

International Travel and Implication

SUSAN TALBURT
Georgia State University

IN U.S. HIGHER EDUCATION over the past decades, international education has become a “must” for institutions and individuals alike. Universities commonly seek to infuse disciplines and courses with international themes, enhance interdisciplinary area studies programs, expand student participation in study abroad, and offer incentives for faculty to engage in international research and curriculum development (Johnston & Spalding, 1997; Pickert, 1992). The “international” has undoubtedly become more urgent with increasing rhetoric surrounding globalization and the positioning of universities as significant actors in “preparing” productive, responsible citizens and workers for a global society. Although this instrumental, economic logic is not my focus per se, it offers a relevant backdrop to this article’s exploration of one dimension of international education, study abroad. I consider study abroad as a crucial site for interrogating curricular questions of the construction of subjectivities, relations, and knowledges through the “international.” Discourses of study abroad rely on individualizing ideas of skill and knowledge acquisition, fixed identities, and non-relationality that carry traces of imperial thought, thus perpetuating instrumental reasoning and foreclosing educative contact that opens selves to change.

This article explores the ways study abroad is not an innocent educational experience but a site of contact that produces and reproduces self, other, and experience. In order to construct an alternative to dominant educational and social psychological outcomes-based discourses, I draw from postcolonial theorizing, anthropology, and cultural studies of “travel” that offer ways to understand study abroad as a process of cultural production.¹ I then turn to readings of interviews I conducted with undergraduate students from the United States during a study abroad program in Segovia, Spain. I offer a reading of the interviews that reframes decontextualizing discourses of study abroad that (re)produce particular identities and differences with a conceptualization of study abroad as a form of contact with the potential to create new forms of relation. I begin with present common sense of study abroad.

Individualizing Discourses of Study Abroad

Study abroad is situated in relation to differing, but related, discourses of international education. On one hand, advocates of international education frame study abroad as an ideal site for acquiring skills and knowledges needed for individual and national economic competitiveness in an increasingly globalized economy (Open Doors, 2008; Sidhu, 2006). Desruisseaux (1999) notes that campus administrators suggest that “what now motivates U.S. students to go abroad is the desire to acquire international knowledge and experience that will give them an advantage in their careers...[and] to prepare themselves for work in the ‘new global economy’” (p. A60; see also Greif, 2000). Other justifications for study abroad point to the cultivation of “intercultural understanding,” or knowledge of and changed attitudes toward other nations and cultures. This more humanistic understanding is based on an idea that “international education may help undermine received opinions of all types, and this can be unsettling and challenging. At its best, however, it fosters personal growth through reflection on assumptions, values, and moral choices” (Johnston & Spalding, 1997, p. 418). Given its experiential dimension, study abroad is often held up as the apotheosis of international learning, offering students expanded opportunities to learn their places in the world, understand nations’ and cultures’ interdependence, view the world from new perspectives, and value national and cultural differences (Johnston & Spalding, 1997). Yet these dominant understandings of international education follow a linear logic that conceptualizes largely disembodied individuals who achieve rather predictable outcomes.

This decontextualized logic produces research that instrumentalizes the meanings of study abroad, whether as developing economic skills or cultivating “globally multicultural” dispositions. An overview of research studies concerning study abroad divides study abroad “outcomes” into categories of knowledge (facts), affect (attitudes and values about others), and language (foreign language ability) (Johnston & Spalding, 1997, p. 26). For example, researchers have identified the improvement of foreign language skills, career preparation, the acquisition of cultural knowledge, and a desire to travel as salient reasons students cite for studying abroad (Carlson, Burn, Useem, & Yachimowicz, 1990; King & Young, 1994; Koestler, 1986; Opper, Teichler, & Carlson, 1990). After study abroad, researchers argue that students cite as benefits of their experiences improved language proficiency, a critical perspective on the U.S., knowledge of the host country, and increased competence in unfamiliar settings (Carlson et al., 1990; Opper et al., 1990). Whether this research “discovers” or “creates” the very categories it claims to uncover is not what is at stake. Rather, it is critical to interrogate the acquisitive nature of decontextualizing discourses that frame study abroad as oriented to individual betterment and ignore the complex subjective processes that constitute the curriculum of study abroad. To do so requires accounting for the social, cultural, and political relations in which movement and contact occur. Such accounting cannot figure the creation of knowledge as bound by preexisting identities, whether travelling subjects, nations, or cultures; rather, it must focus on the ongoing production of identities and relations (Sidhu, 2006).

A beginning point for effecting a shift to a productive, relational understanding of study abroad is to reconceptualize its “subjects,” traveler and place, as “always already” in relation. Dominant discourses of study abroad presume a centered, unitary subject of educational travel who moves from one bounded space to another, acquiring knowledge, skills, and attitudes. For example, Fussell (1988) promotes romantic ideas of the individual subject, expanding the self, constructing the ideal traveler as the universal liberal humanist subject who can employ a “principle of disinterested or nonutilitarian perception and contemplation” (p. 164). Rather than

acknowledging subjective moments of relation, connection, and disconnection, Fussell argues that detachment allows individuals

to deepen your sensitivity to ideas and images and not least to sharpen your sense of humility as you come to realize that your country is not the “standard” for the rest of the world but is just as odd as all the others. (p. 164)

Such neutrality ignores the histories that have enabled and shaped educational travel and effectively erases travelers’ implications in what they perceive and learn. Challenging this objectification through rationality, Kaplan (1996) writes,

I was brought up to believe that distance gives needed perspective, that difference leads to insight, and that travel is quite figuratively “broadening.” Yet it has also been my experience that travel can be confusing, distance can be illusory, and difference depends very much on one’s point of view. (p. x)

I take up Kaplan’s concise argument that self and other are not separate but implicated, places and spaces are not discrete but intertwined and the subject of travel not merely rational but decentered. A view of subjects, nations, and cultures as non-unitary and interrelated invites a reframing of inquiry into study abroad to ask how subjects can learn from and through their very implications in processes of travel and contact. Before turning to the interviews I conducted with students, I offer a brief historicization of travel and study abroad as implicated in past and present imperial relations.

Reframing Subjects (and Objects) of Travel

The movement of bodies through study abroad takes place in a complex web of global relations that carries traces of imperial legacies. It has by now become commonplace to point out that universities have long been implicated in projects of the nation-state, including empire building (Sidhu, 2006, p. 311). It is similarly commonplace to acknowledge that imperial thought and practice continue to constitute social, cultural, political, and economic relations in the ostensibly postcolonial present. Said (1993) offers a useful distinction that relates colonialism’s material practices of overt domination to imperialism’s subjective work through cultural and social practices:

“Imperialism” means the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan center ruling a distant territory; “colonialism,” which is almost always a consequence of imperialism, is the implanting of settlements on distant territory... In our time, direct colonialism has largely ended; imperialism, as we shall see, lingers where it has always been, in a kind of general cultural sphere as well as in specific political, ideological, economic, and social practices. (p. 9)

In the U.S., elements of “imperial subjectivity,” or ways of seeing and relating to others, have sedimented, extending to territories with which it has not had a formal colonial relationship. And this imperial subjectivity must be continually produced in multiple locations.

Empire's identity has depended on its production of itself as distinct, different, and separate from the colonies (Pratt, 1992; Willinsky, 1998). Said's (1995) formulation of Orientalism points to multiple spheres in which subjects are taught to perceive self and other. Orientalism as pedagogy entails

a *distribution* of geopolitical awareness into aesthetic, scholarly, economic, sociological, historical, and philological texts; it is an *elaboration* not only of a basic geographical distinction (the world is made up of two unequal halves, Orient and Occident) but also of a whole series of "interests" which, by such means as scholarly discovery, philological reconstruction, psychological analysis, landscape and sociological description, it not only creates but also maintains; it *is*, rather than expresses, a certain *will* or *intention* to understand, in some cases to control, manipulate, even to incorporate, what is a manifestly different (or alternative and novel) world. (p. 90)

In the nineteenth century, imperial nations supported colonial and expansionist projects by creating an elaborate industry to teach their citizens knowledge about their and others' essential differences and placement in the world:

These instruments of public instruction, including museum, garden, encyclopedia, exposition, and travel, took shape under the auspices of private enterprise, corporate concerns, nation-state, and church. Their imperial display educated the eye to divide the world according to the patterns of empire. As the eye was disciplined, so was the body. A public was lining up for these institutions, and it was leaving them amused, amazed, informed, and committed to, among other things, the future of national empires and the institutions of public education....The West's way of putting the world on display, whether for the museum-goer, spectator, or sightseer, was an education in how to hold the world in mind, with little thought given to the power required to mount such exhibits. (Willinsky, 1998, p. 57)

Within these projects, travel has a long history as part of empire's "imaginative construction of other people and places" (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 1998, p. 96). The dissemination of Europeans' travel writing in the form of explanatory and fictional representations in the Middle Ages, commercial travelers' accounts during the Renaissance, and journals and letters from biological and geographical mapping and missionary projects in the eighteenth century contributed representations that produced knowledge of others' differences from imperial centers. Following this zeitgeist, an early form of educational travel (call it a proto-study abroad) was "the gentleman's Grand Tour of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries" (Ghazvinian, 2000, p. 29), which offered elites access to knowledge and experience of the world. Craik (1997) describes the massification of travel to experience difference and cultivate the self:

With the growth of scientific approaches to knowledge, recording and understanding, travellers became increasingly preoccupied with gaining historical insights, acquiring aesthetic tastes, displaying connoisseurship, and generally demonstrating visionary ways of looking...The nineteenth-century expansion of the tourist trade and non-elite groups of tourists saw a generalisation of these preoccupations into more organised, predictable and marketable forms. (p. 119)

This production of knowledge aligned science and popular culture to produce clearly mapped and hierarchized differences and identities and corresponding subjectivities and relations to the world.

A privileged “empiricist quest to gather information and knowledge” (Ghazvinian, 2000, p. 29), whether for subjects’ or nations’ economic gain or self-improvement, resonates in contemporary discourses of study abroad. A modernist subject moves through space and time acquiring non-implicated knowledge of difference through travel, reproducing “the old Western philosophical subject, thinking itself unified, central, in control, universal, etc., mastering otherness and profiting from it” (MacCannell, 1976, p. xxi). Although such practices as displaying indigenous peoples, or “primitives,” in metropolitan centers no longer continues, the gaze of the privileged subject, separate from the object, continues: “The desire to look upon predictable forms of Otherness from a safe distance persists” (Fusco, 1995, p. 50). This clear division of the world and the (re)production of particular knowledges and subjectivities is at stake in understanding study abroad as curriculum.

In their discussion of curricular practices in the context of postcolonialism and globalization, Matus and McCarthy (2003) have written of the predominance of technical discourses of competencies that conceptualize multiplicity and difference as singular and ignore the movement of ideas, images, people, and capital. Such curricular approaches to knowledge conceptualize

culture and *identity* within the crisis language of imaginary unity, of singular origins, singular ancestry, bounded nationality, and so forth. *Culture* is thus defined as a tightly bounded set of linguistic, aesthetic, and folkloric practices specific to a particular group. *Group identity* is seen as the true self within the collective association—as the fulfillment of a linear connection to an unsullied past and ancestry. (p. 76)

They point to a postcolonial imagination that understands that “culture and identity are the products of human encounters, the inventories of cross-cultural appropriation and hybridity, not the elaboration of the ancestral essence of particular groups” (p. 77). This is a dynamic, relational conceptualization of unexpected affiliations in which subjects and communities “put together their sense of past, present, and the future, their very destinies and their sense of self” (p. 73) in dialogue with changing cultural landscapes. Such thinking offers an approach to understanding the curriculum of study abroad (and the constitution of student subjectivities) as positioned in relation to contradictory discourses, in which traces of imperial ideas of unitary identities and differences clash with actual processes of the co-articulation of cultures and identities (Appadurai, 1996). Moreover, it places study abroad itself as a site of cultural production through contact. In her writing on travel, Pratt (1992) offers the notion of “contact zones” to highlight contingency and relationality in the movement and interactions of embodied subjects. The idea of “contact zone” constitutes

an attempt to invoke the spatial and temporal copresence of subjects previously separated by geographic and historical disjunctures, and whose trajectories now intersect...A “contact” perspective emphasizes how subjects are constituted in and by their relations to each other. It treats the relations among colonizers and colonized, or travelers and “travelees,” not in terms of separateness or apartheid, but in terms of copresence, interaction, inter-

locking understandings and practices, often within radically asymmetrical relations of power. (p. 7)

As a form of contact, study abroad is a dynamic process of potentialities produced at the nexus of multiple places and spaces, presents and pasts, and individual and collective histories.

Interview Fragments

I turn to interview fragments from a qualitative study focused on an academic study abroad program of a U.S. public university that took place for six weeks in the provincial capital of Segovia, Spain. The majority of the 35 students were “traditionally aged” undergraduates in Spanish, Education, Business, and the liberal arts who had a minimum of two years of college-level Spanish. The students come from a non-elite regional institution; for most of them, this was their first time outside of the United States. I accompanied this study abroad group with the express goal of conducting inquiry into study abroad. I interviewed six of the students (five of whom were White and one of whom was African American) three times each over the course of the study abroad, with interview topics including students’ reasons for participating in study abroad, salient experiences they chose to recount, their understandings of culture, and the relations of what they learned in and out of their classes. I focus here on moments in the interviews that point to shifting meanings students created as they narrated self and other in the midst of transcultural contact. I ask of the interviews: How do students abroad narrate the curriculum of travel? What sources of meaning are privileged in their interpretive processes? How does the curriculum of travel produce “the rest of the world” and their sense of “home”? In what ways does it open selves to new perspectives on difference, reinforce received opinions, or encourage a return to self?

The contradictions of their narratives of “contact” as they articulated self, Spain, and their experiences point to the complexities of being a subject abroad, as traces of imperial thought and a questioning of imperial practices comingle. I focus on three dimensions of their narratives: (1) the students’ conscious projects of changing the self through travel, in which they narrate their time in Spain as a sort of intentional *bildungsroman*, or cultivation of self, that is bound up with the acquisition of cultural capital; (2) the privilege of non-implicated knowledge as they searched for difference and responded to tangible signs of modernization and globalization as disruptions of Spain’s “authenticity”; and (3) the potential for the construction of individual and national identities and cultures as discrete rather than as relational to reify national self-identity.

Self-Improvement through Travel

Positioned in relation to the new or different, the students framed study abroad as a self-conscious project of knowing and cultivating the self. In describing their reasons for studying abroad, they narrated a vague sense that six weeks in Spain would provide them worthwhile developmental experiences. Steve explained, “One of my main reasons for coming, I think just as a life experience...Besides liking to experience cultures, I just like to travel and to see new things. And I like doing things that—to feel cultured.” The meaning of “cultured” remained ill-defined: “It’s just kind of going to be something that sticks with me for the rest of my life...It’s

going to leave an impression on me. And I don't know yet what exactly that will be." Jacob felt he had arrived at an appropriate time in his life to explore Spain:

It's kind of like, you hit that, some of us hit that certain period in our life, when it's like, okay, it's time to start traveling. I think I wanted, it was time to go to Europe. I hadn't been to Europe.

As they read guidebooks, studied Spain in their classes, participated in organized excursions, and travelled independently on weekends, some of the students spoke of their search for experience as seeing and doing "the right things." They at times framed themselves as consumers who demonstrated proper connoisseurship of their object of study. Rick explained, "We've gotten to do the big things. We've gotten to see all the things that you're supposed to see when you come to Spain. I would have liked to have been able to visit a couple of more cities." Rick valued seeing what he called "touristy things," commenting, "as far as the culture goes, I just hadn't studied it as much, and I wanted to experience it firsthand, with the help of classroom instruction to help get me going, to tell me what to do, what to see." Nora positioned herself as a shopper in a marketplace of sights:

One place we haven't gone to that we've seen pictures of is that, I can't remember the name of it, it starts with a G or something...I'd like to go there kind of, just because it looks like a really neat building. Something that's on the posters, and you kind of want to see everything that's advertised.

To an extent, these students could be said to have been disciplining themselves to conform to expected connoisseurship of emblematic places that represent Spain as nation and culture, as explicated by the classroom and the tourist brochure. The promise of self-development through first-hand experience of a place hailed the students to experience sights as a ritual, in which, as Horne (1984) says, "there are established for us the monuments and exhibits we must see, and sometimes the order in which we must see them" (p. 11).

Yet the students directed their developmental search not only to acquiring experiences of Spain that could be enumerated as bits of knowledge, or cultural capital, but also internally to improving the self. Carrie framed her purposes as an exploration of self and abilities: "That really is my main goal about being here. To get to know myself. To find out what, to particularly find out what you can do, and what you're capable of in a situation like this." Jacob articulated a desire to know difference in order to change the self:

That's another thing that's extremely valuable about cultural experiences, that you're forced out of your own pattern, or your own mold. And you're forced to get used to other molds. Not that you have to get used to a certain mold, but it's this process of learning how to adapt.

He immersed himself in a process of looking outward in order to look inward:

I think at least one of the values might be that you look at your own culture a little more carefully, more closely...If you can do such a thing as make progress, or at least lead a fulfilling life instead of a vacant life, then a lot of it has to do with knowing something

about your own culture, you, and your people, and knowing something about other people that contrasts with those things, and to know whether you're really leading a happy life or not...Instead of living like a lot of friends I know, living on the surface of the States. I think it's extremely important to at least know one other culture very well so it gives you, for no other reason than to give you a better perspective on your own culture.

Aware he could never become an "insider," Jacob sought to place himself in relation to Spaniards:

I'm trying to speak the way they speak, because, well, it's another thing that's got a lot to do with identity. You're trying to identify yourself a little more with them. Even though it's futile to try and be, you know, ever be a Spaniard, but...it's still trying to identify with the Spanish people, at least experience Spain with them.

Whether directed to acquiring experiences of sites and sights or to changing the self, one could argue that such interactions position travelers in an acquisitive, instrumental relation to the "other" that essentializes people, place, and culture (MacCannell, 1992). For example, Pratt (1992) has described the incitement to experience difference in order to experience self as embedded in histories of imperialism:

Travel, as a way of finding oneself through a greater knowledge of the other, brings us to perhaps the busiest of intersections between education and imperialism...Not only do we seek the thrill of crossing the line and entering the space of the other, but we see this as a way of knowing ourselves and defining our place as the ones who, hovering above this divide, *can* know the other and ourselves, as if to encompass the whole world. This presumption of knowing...is what gives travel its colonizing aspect. (p. 78)

The privileged knowledge Pratt refers to depends on an individualism that assumes non-implication in sights seen and experienced. As empire once constructed itself as innocent due to the preexisting nature of intrinsic differences, travelers (or students abroad) understand themselves as disinterested observers. The innocence of learning and experiencing differences becomes a "privilege of knowing" in which self-improvement is embedded in a capitalist logic that constructs the acquisition of cultural knowledge as the acquisition of cultural capital (Caesar, 1988). Yet a project such as Jacob's of shifting identifications may offer a fulcrum for moving beyond fixed notions of Spanishness by relating one's meanings to the meanings of others. Rather than representing closure, such identifications may be a place for opening.

What is at stake within imperial legacies of study abroad is not to frame these students as budding imperialists but to inquire into the quality, or kind, of knowledge they create. For example, the identifications Jacob seeks, however complicit with structures of privilege, may enable implication in ways that collecting tourist sites does not, a topic I elaborate below. Implication, which presses at issues of how the self is related to the other, dissolves differences as natural, essential, or eternal, foregrounding their relational and constructed nature. It thus becomes useful to ask, for these students, what differences did difference make?

Looking for Difference

The search for difference was central to the students' narratives of Spain. Steve, who had travelled to England before coming to Spain, was disappointed by England's similarities to what he already knew. He found Spain, however, appropriately different:

Well, we were in England, London, for a week. And it was pretty much like the United States. I mean, there's differences, of course, and, well there's a lot of differences. But when you get right down to it, they're pretty much like us. They do the same things. They go out to bars and they drink, and there's nothing like the corridas de toros [bullfights], nothing. When you come to Spain, there's such a difference between Spain and America. I mean, two cultures that are like exact, well like not opposites, but you know, they're so different that it's just interesting, and it's amazing.

Steve's flattening of differences between England and the U.S. and his choice of bullfights as a salient national difference suggest that certain differences counted more than others. These differences centered on a perception of uniqueness and authenticity, as suggested by his essentializing of bullfighting as a national phenomenon: "Well, I'm interested in this seeming Spanish fascination with like death. And I think it's because, you know, of their violent, bloody history. But something like that would never go over in America." The bullfight became a symbol that confirmed preexisting ideas about a national culture, which is locked in tradition and history. The students sought what they already knew: "In the same way that early travelers' experience was coloured by expectations formed over centuries of superstitious imagining, so the modern tourist travels to discover those stereotypical experiences already presented as exotic" (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 1998, p. 98). Cultural hybridity, or signs of the global movement of images and cultural practices, disrupted preconceived ideas in which difference was contained by national space. Nora, for example, commented on a Spaniard who approached her at a discotheque: "And he comes in, he's like very little. He had this dumb Metallica T-shirt on or something. Very not, like Latin-like at all." The students' conceptualizations of Spanishness depended on a non-relational division of the world into demarcated differences that attach identities and cultures to place, assuming "that 'a culture' is naturally the property of a spatially localized people" (Gupta & Ferguson, 1997, p. 3).

The students confirmed their construction of identity, culture, and place as static through their readings of the landscape. Rick explained,

I think people have a different respect for life here, because everything is older and more traditional. And I think that's the main difference. Everything in America is, it's fast-paced and skyscrapers reaching towards the sky. Spain's just different because it's more traditional.

Urban centers' modernity became atypical, not a part of the real Spain, as Jacob described:

I like the atmosphere here [in Segovia] because it's slower, you see a lot more, you get to walk through a lot more of the old part of the city. In Madrid, there's so much that's new. I mean, you've got the huge palace or the huge church or cathedral right in the middle of

the shopping district. The problem is you've got the whole shopping district here, and even though there's still a lot of tourism here, there's so much more of just rural Spain.

The creation of isomorphism between place and identity “confer[s] on the other a discrete identity, while also providing the knowing observer with a standpoint from which to see without being seen, to read without interruption” (Gupta & Ferguson, 1997, p. 12). An idea of culture as discrete and static, separate from global flows, separates observer and observed, constructing an illusion of innocence for the observer, whose very presence in rural Spain creates new positions, implications, and relations.

The search for distinct identities and differences created dissonance when Spain did not conform to a bounded spatiality. Misheila expressed annoyance with the boundary disruption created by the prevalence of U.S. products in the marketplace:

We were surprised that there's so much American stuff here. We were like, we're going to buy T-shirts and little toys and stuff that are Spanish. But we can't find any. It's all Americanized, Bugs Bunny and Disney, and just like, I didn't come here to buy this. I could buy this at home.

Positioning herself as privileged shopper and innocent tourist, Misheila continued:

It seems like they don't like Americans too much...Even if they like American stuff, even if they like American ways, they still don't like Americans...I don't know what the politics are, but I'm sure there's some political background to that. Me and John were talking about, we can't understand why they're so rude. It's like, yeah, we're tourists, we're trying to learn the language, we are speaking. And it's like, okay, you're being so rude to us, but if we weren't here, half of your little shops wouldn't be open.

Expressing a similarly vague awareness of potential cultural and economic relations of power, Nora commented on signs of globalization and patterns of consumption:

It really surprises me how much, I mean, you'd have to call it American influence, is here, here and everywhere. I mean, it's unreal. People are so, they complain that we're all fat because of fast food and all that. Look at them. They scamper en masse to these places, Pizza Hut, McDonald's, Burger King, Hooters, there's a Hooters in Madrid. It's terrible, too, because you walk by and you look in, and it's like a Statue of Liberty with big boobs wrapped in an American flag...That's one thing that you wouldn't think would be international necessarily.

These students' innocent views of landscape and surprise at globalization reflect what Rosaldo (1989) refers to as “imperialist nostalgia,” in which “people mourn the passing of what they themselves have transformed” (p. 69). Imperialist nostalgia longs for timelessness and stability, seeking in another space the simplicity of “what is at once an earlier epoch and a previous phase of life” (p. 70), as confirmed in the rural, the traditional building, or the unique cultural practice. In their search for Spanishness, students found that the traditional past that Spain embodied was being lost to progress, but they were unable to locate themselves in the flow of what Nora named as “American influence.”

Returning to Self

Students frequently used comparisons to the U.S. as a way of understanding their experiences in Spain. Jacob explained that coming to know another culture was bound up with gaining

a better perspective on your own culture. Most of the time I'm just trying to be in Spain, but when you start talking about it, out come all your comparisons with America, or with the States. You have to, because, well, that's how you understand anything, is comparing with what you know.

Combined with the students' emphasis on looking for discrete spatialized differences (or "authentic" Spain), these comparisons had the potential to confirm their similarities to each other and thus to reify "Americanness." Misheila, for example, related the search for difference to developing an enhanced understanding of self:

I came to get to know about how things are in the world. Things are different. I knew it would be different. Every experience helps you grow and helps you be more independent. It helps reinforce who you are. It makes you think about who you are and what you stand for, which is really important, to step back and look at that.

Differences, then, could further sediment identity. Misheila described the bonds that had been forged among students as resulting from a unified sense of what it means to be "American":

We all came here strangers, all different types of backgrounds, different races, different social classes, economic groups. But here, we were all Americans...Everybody's looked at us as we're Americans. It's no longer our differences, it was how we're alike, how we're connected. Even though we may come from different cultural backgrounds, here we were able to really see how much alike we are. How we really are Americans. It's sad we have to be isolated from other people to know what it means to be an American...But it's not until you're isolated from others that you can appreciate your similarities. Because we all come from the same, we have a common history, we have common food, we have common dress. That's what makes a culture.

While it may be gratifying to find young people searching for and appreciating difference, this search can essentialize culture, nation, and identity and construct linearities in which implication and relation are absent. Those linearities, which are promoted by and promote divisions of self and other, encourage a confirmation of self and discourage understandings of mutual implication. On one hand, the nation follows a linear trajectory from traditional to modern; on the other hand, the students develop as linear, bounded selves gaining incremental knowledge of self and other. In other words, essentialist views cast each as following its own predetermined path. The meanings of processes of cultural change, exchange, connection, and disconnection, not to mention the relations of power underlying them, are obscured. Nonetheless, and seemingly contradictorily, the students' interests in difference and sameness, as well as their occasional willingness to implicate the self through identification, suggest that the imperial legacies that

participate in constructing study abroad's meanings are open to rewriting. This rewriting centers contact.

Rethinking Contact as Implication and Relation

To rethink the curriculum of study abroad is a necessarily incomplete venture, as a reconceptualized study abroad cannot serve as “the answer” to “the problem” of imperial ways of seeing and knowing that circulate in the public pedagogies of popular culture and the media or institutional pedagogies of schools and universities. Thus, in proposing thinking of study abroad as contact, relation, and implication, I do so with an awareness that study abroad is but one site of possibility. Moreover, given dominant educational and social norms that do not place differences (or similarities) in relation, a study abroad curriculum of contact may serve as little more than the beginnings of a process of “unlearning.” Nonetheless, such unlearning and learning are essential undertakings. While a curriculum of contact is ideally situated in the context of the movement of travel, it is also suggestive of approaches to thinking about the purposes and processes of international education generally. I thus offer some possibilities for study abroad while recognizing that it is but one location in relation to many others.

What might it mean to construct travel as a site of implication, in which subjects interrogated their own observations, studied the meanings they made, and placed those meanings in their individual and relational histories? What if the meanings of experiencing Spain with Americans or with Spaniards were explored? What if the flow of American goods, ideologies, and people (and their participation in this flow) were an object of study and reflection? Such study is consonant with the insight that the construction of experiences of travel occurs at the intersection of the subjective, or one's “internal landscape” (Rojek, 1997), with social, cultural, and political landscapes. The inherently liminal nature of travel—as between places—constitutes subjectivity and identity as sites of “indeterminacy” (Musgrove, 1999, p. 39) in which the construction of a traveler's subjectivity takes place in relation to shifting constructions of place constituted by the interplay of home and destination. An anti-essentialist curricular focus on the meeting of the two landscapes enables examination of the construction of subjectivities, geography, history, culture, and power as relational, implicated.

Said (1993) has written of two approaches to interpreting history, “one linear and subsuming, the other contrapuntal and often nomadic” (p. xxv). The first narrates tales of progress of unitary, discrete subjects or nations; the second recognizes exchange, relation, uncertainty, and hybridity as integral to the construction of subjects and nations. A contrapuntal curriculum of study abroad would cultivate understandings of identity and difference not as natural divides of nations, cultures, or humans, but as dynamic processes constituted relationally. What might it mean, for example, for Carrie to implicate herself in what she describes having learned?

Just learning about the, how diverse this country is, so diverse. Like so many influences, like Arabic, the Moors, the Christians, everybody. I think that, that's what's been so fascinating to me. It's not like there was one group of people that set the tone for Spain. It's like, there were all these groups. They all got kind of mixed together.

First, she would learn that Spain is not finished, that its trajectories continue—and that her presence constitutes an element in its dynamics (the “mixing together” continues), just as her

own movement and contact reconstitute her trajectories. Second, she would enter a form of dialogue consonant with Pratt's (1992) idea of "transculturation," which refers to the reciprocal influences of colonies and metropolitan centers on each other. In this case, she would understand differences as produced through ongoing contact and globalization as a contemporary form of transculturation that highlights nations', groups', individuals', and cultures' relatedness. And she would learn that these relations are spatial.

A spatialized study abroad understands place, the local, the nation, and so on, not as separate but as mutually implicated events (Sidhu, 2006)—and thus shifts the meanings of contact. Following Gupta and Ferguson (1997), to conceptualize spaces as discontinuous segments, or as already divided up (such as nations), is to understand difference as preexisting and contact as following. But to conceptualize difference through connections is to understand space itself as emergent, as the product of relations (Massey, 2005). In this sense, a preexisting space does not await students' arrival; rather, subjects' movement in and through space "alter[s] it a little" (Massey, 2005, p. 118). Space, place, and culture, then, cannot be objectified as things but become "a constellation of processes" (Massey, 2005, p. 141). This form of spatial implication works against imperialist legacies that ask subjects to produce objects as other and to focus on cultural patterns that appear to bound a nation or culture. It instead focuses on contact and connections, "processes of change and internal inconsistencies, conflicts, and contradictions" (Rosaldo, 1989, p. 28). Rather than looking for authenticity, for example, in the bullfight or the landscape, students might reevaluate their imaginative relations to the production of the authentic. Craik's (1997) argument that "the cultural experiences offered by tourism are consumed in terms of prior knowledge, expectations, fantasies and mythologies *generated in the tourist's origin culture* rather than *by the cultural offerings of the destination*" (p. 118) suggests that curriculum take up the nature of students' imaginings and desires as they approach difference, new spaces, other landscapes, as their desires reinforce the already known or enable the creation of something new. This is a form of unlearning, or learning differently.

To refigure study abroad as curriculum is akin to cultivating sensibilities that Rabinow (1986) attributes to "critical, cosmopolitan intellectuals." While cosmopolitanism is a debated and somewhat fraught term with its own histories of privilege, his formulation nonetheless offers some ideals for study abroad:

The ethical is the guiding value. This is an oppositional position, one suspicious of sovereign powers, universal truths, overly relativized preciousness, local authenticity, moralisms high and low. Understanding is its second value, but an understanding suspicious of its own imperial tendencies. It attempts to be highly attentive to (and respectful of) difference, but is also wary of the tendency to essentialize difference...Let us define cosmopolitanism as an ethos of macro-interdependencies, with an acute consciousness (often forced upon people) of the inescapabilities and particularities of places, characters, historical trajectories, and fates. (p. 258)

His formulation rejects imperialism's innocence and recognizes its ongoing presence. It implicates subjects in processes of seeing, knowing, and changing. Study abroad both creates and undoes boundaries, however real or imagined. The curricular question becomes how subjects are invited to imagine self and other in relation to boundaries. Positionality and location can at once appear as real and as always dynamic, and travel can appear not as the meeting of two distinct identities or cultures but as productive of emergent social formations.

NOTES

1. See Rizvi (2005) on the need for critical cultural studies of international educational practices.

REFERENCES

- Appadurai, A. (1996). *Modernity at large: Cultural dimensions of globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, B., & Tiffin, H. (1998). *Post-colonial studies: The key concepts*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Caesar, T. (1988). "Counting the cats in Zanzibar": American travel abroad in American travel writing to 1914. *Prospects*, 13, 95-134.
- Carlson, J. S., Burn, B. B., Useem, J., & Yachimowicz, D. (1990). *Study abroad: The experience of American undergraduates*. New York: Greenwood Press.
- Craik, J. (1997). The culture of tourism. In C. Rojek & J. Urry (Eds.), *Touring cultures: Transformations of travel and theory* (pp.113-136). New York: Routledge.
- Desruisseaux, P. (1999, December 10). 15% rise in American students abroad shows popularity of non-European destinations. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 46(16), A60-A62.
- Fusco, C. (1995). *English is broken here: Notes on cultural fusion in the Americas*. New York: New Press.
- Fussell, P. (1988). *Thank God for the atom bomb and other essays*. New York: Summit.
- Ghazvinian, J. (2000, 31 January). Round the world in 80 ways. *The Nation*, 270(4), 28-31.
- Greif, M. (2000, April). Just passing through. *Lingua Franca*, 10(3), 8-10.
- Gupta, A., & Ferguson, J. (1997). Culture, power, place: Ethnography at the end of an era. In A. Gupta & J. Ferguson (Eds.), *Culture, power, place: Explorations in critical anthropology* (pp. 1-29). Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Horne, D. (1984). *The great museum: The re-presentation of history*. London: Pluto Press.
- Johnston, J. S., Jr., & Spalding, J. R. (1997). Internationalizing the curriculum. In J. G. Gaff, J. L. Ratcliff, & Associates (Eds.), *Handbook of the undergraduate curriculum: A comprehensive guide to purposes, structures, practices, and change* (pp. 416-435). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Kaplan, C. (1996). *Questions of travel: Postmodern discourses of displacement*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- King, L. J., & Young, J. A. (1994). Study abroad: Education for the 21st century. *Die Unterrichtspraxis: Teaching German*, 27(1), 77-87.
- Koestler, J. (1986). A profile of foreign language majors who work, study, and travel abroad. *Modern Language Journal*, 70, 21-27.
- MacCannell, D. (1976). *The tourist: A new theory of the leisure class* (3rd ed.). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- MacCannell, D. (1992). *Empty meeting grounds: The tourist papers*. London: Routledge.
- Massey, D. (2005). *For space*. London: Sage.
- Matus, C., & McCarthy, C. (2003). The triumph of multiplicity and the carnival of difference: Curriculum dilemmas in the age of postcolonialism and globalization. In W. F. Pinar (Ed.),

- International handbook of curriculum research* (pp. 73-82). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Musgrove, B. (1999). Travel and unsettlement: Freud on vacation. In S. Clark (Ed.), *Travel writing and empire: Postcolonial theory in transit* (pp. 31-44). London: Zed.
- Open Doors. (2008). U.S. study abroad up 8%, continuing decade-long growth. Retrieved May 11, 2009, from <http://opendoors.iienetwork.org/?p=131592>.
- Opper, S., Teichler, U., & Carlson, J. (1990). Impacts of study abroad programmes on students and graduates. *Higher Education Policy Series 11*(2). London: Jessica Kingsley.
- Pickert, S. M. (1992). *Preparing for a global community: Achieving an international perspective in higher education*. Washington, DC: The George Washington University (ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report No. 2).
- Pratt, M. L. (1992). *Imperial eyes: Travel writing and transculturation*. New York: Routledge.
- Rabinow, P. (1986). Representations are social facts: Modernity and post-modernity in anthropology. In J. Clifford & G. E. Marcus (Eds.), *Writing culture: The poetics and politics of ethnography* (pp. 234-261). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Rizvi, F. (2005). International education and the production of cosmopolitan identities. *RIHE International Publication Series, 9*, n.p.
- Rojek, C. (1997). Indexing, dragging, and the social construction of tourist sights. In C. Rojek & J. Urry (Eds.), *Touring cultures: Transformations of travel and theory* (pp. 52-74). New York: Routledge.
- Rosaldo, R. (1989). *Culture and truth: The remaking of social analysis*. Boston: Beacon.
- Said, E. W. (1993). *Culture and imperialism*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Said, E. W. (1995). *Orientalism*. In B. Ashcroft, G. Griffiths, & H. Tiffin (Eds.), *The post-colonial studies reader* (pp. 79-91). New York: Routledge.
- Sidhu, R. K. (2006). *Universities and globalization: To market, to market*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Willinsky, J. (1998). *Learning to divide the world: Education at empire's end*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

