Critical Essay

THE FORUM ON EDUCATION ABROAD

Cosmopolitanism: Rethinking the Agenda of Education Abroad

Brian Whalen[1] & Michael Woolf[2]

Abstract

Cosmopolitanism is an ambiguous and inherently paradoxical notion. Because of the complexities it raises, it generates analyses and discourses that challenge simplistic assumptions embedded in theory and practice of education abroad. Global citizenship, comprehensive internationalization, cultural relativity, immersion, cross-cultural learning, and community engagement are some of the concepts deconstructed through the lens of cosmopolitan ideas and histories. Cosmopolitan philosophies are also of particular and special relevance to student experience in international education. In short, cosmopolitanism is not one idea but a field of meaning, a cluster of profound propositions that might collectively enrich the curriculum of education abroad.

Keywords:

cosmopolitanism; history and philosophy; deconstructing the agenda; nationalism, cultural history

Introduction: What is Cosmopolitanism? What is it not?

> Cosmopolitanism… is a philosophy and ethical orientation that takes account of the dense enmeshment of human beings - the connections

1 CAPA: The Global Education Network, London, UK

2 American International Recruitment Council (AIRC), Bethesda, MD, USA

Corresponding author: Michael Woolf, CAPA: The Global Education Network, mwoolf@capa.org

between them, the bonds that link them, the interests that divide them, and the clashes of ethical and political outlook. Cosmopolitanism is a philosophy for the age of human interconnectedness, and generates a politics for a 'small world' (Brown & Held, 2010, p. 13).

The idea of cosmopolitanism has been debated for over 2500 years. Diogenes of Sinope (400 - 323 BC) asserted that he was *kosmopolites*, part of a common humanity beyond and across political or geographical boundaries. Over 2000 years later the concept continued to engage the Enlightenment thinkers of the late eighteenth century (not least Immanuel Kant, whose work *Perpetual Peace* is a key text).

The notion that our connections are, or should be, stronger than those forces that divide us gained new resonance in recent history partly as a consequence of the barbarism of two world wars, and partly because we now know so much more about each other through enhanced technologies. To be parochial in these times is a choice, a reactionary act of political will, retreat from the present-future. It is, however, an increasingly popular choice.

Isolation, as ideological resistance to internationalism, appears in 2020 to have global momentum. Militant parochialism is manifest in diverse contexts and various forms in Hungary, India, Brazil, the United States, the United Kingdom and so on. Even in countries with impeccable liberal reputations, the rise of parochial ideologies is apparent. In Sweden, in June 2018, 18% of the population voted for right wing, populist parties. In Denmark, 21% of the electorate voted for far-right Parties in 2015; in the election of 2019, a leftish coalition gained a majority having appropriated the anti-immigrant policies of the populist right. Radical parochialism has become something close to a dominant political orthodoxy. A moral and political imperative that recognizes that human similarities transcend differences shaped by nation, tribe, or culture represents an ideology under siege.

There is little to suggest any fundamental alteration in the near future. In the current ethos, the stranger is invader/intruder rather than refugee. Furthermore, the notion that stranger is unclean has a long history. From medieval myth to Nazi ideology, Roma and Jews were seen as carriers of literal or metaphorical infection; racial or ethnic invaders bringing pestilence. The pandemic of 1918-1919 was designated as *Spanish* flu. In this tradition, the Covid-19 virus has been constructed as *Chinese*, re-enacting a classical fear of the alien. Ethnic *cleansing* is rooted in these mythologies. Political rhetoric has given legitimacy to officially sanctioned xenophobia. The icons of a new radicalism are walls, not bridges. Nightmares of history resonate in a rhetoric of hate.

One outcome is a new ideological divide between an inclusive, internationalist ethic, and, in contrast, parochial, nationalism. The collision of the grand narratives that shaped the Cold War have become increasingly irrelevant.   Conflict between collectivism (versions of socialism and communism) and liberal/conservative individualism has, for the most part, lost potency. Instead, the dominant bifurcation is between "open" and "closed" ideologies. The rise of nationalism and militant parochialism expresses itself , for example, in Narendra Modi's radical Hinduism, in the barrier Viktor Orbán built to "protect" Hungary's borders from Serbia and Croatia, in slogans like "America First," [1] in the rhetoric of the Brexit campaign UK, and in many other parts of Europe.

However, the concept of cosmopolitanism does not offer an uncomplex alternative. It has, for example, been seen as a form of criminal disloyalty; the cosmopolitan has allegiances beyond the nation to entities that may be shadowy or secretive and that, subsequently, subvert patriotic ideals. There is also the gender-specific version of the cosmopolitan as a "man of the world," "a flaneur." This figure is a privileged internationalist empowered by wealth to be an urban playboy, almost inevitably, of the Western World. Without any real sense of purpose other than personal gratification, the figure saunters through the city with his close friend "the man about town." [2]   The figure synthesizes sophistication and wealth with amoral hedonism.

The notion of cosmopolitanism is ambiguous and inherently paradoxical encompassing the idealist, the rootless wanderer, the traitor, and the privileged playboy. Ostensibly, it has little relevance to contemporary education abroad. However, as we demonstrate, the notion of cosmopolitanism significantly challenges ways in which we think about the world we inhabit, and have inhabited, and raises questions that resonate within education abroad. The idea of cosmopolitanism generates powerful analyses and high-level discourse that is not always so readily apparent in international education where, reasonably enough, we are often preoccupied by practical imperatives. "How" to do things tends to take precedence over the question of "why" do them.   Alone, this may not be significantly problematic until we make the claim for the centrality of international education within higher education in general.

---

[1] The slogan recalled the America First Committee (1940 – 41), championed by Charles Lindbergh. It was founded to resist Roosevelt's sympathy for the allied cause in World War II. It promoted an anti-interventionist position, was sympathetic to German Nazism, and expressed virulently anti-Semitic views.

[2] Lauren Elkin's *Flâneuse: Women Walk the City in Paris, New York, Tokyo, Venice, and London*, (2016) is an important study of the female equivalent. The dominant construction is, however, masculine.

"Comprehensive internationalization" is, for example, an article of faith, an aspirational objective. Neo-colonial implications embedded in the promotion of this ideal are barely recognized. The possibility that universities in the developing world may have other valid priorities does not figure in the discourse. International education does not, for the most part, generate the level of conceptual sophistication that would validate a position of centrality within mainstream academe. Discussions of cosmopolitanism, in contrast, challenge us to rethink some of our embedded assumptions and offer alternative ways of conceptualizing learning outcomes.

Historical Baggage

Cosmopolitanism carries significant historical baggage. In Nazi Germany and Stalin's Soviet Union to be cosmopolitan was a capital offence; an anathema in that it implied allegiances that transcended national loyalties. An association with rootlessness and internationalism became part of a dominant anti-Semitic discourse and added to the mistrust and distaste that resonated around the idea of a cosmopolitan imagination. It also fuelled international conspiracy theories exemplified by *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.

First published in 1903 in Russia, the document purports to outline a Jewish conspiracy to govern the world over and beyond national borders. It has had a remarkable longevity, is published and given credence in many parts of the world. It describes a small group of Jews who only have allegiance to a shadowy, rich, and powerful group who are planning world domination. The Elders are a remarkably persistent version of many other such transnational conspiracy theories developed around associations that may or may not exist (see, for example, the Illuminati, Opus Dei, Freemasons, the Mafia, Ian Fleming's SMERSH, the architects of Joseph Heller's *Catch 22*, William Burrough's Mugwumps, and so on ad nauseam).

Endorsement of the *Protocols* was not limited to the totalitarian world. Henry Ford financed publication in the 1920s in the U.S. and published a series of articles in which the collocation of international and Jew was used to categorize the source of national ills. In this respect Henry Ford, Joseph McCarthy, Hitler, and Stalin shared the view that cosmopolitanism was a symptom of traitorous counter-national loyalties. The exile, voluntary or otherwise, of intellectuals enforced the idea of the rootless cosmopolitan. Bertolt Brecht, Kurt Weil, Peter Lore, Sigmund Freud, Thomas Mann, Countee Cullen, Josephine Baker, Chester Himes, James Baldwin, (for the most part Jews and African Americans) are examples of figures located in international rather than national contexts. However, complex the term is historically, it is clear that on an ideological spectrum cosmopolitanism is at the opposite end of nationalism.

Ideas of cosmopolitanism also challenge many of the assumptions that permeate the discourse of education abroad: in relation to, for example, community, global citizenship, culture, and student learning outcomes. Education abroad often suggests that engagement with the community is an operational aspiration, that cross-cultural and inter-cultural issues are at the heart of what we do, and that the creation of global citizens is a valid aspiration. Cosmopolitanism disrupts those objectives.

Community and Cosmopolitanism

We aspire to connect our students to communities in their "host" environments. The metaphor of "host" creates expectations of a particular kind of voluntary engagement that fails to acknowledge that relationships, whatever else they may be, are commercial transactions with institutions abroad and, where applicable, with families that sell accommodation. We may have become quite effective at creating mechanisms to facilitate engagement, but we spend less time thinking about what we expect students to engage with. What are these communities? Where are they?

The invention of the notion of community is not a new process. Between 1978 and 1992 U.S. cities were gripped by urban unrest that culminated in the Los Angeles riots of 1992. The fabric of community was severely eroded. At the same time, between 1982 and 1993 the popular television series *Cheers* offered a version of urban community that was, in many respects, a wish fulfilment fantasy. The lyrics that open this television series, written by Judy Hart Angelo and Gary Portnoy (and performed by Portnoy), remind us that we yearn for the place where we are recognized and valued, what we used to call "home." The television series was popular precisely because it constructs a haven of imagined urban community. It is a closed space protected from disturbing reality; it exists literally and figuratively beneath the feet that pass hurriedly over the heads of the habitués. The bar represents a temporary sanctuary wherein human isolation and loneliness is alleviated.

That is not to say that such places do not exist, but they are not part of the reality that most of us inhabit in our daily lives. Processes of urbanization and globalization have made community a more problematic, complex proposition. For most of us community is not defined by geography or location. *Cheers* offers a mythic world where our yearning to belong is met, as the opening theme song tells us:

Making your way in the world today takes everything you've got. Taking a break from all your worries, sure would help a lot... Sometimes you

want to go where everybody knows your name, and they're always glad you came (Hart & Portnoy, 1982). [3]

A similar notion informed the television series *Taxi* (1978-1981). Taxi drivers work as isolated individuals, separated from their customers by barriers; engagement is temporary and functional. Thus, to create a community in contrast to that reality, the action of *Taxi* is mostly contained *within* the base garage where individuals react and bond with each other in significant, supportive, and personal ways. Imagined communities are invented while, at the same time, beyond the sanctuaries of bar and garage, in urban reality social cohesion fractures.

In education abroad, we similarly build concepts of community without recognizing that the notion is problematic. An assumption is that students can gain access to communities; international educators have relatively simple tasks: building a bridge or opening a door. A consequence is that "immersion" is often held up as a measure of quality. There are a cluster of problematic implications: Anthropological methodologies combine participation with observation; engagement with detachment, which qualifies and modifies the notion of immersion. [4] The ideal of immersion creates unrealistic expectations for student engagement that ignores the elusive complexity of social cohesion, especially in urban environments. The assumption that communities are simply there for students to experience combines illusions of accessibility with an archaic belief that social reality is static. This is analogous to the search for "authenticity" which implies that there are "inauthentic" places. There is nothing unreal about the beaches of Benidorm in Spain. The sawdust bars of Hemingway's Pamplona are not more authentic versions of nation than a convention of accountants in Madrid. In pursuit of the real Spain (or Italy, England, Erewhon etc) students are directed towards myth. Constructed notions of community and versions of authenticity derive from a combination of nostalgia, tourist rhetoric, poetic symbolism, yearning for an idealized, romanticized history.

Our forefathers worked the land in a fashion that they believed was timeless. The skills they taught their children were passed on through generations who may well have lived and died in the place where they were born. Knowledge was rooted in community. We do not have that surety or security of identity. For us, time is no longer measured by the rising and setting of the sun. Our reality is that, as Karl Marx wrote: "All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are

---

[3] http://www.lyricsondemand.com/tvthemes/cheerslyrics.html
[4] See Woolf (2001) *Not Waving but Drowning* for a fuller discussion.

swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air…" (Marx, Engels, 1888, p.16).

Geography no longer defines community. If we have a sense of belonging, it may well be to something that is independent of geography. This has always been true to some degree (consider the Jesuits [5]), but the dynamics of globalization have accelerated the disconnection of community from place. We belong to constructed communities (our profession is a perfect example) defined by behavior, interests, belief: race, gender, profession, sexual preference, religion, or any of the other ways in which we seek identity and security. The comfort of similar others offers compensation for the fragmentation of contemporary experience, and protection from the prevailing ideologies of individualism. Ideas of cosmopolitanism require students to look beyond some problematic notions of community or country, to refocus on transnational structures, philosophies, and ethics. In short, cosmopolitanism embodies the notion of global communities.

By prioritizing simple notions of community engagement in education abroad, we direct students towards a kind of archaeology, digging out versions of constructed memories or marginal vestiges that may be found perhaps in religious or ethnic associations. That is not an invalid exercise as long as the context is clear. The kinds of community found in microcosmic forms in urban environments are not representative of what happens to most of us. Most of us across the globe live in cities [6] and the realities of urban existence make community a problematic, complex notion; cosmopolitan perspectives offer meaningful and alternative contexts, and modes of enquiry that better reflect how and where we live.

Global Citizenship and Cosmopolitanism

The notion is also relevant when contrasted with the rhetoric of "global citizenship." In contrast to that idea, cosmopolitanism can be progressively acquired and modified by the qualifiers less or more; it can, therefore, be taught (the business of educators). It is possible to be more or less cosmopolitan. Global citizenship (whatever it means) is a state of grace (not a progressive acquisition).

---

[5] The Jesuit movement, co-founded by St Ignatius of Loyola (1498 -1556), embraced the notion of universal values and the presence of God in all things and all places. From the beginning, this agenda motivated worldwide missionary activities. There are now circa 12,000 Jesuit priests operating in over 100 countries.

[6] In 2018 the United Nations reported that: "55% of the world's population lives in urban areas, a proportion that is expected to increase to 68% by 2050."
https://www.un.org/development/desa/en/news/population/2018-revision-of-world-urbanization-prospects.html

Cosmopolitanism is not dependent on the language of transformation (which is the province of prophets and priests, not educators).

"Global citizenship" is used in essentially four contexts. It functions, firstly, as a marketing tool that suggests that encounters with "abroad" (wherever that is and whatever happens there) will endow students with powers to transcend their identities, from parochial American to citizen of an entity that does not legally exist. No passport is global, and nobody pays taxes to that place; unlike citizenship in the real world, it requires no duties and infers no rights.

However, we should recognize that the term is used as a metaphor for idealistic internationalism. In this second context it is well-meaning obfuscation. Definitions of global citizenship abound. Oxfam identifies awareness of the wider world, respect for diversity, outrage at social injustice, community engagement, and the desire to make the world a more sustainable place. More or less the same elements are offered by Lee Stoner et al in *Global Citizenship through Global Health*.:

> Commonly accepted denominators of global citizenship include: global awareness (understanding and appreciation of one's self in the world and of world issues); social responsibility (concern for others, for society at large, and for the environment); and civic engagement (active engagement with local, regional, national, and global community issues) (April 2019, p.133).

Few of us would find anything to object to in these ethical positions. They define a moral human in a world more and more inter-connected at many levels. Nothing is gained, however, by defining those values as, in some way or another, "global." They are, sadly, not globally shared. A key objective in education abroad is to raise the international consciousness of students so that they may become, progressively, better citizens of their own country. There is, in short, no definition of a global citizen that could not be applied to the notion of a good citizen: global here means good. The idea of cosmopolitanism is far more realistic and manageable in that it does not contain an absolute condition: the object is to teach students something about another society so that they can be better citizens of their own. This is not mere semantics but reflects the need to put education (rather than the rhetoric of transformation) at the center of education abroad.

There might, however, be a fourth way in which the term could make sense as a definition of global elite, a privileged and empowered class who have access to technology and travel. The gap between this stratum and the dispossessed is a chasm, as Taso G. Lagos argues:

...there may emerge two tracks of citizenship: national and global, with the latter being more prestigious. Along with greater separation between rich and poor, educated and not, there would also be those relegated to living out their entire lives in one land, compared to those who freely travel to many. [7]

Thus, global citizenship may be an advertising slogan; a way in which individuals choose to identify themselves; a synonym for good; a quasi-mystic state of grace; and a definition of a privileged class. In short, however the term is used, it raises any number of deeply problematic issues.

Cosmopolitanism and Culture

Somewhere or other in the notion of cosmopolitanism is the idea that certain ethical values are universal and, thus, not modified by relative cultural practices. In that sense, cosmopolitanism is connected to the tradition of "grand narratives" that embed judgments in their implicit or explicit ideology. The Ten Commandments is an example of how a grand narrative may put moral values at the center of its ideology. Universal rights are at the core of the cosmopolitan agenda. The fact that something may be described as "cultural" does not make it less inhuman or barbaric, nor does it relieve us of moral responsibility to oppose, reject, and resist. Dan Rebellato makes a similar point:

> Although there are huge differences of cultural practice and belief in the world, is wrongful imprisonment, or torture, or murder, or rape less wrong in Burma than it is in Boston?... For the cosmopolitan, it is important that the oppressed can appeal to universal rights beyond the level of the state (Rebellato, 2009, p. 67).

The idea of cosmopolitanism challenges the degree to which the discourse of education abroad is rooted in questions of "culture" in its many collocations (inter-cultural or cross-cultural communication, etc.). These emphases construct culture as a set of barriers or obstructions that students need to be taught to overcome because, the assumption is, culture defines our differences. This starts with a conclusion that students have to be taught to negotiate difference. Furthermore, that focus is potentially reactionary and parochial in so far as it prioritizes that which divides humanity over that which expresses commonality. In that respect it conflicts with the ethical implications embedded in cosmopolitanism; it is rooted in an analysis that implies that

---

[7] "Global Citizenship – Towards a Definition," nd. With the permission of the author: http://depts.washington.edu/gcp/pdf/globalcitizenship.pdf

characteristics shared by all humanity are of less significance than the distinctions observed or constructed.

By prioritizing cultural distinction, we answer a question we have not asked; is "culture" divisive or cohesive? The impact of social media, for example, has created transnational communities based on shared interests that transcend geographical or political borders. The idea that the younger generation are "digital natives" metaphorically enforces the notion of a democratized space that exists beyond constraints of culture or nation. They young are, as Brian Whalen argues, a "global peer group" linked (or "linked-in") across borders.[8]

Cosmopolitanism in history, and as a set of ethical aspirations, draws attention to factors that broaden and enrich potential learning agendas in education abroad. Universal values expressed in cosmopolitanism challenge the notion of tolerance for, or acceptance of, cultural relativity. Tolerance is not a value or outcome that we should promote without serious qualification. Do we want students to tolerate bullfighting as a factor in Spanish custom and society, for example? That is not a simple ethical question and may reasonably be answered either way. It becomes much easier, however, if we consider some of these "norms": torture, abuse of women, bribery, public execution, female circumcision, the amputation of limbs for criminal acts, the imprisonment and execution of homosexuals, stoning, honor killing, slavery, building walls to exclude the dispossessed, profiling of minorities (all practices that are, or have been, embedded in some national behaviors). Do we want students to learn to be tolerant of all cultural diversity, to become apologists for cruelty and inhumanity? That is more than amoral or immoral; it is also stupid – it assumes that national practices are static rather than historical aberrations or temporary cruelties.

Educational objectives based solely or predominantly around notions of culture may also distort and constrain learning outcomes. In programs in the developing world, for example, are learning outcomes based on cultural difference the most important thing to understand about, say, South Africa or Ghana? What of geopolitical consequences of the North-South divide? Where do students learn of the inequitable distribution of global resources? Can we understand the significance of apartheid solely through cultural analysis? These are not questions that can be answered through the lens of cultural discourse.

Furthermore, the focus on culture is based on a misconception of what we actually do in U.S. education abroad. Our core activity is to take students to another country or nation on the assumption that there is value in broadening learning environments. Concepts of nation and country are also, however, not

---

[8] 2014. Invited Keynote Address: "Where will Education Abroad be in 25 Years?" Institute for Study Abroad – Butler University, 25th Anniversary Gala Celebration, Indianapolis, Indiana.

unproblematic; they are often used interchangeably although there are nuanced distinctions. A country is frequently defined by political structure and geographic boundaries whereas nation may or may not align with either of these criteria.

Whatever complexities may accumulate around these semantics, what we do is essentially inter-country or inter-national. We take students from one political and geographical location to another. However, we define culture (as high art, ethnographic signposts, food, music, inherited behavior or whatever else), it is not synonymous with country or nation, nor is it constrained by national, geographical, or political boundaries. Nation or country is demonstrably not the same thing as culture.

This is not to suggest that the idea of culture has no place in the discourse of education abroad but rather that its primacy is based upon a set of unexplored assumptions and unchallenged orthodoxies. A consideration of cosmopolitanism offers alternative perspectives that enrich the learning agenda by recognizing and integrating complexities into what we want students to learn. In this manner, we might get closer to parity of esteem with the broader intellectual aspirations of liberal education.

Ideas of cosmopolitanism subvert, disturb, and disrupt inherited norms. That said, cosmopolitanism is not just a set of ethical or moral positions. It also is a subject worthy of exploration. A study of cosmopolitanism would enrich students' understanding of the worlds in which they live and the worlds that created their reality.

Education Abroad and Cosmopolitanism

The education abroad field has traditionally had limited and limiting frameworks for understanding the student experience abroad. Cosmopolitanism offers a lens through which we might usefully reflect upon those frameworks. Historically, the field has been located within the context of academic disciplines, intercultural learning paradigms, a model of language and culture acquisition, and/or some combination of these contexts. There have been significant advancements in understanding and assessing student learning within these realms. Education abroad program descriptions, mission statements and educational goals refer most often to these dimensions. The professionalization of education abroad has largely developed around these frameworks, and have been reinforced by formal training, workshops and textbooks that support these approaches.

At a pragmatic level, these foci help us to organize curricula and offer valid mechanisms for understanding student learning outcomes. However, the tendency to view outcomes solely in terms of what we intend to assess limits

potential fields of enquiry. These common paradigms obscure the richness and complexity of student experience abroad. Such a narrowed focus causes us to miss an opportunity to extend the intellectual boundaries of our work in order to view how education abroad contributes to a student's identity formation. The concept of cosmopolitanism offers a mechanism to rethink education abroad by drawing attention to questions of identity: who the student is, who she is not, and who he may become.

According to the *American Heritage Dictionary*, a cosmopolitan is a person "sophisticated as to be at home in all parts of the world or conversant with many spheres of interest" (2018). Another dictionary describes this person as being

> free from local, provincial, or national ideas, prejudices or attachments. (The cosmopolitan is) at home all over the world (and is) not limited to just one part of the world (Dictionary.com, 2018).

Worldly, sophisticated, free from local provincial or national bias, anecdotal observation and interviews conducted by the authors suggest that this figure is a seductive role model. Students are naturally drawn to the idea of being cosmopolitan and of acting out a global lifestyle. While there is a temptation to view this aspiration with a degree of scepticism, it would be an oversight to ignore how such a longing impacts a student's identity and shapes his or her experience. Desire to be cosmopolitan can provide the student with a higher purpose as equally as it can reflect a superficial and naive illusion of becoming a global sophisticate.

A study abroad alumna of Swiss and Norwegian ancestry, who studied in Italy and Spain, exemplifies an identity located at an intersection of potential ambiguities: "I had always considered myself a sort of cultural misfit; I have learned that I am a culture unto myself: I am Italian. I am Spanish. I am Norwegian; I am Swiss; I am an American." [9] This sense of self is both an expression of sophisticated cosmopolitanism and, arguably, a naiveté about what those definitions might imply.

The key point is that education abroad provides an opportunity for students to pursue the idea of being a cosmopolitan as they grow and develop emotionally and intellectually, a distinctive experience within which students are empowered to explore and enact a set of roles that may or may not cohere. The education abroad field has largely ignored the allure of this cosmopolitan lifestyle and its ongoing impact upon student learning and development. We often position and promote our field by citing academic value, but in doing so we miss an opportunity to embrace a more comprehensive and inclusive view

---

[9] Student quoted in Boston University's International Programs Catalog, 1996.

of the benefits of education abroad: the degree to which it may contain profound impacts upon the identities and lifestyles of the participants. These benefits and impacts can be understood by exploring examples of cosmopolitanism in the American imagination.

Three Forms of Cosmopolitanism

As we have demonstrated, cosmopolitanism is not one phenomenon, but a set of distinctive, connected concepts that may be used to broaden a student's understanding of engagements with the unfamiliar. One of the most astute observers of the U.S. and its relation to other cultures and nations was George Santayana (1863 – 1952) and, in many respects, his life reflects a search for a cosmopolitan existence. A lifelong Spanish citizen, he was raised and educated in the U.S. and identified himself as an American, although he always kept a valid Spanish passport. At the age of forty-eight he left his faculty position at Harvard and returned to Europe, never to return to the U.S. His final wish was to be buried in Rome and his remains are in the Cimitero Monumentale Del Verano.

In his seminal essay, "The Genteel Tradition in American Philosophy," Santayana observed a lack of "vigor of mind" in U.S. society, the remedy for which is the attainment of what he called an "outside view," a perspective on America from afar that overcomes the trappings of provincialism.   The prescription for this "gentility," Santayana wrote, is a "collision of cultures," a vibrant exchange with "the other" that calls deeply into question one's native perspective (Santayana, 1973). Santayana saw the international experience—a movement outward to collide with other cultures and societies—as being central both to self-fulfilment and to a civilized American society.

Transcending a narrow and provincial world view is a major topic within U.S. cultural history, expressing itself in a variety of forms through several themes related to cosmopolitanism: travel, diversity, identity, and the meaning of home. An analysis of these themes and their interconnectedness sheds light on the experience of contemporary education abroad students who, like many of the archetypal figures of American culture, seek the "vigor of mind" espoused by Santayana. They participate in some form of secular pilgrimage towards envisioned enlightenment. An analysis of the inherited "cosmopolitan imagination" reveals biases that affect perspectives on cosmopolitanism.

One of the ways in which the problem of cosmopolitanism is expressed in the American imagination is through a depiction of a root tension: the desire to depart home and the desire to stay. In literature the theme is a major one acted out by characters who wander "on the road" to embrace the call of the frontier, or alternatively, those who are drawn to "main street" and a defined heritage that becomes their destiny. The Swiss psychoanalyst Erik Erikson

deciphered the American psyche in this regard and noted a root bifurcation that exists between these migratory and sedentary inclinations. He observed that America has no epic story that offers a narrative of perpetual departure and return that would describe contacts with other countries and societies, and a subsequent return that incorporates those experiences into one's life "back home" as a more cosmopolitan soul (Erikson, 1978).

Like Santayana and Erikson, many writers and thinkers have framed cosmopolitanism as the polar opposite of "home" and certainly we can observe these inclinations in our education abroad students. They are sometimes defensive and cling to who they are and from whence they come. And yet they also grow to embrace differences and call into question their established world views and values. There are a number of typologies or models of cosmopolitanism that resonate within both the American imagination and the student experience abroad that move us beyond this dualism, three of which are outlined below: 1) self-reliant cosmopolitanism; 2) ironic cosmopolitanism; and, 3) pragmatic cosmopolitanism.

Self-Reliant Cosmopolitanism

Self-reliant cosmopolitanism often appears in descriptions by education abroad alumni when they recall their experiences abroad. In general, we undervalue or perhaps simply do not talk enough about the role of memory, how the experience continues to instruct and how it is remembered, and in the process reimagined, by alumni over time. In a study on what and how education abroad alumni remember, the most common type of reported memory involved participants recalling how they navigated successfully through stressful situations.[10]   Alumni described how they had to figure out solutions by relying primarily on themselves and their own resourcefulness. They viewed this type of experience as a moment when they grew as individuals, breaking away from what they considered to be their former "selves" in order to adapt and succeed. In the process, they reported discovering a new dimension of themselves and consequently felt that they grew as individuals.

This type of self-reliance of course runs deep within the American character, with its highest expression appearing in Emerson's essay, "Self-Reliance." Here, Emerson maps out the psychology of independence and the

---

[10] The study was carried out by Brian Whalen in 2001-02 at Dickinson College. Over 500 alumni responded to a questionnaire that asked about their educational experiences and memories from both their time on campus and abroad. Results were presented by Whalen and discussed in 2008 at an invited conference presentation: "Study Abroad: Measuring Learning Outcomes." *U.S. Department of Education's International Education Program Service Forum: Fostering Connection, Collaboration, and Creative Ideas,* Washington, D.C.

limitless powers of the individual self that achieves everything that it sets out to accomplish. Emerson notes that the real value of a journey is to remind us that the "unrelenting self" is constant, providing our anchor in the world (Emerson, 1883, p. 81). Places are indifferent, only meaningful insofar as they assist the self to be transformed through its encounters with them. One thinks here of how self-reliance went hand in hand with the expanse of the American frontier, which promised a blank canvas onto which one could create oneself and make one's place in the world.[11] As Santayana suggested, "the frontier lured the mind, and the mind filled it up." It was a space to be encountered, conquered, and simultaneously developed along with the simultaneous creation of the self (Santayana, 1973, p. 1550).

Students who venture abroad may replicate this psychology of self-reliance by constructing new identities as they encounter challenging situations and try to adapt to them. Foreign landscapes can become opportunities by which a personal history may be created and established.   In her autobiography, *A Romantic Education*, Patricia Hampfl describes her Midwestern childhood, her coming of age in the 1960s, and a journey to the Prague of her family's past (Hampfl, 1999). She learned that the approach that one takes to a new place determines its meaning, and that Americans are inclined to impose their personal psychology onto the experience. Hampfl explains this in terms of an immigrant search for connection to an ancestral past. She writes:

> If you go to the old country seeking, as third or fourth generation as Americans often do, a strictly personal history based on bloodlines, then, the less intimate history of nation cannot impose itself upon you very strongly. History is reduced to genealogy, which is supposed to satisfy a hunger that is clearly much larger (Hampfl, 1999, p. 142).

This hunger is, for many of our students, the desire to create a more expansive self that can successfully engage with the broader world, a cosmopolitan identity fashioned through self-reliance.

A variation of self-reliant cosmopolitanism can be found in the thought of Emerson's friend and neighbour, Thoreau, who was able to move beyond his local personal experience and connect to the world beyond. Thoreau was that provincial yet wonderfully expansive soul who rarely ventured beyond his beloved Concord and his cabin at Walden Pond. Yet his immersion in the local landscape excited his imagination about distant places and the roles that he might play in various locations around the world:

---

[11] This aspect of what Perry Miller called the "errand into the wilderness" (1952) has been explored by several authors. See especially: Slotkin (1973); and Tichi (1979).

The world is a fit theatre to-day in which any part may be acted. There is this moment proposed to me every kind of life that men lead anywhere, or that imagination can paint. By another spring I may be a mail-carrier in Peru, or a South African planter, or a Siberian exile, or a Greenland whaler, or a settler on the Columbia River, or a Canton merchant, or a soldier in Florida or a mackerel-fisher off Cape Sable, or a Robinson Crusoe in the Pacific, or a silent navigator of any sea. So wide is the choice of parts, what a pity if the part of Hamlet be left out! (Thoreau, 1973, p. 773)

Thoreau found inspiration in his experiences in and around Concord to transcend his locality, and for this reason we might label him a "local cosmopolite." He famously stated that the "frontiers are not east or west, north or south, but wherever a man fronts a fact," thus transforming the image of America's frontier into a private metaphor (1973, p. 773). Thoreau's genius was to see, as Frederick Turner has argued,

that the cultural journey cannot properly take place without the personal one. For Thoreau, some personal voyage of self-discovery must accompany any genuine understanding of another culture (Turner, 1986, p. 87).

Turner suggests that this view generated the unique anthropological tradition of the West, where there was a "contraction of the unit of social initiative to the individual." In this tradition, "Americans are anthropologists (who are) alone, almost marooned or shipwrecked in the culture they study." Alone, yes, and on a personal journey that occurs simultaneously with the accumulated understanding of the new. This is, Turner tells us,

an experience of personal conversion that involves culture shock, self-confrontation, a profound alienation from their own culture, a sense of being only a child in their newly adopted culture, an initiation into its mysteries and acceptance by it (Turner, 1986, pp. 87-88).

Hampfl would have us embrace history of a foreign place and through this act simultaneously discover ourselves. In her view, the study of another nation is a study of oneself:

[T]he country itself becomes the lost ancestry and, one finds, the country is eloquent. Its long story, its history, satisfy the instinct for kinship in a way that the discovery of a distant cousin could not. For it is really the longing for a lost culture that sends Americans on these pilgrimages (1999, p. 142).

Self-reliant cosmopolitanism involves asserting individual identity through imagination and determination to create and advance a personal

history. It is simultaneously an outward movement from, and an interior journey into, the self. Here, personal and geographical journeys unite to form a type of cosmopolitanism brought about through personal trial and adaptation. Alumni who recall and reimagine their experiences abroad are like Emerson, Thoreau and Hampfl: they use their powers of imagination to unite their personal journeys with geographic and cultural ones. Self-reliant cosmopolitanism is the wilful expression of a personal story of an expansive individual.

Ironic Cosmopolitanism

A second type of student-as-cosmopolitan involves irony that is brought about by an existence perched between two identities. As we have argued, international educators tend simplistically to emphasize the value of "immersion" in foreign landscapes: the capacity to be sensitive to another culture's particularities and to negotiate them successfully. In contrast, the ironic cosmopolite exists as two distinct selves simultaneously engaged in two different contexts. Unlike the self-reliant cosmopolitan who embraces and asserts a personal history and is able to integrate it with a foreign environment, the ironic cosmopolitan transcends the cultural landscape and his or her own personal history, floating freely beyond their bounds. Humor is often part of ironic cosmopolitanism because the perspective affords an opportunity to view a new location more objectively and to identify the relativity of its established norms, which creates possibilities for new forms of engagement. In these actions, "immersion" is subverted; it is perhaps a kind of baptism, but it may also represent drowning.

The fullest expression of ironic cosmopolitanism in the American imagination can be found in the writings of Mark Twain, who espoused, "Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts" ([1869]) 1911, p. 407). Twain of course spent a great deal of time abroad and wrote wonderful, and generally underrated travel narratives that are richly complex in the way that they analyze and critique both American and foreign customs in laugh-out-loud ways.

The collection of essays, *Cosmopolitan Twain*, explores various aspects of Twain's ironic approach to other cultures as well as to his own. In the introduction, Ann Ryan states that "Twain is a cosmopolitan: he is competitive, sceptical, necessarily tolerant, passionately secular, multilingual and multicultural, frankly materialistic and acquisitive. . . [his writing] evinces a progressive, modernist critique of American politics and history, a critique provoked by his life as an urban citizen" (Ryan, 2008, p. 4). Commenting on Ryan's introduction, Twain scholar Harold K. Bush notes that Ryan considers cosmopolitanism as an identity that is "at once displaced and interconnected, of

being unified and connected," a way "of living at home abroad and abroad at home," and that "both of these statements ring true for Mark Twain." Bush also observes that Ryan quotes from Marshall McLuhan's 1964 description that the cosmopolitan "transcends national boundaries and . . . articulates the commonality of human suffering and human potential. . .. sympathetic, engaged, yet also distanced from his subject...Again, a bullseye for Twain" (Bush, 2009).

In *The Innocents Abroad* and *A Tramp Abroad*, Twain is at his cosmopolitan best. These works are hilarious, irreverent, politically incorrect, and refreshingly critical of the countries that Twain visits, as well as the American society that he leaves behind. Twain enacts the stereotypical role of the "ugly American" by exaggerating the unsophisticated, rude, loud, obnoxious, and uncultured American on holiday. His travel companions become fodder for his sharp wit as much as the foreign behaviors he dismantles. Twain's writings would make excellent pre-departure reading for students because they provide a humorous gaze into the cultural mirror, encouraging the sojourning American to laugh at and critique his or her insensitive behaviors.

For example, Twain describes how he and some of his travel companions play jokes on their enthusiastic tour guides who lead them around to visit historic monuments. Here, Twain knowingly plays the role of the ignorant American, oblivious to the high art to which the guides introduce him. He and his companions call their tour guides "Ferguson," and ask them with feigned naiveté if this or that well-known historic figure is now dead. In one museum Twain expresses puzzlement while listening to the guide describe a statue, and he asks, "Oh, I see. Now...which is the bust and which is the pedestal?" (1869, p. 156). When touring Rome the tourists become weary of how much of the city and its monuments seem to be attributed to Michelangelo, causing Twain to write, "I never felt so fervently thankful, so soothed, so tranquil, so filled with a blessed peace, as I did yesterday when I learned that Michael Angelo was dead" (1869, p. 154). Losing their patience, they conspire to play a joke on the tour guide:

> He shows us a figure and says: "Statoo brunzo." (Bronze statue.) We look at it indifferently and the doctor asks: "By Michael Angelo?"
>
> "No--not know who."
>
> Then he shows us the ancient Roman Forum. The doctor asks: "Michael Angelo?"
>
> A stare from the guide. "No--thousan' year before he is born."
>
> Then an Egyptian obelisk. Again: "Michael Angelo?"
>
> "Oh, no, genteelmen! Zis is two thousan' year before he is born!"

He grows so tired of that unceasing question sometimes, that he dreads to show us anything at all. The wretch has tried all the ways he can think of to make us comprehend that Michael Angelo is only responsible for the creation of a part of the world, but somehow, he has not succeeded yet. Relief for overtasked eyes and brain from study and sightseeing is necessary, or we shall become idiotic sure enough. Therefore, this guide must continue to suffer. If he does not enjoy it, so much the worse for him. We do (Twain, 1869, p. 154).

In his travel writings Twain stands outside of both the American and the foreign host environments, simultaneously criticizing both through his ironic imagination. This ability to be critical both of one's hosts, as well one's home, is a laughable matter. These ambiguities are apparent in the ways in which Twain uses American innocence to satirize European behavior. The innocent American visitor confronts perceived perversities of European social customs in Venice:

Very many of the young women are exceedingly pretty and dressed with rare good taste. We are gradually and laboriously learning the ill manners of staring them unflinchingly in the face - not because such conduct is agreeable to us, but because it is the custom of the country and they say the girls like it. We wish to learn all the curious, outlandish ways of all the different countries, so that we can "show off" and astonish people when we get home (Twain, 1869, p. 236).

There is a clearly ironic perspective on European customs that are "curious" and "outlandish."

Simultaneously, Twain's Europe is a complex dreamed landscape shaped by poetic constructs:

We have stood in the dim religious light of these hoary sanctuaries in the midst of long ranks of dusty monuments and effigies of the great dead of Venice, until we seemed drifting back, back, back, into the solemn past, and looking upon the scenes and mingling with the peoples of a remote antiquity. We have been in a half waking sort of dream all the time (Twain, 1869, p. 236).

The ambiguous, dreamy space that the ironic cosmopolite inhabits is filled with laughter, and we might do well to foster this appropriate laughter in both our students and our international friends and colleagues.

Pragmatic Cosmopolitanism

Another expression or form of cosmopolitanism students seem only rarely able to achieve, and it is one with a potentially higher purpose: pragmatic

cosmopolitanism. Education abroad alumni describe this as the experience of being actively engaged in a role abroad that is at once familiar yet somewhat foreign because they are enacting this role in a different environment than the one to which they are accustomed. This ability to change and adapt to novel situations on new stages of action is a core characteristic of the pragmatic cosmopolitan.

Pragmatic cosmopolitanism is perhaps embodied and articulated most fully in the American context by William James and his brother, Henry James. William James has long been regarded as one of America's greatest intellectuals and his younger brother Henry one of its greatest writers. William synthesized the intellectual viewpoints of his day into a type of pragmatic cosmopolitanism, a form that many of the characters in Henry's novels dramatize.[12]

William James made major contributions to theories of the self by articulating the principle of multiplicity of social selves, the view that the "self" is actually a collection of possible selves that one might enact at any given time. This idea resonates with the tenets of depth psychology, a school of thought that James helped to advance, in viewing the self as a deep and often hidden well of imagination. At the same time, James is considered a phenomenologist and a forerunner of the school of behaviorism because of his insistence on "radical empiricism," a philosophy that espouses observing and believing only what is visible and known through experience. This, one of the many contradictions in James' thought, lies at the heart of his pragmatic cosmopolitanism. For James, the habits or roles that we engage in daily form a bridge between the multiple interior selves and the exterior empirical stage upon which these selves act in the world. The pragmatic cosmopolitan creates and discovers ways to enact his or her imagination so that roleplaying becomes identity.[13] And while William lived out this philosophy in an international context in his own life (he studied abroad multiple times and travelled extensively overseas in a variety of roles, including on a famous expedition to the Amazon with Darwin's student Louis Agassiz), it was his brother Henry who explored this form of cosmopolitanism through fiction.

Henry James inaugurated what is known as the "international theme" in American literature, portraying his literary characters as figures in a drama who act out their roles (and are often unravelled in doing so) on a foreign stage. His characters are "ambassadors" and expatriates who attempt to adjust a variety of selves to the European environment of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century. The European environment created by James is largely

---

[12] There are a number of studies of the pragmatism of William and Henry James. See, for example, Hocks (1974); Cormier (1997); and Lapoujade (2008).

[13] See Bruce Wilshire's very interesting and important study, *Roleplaying and Identity: The Limits of Theater as Metaphor*.

aristocratic and genteel. By the 1920s, the image of Europe had undergone a transformation within which, however, the drama of identity is similarly performed. In the nineteenth century, the American expatriate sought the kinds of social conventions and complexities felt to be absent in an unsophisticated native land. For the immediate post-World War I expatriate generation, the significances of Europe were inverted; the associations were with anti-conventional and libertarian possibilities.

In the first decades of the twentieth century, Europe represented relief from the stifling conventions prevalent in the America of Presidents Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover. In Europe, particularly in Paris, it was possible to reinvent a liberated self beyond the bounds of bourgeois constraint. The forces that attracted Gertrude Stein, Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, the Crosbys, Robert McAlmon, Malcolm Cowley, and a host of others to Paris in the 1920s, were (at least) two-fold. One was certainly a favorable exchange rate, which always has an important impact on international sojourns.[14] Paris also promised the pursuit of freedom rather than conventional constraint.

That generation of expatriates sought liberation from U.S. norms. In the fiction of Fitzgerald and Hemingway, drinking, in the age of Prohibition, becomes a symbolic act of rejection of American parochialism. While the Europe of Henry James is characterized by dense pervasive social conventions, Fitzgerald, Hemingway et al. see in Europe the absence of convention - a freedom not available to them in America. That generation did not seek the high civilization of James, but pursued pleasures of fornication, alcohol, and artistic freedom. Like James, however, they explored ways in which the self might be reinvented in their lives and in their writing. In this sense, these authors follow in the footsteps of Henry James and his pragmatic cosmopolitanism.

The critic Jessica Berman points out that, in his novels, James explores "the drama of identity formation provoked by the modern experience of cross-cultural encounter" (2010, p. 138). His characters struggle to assert their identities in new ways by drawing on past roles they have enacted but adapting them to the realities of the present. Taken as a whole, the span of James' literary work mirrors his own life as a person perpetually navigating between cultures. In both the literary and personal realms, James is fascinated by how he and his characters embody the spaces between cultures and societies. One of his later works, *The American Scene*, is an account of his extended trip across the United States after a lifetime living abroad. Here James "struggles to define a modern,

---

[14] In 1919, one U.S. dollar was worth eight French francs; by 1922, thirteen French francs, and, by 1926, thirty-five French francs. When the value of the U.S. dollar collapsed in 1929, an exodus from France began: See Malcolm Bradbury (1995, p. 302). Malcolm Cowley describes the several impacts of exchange rates on American expatriation in *Exiles Return* (1934, revised 1951).

everyday cosmopolitanism, one where appreciation for the world does not imply military expansionism or rapacious commercialism, but where room remains for pride of place and the cultivation of a worldly conversation" (Berman, 2010, p. 147). After lamenting the "embalmed" cosmopolitans of a faded Newport, James was struck by the vibrant and productive immigrants of New York City and Baltimore, but saw the latter as turning away from the wider world in their obsession with their newfound opportunities in America (Berman, 2010, p. 146). As Irving Howe observes in his definitive introduction to *The American Scene*, James was searching for signs that America was achieving the promise of a "humane civilization" in which its citizens respected their own and other traditions and habits, and found ways to incorporate them into everyday life (Howe, 1967, p. xvi). While James ultimately does not provide an answer to this question, his hope for an answer is anchored in the people whom he meets in specific locations and situations, cognizant of their duties at home and simultaneously aware of the need to engage and act in the world at large. In other words, James was inspired by the way that people are able to adapt their domestic habits and roles to an increasingly internationalized world.

As Berman points out, this view is akin to the cosmopolitanism articulated by Kwame Anthony Appiah, who is concerned about "specific locations and situations and espouses a type of cosmopolitanism that is based on the assumption of shared universal values and liberal conversation" (Berman, 2010, p. 140). Appiah writes, "[c]osmopolitanism shouldn't be seen as some exalted attainment; it begins in the simple idea that in the human community, as in national communities, we need to develop habits of coexistence…" (Appiah, 2006, pp. xvii-xix). Appiah's vision of cosmopolitanism "would require that people accept the citizen's responsibility to nurture the culture and politics of their homes, whether they spend their lives in the places that shaped them or move elsewhere, taking their cultural practices with them" (Berman, 2010, p. 147). For James, "the ideal cosmopolitan world becomes harder and harder to imagine, (but) he continues to describe the possibility of a cosmopolitan sentiment, able to bridge the worlds of both home and away…" (Berman, 2010, p. 147).

The characters in James' novels are pragmatic cosmopolitans who aspire to adapt domestic habits and roles to an international setting. The phrase, "think globally, act locally" almost fits here; but a better way to convey this form of cosmopolitanism would be, "act locally and globally." This is perhaps the most desired form of cosmopolitanism to which we can aspire for our students. It is the experience of adapting the habits of life to a foreign setting, becoming a pragmatic self in a global context. In this respect, education abroad can play a significant role in preparing students for a wider stage of pragmatic action.

The student as cosmopolitan has its superficial aspect, but less so than the student as global citizen. It offers profound possibilities for students to develop as engaged individuals, with enhanced awareness of transnational contexts, committed to addressing global issues and challenges. The cosmopolitan lifestyle may, in this context, attract students because it offers opportunities to become part of the solutions to world problems.

From a psychological perspective, cosmopolitanism may be seen as a matter of personal identity and experience with three potential variables. Each of the forms described above move us beyond both Santayana's lament and Erikson's diagnosis of an American mind that cannot reconcile the conservative with the liberal. The three typologies help us to transcend traditional views of the problem of home versus abroad, and in doing so offer opportunities to explore the more subtle and complex nature of sojourns abroad.

Cosmopolitanism no doubt takes many forms and individuals will take on some or all of these within their experience, and certainly these typologies can overlap and exist within the same, discrete experience. In the education abroad context, students act out the forms of cosmopolitanism that have been reflected by and articulated in the American imagination. Taken together, they express distinctive American versions of cosmopolitanism.

Conclusion: Reclaiming Cosmopolitanism

At least one implication of cosmopolitanism is that there are ethical imperatives that transcend national or cultural norms. Cosmopolitanism, at the most basic level, offers an ethical prescription that is universally relevant. It involves, as Appiah suggests, "the recognition of our responsibility for every human being" (Appiah, 2006, p. 7). Cosmopolitanism restores political, historical and ethical perspectives to the necessary discourse of education abroad, or as Marsha Meskimmon argues: "[c]osmopolitan imagination is key to engendering a global sense of ethical and political responsibility" (Meskimmon, 2010, p. 7).

Cosmopolitanism is a concept distorted by history through association with notions of rootlessness, restlessness, and homelessness. In the nationalisms of the nineteenth and twentieth century, cosmopolitanism was often considered unpatriotic and, sometimes, criminal. In the collective symbolic system of the Nazis, "cosmopolitanism" was synonymous with a death sentence, and this death sentence was extended to the word, which in its own way succumbed to the same fate: "The Nazis said 'Jew' and meant 'cosmopolitan,' the Stalinists said 'cosmopolitan' and meant 'Jew'" (Beck & Grande, 2007, p. 3). In one manifestation cosmopolitanism has been perversely reconstructed through an "involuntary association with the Holocaust and the Stalinist Gulag" (Beck & Grande, 2007, p. 3).

That suggests that the history of cosmopolitanism is, in itself, a relevant topic for education abroad. It offers a dramatic example of an ideological collision between nationalism and internationalism and it encapsulates key conflicts in human history. It can be argued that it represents one end of an ideological spectrum that has helped shape our common experience. In that sense, it offers a field for potential study that is of particular and special relevance to any international educational agenda. Some understanding of these dynamics and counter-dynamics would enrich the education abroad classroom. The notion offers a constructive alternative to vague, elusive, amorphous ideas of community, culture, and global citizenship so that the quality of our discussions may more closely align with the aspiration to make internationalization a core element in higher education. Further, and of primary significance, cosmopolitanism suggests a set of values and an ethical agenda that draws attention to the inter-connectedness of humanity.

The inherent value of the concept is apparent precisely because, not despite the fact, that it offers a field of meaning rich in ambiguity and creative ambivalence. Even within this relatively brief analysis, a bewildering number of figures have been cited as, in one way or another, cosmopolitans: from Kant to Twain, from Diogenes to Emerson, to the urban idler. The counter voices include Hitler, Joe McCarthy, and Henry Ford (among many others). These are, indeed, very strange bedfellows.

That should not be seen as a conceptual weakness but rather as a signifier of complexities. The issues raised are not single or simple and, consequently, they offer a mechanism to subvert simplistic assumptions that weaken the intellectual case for education abroad. If nothing else, they require us to reflect on what we do.

Cosmopolitanism gives us tools to revisit notions of community and culture; it gives us a tool to refocus attention on students' psychological and personal development. The ambiguous and shadowy figure of the cosmopolitan challenges us to re-align our objectives.

There is, of course, a significant body of work on cosmopolitanism in history, as an inter-disciplinary mode of enquiry, and as a set of ideals that resonate with human rights [15]. The idea of cosmopolitanism offers rigorous concepts alternative to those in the common discourses of education abroad. The historical, philosophical complexities accumulated around the various forms and formats of cosmopolitanism offer mechanisms with the potential to enrich the curriculum of education abroad. Cosmopolitanism is not one idea but a field of meaning. It is, in short, something we may or may not choose to

---

[15] In particular see bibliographies in Appiah and Beck for a sense of the breadth and depth of scholarship across disciplines

embrace but it is, in any case, a cluster of profound propositions we should not ignore.

References

American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language. 5th Edition. (2018). Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. Retrieved October 19, 2018, from: https://ahdictionary.com/word/search.html?q=cosmopolitan

Angelo, J. H. & Portnoy, G. (1982). Theme from *Cheers* [Lyrics]. Retrieved March 3, 2019, from: http://www.lyricsondemand.com/tvthemes/cheerslyrics.html

Appiah, K. (2006). *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers*. New York: W. W. Norton and Co.

Beck, U., & Grande, E. (2007). *Cosmopolitan Europe.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Berman, J. (2010). Cosmopolitanism. In D. McWhirter (Ed.), *Henry James in Context* (pp. 138-149). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bradbury. M, (1995). *Dangerous Pilgrimages: Trans-Atlantic Mythologies and the Novel*. London: Secker and Warburg.

Brown, G. W., & Held, D. (2010). Introduction. In G. W. Brown, & D. Held, *The Cosmopolitan Reader* (p. 13). Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bush, H. K. (2009, March 30). Book Review: *Cosmopolitan Twain.* Retrieved February 3, 2013, from: Mark Twain Forum: http://www.twainweb.net/reviews/CosmopolitanTwain.html

Cormier, H. (1997). Jamesian Pragmatism and Jamesian Realism. *The Henry James Review, 18* (3), 288–296.

Cowley. M. (1951). *Exiles Return: A Literary Odyssey of the 1920s*. New York: Penguin Books. Dictionary.com. (2018). Retrieved October 19, 2018, from: https://www.dictionary.com/browse/cosmopolitan

Elkin, L. (2016). *Flâneuse: Women Walk the City in Paris, New York, Tokyo, Venice, and London*, New York: Farrer Strauss and Giroux.

Emerson, R. W. (1883). Self-Reliance. In R.W. Emerson & J. E. Cabot (Ed.), *The Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (Vol. 2). Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company.

Erikson, E. (1978). *Childhood and Society, 2nd Edition*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co.

Hampfl, P. (1999). *A Romantic Education*. New York: W. W. Norton & Co.

Hocks, R. A. (1974). *Henry James and Pragmatic Thought: A Study of the Relationship between the Philosophy of William James and the Literary Art of Henry James*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press.

Howe, I. (1967). Introduction. In H. James, *The American Scene*. New York: Horizon Press.

Lagos, T.G. (nd). *Global Citizenship – Towards a Definition*. Retrieved May 5, 2020, from: http://depts.washington.edu/gcp/pdf/globalcitizenship.pdf

Lapoujade, D. (2008). Fictions du Pragmatisme. William et Henry James. Paris : Les Édition de Minuit.

Marx, K and Engels, F, (1888), Manifesto of the Communist Party, (1848), Samuel Moores (trans). London, William Reeves.

Meskimmon, M. (2011). *Contemporary Art and the Cosmopolitan Imagination.* Oxford and New York: Routledge.

Miller, P. (1952). *Errand into the Wilderness*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Rebellato, D. (2009). *Theatre and Globalization*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Ryan, A. (2008). Introduction: Mark Twain and the Cosmopolitan Ideal. In A. M. Ryan, & J. B. McCullough (Eds.), *Cosmopolitan Twain* (pp. 1-20). Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press. p. 4.

Santayana, G. (1973). The Genteel Tradition in American Philosophy. In C. Brooks, R. W. B. Lewis, & R. P. Warren (Eds.), *American Literature: The Makers and the Making* (Vol. 1) (pp. 1542-1554). New York: St. Martin's Press.

Slotkin, R. (1973). *Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600 – 1860*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.

Stoner, L., Tarrant, M. A., Perry, L., Gleason, M., Wadsworth, D., & Page, R. (2019). Global Citizenship through Global Health. Retrieved July 3, 2020 from: *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 31(1), pp. 131-147. https://doi.org/10.36366/frontiers.v31i1.446.

Thoreau, H. D. (1973). Journals. In C. Brooks, R. W. B. Lewis, & R. P. Warren (Eds.), *American Literature: The Makers and the Making* (Vol. 1). New York: St. Martin's Press.

Tichi, C. (1979). *New World, New Earth: Environmental Reform in American Literature from the Puritans Through Whitman.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Turner, F. (1986). Reflexivity as Evolution in Thoreau's Walden. In V.W. Turner & E. M. Bruner (Eds.), *The Anthropology of Experience*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

Twain, M. (1869). *The Innocents Abroad.* Hartford: The American Publishing Company.

Whalen, B. (2008). Study Abroad: Measuring Learning Outcomes. U.S. Department of Education International Education Program Service Forum: Fostering Connection, Collaboration, and Creative Ideas, Washington, D.C.

Whalen, B. (2014). Where will Education Abroad be in 25 Years? Keynote Address: Institute for Study Abroad – Butler University, 25th Anniversary Gala Celebration, Indianapolis, Indiana.

Wilshire, B. (1982). *Roleplaying and Identity: The Limits of Theater as Metaphor*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Woolf, M. (2001, Fall). Not waving but drowning: Arguments against immersion in study abroad. *International Educator*, 10 (4), pp. 29–34.

Author Biographies

Brian Whalen, Ph.D., is the Executive Director of the American International Recruitment Council, an America's Languages Fellow at the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and an International Education Leadership Fellow at the University at Albany, and a Dean's Fellow at Dickinson College. Brian has taught psychology, literature, and international and comparative education to graduate and undergraduate students at Boston University, Brookhaven College, Dickinson College, Lesley University, University at Albany, and the University of Dallas. A widely published scholar, Brian's publications include commentaries, essays, research articles and book chapters on a variety of topics in the fields of international education and psychology.

Michael Woolf, Deputy President at CAPA, has spent much of his career in an international context. He taught American Literature at the universities of Hull, Middlesex, Padova, and Venice, and worked as a researcher-writer for BBC radio. Michael has held leadership roles with FIE, CIEE, and Syracuse University.

Michael holds a Ph.D. in American Studies and has written widely on international education and cultural studies. You can read a sample of Michael's short essays in his monthly column: https://capaworld.capa.org/author/dr-michael-woolf.