

Martha C. Nussbaum. *Cultivating Humanity: A Classical Defense of Reform in Liberal Education*. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, Harvard University Press, 1997. Pp. 301. \$28.50

Martha Nussbaum argues that the purpose of liberal education is to cultivate humanity. In her view, this is the same as educating for world citizenship. But, what does it mean to cultivate humanity? According to Nussbaum one cultivates humanity by developing three capacities. The first is the capacity for critical self-examination and critical thinking about one's own culture and traditions. The second is the capacity to see oneself as a human being who is bound to all humans with ties of concern. The third is the capacity for narrative imagination – the ability to empathize with others and to put oneself in another's place. As one develops these capacities one becomes increasingly suited for world citizenship.

One of the strengths of *Cultivating Humanity* is the way in which Nussbaum ties these capacities together and shows that they function as an organic whole. The capacity for narrative imagination and the capacity for identification with humans are obviously enhanced by studying other cultures, but this also deepens the capacity to examine one's own culture and traditions. As Nussbaum points out, studying other cultures may show one that what had been taken simply as natural is in fact a cultural artifact. In addition, Socratic criticism when applied to other cultures is actually a way of respecting them. Narrative imagination is also vital for seeing oneself as a human among other humans. The person who develops these capacities is becoming a world citizen with narrative understanding for other cultures, identification with humanity and a critical understanding of his or her own culture. If Nussbaum is right, international study, including study abroad, is at the heart of liberal education and not merely an ornament that contributes to the overall quality of a liberal education.

A second strength of *Cultivating Humanity* is the extent to which Nussbaum's vision has historical roots. She shows how arguments regarding the curriculum were already being fully engaged at the time of Socrates. Her explanation and defense of narrative imagination and the importance identifying with humans is rooted, at least in part, in the work of Marcus Aurelius and other Stoics, and her emphasis on self-examination is tied to Socrates' vision of philosophical thinking. Throughout *Cultivating Humanity*, Nussbaum ties her argument to the works of classical thinkers. The classical grounding of her

argument gives her a way of answering both academic conservatives who appeal to classical education and postmoderns who sometimes ignore the lessons to be learned from classical thinkers.

Nussbaum's vision rests on significant and controversial philosophical commitments. She argues against chauvinism and simplistic moral relativism by calling attention to shared human life. Her discussion assumes that in general terms there is something that constitutes human flourishing. Humans, according to Nussbaum, face similar problems regarding mortality, appetites, property and planning their own lives; and these problems need to be addressed in order for them to flourish. Without this foundation it is difficult to see why identifying with humanity in general plays such an important role in her vision of liberal education. It is, in fact, difficult to see how it even makes sense to talk of the cultivation of humanity if there is no common thread running among all humans. While there may be very vague and abstract concepts that can be applied to humans generally, when these are given a more specific interpretation in light of various cultures it is not clear that humans have enough commonality to support the cultivation of humanity in the way Nussbaum presupposes.

Nussbaum also presupposes that the optimal form of government is deliberative democracy, as opposed to democracy construed as a mere conflict of interest groups as well as to non-democratic forms of government. Nussbaum is clearly right that liberal education is intimately tied to democracy and that the unexamined life threatens democratic freedoms, but her vision of democracy needs more defense than it receives in *Cultivating Humanity*. This is especially true in light of recent controversies surrounding defenses of deliberative democracy by Amy Gutmann, Dennis Thompson and others.

Finally, Nussbaum's argument rests on tremendous faith in reason. She assumes that value conflicts will not simply end at loggerheads with no way to adjudicate. Nussbaum makes a convincing case for the central role of Socratic reasoning in cultivating humanity and world citizenship. At the same time, critical reasoning can erode religious belief and engender skepticism in a variety of areas. *Cultivating Humanity* would have benefitted from more discussion of the potential corrosive effects of reasoning. This is especially true of her chapter on religious colleges and universities.

In defending these commitments she argues against postmodern and conservative writers who would call into question the importance of reasoning. One of the more interesting points of her discussion is the extent to which it makes clear the commonality among postmoderns and conservatives.

Both ideologies undermine the sort of Socratic reflection necessary for deliberative democracy and liberal education.

Nussbaum notes that conservative writers who criticize the new initiatives in the humanities often call the humanities in general into question and that this leads to an emphasis on vocationalism, which she also sees as a threat to liberal education. She is right that vocationalism can be a problem. At the same time, however, it is important to note that cultivating humanity and educating for world citizenship suits one for a variety of vocations. An emphasis on vocations is an enemy of cultivating humanity only when it replaces or supersedes it.

Nussbaum also argues against identity politics which she sees as undermining identification with humanity by holding that primary loyalty is to one's local group. In their most extreme form, Nussbaum notes, advocates of identity politics hold that only members of a particular ethnic group are able to write with insight about that group. It is clear why identity politics poses a threat for Nussbaum's vision of world citizen, but Nussbaum needs to do more to say just where it is that identity politics goes wrong. It is surely true that respecting persons requires respecting the cultures that form their identity. Nussbaum takes account of this, but does not explore in sufficient detail how the insights of identity politics can be captured without undermining the cultivation of humanity. There is a tension between identifying with humanity and identifying with one's local culture, and this tension needs more philosophical exploration than it receives in *Cultivating Humanity*.

In spelling out a compelling vision of liberal education in terms of cultivating humanity and world citizenship, Nussbaum makes it clear that there are certain underlying philosophical and political commitments that need to be accepted. She does a convincing job of this, though there are places where more justification would be helpful. If Nussbaum is right, what emerges is that liberal education cannot be defended apart from a set of moral and political commitments that include cosmopolitanism, respect for persons, and deliberative democracy.

*Cultivating Humanity* was published in 1997 at the height of the culture wars over the curriculum. The purpose of the book is to defend scholarship and curricula in areas such as African-American studies, women's studies, human sexuality, and multiculturalism from a variety of attacks. As these areas have matured, produced excellent scholarship and become increasingly incorporated into the academic structure, the furor has subsided. This gives the book a somewhat dated quality, but it would be a mistake to dismiss the book. Nussbaum's view of what it means to cultivate humanity and her philo-

sophical defense of this is still relevant and well worth considering. Her book should not be viewed merely as further conversation in the academic culture wars, but as a powerful vision of liberal education with deep historical roots and fascinating philosophical foundations. Because of this, the book is of interest to philosophers and scholars of education as well as to lay persons for whom the book was also written.

The sections on multiculturalism and the chapter on the study of non-Western cultures have special significance for those interested in study abroad. For the readership of *Frontiers*, *Cultivating Humanity* can be seen as a sophisticated philosophical defense of the importance of study abroad.

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Ania Loomba. *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*. The New Critical Idiom Series. New York: Routledge, 1998. Pp. 289. \$16.95

Robert J. C. Young. *Postcolonialism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003. Pp. 178. \$9.95

Ania Loomba, a professor of English, utilizes multiple Shakespearean examples to illustrate postcolonial theory (*The Tempest* in particular). Robert J. C. Young, also a professor of English, instead uses a montage approach, providing “real world” examples of postcolonial theory before working backwards towards a definition or some exposition on power relations. A middle road between these two authors’ works might be one that quotes not Caliban (the postcolonial posterchild) but his master/oppressor, Prospero. Referring to the duplicitous brother who overthrew him as Duke of Milan, Prospero describes Antonio as “one/Who having, unto truth by telling of it,/ Made such a sinner of his memory,/ To credit his own lie,—he did believe/He was indeed the duke.” In other words, Prospero’s brother, by performing the duties associated with the Duke, came to believe that he *was* the Duke. Antonio’s hierarchical relationships—with his brothers, with his peers, with his subjects—led to the creation of a specific type of knowledge. In this realm of knowledge, it is right for Antonio to seize power from Prospero. This enforced paradigm shift (Antonio’s actions creating the parameters in which “truth” is created) was labeled by Nietzsche as “will-to-knowledge.”

The unearthing of this will-to-knowledge between colonizing powers and their colonies is the basis for postcolonial theory and literature. The

question is one of epistemology: How do I know what I know? How do I answer that question differently if I live outside the West? And do my answers reflect a system of knowledge imposed upon me by the West? If I live in a (former) colony, how would I have answered that question before the arrival of colonizing powers? If I live in a (former) colony, how do I answer that question in the absence of the colonizing power? Finally, if I live in a (former) colony, what factors—gender, religion, caste—might also impact how I answer the question, “How do I know what I know?” In short, what Nietzschean power relations have constituted knowledge in my culture, and to what degree have these relations been forced on me?

Loomba, in trying to answer these questions and provide an overview of the field of postcolonial studies, has written a book with three broad chapters. In the first, an attempt is made at defining such crucial terms as colonialism, postcolonialism, and nativism, and the philosophical, ideological, and economic arenas in which those terms are used. The second chapter discusses the creation of identity in colonial and postcolonial worlds, especially how those identities are impacted by race, gender, sexuality, and culture. Finally, the third chapter looks at “the agency of the colonized subject, or subaltern”—how nationalism has been used to reconstitute individuals and communities in decolonized areas, and the never-ending question of objectivity in studying the same.

It is disappointing, then, that in trying to define *so many* terms, highlight *so many* critical perspectives, name-drop *so many* theorists, and provide a voice to *so many* perspectives, that what results from *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* (forgiving the racially charged expression) is merely white noise. In attempting to distill such a broad field to its essence, the reader is left without a sense of what the field is or what its essential concepts are. For instance, it is fully 96 pages into the book before the author mentions that “‘postcolonial theory’ has largely emerged from within English literary studies” (perhaps an important perspective with which to start?). In addition, though the index states that the term “postcolonialism” itself is discussed for seven pages early in the book, in those pages one finds a discussion of the challenges of using “post,” the difficulties of the word “hybridity,” and an overview of poststructuralist theories of history (but no definition). In the conclusion, it is emphasized that if “postcolonial studies is to survive in any meaningful way, it needs to absorb itself far more deeply with the contemporary world, and with the local circumstances within which ideas . . . are being moulded” (256-257). Yet, examples of those circumstances are suspiciously absent from the book’s content. Perhaps the best example of the mishmash nature of the book is the closing paragraph of the second chapter:

The point, then, is not to simply pit the themes of migrancy, exile and hybridity against rootedness, nation and authenticity, but to locate and evaluate their ideological, political and emotional valencies, as well as their intersections in the multiple histories of colonialism and postcoloniality (183).

By contrast, Young's *Postcolonialism: A Very Short Introduction* is clear and concise. This book is no "Postcolonialism for dummies." Definitions are readily available and accessible. A second-person writing format is often used to draw in the reader ("You find yourself a refugee"; "Have you ever been the only person of your own colour or ethnicity in a large group or gathering?"). "Real world" examples are readily available, spanning various world regions and oppressed peoples. Called "Almost poetic in conception" by one Indian reviewer, Young floats between the disciplines of history, political science, literary theory, and economics to show how postcolonialism "comprises instead a related set of perspectives, which are juxtaposed against one another, on occasion contradictorily" (7). He very much succeeds in his stated goal: to show how "postcolonial theory" involves a conceptual reorientation towards the perspectives of knowledges, as well as needs, developed outside the west" (6).

Young summarizes the disparate theoretical underpinnings of postcolonialism and its oppositional political stances in the term "translation." "Nothing comes closer to the central activity and political dynamic of postcolonialism than the concept of translation" (138). Translation involves the (apparently neutral) activity of reworking one text into the language of another. Likewise, a colony begins as the reworking/copying of one culture to another place on the map: "New England. New Spain. New Amsterdam. New York. Colonial clone" (139). Translation means *materially* superimposing the identity of one text onto another ("there are no perfect translations"). In a colonial apparatus, this means the superimposition of one culture on another, a dematerialization that occurs at the expense of that indigenous culture. Translation also implies hierarchy (original text, inferior copy). This aspect of translation applies both metaphorically and literally in the colonial experience, as not only are all aspects of the colonizing power considered superior, but also the colonizing language is forced (often violently) on local peoples, cultures, geography (deterritorialization). Postcolonialism, then, is that state that occurs when the relationship of translation ends, when the departure or eviction of a colonial power leaves in its wake a situation of inequality. "Postcolonialism names a politics and philosophy of activism that contests that disparity, and so continues in a new way the anti-colonial struggles of the past" (4).

It is in the importance of translation as *resistance* that postcolonialism finds its foremost opportunities for interaction with the field of overseas education. Taking the three points above, it is obvious that study abroad itself can have colonializing tendencies. First, overseas education fits into the colonization/translation matrix by presenting itself as value-neutral. Current trends in the field include internationalizing the campus, curriculum integration, and outcomes assessment: all seemingly objective, quantifiable terms. Professional development issues center around health and safety, marketing, and liability issues (again, all value-neutral). Even the Forum on Education Abroad's groundbreaking *Standards of Good Practice* ventures into the qualitative for only half a page in the 17-page document, in the subsection on "Inter-Cultural Understanding." Second, as a field we foster deterritorialization of the host culture in our demands for student services. It isn't enough that economic forces have created the famous "McWorld" phenomenon, ensuring our students their coffee brands and clothing lines wherever they go. We purposely create programs—or demand from our program providers—that dormitory rooms have email access, that "someone be there at the airport," that mobile phones are included in "the package." In other words, we deterritorialize the host country by making it as much like home as possible. Finally, any *Open Doors* survey reveals the clear hierarchy that exists, as with colonialism, in study abroad. To borrow a term from philosopher Paul Virilio, US students practice the high levels of endocolonialism, traveling in droves to the "usual suspects" (other colonial powers such as the UK, Spain, France, etc.) as compared to, say, less than 3% of students studying in Africa.

Like postcolonial theory/literature, study abroad is a matter of translation. It is matter of the student translating herself into a new culture. It is a matter of the student translating his experiences to his own ethical system. Most importantly, study abroad is an active, value-laden (as opposed to a passive, value-neutral) exercise in epistemology; like postcolonialism, it challenges students to question how they know what they know, and how that same knowledge is constructed in their host culture. Following Loomba and Young's lead, then, a postcolonial approach to overseas education might have the following attributes:

- If there is oppression (political, economic, religious, etc) in the world, it behooves us to learn about it in order to change it. Study abroad can do this by encouraging students to engage in Whole World study, going to those areas of the globe inhabited by the 'subaltern,' or dispossessed (see <http://www.secussa.nafsa.org/wwc.html>).

- As Loomba argues, “nations are communities created not simply by forging certain bonds but by fracturing or disallowing others” (202); a postcolonial approach to study abroad would necessitate study of the subaltern even in the West (e.g. students in Australia required to learn about Aboriginal culture, students in Europe required to learn about “Travelers” or “gypsies”). Further, since “The framework of postcolonial politics is such that gender constitutes one of its enabling conditions” (Young 114), gender studies should be an important part of any study abroad curriculum. In direct-enroll programs, this curriculum development means steering students towards courses in Women’s Studies departments; in non-immersion or “hybrid,” programs, this means study centers hiring local faculty to design courses within this framework.
- Along these same lines, postcolonial study abroad would include pedagogical elements of political science and political theory, helping students to understand the difference between “state” and “nation.” Discussing the important issue of transnationalism, Young writes “Resistance to the oppression of the colony or the nation can best be broken by cutting through its boundaries and reaching out beyond them” (64).
- Postcolonial study abroad would offer a variety of different texts for acceptance packets, predeparture orientations, in-country culture courses, or distance-learning required readings: Edward Said, Frantz Fanon, and Gayatri Spivak have applications to student learning regardless of host country.
- To quote from Paulo Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, “Education is suffering from narration sickness.” The same hierarchical power structures that lead to colonialism are reflected in the classroom: education becomes a matter of the teacher depositing knowledge “into” the student, a “banking” concept of education. Just as postcolonialism rails against these hierarchies, a postcolonial study abroad would work to undermine this structure. Students’ overseas programs should have elements of dialogue, curiosity-driven independent research, and authentic reflection. In short, programs should incorporate experiential education.
- Finally, postcolonial study abroad furthers the idea of self-translation, continuing the learning process for students after they return to their

home culture. This active learning requires students be given the chance to continue reflection on their experience, somehow beyond the standard “welcome back reception.” As a concept, this goes back to St. Augustine: “Once again they [memories] have to be brought together so as to be capable of being known; that means they have to be gathered from their dispersed state.” This continued self-translation provides the spring-board for later activism.

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Nicholas Crane, *Mercator: The Man who Mapped the Planet*. London: Phoenix, 2003. Pp. 326. Notes, Index, Select Bibliography, Illustrations. \$16.00, paperback.

Nicholas Crane has constructed a compelling narrative of the story of Gerard Mercator, the early cartographer who we remember for the Mercator Projection. Crane has written an easy-to-read but well-researched volume on a most unusual individual who lived in a dynamic period of European history and geography.

To establish a timeline, Crane places the reader in the village where Mercator is born, on a muddy flood plain in Belgium in 1512. The harsh life of peasant farmers is vividly illustrated in the story of Mercator’s early childhood, bringing to life the early historical geography of this area. Crane’s narrative of Mercator’s life leads us through turbulent and dynamic period of human history which included the Reformation, the Inquisition, wars in Europe and the age of geographical discovery. The latter factor had the most lasting impact on Mercator.

In his mid fifties, at an age when many of his contemporaries had already died, Mercator produced a cosmography. The cosmography consisted of five parts: first, the creation of the earth; second, the heavens; third, a representation of the land and sea; fourth, the order and succession of kings who found cities and kingdoms; fifth, a chronology of world events from creation to Mercator’s day. Today, the third piece of the cosmography, the representation of the land and sea, is best remembered. Although he had never been to sea, Mercator recognized the need for rectilinear rhumb-lines, so that mariners and cartographers could each work from the same map. With his new projection, Mercator was able to harmonize the geography of globes and maps, the three-dimensional with the two-dimensional, the spherical with the planar. When Mercator

died at the age of 82, his *Atlas* was yet to be completed; however, his sons and grandsons completed it less than four months later.

For any student, professor or administrator interested in international education, Crane deepens the historical foundations of one of their most basic tools, the map, whose complexity of construction is seldom fully appreciated. Today, with the availability of Global Positioning Systems and computer-generated maps, most of us do not realize the significant mathematical challenges involved in generating a map (a two-dimensional surface) from a globe (a three-dimensional surface). Crane has done a real service to all scholars of global and international education.

Nicholas Crane succeeds in humanizing one of the great pioneers in geography and cartography. The reader is effectively moved back in time five-hundred years to the geographical and historical milieu of 16th century Europe, and feels the excitement, the drama and the conflict of the period. Because of its broad appeal, Crane has crafted a book which goes well beyond the interests of geographers and cartographers, and the appreciation of international educators. Along with its important role of introducing a pioneer in map construction to a general audience, this volume is important reading in the History of Geography.

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