142).

Correspondingly, we see the learning of the host country's lan-
guage (in our case Italian) as crucial within the study abroad context, as
it may facilitate interaction with the host community. If we do not help
our students to interact with the host country (meaning its people and
culture), they may merely use it without experiencing it, without coming
into true contact with it, without understanding it. They may only see
Italy through the stereotypes that they had of it before coming here,
and they may return home with same preconceived ideas. They may
not develop the soft skill called *cultural intelligence* (CQ) that enables
them to better understand people who are different than themselves.
The city, the country, and its culture and art may remain a background,
which students may end up not seeing, not perceiving, and not assim-
ilating. The host culture/environment may lose its relevance, and our
students may miss the opportunity of learning about everything around
them and, therefore, about themselves. In other words, they may live
their lives as "donkeys."

While being aware that our students are not perfect, that we, the
faculty, are not perfect, that the study abroad programs are not perfect,
that the local host environments are not perfect, we are fully confident
that we may find a way to manage these imperfections and use them in

a constructive way. To be not perfect means to be not yet completed but to have the chance to perfect yourself. The world is imperfect and so are we humans, but as Giovanni Pico della Mirandola put it in his famous 1486 *Oratio de hominis dignitate* (*Oration on the Dignity of Man*), delivered in a square in Florence, this gives us freedom of choice: it is up to us to decide whether we want to crawl like worms or fly like angels:

> At last the best of artisans [God] ordained that the creature whom He had been able to give nothing proper to himself should have joint possession of whatever had been peculiar to each of the different kinds of being. He therefore took man as a creature of indeterminate nature and, assigning him a place in the middle of the world, addressed him thus: "Neither a fixed abode nor a form that is thine alone nor any function peculiar to thyself have we given thee, Adam, to the end that according to thy longing and according to thy judgement thou mayest have and possess what abode, what form, and what functions thou thyself shalt desire. The nature of all other beings is limited and constrained within the bounds of laws prescribed by Us. Thou, constrained by no limits, in accordance with thine own free will, in whose hand We have placed thee, shalt ordain for thyself the limits of thy nature. We have set thee at the world's center that thou mayest from thence more easily observe whatever is in the world. We have made thee neither of heaven nor of earth, neither mortal nor immortal, so that with freedom of choice and with honor, as though the maker and molder of thyself, thou mayest fashion thyself in whatever shape thou shalt prefer. Thou shalt have the power to degenerate into the lower forms of life, which are brutish. Thou shalt have the power, out of thy soul's judgement, to be

> reborn into the highest forms, which are divine." (Mirandola, 1956 [1486]: 224–225).

There is another significant passage in Pico della Mirandola's speech, that reminds us of Pinocchio, of him being a seed:

> On man when he came into life the Father conferred the seeds of all kinds and the germs of every way of life. Whatever seeds each man cultivates will grow to maturity and bear in him their own fruit. If they be vegetative, he will be like a plant. If sensitive, he will become brutish. If rational, he will grow into a heavenly being. If intellectual, he will be an angel and the son of God (Mirandola, 1956 [1486]: 225).

In conclusion, we think that our students, as Pinocchio, and all young beings, have enormous potential—they only need to be guided. They should seize the opportunity of enjoying the Carnival, and they should make their mistakes: you need to lose yourself a little bit in *Il Paese dei Balocchi.* You have to wear the donkey skin at least once in your life to be able to understand what it means. However, we have the duty to remind and show them how to cultivate the seeds and find their own way. Studying, thinking, reflecting, experiential learning, but also traveling and enjoying good food are some ways to cultivate the seeds and make them grew into virtues. And our students are aware of this, because as Baldwin put it at the end of his reflection:

> I reminded myself how much I find education and the drive for more knowledge to be a critical point in growth and continuing to achieve desirable virtues.

> So maybe what I found important in my abroad semester was not the phenomenal cultural experience and the beautiful travel, but rather the self-discovery of what I want in life and

what holds importance to me, why it holds importance to me, and with whom I wish to share the importance.

This, again, resounds with the two main strands of meaning of Collodi's message in *The Adventures of Pinocchio*; that is, "The twin morals of the story, it can be argued, are that education is vital and, more important, that a sense of duty to others is at the core of our common humanity" (Hooper and Kraczyna, 2021: X). And this is ultimately what Pinocchio meant when, at the end of his adventures, he said, "How funny I was when I was a puppet! And how happy I am now to have become a good little kid! . . ."

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GLOBALIZATION, ACADEMIC CAPITALISM, AND THE UNIVERSITY MISSION

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Introduction

Universitates, the itinerant scholar communities of medieval Europe, represent one of the earliest forms of higher education. The current era of globalization has presented an unparalleled opportunity to extend higher education far beyond the imagination of its forebears, uniting diverse individuals, communities, and ways of knowing from all corners of the globe. However, the nature of globalization as it has unfolded in our history—namely, through imbalances in power relations, which have given way to a world order dominated by Western political, cultural, and economic values—has caused higher education to face exploitation in service to geopolitical and economic goals, suborning the mission of and contributing to stratification in research and higher education around the world. In this paper, I wish to explore how the literature describes the global system, its levels and coupling with universities, and how these relations have influenced the functioning of universities. I will argue that neoliberal globalization, much like the trend of privatization of higher education in the United States, has swung the balance between production of knowledge for academic interest and service to an increasingly market-focused society largely in favor of the latter.

Theoretical Framework

Globalization and World-Systems Theory

Defining and operationalizing "globalization" had been a matter of contention in the literature since as recently as a decade ago

(Rhoades and Szelényi, 2010). Murkiness of this concept may be abetted by universities themselves; Rhoads and Liu (2009) note that declaring goals of internationalization has become "fashionable" among university presidents (Liu, 2007: 285), yet such proclamations seem to lack the specificity of objectives like increasing student diversity or scholarly output. Nonetheless, a consensus seems to have developed which asserts a conceptualization of globalization as the compression of the space and time in which the impact of events in one locality propagates to influence circumstances in other localities (Marginson and Rhoades, 2002; Rhoads and Liu, 2009; Rhoades and Szelényi, 2010; Scott, 2015). This is made possible through increased contact between actors, permitted by increasing economic and technological ties.

Meanwhile, world-systems theory posits a system of relations among a "core" or "center" of developed nations and a "periphery" of the developing; these relations are characterized as exploitative insofar as they constitute a unidirectional flow of resources which are produced in the periphery (Clayton, 1998) to the core. Critiques of world-systems theory seem to have unfolded along two main lines. First, membership in the "core" and "periphery" do not appear to be as fixed as they originally were when world-systems theory was originally proposed. In terms of academic output, Marginson (2021) notes recent increases in scholarly production of "peripheral" countries including China, India, Iran, Korea, and Brazil, while Scott (2015) points to the rise in prominence of universities in East and South Asia, which challenge the directionality of brain drain. Wu (2019) also notes criticism of China's exportation of its domestic higher education model as well as its international development aid for higher education as new forms of colonialism, thus implying that China is at least engaging in "core"-like behaviors. Second, Clayton and other scholars have argued against the "subjectification" of actors in this model, rejecting the idea that they are passive receptacles

for influence and offering illustrations of actors' agency, including sometimes their resistance to the hegemony implicit in world-systems theory. An interesting microcosm of this, which helps to illustrate the broader phenomenon, is Wen and Hu's (2018) assertion that micro-level personal characteristics of scholars have been overlooked in favor of macro-level phenomena when seeking to explain trends in global scholar mobility. While the literature has spent a good deal of time illuminating the nuances of center-periphery relations and mobility at the individual and local level, it does not seem to dispute the prevalence of this thinking by actors at the national and supranational level.

Academic Capitalism

Academic capitalism, articulated by Slaughter and Leslie (1997) and Slaughter and Rhoades (2004), describes the ways in which universities and scholars have sought or responded to pressure (directly and indirectly) to leverage knowledge production for fiscal gain and otherwise engage in entrepreneurial behavior. In discussing privatization of higher education in the U.S. context, McClure et al. (2020) offer distinctions between commercialization—"the process of offering or managing a university activity or service principally for net financial gain, as well as policies designed to encourage such activities or services" (7)—and marketization—"increasing market coordination or interaction through policies to promote competition among buyers and sellers of higher education products and services" (8). Behaviors may include patenting, developing spin-off companies, grants, university-industry partnerships, and adjustment of tuition fees (Slaughter and Leslie, 1997; Rhoades and Slaughter, 2004; both as cited in Kauppinen, 2012). In short, academic capitalism asserts that universities are becoming more entwined with their environment as a matter of generating revenue, and this increased connection renders them susceptible to influence from

other sectors of society which are also increasingly guided by neoliberal principles.

Emergent Themes of Analysis

Blurring of Organizational Field Boundaries and Multilevel Analysis

A number of scholars have offered deconstructions and reconstructions of traditional concepts in the study of comparative higher education to better explain the widespread influence of neoliberal globalization and increasing linkages more fully between academia and its external environment. One example is neo-institutional theory; originally described by DiMaggio et al. (1983), the theory posits an organizational field where organizations operate and compete in a hierarchy of status. Those which hold sway in the organizational field seek to maintain the status quo, while those which seek greater influence or success will often mimic those players at the top of the field. As Slaughter and Cantwell (2012) describe, norms and values (and therefore the field's structure) are maintained in the field through such means as state regulation, circulation of professionals within the field, and managers in organizations who act in response to isomorphic pressure; however, the authors argue that fields are becoming harder to define as intermediating organizations (such as think tanks), which span the public, private, and non-profit sectors, shape policy and soften boundaries, "reconfiguring these spaces so they are more amenable to the market" (588). Kauppinen (2012) offers support for this argument by stating, "[T]he focus of academic capitalism is 'on the blurring of boundaries among markets, states, and higher education' (Slaughter and Rhoades, 2004: 11). The study of academic capitalism should not be reduced to HE as an isolated social system" (545).

Meanwhile, multilevel analysis of globalization and higher education has continued to gain traction in the literature over time. One

frequent citation in the literature of comparative higher education is Marginson and Rhoades' (2002) "glonacal agency heuristic." In essence, the heuristic offered a rebuttal of analysis conducted solely at the national level to stress analysis of activity within and among levels ranging from the global to the local. This resolution of analysis is necessary in studying neoliberal globalization and academic capitalism because the blurring of boundaries means that universities are increasingly engaging with or influenced by actors outside of the nation-state. Indeed, Kauppinen (2012) explains that the impetus for focus on the transnational dimensions of academic capitalism—and specifically the role played by transnational corporations (TNCs)—is that "nation-states are not natural containers of those networks, circuits, and activities that are established by universities together with private sector and public authorities" in pursuit of revenue (544).

These dual phenomena of blurring organizational field boundaries and multilevel analysis frequently appear together in recent literature discussing the influence of neoliberal globalization and academic capitalism on higher education and research. Why is this so? These concepts obviously complement each other, and it should be considered beneficial that studies employ higher granularity without sacrificing explanatory power, which these concepts seem to succeed in doing. However, I would posit that the main reason these phenomena are often studied and applied together is because neoliberal globalization and academic capitalism pursue behaviors which increase revenue and "competitiveness" in ever more complex and novel ways, creating more opportunities for engagement or influence between universities as the site of knowledge production and enabling a greater range of stakeholders to participate. In the following section, I will examine how the literature has demonstrated greater linkages between academia and its environment in this vein.

Internationalization of Knowledge Production for Geopolitical and Economic Competition

Several scholars have explored the connection between the commodification of knowledge and its leverage for geopolitical gain. Paasi (2017) argues that "the claims for the need to *internationalize* national science are namely often done in the name of *national* competitiveness" (515, *emp. in original*). Furthermore, in examining the marketization of higher education, Slaughter and Cantwell (2012) note that "human capital and competitiveness discourses were among the major narratives" circulating in intermediating organizations, research universities, and policy groups in the U.S. and E.U.; such discourse arose from the private sector and think tanks to deal with foreign competition, and it situates higher education as serving society's needs through building a strong labor force and thereby economy (589). Slaughter and Cantwell (2012) and Paasi (2017) both mention the commodification of knowledge as a precondition for this discourse, which is also acknowledged by Kim (2017) in stating that "the value of knowledge production is increasingly defined by economic relevance and closely tied to the creation of revenue" (982).

In addition to the human capital discourse, the literature illustrates a myriad of entrepreneurial behaviors universities may engage in with other implicated stakeholders to secure revenues, including patenting, spinning-off companies, grant seeking, developing university-industry partnerships, adjusting tuition fees, corporate donations, sales of institutional goods and services, soliciting philanthropy, establishing branch campuses, international student and faculty recruitment, and brokering transnational university mergers (Kauppinen, 2012; Rhoads and Liu, 2009; Slaughter and Leslie, 1997; Slaughter and Rhoades, 2004). Though some of these activities may be carried out in ways which are not strictly international, the literature firmly indicates that

these behaviors are situated in the phenomena of competition in geo-politics and the global economy. Additionally, we can see in this sampling of behaviors the broad range of potential stakeholders, including governments, NGOs, and businesses at the local, national, and global levels, as well as institutions, sub-institutional units such as departments, and individual scholars.

These imperatives are fostered by a discourse of competition. Kim (2017) notes that "[t]he EU has consistently promoted academic mobility as a major policy priority for economic competition in the wider global market" (European Union, 2011, as cited in Kim, 2017: 983). Nation-states may entice foreign direct investment from TNCs, such as in Spain, where tax credits are offered to "R&D work subcontracted to universities or public research centers" (Guimón, 2011: 83, as cited in Kauppinen, 2012: 553). Such policies may be abetted by interstitial organizations like Invest in Finland, the U.S. Business-Higher Education Forum, and the European Round Table of Industrialists (Kauppinen, 2012; Slaughter and Cantwell, 2012), all of which bring together some combination of business and political leaders, lobbyists, and university actors.

Impacts on Universities and Higher Education Mission

The discussion above illustrates the ways in which universities may participate in academic capitalism as precipitated by neoliberal globalization. What is the merit of exploring this phenomenon at this moment? The struggle of universities to survive and exhortations that they heed the demands of the public are nothing new. However, a review of the literature indicates little ambiguity that we presently live in an era of unprecedented globalization, and consequently of new expressions of capitalism as extolled by the supremacy of the Western neoliberal hegemony. This environment creates new challenges for higher education

to pursue the production of knowledge autonomously. As Rhoads and Liu (2009) note, internationalization may become "an entrepreneurial response to a global market wherein practical application and job relevance drive curricula to be more task-focused" (287). Meanwhile, Paasi (2017) and Kim (2017) both point out how scholars are increasingly being assessed for their ability to earn revenue and contribute to the economy. More broadly, Rhoads and Liu (2009) posit that neoliberal ideology has inculcated "market ideals into the teaching, research, and service functions of colleges and universities," where "students commonly are viewed as consumers, and research and service are business ventures to be managed for their highest economic value" (294).

The literature demonstrates a few impacts on the ability for universities as a whole to pursue their mission. In particular, patterns of funding create stratification in systems of higher education. Funding for technology transfer is highly concentrated among a small number of universities and mostly in STEM fields in the U.S. and to a lesser degree Europe; certain institutions and fields of study enter new circuits of knowledge and funding streams while others, particularly humanities and certain social sciences, do not (Slaughter and Cantwell, 2012). Second, increased exposure to the market results in vulnerability to market failure (Slaughter and Cantwell, 2012). This makes entrepreneurship a difficult proposition for universities with lesser resources; they must choose between taking on financial risk versus being outcompeted by other institutions, while those universities which already have greater resources can better absorb such risk. Additionally, outside investment is uneven because actors such as TNCs have the global reach to take advantage of talent pools and scientific bases wherever they exist; they "do not find all nations, universities, and cities equally attractive localities in respect to FDI in R and D" (Kauppinen, 2012: 549). Again, this points to a phenomenon where those universities which are already

most successful are more likely to secure an outsized share of external funding, as investors are keen to maximize their return on investment. In this vein, universities also seek revenues by focusing on developing ties to knowledge-intensive sectors such as biotechnology, "intersecting with a global economy in ways that do not always pay dividends for local economies and regions" (Slaughter and Rhoades, 2004: 36).

In short, universities are becoming increasingly beholden to the for-profit sector and a public sector where nation-states are investing less in the public good in favor of their geopolitical position in the global economy (Rhoads and Liu, 2009). Universities' focus on revenue-seeking may cause them to minimize activity which is deemed not to significantly contribute to prestige or revenues. The effects of this are various and seen throughout the literature. For one, citing Münch (2014), Kim (2017) points out that academic capitalism has led toward uniformity of research and loss of academic autonomy by universities. Additionally, stratification of national higher education systems reduces opportunities for those students outside the societal elite by concentrating quality education opportunities at selective schools. Furthermore, revenue-seeking behaviors in the global economy by universities may allow the continued perpetuation of neoliberal globalization, as the decline of non-STEM studies minimizes those disciplines which are best positioned to critique neoliberalism (Slaughter and Cantwell, 2012) and transnational collaborations between the Global North and South uncritically reproduce unequal power relations (Rhoads and Liu, 2009). There may be reasonable debate about the degree to which universities should train students for labor and contributing to their local and national economy, but any balance between these and teaching, research, and service toward goals in all the other domains of society at large is at risk of becoming upset by the imperatives of neoliberalism and the global economy.

Conclusion and Potential Solutions for Future Inquiry

Globalization has ushered in a new era for universities; as resources and competition are unleashed on a global scale, so too come new opportunities and hazards. The literature reviewed in this paper examines the various ways in which actors in different sectors and at different scale are engaging with higher education and research, and how such intersections are leveraged for economic and geopolitical gain. This new arms race—featuring a perpetual demand for academic outputs along with ballooning costs, rhetoric, and governance technologies (Slaughter and Cantwell, 2012)—risks awakening new forms of nationalism and colonialism in the world-system as universities themselves lose autonomy to global capitalism and post-industrial nation-states.

Multifaceted as these circumstances are, the literature seems to offer only disparate solutions. Slaughter and Cantwell (2012) observe a European movement to create a "third way" which favors development for sustainability and the public good rather than competition. Indeed, the Russian Federation aggression in Ukraine has raised the specter of a fractured global order, and so more nation-states may become interested in a policy framework which overemphasizes safety and redundancy as a means of reducing exposure to risk in the global economy. Because this solution is still firmly rooted in the logic of knowledge production as an instrument of geopolitical advantage, proponents of such a solution would need to attend to the social and political processes which would allow Europe and others to develop a consensus for reorienting universities toward the public good. Separately, Rhoads and Liu (2009) offer an interesting conceptualization of universities as the site of social movements, including those which resist neoliberalism. They discuss University of Buenos Aires student and faculty resistance to external policy impositions, a unique example of active participation in

opposition to neoliberalism. This is useful as the victims of neoliberalism tend to be those "periphery" nations, but their argument might be further enhanced with additional case studies of social movements with similar magnitude in "center" countries from which neoliberalism originates in the first place. Another potential for a solution may lie with an explanation from Rhoads and Liu (2009: 294):

> In response to the uncertainties of the late twentieth century, including the wayward expansion of higher education, increases in student demand, greater public expectations for higher education, and shrinking state and federal expenditures, universities forged a path of entrepreneurialism to cope with the new complexities (Clark, 2001, 2004). Shifting from a social institution logic to an industry logic (Gumport, 2002), the "entrepreneurial university" actively sought innovation in its business practices. As a consequence, given their nature as knowledge-based institutions, universities became deeply entrenched in academic capitalism (Slaughter and Leslie, 1997; Slaughter and Rhoades, 2004).

If we consider that universities comply with neoliberal globalization and academic capitalism insofar as they are seeking to ensure their survival amid an uncertain external environment, policies to alleviate undue pressure on universities from these phenomena should consider how to empower universities to resolve uncertainty and maintain a nominal level of autonomy. A solution along these lines will likely require a large mobilization of advocacy across many segments of society, but as universities are implicated now in so many spaces, so too may there be an opportunity to activate a diverse coalition of support.

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I BEFORE *E*, EXCEPT OVERSEAS

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CEA CAPA EDUCATION ABROAD

It is through my body that I understand other people, just as it is through my body that I perceive 'things.'

> - Merleau-Ponty (1962: 86)

Our feelings are our most genuine paths to knowledge.

> - Audre Lorde (as cited in Hall 2004: 92)

Overview

Identity politics, and a focus on supporting, recruiting, and amplifying diverse identities, reign supreme in U.S. higher education right now. Gender, racial, ethnic, and other identities are often the primary factors that drive how students understand themselves, represent themselves to others, and navigate their learning. There are very good reasons for this to be the case in the U.S. higher education context, even as there is also active, worthwhile dialogue about where principles of equity, restorative justice, and other identity-based values and initiatives intersect with principles such as freedom of speech. We are not seeking to engage in those debates here.

What we would like to do is to locate them in U.S. higher education, in U.S. campus politics and policy debates, and ask whether identity need also assume the same primacy in the teaching, learning, and navigating of life that we frame, guide, and foster in education abroad. Specifically, we are wondering whether there might be a different,

better-suited organizing principle for our place-based learning abroad: *embodiment*. Our argument here—drawing on Buddhist mindfulness and Yogic traditions, ethnographic theory, African-centered pedagogy, and post-ableist thinking—is that embodiment can encompass but also go beyond a focus on identity in how we encourage our students to experience their time abroad.

Beyond the Ego

Yogas chitta vritti nirodhah. (Yoga is the cessation of the fluctuations of the mind.) (Patañjali, *Yoga Sûtra 1.2*)

Yogic, Buddhist, and secular mindfulness traditions all focus on using groundedness in the body—in the breath, in particular, as the *sine qua non*[16] of life—as a way to move past, frame, and even perhaps defang the travails that come with being an identity in the world. The self, the ego, the conglomeration of history and thoughts and opinions, grievance and superiority, and how we are seen by others and treated by others, is positioned in relation to what undergirds and transcends them. By focusing on sense impressions in cultivating heightened awareness, these traditions use the body to move us past our identities in the interest of engaging more fully with the world, recognizing the commonality and shared nature of what it is to be human, while simultaneously suspending judgment on what might constitute troublesome (or welcome) differences.

What would it be like if we left our egos, our sense of self, our matrix of identities behind when we traveled abroad? Though we are moving embodied through the world, and are subject to the various symbolic overlays and projections of those we encounter, what if we could train ourselves and our students to put the "I" aside as much as

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16 *Editors' note*: trans.: "a necessary condition without which something is not possible."

possible and hone our powers of perception, observation, and non-judgment? To sink below the interfaces of identity and into a deeper ground of being that encompasses a much deeper awareness and reality? What if we could note and register how we are perceived, but separate ourselves from our reactions associated with that and focus on our own perceiving? To open fully to the world around us—to the world permeating us, of which we are a part—to perceive it in all the nuance and richness of its reality, we must try to acknowledge yet deconstruct the filters of identity that color how we encounter it. There are not just multiple layers to our own identities, there are multiple layers to the identities and cultural artifacts around us, and by cultivating attuned, refined sense impressions, our powers of observation and perception—projecting less and perceiving more—we can come closer to opening to the fullness and complexity of our host context.

Mindfulness in education abroad is a burgeoning area of interest in the field. Not only does it have potentially powerful applications to mental health abroad, but profound pedagogical possibilities as well. Though the term centers the mind, the practice centers the body. We lead with this concept in our thinking about embodiment in education abroad, knowing that many of our colleagues are thinking in the same direction.

Although there is a preponderance of focus on the physical practice of yoga in the West, *āsana*—the "down dogs" and "warriors" taught in studios and gyms—is traditionally understood as a vehicle for clearing and focusing the mind. Even beyond yoga's origin in ancient India, there are hieroglyphics depicting ancient Egyptians in "yoga" postures practicing s*mai tawi*, the union of higher and lower consciousness (Ashby, 2005) through the joining of physical movement, breathing, and meditation. Both of these traditions leverage the body as a tool to relax and reset the mind in preparation for learning—or if you're very lucky and

work very hard, enlightenment. "Yoga" derives from the Sanskrit expression "to yoke" or "unite" and is therefore understood as a vehicle for preparing the mind for learning, insight, and development through yoking or union with the body.

There are applied, ethical dimensions to yogic practices, too, which can link to the ethical dimensions of how we practice education abroad. The yoga *sûtras*, discourses credited to Patañjali, present *yamas* and *niyamas*—moral codes or ways of "right" living—as the first two phases or limbs on the eightfold path to achieving yoga: the yoke of learning. These could be applied to how we embody learning and wellbeing in community. In their most basic sense, the *yamas* are suggestions of what not to do, while the *niyamas* suggest practices also present in moral codes at the root of ethical education abroad. The *yamas* are like the community contracts we create with education abroad program participants at the start of class or program. These principles of self-control are about how we live in community with others—agreements we make to be good stewards and collaborators in life, involving nonviolence, truthfulness, non-stealing, non-excess, and non-possessiveness. These five principles are balanced through *niyamas*, which are personal practices each person strives to maintain inside of themselves—purity, contentment, self-discipline, self-study, and surrender—which are embodied principles for functioning in the world with self and others. Combined with concentration, breath control, and meditation, all of this can serve as a foundation for understanding and facilitating embodied learning.

Ethnographic Embodiment Theory

On the other side of these spiritually-informed approaches, squarely located in the thinking mind is a rich anthropological body of scholarship that employs embodiment as its primary reference point for approaching, engaging, and experiencing other cultures. Works

such as Robert Desjarlais' *Body and Emotion: The Aesthetics of Illness and Healing in the Nepal Himalayas* (1992) and Jennifer Biddle's *The Anthropologist's Body or What It Means to Break Your Neck in the Field* (1993) make the case that the body, embodiment, matters in how we encounter and navigate novel contexts abroad. Embodiment encompasses elements of identity such as our gender, our race, our physical abilities and markers, to be sure. But it's also so much more, and we would argue that, in a way, it can release our students from a laser focus on identity—identities that are constructed and perceived differently elsewhere—that might be less productive or appropriate abroad, opening up a different way of grounding in the self and encountering the other.

Biddle writes in the context of her fieldwork in the Australian Outback, and Desjarlais in the Nepal Himalayas. Though both are writing as ethnographers in physical and cultural contexts radically different from what most of our students encounter abroad, we would suggest that these more extreme examples can nonetheless shine light on how embodiment structures and mediates what our students experience. If we swap "ethnographer" with "student" in Biddle's and Desjarlais' insights, much of it still holds true. Building on the work of Merleau-Ponty, Biddle notes that:

> It is the experience of our body in action - the day to day orientation as we move in the world, that creates spatio-temporality as we know it. The body orients itself, and the world, through movement. . . . The repetition of activity in turn carves out certain trajectories, certain modes of being, which accrue meaning and posit the world in a particular way. Put simply, your vantage point is always and only embodied (Biddle, 1993: 188).

Embodied experience in a different cultural context—through the "body as medium of culture" (1993: 186)—can open to new forms of spatio-temporality, such as, for Biddle, re-learning how to sleep in Warlpiri culture. It can also offer novel ways of relating to material objects.

> I had to abandon my European house with washing machine, stove, refrigerator, deep freeze, air conditioner, continuous hot water, bathtub, tiled floor, toilet that flushed, rooms with doors, doors that locked, windows with glass in them, etc. in favour of my Warlpiri mother-in-law's camp (which, by definition, has none of these things) because the house kept me tied to particular bodily orientations, particular activities which I no longer valued, nor had time for. . . . The materiality of what surrounds you embodies attitude and orientation, in so far as you develop habits, relations of being, with these objects (189).

Though we might not expect a similar level of renunciation among our study abroad students, they do have to re-orient themselves to different ways of heating, cooling, washing, drying, cooking, showering, and moving about. If, as Merleau-Ponty suggests, "our habitual activities get organized into an unconscious, individuated system" (1962), a kind of "postural" or "corporeal schema" (1964), then this is what "organizes sense impressions, and structures the meaning of lived experience" (Biddle, 1993: 189). At home, we take this corporeal schema for granted—"normal" lived experience requires a certain "dullness, a certain lack of bodily consciousness'' (1993: 190)—but abroad, it can be thrown into relief. This is often where some of the biggest revelations about cultural relativity come for students even as they navigate what they perceive as "normal" based on their home context. To swap Biddle's fieldwork for our work:

> to [study abroad] is to live difference. It is both to confront
> and to a greater or lesser degree, transgress the safety, the
> certainty, the habits, the contours and definitions of a single
> corporeal schema (193).

The beauty of doing this, of taking on new corporeal habits and orien-
tations, is that, through this process, "the Other does not remain other
very long. One becomes an active participant, a willing subject in what
was supposedly, and perhaps originally, foreign" (191). Being open to
taking on a new corporeal schema also opens the door to sympathy,
empathy, connection, and engagement. In Biddle's words:

> We are not spectators who remain outside of and indifferent
> to what we perceive but rather we are corporeally implicated
> in and through perception. Recognition is a *corporeal* not an
> intellectual process. As Merleau-Ponty puts it: "It is through
> my body that I understand other people, just as it is through
> my body that I perceive 'things'" (1962: 186). This capacity
> to feel for and as another means that we remain open to the
> world of Others (Biddle, 1993: 191).

It is not all roses, however. In Biddle's case, there was sunburn,
boils, insect bites, and eventually a broken neck. For our students, there
may be illness or discomfort brought on by different food and water,
treated more or less effectively with different medications and health
systems. Culture shock can and should also be understood corpore-
ally, then. As Biddle puts it, "culture shock and illness are all indicative
of the limits and boundaries of the social bodily self. They represent
points where the limits of the social body are manifest; they also, nec-
essarily, represent moments of transformative potential" (1993: 193).
One might have to choose how far one wants to go in encountering
and opening to difference. Biddle recounts her decision whether or not
to wear a sunhat (194)—it would protect her European skin from the

blazing sun of the Australian Outback but prevent her from participating in grooming rituals with her Warlpiri kin. In villages of rural India, I (Andrea) found myself having to choose whether to drink the water that was offered to me in welcome—and probably get sick—or to turn it down and forgo the intimacy that comes from shared drink, disregard of (perceived) social status, and accepted hospitality. As Mary Douglas suggests in her seminal work *Purity and Danger*, the body as "bounded," like all social systems, is "particularly vulnerable at its borders" (1966: 120)—most fundamentally at the level of what we consume and how we react to it.

In his ethnography of illness and healing in the Nepal Himalayas, Desjarlais similarly describes the kind of embodied learning that our students can experience abroad: "By participating in the everyday life of a society distinct from one's own, a [student] confronts and slowly learns . . . patterns of behavior previously unfamiliar to his or her body" (1992: 19). Much as Biddle describes new spatio-temporal orientations and relationships to material surroundings, Desjarlais recounts the kind of learning that occurs "tacitly, at the level of the body" (26), bringing together "social and somatic forms" (27). By having to teach his body to crouch—awkwardly—alongside Yolmo men as they smoke cigarettes, for example, he encounters physical limits of participation but becomes more deeply aware of "the sensory grounds of . . . experience distinct from what I was familiar with. . . . By using the body in different ways, I stumbled on . . . practices distinct from my own" (27). Though "we tend to privilege the linguistic and cognitive over the visceral, sensory, and tacit," in both ethnography and education abroad our students have the opportunity to soak up new embodied ways of being as a sponge soaks up water (29).

So, an embodied pedagogy for education abroad would encourage students to consider experiences "from the plane of the body"

(Desjarlais, 1992: 31) and encourage them to explore "how certain forms of social life shape the bodily and mental structures through which life is apprehended" (1992: 32). Similar to Merleau-Ponty's corporeal schema, Desjarlais cites the cognitive scientist Mark Johnson's "embodied schemata" that allow us to structure human experience: if "many of our basic orientations to the world derive from tacit bodily orientations . . . visceral *sense* . . . rather than from seemingly objective reasoning, ideas, and categories" (1992: 38), then our pedagogies for teaching students how to encounter and navigate difference abroad should center on that plane of experience in addition to the more purely intellectual.

African-Centered Pedagogy

I have always been acutely aware of the presence of my body in those settings that, in fact, invite us to invest so deeply in a mind/body split so that, in a sense, you're almost always at odds with the existing structure, whether you are a black woman student or professor. But if you want to remain, you've got, in a sense, to remember yourself—because to remember yourself is to see yourself always as a body in a system that has not become accustomed to your presence or to your physicality.

　　　　-bell hooks*, Teaching to Transgress* (1994)

To see yourself as a body in a system that has not become accustomed to your presence or to your physicality internationally can *both* do psychological, physical, and/or emotional harm *and* have the capacity to open up pathways to freedom. Whatever that body is, whatever the ways in which that particular body is not aligned with where power sits in any given context, necessitates widening the scope of how we prepare, engage, process and commit meaning-making to our experiences of space, place, and people—embodiment before identity. Once the body enters the conversation, the way we holistically prepare for program participants necessitates considering more about the whole *person*

(see "Whole Human Pedagogy" in this volume)—not the generic "student" who has not been traditionally thought of as an embodied learner. This requires considerations of mobility and migration, languages, emotional contexts, our relationships to time, and historical intersections. Space, time, and movement are inextricably linked to how we relate to freedom, creation, and the ability to both make meaning and use our agency. If we are intentional about creating conditions where all student bodies can thrive, we have much greater capacity for establishing the kinds of embodied learning spaces that bell hooks writes of when she says:

> Once we start talking in the classroom about the body and about how we live in our bodies, we're automatically challenging the way power has orchestrated itself in that particular institutionalized space. The person who is most powerful has the privilege of denying their body (hooks, 1994: 137).

Our concern, here, now, is what happens when we shift our consciousness to centralize humanity in our framing of social justice and equity with dignity and intention such that the people who are most powerful have the privilege of embracing their bodies and their personal relationship to knowing. In this regard, education abroad, understood as the ability to choose to *move one's body* from country to country in pursuit of knowledge and growth, self-determined and free, has the potential to be an extraordinary act of social justice. Ideas alone do not create transformation, but embodied knowledge does. Knowing and feeling yourself as free, whole, and centered is something felt and *then* thought through or reflected upon. Reading alone can transform, but reading *and* having physical, embodied knowledge of the place you are in *and* have read about is something else entirely.

At its root, African-centered pedagogy considers the body as central to how and what we learn about ourselves and the world. Much

is made of decolonizing study abroad, and this offers a pedagogical model. It provides a context for framing how we take in information, what information we take in, how it is framed, who gets to frame it, how we make meaning of this, and what additional information there is to know that our bodies stand between and within. Once we recognize and appreciate traditional African spiritual concepts such as *Ubuntu* (I am because you are) as central to how we learn within and across cultures, we enhance the creation of a context for a positive embodied learning experience. We are interested in strategies that center wellbeing for all of our students, and to do this requires consideration of our natural ways of knowing and processing information.

The "I" in our title can thus refer both to Identity and to the Individual as primary frame of reference, then, just as the "E" can refer both to Embodiment and to the Experiential pedagogies that leverage the body as a vehicle for learning.

Post-Ableist Thinking

Post-ableist approaches treat differences in embodied reality as enriching of both individual and group experiences abroad. For example, the notion of *journeying* together—through various means, not just walking, for example—is inherently inclusive. If we start from a premise of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in everything, what linguistic and pedagogical choices do we then make? What else changes when we are intentional with designing for every BODY first? Not the body of the mind, the body which *carries* the mind. Quite often, UDL is considered as a solution to a problem. But as a premise for how we build pedagogical strategies with the intention of all bodies being included, it becomes a starting point, a leveler of the learning field. Where the attention goes the mind flows, and we, as spiritual beings having a human experience, get our information about what feels good or not, what works for us or

not, through the body—and then we begin to process *why* and what to do about it. Considering how our bodies show up for learning and for work with grace, and centering of the possibility that we all have some form of *dis*ability and perhaps *dis*ease, what does that do to shift where we place emphasis on timing, structure, and design of our programs, and what will we need to carry this out?

As a field, when we are designing our experiential and field-based activities with on-the-ground travel—place-based learning that often includes the use of public transportation—it is most often conceptualized from an ableist perspective. We offer walking tours without realizing how this could be a barrier to entry. By replacing the concept of "walking" with "journeying" or "traveling," we can all "go" together, but we might not all be walking. Some will need taxis or forms of public transport to meet us there in advance. We need to consider this and other modes of mobility in programming so that the timing allows for everyone to have equitable access to the learning experience. When we talk about travel time, for example—ideally instead of walking time—are we presenting that time frame as an open window or some fixed unit of time that becomes an unrealistic expectation for some bodies? What can we all gain from being presented with expected travel times like five to ten minutes, possibly mapping it out with people who move at different paces to be more confident in their ability to arrive? Does it give more bodies more possibilities for how they move in space, and more validation of the different perspectives that represents? No one loses when we plan with more openings for who we are and what we come with. It is the limitations, the exclusionary language and practices embedded in worldviews that present themselves as neutral, that do harm and create unnecessary barriers.

A welcoming space where we all can find and experience belonging is an honest space that allows each of us to know how to bring

our bodies to the experience. Knowing how to plan for who we are and what we might realistically need includes normalizing that, while some will take five minutes to arrive, for others ten is a stretch. It behooves us to think about this in all aspects of our programming. Working with students with both visible and invisible disabilities broadens the lens on how we prepare and continually structure our work with the body's role in learning.

Biddle, in particular, uses the experience of illness and injury as a way of breaking out of established patterns of proprioception and exploring their revelatory potential. Our students can be our teachers here. Though much of the narrative in the field bemoans the rise of mental health issues and the administrative and pedagogical challenges of handling the ever-greater increase in academic accommodation requests—and to be sure, depression, dyslexia, dyspraxia, and anxiety are no fun for those who must manage them—our students are coming to us more attuned to mental health and neurological and sensory diversity, and more open about physical challenges and chronic illness. More willing to advocate for themselves and insist on the right for those differences to be not just accommodated but welcomed within learning design. A full embrace of UDL in all things, as suggested above, leans into the richness of experience and learning that the full range of embodied experience can offer. We each take a bit of where the other is different. We each benefit a bit, get to experience greater possibility through the opening of *how* it is that we teach and learn, exploring what it would look like to do so for as broad a swath of embodied experience as we can.

In Conclusion

As scholar-practitioners and close observers of teaching and learning in education abroad programs, we have seen how the export and foregrounding of U.S.-based identity models abroad can affect how students move in, perceive, adapt to, think about, and integrate to their host context, and we wonder if there is another paradigm that can more effectively guide and frame students' being-in-the-world—and learning about the world—while abroad. If shifting the theoretical lens to embodiment offers us that conceptual possibility, the next step will be to give sustained attention to identifying actual elements of program design that can foster this.

We can offer some beginnings of thinking in that direction: the post-ableist approaches to moving bodies around host contexts, suggested above, for example, or the burgeoning practice of incorporating mindfulness (understood as an embodied practice) into classroom pedagogies using breathwork, movement, music, and cultivating perception, observation, and attention to feelings, sensations, and emotions. And then there is centering the embodied experience in faculty-led custom program design, with a Fordham University Medieval Studies program on the Camino de Santiago as an inspiring example. The faculty member leading the program speaks about the pedagogies of getting lost and finding one's way back—productive disorientation that speaks to the more theoretical breaking out of corporeal schemas discussed above, intentionally leveraging the discomfort of the heat, the fatigue, and the repetitive motion of walking to prompt reflection, to push outside the proverbial comfort zone—even to access, through embodied experience, what it must have been like for medieval pilgrims. If, through the body, we can gradually acculturate to different cultures, as Biddle and Desjarlais suggest, can we also, through the body, access different strata of human history? There is so much to further explore here.

We should also add some closing caveats. First, it may go without saying but bears noting that embodied experience will vary significantly by location. Desjarlais works in the Nepal Himalayas, and Biddle in the Australian Outback—both places so remote that it is unlikely that there would be education abroad programs for U.S. undergraduates there, and more physically challenging than, say, a Barcelona, London, or Sydney. It is precisely by foregrounding the body as frame of reference in more challenging locations, however, that allows these scholars to develop the insights that might be harder to discern in places where bodies might face a less drastic encounter with difference. But even in the most globalized of cities, smells will change, diet and water will be different, as will climate and public transportation, mattresses, and household appliances, and thus how you sit, walk, and manage your time, rhythms of sleeping, waking, and eating. Training students to hone in on even subtle differences in how they exist corporeally in the world increases powers of perception and observation, circumvents too-easy judgments, and removes the "I" of ego and identity from its position of primacy.

At the same time, we can in closing note that, really, it is all intertwined. As Merleau-Ponty describes above, though the body is a key, foundational frame of reference, it is part of a larger matrix of the Self that includes corporeal, symbolic, and conceptual components. Bodies will be of different colors, genders, sizes, and abilities that affect how they are perceived and treated. So whether it is how students understand themselves, or how they are perceived by others, it is never really, purely, only a function of embodiment. Ultimately, as noted in the outset, identity has its place, and as a lens of inquiry and advocacy can serve as a much-needed corrective to hegemonic forms of knowledge. But the Western focus on individualized identity is itself an epistemological statement that could benefit from being decentered or destabilized

by South Asian and African forms of approaching and understanding the world. With more arrows in our pedagogical quiver—and the addition of embodiment as a new frame of reference—the greater the nuance, complexity, and depth we can offer in teaching and learning in education abroad.

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WHOLE HUMAN PEDAGOGY: A NEW FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING IN EDUCATION ABROAD

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In her book, *Teaching with Tenderness,* poet, activist, and sociology scholar Becky Thompson writes:

> For the most part, it feels like teachers carry our minds to one place (to work, the classroom, our desks), our bodies to another (to the gym, yoga studio, or couch), our spirits to another (to church, synagogue, mosque, mountains), our psychic healing to another (to the couch, the bed, to vacations), and our activism to another (to prisons, borders, the streets). Students sense and feel these splits. They are trying to learn amid these splits. And we are, somehow, trying to teach amid these splits (2017: 17).

Here, Thompson describes the compartmentalization of humanness that the Western academy so often demands of its participants. This dividing starts with the traditional mind/body duality and continues sectioning off each additional facet of human existence and experience. *These splits* tell us where each part of our humanity belongs; *these splits* tell us that the mind alone belongs in education.

Education abroad already rebels against strict, dehumanized conceptions of classroom learning common in the United States educational system and thus presents a unique opportunity to intentionally emphasize *human* learning in praxis. Walking between a guesthouse and a metro station, breathlessly hiking high-altitude grasslands, sharing the presence of host siblings, or making and eating traditional foods

are all examples of *human* learning. These experiences are, perhaps, profoundly meaningful, spiritual, intellectual, or analytic; they have the potential to lead students to live a knowing life in ways more expansive than the prescriptive standards of the dominant academic culture. Education abroad has the potential to epitomize transformative education if the field continues to imagine new ways of being and learning.

In his iconic work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paulo Freire names dehumanization as a primary facet of oppression and argues that "liberation, a human phenomenon, cannot be achieved by semi-humans" (2018: 66). Liberation, in Freire's work, comes from individuals "engaged in the ontological and historical vocation of becoming more fully human" (44). By extension, this essay argues that justice and wellbeing for learning communities cannot be achieved amongst *these splits of semihumans.* Liberative learning processes must instead emphasize wholeness and integration where each facet of humanness is acknowledged, embraced, engaged, and connected. At its core, this essay asks: How can educators cultivate facilitation practices that embrace and encourage *whole human beings*, in the name of wellbeing and justice, specifically within the field of education abroad?

Becky Thompson (2017) and bell hooks (1994; 2010) both testify to the harms of academic life, arguing that the disembodiment and dehumanization of the academy is not in service of full, human-oriented learning. This essay utilizes Thompson's *Teaching with Tenderness* (2017) and hooks' *Teaching to Transgress* (1994) and *Teaching Critical Thinking* (2010) to develop the conceptual framework of whole human pedagogy. This new framework for education abroad revolves around four primary tenets for learning communities: embodiment, emotions, belonging, and becoming.

Theoretical Background

bell hooks prevails as one of the most influential and foundational scholars in critical and alternative pedagogies. In *Teaching to Transgress* (1994) and *Teaching Critical Thinking* (2010), hooks describes her own "engaged pedagogy" (2010: 8), a progressive, holistic education that emphasizes student wellbeing and critical thinking as it "aims to restore students' will to think, and their will to be fully self-actualized" (2010: 8). The core of hooks' approach is the notion of education as a "practice of freedom" (1994). She repeats this refrain throughout her pedagogical manifesto to contrast the widespread understanding of "the banking system of education (based on the assumption that memorizing information and regurgitating it represented gaining knowledge that could be deposited, stored and used at a later date)" (1994: 5). Education as a practice of freedom embraces critical thinking, recognition of each individual participant, excitement and pleasure, active participation, and community.

Thompson builds on hooks, as well as the broader fields of multiracial feminism, trauma studies, and contemplative practice in her work *Teaching with Tenderness* (2017). She offers a teaching philosophy that leaves space for tenderness to enter the classroom. On the first page, she describes her understanding of the word:

> By tenderness I mean an embodied way of being that allows us to listen deeply to each other, to consider perspectives that we might have thought way outside our own worldviews, to practice a patience and attentiveness that allow people to do their best work, to go beyond the given, the expected, the status quo. Tenderness makes room for emotion; offers a witness for experiences people have buried or left unspoken;

welcomes silence, breath, and movement; and sees justice as key to our survival (Thompson, 2017: 1).

She emphasizes inviting bodies to learning, claiming that "intellectual, spiritual, and political growth" all start in the body: "the happy body, the brown body, the young body, the worried body, the hurt body, the curious body, the growing body" (Thompson, 2017: 12).

Both Thompson and hooks revere the classroom as communal learning space involving both individual and shared investment. Each prioritizes social justice in both learning content and process. Both center ritual and community building in classroom contexts. Most importantly, both understand teachers and students as whole human beings and see the necessity of inviting whole humans into communal learning spaces. Continuing in this lineage, this essay builds on the work of both hooks and Thompson by creating a model of whole human pedagogy specifically tailored to education abroad.

Key Tenets of Whole Human Pedagogy

From a conceptual standpoint, whole human pedagogy muses: why does education necessitate compartmentalization? How might educators imagine a pedagogy that centers integrated humanness instead? And how might education abroad—a fundamental practice of humans existing in the *world*—be an opportune place to make that shift?

This section describes four of the most consequential contributions that tenderness pedagogy and engaged pedagogy share: embodiment, emotions, belonging, and becoming. Further, this section demonstrates how and why whole human pedagogy is uniquely suited to education abroad. All four of these tenets are profoundly experiential: The core refrains of experiential learning—experience, reflection, analysis, and action—reverberate throughout (Kolb, 1984).

Embodiment

Both hooks and Thompson embrace embodiment as a powerfully liberatory form of knowledge. As an element of teaching and learning, Thompson describes embodied classrooms as "spaces where we take seriously that the mind extends throughout the body and the body throughout the mind" (2017: 113). Embodiment is at once a way of feeling, being, comprehending, and acting. It is a state of attentiveness and groundedness, attendance and inhabitance; embodiment is the endeavor to stay with wholeness, despite the forces that restrict and renounce it.

Thompson writes about academics "ransoming off" (2017: 36) body parts and her fears that she was passing the same costs she paid to become an academic along to her students. In response, she developed a "body-centered approach to teaching, one that keeps intellect in the room while teaching through the body" (38). This included incorporating "embodied writing—prose and poetry that made room for emotion, personal narrative, nonlinear structure, and experimentation," which she hoped might help students avoid the disembodiment that she experienced herself as an academic (37).

Thompson explains that "inviting the body into the classroom can't be a onetime thing. It can't be an intellectual exercise" (40). A pedagogy of tenderness demands intentionally inclusive and consistent rituals of inviting bodies:

> I start with rituals to invite the body into the classroom because it is no small accomplishment for many students to come to class in their bodies or stay in them while we are together. . . . Students who have had to vacate their bodies—due to the trauma of war, abuse during childhood, or a disability—may come to class not even knowing that they don't live in their bodies (63).

Students who feel disembodied may feel consistently numb or have a hard time engaging with course content; they may be physically present but emotionally and intellectually distant. On the other side, reclaiming embodiment can feel foreign or scary for students who have spent long periods of time living outside of their bodies. Thompson explains:

> For people who have had to leave their bodies, recognizing why and how that happened can feel like losing your life. . . . This is shaky, difficult ground that most of us have been taught to walk away from. But then I wonder, what happens when we don't teach about disembodiment, particularly when there is a deep connection between being in one's body and learning, between living in one's body and being able to envision a future? (67)

Highlighting the deep connection between bodies and learning thus becomes a cornerstone in Thompson's actualization of accompaniment in teaching. She explains that incorporating guided meditations, breathing exercises, or yoga practices followed by free writing can energize, deescalate, or bear witness to students' energy.

Additionally, it is no coincidence that both of these authors write about harm and healing in academia at the same time that they write about intersectional feminism and anti-racism. hooks explains: "[T]o call attention to the body is to betray the legacy of repression and denial that has been handed down to us by our professorial elders, who have been usually white and male" (1994: 191). The positionality of the body matters: trans bodies, bodies of color, queer bodies, and elder bodies all hold different levels of "acceptability" within academic space. For many students, the trauma of academic disembodiment is multiplied based on the body they inhabit: a female body, a Black body, a trans body, a disabled body. Thus, it is not only an issue of wellbeing but one of justice—for students who have been systemically marginalized by

academic institutions, for all students who learn anti-oppression material, and for educators who endeavor to create communal learning that better reflects the liberatory spaces we imagine.

Embodiment for Education Abroad

Education abroad is a bodily process before it becomes an intellectual one. One surely has intellectual intentions, but the simple act of stepping on a plane (or even a bus) is physical before it is anything else. The corporeal discomfort of long hours in airline seats, the shallow breaths of anxiety or excitement, and the moment of realization that one is surrounded by signs in a new language in an airport surrounded by a new landscape are fundamentally *body* experiences. Closely following are encounters with unfamiliar foods, different styles of beds or toilets, and local methods of transportation. Education abroad programs may include site visits with walking meditation exercises or religious prostrations, dance or drumming classes, hikes, or water sports.

Education abroad programs are commended for being immersive. While advertisements largely focus on language or culture, the process of immersion is also *physical.* Participants' bodies exist in a significantly different context and location, which creates experiences of displacement and spatial learning. Pipitone and Raghavan offer a case study of a short-term study abroad program to Morocco from a socio-spatial perspective, which "embraces meaning-making as a participatory and collaborative process mediated through the body and embedded within social, spatial, and temporal realities" (2017: 265). The researchers note that when given reflective journal prompts about their experience in a space, students relied heavily on descriptions of sensory engagement—i.e., the sights, smells, sounds, *bodily* experiences of the place.

Jarman et al. (2022) provide a case study example of a short-term study abroad program about wartime medical professions in

France and England. They cite embodied learning as a key finding of their research on transformative learning for study abroad. Their article describes students' reflections on their physical feelings standing on Omaha Beach or walking through military cemeteries as some of their most powerful learning moments.

Further, the way learning space is constructed on education abroad programs differs significantly from traditional classroom learning. Instead of bringing their bodies to a specific place and time for learning (i.e., the classroom) and then leaving that space when the learning time has "finished," for education abroad programs, there is neither a specific learning space nor end time until the program concludes. Students are physically immersed in learning space for extended periods of time, which means that "learning space" cannot exile bodily needs or delay them until after. Participants will need to eat, use the bathroom, stretch, receive physical touch, dress, medicate, bathe, and rest. When learning space is extensively immersive, physical needs inherently become included in ways they aren't traditionally welcomed in academic contexts that embrace the mind/body split. Bodies and the human needs of bodies are part of the learning process.

Most education abroad practitioners, and student development professionals more widely, are likely familiar with the phrase "comfort zone." In 2000, German pedagogue Tom Senninger created the learning zone model based on Vygotsky's zone of proximal development theory (McLeod, 2023). The learning zone model describes three zones of learning: the comfort zone, which encompasses familiarity and ease; the learning zone, which includes new experiences and opportunities to expand the comfort zone; and the panic zone, which is characterized by participant fear and overwhelm (Kouvela et al., 2018). Senninger (2000) argues that the learning zone, with the right amount of challenge and exploration, is the optimal condition for student growth. While

the learning zone model may often be applied to social, emotional, or intellectual "comfort zones," education abroad has the potential to reimagine the ways practitioners encourage or discourage physical discomfort. While it's happening, students may complain about misunderstood metro schedules that lead to long walks in cold rain, overnight train rides, unfamiliar foods, and upset stomachs, but learning is happening there, in bodies, whether it's conscious or not. When they later speak of their programs, the discomfort will likely morph into stories they tell through laughter or wide-eyed fulfillment, complaints omitted.

As students are feeling their way through immersion and discomfort, professors and facilitators are doing the same. Practitioners are inherently part of the exercise; both program structure and physicality mirror this inclusion. hooks describes how the traditional placement of the professor at the front of the room, behind a podium or a desk, creates an unrealistic sense of the professor as an objective, all-knowing conduit of information (1994). When the professor emerges from behind the podium, the perceived arrangement of power in the classroom changes. In many education abroad programs, there is no podium to begin with. As groups walk down the street or participate in site visits, physical relationality of students and facilitators is more flexible. The facilitator is no longer the center, communally or *physically*.

Lastly, when visiting a new place, the way one's body is perceived by others may shift: Students may be asked for photos or experience hostility or stereotyping depending on the color of their skin or hair (Lott and Brundage, 2022; Nyunt et al., 2022; Willis, 2015). Students with disabilities (when they are able to participate at all) may find programs more arduous than their able-bodied peers (Johnstone and Edwards, 2020; Soneson and Cordano, 2009). While their intersectional identities are present everywhere, participants may have striking experiences of those identities in different cultural contexts. Creating space to

process experiences of embodied identities is integral to implementing justice-oriented learning communities with both content and student care that make students feel seen and supported.

Emotions

Thompson writes that "crying during class needs to be okay, might, in fact, be inevitable, when dealing with the weight of the world" (2017: 32). She argues that it is better for learning to give students space to feel and process the emotional weight associated with anti-oppression content—content that often involves violence, potentially towards marginalized groups with which students identify. Thompson muses, "It is as if we expect students to hold their bodies in the same way, have the same emotions, whether they are studying tax law or genocide in Rwanda" (2). Learning about war, suffering, and death *shouldn't* exist without emotional reactions; likewise, it shouldn't exist without space for students to process these feelings.

Further, contemporary events like the beginning of a war, an instance of police brutality, an ongoing public health crisis, or an election might deeply influence the emotional state of the class, whether it's related to course content or not. These emotions do not simply disappear when the class bell rings. hooks explains that for professors, one of the most challenging aspects of liberatory pedagogical praxis is changing the agenda to work with or cope with the mood of the class (1994). To avoid slipping back into the "banking system of education," hooks stresses that all individuals are responsible for creating the best learning environment for the group and explains that the scheduled material may not be what constitutes learning on a particular day (1994).

While emotions in learning often have to do with caring for the trauma and heartbreak of humanness, all emotions play a role. hooks writes,

> If we are all emotionally shut down, how can there be any excitement about ideas? . . . The restrictive, repressive classroom ritual insists that emotional responses have no place. . . . To me this is really a distorted notion of intellectual practice, since the underlying assumption is that to be truly intellectual, we must be cut off from our emotions (1994: 154–155).

Excitement, and so many other human feelings, are powerful forms of resistance to the apathetic classroom experience, Cartesian intellectualism, and the oppression of humanness more widely. Albert Camus (1991), the mid-twentieth-century French novelist, writes that love is resistance. Tricia Hersey (2022), founder of the Nap Ministry, writes that restfulness is resistance. adrienne maree brown (2019) of the Emergent Strategy Ideation Institute writes that pleasure is resistance. The breadth of human experience that constitutes *resisting* capitalist and colonialist power systems is the same breadth (and breath) that has been outlawed within the walls of the academy. Slowness, artfulness, playfulness, joyfulness, gratitude, lament—these facets all matter for learning because they are *human*.

Emotions for Education Abroad

Emotions naturally arise on immersive international programs as participants find themselves experiencing unfamiliar contexts and practices. Students will likely feel some sort of excitement or anxiety as the program begins. They may feel confident, disillusioned, curious, overwhelmed, hopeful, embarrassed, annoyed, homesick, inspired, all feelings in between, or many feelings all at once. These emotions may come as a surprise to students—who expect programs to always be "fun," who anticipate they will acclimatize easily, who assume they already know host cultures, who witness global injustice firsthand, who

come to poignant realizations about their homelands. hooks explains, "If we focus not just on whether the emotions produce pleasure or pain, but on how they keep us aware or alert, we are reminded that they enhance" learning communities (1994: 155). Immersive, transformative engagement inevitably provokes emotional response. Learning how to identify and process emotions, without judgment or dismissal, merits learning space. Creating that space is simultaneously an act of both deep intellectual learning and student care.

In the same vein as physical discomfort, emotional discomfort naturally surfaces for participants on education abroad programs, and the learning zones apply in this context as well. For example, the field of education abroad often engages with the concept of culture shock or the process of feeling patterns of disorientation, distress, and acclimatization when one adjusts to a new cultural context (Oberg, 1960). Oberg introduces the theory of culture shock and explains that "culture shock is precipitated by the anxiety that results from losing all our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse. These signs or cues include the thousand and one ways in which we orient ourselves to the situations of daily life" (1960: 142), such as how to greet people, express humor, make purchases, etc. Oberg describes an adjustment curve that moves past a honeymoon period into feelings of frustration and superiority towards the host culture before finally culminating in the acceptance and embrace of local customs. The concept of culture shock or cultural adjustment forecasts a variety of participant emotional experiences, and while these responses are anticipated, they are still deeply personal and individualized.

Additionally, personal reflection constitutes a key phase of Kolb's (1984) theory of experiential learning. Personal reflection, or "reflective observation," naturally involves personal reactions to program stimulus. Reflecting on one's inner response to experiences leads to the stage of

abstract conceptualization, wherein students connect experiential and theoretical knowledge. The personal reactions and inner responses participants reflect on in this phase are feelings and emotions. Thus, emotions constitute a primary course material for experiential learning.

Belonging

Belonging in whole human learning constitutes a multi-faceted approach to relationality. First and foremost, belonging refers to the intentional creation of a *learning community*, a notion that both hooks (1994) and Thompson (2017) highlight as the cornerstones of their teaching philosophies. Both strive to decrease the felt power differential between students and teachers, include student identities and reflections, and increase student participation in learning. hooks explains, "The bottom-line assumption has to be that everyone in the classroom is able to act responsibly. That has to be the starting point—that we are able to act responsibility together to create a learning environment" (1994: 152). While the teacher/student power dynamic inevitably exists (particularly on the issue of grading), hooks strives to create "a community of learners *together*. It positions me as a learner. . . . I'm trying to say that we are all equal here to the extent that we are equally committed to creating a learning context" (1994: 153). She explains that respecting the classroom as a communal space increases the collective effort participants contribute to creating and sustaining that community. Freire describes a similar phenomenon he names *co-intentional* education, wherein "[t]eachers and students (leadership and people), co-intent on reality, are both Subjects, not only in the task of unveiling that reality, and thereby coming to know it critically, but in the task of re-creating that knowledge" (2018: 69). Co-creation of a learning community, and thus the learning process and the knowledge itself, rejects the banking system of education in favor of a liberatory approach.

Additionally, communal co-creation shifts the learning community from a top-down leadership model to a model "more like a cooperative where everyone contributes to make sure all resources are being used, to ensure the optimal learning well-being of everyone" (hooks, 2010: 22). hooks credits mutual interest in each other as the basis of excitement in educational contexts and asserts that "any radical pedagogy must insist that everyone's presence is acknowledged. That insistence cannot be simply stated. It has to be demonstrated through pedagogical practices" (1994: 8). Thus, engagement or involvement in the community by individuals must be implemented through structural and philosophical approaches to learning design.

Thompson (2017) describes two "rituals of inclusion" she practices to bring students into communal learning space. The first is the "Naming Ritual," which she learned from Dr. Reverend Katie Geneva Canon. In this ritual, each student says their whole name and describes the history and meaning as well as any other stories that might explain their name. Then each person in the circle recites the names of students who have already shared. Thompson explains that taking away one's name is often the first step of dehumanization, so knowing each other's names and the significance they hold matters. Additionally, this ritual moves from English-domination to multilingualism, highlights multicultural backgrounds, and brings students into intense presence with each other.

In the "Who am I?" ritual, students sit knee to knee in pairs and each speaks for five uninterrupted minutes on the question "Who am I?" While the first student is talking, the other is prompted to "shower them with loving kindness" without speaking (Thompson, 2017: 43). In this ritual, students know each other, and they also know what it feels like to be deeply listened to. Over the course of the semester, the explanations of *self* become more intimate, more emotional, and

more present. Thompson quotes Mary Rose O'Reilley, who explains the importance of true, deep listening: "You are listening people into existence" (2017: 44). hooks explains that "we must intervene to alter the existing pedagogical structure and to teach students *how to listen, how to hear one another*" (1994: 150). In both of these rituals, the importance of intentional relationality is evident: These learning spaces function because they are communities that hold the trust and investment of participants. Such buy-in requires vulnerability.

hooks offers her perspective on the teacher's role in creating learning communities: First, "the professor must genuinely *value* everyone's presence" (1994: 8). Beyond valuing presence, the teacher must embrace vulnerability and growth for themselves as much as students:

> In my classrooms, I do not expect students to take any risks that I would not take, to share in any way that I would not share. When professors bring narratives of their experiences into classroom discussions it eliminates the possibility that we can function as all-knowing, silent interrogators. . . . [P]rofessors must practice being vulnerable in the classroom, being wholly present in mind, body, and spirit (hooks, 1994: 21).

The teacher, while facilitating the learning community, is also fundamentally a participating member. Leaning into the growth that comes from learning programs shows students that they are valued and respected on a level playing field. This signals to students that, rather than being a graded confessional, community building constitutes an integral learning process of knowing and being known. Simultaneously, facilitators gain the space to receive fulfillment and liberation through learning communities.

Belonging for Education Abroad

Community-based learning naturally fits with many self-evident elements of education abroad programs. In group-based education abroad programs, the notion of a community is built in from the beginning, given that a particular group of people is intended to learn, live, and travel together for a set period. Group dynamics management constitutes a common concern of student support for education abroad administrators and facilitators (Punteney, 2019). While quarrels between classmates may be ignored or dismissed in limited classroom hours, strained relationships between program participants have greater potential to escalate, given the amount of time spent in close proximity. In this context, creating intentional opportunities to know and recognize each other may be particularly powerful.

For example, Pipitone advocates creating opportunities for students to find shared meaning about the study abroad experience, particularly through pre-trip classes or meetings, as these "may be a way to foster relationality, especially with students who have not traveled abroad previously . . . [which] may be a particularly powerful strategy to introduce students to a novel cultural environment and make space to discuss preconceived notions of difference within host countries" (2018: 70). Additionally, Harper describes how a group participating in an adventure study abroad program saw physical challenges as "shared social experiences in which individuals tested their personal resources physically and emotionally, while collectively the group relied on each other through encouragement and physical assistance" (2018: 303).

Further, experiential education with its emphasis on individual experience and reflection, tends to decenter the teacher, at least to some extent (Punteney, 2019). In traditional classrooms, students may be experiencing an environment designed and maintained by the

professor. On education abroad programs, neither the professor nor the students control the environment. If the professor isn't deeply connected to the program location, they will likely be having a simultaneous intercultural, displaced experience and engaging in reflection on that experience. The positionality of the professor vis-à-vis the host context exaggerates hooks' idea of the professor as an equal member amongst a learning community (1994; 2010). This dynamic offers a unique opportunity for transparency on the part of the facilitator to emphasize one's position as a learner also, rather than an all-knowing authority.

Because these two elements of belonging tend to occur on education abroad programs, intentional design and implementation is key for truly transformative experiential education. Community-building rituals cultivate a different depth of mutual knowing and appreciation than typical, casual icebreakers. Similarly, deliberately deconstructing the notion of professor as top-down commander in favor of a professor-as-community-member approach creates an alternative economy of knowledge where students share ownership of their individual and collective learning. Rather than considering these components accomplished by the format of education abroad programs, practitioners can consider the format of education abroad programming to be complementary to pedagogical choices that prioritize belonging.

Becoming

The culminating area of whole human pedagogy is *becoming*, after hooks' description of a "vision of liberatory education that connects the will to know with the will to become" (1994: 18–19). Becoming, in this context, is not so much about *what* exactly we become; instead, it is becoming in the sense of *beginning to be*. Becoming is the idea that learning isn't a compartmentalized collection of facts but a process that can and should deeply inform the ways that learners as humans

exist in the world. Education is not solely for what we do inside of the classroom but who we are outside of it. hooks argues this is precisely what students want: Students "want an education that is healing to the uninformed, unknowing spirit. They do want knowledge that is meaning-ful" (1994: 19). While this theme may seem to be an abstract recommendation, an emphasis on learning for becoming constitutes a deep reverence of the learning process and a profound philosophical shift in the relationality between facilitator, student, knowledge, and the world. This shift changes how practitioners see what education is and what it is for, which creates a ripple effect through each practice they facilitate. In turn, this style of learning gives way for compassionate, curious, empathetic critical thinkers.

Learning is destined to affect us. Designing education that is *affective*—actively bringing whole humans with bodies, emotions, lives, experiences, and connections into learning—only makes that effect deeper and more intentional. Instead of a disembodied learning, educators can strive for the kind of education that is:

> ...part mindfulness, part playfulness, part intuition, part analysis; a pedagogy that works inside and outside of the classroom; can climb prison walls; leans toward the poetic word; makes intimacy a safe and generative resource of power; can hold us together during social upheavals, natural disasters, and disasters of our own making . . . invites everyone to talk; isn't afraid of silence . . . grows with the times; returns us to joy (Thompson, 2017: 18–19).

This type of education is truly transformative of people, communities, and societies. Learning for becoming is engaging with learners in their ventures toward becoming free, becoming seen, becoming well, becoming meaning-*full*, becoming *wholly*.

Becoming for Education Abroad

Education abroad inherently centers being in the world. The simple fact that humans have spent hundreds of years traveling to learn is a testament to the idea that there is knowledge to be found outside of the classroom that matters profoundly. If that is the founding assumption of education abroad, then it is counterintuitive to try to fit its learning processes in the constrictive box of traditional Western classrooms. The meaningful learning that education abroad is about isn't found *in the box*—whether that's the literal box of the four-walled classroom or the figurative box of dominant Western epistemology. Perhaps ironically, much of the knowledge found outside of the classroom is about the *self*: Pipitone and Raghavan describe students' experiences of study abroad programs as "the ongoing and collaborative process of making sense of themselves, the world, and the places within it" (2017: 265).

Reflecting on her career in higher education, hooks writes, "Nothing about the way I was trained as a teacher really prepared me to witness my students transforming themselves" (1994: 195). The word "transformative" is commonly associated with education abroad: any search engine or library catalog can bring you a plentiful list of results painted with phrases like "transformative learning," "transformative impact," or "transformative power" referencing practices and studies in education abroad. In education abroad literature, "transformative learning" may be a reference to Jack Mezirow's transformative learning theory of adult education, which describes the process by which adults interpret and reinterpret meaning, eventually with the motivation of social change (Jarman et al., 2022; Mezirow, 1997). Alternatively, "transformative" may simply refer to the word's definition: "causing or able to cause an important and lasting change in someone or something" (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). Education abroad institutions often

advertise or define their mission in reference to the term (CIEE, n.d.; CIS Abroad, n.d.; IES Abroad, 2019; ISA, n.d.; SIT Study Abroad, n.d.). The common association with the word "transformative" indicates that education abroad is already a field that expects participants will experience significant change. If transformation is the selling point, the defining feature, or the goal, designing for transformation, in the many facets that entails, should be the norm.

Conclusion

When thinking about anti-oppression praxis and education abroad, an obvious question arises: why bother focusing on anti-oppression processes when the majority of participants come from privileged identities? Most U.S. study abroad participants are white, financially comfortable, able-bodied women (Hoffa and DePaul, 2010; IIE, 2023). Diversifying student participation in study abroad has garnered discussion in the field (McCorristin, 2019), but simply getting underrepresented students signed up for programs doesn't change the posture of education abroad toward marginalized identities. If Western academic spaces, including education abroad, are inhospitable to "the oppressed"—if these systems constitute historical and epistemological violence against marginalized communities, as decolonial theory demonstrates (Stein, 2022)—what is the incentive for these students to join those spaces? Further, is it ethical to recruit students of marginalized identities into places that aren't designed with their recognition and care in mind? A true effort toward diversifying education abroad requires examination of *both* presence and practice. Stein (2022) critiques higher education for maintaining colonized conceptions of *knowing*, *relating*, and *being*. Reimagining epistemological, relational, and ontological learning is one way educators and practitioners can strive for *equity* beyond mere inclusion in education abroad.

As it stands, education abroad constitutes an intense point of contact with predominantly privileged student populations. Through this lens, education abroad can either be a point of perpetuation or a point of intervention in existing systems of power. Leaving study abroad to serve socially advantaged students with epistemologies that are indicative of privilege and historical violence perpetuates colonial and racial subjugation. However, practitioners can also choose to view programs with high levels of student privilege as opportunities to dive into anti-oppression learning with a population whose voices are more likely to be heard by (or be part of) systems in power. As demonstrated above, Freire (2018) cites *dehumanization* as a problem for the oppressors, as well as the oppressed. Interrogating pedagogy and process in education abroad allows the work of inviting greater diversity in study abroad by enacting change in systems that influence how we think about *knowing, relating,* and *being* that will better serve a higher rate of representation *while also* striving for change in wider society by creating intervention for more privileged populations.

After a terrorist massacre of Muslims in New Zealand, Nakita Valerio, a Canadian, Muslim writer, academic, and organizer, shared a single-sentence Facebook status that quickly went viral: "Shouting 'self-care' at people who actually need 'community care' is how we fail people" (2019). Expecting individuals to compartmentalize themselves into thoughts in one room, emotions in another, bodies in another, whilst demanding they find healing and integration outside is a profound failure of care that falsely blames all the selves that were barred from the room in the first place. Whole human pedagogy embodies a radical movement of community care in education. Whole human education seeks learning that doesn't demand individual recovery; it may even aid in the recovering.

Education abroad, as a field, has the ability to do much better for the individuals in its care. The capitalist system, which relies on productivity, burnout, and the denial of humanity, is designed to ensure practitioners are too tired to reinvent the wheel—to see there is another way and imagine it into existence. Education abroad, however, has been reinventing itself for the duration of its existence—from no-credit study tours to junior year abroad to short-term programs (Hoffa, 2007) to virtual exchange programs during the COVID-19 era. A whole human approach to pedagogy in education abroad is a fitting next reimagination.

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TEACHING STUDY ABROAD STUDENTS ABOUT THEMSELVES: A VIEW LOOKING BACK AT THE VERANDA FROM THE COLONIZED

Julia Miller

CEA CAPA EDUCATION ABROAD

This paper uses Anthony Ogden's "colonial student" to interrogate the study abroad experience in Sydney, Australia. It does so from the point of view of the colonized—that is, an Australian academic delivering a study abroad program to U.S. students. It offers some suggestions on ways forward beyond the education abroad "gaze." The aim is to contribute to the debate about the value of study abroad programs as opposed to the direct enroll model. It asks: how can we, as study abroad professionals, assist the "colonial student" to move out of their comfort zone, to "step off the veranda" and engage in a more meaningful intercultural experience? It concludes that decentering the U.S. approach to international education has ramifications way beyond the study abroad field.

In a 2007 article, Anthony Ogden coined the phrase "colonial student" to describe the contemporary American study abroad student and to explain the degree to which the education abroad field was implicit in developing and perpetuating a colonial system (Ogden, 2007). Ogden was comparing the contemporary student to members of colonial families of the British realm who, in taking up residency in the empire's colonies, usually lived within compounds and viewed colonial life from the comfort of their verandas. Ogden linked this development with the parallel "student as consumer" mentality and noted the ways in which education abroad programs facilitated the perpetuation of the U.S. student as "at home while abroad" through delivering palatable

classes, inflated grading systems, and discussion-based teaching styles. The trend towards short-stay, faculty-led programs in separate study centers, Ogden argues, leads to the creation of a student cohort or student bubble. All this makes it difficult for the colonial student to leave their comfortable colonial veranda and immerse themselves, culturally, in their locality.

Ogden's concept is used to evaluate the study abroad experience from the point of view of the colonized. To what extent is the goal of study abroad—an important tool to equip students to function in a globalized world through educating them to be responsible global citizens (Jorgenson and Shultz, 2012)—being thwarted by the perpetuation of U.S.-centric cultural norms and practices? In what ways does the tailoring of study abroad programs, heavily influenced by the expectations of home institutions where activities are guided and curricula are adapted to American standards often at the expense of local quality, lead to the perpetuation of the study abroad gaze? This is a pertinent question to ask as, akin to the tourist gaze, it is this framed experience that stands in for an immersive, instructive, intercultural integration.

The goal of study abroad has been to create opportunities for students to experience belief and value systems that are different to their own. This thereby provides the students with the opportunity to reflect on ideological differences between the host and home state. It is argued that the immersive nature of study abroad enables students to experience the real world with the aim to develop a more global view and a sense of global justice (Sharpe, 2015). However, the study abroad field has been criticized for maintaining power structures that are oppressive and place the visitor at the center (Sharpe, 2015). Sharpe argues that such power structures are problematic due to the way they mark out the host community as traditional and inferior (Sharpe, 2015). While Sharpe uses the example of Cuba, this colonial power structure can be

seen in the colonial student's approach to Sydney reinforced by U.S. programming. I would argue this is to the detriment of the student and the study abroad field.

Students coming to CEA CAPA Sydney typically enroll in a 13-week program. This gives the students some time to adjust to the local environment, take up an internship with a Sydney-based company, and make connections with Australians both through the local center programming and through their own initiative. However, the trend is to incorporate much shorter programs of 10–14 days that see students on a tightly packaged visit led by faculty from their own institution. With every minute planned, activities set, housing organized, and classes designed and taught by U.S. faculty, one has to ask what type of experience are the students being offered? The U.S. student is increasingly corralled within a U.S.-centric experience that touches ever so lightly on the host country. This highly curated experience, akin to a guided package tour, perpetuates colonial attitudes in assuming that U.S. standards, views, and modes of teaching delivery are superior to what the host country could provide. Even when local guides are employed, the reality is that their interaction is modeled to fit the U.S. programming and course design even when the topic is specifically about the host country. To those of us who oversee the academic program in the host country, it is further evidence of the colonial nature of the study abroad field.

The other aspect to this colonization is the assumption by the U.S. student, including those on longer programs, that their study abroad experience should cater extensively to what they consider the norm, that is, what they are used to back home. This plays out in various ways and is evident in program critiques in student feedback when expectations are not met. For example, the colonial student assumes most of the comforts of home, such as very fast Wi-Fi and superior accommodation, and their home university norms, such as U.S.-style teaching delivery,

U.S.-style grading, and extensive academic accommodations, as well as facilitated social interactions with Australians, will be provided as a matter of course. Much of the indignation associated with not having the home institution replicated in the host country is tied to the myth of U.S. "exceptionalism"—one that the student carries with them (Hodgson, 2010). In this way, U.S. value systems have been normalized. As one student noted when asked for examples of U.S. colonization in Australia, American cultural products seemed so "everyday" that they expected them to be in Australia.

The gap between expectations and reality is, as Ogden notes, partly due to the "student as consumer" mentality (Ogden, 2007). As consumers, students and their parents expect a level of service for the money tendered, which is tailored to suit the specific expectations of the American market. Students citing the commercial transactional nature of their participation in the program, when questioning grades or housing facilities, for example, are firmly operating within the "student as consumer" paradigm. In doing so, they appear ignorant of the irony of their participation in the hegemonic consumerist discourse that has accompanied American cultural and economic colonization of the world through globalization while, at the same time, seeking an experience supposedly outside of these parameters.

Partly it is a failing of the study abroad industry to impress sufficiently on students that the benefit of study abroad is that they will experience structures, standards, and viewpoints that may run counter to what they are used to. Australian faculty may expect higher standards of them in terms of academic work, attitudes, and effort, and this is actually to their advantage in preparing them for an increasingly globalized world. Some of this is not surprising when we consider that U.S. study abroad staff also appear to promote the colonizing mindset. For example, asking how Australian faculty are trained to teach in the

U.S. style implies this is the desired and superior form of imparting knowledge. Additionally, I've taken part in more than one training program delivered by education abroad practitioners designed to equip me to understand the U.S. student's peculiar needs and outlook and to facilitate their expectations. Further, U.S. grading systems, with their inbuilt grade inflation, all preserve the impossible myth that almost every student on a study abroad program is academically superior or exceptional. Many students, of course, blossom when faced with the challenge of a new environment, but the colonial student tends to blame the host for not replicating what they see as the norm.

What, then, to do for the colonial student? One of the hallmarks of the colonial student is heightened anxiety when faced with an inability to adjust to the host environment. Much scaffolding can be put in place, such as counseling services, emergency response systems, organized programs, and the like. However, often concerns about "safety," for example, stand in for an imperative to replicate U.S.-style structures that reproduce home-spun anxieties. Further, this scaffolding should not corral the student into a curated experience; rather, it should provide a sturdy structure to enable them to step off the veranda. The colonial student must be allowed to experience the host environment, on the host environment's terms, to build resilience and the capacity to cope with being "not at home." Limits should be put on accommodations, both academic and behavioral. Students must be guided to realize that their criticisms of non-White Australian faculty, even those who might have grown up or been educated in Australia and have extensive teaching experience in Australian tertiary institutions, are, at heart, racist. Equally, we should not shy away from reminding students that housing in a multicultural area of Sydney is not jeopardizing their safety but rather providing them with a typical Sydney neighborhood experience. Additionally, the expectations of

sending institutions and parents need to be adjusted in line with the study abroad goal of providing a transformative cultural and intellectual experience (Sharpe, 2015). I agree with Arvanitakis and Ogden that a sense of "cultural humility" can be developed if we allow students truly meaningful interactions with different cultures (Arvanitakis and Ogden, 2021). While we cannot expect the colonial student to understand at first that the difficulties they feel they are encountering are due to a U.S.-centric mindset, we can aim to shift them from that mindset to a more global one as their program progresses. For short-stay programs, this is problematic, and the study abroad field should not pretend that these are in any way meeting the broader aims of the study abroad experience.

For a colonized academic running a study abroad program in Sydney, then, one of the most challenging aspects is the normalizing of U.S. practices influenced by the "student as consumer" thinking. Students who fail to attain high grades are surprised by the academic rigor of the Australian program while others need persuading that activities designed to enhance their intercultural competence are integral to the study abroad experience. Some turn to their home school advisors to support their challenge to these discoveries with some success. Despite persistent calls to decolonize education abroad, from Bolen (2001), Ogden (2007), Woolf (2007), Zemach-Bersin (2008; 2009), Sharpe (2015), Adkins and Messerly (2019), Arvanitakis and Ogden (2021), and others, arguably little has changed. The collective advice is that education abroad programming must prioritize student preparedness and critical reflection. To fail to do so risks entrenching students as colonials within a system "that makes it difficult, if not impossible, for them to seek out, on their own terms, meaningful intellectual and intercultural exchange" (Arvanitakis and Ogden, 2021).

At a time when it appears the U.S. may be reverting to isolationism (Nye, 2023), the goal of study abroad—to give students a transformative

cultural and intellectual experience (Sharpe, 2015)—couldn't be more vital. As I write this in January 2024, former U.S. President Donald Trump is gathering support for his run for the presidency. Espousing an America First rhetoric, Trump is likely to rethink support for Ukraine and withdraw once more from the Paris agreement on climate change. I chose this example because, as an Australian, I am comfortable weighing in on global issues. Yet I am conscious that many American students who come to study in Sydney generally are not comfortable when Australians seek their comments on U.S. and global politics. For the colonial student, a critique of their own systems and values can be confronting. But to be open to being challenged on American gun laws or exposed to questions about America's record on environmental justice issues, for example, is, I would argue, part and parcel of acquiring a global perspective.

As study abroad practitioners, if we fail to encourage students to step down from the veranda and provide them with the means to have a truly immersive experience, are we simply falling down on the job? As a colonized academic teaching American students, I ask this because I am struck, not by the level of anxiety typical of today's colonial student, but by the failure to address these issues head on. As Chaput and O'Sullivan note, educating for global citizenship has much less to do with a student's exposure to different people, places, and cultures than it does with placing students in an experience in which "new knowledges are engaged, placed in relationship to one's own experience, and entered into a deliberative framework that leads to a deeper appreciation of global interdependence and worldmindedness" (Chaput and O'Sullivan, 2013).

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FOUNDATIONS OF INCLUSIVE GLOBAL EDUCATION: EXPLORING GLOBAL EQUITY IN ACTION

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COMPEAR GLOBAL EDUCATION NETWORK

In the ever-evolving landscape of global education, it becomes increasingly evident that there is a pressing need to bridge the conspicuous gaps within our existing practices. This imperative compels us to adopt a mindset of respectful disruption, one that rigorously reevaluates our current approaches and methodologies. Respectful disruption refers to challenging and transforming established systems and norms with a commitment to empathy, understanding, and respect. It seeks to bridge divisions and promote unity, ensuring genuine diversity and inclusion by valuing the inherent worth of every perspective (Thompson, 2023). Among the critical aspects warranting this scrutiny is the onboarding and support of our dedicated home-based and in-country staff and faculty, individuals who play an integral role in shaping the transformative experiences of our students abroad.

While various educational frameworks have proposed incremental adjustments to our systems, it is strikingly clear that few have ventured into the uncharted territory of socio-cultural dimensions that permeate study abroad programs for the very practitioners who facilitate them. This gap in our collective knowledge has sparked a call to action, leading to the development of the "Global Education Equity Empowerment Framework." This comprehensive tool serves as a versatile guide, designed not only to nurture individual self-awareness but

also to underscore the paramount importance of cultivating a profound global consciousness.

The "Global Education" facet of the framework is a testament to our unwavering commitment to fostering learning and understanding on a global scale. It urges us to confront our inherent biases, embrace the intricacies of cultural diversity, and adapt to the multifaceted international contexts that define our organizational settings. At its core, the concept of "Equity" takes center stage, advocating beyond fairness or equality towards equitable practice in global education by addressing long-standing disparities and promoting inclusivity at every level. Similarly, "Empowerment" resonates as a compelling call to action, inspiring all participants to become confident and capable agents of positive change within the dynamic realm of global education.

Through the practical application of this framework, practitioners are not only encouraged to embark on a journey of self-discovery but are also equipped with the tools to gain a richer understanding of the diverse cultures, perspectives, biases, and challenges that collectively shape our global community. It is through this lens of empowered, equitable, and globally conscious education that we aspire to pave the way for a brighter, more inclusive future in global education, one that transcends boundaries and empowers individuals to thrive in an interconnected world. In this image, we break down the five points for consideration:

Global Education Equity Empowerment Framework (Updated 12/2023)

Growth weaves, bends, and revisits paths, but ultimately illuminates progress

1 Fostering Continuous
Self-Discovery & Growth

Encourage ongoing self-reflection
on biases and assumptions.

2 Provide Sustained Support
and Allyship in Global Context

Support global opportunities with
tailored resources for continuous
self-growth.

3 Cultivate a Global Culture of
Inclusivity and Equity

Facilitate learning spaces where
diversity is valued and respected.

4 Engage in Transformative
Learning for Global Context

Incorporate learning that challenges
and transforms perspectives.

5 Address Safety and Risk
Management in Global
Scenarios

Take active steps to proactively
address safety and risk through
co-construction.

Permitted Uses: Use the framework as-is within your organization; Share the unaltered framework image online with appropriate credit.
Restrictions: No modifications to the framework; No inclusion in personal publications, courses, or sessions without approval. No commercial use.
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1. The Need for Transformative Learning

In the realm of global education, a critical need emerges that transcends the traditional confines of academic exchanges. While the transfer of knowledge is undoubtedly a pivotal element, true transformation challenges us to explore the deeper dimensions of the educational experience. It challenges us to move beyond the mere acquisition of facts and figures and into the profound territory of reshaping perspectives, cultivating a heightened understanding of cultural nuances, and courageously confronting biases. It compels us to question: without these transformative elements, are we genuinely educating, or are we merely engaging in the procedural process of transferring knowledge?

Consider a study abroad program that primarily emphasizes academic pursuits or cultural curriculum. While these are undoubtedly valuable components, focusing solely on them is akin to overlooking a variety of opportunities for growth and enlightenment. It's like looking at the tip of an iceberg without noticing the immense mass underneath.

To unlock the full potential of global education, we must recognize that it encompasses far more than textbooks and lectures. It is about immersing ourselves in the diversity of varied human experiences, understanding the intricate threads of culture that weave through our world, and peeling back the layers of bias that may obfuscate our perceptions.

One way to achieve this is by integrating training modules that delve into the intricacies of cultural norms, biases, and the unique regional challenges that define different parts of the world. For instance, addressing issues like climate justice as part of a study abroad program can provide students with a holistic understanding of global concerns and inspire them to become advocates for positive change. These additional layers of learning elevate the program from a simple transfer of knowledge to a transformative educational experience.

Transformative learning challenges us to emerge from our comfort zones, embrace the unfamiliar, and embark on a journey of self-discovery. It empowers us not just to accumulate information but to use it as a tool for personal growth, empathy, and a deeper connection with the world around us. It is through this approach that global education becomes a force that not only broadens our horizons but also shapes compassionate, globally conscious individuals who are ready to tackle the complex challenges of our interconnected world.

2. Continuous Self-Discovery: The Core of Global Education

In today's globalized world, the concept of self-discovery for educators goes beyond being a mere academic exercise; it is, in fact, the very core of meaningful international pedagogy. This notion emphasizes that educators, acting as advocates for knowledge and growth, must embark on self-reflection journeys. Regular dialogues, self-examination, and the practice of maintaining reflective journals are not

supplementary tools; they are fundamental elements in the foundation of an educator's role in uncovering and challenging biases that may reside beneath the surface.

Imagine the classroom as an extension of our interconnected world, with students representing diverse backgrounds, cultures, and perspectives. In such a setting, educators are not just transmitters of information; they are facilitators of mutual understanding and respect. Self-reflection is essential for educators as they navigate this complex landscape. Understanding that beliefs, values, and assumptions impact interactions with students of diverse backgrounds, educators must scrutinize their beliefs, values, and assumptions. By doing so, educators can identify biases and prejudices, both conscious and unconscious, that may impact their teaching and communication. This introspection is not just a professional responsibility; it is an ethical imperative in the realm of global education.

Investing in professional development for educators isn't solely about enhancing their skills; it is a commitment to their continuous personal and professional growth. It signifies an understanding that education is not stagnant but an ever-evolving field shaped by emerging knowledge and changing global dynamics. Moreover, this dedication to self-awareness and progress is not just a luxury; it lies at the very heart of global education. It is a recognition that teaching is not a one-way process but a dynamic exchange of ideas and experiences, a journey educators embark upon alongside their students.

In this journey of self-discovery, educators become more than just stewards of knowledge; they evolve into guides and mentors in the profound process of mutual enlightenment. They acknowledge that the path toward growth is not always straightforward, but by embracing each step, confronting biases, and fostering a culture of openness and empathy, they nurture the authentic spirit of global education. This

spirit transcends textbooks and classrooms; it instills a sense of global citizenship and fosters a community of learners who are not only knowledgeable but also deeply aware, compassionate, and committed to making a positive impact in our interconnected world.

3. Inclusivity and Equity: Non-Negotiable Pillars

In the realm of global education, inclusivity and equity are fundamental and indispensable pillars that uphold the essence of meaningful global learning. It's crucial to recognize that diversity goes beyond being a mere surface-level requirement; it is, in fact, the foundation that upholds and strengthens the core of global education. To reduce its significance to a mere checkbox is to disregard the profound impact it has on the transformative potential of global education.

Inclusive and equitable programs are not just a reflection of contemporary values; they are fundamental to the core mission of global education. By emphasizing equity, we champion the principle that every individual, celebrating their unique background, deserves tailored support to access fully the transformative opportunities that global education provides. Equity here underscores the importance of giving people what they specifically need to thrive, rather than a one-size-fits-all approach. This ensures that the rewards of global learning are provided justly, accounting for diverse needs, rather than being distributed uniformly without considering individual circumstances.

Consider the composition of a study abroad office. A diverse team within such an office isn't a "nice-to-have"; it's an absolute necessity. Several factors contribute to this. First, a diverse team brings a wealth of perspectives, experiences, and insights that enrich the decision-making process. It ensures that the office is attuned to the diverse needs and aspirations of students from various backgrounds.

Furthermore, without clear anti-discrimination policies and inclusivity workshops, we risk perpetuating harmful stereotypes and biases. These biases can inadvertently find their way into the program offerings, influencing everything from curriculum design to student interactions abroad. Such perpetuation of harmful ideologies not only undermines the educational experience but also poses the risk of carrying those harmful beliefs to other countries or regions, where they may adversely impact intercultural relations and global understanding.

In essence, inclusivity and equity are not optional add-ons to global education; they are its very foundation. When we prioritize these ideas, we create an environment where individuals of all backgrounds can fully engage, learn, and thrive. We foster a culture of respect, empathy, and understanding, one that empowers students to become global citizens who embrace diversity and champion equity. By upholding these ideals, we not only honor the essence of global education but also pave the way for a brighter, more inclusive, and equitable future for all.

4. The Ethical Obligation of Providing Sustained Support

In the global education landscape, it's clear that we cannot embark on the journey alone. It's a collective mission that relies on the collaboration and support of a community united in its commitment to education principles. Within this context, staff members emerge as crucial contributors who need more than mere access to resources; they require continuous support and allyship. Anything less than this ongoing commitment would not only be a disservice to the individuals themselves but also undermine the very ethos that drives the field of education forward. Staff members play a crucial role in global education. They work behind the scenes, planning and coordinating experiences that shape the futures of many students. They provide valuable support, guiding students through the complexities of cultural adaptation

and learning. However, facilitating global education is challenging and requires a range of skills. Staff members must navigate a complex terrain that includes logistical complexities and intercultural communication. They need not only professional competence but also emotional resilience to succeed.

It is not just a considerate approach to offer a basic intercultural communication language course to students, faculty, and staff members; it is an essential responsibility. By providing intercultural learning opportunities, we recognize the specific challenges and opportunities that come with global education. We acknowledge that effective communication across cultural differences is crucial to fully embrace and benefit from global learning experiences. Offering these resources empowers staff members to excel in their roles, which in turn fosters a more enriching educational environment for all participants involved.

Global education requires an unwavering commitment to both the students who embark on life-changing journeys and the educators and staff who guide them. Their ongoing support is essential not only for their professional growth but also for affirming our values as educators and institutions. It emphasizes our dedication to not only imparting knowledge but also fostering a culture of empathy, dignity, and advancement within the global educational community.

At its core, the ethical obligation of providing sustained support to staff members is rooted in a profound understanding of the interconnected nature of education. It is a recognition that by championing their well-being, we create an environment where they can flourish and, in turn, empower students to thrive. It is a commitment to the belief that in order to champion global education, we must wholeheartedly champion the well-being, growth, and professional development of those who dedicate themselves to its realization.

5. Address Safety and Risk Management in Global Scenarios

Take active steps proactively to address safety and risk through co-construction. This approach involves educators and students working together to identify potential risks and collaboratively develop strategies to mitigate them. By doing so, it ensures that safety measures are comprehensive, contextually relevant, and sensitive to the diverse needs of those involved in global education settings. This co-constructive method aligns with the framework's emphasis on equity and empowerment, fostering a participatory and inclusive process that considers both physical safety and psychological well-being.

Engage in a proactive and dynamic process by taking deliberate actions to address safety and risk through co-construction. This innovative approach entails a collaborative effort between educators and students, wherein they actively identify potential risks and work together to devise effective strategies for their mitigation. By adopting this participatory method, the resulting safety measures become not only comprehensive but also intricately attuned to the specific context, considering the nuanced and diverse needs of individuals involved in global education settings.

The essence of co-construction lies in its capacity to align with the framework's core values of equity and empowerment. This collaborative model fosters a participatory and inclusive process, ensuring that the voices of all stakeholders are heard and considered. Beyond the mere physical aspects of safety, this method also prioritizes psychological well-being, recognizing the interconnected nature of both facets. In doing so, the co-constructive approach becomes a cornerstone in establishing a robust foundation for safety measures that are not only effective but also resonate with the principles of inclusivity and empowerment within the realm of global education.

Conclusion

While the Global Education Equity Empowerment Framework might not offer the only solution to the diverse challenges in our field, it presents a crucial strategic approach, stemming from the often-underrepresented perspective of two black interculturalists and diversity, equity, and inclusion practitioners within our domain. To foster genuine inclusivity in global education, a fundamental shift in our current approaches is needed, and this shift necessitates a respectful disruption of the status quo. For too long, deeply entrenched colonialist practices have acted as roadblocks to our collective progress, hindering the realization of our educational ideals.

The present moment calls for a profound reexamination of our methods and the paradigms that have guided us so far. In today's dynamic educational landscape, adhering to outdated norms not only obstructs our path to progress but also contradicts the very essence of education itself, which thrives on adaptability and innovation.

The Global Education Equity Empowerment Framework offers a unique blend of principles that ensures these strategies are both innovative and inclusive, setting it apart from other models. Introducing radical approaches can spark creativity, improve operational efficiency, and help tackle the challenges that arise. However, it is crucial to approach the process with thorough research, comprehensive planning, and alignment with the organization's objectives. Success depends on open communication, co-construction, and a willingness to adapt as needed. This is essential for navigating the complexities and potential obstacles that come with implementing innovative methods.

Our aim is to establish a framework that motivates us to embrace a worldwide educational approach that is both comprehensive and adaptable, emphasizing inclusivity and self-awareness. Our aspiration is to revolutionize education on a global scale by acknowledging the

unique requirements of learners and empowering educators and institutions to fashion an educational environment that genuinely embodies these principles.

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SECTION TWO:
Curriculum and Change

The impact of rethinking program content and practice is explored here from a variety of perspectives, including those of faculty and instructional design experts. Readers are invited to review the manner in which we build and enact the student experience. The challenge of reviewing the situation impacts on what we teach and ways in which we teach. Student learning is rightly and properly at the heart of our endeavors. The essays in this section demonstrate a necessary intimacy between theory and practice.

Bright College Days, oh, carefree days that fly

To thee we sing with our glasses raised on high

Let's drink a toast as each of us recalls

Ivy-covered professors in ivy-covered halls

Turn on the spigot

Pour the beer and swig it

Here's to parties we tossed

To the games that we lost

(We shall claim that we won them some day)

To the girls young and sweet

To the spacious back seat

Of our roommate's beat-up Chevrolet

To the beer and benzedrine

To the way that the dean

Tried so hard to be "Pals" with us all

To excuses we fibbed

To the papers we cribbed

From the genius who lived down the hall

We shall sleep through all the lectures and cheat on the exams

And we'll pass and be forgotten with the rest

Soon we'll be out amid the cold world's strife

Soon we'll be sliding down the razor blade of life

- Tom Lehrer, "Bright College Days"

STUDYING SCIENCE IN CONTEXT

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On the evening of December 19, 1667, Dr. Jean-Baptiste Denis's carriage approached the imposing *port-cochère* doors of his patron, Henri-Louis de Montmor's city residence. As with many of the streets of the Paris neighborhood of the Marais, Rue Sainte-Avoye was narrow with impressive mansions crowding the streets. Denis didn't write down how he was feeling as the carriage paused at the threshold to allow the household staff to open the doors, but given his subsequent writings it wouldn't be a stretch to believe he was anticipating something momentous was about to occur. Fast-forward a little less than 400 years and a group of study abroad students walk down the same street (now called Rue du Temple), led by their instructor. The road is still narrow, with the one-way vehicle traffic forcing pedestrians to the narrow sidewalks. The instructor pauses the group in front of two-story dark wood doors. That same doorway. The group all bunches around the door, trying to stay out of the traffic. No footmen awaited their arrival, at the ready to open this grand doorway. But despite the doors staying firmly shut, the students still stood at the threshold of their own scientific journey, one that will hopefully transform them and their understanding of science.

Study abroad in the life sciences generally falls into two specific categories: (1) field courses (e.g., a tropical ecology course in Costa Rica or medical shadowing/volunteering at a hospital in Italy), or (2) relatively standard science courses that just happen to be taught in a foreign location (either via exchange with a local university or faculty from the students' home institution coming abroad with them). Field courses have a specific scientific reason for being in the location they

are studying, such as seeing the specific flora and fauna in their natural environment or seeing healthcare practitioners working under certain healthcare constraints and conditions. They may or may not explicitly engage with the locale in a cultural sense, but the learning is grounded in the place. The standard science course that just so happens to be taught in a specific location probably does not have a scientific reason for being there, and also the course itself probably does not engage with the local culture (though the larger program they are involved in might).

Studying abroad is a transformative experience. It is through this lens that we often sell students, parents, and administrators on these types of programs. According to Mezirow (1991), transformative learning comes from an individual critically evaluating their assumptions and the role that those assumptions play in their worldview. Therefore, by exposing a person to different cultures and ways of thinking, travel in and of itself has value in this regard, or at least can have value (Stone and Petrick, 2013; Roberson, 2018). A study abroad program can provide a framework that makes this transformation more likely by helping students to intentionally engage with the local culture and ensuring that they have the time, space, and guidance for critical reflection on those experiences (Stone and Duffy, 2015). Unfortunately, not all programs are created equal when it comes to putting students in a position to really have that growth (Trede et al., 2013).

If one of the foundations of study abroad is putting students in a position to expand their understanding of the world and other cultures, there must be a mechanism for students to, if not immerse themselves, at least engage with that culture and reflect on the experience. Some study abroad programs that include science courses may pass the cultural engagement off to another course in the program. This is more possible during semester-long experiences when students take multiple courses. However, many of those might be an exchange with a foreign

institution, and the student may be enrolling in "regular" courses at the institution and not learning about local culture in a formal sense or with any sort of guidance. Short-term programs (3–6-week programs) may not include multiple courses, placing any sort of formal cultural component in peril if the only course taken is a science course.

Science is a fundamentally international field though. Science faculty and students crisscross the globe to learn, teach, and collaborate, and as a result, most university science departments in the United States have both students and faculty from a variety of nationalities (National Science Board, 2022). The ability to communicate effectively in these inherently international and cross-cultural fields requires an appreciation of the differences and commonalities between cultures (Lustig and Koester, 2017). The importance of being able effectively to communicate science within your field, and to the broader world, is widely recognized as a vital skill, emphasized by it appearing as one of the six core competencies that all life science majors should learn in "Vision and Change" (American Association for the Advancement of Science, 2011). The development of these intercultural skills are core aspects of what students gain from a well-designed study abroad program.

A common refrain when I talk with science faculty about study abroad is: "I don't teach a field course discipline; I teach Cell Biology, and Cell Biology is Cell Biology—it doesn't matter where you are. So, how can I justify teaching in a study abroad program?" In a basic sense, they aren't wrong. The structures and functions of cells don't change with the location in which you teach. Despite that, science has a cultural and historical context. As much as scientists would like to pretend that their research work would happen in the same manner no matter what is going on in the world, that research is a product of a specific time and place, and was influenced by social, political, personal, and religious factors. Understanding this relationship between science and

society is another core competency from "Vision and Change" (American Association for the Advancement of Science, 2011). The issue of societal pressures influencing scholarly work is especially applicable in the current world, with obvious examples around COVID-19 and vaccines in the sciences (and even more examples in the social sciences), and the historical examples used in a Science in Context classroom can provide a lens with which to contrast the more modern examples.

How can a science course address culture? I propose that science faculty develop courses on a particular discovery (or set of discoveries) in their field and all of the things swirling around that scholarly work that shaped its progress (or lack of progress). This approaches the broad culture of the place and time, as well as the culture of science. I call this "The Story Behind the Science" or "Science in Context."

How does a science faculty member begin to learn the history and social contexts of that time? Not every scientific breakthrough has an interesting (and documented) story, but some do, and that can provide an exciting and accessible first step. My first study abroad program utilized a book called *Blood Work: A Tale of Medicine and Murder in the Scientific Revolution* by Dr. Holly Tucker (2012) to act as the scaffolding to a program about the first blood transfusions done on a human. Dr. Tucker's book looked at competing English and French efforts to be the first to transfuse blood from an animal into a human to cure them of a disease, focusing on Dr. Denis as a main character of sorts. This book introduced me to Dr. Denis and brought me, and then my students, to that doorway in the Marais.

That provides a starting point, but it is still a long way from a full study abroad program. What comes next? Modern scientists rarely read the original literature on topics in life sciences, especially articles that were published further in the past. We may mention in our courses, for example, that William Harvey first characterized a modern

understanding of the circulation of blood, but almost none of us have even attempted to read *De Motu Cordis et Sanguinis*, let alone assign it as a course reading. As summarized by Galili (2012: 1284), "[W]hy should we confuse students with obsolete views, surpassed problems, and premature epistemology of science?"

Despite being considered the father of cardiovascular physiology, you could argue that Harvey's understanding of the human body was less than that of your typical, modern, life science major. However, starting with past, rejected conceptions about a topic can be a building block toward understanding the modern (and presumed correct) understanding of that topic though. It also helps illustrate the process of science, another core competency outlined in "Vision and Change" (American Association for the Advancement of Science, 2011), which is based on the accumulation and interpretation of evidence built on the foundation of the collective works of numerous researchers. In this case, the publication of Harvey's groundbreaking work was one of the factors that inspired Denis (and others) to explore the possibilities of blood transfusion. The varying degrees of acceptance of Harvey's work also led to some of the central conflicts of his story.

The early seventeenth century was a time of religious, political, and philosophical upheaval, but centuries of cultural inertia remained in place. Just like those areas, science had its own cultural norms and traditions. In medicine, this was the Galenic and Aristotelian view of the human body that had persisted for well over 1000 years by that point. And even though Harvey proposed something wildly different from the previous scientific dogma, he (perhaps wisely considering the response to broad contemporaries like Servetus, Copernicus, and Galileo) was rather measured in his writings and tried to keep things within the established understanding. Denis was not as measured and suffered from biases against the location of his medical training. How did this

impact the acceptance of, and resistance to his ideas? The grounding of learning about this momentous time in cardiovascular understanding in a tangible place, with a greater understanding of the actual people involved, makes it real, something more than the dry and distant history. This essay isn't meant to be a historical primer, but understanding why those (incorrect) ideas persisted for as long as they did (in spite of the work of Ibn al-Nafis, Andreas Vesalius, and others who have been lost to history) can shed light on current resistances and misconceptions about new ideas. As said by James Baldwin, "Once you find yourself in another civilization, you're forced to examine your own."

We could probably substitute culture for civilization without losing Mr. Baldwin's meaning. This brings us back to the idea of engaging with the local culture and cross-cultural learning—the foundation of study abroad. Here, what I propose would not directly tie to modern French culture but to the broader historical contexts that led to a modern France. (And, if paired with a course on French history or something similar could make that connection more explicit.) There are multiple layers of cross-cultural learning happening: American students in Paris (of course), but also modern scientists immersing themselves in the scientific culture of the Scientific Revolution. It also leads to an interesting reflection question: what scientific knowledge are we absolutely sure is correct right now, that will very likely look ridiculous to someone in 500 years?

Still, that material could be, and likely is being, taught in a classroom in the United States this semester. What makes a topic like this an effective starting point for a science study abroad program? We started this story with students literally walking in the footsteps of Denis, but in what other ways can we leverage being in Paris to engage with the Paris of the late 1600s?

We can continue to walk in the footsteps of Denis, or at least the footsteps of Parisian residents of the seventeenth century: the Louvre, Notre Dame Cathedral, and the Palace at Versailles were landmarks for that era, just as they are now (though Versailles was under construction). King Louis XIV was establishing the French Royal Academy of Sciences and building the Paris Observatory during this time period. In the Louvre, we can look at art that was at the cutting edge of painting and sculpture technique for the time, while walking through rooms in a palace that someone like Denis could only dream of entering. We can tour the Conciergerie, a place that Denis would hope to avoid since it was the main city jail. The Musée Carnavalet can give us a glimpse of what Paris was like in the seventeenth century via its role as the museum of the history of the city of Paris, while also allowing us to visit a former home of the Parisian nobility of the era.

A "Science in Context" program allows for a wide range of topics, based on faculty interests, and could be applied to any scientific discipline. This approach allows the development of science-focused study abroad programs that leverage a local context, while also addressing skills that are considered vital for future scientists (and any college graduate, really). The examples used here are based in Biological Sciences but could easily be translated to other scientific discoveries in other fields and the location or locations relevant there. Hopefully this spurs other scientists to explore their own interests and ideas, and develop science-focused programs that lead to transformative student learning experiences.

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PILGRIMAGE TO SLOW STUDY ABROAD: AN HOMAGE TO CATALONIA

Emily Resnevic

CEA CAPA EDUCATION ABROAD

Reading instructions:

Read while sitting or lying down, generally
lounging, in a comfortable position.

Take four deep breaths.

Let's begin.

In September I traveled to Spain to visit CEA CAPA's study center in Barcelona. The objectives of my trip were to study the culture, the city, the team, the dynamics, the excursions—and to really learn and understand what it means to develop custom study abroad programs in this location. My visit included many conversations with students, staff, and locals—touring the city as a classroom. But underneath it all I had a larger objective, a more abstract mission: beyond Barcelona, what is the best way to organize study abroad programs? What is my philosophy of developing custom and faculty-led program best practices, and what do today's students need from us as study abroad practitioners?

When designing custom programs at CEA CAPA, we spend a good amount of time going into detail about what arrival day will be like. Of all days, the first day of the program seems like the most significant; it's the day that causes the most anxiety and requires the greatest preparation, that immediate stress of landing, being jet lagged, lugging luggage, not knowing anything of what to see and do. Despite advice I've heard given to students about successfully navigating jetlag, I found myself taking a short nap after checking into my hotel around 2pm on

my arrival day. The city rose up before me out my terrace, everything a complete unknown, and an adventure awaited every street- and yet, I told myself that it would not be as great as I'd wanted it to be if I didn't rest first. So, I napped. I set an alarm for an hour but woke up in a half dream fright before it had a chance to go off. A voice in my head was yelling "You don't have time for naps! You're only here for 10 days! Go to the city!" and I startled out of bed like a soldier responding to a call to action from their commander. "yes sir" I told this voice, and then stopped, and reminded myself: *The city will be there when you're ready to meet it. This day is for you. Do what you need, and what feels right*.

The voice in our heads, barking orders that prevent us from resting (whether while traveling or simply during free time at home), is the one we need to address when explaining the concept of Slow Study Abroad. But who is this voice?

This voice knows many Americans and gets inside our heads every day of our lives, not just on Day 1 of our travels. This voice is capitalism, grind culture, and productivity. This voice is "resilience." Consider some toxic expressions in our culture that we parrot, expressions authored by this inner voice:

- Sleep when you're dead.
- Rise and grind.
- While they sleep, I grind.
- If it doesn't make money, it doesn't make sense.
- Wake up to hustle.

It's hard to deprogram our innermost resistance to rest when society tells us that we must constantly be performing, achieving, and making progress.

* * *

Pause – Reflect.

Release the shame you feel when resting.

It does not belong to you.

- Tricia Hersey, *Rest is Resistance*

* * *

Being a custom program developer at an education abroad provider, to me, means embracing the roles of both an artist and a scientist.

From an artistic perspective, I translate dreams and ideas into reality, using creativity, design, and vision. I am an architect of opportunity, aiming to curate experiences for thoughtful students and dedicated faculty to elicit moments of insight and joy. An artist conducts "studies" to figure out how to execute a final vision, working through rough drafts and refining ideas. Standing in the Picasso Museum in Barcelona I marveled at the "studies" that Picasso did before arriving at his masterpieces. In designing programs, we often look at several drafts before we arrive at the final version. We sign agreements to formalize consensus from institution to provider so that we are aligned in our values and goals, and we collaborate to make this opportunity as enriching as we can for students and faculty. Slow Study Abroad has been my subject, and this is a creative study.

When I think scientifically, I study data, compile qualitative and quantitative feedback on how a program went, and examine trends in the field. I amalgamate academic objectives with finances – calculating exchange rates, group vs individual costs, strategic risks of how much to budget for housing 12 months in advance. As a study abroad "scientist," I make hypotheses: "I'll bet if we organized the program *this* way, students might gain *that* outcome."

What I am not is a fortune teller—but I do know that what has worked in the past sometimes works again in the future. But really, we'll never know—and so Slow Study Abroad is a hypothesis, nothing more until it is repeatedly tested, and even when it is proven to work one time, it might not work every time. *Ichi-go ichi-e* is a Japanese proverb that may be translated into English as "in this moment, an opportunity." This wisdom in the unrepeatable nature of every moment applies, to some extent, to study abroad program design. Even when we do determine "best practice" behind any theory, we must recognize that every moment, person, situation, student, culture, and context is unique, and so we must recognize that a one-size-fits-all approach won't be universally appropriate. That said, I believe that we can harness principles that drive decisions in our program design, and that the foundations of Slow Study Abroad have value in our work and can shape thinking about how we see our programs as being successful or not.

* * *

Pause – Reflect.

No man ever steps in the same river twice,
for it's not the same river and he's not the same man.

- Heraclitus

* * *

If you look around just the field of international education, you may notice many colleagues experiencing and talking about their experiences with burnout. Scroll on LinkedIn and count how many folks share strategies for setting boundaries at work. At NAFSA's 2023 Annual Conference, several sessions were dedicated to supporting international educators around burnout. An article on NAFSA's *International Educator* notes that "to continue to innovate and move the field forward,

international educators need to acknowledge signs of struggle and burnout—and find ways to overcome it. By prioritizing self-care and setting aside time for creative thinking, professionals can better consider new approaches with open minds" (Bowman, 2021). The article goes on to define burnout, crediting the World Health Organization with identifying three primary dimensions of burnout: energy depletion or exhaustion, cynicism toward and disengagement from one's job, and feelings of ineffectiveness (WHO, 2019).

Have you felt these feelings? I have. But I have a question for you: does this not also plague our students? Aren't our students also burning out? And if we can agree that our students also face this level of stress, what are we doing to prevent or try to alleviate student burnout? What boundaries are we setting on behalf of our students?

* * *

CEA CAPA and University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee were honored to receive an award in 2023 for Innovative Program Design for a new program called "Black Lives Matter: A Global Comparative Study." The program focuses on the Black Lives Matter Movement in the U.K. and compares it to similar social justice movements in the U.S., and was recognized for its achievements in subject matter and student recruitment (Go Abroad, 2023). This program showcases excellence in more ways than one, with innovative curriculum, thoughtful experiential learning components, and student access at the forefront of the design, and the experience of collaborating on the development of this program inspires me to be a better program designer daily. In working on developing this program, I felt myself reaching further towards excellence at every opportunity; diving deep into research to find the perfect walking tours, challenging myself to go beyond my typical trusted colleagues for

feedback and seeking new perspectives on the program design, and advocating for equitable pricing strategies with our leadership.

I would like to let you in on a secret about the award-winning program. While the concept was rightfully celebrated, and there was a lot of pride in the work, there are some aspects of the design that I would change for next time. I spent a few months in 2023 analyzing programs that had gone abroad and returned as our organization prepared to host these custom programs again in 2024 with new cohorts. I asked our onsite teams, pre-departure teams, faculty, students, and study abroad offices for feedback about how they went. In the case of the Black Lives Matter program, I found that it was brimming with ideas and genuine excitement to achieve as many of them as possible. I also heard that the students were exhausted and burned out by the end. They walked maybe 25,000 steps a day, grappled with challenging subjects, like their histories and the contexts around their race and identity—leading to physical, mental, and emotional exhaustion. The underlying concern was burnout; too much to do and too much to process, not enough time to reflect.

This is not an uncommon theme of feedback that we hear about both short-term and long-term programs, and a piece of feedback I hadn't considered deeply until I heard it about one of my favorite programs. To me, this felt like the program that defied all conventional expectations, the innovation that kept the field looking for more creative ways to be inclusive and thoughtful about international education. This program was one of the most meaningful collaborations I have contributed to, and respect and admire deeply, but it too fell victim to a busy schedule leaving students exhausted. Even the programs that we are most proud of and consider our best work have rooms for constant improvement. Many study abroad programs can feel like nonstop missions for students to do as much as possible, visit as many places as

possible, check off as many highlights as possible. This is what Slow Study Abroad aims to examine and address.

<p align="center">* * *</p>

<p align="center">Pause – Reflect.</p>

<p align="center">*Slow down, you crazy child*
and take the phone off the hook and disappear for a while.
It's all right, you can afford to lose a day or two.
When will you realize Vienna waits for you?</p>

<p align="center">- Billy Joel, "Vienna"</p>

<p align="center">* * *</p>

The problems that exist in our study abroad programs don't exist in a vacuum, and so it's useful to examine the wider societal structures and trends that contribute to burnout. This is not entirely our fault. (*It's not your fault!*) But there are ways we can be intentional about creating fulfilling programs that act as an antidote to this larger societal ill. Slow Study Abroad is not a cure, but it thoughtfully considers issues and pro-actively reaches to provide a solution.

I'd like to invite you to consider these three words and whether they elicit positive or negative connotations for you: loneliness, curiosity, and boredom. Let's explore them.

From my view, loneliness has been an under-acknowledged problem in the United States for years, but this is changing. The idea of looking at loneliness as a widespread issue to address institutionally garnered widespread attention in 2023 when the U.S. Surgeon General released a report declaring loneliness an epidemic. The Surgeon General's 82-page report on this topic states that about half of U.S. adults reported experiencing measurable levels of loneliness – since

even before the COVID pandemic—and that some of the most at-risk populations for loneliness are young adults (the majority of our study abroad participants). The rate of loneliness among young adults increased every year between 1976 and 2019 (Buecker et al., 2021). And what's at stake? The physical implications of loneliness can be so severe that it is comparable to smoking 15 cigarettes a day (Holt-Lundstad et al., 2017). Surgeon General Vivek Murthy attributes the loneliness epidemic to technology and constantly moving through the world—moving homes, changing jobs, etc. "You can feel lonely even if you have a lot of people around you, because loneliness is about the quality of your connections" (Murthy, 2023).

The office of the Surgeon General recommends strategies for educators on increasing connections to combat the loneliness epidemic, which include promoting peer-led programs and partnerships with key community groups. We can apply this to study abroad, and as we design our programs, ask ourselves: how can our students connect with their peers? Are there local universities with whom we can create partnerships and peer-to-peer programming? Do homestays make sense as a living arrangement for this program? Can we create pen-pal or matching programs that match students to local families outside of homestays?

Research also suggests that socially-based educational techniques, such as cooperative learning projects, can improve not only loneliness but also educational outcomes and peer relations (Roseth et al., 2008). Can we introduce more group projects within our cohorts? Across cohorts? Across student cohorts and local community organizations and companies abroad? Are there mentoring programs we can include in our programming? How can we implement peer support groups that allow students to lean on one another and learn from each other's experiences?

* * *

Cooperation and collaboration were on my mind in Barcelona. In Plaça Catalunya, Barcelona's central square, locals celebrate *La Merce*, Barcelona's local holiday, by building human towers, or *castells*. Large teams of people form together to create a strong base which acts as the tower's support. On top of this first cone area climbs up the trunk, which acts as the central structure. The highest point of the *castell* is the canopy, making way for the last person to climb to the very top, and raise their arms in victory. This stunning and intimate tradition raises up one person through the tightly knit group through teamwork and trust. We cannot reach these great heights without the support of our community.

* * *

Loneliness and social isolation increase the risk of depression and anxiety. Anxiety can be a problem for all people, research shows that young adults in the U.S. continue to be more likely than their older counterparts to be experiencing symptoms of anxiety or depression. About 50% of adults aged 18-24 reported anxiety and depression symptoms in 2023 (Panchal et al., 2023). Doctors such as Jud Brewer have researched anxiety and determined that curiosity is an effective antidote, in short because anxiety signals us to retreat, but curiosity signals us to lean in (Brewer, 2022). In embracing curiosity, we can encourage our students to be investigators of the unknown, and this simple intentional choice can shift us out of fear and into the search for connections. Instead of a ramped-up sense of threat, we can shift it into a heightened attention to what is fascinating and fun about the present moments, and what is being created. So, a major goal for program design is in successfully imparting a sense of curiosity for students on our programs.

Curiosity may be viewed as positive or negative; consider the proverb "curiosity killed the cat," or Cambridge Dictionary's definition of "inquisitiveness" meaning "wanting to discover as much as you can about things, sometimes in a way that annoys people." However, in education and in particular the international education arena, curiosity is seen as an essential element needed for students to develop intercultural effectiveness. Gregerson, Morrison, and Black (1998) define curiosity as "unbridled inquisitiveness" noting that global leaders "stated repeatedly that inquisitiveness is the fuel for increasing global savvy, enhancing their ability to understand people and maintain integrity, and augmenting their capacity for dealing with uncertainty and managing tension."

Curiosity is a trait that spurs many students to take an interest in studying abroad to begin with. *What is it like in another country?* So how do we, as international educators, facilitate curiosity in the classroom, in our programming?

Curiosity stems from a gap or absence of information—but it needs to start with some existing information. Stephanie Ann Houghton writes: "People are likely to become more curious about topics they already know about because perceived gaps in their knowledge become smaller relative to what they already know as knowledge is acquired," (Houghton et al., 2014). As an example or extension of this line of logic, we can stoke curiosity on upper-level courses in which a student already has a good amount of understanding in the basic principles of the field and is looking to expand their knowledge in other contexts.

Students can also be made aware of the gaps in their knowledge through use of the Socratic method. *You know that this is a historical event, but do you know why this occurred? You know that this is the principle that we have found to be true, but do you know how this is applied*

in this culture? You know that this is a typical situation in your home country, but this cultural context is different—can you imagine why?

Another great way to stimulate curiosity is to encourage students to make predictions based on the information they know to be true. For example, students may be challenged to identify social stereotypes and consider whether or not their predictions will be correct. This can be done in pre-departure: *we are all going to Spain, what do you think the working culture will be like?* After the program ends: *what predictions did you have before this program, and were they true? Why / why not?*

* * *

Pause – Reflect.

Education is not the filling of a pot but the lighting of a fire.

- W.B. Yeats

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Boredom can result in either not having enough stimulus, or too much stimulus. When we think about students being bored because of a lack of stimulus in study abroad, we tend to lean into that with fear, usually because of health and safety reasons. *If we don't keep students busy, they'll have too much free time, and they'll use that to get into trouble* is a common philosophy that is held in the field for modern study abroad program design, whether explicitly stated or not. But I would assert that we fear trusting our students to be responsible for their safety based on the exception, not the rule. Most students are thoughtful and well intentioned (not a statistic that I can cite, but a personal intuition about our youth and posterity). We can't design rules and systems around the few students that abuse their free time and put themselves in dangerous situations. So, let's put that health and safety argument aside for now.

In reality, boredom resulting from a lack of stimulus often creates opportunities for creativity. How many of you have come up with your best ideas during a moment of boredom? Consider a 2017 TED talk by Manoush Zomorodi, which explains that in tasks that are more routine, less stimulating, and more "boring," like going for a walk without headphones, taking a shower, or folding laundry, our brains go into a "default mode." And it is in this mode where we start to connect disparate ideas, solve some of our most nagging problems, and do our "autobiographical planning," defined by Zomorodi as "when we look back at our lives, we take note of the big moments, we create a personal narrative, and then we set goals and we figure out what steps we need to take to reach them." So, in moments of downtime, reflection, without screens, distractions, or multitasking, we and our students could be reflecting upon our lives, setting goals, and solving the most nagging problems. And this is a goal of education – to provide students with personal and professional growth opportunities. In this way, Slow Study Abroad attempts to harness boredom and subvert its negative connotations by providing the absence of distraction, free time, and unplanned spaces for students to rest, recover, and just think. The result is more creative students–and we need our students to be creative. They are our world's next leaders with a lot of big problems to solve.

* * *

Our brains function better in terms of creative problem-solving if we give them a chance to rest. We are more resilient when our minds and bodies are rested. In our culture, we often equate resiliency with being tough and being able to just grind it through, but actually nothing could be further from the truth. Resilience is the ability to withstand challenges because we've been able to rest our minds and bodies.

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- Jane Bjerklie-Barry, *Overcoming Burnout to Spark Innovation,* NAFSA

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On the flip side, let's look at boredom from too much stimulus. There's a growing amount of data and concern about younger generations and the impact of screens. As digital natives, our students don't know a world without smartphones. How do older generations look at Gen Z's relationship to technology? *They're addicted. They watch TikTok, a never-ending stream of content, which changes very quickly. They must have trouble paying attention for longer periods of time.* Sometimes I think the field tries to keep up with TikTok—we design programs that bombard our students with one stimulus after another. In our own professional lives, we are hungry for hacks that limit distractions and allow us to focus. Why aren't we re-applying these strategies to our students on study abroad programs? Study abroad is not TikTok, and it shouldn't be.

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A mountain is formed when two tectonic plates of Earth are pushed together over time, forcing the rocks and sediment between them up towards the sky. Montserrat ("serrated mountain" in Catalan) was formed by rocks that were once found at the bottom of a tropical sea, which dried up many millions of years before the birth of the first human being. When visiting this strange formation and learning about its natural history, it's hard not to remark at the sheer expanse of change that can occur over time, and how relatively slowly mountains are built in comparison to human life.

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Two tectonic plates that seem to be at odds with each other in this theory are Slow Study Abroad and *carpe diem*. *Carpe diem* is a relatively accepted and embraced epithet—"seize the day" for we might not live tomorrow. You may ask, if we are deliberately slow, resisting the ideas of endless bucket lists comprised solely of things to see and take pictures of, then how do we reconcile with *carpe diem*? How do we reconcile Slow Study Abroad with the idea that every moment is unique and irreplaceable, as we learned from *ichi-go ichi-e*? How do we reconcile the very Western emphasis on instant gratification and all of these ideas we also believe to have validity? Instant gratification pervades many aspects of Western culture—social media, modern conveniences, level of customer service in many industries. We continue to lead busier and busier lives, both as professionals and as students. We have many obligations, clubs, activities, jobs, family responsibilities, a myriad of things that pull our minds and bodies into different directions and take us away from that deep breath moment of appreciating the now.

Slow Study Abroad might respond: yes, I want you to seize the day. I want you to get the most that you can out of every beautifully unique moment. But exhaustion is not *carpe diem*, and there is more to the beauty of the iceberg than what we see on the surface. Sit with it. Rest.

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Trends change slowly, as slowly as Montserrat was formed, and it often feels that way in international education. We, as international educators, are battling our own burnout, which prevents us from thinking carefully about innovation or engaging in meaningful topics with enthusiasm. The field of U.S. education abroad is slowly changing. As the field adapts to the changing tides of history, program types come in

and out of style, like the more academic junior year abroad programs in the 1920s (Bowman, 1987), or the faculty-led study tours and summer study programs that often spanned multiple countries (Hoffa, 2007). It's interesting to consider these early programs of our field, now over 100 years old, against the 2023 *Open Doors* report, which shows findings that are similar to our historical understanding of where our field began. 49% of reported U.S. students who studied abroad in 2021/22 went during the summer term, and 68.7% of reported U.S. students who studied abroad identified as women (IIE, 2023). Study abroad remains inaccessible to other student populations for many reasons; the emphasis and insistence on justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion in the field is crucial in addressing historically exclusionary practices.

There is much work to be done to foster inclusion and increase student access to study abroad programming. One commonly pointed-to barrier to education abroad is finances and funding, and whether affordability has been considered in program design. Slow Study Abroad programs may be able to lend a small hand in decreasing program fees (ever so slightly) by alleviating pressures on budgets by reducing the total number of inclusions on the program. By reducing the number of inclusions and focusing on those that really count, program fees can reflect the most important and meaningful aspects of our programs, and in turn promote access to programs embracing healthy and equitable views on rest, community, and reflection.

Prioritization is a term often heard from managers or HR, encouraging employees to focus on what's important and most effective to achieve the most impactful results. This seems particularly common when asked about how to address burnout (*you don't need to do it all, just pick the most important things!*) We can put this well-meaning advice to good use when designing programs for our students. In your program design, ask yourself what students on this program would

"need to do" versus what would be "nice to do." This will help to determine the appropriate inclusions for any given program and reduce extraneous costs. Another useful question or tool to consider the same goal would be the Pareto principle, or the 80/20 rule. This principle asserts that 80% of all outcomes result from 20% of all causes for any given event. We may use this principle to identify where to put our energy into our programming—which have the highest impact? Prioritize those.

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Slow Study Abroad is a cultural shift, so it must be actively practiced and engaged in, because it pushes back against the dominant culture of American productivity.

Pause – Reflect.

Revolution is not a one-time event. – Audre Lorde

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As a program developer, I see a lot of requests for programs with a lot of different types of goals. I have encountered the mindset that *if students aren't working hard, that they aren't learning. If they're not complaining, the program isn't rigorous enough.* In some extreme cases, there has been the mindset that if the program isn't busy, then students will think it's a waste of time. *Let's add more. Let's see how much they're willing to invest in it. Let's weed students out.* I have developed programs on request for faculty who want an expensive price point to make the program seem more exclusive, and with the idea that students should complain about how busy they are as an indicator of program success. These perspectives are not the norm, but they do tug at deeply laid cultural values that pervade every aspect of our thinking.

Let's lock these ideas in the vault and keep it shut. My goal is to create accessible and approachable experiences for students to learn in.

* * *

I name academia as one of the main sites of grind culture. The headquarters of pushing through exhaustion, competition, expectations, and a lack of balance. During the final exam season, I watched people live in the library never once leaving, bringing sleeping bags to lay under tables and in between the bookshelves. I spent numerous times living in the library for overnight group study sessions with classmates during finals week. The stress, anxiety, overloaded curriculum, and pressure we normalize in public school and higher education are toxic and dangerous for everyone involved, but particularly toxic for young children and young adults who are still developing their sense of self. They are exposed to the lie that their worth is determined by how much they can accomplish constantly, and it's reaffirmed and rewarded when they push their bodies to the limit to do well in classes. Many also begin to pour themselves into the life of perfectionism, which is a function of white supremacy. We internalize the toxic messages received from the culture and begin to hate ourselves unless we are accomplishing a task. We seek external validation from a violent system void of love. Dreaming and creating the space to dream is the remedy and the cure.

-Tricia Hersey, *Rest is Resistance*

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Anywhere you go in the world, you are likely to encounter some sort of public park. Parks are the genius of urban design because they

cut through class, race, and age—the park is for everyone. Frederick Law Olmsted, widely regarded as the father of landscape architecture in the United States and architect of famous parks such as Central Park in New York City, is famous for his transcendental philosophy concerning parks. In his view, they provided a "sense of enlarged freedom" to their visitors, promoting tranquility and rest to the mind (Fein, 1968). Hundreds of years later, studies in the field of environmental psychology support his ideas that he generated from observation and intuition. Spending time in nature can provide myriad health benefits and is known to be one of the most notable ways to reduce stress and anxiety (Warsh, 2020).

All Slow Study Abroad programs should spend some time in a park. This is a place for the group to rest, to recover, and to observe culture. *How do locals use the park? What are they doing, wearing, talking about? What does this reflect about who they are?*

I used to teach ESL to groups of international students in Boston, and on nice spring days I would take the group to the Boston Common to sit and observe their surroundings, with assignments designed to encourage them to engage with strangers and practice their English in an uncontrolled setting. In all honesty, I used to feel like those days were a waste of time, or a throwaway—we never got through as much of the curriculum as I had hoped, and it was hard to formally teach grammar out there—papers got blown around, students were distracted. Looking back on it, those were the fondest days of my teaching, and likely the most memorable days for my students. They were challenged to be brave and engage with locals. Beginner students would ask for directions, advanced students would prepare a short survey about American politics and engage with locals about their feelings on the newly elected President Trump. Slow Study Abroad involves creative uses of parks – because it's about rest, culture, and connection.

* * *

Social media. Everyone's favorite topic to blame when looking at the problems of today's society and modern college students. Does Slow Study Abroad encourage social media, phone use, technology? Yes - embracing technology and using it to stay connected is important. While I do believe that we should encourage social media breaks, Slow Study Abroad thoughtfully embraces the momentum of a powerful tool and encourages participants to use it wisely.

While I don't consider myself a "Luddite" as is commonly used in modern vernacular, I also am not denigrating the historic concept. Historic Luddites didn't just hate technology for no reason—they were textile workers in nineteenth-century England who fought for labor rights at a time when unions were severely repressed. Luddites were seen as heroes by rebelling against industrialization; Luddites rebelled against the way that the "Big Tech" of their era would claim that machines could replace humans, and then use that claim as a cudgel to keep workers in line (*Scientific American*, 2023). Sound familiar to modern times? In 2023, we saw Hollywood writers and actors on strike in part to prevent studios from using AI to pay them less. In San Francisco, activists have been putting cones on top of self-driving robotaxis.

Luddites are not the enemy; they are the revolutionaries that stand up for workers' rights in the same way that Slow Study Abroad challenges aspects of capitalism. Technology is also not necessarily the enemy, but the capitalistic values underpinning it that turn us into mere users and consumers (akin to addicts) are.

Let's encourage a healthy and creative use of technology on our programs – after all, we don't want to isolate our target audience. Buy your program a disposable camera and allow each student to take only one photo – and to think carefully about what they see and document.

(Dearest Reader, please check my references list to find that I am, indeed, citing a TikTok as a relevant and reliable piece of information for this paper, in which I have recommended that we do not design study abroad programs like TikToks and generally recommended the use of soft boundaries around social media use. "I am large, I contain multitudes," Walt Whitman, "Song of Myself")

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At dinner with colleagues in Barcelona, I lean over to my British colleagues and talk with them about business. The Spanish and Italian colleagues laugh and tell stories. And after a glass or two of wine, I realize I am not here just to be productive. I am here to learn what they need, what truly motivates them, who they are beyond their LinkedIn profile. I am here to sample tapas until 11pm. Slow Study Abroad starts to settle in.

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At the top of a mountain looking down at a view, you have no choice but to feel reflective, to have vision, to see more clearly the path you need to take to get to where you want to go.

We can seize the moment and recognize that it is unique without having every moment be a productive one. Seize the day means to reach, savor, and enjoy it.

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Montserrat is a famous destination for pilgrims on religious journeys to visit the Black Madonna. On my final day in Spain, I bought a ticket to see her, too. The line moved slowly through a side corridor of a church, in which everyone was silent. From there, we had a view across

the magnificent basilica where we could see people immersed in a certain ceremony - a wedding. Spaniards dressed up in their finest suits and floral dresses, a bride with a 12-foot veil and long sleeves stood proudly next to her groom. At this point in the line, I was standing 20 feet away from the couple and the ceremony, amazed at how close I was to this formal and yet intimate event. I desperately wanted to take a picture. This wedding – this place! This is the cultural experience I journeyed all this way for! Though I was itching to snap a picture, nobody around was taking pictures, they stood solemnly in line. I decided instead to climb the stairs, tracing my fingers over the small golden tiles that make up the mosaic images of saints, connecting physically with the cool walls of the basilica. By the time I made it to the top, "Ave Maria" was echoing from the organ, and a couple in front of me stopped and kissed the Black Madonna and looked upon her with their heads slightly bowed. When it was my turn, I suddenly found myself up in a window, on display in front of the entire church, looking down at the most beautiful scene I'd ever witnessed. This time I couldn't help myself—I took a picture. A clerk lunged at me—*no photos!* he barked and ushered me quickly away. My heart was pounding. Was the photo worth it? I followed the devout couple on, down the next set of stairs. The couple stopped at a basin of holy water and blessed themselves with the sign of the cross. I remembered this ritual from some churches I had visited as a child, and did the same, though I wondered if I was allowed to because I am not Catholic.

At the bottom of the stairs there were dozens of candles. Taking in this sight, I was immediately reminded of my grandmother, a Polish Catholic doctor who immigrated to the United States after WWII and died when I was four years old. She loved hosting parties with her European friends, and every time we went to visit for a holiday at her house, we'd be swept up in the same traditions: the cross, the water, the wafer. Recently, my parents transcribed some old VHS footage of her from

1986, and I was able to watch her on my iPhone—helping the kids with an Easter egg hunt, speaking with a thick accent. I had realized that I didn't know what my Baba's voice sounded like—and I was for some reason shocked that she had an accent, even though I knew she was born and raised in Poland. Standing here in the basilica in Montserrat, I swore I heard my grandmother's voice again. She would have loved this experience. I paid two euros and lit a candle for her. Standing there, holding that burning candle, I cried. I was neither particularly sad nor happy, just overwhelmed with the powerful tradition that reminded me so closely of my grandmother, a woman I barely knew but suddenly felt so close to. It felt like the tectonic plates pushing Montserrat up shifted an inch closer, pushing me upwards to her. Upon returning home, I showed my father a picture of this place and the candle I had lit for his late mother, and he in turn dug out an old photo album and showed me the same photo—a photo I had never seen before, one that my grandmother had taken at that very same place at Montserrat in her youth.

* * *

The pilgrim seeks answers, but you must first know your questions. My question in Spain was—how should we travel, and what is the best way to design experiences for today's students to travel, learn, and have fundamentally life-changing, earth-shattering experiences? On my pilgrimage, I searched for these answers. I worship at the altar of Slow Study Abroad. There are no gods in this faith – only the divine magic we all have within us, and the divine magic that is the spark of connection between people.

* * *

Pause – Reflect.

I believe if there's any kind of God it wouldn't be in any of us, not you or me but just this little space in between. If there's any kind of magic in this world it must be in the attempt of understanding someone sharing something. I know, it's almost impossible to succeed but who cares really? The answer must be in the attempt.

— Julie Delpy as Celine, *Before Sunrise and Before Sunset: Two Screenplays*, Richard Linklater

* * *

Slow Study Abroad is a sustainable approach to program design that centers mental health and wellness by focusing on reflection, appropriate pacing, and cross-cultural connections. It values quality over quantity, and privileges creativity over consumeristic production or consumption. It is achieved by strategically editing program inclusions, and intentionally including components designed to spark curiosity, creativity, connection, and cultural awareness. Slow Study Abroad programs harness the educational and healing properties of nature and community and prioritize the highest-impact activities by using the 80/20 rule. Slow Study Abroad encourages rest, carefully uses social media and technology, and collaborative projects.

Let's test this hypothesis, scientists, and make some beautiful art!

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RETHINKING ASSUMPTIONS IN EDUCATION ABROAD

Max Chappuis

CEA CAPA EDUCATION ABROAD

I'd like to begin by asking you to take a few minutes to plan a trip. A friend is visiting the United States for the first time. With only 10 days to spend in the U.S., they've asked you to guide them in seeing "the real America." How many sites did you include, and what was your top spot to visit? More importantly, why? What do you think others chose?

As you consider that, ask yourself also how we plan study abroad programs. We strive to give students authentic experiences, packing the "real" culture of a destination into limited time. We are forced to make value judgments on what is authentic and worthwhile. We take our perspective of what is available and what is appealing and put together programs we believe will recruit. In doing so, we at best offer an incomplete picture, and at worst reinforce the very stereotypes we hope studying abroad will challenge. We aim for cultural growth, faced with unavoidable choices that gatekeep the culture.

How can we design programs to encourage learning while allowing more open exploration of culture, without ascribing our own views of authenticity, and focusing on student interest and engagement?

I have a travel confession: On my one visit to China, I went to Disneyland, just as I did on my first trip to Paris. I hesitate to share this in professional spaces, as it often leads to a puzzled expression and a round of questions. Disney is the standard bearer of everything fictional and artificial—surely a confounding choice for someone engaged

in cultural study to spend their precious time abroad. Thankfully, I've grown more comfortable with the answers over time: I wanted to, and it gave me a basis to analyze something I know well in an unfamiliar cultural context. I find it informative to see how the model adapts, how audiences respond, and how the culture guides those changes.

So why would educators view this negatively? This is one example, but surely most have raised an eyebrow at how students spend their limited time abroad. I'm certainly guilty—ask me about Madam Tussauds. Reflecting on this, I realize I have often failed to give other interests the kind of consideration I give my own. In my desire to help students build a more expansive worldview, I project mine. A better approach would be helping to connect themes to their interests in the same ways I have explored. With some thought and creativity, we can engage with these students and inspire curiosity.

Turning to educational theory, Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development and the closely related Learning Zone framework can provide some guidance. The Zone of Proximal Development holds that individuals have tasks they can achieve independently, tasks they can achieve with help, and tasks they cannot (yet) achieve. The middle zone, tasks that can be achieved with help, is the zone of proximal development, a sweet spot for learning. It emphasizes the need for an experienced teacher or role model to make gains in this area (Main, 2021).

The Learning Zone framework is a popularized version of the Zone of Proximal Development. It states that individuals have a comfort zone, learning zone, and panic zone. Learning occurs when one goes beyond the comfort zone in a controlled and measured way so as to avoid crossing into the panic zone (Mind Tools, n.d.).

Education abroad programs and practitioners often apply the learning zone idea to environmental factors, taking steps to mitigate

culture shock and provide a stable foundation for students to grow. However, the learning zone leaves out the critical element of expert guidance. This risks a passive approach to educational outcomes. By nature of going abroad, the comfort zone will be left behind; the program model, duration, and other design factors will ensure the panic zone is avoided. This approach is tried and true, but it leaves unrealized potential for growth. Educators must embrace the necessity of guidance and take a more proactive role throughout the student experience, offering continued guidance on difference, empowering individuals to move beyond their comfort zones.

In part, this requires a critical look at the comfort zone and how educators can use a wider array of starting points to encourage learning. This can be achieved by appealing more to personal interests, using these to bring some familiarity to the subjects at hand. These interests can then serve to hold attention and provide a starting point, familiarity, as a basis for comparison. In many cases this can be accomplished with specific, specialized academics, such as a faculty directed program. A grounding in familiar topics, academic systems, and peers can serve as a mobile comfort zone, allowing more freedom to explore in other areas. In cases with broader course offerings, greater independence, and unfamiliar academic structures, we must provide opportunities to explore and compare in ways that resonate with students who have a variety of interests. This is where we must embrace activities beyond what is typical and look critically at the value of each.

Consider a comparison: a museum visit and a sports match (or concert, if you prefer). One is perhaps the most common inclusion on study abroad programs, with unquestioned educational value; the other a more occasional add-on, seen as fun but perhaps nothing more. What makes these different, though? Each is a lens on culture and history, in its way. Museums are curated, sharing information on each artifact and

exhibit so that we and our students can understand more deeply; however, engagement is limited to standing behind the ropes. The sports match is presented without comment but invites the crowd to be part of the experience. That is where educators must step in, guiding students to question and observe more critically.

Equipped with context to empower critical observation, attending an event may even lead to greater cultural insight. Students have a firsthand chance to observe people doing what they might do themselves back home. They can relate, connect, and contrast—drawing on familiarity as a comfort zone to learn something beyond it. They ask and answer their own questions. On the other hand, the curation of a museum provides answers based on the perspectives and experiences of the curators rather than the audience. Though these experts do incredible work to explain artifacts and connections, the questions and answers are provided rather than explored individually, driven by the audience's curiosity.

This additional learning potential is supported by the connection between emotion and memory: events are remembered longer and more accurately if they coincide with strong emotions, especially positive ones (Tyng et al., 2017). Studies have concluded that positive emotion aids especially in motivation and learning (Um et al., 2012). Confusion can also result in increased learning as individuals must alter their prior knowledge and future expectations to resolve it, building their own knowledge (D'Mello et al., 2014). The combination of these emotional experiences provides not only an excellent argument for education abroad as a whole but can also guide intentional elements of program design. The inclusion of experiences that can inspire positive emotions, and guiding students to navigate the confusion of that experience in a new context, can engage their curiosity more inclusively.

Even if we are able to engage students based on their interests, we still must consider the question of what is real and authentic. What destination should a program visit? What do we highlight for students? I believe that these selections are less important than our ability to become an experienced guide, providing context to help students beyond the comfort zone and encouraging the feelings that will help students form memorable insights.

When choosing locations, we try to remain conscious of the impact of travel, and authenticity of the experience on site. We wonder whether popular destinations demand less cultural understanding and growth. Of course, travel on a large scale changes places and cultures. If observation changes a thing, what must interaction do? A destination's popularity, whether for education, tourism, or business, cannot help but alter the destination itself.

To take one common example: is a popular, globalized, or crowded Florence less Italian? Only if one freezes in time the idea of what is Italian. Perceptions of a place tend to be rooted in significant historical moments, and these ideas are reinforced with each portrayal we see. For Florence, perhaps the typical American idea is of a step back in time to the Renaissance. That Florence does not exist—and likely never did—but its successor is no less authentic. The fabric of a place and its people as they exist now are worthy of exploration and understanding. Travel becomes part of the culture as well as a culture unto itself; within crowds, and often because of them, we can find and share important connections. Consider what inspired the location's initial popularity, and the new opportunities supported by having a broad appeal: more artisans can sell their work in busier markets, new restaurants can flourish, and more people gain exposure to historical knowledge—bringing it back home to share. This blurring of cultural lines—travelers and locals adopting ideas and behaviors from those we meet—may be seen

as strengthening connection, or as diluting unique cultures. We can embrace both possibilities as avenues for curiosity and opportunities for learning. The popularity can also be used in favor of cultural goals: the thrill of traveling to a destination that friends have visited before, that they have heard and dreamed of, can help students rise to the challenge of adaptation and culture shock.

When we consider inclusions, these same elements, and our ability to provide context, come to mind. Popular events can either reinforce stereotypes or encourage understanding. To draw students in based on their excitement and perceived familiarity opens a window to deeper understanding. For instance, an afternoon tea in London may be seen as an opportunity to experience English culture and enjoy a photogenic scone or sandwich. Left at that, it does little more than reaffirm assumptions. When paired with an explanation of the class dynamics and human cost of the tea and sugar trades that made it possible, the event can take on greater meaning. The surprise of this revelation can become a catalyst for challenging assumptions and looking deeper.

Returning to my own example, theme parks have become a worldwide cultural, economic, and political force. They offer fascinating case studies for engineering, art, supply chains, marketing, . . . the list goes on. As they are based on what will interest people and draw consistent crowds, theme parks reflect the culture of each location and, in doing so, become a part of the cultural context. They produce art, technology, and entertainment that appeals to the masses. Surely this is worth exploring if we seek understanding of the places and people we visit.

What is real, and what is authentic? Everything, equally. The museum showcases what experts want us to understand about their culture and history; the sporting match immerses us in a shared experience with thousands of people living within the culture. The small town with few tourists offers unique opportunities for language exchange

and a view on cultural context; the city that doubles in population each summer shows its cultural appeal and opens new subjects to study. Returning to our introduction, wherever you chose to showcase the real America, each experience is equally valid and each perspective meaningful. If we judge and exclude experiences that we deem less valuable, we keep students from connecting with different elements of culture and limit their growth. By keeping an open mind to less traditional inclusions and embracing more traditional locations, we open new avenues to learning.

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WHAT IS NOT WRITTEN: THE RHETORIC OF EDUCATION ABROAD

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Introduction

Education abroad has been touted as a life-changing experience to students all across the globe, a statement that many professionals in the field not only uphold but directly attribute to our own career path successes. However, the challenges education abroad professionals face have dramatically changed as the incoming student generation shifts. This shift in student needs, wants, and priorities has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and dramatic societal change in a short period of time. What can we as a field be doing to better address today's students in preparation for education abroad?

The field sees students pursuing educational opportunities abroad extending beyond simply the desire to travel. World politics, international risk and safety concerns, and more affect international travel, but it is how these factors are communicated—written, verbal, or visual—that convinces a student to travel or to remain home.

In our professional experiences, students have contacted our offices when their experience abroad is not what they believe they signed up for, when the rhetoric did not set proper expectations for the reality. For example, students often complain about their housing. The neighborhood, commute, and local amenities may not be what they envisioned from the rhetoric surrounding their experience. Challenges

to a student's assumptions and the images they have of a city, country, or culture based solely on social media posts and movies are among the many avenues by which the student undergoes growth when abroad. If every student complaint was validated every time, they would never experience the *real* London or the *real* Buenos Aires or whichever city they may be in. Students would only ever experience the vacation-perfect, photo-ready scene they had imagined before experiencing the reality of the world's cities and cultures. These images, which infiltrate the students' expectations, come from our own marketing and promotional materials—the rhetoric we use to raise enrollment numbers.

There have been numerous incidents in which students quote specific passages from written rhetoric to show examples as to why they are deserving of some sort of apology or compensation to make up for the misleading nature of the rhetoric. However, more often than not, we see this skill of critical review of marketing and recruitment materials only in action when students want some sort of financial compensation for the failure of the institution or education abroad provider to describe the experience accurately. This is an exemplary case of how important the rhetoric is to the student and why an intense review of it is warranted.

The rhetoric that convinces a student to commit to an education abroad program is paramount. Rhetoric can persuade a student to open a brochure for a school on the other side of the world or walk into their international education office. However, once a student commits to an education abroad program, the reality of living and studying in a different cultural context can bring difficulties and challenges. We intend to demonstrate that the rhetoric does not fully capture the challenges of education abroad and that overcoming these challenges can lead to transformative experiences.

It is important to acknowledge that there are many variables that impact a student's decision to travel on an education abroad program. Some recurring, common factors are finances, alignment with their academic career, and the fear of missing out. We do not think that a single word or phrase will completely convince a student to commit to spending thousands of dollars on a program, but we do believe that the rhetoric and language used around education abroad can positively influence them to join a program. It is important for a student to discuss with their advisor, friends, or family to determine whether education abroad is appropriate for them.

Rhetoric

As practitioners, we are all too familiar with the rhetoric of education abroad. Schools and providers alike promote it as "an incredible opportunity to travel, explore and broaden your experience and perspectives," and "a once in a lifetime opportunity" (University of Colorado Boulder, 2023). We say it every day to students, parents, faculty, and staff when promoting our programs, as well as to our family and friends when asked what we do for work. We put it on our websites, brochures, and promotional materials. Certainly, rhetoric is a marketing tool, but we also mean it and believe deeply in the mission of education abroad, whether that be an official stated mission of our institutions and organizations—for example, CEA CAPA's newly published mission is "empowering students to become thoughtful and thriving leaders through living and learning abroad"—or a more personal call to action. Between the promotional and personal aims, and the stories shared by study abroad students, the rhetoric is repeated and constant.

On campus, study abroad rhetoric is everywhere. The most obvious place to start is the study abroad office. The Learning Abroad Center (LAC) at the University of Minnesota (UMN), for example, shares

Instagram posts with captions that highlight education abroad as a "lifetime of memories" and "the best experience of my life" (Learning Abroad Center, 2023). Arizona State University notes on their Global Education Office's website that

> The benefits of participating in a Global Education program are endless and only enrich your experience as a Sun Devil. Stand out from the crowd once you graduate by adding global education to your resume and demonstrate you can thrive in a global and diverse environment (ASU Global Education Office, n.d.: n.p.).

However, the rhetoric goes beyond just the study abroad office. Universities weave the values of international education into their mission and vision statements. UMN's mission statement includes:

> The University of Minnesota, founded in the belief that all people are enriched by understanding, is dedicated to the advancement of learning and the search for truth; to the sharing of this knowledge through education for a diverse community; and to the application of this knowledge to benefit the people of the state, the nation, and the world (Regents of the University of Minnesota, 2008: n.p.).

Included in its Mission and Vision statement, the University of Pittsburgh states its goals to "offer superior graduate programs in the arts and sciences and the professions that respond to the needs of Pennsylvania, as well as to the broader needs of the nation and the world," and to "contribute to social, intellectual, and economic development in the Commonwealth, the nation, and the world" (University of Pittsburgh, n.d.a: n.p.). These core values and goals do not just overlap with the mission of education abroad; they directly embody them.

Providers share similar rhetoric and often help to personalize and directly create much of the rhetoric promoted by their partner universities. CIEE tells prospective students on their website that "the benefits of studying abroad impact each and every part of your life" and that through education abroad students will "make lifelong connections, gain a competitive edge, and become their best self" (CIEE, 2023: n.p.). At CEA CAPA, our language is no different and directly correlates to the language used by universities. We promote our mission of "empowering students to become thoughtful and thriving leaders through living and learning abroad" (CEA CAPA, 2023b: n.p.). Our website goes on to state that "as one organization, CEA CAPA Education Abroad, we are better preparing students to live, work, and thrive in a globally interdependent and diverse world" (CEA CAPA, 2023a: n.p.). You may have noticed these statements all start to sound alike, which is because they're all different ways of framing the same goals and values that motivate each of us to work in international education. Students receive this messaging repeatedly from promotional materials, providers, the study abroad office and advisors, and across their university.

It's not just the providers and universities though; students are also inundated with the rhetoric of education abroad from their peers. Students generate significant content for providers and their home institutions, serving as program ambassadors, participating in social media takeovers, and providing testimonials. The University of Pittsburgh includes featured testimonials on their Global Experiences website: "My study abroad experience has been extremely beneficial to my career. I talk about it all the time. My clinical experience in India has allowed me to share and learn healthcare disparities and from firsthand experiences" (University of Pittsburgh, n.d.b: n.p.). Program provider CET has a section front and center on their website for student voices featuring quotes from students that praise the value of education abroad:

This was my first time abroad and it really opened my eyes
to the scale of the world and the different cultures within it.
It has also given me so many experiences that I will cherish
and remember for the rest of my life. I will remember not only
the wonderful and amazing students that I have been able
to meet, but also the amazing teachers and staff that have
looked out for not only me, but for the other students as well
(CET Academic Programs, 2023: n.p.).

The quotes published online do not even begin to cover the sto-
ries shared in the cafeteria, pictures posted on personal Instagram
accounts, and TikToks filmed while living abroad.

Realities

Students are pummeled with examples of grandiose results for
participating in an Education Abroad experience. Language like the above
exists across the field of international education. If the rhetoric all leads to
grand, life-changing experiences, then a person may think, "If I go abroad,
I will gain what the rhetoric says," but how true is that? This section will
explore a few examples of the reality related to written rhetoric.

Education abroad is touted as "a once in a lifetime opportu-
nity" (University of Colorado Boulder, 2023: n.p.). How do institutions
guarantee once in a lifetime opportunities? Simply being in a foreign
country does not guarantee intercultural learning. NAFSA shares that
mere exposure to a culture does not guarantee intercultural learning.
Exposure is, of course, the first step, but "what students choose to do
with that exposure is paramount" (NAFSA, n.d.: n.p.). One method is
to develop interventions that take students out of the classroom and
into contexts that may challenge their current understandings of the
world. Both the higher education institutions and education abroad

providers work to develop such learning activities. These could be in the form of guided tours that share the history of the location or of providing entrances to historical cultural sites. The caveat is that the student has to attend and engage with the intervention. Many of these interventions are promoted to the students as a voluntary activity, so it is the student's responsibility to take the initiative to participate. Some programs may have big groups of students, which can make it difficult to have meaningful discussions with each student on a personal level. The rhetoric for these learning interventions often glorifies the attractive elements of the education abroad program to entice the students to join, while avoiding language which explains that the intervention is meant to deepen understandings and challenge assumptions.

Another important step to obtaining the desirable outcomes stated from the written rhetoric is for the students to understand that the learning isn't exclusive to their time abroad. When the student returns home, they have the opportunity to incorporate their learnings from abroad to their prior ones. This period or return is an incredible learning opportunity, but similarly to the contact theory, if there is no appropriate support to the student's learning, they may miss this learning opportunity (Wayland, 2015). Upon reentry, students will be exposed to their familiar, perhaps comfortable, home culture while still having fresh memories of their experiences abroad—experiences that may come into conflict with their previous biases. Mezirow (1997) explains that for transformative learning to occur, students must have awareness of their own assumptions and then reflect on their new experiences. While some universities have begun implementing some small-scale reentry programming, this has not been a major focus in the field as far as research goes. Conducting content analysis of reentry materials, along with longitudinal studies to assess the impact of such materials and

programming, could provide opportunities to enhance knowledge and awareness of arguably the most significant learning stage for an education abroad program.

What seems to be consistently missing from the rhetoric is an explanation that to obtain these life changing opportunities, it is the students that need to take the initiative toward them. Learning interventions are designed specifically for them to gain intercultural experiences but if they do not participate, the interventions will not work. Rhetoric such as "contribute to the social, intellectual, and economic development in the Commonwealth, the nation, and the world" (University of Pittsburgh, n.d.b.: n.p.) may lead a student to see a result of their time abroad as being able to move the world, which may be true if they take advantage of the interventions provided to them while abroad and then integrate their experiences when they return home.

International educators need to do the work to even the gap between strong marketing and responsible informing in the promotion of education abroad. The rhetoric currently in practice has proven very successful in encouraging students to travel abroad. What it fails to do well is accurately prepare today's students to get the most out of that experience abroad. What we challenge the field to do is to enhance our rhetoric to showcase more of the realities of study abroad. Studying abroad is not a simple task that leads to world-changing skills. It takes hard work, effort, and often significant discomfort and struggle on the part of the student. Sharing with students how to gain these life-changing experiences may set expectations for students to be better prepared to take advantage of all the learning interventions provided to them.

Discussion and Suggestions

The rhetoric—written, verbal, or visual—is critical to keeping education abroad alive. We offer critiques and suggestions on how to

enhance the rhetoric to better inform and positively impact the students, and therefore the field, as a whole. We believe that there is room for significant improvement to the rhetoric in relation to reentry programming, the discussion of mental health while abroad, and the real student experience.

Reentry, Rhetoric, Reality

If we take a different perspective toward the rhetoric and reality of education abroad, what may present itself is a solution to narrowing the gap between the two. Instead of the current common rhetoric, which touts extravagant places and world-moving learnings, the rhetoric could have a foundation of real student experiences abroad—the good and the bad, the easy and difficult. Simply collecting real stories from returning students may not be enough, but creating interventions that lead students toward transformational learning could be a key part of lessening the divide between rhetoric and reality.

Reentry programming can lessen the divide, but it requires intentional and well-thought-out interventions. Student blog posts or other testimonials written while participating in a program and in the time afterward create opportunities for the student to reflect on their experiences abroad. This reflection can serve as a reentry activity, but it can also serve as resources of more reality-based rhetoric for prospective students.

Using those blog posts and testimonials showcase the student voices and is something already being done by universities and providers, including CEA CAPA. While this does serve as promotional material, it also offers a rare opportunity to show the realities of study abroad directly from the point of view of program participants. While the bulk of the CEA CAPA world blog highlights the positive experiences students have abroad, it also serves as an opportunity for open and honest reflection about their struggles and growth. One student studying

abroad in Sydney noted, "I've gotten lost more times than I can count, had an existential crisis while grocery shopping and spent an absurd amount of money eating out. I was nowhere near prepared for the cost of living in such an expensive city" (Ritz, 2023: n.p.). Another student shares with readers to "expect some of the most formative days of your life, but don't lose sight of the trials of reality. In my experience, that is one of the hardest challenges I faced: reality. My new reality consisted of loneliness, missing out on trips back home, budgeting, and resting" (CEA CAPA, 2022: n.p.). These honest reflections should be utilized more in advising students preparing to go abroad to help create appropriate expectations that education abroad will indeed have the potential to be life changing as promised, but also challenging.

These blog posts are truthful about the struggles students faced while abroad, but also show that these struggles were opportunities for tremendous individual growth—one of the quintessential elements of study abroad as noted in the rhetoric above. A student who studied in London reflected,

> I realize that every difficult situation I experienced in London enhanced my problem-solving skills and now I'm more resilient. Navigating public transportation, interacting with various cultures, and handling unexpected problems all contributed to me adapting to my surroundings. I learned from these experiences that these aren't obstacles, but instead chances to develop and improve my independence (Gawin, 2023: n.p.).

Typically, these reflections come for students who are particularly energized about their experience or otherwise incentivized to create them. At CEA CAPA, for example, students may apply for competitive Content Creator grants. It is critical to also highlight studies from students who aren't necessarily the most enthusiastic on their program or padding their resume or bank account by sharing their experiences.

These alumni statements are important but may be surface level. One suggestion is for students to engage in organized, facilitated reflections after their program. Reflection during the program can help students process experiences abroad in real time, but they can also serve as an anchor for the student to reflect back on when they return home. Facilitated interventions based on post-program reflections provide the opportunity for students to reframe the memory of a difficult or challenging experience to one that reminds the student of the growth and personal development they underwent while abroad—changing a negative memory into a positive one. Thus, when the student shares their difficult or hard experience abroad, it shows how they overcame it, sharing a new reality with other students.

Another possible reentry intervention could be to create opportunities for reflection well beyond the initial reentry period. Universities and program providers could offer alumni opportunities to reflect on their experience and how it has impacted them and shaped their lives since returning 5, 10, even 15 years out from their program. Alumni could contribute to blog posts, sit on panels, and do informational sessions with prospective students. This would allow students to see the potential impact of a program on their lives, careers, and values far into the future and allow the alumni to share reflections that may not have percolated upon their initial return. Furthermore, alumni may feel more comfortable being transparent about their experience as they are likely to be no longer directly affiliated with the program or school in the same way as a student who just returned from abroad. Overall if the programs are going to be framed as "life-changing," the best way for a prospective student to see that in action is to allow those alumni to reflect further after living more of their lives.

Mental Health

Another critical area that the current rhetoric fails to address well is mental health. According to the American Psychological Association (APA), "by nearly every metric, student mental health is worsening," with over 60% of all U.S. college students meeting criteria for one or more mental health conditions in the 2020–2021 academic year, as well as a notable increase in demand for support services in the years prior to the onset of the pandemic (Abrams, 2022). While many universities and providers have increased mental health resources both in pre-departure and abroad, many students arrive on site unprepared for the impact being abroad can have on any existing mental health conditions. Much of this can be attributed to the substantial change in their daily routine and the cultural adjustment period, which they will eventually overcome as they acclimate. For some students, mental health can not only impede their ability to thrive abroad, but studying abroad may actively exacerbate an existing issue. It is important that as a field we not only better articulate the resources available to students grappling with poor mental health but also paint a very clear picture of the impact education abroad can have on mental health. While we certainly want to promote education abroad to as many students as possible, it is important to recognize that not every individual is in the right place to have that experience at that moment in their life.

To better serve prospective students, universities and providers should go beyond sharing guidance on mental health resources and work to highlight the realities from both a student and professional perspective. Student blog posts as well as in-person panels—both written while on programs and as alumni—can help depict the struggles students face while abroad, as noted above. Students who feel comfortable sharing their personal experience working with the provided support services could give students a more accurate understanding

of what it's like working with a new therapist while overseas, treating ongoing conditions or receiving a new diagnosis while away from home, and working with their pre-existing support systems from a distance. Showcasing insight from mental healthcare professionals is of equal importance to help students grasp how critical the role their mental wellbeing will play while abroad. The message needs to be that, if you're struggling at home, education abroad is not going to eliminate this struggle. Education abroad cannot magically resolve one's mental state and, for many, can serve as an added stressor to ongoing issues or issues that may have been considered under control at home. We do not advocate that students should be excluded from education abroad due to their mental health but rather argue they must have a strong enough grasp of the realities of mental health abroad to make a properly informed decision.

Conclusion

We do not suggest that we put every student who enjoyed their experience abroad against every student who did not, but we believe that students need to hear a variety of voices and experiences to be truly informed prior to studying abroad. In some ways, by not sharing the "bad" experiences, the field is silencing those student voices, which leads to not fully advising students on the reality of education abroad. Those stories of "bad" experiences should be met with empathy but also constructive discourse. Every positive or negative experience can be a transformative learning opportunity as long as there are appropriate interventions to help the student reflect and integrate the experience into their current knowledge and understanding.

By better preparing students for their time abroad, we position them to gain the most from their experience and to allow that experience to live up to the rhetoric of being life-changing. By doing that, we

also become more aligned with our mission as international education professionals, and even make our jobs a bit easier in the process. We challenge the field to find not only those stories that glorify education abroad but also those stories that challenge it. Just as we expect and hope the students have a transformational learning experience, the education abroad field should challenge itself and take on transformation as well.

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SECTION THREE:

How I See It: Values and Education Abroad

Drawing upon personal experience, authors in this section seek to explore the values that motivate their engagement with the field. The essays remind us that at the root of our endeavors, we have to ask not just how we do things, but why. Furthermore, the personal stories told in this section speak to ideals that are sometimes lost in the pressures of daily imperatives. Finally, education abroad is motivated by values that challenge dominant narratives.

> *Hold fast to dreams*
>
> *For if dreams die*
>
> *Life is a broken-winged bird*
>
> *That cannot fly.*
>
> *Hold fast to dreams*
>
> *For when dreams go*
>
> *Life is a barren field*
>
> *Frozen with snow.*
>
> -Langston Hughes, "Dreams"

REVIEWING THE SITUATION: I THINK I'D BETTER THINK IT OUT AGAIN!

Michael Woolf

CEA CAPA EDUCATION ABROAD

Introduction: Research—A Confession

To steal ideas from one person is plagiarism; to steal from many is research.

 - Steven Wright

If you steal from one author it's plagiarism; if you steal from many it's research.

 - Wilson Mitzner

This approach to research, variously attributed to Steven Wright and Wilson Mitzner,[17] resonates with my own sense that scholastic inquiry in education abroad is primarily designed to give credence to long-held convictions. There are, of course, dedicated colleagues who do not begin their ruminations with the conclusion, and, to them, I apologize for my flippancy.

In my own work, I have scrupulously avoided data on the grounds that it gets in the way of opinion. However, I am much impressed by those colleagues who grasp concepts of statistical variables. Definitions such as this in *The Sociology Index*, "The term variable refers to that which varies,"[18] offer little by way of illumination. I am also flummoxed

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17 Steven Wright (born 1955) is an American comedian, actor, and wise man. His relationship with numeracy is refreshingly problematic: "Five out of four people have trouble with fractions." Wilson Mitzner (1876–1933) was an American playwright and raconteur. He famously offered excellent advice, such as: "Be nice to people on your way up because you'll meet them on your way down."
18 http://sociologyindex.com/variables.htm

by standard deviation, at least in statistical contexts. *Statista* offers a "simplified" explanation:

> The standard deviation is calculated using the square root of the variance. The symbol of the standard deviation of a random variable is "σ" and the symbol for a sample is "s.". [*sic*] The standard deviation is always represented by the same unit of measurement as the variable in question. This simplifies the interpretation of the standard deviation (Statista, n.d.: n.p.).

Thus, I tend to avoid formulae along the lines of r = .815.

As a consequence, I have not interviewed the standard 10 to 15 students. Even accounting for variances (r = .815), about 50% of students will try to tell you what they think you want them to say. Others, with an admirable sense of resistance, seek to do the opposite. The remainder will keep their opinions to themselves on the sensible grounds that what they think is their own business.

Nevertheless, it is in our genes to wish to probe into students' consciousness. Assessment is no longer a matter of simple knowledge or skills acquisition. Examinations and essays are now incidental in the process. What we really want to know is the degree to which students' attitudes and opinions align with the orthodoxies of education abroad. In short, have they been taught to agree with their teachers?

What Do We Want to Prove?

Of course, assessment methodologies depend upon what you wish to prove. The Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) is widely employed, a sophisticated tool that offers a spectrum of approved consciousness. It measures a student's progress from denial through polarization, acceptance, to a final stage of grace, blessed by their teachers: adaptation. En route, students stumble from polarization to pass through minimization. I intend no particular criticism; IDI is one of many tests, brought in or developed locally, aimed at proving that students can be indoctrinated to think the same as their elders.

IDI starts with an unexamined assumption that "intercultural" is particularly relevant to education abroad. This is a concept deeply embedded in practice and theory even though what we do is take students from country *a* to country *b*, and countries do not, of course, align with cultures. In passing, we might note that ultranationalists and international educators are the only two groups who appear to believe that national boundaries define cultures. Thus, intercultural contamination and intercultural communication are two sides of the same unfortunate coin.

Along IDI's version of the yellow brick road, instead of encountering the surprising straw man, the cowardly lion, and the tin man, students may wander into an imperfect state of consciousness called "minimization." This is the condition of mind in which differences between peoples matter less than similarities. As students aspire to the wisdom of their elders, the assumption is that they will grow past those cosmopolitan ideals reflected, for example, in the notion of the human family (U.N. Declaration of Human Rights, 1948).[19] That humanity is

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19 "Recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world..." (United Nations, n.d.: n.p.).

an interconnected family is a profoundly moral, fragile position that, as history continues to demonstrate, offers no protection against hate.

Nevertheless, variations of this moral assertion permeate the thoughts of visionaries such as Christ, Gandhi, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. It is also found in much religious teaching: "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with saints, and of the household of God" (St Paul's Epistle to Philemon 2:4 [KJV]), and "Hatred does not cease by hatred, but only by love; this is the eternal rule" (The Buddha).

As students move along the spectrum of consciousness envisaged by IDI, they will cast off these delusions to discover that we are, after all, each separated from each. IDI measures this progress.

"Bewilderment" is rarely measured in research on outcomes of education abroad, but it offers an approach and a methodology that aligns with my suspicion that things may either be true or untrue, and, at the same time untrue and true. Thus, I have taken as my guiding text, and the inspiration for the title of this volume, Fagin's troubled introspection, questions without answers, as sung by Ron Moody in the musical *Oliver!* (1968)[20]:

> A man's got a heart, hasn't he?
>
> Joking apart, hasn't he?
>
> And tho' I'd be the first one to say that I wasn't a saint
>
> I'm finding it hard to be really as black as they paint
>
> I'm reviewing the situation
>
> Can a fellow be a villain all his life?
>
> All the trials and tribulations!

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20 As a Jew, I am aware of the stereotypical representation in the figure of Fagin. In the context of this discussion, it suits me not to worry too much about this. I'll worry about it somewhere else.

I think I'd better think it out again!

And I'm starting from now

So "how to win friends and to influence people"

So how?

I'm reviewing the situation,

I must quickly look up ev'ryone I know.

Who do I know? Nobody!

So at my time of life

I should start turning over new leaves?

I'm reviewing the situation.

I think I'd better think it out again!

Fagin first appeared in Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist* (1838). He was the trainer and organizer of a gang of young pickpockets in Victorian London. Changing circumstances beset Fagin's profession. In 1829, Sir Robert Peel established the first professional police force in the city. Progressive improvements in gas light technology illuminated the dark corners conducive to illicit activity. Under pressure from philanthropic souls, the government began to take some interest in the condition of impoverished children. Those conditions generate his uneasy awareness of the need to revise and review practices and principles.

Education abroad hopefully does not have much in common with the criminal exploitation of the young, but it too has entered an age of uncertainty. From within and without, attitudes and environments have shifted by intention, accident, and political alterations. Reviewing the situation is overdue. Fagin's methodology offers an excellent model for the following discussions. In an age of uncertainty, questions rather than answers—agnosticism rather than faith—are positions that may allow us to avoid the temptations of simplification.

Where Does It Fit? What Does It Do?

Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts. Broad, wholesome, charitable views of men and things cannot be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one's lifetime.

     - Mark Twain, The Innocents Abroad (1869)

"Education abroad" is necessarily and directly linked with the prevailing concerns, priorities, and possibilities of higher education in the U.S. It is, in our common usage, a nationally specific version of international education in which American university students go abroad to study for limited durations. The courses they take have to be of equivalent value to those at home, worthy of credit, so that the overall duration of study is not extended.

In contrast, "international education" as used in this discussion, encompasses a wider variety of models and activities involving students and institutions from across the world. These may include students matriculating at overseas universities, joint degrees, exported campuses, English language training, transnational faculty research, etc. Another major distinction is that the American model of education abroad is motivated by student demand and institutional priorities, including commercial potential. There is no significant national policy in U.S. higher education but rather a *laissez-faire* approach. In contrast, the evolution of European international education has been driven by government initiatives as manifest in the Bologna Declaration (1999) and further demonstrated by the idea of a European Higher Education Area.[21] Student mobility may also be seen as a form of diplomacy. Thus, in the former Soviet Union, scholarships directed towards African stu-

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21 The range and scope of these government driven initiatives is illustrated by https://ehea.info.

dents were intended to create a future leadership sympathetic to Soviet ideologies. There is, then, a spectrum along which international education functions that ranges from a tool of government policy to a matter of individual choice.

In the U.S. model, there is an obvious intimacy, implicitly or explicitly, between sending organizations and institutions abroad that serve their needs. This manifestation of international student mobility, the preoccupation of our sector, nevertheless represents a very small part of transnational movements. Disregarding the impact of COVID-19, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, somewhere around four-million-plus students a year are customarily abroad for educational purposes (OECD, 2013). Education abroad students have never represented as much as 10% of that total.

That is not to suggest that what we do does not matter but that it matters in a specific context. One consequence is that the assumptions and ideologies generated by U.S. education abroad may not be as universally relevant as we sometimes assume. In a broader context, this also demonstrates the power of the American voice to shape much of the current discourse.

The concept of comprehensive internationalization needs to be seen through these lenses. It came out of Washington D.C., specifically from NAFSA,[22] was endorsed by the American Council on Education,[23] and was posited as a measure of international institutional quality. However well intentioned, the ideal makes assumptions about the function, capacity, and mission of universities across the world. The export

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22 See for example: https://www.nafsa.org/sites/default/files/media/document/comprehensive-strategic-izn-introduction.pdf
23 See for example: https://www.acenet.edu/Research-Insights/Pages/Internationalization/CIGE-Model-for-Comprehensive-Internationalization.aspx

of American standards as a model to which all institutions should aspire represents, at an obvious level, a form of quasi-colonialism.

This was the theme explored by the Indian scholar Kalyani Unkule in *Internationalising the University: A Spiritual Approach* (2019). Revisiting this theme, she argues for an approach that decentralizes western priorities:

> I call on us to roundly jettison a superficial and instrumental view of intercultural competence which essentializes and stereotypes other cultures (and to the critical mind smacks of a deep-seated coloniality). I remind us that nurturing a pluriversal knowledge commons requires first and foremost that we take the trusteeship of our local particulars seriously, put to rest those tired associations of "global" which no longer serve us, and open up our practices to be suffused with the eccentricities of the glocal (Unkule, 2021a).

If the decolonization of higher education is to be a significant process, it must go beyond revision of curriculum to look at fundamental functions and purposes rather than some universal measure of quality. Internationalization, however this is envisaged, establishes priorities drawn from American and Western higher education that have filtered through to institutions in the Global South. At a most obvious level, the impact of international ratings has been a tool, intended or otherwise, for the propagation of values rooted in the Global North.

The Indian philosopher Rabindranath Tagore noted that "the promise that offering knowledge to the learner as stepping stones to status and power was akin to bribery" (as cited in Unkule, 2021b: 66). In his essay "An Eastern University," Tagore offers another ironic perspective:

> But unfortunately, education conducted under a special providence of purposefulness, of eating the fruit of knowledge

from the wrong end, does lead one to that special paradise on earth, the daily rides in one's own carriage and pair. And the West, I have heard from authentic sources, is aspiring in its education after that special cultivation of worldliness (as cited in Unkule, 2021b: 66).[24]

Keshia Abraham identifies a similar alignment between Western notions of internationalization and globalization with colonialism and unequal power relations. A dominant discourse depends upon exclusion and marginalization:

> Europe was at the center of this discourse and there were no mentions of Africa, Latin America, or the Caribbean, or the work of any scholars of color who have contributed to this field, as if globalization could have happened without colonization. The examples presented were all centered on how white men of power worked within systems of commerce and international engagement as if these were the only people and the only places involved in, or impacted by, globalization, and as if only these men had written about or imagined it. Each of the presentations we heard, and all the texts we were given to read in preparation, framed the world in such a way that I had no place in it and seemed to suggest that how I came to be was somehow far outside of the imagination of globalization (Abraham, 2022: 261).

There is then something of a paradox. While American education abroad represents less than 10% of global student mobility, the influence of its ideologies goes deeper and further than the relative numbers might suggest. In particular, a collocation of ideas of globalization

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24 The full essay is available online at: http://tagoreweb.in/Render/ShowContent. aspx?ct=Essays&bi=72EE92F5-BE50-40D7-AE6E-0F7410664DA3&ti=72EE92F5-BE50-4A47-DE6E-0F7410664DA3

and internationalization establishes an agenda and a measure of quality that is both influential and inappropriate in higher education in other parts of the globe. I see no reason to alter the opinion I offered in 2021: "In education abroad, American values and perspectives are privileged by, among other mechanisms, soft power, wealth, quality criteria, and the dominance of the English language. Standards to which others need to adjust are made in America" (Woolf, 2021: 196). At the very least, this is a situation that invites substantial review. Who is part of our conversation and who is missing?

Who is Missing? What's Included?

Some racisms seem to be thought of as more important – more troubling, more in need of being shut down than others. . . a hierarchy of racisms.

- David Baddiel, *Jews Don't Count* (2021)

The scorn and ridicule the nation has heaped on poor Southern Whites, the only ethnic group in America not permitted to have a history.

- Dennis Covington, *Salvation on Sand Mountain* (2009)

The various agendas of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) sometimes known as justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI) have had significant impacts upon education abroad objectives in the U.S. and on the ways in which foreign partners engage. From U.S. institutional perspectives, the important intent is to broaden the base of participation; overseas partners are made aware of the alterations they may need to make to create more inclusive environments.

These are unarguably significant objectives. Simply put, if you believe that education abroad is beneficial to students, it follows that

you would want more students to benefit. The underrepresentation of certain students is a problem that needs attention. Despite some sense of progress, the reality is that African American students, for example, still represent no more than circa 6% of the total participants.[25]

That said, DEI has been subject to criticism from political voices, mostly from the right. Vulnerability to these critiques is a product of an inherent weakness in the manner in which inclusivity has been constructed. For the most part, the focus, with reason, has been upon African American students. There have been nods in the direction of LGBTQ+ groups, but other factors including class, religion, region, discipline are rarely addressed. Christian and military colleges are for the most part invisible. Ironically, inclusion is largely exclusive. A consequence is that well-intentioned endeavors are open to attack from political interests inhospitable to progressive agendas. A broader, more inclusive and diverse approach, would have enabled a more coherent defense based upon a commitment to those unconsidered and underrepresented in education abroad. An unintended implication is that proponents of DEI are either unaware of, or indifferent to, broader questions of inequity in American society.

Furthermore, the current exclusive focus demonstrates an unconsciousness of conditions beyond the U.S. International educators are myopic regarding the diversity that students will encounter abroad. There is an intellectual fragility in the assumption that the conditions in the U.S. are universally significant. The lens of race will not bring clarity in the context of many of the realities encountered elsewhere.

There are, then, fractures in the coherence of DEI. The first is an assumption that domestic bifurcations are of equal significance

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25 These figures and others related to this discussion are found in the Institute of International Education's annual *Open Doors* Report. See: https://opendoorsdata.org

beyond the borders of the U.S. At the same time, the complex nature of inequities within the U.S. receive little attention. A failure to explore and analyze the complexities of diversity at home and abroad is narrowly parochial.

What would a real commitment to inclusivity and diversity look like? It would be broad enough to encompass underrepresented and marginalized groups in the U.S. regardless of their perceived political identities. It would also be international in scope and commit to teaching students that diversity in other countries and regions does not necessarily conform to domestic realities.

Current agendas, built upon the best of intentions, are, in short, too narrow.

Where Did Class Go?

They say in Harlan County

There are no neutrals there

You'll either be a union man

Or a thug for J. H. Blair

Will you be a lousy scab

Or will you be a man?

Don't scab for the bosses

Don't listen to their lies

Us poor folks haven't got a chance

Unless we organize

- Florence Reece, "Which Side Are You On?" (1931)

Largely missing from DEI narratives is the question of class as a determinant of privilege and inequity. There is, indeed, little enthusiasm

for discussions of class in the broader context of American society. A dominant national myth is that of an egalitarian, classless society that inevitably obscures historical evidence and contemporary social and economic distinctions.

Much labor history has disappeared from American narratives. Mother Jones's contribution to that history has faded. The lives of individuals such as Samuel Gompers (1850–1924), founder and president of the American Federation of Labor; Eugene Debs (1855–1926), a founding member of the Industrial Workers of the World; and Joe Hill (1879–1915), songwriter and martyred activist have disappeared into a miasma of obscurity, as indeed have organizations such as the International Workers of the World known as Wobblies (IWW). At the height of its influence in the first decades of the twentieth century, IWW membership was estimated at more than 150,000.

The Battle of Blair Mountain (1921) was the largest military struggle on U.S. soil outside of the Civil War and is relatively unknown. Its roots were in the struggles of exploited workers in the Appalachian coalfields:

> The largest example of class war in U.S. history. It was fought over the course of five days in 1921 by 10,000 coal miners. The coal miners were rebelling against inhumane conditions in the West Virginia coalfields. The region led the nation in mine fatalities and the coal companies controlled almost every aspect of mining families' lives. The miners had attempted to unionize for decades, but were constantly blocked by a corrupt political system, brutal intimidation for organizers, and other forms of harassment such as blacklisting where union sympathizers were barred from working in the region (Nida, 2015).

What was "the largest armed uprising since the Civil War" (Andrews, 2018) is barely visible in mainstream American histories.

"Redneck" offers another example of a term divorced from its roots in labor history. It has become invested with negative characteristics, a mark of primitive, rural stupidity. In practice, it emerged out of the miners' struggle to unionize in the early 1920s, as described by Robert Shogan: "Most took to wearing blue bib overalls and tying around their necks a red bandana, which soon became the hallmark of the insurgent army, leading both friends and foes to refer to them as 'rednecks'" (Shogan, 2004: 169).

"Redneck" thus symbolized union radicalism and collective endeavor:

> In 1921, black, white and immigrant mineworkers took up arms to battle the coal companies that controlled and exploited every aspect of their lives. United, they wore red bandannas to identify each other in battle. They called themselves the "Redneck Army" (Stephen et al., 2018).

Labor conflict is not limited to a distant past. Implications of the Harlan County Mine Wars persisted until 2019.[26]

Mainstream versions of American myth and history rarely encompass narratives of striking miners at war with agents of corporate capitalism. Outside of exceptional historians, such as Howard Zinn and Nancy Isenberg, the significance of class in the evolution of American reality is mostly buried beneath dominant notions of egalitarian meritocracies. The highly influential novels of Horatio Alger (1832–1899)

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26 There are many other industrial sectors in which labor and employer clashes have had significant impact without substantially impacting the idea of a classless society. See, for example, Desilver (2024).

exemplify popular myth through formulaic tales of young boys' journeys from poverty to wealth.[27]

The conflicts that are represented in mainstream American history reflect nation building, the preservation of the Union, dynamics of manifest destiny, and the African American struggle for civil rights. The significance of class is buried beneath layers of amnesia.

One consequence in education abroad is that students are rarely sensitive to the nuances of class distinction abroad because they are relatively unaware of these factors at home, or as dynamic factors in their own identity. Of course, this is a large generalization and there are certainly students who are conscious of the impact of their origins. At the same time, however, the stories that permeate ideas of America are, unlike those of the United Kingdom, for example, more likely to reflect dynamics and divisions other than those manifest in labor history.

To engage with foreign realities, students may first need to understand that privilege is, in the U.S. as elsewhere, inherited. Students do not begin from the same starting point:

> Despite frequent references to the United States as a classless society, about 62 percent of Americans (male and female) raised in the top fifth of incomes stay in the top two-fifths. . . . Similarly, 65 percent born in the bottom fifth stay in the bottom two-fifths (DeParle, 2012).

No society in our historical memory is without distinctions of status.

The idea of "class" is a useful shorthand that gained credence and influence from nineteenth-century Marxist thought. Isabel Wilkerson employs "caste" to identify the foundations of distinction.

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27 Alger was a hugely influential writer whose circa 135 books mostly featured rags-to-riches stories of poor boys.

They may, alternatively, be conceived of as shaped by the intersection of diverse identities or derive from racial categorization. Peggy McIntosh, for example, defines the notion of White privilege as: "like an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, code-books, visas, clothes, tools and blank checks" (McIntosh, 1989: 10). White supremacy is a perverse inversion of that notion, justifying the privilege accrued to White skin as a signifier of innately superior status.

Victorian pre-Marxist concepts of dispossession and poverty point to another set of criteria that distinguish the deserving poor from the feckless rest. In *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Oscar Wilde offers the term "Society" to indicate a narrow, fashionable, privileged portion of the wider population—an exclusive club. The fearsome Lady Bracknell instructs her nephew to "[n]ever speak disrespectfully of Society, Algernon. Only people who can't get into it do that" (Wilde, 1895: 108).

Religions and tribes have elders. The army has rank. European history is littered with stories of kings, queens, princes, and princesses. Divisions are everywhere. The degree to which they are visible, and the possibility of moving across these, varies, but the existence of barriers, walls, and glass ceilings, is an inherent characteristic of reality. It is also rarely the case that mobility is hampered only by individual will and effort. Class, caste, society, however you may choose to define these distinctions, will always, to some degree or another, create limitations that transcend personal aspiration.

What Does This Mean for Education Abroad?

The Global Question

Some of the perceived benefits of education abroad, neverthe-less, enforce the idea of untroubled mobility. It offers, for example, a gateway into a global elite, a mechanism that will separate participants

from their unfortunate peers. At an extreme end of marketing hyperbole, students may be seduced into the notion of mystic transformation whereby they will be made into valuable commodities in the "global economy." Such a notion of transformation is as fragile as the existence of an economy of global scale. Since the 1990s, the reemergence of militant nationalism has eroded internationalism. Globalization increasingly emerges as an elusive notion, not a promised land but a vaguely imagined threat to national and community identity. Michael Ignatieff's vision of the world at the end of the twentieth century may be bleak, but the metaphor reflects some observable realities:

> What the new world order actually looks like . . . paramilitarist, drunk on plum brandy and ethnic paranoia, trading shots with each other across a wasteland. . . . [W]hat has succeeded the last age of empire is a new age of violence. . . . [T]he key language of our age is ethnic nationalism (Ignatieff, 1994: 1–2).

In this disturbing environment, students may be tempted by visions of Nirvana, a land of Cockayne, or images of Shangri-La: alternative utopian projections of landscapes of enlightenment. Education abroad offers the fallacious concept of global citizenship. This is a state of imagined grace, achieved by (bought by?) participation in education abroad. There are proponents who develop thoughtful ways of employing the concept. I mean no disrespect to them, nor do I question their sincerity. I believe, however, that the use of "global" as a synonym for good is a distortion of contemporary reality. Globalization is a threat to ethnic nationalism. Benefits may accrue to an economic elite, but for most of the world, "global" more readily aligns with "menace" or "terror" than with "citizenship." In its crudest exposition, global citizenship is an exclusive club that does not exist. Selling membership is promoting delusion—a seductive strategy familiar to a snake oil salesman. A

thoughtful review of the meaning and usage of "global" might move us away from rhetorical quicksand toward drier ground.

Then there is the money question.

The Money Question

There are "research" projects that purport to prove that studying abroad will increase students' earning power.[28] These results require selective amnesia. Students who study abroad are still substantially drawn from the more privileged sector of students in U.S. higher education. It might also be assumed that those students display some kind of active curiosity, are less risk-averse, open to encounters with unfamiliar environments. The credibility of the research depends crucially on ignoring these and other determining factors.

As indicated in my previous discussion of class, research that begins from the assumption that students start at the same place and move upward through education abroad needs critical reconsideration. Of course, higher education is, demonstrably, a means of advancement, one of several mechanisms for social mobility. My own experience was that education offered a way out of the narrow options available to working class kids in the East End of London after World War II. Without education, if you were not a talented footballer, boxer, or criminal, your horizons were, for the most part, constrained by jobs, not careers. However, educational qualifications were not necessarily an open path; certain careers were not open to Jews; an East End "cockney" accent identified the speaker as part of an underclass (just as an Appalachian accent does in America), but, undeniably, prospects were better. In my own case, a career in international contexts enabled me to transcend

28 See, for example, UC Merced (n.d.).

discriminatory barriers in England (though I was far from aware of that advantage at the time).

Promoting the concept of a global elite accessed through education abroad requires an edited version of reality. It ignores, critically, accidents of birth and consciously disregards the significance of where students study. The relative prestige of universities is a major factor in employability. A student with a degree from Harvard or Yale is at a clear advantage in a competitive job market. The same is true, of course, of graduates of Oxford or Cambridge in the U.K., who start from a better place than those from London Metropolitan University or the University of Central Lancashire, however good those institutions may be. Reputation is critical.

Elsewhere in international education, the relative prestige of universities is a determining factor in student mobility. Foreign students are acutely aware of the significance of status. In short, they know what education abroad ignores: where you study matters.

The idea of the unique benefit of education abroad also requires ignoring other factors in the undergraduate experience that may help students distinguish themselves in relation to income and employability. Those might include personal and family connections, participation in sports teams, responsibilities assumed on campus, domestic volunteer and internship engagement, active membership of interest groups, and so on and so forth.

There are concrete benefits that education abroad offers participants. Encountering unfamiliar ideas, people, structures, situations, in environments different from home may act as intellectual and emotional stimulants. Metaphorical pathways along which students might move, with effort and support, offer opportunities to go from relative

ignorance toward relative knowledge and enlightenment. This is real education, not magical transformation.

In that process, students may well gain skills and acquire attributes that make them more attractive to employers, but this is by no means guaranteed. Study abroad creates opportunities within which students might actively develop themselves in ways that have utilitarian benefits for career development and graduate school admission. There are also significances beyond those factors; appreciation of difference may enrich a lifetime of consciousness; curiosity about other people and nations subverts parochialism; we can learn to hate but we can also acquire the precious gift of empathy that benefits individuals and communities. Narratives of practical benefit and idealism are not in conflict but are complementary. That which benefits us may also benefit the worlds in which we live.

Students might also gain the profound gift of doubt. They may learn that what they assumed to be universally true is not so, that well-meaning people might behave and think differently and that it is possible to learn from that difference. They may also discover that beyond difference there is a common humanity. Whatever our differences, most of us have similar aspirations; we hope that our children have better lives than our own; we hope for security, peace, love, friendships, pleasures. At the risk of annoying our IDI friends, they may learn to remain in a state of minimization!

As we review our situation and think it out again, we might revise our rhetoric and emphasize benefits of education abroad in terms that are credible, demonstrable, and convincing to colleagues in wider academia. Education abroad, like any other form of learning, is about the opportunity to take progressive steps. The processes need to be qualified by less or more. Moving from classroom theory to physical, intellectual, emotional engagement offers a stimulus to gaining more

knowledge, more insight, more curiosity, more sensitivity. These are lessons that might enrich the lives of our students for as long as they live.

Of course, we need to sell the benefits of education abroad to all the constituencies involved: students, parents, faculty, administrators, politicians, institutional presidents. This is not best achieved by propagating delusions or promising fantasies. Surgery is required.

What Threats Are There to Education Abroad?

The boundary between the darkness and the light was shifting all the time, but too subtly for us to be aware of it, except when it was too late.

- Michael Dibdin, *And Then You Die* (2002)

There are threats inherent in education abroad, generated by ourselves, but external factors also create an ethos that is not necessarily in sympathy with our core values.

Most of us who do this work do so out of liberal convictions. That is a very broad church and does not indicate shared opinions or consensus across all the issues that we may face. However, the range of views represented by professionals in this field is likely to be narrower than that found in other contexts. Lawyers and doctors probably display a spectrum of views from left to right. For the most part, it is extremely unlikely that international educators commonly display ultra-nationalist tendencies or are inspired by conservative resistance to internationalism. There is, one can assume, a common commitment to core beliefs that include some sense that foreign does not equate with menace. In short, this is a profession largely of overlapping values.

In most of us, there is an assumption that students studying abroad will, to some degree or another, arrive with, or acquire, views broadly compatible with those values. In this aspiration there may lurk

some potentially problematic scenarios. If, as we hope, the base of education abroad grows and diversifies, it is likely that the student body might become more representative of American society as a whole. The assumption that students we teach are broadly in sympathy with liberal views is already problematic and will increasingly become so. In short, conservative Republicans also study abroad.

The job of faculty is to help students understand and think for themselves, to approach the worlds they encounter with a more sophisticated, nuanced awareness. It is not their job to convert students. That may or may not be a consequence of what and how they are taught, but faculty are not priests. Conversion is not their business. Students own their own convictions and have the right to do so. Faculty may encourage all students to argue logically, to use evidence, to write with clarity and reasoned conviction but there is a difference between education and indoctrination. We need to approach teaching with some respect and humility, with a sense that what we may believe is not necessarily incontrovertibly true. Of course, there are opinions that simply contradict evidence; the laws of physics perhaps; the Earth is not flat; but beyond such matters there are vast areas of ambiguities where it is possible that interpretations and faith may not point in a single direction.

There are critics of higher education provision who, for their own purposes, characterize faculty as left-wing agitators, antipathetic to American values. It follows, given that assumption, that foreign faculty may be even more suspect. In these circumstances, it becomes critical that we build tolerance of difference into syllabi and classroom behavior. This is not a matter of censorship, nor does it mean that it is necessary to avoid controversial topics. Challenging students to think about

their views is an educational obligation, but debate must take place in an environment in which it is possible for students to dissent from dominant opinions. Respect for diversity and inclusion must extend to divergence of views. The role of faculty is to seek to encourage an environment in which this is welcome, not to promote their own convictions.

"Civil society" describes a form of political organization arranged upon principles of citizenship cooperation, but "civil" has another relevant meaning. It relates to the idea of politeness, a willingness to listen with respect and agree or disagree without personal denigration. This precludes silencing others, ridiculing them, or characterizing them as conditioned by unconscious bias. Those strategies deny a speaker an individual right to be heard. In any educational process, listening is as important as speaking. In these contentious times, there is something archaic about the notion of civility, but it is a value we have to teach. It has a particular resonance in education abroad wherein individual beliefs may be subject to additional pressures through encounters with the unfamiliar.

The single biggest threat to education abroad is, however, external to us and is not necessarily obvious or immediately visible. A dominant narrative in our field is that of the growing interdependence of countries. It is demonstrably the case that transnational realities have created mutual dependencies and connections that transcend borders. Simultaneously, and paradoxically, as demonstrated earlier, there has been a significant growth in militant nationalism and radical parochialism. Metaphorically, this may be represented as a clash between a belief in bridges and a desire to build walls, open or closed ideologies. The political reality is that the dynamics of suspicion have current political momentum, as evidenced by the rise of the radical right even in places long associated with liberal democracy. The term "illiberal democracy" was coined by Hungary's right-wing president Viktor Orbán. It precisely

describes the impact of populist resistance to the forces of globalization. Swings towards xenophobia, in Western Europe, for example, have resulted in the rise of the far right in Italy, in France, in the Netherlands, even in impeccably liberal Sweden.

In Central and Eastern Europe, militant nationalism has pervaded the political ethos. The destruction of the Berlin Wall, the fall of the Soviet Union and its dependent states were taken as welcome liberation from the aftermath of World War II. The West celebrated the defeat of Communism and heralded a new age of freedom. However, there is more than one version of freedom. Freedom from totalitarian oppression led toward freedom to reenact traditional hatreds.

The bloody consequences of the collapse of Yugoslavia need no retelling, but they represent an extreme manifestation of the nationalism that reemerged in the shape of ethnic cleansing, hatred of foreigners, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism. Hatred exists along a spectrum. Prejudice is a widespread emotion which characterizes others as unwelcome strangers; discrimination is the enactment of prejudice; persecution is the legalization of discrimination. In many and various contexts, each of these manifestations of hate reemerged.

A simple implication is that international education is, like it or not, a political endeavor. The illusion that we function in a benign environment is exposed. Education abroad, rooted in liberal principles, is vulnerable to skepticism of the American Right. The locations in which American students study may be less sympathetic to foreigners and their values. Simply, there are powerful forces that hate the things in which we believe, for whom "international" is analogous to alien. It stands for things to which they are implacably opposed. This is an environment in which education abroad is required to function. Nothing is gained by sleepwalking in darkness.

Are There Reasons for Optimism?

I note the obvious differences

in the human family.

Some of us are serious,

some thrive on comedy.

The variety of our skin tones

can confuse, bemuse, delight,

brown and pink and beige and purple,

tan and blue and white.

I've sailed upon the seven seas

and stopped in every land,

I've seen the wonders of the world

not yet one common man.

I note the obvious differences

between each sort and type,

but we are more alike, my friends,

than we are unalike.

We are more alike, my friends,

than we are unalike.

- Maya Angelou, "Human Family" (1990)

There is something explicitly or implicitly optimistic about all teaching. The classroom is an environment dedicated to the idea that there is potential for improvement. Each seminar, discussion, and class is based upon an assumption that some steps, however limited, might progressively expand knowledge or consciousness. Educators know that there is no guarantee, but over time, most students and teachers, certainly at different speeds and levels of intensity, move from point *a*

toward *b*. If nothing was ever learned, the classroom would be a land-scape of futile despair.

In education abroad, there is an added stimulant to learning: an interaction between intellectual and physical encounters (within and beyond the classroom) that is likely to be disruptive of assumptions. Education is intended to disturb equilibrium, to challenge convictions, and, thus, to alter or confirm beliefs through new experiences and ideas. The impact of those encounters is inevitably intensified when they occur in unfamiliar spaces and, consequently, involve the senses, the body, and the mind.

At the most simple level, students will observe similarities but also encounter views, behaviors, assumptions unlike their own. When we go elsewhere, we carry baggage: expectations that may be fulfilled or subverted but, in any case, are unlikely to be consistently enforced. Curiosity and thought are enemies of complacency and dogmatism. There is a kind of morality in uncertainty, or as the Irish playwright Brian Friel asserted, "[C]onfusion is not an ignoble condition" (Friel, 1981: 67).

Doubt is the enemy of dogmatism. The uncertain do not commit atrocities. Agents of the Inquisition, concentration camp administrators, and terrorists planting bombs in shopping centers are convinced of the justice of their causes. Extremism is built upon a belief that there are absolute, unconditional truths. Such faith permits no critical thought, allows for no empathy. The practices and principles of international edu-cation directly collide with such dogmatic faith.

If I have learned anything, it is that we should aspire to doubt. We owe it to our children and grandchildren to balance conviction with agnosticism. Learning abroad takes us from the known toward the unknown. En route, we cross literal and metaphorical borders and learn

from the differences we encounter. We learn that what we thought was universal may not be so, that what we thought was true may be conditioned by time and place. There are more things in heaven and earth than we have dreamed of in our philosophies.

We occupy a profound paradox. We are enriched by our differences and stimulated by the unexpected, engage with a diversity of beliefs and customs. At the same time, we aspire to feel the emotional reality embedded in Maya Angelou's wisdom: "We are more alike, my friends, than we are unalike." The idea of a common humanity resides in our ideological heart, which is broken, again and again, by blood in the streets: sectarian violence, ethnic conflict, hatred of strangers.

Nevertheless, the resurgence of interest in mobility since the COVID-19 pandemic is cause for some optimism. As the world around us closes borders, students are not restrained by parochialism or xenophobia. The curiosity of the young, idealism of youth, transcends the heavy weight of despair.

In these circumstances, questioning the status quo, challenging received opinion, bringing doubt to unexamined assumptions, is a source of hope. "I think I'd better think it out again!" becomes a profoundly ethical proposition.

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FUTURES PAST: LEARNING FROM PREVIOUS CHALLENGES TO EDUCATION ABROAD TO INFORM OUR PRESENT

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To review the current world situation, we can look at major societal events that have impacted education abroad in the past. While never a perfect comparison, we can perhaps learn from history to make meaning of our current challenges and envision a way forward together.

Recently, we had the COVID-19 pandemic, and right before it, the rise of nationalist ideologies and governments; in 2001, we had 9/11.

From that date and the ensuing Iraq War, the Middle East and North Africa were significantly impacted in terms of U.S. student mobility. In the academic year 2002–2003, the region showed a drastic 41% decrease in American study abroad students, dropping below 1,000 students. Europe, on the other hand, continued to increase steadily, with a 9% uptick in American study abroad students.

I went abroad the year before 9/11, which was a year in which nascent Internet and email use were piquing our imaginations (see Jenny Slate's film *Landline* for a look at the 90s' analog era). We were pre-Wi-Fi and pre-smartphone (see Matt Honson's 2023 film *BlackBerry*), and I even traveled to Paris without a laptop. Email was checked at Internet cafés, where our cohort of study abroad program students obtained memberships. We all had passes to the Forum des Images, a movie theater and film center in the underground mall, Forum des Halles, in the heart of Paris. In Forum des Images, there was a small computer room—their own *petite* version of an Internet café—next to a stand where you could get coffee, drinks, and snacks before or after

going to a screening. So, as part of our Forum des Images membership, we could use the computers and the Internet. Regular members might have seen a gaggle of 20-year-olds in the afternoons awkwardly typing away at the French keyboards while we wrote missives back home to our families and college friends on home campuses. Some of my fellow students and I soon branched out, expanded our bandwidth, and got a card for an Internet café on the Champs-Élysées, not far from the Arc de Triomphe, owned by the multinational media company Vivendi-Universal.

Eager to return abroad, this time with a laptop—though still with no in-home Wi-Fi—I taught abroad two years after 9/11, on the Teaching Assistant Program in France (TAPIF) program in Bordeaux, France. While there, in 2003–2004, many French people, including those of North African or Middle Eastern descent, would ask me whether I liked George W. Bush and how I felt about the invasion of Iraq, usually with some choice words about the U.S.' involvement. I particularly remember talking to one person on occasions when I would stop by the kebab shop where he was working in the evenings to grab a cheap dinner. These criticisms of the U.S. came to head at a pub darts tournament I was a part of, where an opposing French team member mildly berated me for that military campaign, resulting in one of my *flechettes* team-mates urging him to stop harassing me.

When I went abroad again in 2009, back to France and in grad school with Middlebury, things seemed back to "normal." Figures from *Open Doors* back up this feeling: Europe had been steadily increasing as a destination, from about 116,000 students to 144,000 from 2003–2004 to 2009–2010. And the Middle East and North Africa had rebounded to boast over 8,000 American students studying abroad in the region in 2009–10 (2023).

Michael Jackson died the day I landed in Paris in Summer 2009, but nothing of note was happening on the airlines, and all was clear as

I traveled by train to my program's study abroad destination of Poitiers. The summer went by successfully, and I even stacked on a meet-up with my brother in Paris and then with my parents in London following the session.

When traveling abroad in 2017 in France and Italy, my wife and I received questions about whether or not we liked Trump and what we thought of him, in much the same way as I had been asked about George W. Bush in the early 2000s. We were in a taxi in Nice, when an Algerian-born driver asked us our opinion of the then-President Trump. Once we crossed the border by train to Italy, my wife's family members also asked us about the current president and what we thought of him. We were asked about the divide in the U.S. along political lines and whether he was well-liked in the States.

When COVID-19 hit in March 2020, I was teaching at the high school level while pursuing a degree in International Higher Education. I witnessed the closure of schools, while my colleagues at the university level were witnessing not only the interruption of classes but the shutting down of study abroad programs, resulting in furloughs and many in the field losing their jobs.

In 2021, I went abroad to Italy to observe an independent study abroad center in Siena as part of my program. I saw a very small number of in-person students combined with virtual classes featuring students from the U.S. and Europe.

We, in the field, all know this reality, and *Open Doors* shows both the effect of COVID-19 (a near-90% reduction in students abroad in Europe in 2020–21) and the subsequent return to form of study abroad. In 2021–22, student numbers had returned to about 133,000 in Europe (2023). I saw the financial and health-related challenges faced by study abroad providers, universities, and students. As a result

of COVID-19 restrictions, limits to programming necessarily took place. And simply, the small number of students made it difficult to pull off an effective education abroad sojourn. I remember, however, that two of the American university students bonded tightly and left a handwritten note that is still up on the SIS Intercultural Study Abroad Center's wall in Siena, thanking the staff for an unforgettable experience despite the difficulties.

In 2022, I went back to Siena to do an international internship at the same center and saw a dramatic increase in students and programming—all in person. Things were on par with how I had experienced a post-9/11 world in Bordeaux in 2003. Even at that time, I took a short walk in my neighborhood in the northern part of the city to see a mini-Statue of Liberty and a plaque that served as a memorial to the terrorist attacks that took place two years earlier in New York.

In 2023, I joined Emerson College as an education abroad staff member and am fortunate to work with programs that have largely reopened in person as the global pandemic wanes. The one exception is China, where a confluence of factors, including COVID-19 and geopolitics, have contributed to halting most education abroad programs. Chinese students, however, continue to travel to the U.S. and elsewhere for their studies.

In addition, Russia remains mainly closed because of the Ukraine War. While I am not an expert on Russia, I can point to another series of watershed events that changed the landscape of study abroad and the world: the fall of the Berlin Wall, the end of the Cold War, and the breakup of the USSR. To end with another personal anecdote, not long after the events that brought together East and West Germany in 1989, my independent school in New York hosted Russian high school students for homestays around the spring of 1992. Much to the excitement

of my brother and I, our small Lower East Side apartment would play host to one of these young emissaries.

Dimitri came with a suitcase full of gifts, including a samovar (Russian tea kettle) for our family. He then stocked up on NBA gear, including a Chicago Bulls Starter brand jacket—all the rage at a time when Michael Jordan was in his prime. If our Russian adversaries could turn into our school-age friends, maybe the same thing can happen again in the 2020s.

Time will tell how long it will take for education abroad to regain the luster it had pre-COVID-19, pre-Ukraine War, and pre-nationalist governments' surge in the mid-2010s. If 9/11, though a different type of security threat, tells us anything, it may only be in several years. *Open Doors* tells us we are about half-way back to pre-pandemic levels of American study abroad students worldwide (2023).

The early signs, then, anecdotally and statistically, are that students are eager to get back out there and, so far, the world is ready to welcome them back.

The Artful Dodger…Andrew Palmacci | Oliver!

Birch Wathen Lenox Middle School Musical, 1994 | New York, NY

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LOYALTY, HONOR, DUTY, AND SACRIFICE: A HUMBLE LENS TO LEADERSHIP FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

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> *Cannon to right of them,*
>
> *Cannon to left of them,*
>
> *Cannon in front of them*
>
> *Volleyed and thundered.*
>
> *Stormed at with shot and shell,*
>
> *Boldly they rode and well,*
>
> *Into the jaws of Death,*
>
> *Into the mouth of hell*
>
> *Rode the six hundred.*
>
> -Alfred Lord Tennyson, from "The Charge of the Light Brigade"

The date, October 25, 1854, will never be remembered only as an infamous blunder; it has emphatically been analyzed and extrapolated by historians and literary scholars alike. The Charge of the Light Brigade during the Battle of Balaclava has been viewed as an incredible breakdown of the chain of command and miscommunication. The charge is also viewed as an outstandingly virtuous act of bravery on behalf of the soldiers who carried out their orders without question. It can all at once be considered a communication breakdown in three separate perspectives: the leading commander of the allied forces, the officers who carried the message to the Light Brigade, and the cavalry who made the charge. The question is: who is right? Was the breakdown at the top, was it through the "telephone game" version of passing

the message down the chain of command, or was it with the troops who attempted to carry out the orders they were given?

The charge itself was a devastatingly simple disaster of sorts. Light cavalry mounted on horseback charged through a low valley with the intent to reach the heights on the far end to eliminate an artillery battery that was stationed there. All the while, the brigade received cannon and musket fire from the heights above the valley. Their reinforcements saw this and did not follow, so the Light Brigade was left alone to take the ridge. Casualty estimates were about half of the 600 who made the charge. The orders that were given by the commander of the allied forces were to advance and prevent some stolen artillery from being taken off the field. The orders said nothing about moving into the valley nor attacking head on into the enemy lines. Unfortunately, by the time the orders were passed down to the Light Brigade, they only received the order to "advance rapidly."

The field of international education has its controversial and tumultuous times (e.g., COVID-19). Whilst we seldom experience circumstances that place us in life-threatening situations, we can all remember instances when we felt like we were surrounded and coming under fire from all sides.

International education is both miraculous in design and impending chaos on the verge of collapse, threatened by countless and unpredictable variables. The design is highly improbable—various cultures and nations with enough people who have obtained the socio-economic capacity to travel combined with the human desire to learn and explore the world, fused with the privilege to place educational scholarship as a priority. With these elements united, international education mobility was born. It could essentially be described as an economic example of supply and demand. However, add to the equation world events, natural disasters, human error, and malintent, and you have the perfect

storm of potential chaos waiting to happen at times that we could never predict.

Now, consider for a moment the vast variety of institutional structures, organizational charts, strategic plans, and budgetary models. The overall career field and the day-to-day responsibilities will have a completely different resonance if you work in an office of one, a small office of a few, a team of several, or a large organization with dozens or hundreds of employees. Which side of the "house" makes an immense difference as well, whether you work primarily with incoming or outgoing student mobility or are responsible for both. If you work at a college or university, the type (public or private), the size of the institution (small, medium, or large), the demographics of the students, staff, and faculty, and the geographic location are undoubtedly some of the most influential factors. Conversely, working at a provider, company, NGO, governmental agency, or special purpose organization will afford quite another perspective on the international education landscape. However, superseding all these factors, *leadership* is paramount.

Each of us has experienced leadership that has been motivational and aspirational. Likewise, we have all experienced leadership for which we lost all respect, and which may have even been the deciding factor for why we left a job or an entire career field. Under both circumstances, we should consider the avenues of how people enter the field of international education and work their way up the ladder. Many of us entered nearly by accident, falling into our offices and positions on a whim, with the subconscious aspiration that we might still be able to change the world if we do good work as educators or practitioners. Most of us entered the field after we had some "amazing" experiences as undergraduate students ourselves. Some of us entered the field because we could not think of any other career goals after completing our various levels of higher education. From these primary avenues,

rarely do many in our field, especially on the higher education side of the house, bring with them the crucial experience or understanding of leading other people.

The greatest downside to this, as many of us have experienced, is that it translates into people being advanced into leadership roles without any requisite knowledge or experience of the supervisory responsibilities that those roles demand. Another difficulty with many leadership roles in our field is that they often do not require any examination or evaluation of an applicant regarding their skillsets or leadership abilities. Since many leaders are frequently awarded their roles due to time in service to an institution or organization (or based on their performance in a previous role, not the required competences the new role would entail), it creates a leadership deficiency.

Additionally, to complicate matters, many leaders typically will not or prefer not to train a newer professional to become a leader for a few detrimental reasons. Oftentimes, there is a bias to not train or mentor someone who does not look alike or who does not share a similar ideology or nature. Sometimes, it can be as simple as they do not root for the same team or they do not have a complementary personality, so they are dismissed or even held back intentionally. This dismissal or prevention from teaching can occur out of fear that the newer, typically younger, professional could eventually surpass the leader or even replace them. There can also be a perceived or deliberate lack of time or ability to train a new employee, and an assumption that since the leader had to learn everything on their own at some point in the past, so should this person.

Communication has been a constant source of contention and, at the same time, creativity for years, naturally exacerbated through the COVID-19 pandemic. Some would say that we have almost completely forgotten how to communicate with one another. It has also opened a

world of possibilities for technology and critical conversations which did not exist in such public forums until now. There are now dozens of social media apps and hundreds of options for communicating electronically with others personally and professionally. The options we utilize, however, are commonly chosen for us by our places of employment. The most daunting deliberation for every university's leadership is: Google or Microsoft? (Pepsi or Coke is another issue, but that belongs in another paper.) Clearly, every form of technology has its positive and negative aspects, so it could be argued that one platform is not necessarily better than another. Decisions should be more about functionality based on individual or group needs and expectations for communication protocols and responsibilities.

The more preeminent facet to communication, apart from technology, are the style and methods by which leadership prefers to interact with their subordinates. This layer is probably the most critical and potentially the most dangerous regarding the impact that leadership can have upon their employees and team. There are so many aspects to leadership that will determine whether they are effective in the mission of the organization and whether their workplace retains or repels people.

Bring into your mind your previous supervisors and leadership in any job you have had. Were they effective and charismatic? Did they make you feel respected or replaceable? Most leaders are not simultaneously efficient and empathetic. You can probably remember a leader or supervisor you had who was incredibly competent and productive, but they barely made an effort to get to know you personally. You can probably call to mind a leader or supervisor who you had who was kind, caring, and compassionate but was nearly incompetent and unproductive. Bear in mind that I am not including leaders or leadership styles with which you do not agree ideologically. However, when we find leaders or mentors who are driven, empathic, and agreeable with our

worldview, we tend to latch onto them as quickly as we can, and for as long as possible.

Where Do We Find Our Values?

We all learn, hone, and incorporate a variety of values into our personalities and our lives. The nature of our values stem from count-less sources and variables. Our values define who we are, our qualities, vices, and virtues. What we decide to believe directly fuels our motiva-tions for our lives and how we view ourselves, other people, and the world in which we exist. The ways in which we adopt, discover, and attain our values are completely relative to our time and place upon the Earth. There are several key areas in which most of our values have originated.

Family and Heritage

Our family and heritage have an immense impact upon who we become. The values of your family, whether generational, cultural, socio-economic, or situational, all play pivotal roles to connect to who you are as a person. My own situation was that I was Korean by birth, and adopted by American parents who were both from Pennsylvania. I was also an only child, something which differentiates you from those who have siblings. I was raised Christian as it was my parents' faith prior to adopting me. My father being a Vietnam veteran of the U.S. Army and both my grandfathers and a grandmother serving during World War II instilled in me a strong importance of the military from a young age. My father battling with PTSD from serving in Vietnam has also had a huge effect on my life.

I was raised in rural Arizona (AZ) and rural West Virginia (WV), which clearly impacted the world I perceived around me and the people that I met. Goodyear, AZ, being a curious distribution of largely Hispanic, White, and Black people with very few Asians, led to many awkward interactions, like people asking my mother why I was with her, and

getting in my first fist fight as a third grader. Charles Town and Harpers Ferry, WV, where we relocated while I was in fourth grade, were even smaller by population and more homogenous in racial demographics. I ended up learning how to be a social chameleon (my own term for it) and knowing when to be a wallflower, analyzing everything from the outside looking in. Living most of my life in Harpers Ferry instilled in me a massive interest in history, particularly of the American Civil War.

Culture and Society

To anyone who believes that the United States of America has a single form of culture or societal norms, that is false. The U.S. may share a common official language, but if you try to live in more than one region of the country, you will understand what I mean. My cultural background growing up in AZ was vastly different from what I had to adapt to in WV, moving from a history of "Native Americans" that I learned about in school in AZ to the deeper American history about the original colonies and the U.S. Civil War, which was all around us in WV. In AZ, we lived in the desert with dust storms, monsoons, and the most awe-inspiring sunsets I have ever seen on the North American continent. I saw snow legitimately for the first time when we moved to WV. Geography, religious beliefs, community norms, and social environment all intersect and impact us in ways we rarely perceive.

Education and Knowledge

As the saying goes, "knowledge is power." The way we comprehend and observe the universe is completely correlated to our level and amount of education and knowledge. This is for everything we know, from cultural truths, to scientific discoveries, to an individual's success in life. We may all define success differently, but the level of success someone achieves can be derived from their knowledge and expertise. Just consider language learning as a prime example. You could take

classes in middle school or high school. Compare those to courses you took in college. Then, consider moving to another country in which the language you were learning is spoken natively. The level of your success of culturally immersing within that country can be linked to the level of your language abilities. This concept of levels or stages of learning and understanding concepts can be applied to any subject or experience.

Personal Experiences

Distinctly, values are going to vary with, and be grounded in, on our own experiences. Being adopted and raised in rural areas of AZ and WV has had a unique influence on my personality and value systems that I possess. Watching the events of September 11, 2001, in NYC on live TV while I was a junior in high school was a galvanizing reason why I decided to enlist in the military shortly after that. And it was my prior experiences and family history that allowed me to view the military as a legitimate avenue for my life.

I believe that being bullied while I was in school and getting into fights led me to champion the value of protecting the weaker or less fortunate in the world.

Reflection and Self-Discovery

As we age, learn, and grow throughout our lives, reflecting upon and seeking out new experiences can provide us with new or foreign value systems that we may choose to add to our own. Studying or working in another country is an obvious example of this playing out.

Role Models

There will always be people we see and encounter in our lives who will inspire and motivate us and whom we wish to emulate. While we should be careful about who we choose to follow or imitate, role models, mentors, and leaders can be an integral part of the journey to finding our own values.

Goals and Aspirations

Sort of a chicken and egg dilemma. Do values come first or do the goals and aspirations, which then fuel our intentions? It could be reasoned that throughout life, these dilemmas will contrast situationally. If you have a heart to end world hunger, your values of empathy and kindness may become primary, and you pursue a career or opportunities to advance this cause. Alternatively, you may establish the values inherently instilled at a very young age, and then you begin to seek out opportunities to relieve the suffering of others, world hunger becoming one of your causes to rally. How do your goals and aspirations for your life guide the values that you convey on a daily basis?

My Values: Ethos and Origins

For the sake of this paper, I have decided to focus upon the four values stated in the title, which are a few of my most fundamental values:

- Loyalty
- Honor
- Duty
- Sacrifice

These are part of my "ethos," the tenets or codes by which I live my life. In this section, I will make a case for why it can be futile to have these values misplaced in people and a concerted recommendation to resist this futility. I will also share the "origins" of my values, in effect, where and when they originated, and from whom.

Loyalty and the Duty to Care

Our current culture, at least in most of the United States of America, has dramatically minimized the concept of loyalty in the sense of national pride. Unfortunately, it has been distorted into an extremized form of tribalism. While this is regrettable for many reasons, much of

the loss of loyalty can be seen as justified at the same time. Events in the U.S. over the past few decades have not lent themselves to unifying under one banner—instead, each individual seeks a group, cause, or team to enlist with that supports their worldview and, in reciprocity, detests others who are perceived to be counter to that identity. The polarization and divide have been ever-growing. Yet, these are not new concepts within the U.S.

There is one remarkable example of loyalty and duty from U.S. history that provides some insights and analysis into these complicated concepts. The example comes from the American Civil War, a time many have located in stereotypes, a forgotten tale simplified to a conflict over slavery. The U.S. Civil War was much more than one cause; rather, it was a war for the soul of our nation.

While this section may be considered somewhat divisive, I personally request that you bear with me and contemplate the concepts that I share with humility, wisdom, and empathy. If you know me, you know where my heart lies. I am a huge history buff and I firmly believe that we can take countless lessons from historical figures and events, so long as we analyze them in full context, place, and time and with a genuine intention to learn and not judge them based on our modern-day viewpoints.

Robert E. Lee is one of the most controversial leaders in the history of the United States of America. Regrettably, many people only see a one-dimensional perspective of him. Lee is archetypally seen as the face, or one of the faces, of the Confederacy during the U.S. Civil War in the 1800s. The reality is that Lee, like all of us, had many facets and experiences throughout his life, which fashion him as a complex character to analyze and, thus, this is why many historians study him. Certainly, I am not defending Lee, as he was a slave owner and commanded an army that attempted to overthrow the central government of our nation.

However, I will reason that his decision was not an easy one—he never intended to break his oath to his nation, and the U.S. Civil War had to be fought for the soul of our country at that time.

Robert Edward Lee attended West Point and graduated second in his class. He served honorably in the U.S. Army for many years before the Civil War, including during the Mexican War. Lee was 54 years old when the war began, and his troops even nicknamed him "Old Granny," as he was known for his combed down white and grey hair, and beard, which they equated to being reminiscent of an elderly woman. That reputation would be forever changed once Lee proved his strategic tenacity, military professionalism, and genuine affection for his troops.

One incredible fact about Lee that many people are unaware of today is that he was offered command of both the U.S., or Union, Army and the Confederate Army, the Army of Northern Virginia, before any major battles occurred. Lee had to weigh his options, as we all do when given multiple job offers at the same time. However, for Lee, he had to weigh his loyalty to his nation with his loyalty to his state of Virginia. At that time, in the mid-1800s, the United States of America was quite young—a mere 85 years old, give or take some time depending on your definition of our nation's founding. Due to this, states were considered the primary source of belonging, culture, and economic livelihood for most Americans. The federal government as a democratic republic was still a new concept, and many people in the U.S. at that time had escaped from centralized governments, mostly from Europe.

Once he made his decision, Lee wrote to the Secretary of War, Simon Cameron, to resign from the U.S. Army. He wrote to his sister, Anne Marshall, that:

> I have not been able to make up my mind to raise my hand against my relatives, my children, my home. I have therefore

resigned my commission in the Army, and save in defense of my native State, with the sincere hope that my poor services never be needed, I hope I may never be called on to draw my sword (1861).

He still had not yet accepted the offer from the Confederate government, however. Aside from having to choose between his nation (which he had honorably served for his entire life up to this point, and to which he had sworn an oath) and his state, family, and neighbors, Lee also had to decide on which side of the war he would fight.

We know that Lee eventually elected to side with his state of Virginia and would become the General in Chief of the Armies of the Confederacy by the end of the U.S. Civil War. That said, his leadership granted him near-deity status with his troops. Once Lee took command of the Army of Northern Virginia, they won virtually every battle against the Union Army for approximately two years. This winning streak gave the troops a misperception of invincibility, as if Lee could do no wrong. This misperception would be tested and destroyed at the Battle of Gettysburg across the hallowed fields of a small town in southern Pennsylvania.

Does loyalty have a place in the field of international education? At what level does student mobility become primarily transactional and lose its altruistic nature? Loyalty could be interpreted as faithfulness to one's institution or organization. During the most trying of times, are we stalwart with our own leadership, or do we find alternative routes to circumvent difficulties? Consider an institutional agreement with a partner in another country when there is miscommunication or a negative experience for the students. It would seem likely that the options are to break the agreement or maintain it and hope there is improvement. What other options are likely? How many times does a partner have to

break the trust of an institution or vice versa before one or the other ends the relationship?

Honor and the Sacrifice of Angels

Some readers may have heard of Pickett's Charge before now. It can be attributed to the turning point of the U.S. Civil War on a substantial scale. General George Pickett commanded a division of troops of the Army of Northern Virginia. When his division arrived in Gettysburg, Lee decided to have them do a frontal assault, charging into the center of the Union Army. This may sound eerily reminiscent of my previous story of the Charge of the Light Brigade. Over the previous two days of the Battle of Gettysburg, Lee had attacked the Union on its left and on its right, so he assumed they had reinforced those positions, leaving the center at its weakest. Lee was sorely mistaken. The Union Army had a strong center with the headquarters of the Army of the Potomac (the name for the Union Army at Gettysburg) held there.

Pickett, along with his troops, trusted General Robert E. Lee as the near deity who could do no wrong when it came to his command and strategy. While Pickett did appeal to Lee to alter the plan and not attack the center of the Union Army, Lee refused his request, and with the honor of his command on the line and duty to his commander, Pickett went through with the charge, for which he would go down in history.

Pickett's Charge comprised of an estimated 12,000–15,000 troops who made the assault. They marched in straight, parallel lines, known as continental style warfare, across nearly a mile of open fields toward the center of the Union Army. The charge came under fire from cannons almost as soon as the march began and musket fire as they approached closer to a stone wall that the Union troops were shielded behind, and they were torn apart. More than half of the troops under Pickett's command were killed in the charge, thousands more were

wounded or missing. With his division decimated, Pickett was devastated and blamed Lee for a massive betrayal of his leadership and for ignoring the recommendations of his subordinate officers. Pickett would go on to survive the war and to denounce Lee on every occasion publicly for being the cause of the destruction of his division. Does this sound familiar to you at all?

Surely, everyone can agree that blind total loyalty is hazardous. We need to maintain our awareness of our surroundings and events going on around us so that we do not fall victim to poor or blind leadership. In the context of international education, following weak leaders will not usually cause catastrophic consequences or place us in life-and-death circumstances. But deficient leaders can cause us to have setbacks as a field. They can construct additional barriers to our students or our own development and create situations that institutions are forced to deal with legally or financially. There were too many of these scenarios that played out during 2020 that we can all call to mind.

These values of loyalty, honor, duty, and sacrifice stem from the core values of the United States Army. You learn these values as soon as you enter Basic Training. The full acronym is LDRSHIP (leadership shortened for use)—Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service (or Sacrifice), Honor, Integrity, and Personal Courage. I chose to embrace these values and many others for my life and apply them to every situation and relationship that I develop. My firm belief is that these core values are directly applicable to international education. We can infuse these into our work with balanced methodology and practices, and strive to better our field incrementally over time.

Loyalty is vital to any relationship, to any agreements, to any oaths. It takes steadfast loyalty to honor our agreements and uphold a duty to fulfill an oath. Sacrifice is a term which I did not select lightly. It is inevitable that if we wish to make grand changes in the world, sacrifices

will be necessary. We do this constantly, whether we admit it or not. We sacrifice time in the pursuit of things of importance; we sacrifice energy and sometimes our health, physical or mental, in the hopes of accomplishing certain things throughout our lives. What is worth sacrificing to you as a professional in international education?

Where Do We Go from Here?

My belief is that inherent lessons can be taken from the chain of command and leadership development that the U.S. military employs. We may elect to learn from historical events, and our triumphs and mistakes as a nation and as a human race.

For the consideration of leadership in international education, I have gathered some feedback from several people across the field. Ask yourself what the top qualities are that you want in a leader. I requested these responses from people in a variety of stages in their careers from senior leadership to brand new to the field. These voices are highly diverse in personal and professional experiences, demographics, institutions, and geographic regions.

Uttiyo Raychaudhuri, Ph.D.—*Vice Provost for Internationalization, University of Denver*

- Humility
- Empathy
- Emotional Intelligence

Kyle Rausch, Ed.D.—*Executive Director, Study Abroad Office, University of Illinois at Chicago*

- A strong sense of self and one's values
- A clear mission, "why," and ability to communicate both
- An ability to advocate for those that one is leading

Christina "Chris" Thompson, M.A.—*Founder of Compear Global Education Network*

- Empathy and Active Listening: My background in International Education and as a DEI practitioner emphasizes the importance of empathetic leadership. Active listening goes beyond words, valuing the stories, especially from marginalized voices.
- Cultural Intelligence (CQ): My global experiences highlight Cultural Intelligence's value. Leaders with high CQ adjust to diverse groups, making it a key leadership asset in today's world.
- Co-Construction: The African philosophy "Ubuntu" aligns with collaborative leadership. From my travels and North Carolina roots, I believe in co-creating, ensuring every voice is respected.

Emily Dougherty, M.S.—*Senior Education Abroad Advisor, Cornell University*

- Empathy
- Active Listening
- Communication Skills

Rachel Bornstein—*Programs Abroad Coordinator, University of Tennessee at Knoxville*

- Emotional Intelligence: To be a great leader, you need people that respect you as a leader. Earning trust takes time and effort. The ability to listen, adapt to different personalities, and understand what makes your colleagues feel appreciated goes so far!
- Humility: There is always something new to learn and a new challenge to overcome. Great leaders are adaptable and know when to transfer some of their experience and when to be open-minded to challenge what they know.
- Curiosity: Curiosity supports an overall growth mindset—the mindset that thrives on facing situations that make

one uncomfortable. Leaders will always face things they
aren't prepared for. Leaning into discomfort is the only way
to grow!

These responses share some insightful characteristics, and each is chosen by the individual experiences of the professionals. It is clear that to be a strong, effective, and respected leader in the field of international education, one needs to be humble, willing to listen to others, empathic, adaptable, and supportive of one's people.

If you are currently a leader or supervisor, I would challenge you to consider whether you embody all or most of the qualities and values discussed throughout this paper. If you are not presently in a position of authority, judge whether you embody these qualities and values in order to become a strong and effective leader someday. If you read this paper with someone in mind who is in leadership or supervises you, flip your mindset and think about how people who are below you in the chain of command may view and respect you.

Biases can creep into everything we do. The easiest bias to manifest in any circumstance is the bias of self-perception. It is incredibly difficult to analyze our own actions and mentality with a sensitivity to how others perceive us. But with practice, resolution to change, and the humility to share and ask others and accept truly constructive feedback, we can all improve our leadership skills and learn to embrace new qualities into our personas.

I believe our field needs strong leadership—we need leaders who are dependable, capable, proven, and respectable. It is essential that we concurrently instill in our future leaders these qualities, virtues, and skillsets that we, ourselves, strive to achieve. Humble leaders who can adapt and adopt many of the values expressed across this paper will be necessary to move the field forward into the future. We cannot continue

to maintain the way things have always been if we ever hope to make the world what we wish it could become.

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SECTION FOUR:
CODA

A concluding musical section that is formally distinct from the main structure; a concluding part of a literary or dramatic work; something that serves to round out, conclude, or summarize and usually has its own interest.

-Merriam-Webster Dictionary

These fragments I have shored against my ruins
-T. S. Eliot, The Waste Land (1922)

Who noticed the toad cross the street? He was just a little man — a doll would not have been more miniscule. He dragged himself along on his knees — as if he were ashamed….? No! He has rheumatism, one leg remains behind, he drags it forward! Where is he going like that? He comes out of the sewer, the poor clown. No one has noticed this toad in the street. Before no one noticed me in the street, now children make fun of my yellow star. Happy toad! You don't have a yellow star.

-Max Jacob, "Love Thy Neighbor," Lyon, February 15, 1946 (post-humously published in French, André Billy, 1946)

DISAGREEMENTS FOR THE SAKE OF HEAVEN

Michael Woolf

CEA CAPA EDUCATION ABROAD

As senior editor of this Occasional Paper, I am aware that there have been creative discussions, even disagreements, in the process of creating this collection. The Editorial Board has not, however, been overly disturbed by this. Our Occasional Papers have never been a place for the promotion of a thesis or a singular perspective. The objective has been, and remains, to create a forum wherein ideas are exchanged in a safe space. Our objective is to encourage discourse, rather than silence dissent.

We take inspiration from an old story. Two wise rabbis born before Jesus, Shammai (50 BCE–30 CE) and Hillel the Elder (c. 110 BCE–10 CE) rarely agreed about anything. They did not seek to reach consensus. They always ended their discourses with the assertion that these were "disagreements for the sake of Heaven." Disagreement had, for them, both intellectual and spiritual dimensions.[29] Regardless of heaven, thought moves beyond superficial reiteration of received ideas when thesis is challenged by antithesis, when dogma is subject to deconstruction, when we stop to listen to each other.

Uncertainty is the source of creativity. Dogma is the enemy of truth.

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29 I am indebted to the writer Isla Van Tricht for this information.

The Civil Society

This notion has been discussed elsewhere in this collection, but it is worth revisiting at the conclusion of these arguments. "Civil" has at least two meanings that are of crucial significance in our work. A "civil society" is one in which citizens are thoughtful participants, engaging with an implicit awareness that wisdom does not reside in any single national identity or in any set of unexamined ideologies. There are also implications for the manner in which citizens engage with each other and the nature of interactions between nations. Both are conducted in an ethos of mutual tolerance for diversity.

"Civil" has another important meaning that relates to our role as international educators: politeness and respect of speech and behavior. Civility toward others is a pre-condition for learning. It implies that we listen to voices whose views may conflict with our own; that which is strange to us is not to be dismissed as unworthy of consideration. If all we hear are views that reflect our own, we reside in an arid echo chamber.

I hope that these essays will be a catalyst for reaction, alteration, agreement, and disagreement, that this Occasional Paper (and those that have preceded it) make a small contribution to the creation of civil space. There we speak and listen to each other with respect for diversity of opinion, with minds and hearts, intellects and emotions, open to many voices, consciousness that is inclusive.

Wishful Thinking?

This is, of course, wishful thinking in many of the environments in which we function. External pressures and internal fractures represent constraints upon what we seek to achieve, that limit the range of permissible communication. In this collection, authors have offered perspectives on such factors as the rise of neoliberalism and consequent utilitarian view of purposes of education, allied with populist assaults

on the values of the humanities. "Culture wars" have also engulfed DEI/JEDI initiatives, reflecting clashes of ideologies within and beyond educational institutions. Discussions of Critical Race Theory further demonstrate the degree to which educational policies and practices have been subject to external political pressures. Jacey Fortin offers a succinct summary:

> Culture wars over critical race theory have turned school boards into battlegrounds, and in higher education, the term has been tangled up in tenure battles. Dozens of United States senators have branded it "activist indoctrination" (2021). [30]

The intellectual space in which we can safely and creatively function is narrowed.

We might return to our old rabbis, Shammai and Hillel the Elder. They represent the kind of discussions we want to have, built around tolerance of diversity. I suspect that they would have gotten on very well with Plato, who in *The Republic* said, "I am the wisest man alive, for I know one thing, and that is that I know nothing." What they share is a sense of intellectual humility.

In a rather unhistorical leap, I will move forward to July 4, 1776. (I've never been accused of logical consistency or scholastic cohesion). As a mordant Englishman, there is a part of the Constitution of the United States that has bothered me for a very long time:

> We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness.

30 See also, for example, Sawchuk (2021).

I am not at all bothered by the concepts of equality, life, or liberty because they were never meant to be taken entirely seriously anyway. Equality and liberty were not universal principles but rather dependent on such factors as status, gender, and race. What bothers me (and Plato, Hillel, and Shammai too, I suspect) is the "unalienable right to the pursuit of happiness." It collides with a rather more somber European view of happiness as expressed, for example, by Bertolt Brecht: "The happy man is he who has not heard the disastrous news." Happiness here is equated with ignorance, a state of not knowing. The pursuit of happiness requires a journey to the mythic River Lethe wherein the Greeks believed the waters would bring forgetfulness, the eradication of knowledge. The pursuit of happiness is, from this European perspective, a symptom of intellectual impoverishment.

The pursuit of happiness in this manifestation requires us to edit reality, to cultivate the habit of myopia.

What This Did to Health and Safety

For a long time, the health and safety of students, let alone happiness, was not really the concern of European higher education. It was not that anyone wanted students to be unhappy, ill, or in danger, but it was nobody's business. There has always been a spectrum of indifference in Europe. At one end, English universities have usually taken some mild interest in the well-being of students. Italian or German universities traditionally have kept out of it.

All that has changed. Standards of health and safety have become a measure of quality, at least in part due to the international influence of U.S. higher education's commitment to holistic education. Everything is its business.

Health and safety is a serious responsibility. In education abroad, students are taught the dangers of irresponsible drinking, are instructed

on how to cross roads, are warned against accepting sweets from strangers. . . . Professional staff are trained to be aware of the plethora of mental issues that students bring with them. They have those things we used to have—depression, stress, lovesickness—and a bunch of relatively new stuff: ADHD, OCD, ADD, and many combinations thereof.

The pursuit of happiness complicates matters insofar as it expands health and safety to include emotional and intellectual safety. The implications are, as Greg Lukianoff and Jonathan Haidt discuss in *The Coddling of the American Mind,* emotional and intellectual impoverishment:

> A culture that allows the concept of "safety" to creep so far that it equates emotional discomfort with physical danger is a culture that encourages people to systematically protect one another from the very experiences embedded in daily life that they need in order to become strong and healthy (Lukianoff and Haidt, 2018: 36).

Furthermore,

> The notion that a university should protect all of its students from ideas that some of them find offensive is a repudiation of the legacy of Socrates, who described himself as the "gadfly" of the Athenian people. He thought it was his job to sting, to disturb, to question, and thereby to provoke his fellow Athenians to think through their current beliefs, and change the ones they could not defend (Lukianoff and Haidt, 2018: 53).

There are, then, circumstances in which it becomes perilous to upset students' equilibrium with disturbing or challenging concepts or information that might make them feel unhappy or emotionally "unsafe." I return then to the spirit of Oscar Wilde's Lady Bracknell: "I do

not approve of anything that tampers with natural ignorance. Ignorance is like a delicate exotic fruit; touch it and the bloom is gone" (Wilde, 1895: 17).

Shakespeare's *Hamlet* offers another perspective. Hamlet is a study abroad student who, upon return to his country, discovers that "[s]omething is rotten in the State of Denmark." The young prince faces profound re-entry dilemmas: domestic disintegration and frightful maternal misbehavior:

> Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears
> Had left the flushing in her galled eyes,
> She married. O, most wicked speed, to post
> With such dexterity to incestuous sheets!
> (Act One, Scene 2)

It may be flippant to suggest that protecting students from such a story of domestic discord is an imperative lest the pursuit of happiness is wrecked upon the stormy seas of reality. How much more disturbing might it be to be forced to learn of the atrocities of history, contemporary traumas of poverty and pollution? To respect an unalienable right, we would be obliged to allow students the privilege of selective myopia, to edit disturbing experiences out of the curricula of education abroad lest they undermine students' untroubled equilibrium. If Brecht was right, and who are we to disagree, happiness and knowledge are irreconcilable beyond those moments of forgetful bliss when, drifting down the Lethe, we imagine the world to be just as we would wish it to be.

Somewhere within these fanciful thoughts, there is an issue about the nature of learning that we need to consider. Learning does not take place in a sea of tranquility. The process of encountering new ideas in unfamiliar environments is intended to be disruptive, challenging, and disturbing. We learn nothing if our comfortable assumptions

remain untroubled. If this proposition has some element of truth in it, the pursuit of happiness is profoundly problematic.

Not Howling at the Moon

> *His roots shall be dried up beneath, and above shall his branch be cut off. His remembrance shall perish from the earth, and he shall have no name in the street. He shall be driven from light into darkness, and chased out of the world*

- Job 18: 16-19, KJV

I do not want to end these thoughts with the dire vision of Job lest readers have the impression of a garrulous old cynic wailing impotently at the moon. I think we are facing some significant challenges to the principles and practices of international education. I also believe that we have an ethical and political obligation to reiterate those values, to represent not only the materialistic and individualistic benefits of education abroad but also to affirm the social good that is consequent on expanding knowledge of other worlds. We also need to recognize that learning may not be comfortable. That which we have believed to be true may be revealed as illusion.

How might we articulate these perspectives? The temptation of hyperbole needs to be resisted. What we do is not going to change the world and all the evidence of history indicates that international education has not brought greater peace. What it may do, however, is enrich the lives of individuals and those they encounter abroad and at home. The most difficult border to cross is that which separates the self from others. Learning that no nation has a monopoly on truth, and that contact with those unlike ourselves may create empathy across borders, may enrich our lives and represents a step along the path towards enlightenment. I think also of the metaphor of throwing a pebble in a pond. It makes a small splash, but ripples spread in many directions.

Nothing ever stays the same. Karl Marx understood that "[a]ll fixed, fast-frozen relations, swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air..." (Marx and Engels, 1888 [1848]: 16). The current environment for international education is an uneasy one, but if we remain consistent to the heart of our ideals, we will step by step, mind by mind, work toward those "ordinary virtues" that Michael Ignatieff characterized in his book *The Ordinary Virtues.* Rather than the grand narrative, the universal solution, the ordinary virtues derive from "a discipline of moral individualism . . . to suspend prior judgment, to take people as they come, to judge them on their merits, to bat away stereotypes and focus on the distinct reality of the person with whom you are dealing" (Ignatieff, 2017: 212). Those principles align with objectives that are properly embedded in situational learning: to help students unlearn generalized assumptions, to acquire the gift of uncertainty, to discard the baggage with which they traveled, and to achieve Ignatieff's insight that "context was all" (27).

Through that perspective, I believe we might usefully revisit some of our own orthodoxies, to revise some of the ways in which we talk of benefits. Return on investment is, for example, a banking metaphor that litters our rhetoric and sits uneasily within the context of the serendipity of learning. There is no guarantee of repayment. We might also look more closely at the implications of "outcomes," a mechanistic consequence of industrial processes in which inputs lead inexorably to outcomes. Pathways to learning are rarely predictable. We do not know at the beginning of our journeys what we may know at the end. Along the route, there will certainly be diversions, epiphanies, dead ends. Metaphors drawn from investment and industrialization are ultimately misleading. Certainly, we need learning objectives, but these are unlikely to align with learning outcomes that emerge from the rich, creative unpredictability that is a consequence of encounters with unfamiliar ideas in unfamiliar environments.

I want to conclude with reference to the poet and painter Max Jacob (1876–1944), who came to Paris from the provincial town of Quimper in Brittany. He became a close friend of Picasso, was a homosexual and a Jew who converted to Catholicism. Vichy collaborators with Nazi-occupying authorities arrested Jacob and interned him in the Drancy holding camp where French authorities held Jews before passing them on to the Nazis. It was called by a survivor "an antechamber to Auschwitz." On March 5, 1944, Max Jacob died in Drancy while awaiting deportation. He was a victim of ancient hatreds and modern bigotries. I honor him as an artist, a poet, a humanist. He remains a moral force living still in my heart and mind. I think his words perfectly encapsulate the values and ideals that are at the profound center of our aspirations. It is appropriate to end here: "There is only one country. The country of the heart."

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