Attending to Early Modern Women 2015

Proposal for: Pedagogies

Title: Time Travel: Teaching Early Modern Women in European Study Abroad Programs

Workshop Summary:
Through study abroad/travel courses, undergraduate students of early modern European culture explore the past with a heightened sense of time, studying textual and material artifacts as travelers to distant locations and distant times. Workshop co-organizers Susan Hraclh and Rosanne Denhard, both experienced facilitators of travel courses in early modern interdisciplinary studies, designed this interactive workshop to advance practical and philosophical discussion regarding on-site learning and research about early modern women during travel abroad. Whether participants already teach or plan to teach interdisciplinary undergraduate study abroad courses, we invite workshop discussion focused on strategies for teaching about the early modern past and its legacies for the present and future.

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Through travel courses, undergraduate students of early modern European culture explore the past with a heightened sense of time, studying textual and material artifacts as travelers to distant locations and distant times. Workshop co-organizers Susan Hraclh and Rosanne Denhard, both experienced facilitators of travel courses in early modern interdisciplinary studies, designed this interactive workshop to advance practical and philosophical discussion regarding on-site learning and research about early modern women during travel abroad. Whether participants already teach or plan to teach interdisciplinary undergraduate study abroad courses in the future, we invite workshop discussion focused on strategies for teaching about the early modern past and its legacies for the present and future.

The interactions of students with time past, present, and future are, in the context of travel learning, both more distilled and more complex. The relocation and dislocation of travel can lead students to deeper learning through this academic "time travel." Material and cultural contexts are everywhere, and the engagement of multiple senses fostered by interdisciplinary studies can be particularly effective as a conduit for learning during travel. North American students benefit in particular from learning on location in Europe, countering the oversimplifications of cultural presentism by experiencing first-hand the complex relationship between past and present. The study of literature, performing arts, visual
arts, architecture, fashion, and food within the framing context of historical events and daily life guides students to a complex cultural understanding of the early modern past with an emphasis on women’s experiences and cultural expressions.

To open the workshop, the co-organizers will present examples from our own work in teaching about early modern women through our travel courses. Susan Hrach will provide some conceptual frameworks for designing study abroad courses on women within a single discipline or as part of interdisciplinary programs. While the appeal of teaching abroad seems self-evident, academic challenges apply: the principles of backward course design are especially salient for experiential learning, so that asking “how might the learning goals for a travel course differ from a similar course on campus?” and “what is there to see and do?” should drive our decisions about what and how to teach. Practical challenges may exist as well, such as recruiting students to study a relatively unfamiliar historical culture, or planning visits to sites you’ve not yet seen for yourself. Despite these challenges, travel learning offers students powerful opportunities to absorb and interrogate historiography from a feminist perspective. A list of sites and learning materials for teaching early modern women in Florence—as writers, artists, and patrons—will offer practical examples.

Rosanne Denhard will introduce the Arts of Renaissance Britain honors travel course and discuss, as an example, how the representation and reception of Queen Elizabeth I from her contemporary world to the current day can illuminate the practices of shaping and sharing memory and remembrances across time. Studying portraits, memoirs and historical documentation by contemporaries, as well as Elizabeth’s own life-writing, students construct perspectives on Elizabeth Tudor as she fashioned her self-representation and as she was represented by others. On-site during travel, students explore complexities of reception when visiting sites presenting Elizabeth I and examining how current exhibition practices in museums and historic sites and their publications interpret the early modern past. Ultimately, the study of Elizabeth I within her cultural context aids students in shaping their own interdisciplinary research and creative projects for the course.

After the introductory presentation, the co-organizers will encourage open discussion and sharing about teaching study abroad courses that include the study of early modern women in cultural contexts. At past Attending to Early Modern Women conferences and at related conferences, these conversations among colleagues have often offered the most direct and productive engagement with teaching and learning issues. This workshop’s co-organizers intend for our session to provide colleagues at all career stages with a forum for vital and fruitful conversations on this topic.

Initial prompt questions for workshop consideration include:

What can the study abroad course do that a traditional classroom format cannot—for teaching the early modern period? for teaching about female figures?

How do we integrate undergraduate research into the travel course experience?

What kinds of material or assignments work well to prepare students for visiting a particular site? What helps students to process their experiences? (60 minutes)

To conclude the workshop, the co-organizers will identify major points of discussion and frame a brief summary of the session’s concerns and priorities. We look forward to a stimulating interdisciplinary conversation with colleagues at various stages of their teaching careers. (10 minutes)
Preliminary Reading and Media List:

Article attached as PDF file:

Article as full-text link:

Student Blog site:

Multimedia Link:
INTEGRATING STUDY ABROAD INTO THE CURRICULUM
Finally the journey leads to the city of Tanarwa. You penetrate it along streets thick with signboards jutting from the walls. The eye does not see things but images of things that mean other things: pincers point out the tooth-drawer’s house... signs of what is forbidden and allowed. From the doors of the temples the gods’ statues are seen, each portrayed with his attributes so that the worshiper can recognise them and address his prayers correctly. If a building has no signboard or figure, its very form and the position it occupies in the city’s order suffice to indicate its function: the palace, the prison, the pythagorean school, the brothel. . . . Your gaze scans the streets as if they were written pages: the city says everything you must think, makes you repeat her discourse.

(Calvino, 1997, pp. 13–14)

As outlined in chapter 1, many study abroad students claim that they learn most outside of the classroom. The aim of this chapter is to illustrate how out-of-class experiences can be mediated through an interdisciplinary academic framework that is linked with and reinforces in-class learning. In essence, I argue that study abroad learning can be particularly effective in breaking down the false dichotomy between classroom and street and between “high” culture and “low” culture.
In Calvino’s quote at the beginning of this chapter, newcomers to a city are faced with streets “thick with signboards” and “images of things that mean other things.” This chapter outlines how reading the city’s architecture and signs as a text provides students with valuable insights about the world beyond the classroom. However, as discussed in chapter 2, many students are not natural explorers; they can fear new places and as a result create comfort zones. Therefore, students must be encouraged to go out and explore their study abroad sites, to wander and wonder. They should learn the city’s rhythms by studying its ebb and flow, seek out its hidden spaces, such as courtyards, and “learn the art of seeing” (Sennett, 1974, p. 213).

Students as intentional, critical observers can deconstruct the meaning(s) of their study abroad sites by approaching what they see in a focused and systematic way, through semiotics, the study of signs. I propose that the iconography of cities, which includes monuments and street names, is a means for students to understand the history and cultural context of space and a way of creating a dialogue with the inhabitants of their study abroad sites. According to Hertmans, “The city is the territory of human communication in its most advanced form” (2001, p. 10); therefore to study a city (or any study abroad site) is to study its people, their lifeblood.

The theory underpinning the methodology discussed in this chapter of walking, observing, and critiquing the city is a narrative. From literature and literary theory, cultural geography and cultural studies, ethnography and anthropology, and contemporary French philosophy. It is argued that introducing students to literature and theory will aid the students’ abilities to read and understand their study abroad sites. It is hoped that the emphasis on theory and its relationship to study abroad will complement other chapters in this volume that employ methodologies such as participant observation. For example, in this chapter the role of the city walker is related to the concept and practice of flânerie, and the role of the observer is related to the ethnographer and anthropologist. Combined, these can be considered flânerie and undertaken by the flânerie. Additionally, assignments that encourage students to engage with and learn from their study abroad sites are discussed.

Many of the examples in this chapter of discourse and its relevance to student activities are taken from a course I designed and teach at the Institute for the International Education of Students (IES) to American students studying in Dublin, Ireland, “Communal Irish Identity,” referred to in this chapter as “the Dublin course.” However, although the term city is frequently used in the chapter, the theories, methodologies, and activities can apply to varying degrees to other study abroad sites as well as to home campuses. At Beloit College, a series of curriculum development activities based on some of the work described in the chapter led to the inclusion of similar methodologies in courses now taught in China (see chapter 8), Ecuador, Nicaragua, and Beloit (see chapter 9), and Moscow, as well as courses within the college’s first-year seminar program and a travel-writing course.

The chapter is subdivided into three interconnected sections: “Semiotics: Teaching Study Abroad Students How to ‘Read’ a City,” “Walking (Wandering and Wondering) Through the City,” and “Returning to Semiotics: Linking the Social Sciences With Literature.” Subsections outline the course components and describe exercises illustrating their relevance to particular disciplines and study abroad. Interdisciplinary anthologies such as The Blackwell City Reader (Bridge & Watson, 2002) and The Subcultures Reader (Thornton & Gelder, 1997) provide particularly useful thematically divided readings relevant to study abroad.

**Semiotics: Teaching Study Abroad Students How to “Read” a City**

For many students, reading texts about literary and cultural theory can be dense and challenging at best and, at times, close to impenetrable. However, the theory can give them an intentionality for their interactions with their study abroad sites as well as a vocabulary with which to understand them.

In the first session of “Communal Irish Identity,” several activities provide students with a basic but functional understanding that semiotics can be used to read a city and that cities exist within conurbations of vast and varied symbols (text and visual images) and iconography (architecture, statues, and monuments) with historical, political, and cultural contexts. According to T. Hall, “There have been various frameworks put forward to deconstruct or ‘unpack’ the meanings inscribed in or attached to urban spaces. Despite their differences these frameworks are all described as being broadly ‘semiotic’” (1998, p. 28).

Semiotics in its simplest form is the analysis of the meanings humans derive from signs and symbols, ranging from the written word to architecture. For example, when study abroad students see a building or monument, a signpost above a store, even the styles of clothes worn by the residents of
their host site, they derive meanings from them. In effect, they are using semiotics to interpret the world around them. To help make this a conscious practice, the theory of semiotics is made visible in the first session of the course by drawing symbols on a chalkboard.

The students then list and discuss other signs and symbols that they see (read) every day, such as $\Phi$ & $\Psi$ @, and they are asked to consider one symbol at length. I typically use the McDonald's logo, both because it is so pervasive, and because its presence in cities such as Dublin can mask the real cultural differences between Ireland and the United States.

Students' initial responses to the McDonald's logo include fast food, America, obesity, and globalization. They are then asked to consider what the logo might mean in other countries. For example, the logo represents a kind of positive or even elitist status for young Chinese. When the first McDonald's restaurant opened its doors in Moscow in 1990, long queues awaited its opening. The students interpret the meaning of the logo in that context to have meant democracy and freedom for some and a sign of American imperialism for others. The McDonald's logo makes them understand that although the same logo may appear around the world, it has local interpretations. On the other hand, some symbols they may assume are universal are not, such as the Red Cross (Fig. 6.1). Geography and religion led to the creation of the Red Crescent in 1919, but most students fail to recognize the logo, as it falls outside their normal frames of reference. Semiotics does not allow students to be passive receptors of visual information; instead it forces them to actively investigate, decode, and reflect. As Hertmans writes, "You are inclined to think in general terms, so you must look at the small things, the individual, or you will begin to think that you understand the world—the surest way not to understand it" (2001, p. 103).

The Dublin students next are asked to consider what certain well-known buildings and landscapes connote, for example, the Statue of Liberty, the Golden Gate Bridge, Niagara Falls, and the Grand Canyon. When asked to consider what the site of the "Twin Towers" symbolizes following 9/11, they usually respond with phrases like "terror," "Islamic terrorism," and "an attack on freedom or democracy." The aim of these questions is to illustrate to students how buildings and the natural environment can engender particular emotions and that, in turn, language conveys them.

Nonvisual signs also signify meanings, such as the words that students speak and read. An excerpt from Nobel Laureate Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* (1970) makes them question what they associate with the words *white* and *black.* They respond with snow and purity to the first, and dark, night, and dirt to the second. In the novel, one child internalizes negative associations with the color black and positive with white, whereas the other does the opposite, with implications for both children's self-understanding and actions. The passage elicits an emotional discussion from the students about the ability of language to categorize and stereotype people and create moral panics leading to geographies of exclusion, and shows them how Morrison's work lends itself to postcolonial and feminist readings.

Finally, to connect visual semiotics with linguistic semiotics, I ask the students to consider two identical cities whose main thoroughfares are named respectively "Queen Victoria" and "Karl Marx." As a group, we discuss the possible connotations (historical, political, and sociocultural) a visitor might attribute to each city based on the names of the streets. The students are then asked to discuss the names given to prominent streets or buildings where they live in the United States.

**Semiotics and Photo Essays**

Photography allows students to test their understanding and practice of semiotics. By sharing their photos in class, students experience firsthand how they interpret images differently. Although students have technical and visual competence, they often make the mistake of taking photographs as a way of remembering the story behind the image instead of visually capturing the story. To make students more intentional or discerning photographers, they are asked to create silent thematic-based PowerPoint photo essays. This forces them to consider why and how to capture an image so that it can speak for itself. Examples of themes include architecture, litter, graffiti, nature, and politics. According to one student evaluation, "The photo essay was great because it forced me to look at Dublin through one specific theme and later
Reading and Decoding Street Names and Monuments in Dublin, Ireland

Readings from Yvonne Whelan’s Reinventing Modern Dublin (2003) demonstrate how semiotics can help decode or deconstruct Dublin. Whelan researched the historical, sociopolitical, and cultural significance and implications of place names in Dublin following independence from British rule. During this time, many street names were changed; for example, the name of the city’s main thoroughfare was changed from Sackville Street to O’Connell Street. Analyzing street names is a form of semiotics. A postcolonial reading could focus on their historical context, whereas a feminist reading could take particular notice of the prominence of male names in the streetscape. Students can use the street names to guess when they were constructed; location and architecture of particular streets can also be used to determine date of construction.

As Whelan (2003) documents, not only did street names change, but monuments were removed, destroyed, and relocated. Nations erect monuments to represent themselves and their past; they may remove or change them to signal a departure from the past. If students can read the monuments, that is, understand their cultural and historical context and significance, the monuments can become more than part of the scenery. Whelan cites the case of the history of the highly contentious statue of Queen Victoria. Removed in 1948 from in front of the Irish parliament in Dublin and relocated several times, it eventually was presented to the people of Sydney, Australia, and currently stands in the Bicentennial Plaza in front of Sydney’s Town Hall (Whelan, 2003, pp. 195–202).

In the class, we examine the 390-foot, needle-shaped Dublin Spire, the world’s largest freestanding sculpture located in the very center of O’Connell Street. Used as a meeting point for many of the city’s residents and tourists, it is familiar to all of the students. However, as tall as the Spire is, its history is deeper, revealing to the students, like a piece of historical and sociocultural DNA, an important piece of Ireland’s past and collective memory.

On the same site, almost 200 years before the Dublin Spire was installed, an impressive 121-foot pillar was erected in honor of Admiral Nelson. Symbolic of British naval supremacy and the Battle of Trafalgar, in the context of its location the pillar also symbolized colonization and oppression. The pillar was blown up by a splinter group of the IRA in 1966. In 1988, to celebrate Dublin’s millennium, a bronze female statue of Anna Livia, a personification of the River Liffey, was placed on the pillar’s original site. Referred to locally as “the floozy in the jacuzzi,” it was replaced in 2002 by the Dublin Spire, itself contentious, loved by some and loathed by many. Its nickname, “Stiletto in the Ghetto,” derives from its close proximity to shops and services owned by and catering to Dublin’s newly established immigrant population. Thus, the unofficial naming of official places and structures illustrates the power of a populace (and of language) to subvert and change and the meaning (label and stereotype) of monuments and places. As Tuan writes, “Naming is power” (1990, p. 688). Cresswell discusses the importance of “inscribing memory in place”:

Monuments, museums, the preservation of particular buildings (and not others), plaques, inscriptions and the promotion of whole neighborhoods as “heritage zones” are all examples of placing memory... The connection between place and memory and the contested nature of this connection has been the object of considerable enquiry. (2004, p. 85)

City as Palimpsest: Seeing the Past in the Present

A city (usually Rome), built on the ruins of its past, with history accumulating but not quite adding up, is a constant analogy for Freud... Ruins, monuments and urban architecture point to an environment where the past continually impinges on the present... And just as psychoanalysis is dedicated to uncovering the power of the past as it acts on the lives of the present, so a study of urban culture must look to understand the power of an urban imagery. (Highmore, 2005, pp. 4–5)
Students in the Dublin course research the historical, political, economic, and sociocultural processes that have given rise to Dublin’s current shape and culture, a Highmore-like form of urban psychoanalysis. Understanding the past in the present is important lest we see cities as static, unchanging spaces, rather than sites that physically and culturally morphologize over time. Most notably, cities show their different historical periods through the radical juxtaposition of architecture, such as small houses and skyscrapers. Some of the old architecture—usually the most grandiose—survives; however, as Calvino writes, cities can “follow one another on the same site under the same name, born and dying without knowing themselves” (1997, p. 30).

To uncover and see the past in Dublin, the students study the expansion of the city over five time frames that can be broadly labeled medieval, Georgian, tenement, suburban, and contemporary. The political reasons for each expansion are considered as well as their economic and sociocultural realities. For example, the instatement of a form of self-governance in Dublin, signaled by the arrival of the Duke of Ormond in 1601, put into motion the creation of what is called Georgian Dublin. During the 1700s Dublin became one of the most beautiful and elegant cities in the world. Its large houses were situated around lavish squares and government buildings were constructed in white stone in the neoclassical European tradition. The most prominent squares remain and now are one of Dublin’s main tourist attractions. They are also home to some study abroad students, and to appreciate where they live, the students need to look back in time.

Following events such as the failed 1798 rebellion, the Act of Union was passed in 1801, restoring central control and governance of Ireland to London and initiating a rapid fall in Dublin’s fortunes. Over a few decades, as the political classes returned to England or moved out from the city to enclaves of prosperity in the suburbs, the inner city imploded because of a lack of taxes to support social services, rural urban migration, and the advent of scrupulous rack-renting by landowners. What emerged was the tenement period, a time of extreme poverty in Dublin. Oral histories and excerpts from the plays of Sean O’Casey show students the period’s human dimension.

To track these changes in Dublin through space and time, students view and create maps, either on paper or using Google. The city’s expansion over time emerges like the rings of a tree, with the final ring, the M50 motorway, circling it. To develop their understanding of the political, socioeconomic, and cultural realities of a given time, ask the students to research one and represent it creatively. Students are appreciative of and excel at the creative freedom they are given with this individual or group assignment. They have written fictional letters from family members living in “Tenement Dublin” to relatives living in America, staining and burning the paper to make the letters appear old and crumbling. Others have written poems, songs, or short stories. One student created an illustrated “Medieval Dublin” book for children and another a full-scale game of Georgian monopoly; others have built architectural models. The creative projects are submitted along with a written explanation or rationale for the projects and a bibliography.

Walking (Wandering and Wondering) Through the City

Walking through Dublin is a critical component of the course; it aids the students’ understanding of Irish identity and contributes to their intercultural learning. Philosophy (de Certeau in particular), practices (Flânerie), sociological theory (the Chicago School), and cultural studies (the Birmingham School) are employed to both give the students different ways to understand and interpret what they are doing and observing, and a vocabulary with which to describe and discuss it.

Flânerie

To learn how to walk and observe the city the students are introduced to flânerie, a practice most commonly associated with the 19th-century Parisian male (flâneur) who voyeuristically navigated the city by foot and often inhabited cafes to observe the “pageant” of everyday life (Baudelaire, 1861). Despite its negative portrayal as the preserve of the male decadent, over time the theoretical, sociopolitical, and cultural insights provided by flânerie were recognized within the social sciences and philosophy and the practice was adopted as a research methodology. Walking and observing in the city has influenced the study of urban space and the patterns and consumption of commodities. In a contemporary context, Carrie Bradshaw in Sex and the City can be critiqued as a contemporary flâneuse.

The first person to seriously examine the sociological uses of flânerie was Walter Benjamin who, with reference to the French poet-flâneur Baudelaire, referred to this activity as “botanising the asphalt” (1973, p. 36). Benjamin’s use of flânerie is most explicitly expressed in his seminal The Arcades Project,
which explored patterns of consumption and the uses of space in the covered shopping arcades of Paris. *Flânerie* is also associated with the work of sociologist Georg Simmel whose “The Metropolis and Mental Life” (1950), originally published in 1903, discussed the importance and preponderance of “the visual” in cities and what he called the “microscopy” of urban fragments. Both Frisby (1981) and Jenks (1995) maintain that a *flâneur*-like role has relevance in contemporary social sciences through the ability of the *flâneur* or *flâneuse* to walk through the labyrinthine city and observe its rhythms and read its visual clues, to be an insider and outsider simultaneously. To link the concept of *flânerie* with semiotics and the “art of seeing,” students visit a website dedicated to *flânerie* and photo essays (www.flaner.org). They choose one essay to discuss in class and act as a model for their own photo essays. Jenks makes the case for the *flâneur* as psycho-geographer and cartographer with the eye of a photojournalist:

The walker... can playfully and artfully “see” the juxtaposition of the elements that make up the city in new and revealing relationships...

All this conceptual re-ordering is open to the imaginative theorising of the wandering cultural critic and yet mostly such techniques have come to be the province of the photo-journalist. (1991, pp. 154–155)

Frisby, linking *flânerie* with investigative journalism, writes that the *flâneur* must not only walk with the crowd but also explore hidden spaces in cities such as “alleyways, courtyards and green spaces” (1994, p. 93). Amin and Thrift write with regard to *flâneur* poet Baudelaire that he “was not a naïve dilettante” but rather, “These were reflective wanderings underpinned by a particular theorization of urban life, with the demand from theory to reveal the process at work through the eye of a needle” (2002, p. 10).

French Philosophy and Everyday Life

The work of Michel de Certeau helps the students select, order, and interpret their observations, and thus they read “Walking in the City,” a chapter from his 1984 book *The Practice of Everyday Life*, which is frequently used in cultural studies and urban studies anthologies. The chapter begins from atop the Twin Towers, the view from which, he argues, is the privileged view of the urban planner and bureaucrat. He argues instead for a way of seeing that “...can analyse the microbe-like, singular and plural practices” of the everyday, “which an urbanistic system was supposed to administer or suppress” (de Certeau, 1988, p. 96). De Certeau’s *Wandersmann* has the ability to reappropriate space, or create what I call a “spatial patois.” Applied to Dublin, my students understand the patois to represent the different ways in which new communities or ethnic groups use places and spaces, from the rhythm or pace of their movement, to their use of parks and other public spaces, to working practices and business hours. As they walk through Dublin at different times and days the students practice Lefebvre’s “rhythmanalysis” (2004), which was inspired by his detailed observations of a Parisian intersection from his hotel window.

When the students act as *flâneurs* and use rhythmanalysis and Jenks’s investigative photojournalism, they enter, observe, and critique spaces bustling with businesspeople during the day and empty at night, sections that seem wealthy, poor, or both, and immigrant spaces. Over time, the students can identify the different “urban uniforms” and the uses of space by subcultural groups such as gentrifiers, goths, skateboarders, and tourists.

**The Chicago and Birmingham Schools**

Seminal essays from the work of the Chicago School of Urban Sociology and the Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS), known as the Birmingham School, develop the students’ understanding of the links among walking and observation, ordering, and critical analysis. The Chicago School serves as entrée into urban discourse and methodologies such as participant observation. The School saw cityscapes as fluid with immigration and the increasing mechanisation and speed of the city affecting residential space and city growth. The students study this fluidity at work in Dublin, with gentrifiers “invading” small, inner-city neighbourhoods, and learn firsthand the value of combining qualitative and quantitative methods of enquiry. Burgess’s seminal concentric ring map of Chicago helps the students appreciate and contextualize their own research and mapping of Dublin’s physical morphology through space and time, as well as their mapping of inner-city neighborhoods based on demographics and culture. To quote a Temple University student, “The teaching was very Chicago School. We actually got out into the city to see causes and effects firsthand... [T]he walking tours are the lifeblood of the class; without them it’s difficult to grasp the concepts covered in class.” Fieldwork thus complements and reinforces in-class learning.
Like the Chicago School, the Birmingham School of the 1970s and 1980s employed observation and analysis of the cultural practices of different subcultural groups. In this case, sociologists looked at the effects of immigrant cultures on the host society (England) as well as the political and socioeconomic significance of subcultural movements associated with music and fashion (Hedgige, 1979). Similarly, the Dublin course students are outsiders in their flânerie and observation. The following section discusses a self-reflective process in which they consciously consider their role as outsiders or immigrants to advance their intercultural learning and strengthen their ability to adapt to new cultural environments.

Body Language, Proxemics, and the Meaning of Culture and Style

In the city emblems are everything... the external signs and signals from which I construct the character with whom I am going to deal... (Raban, 1974, p. 29)

All sets of clothes are geared to a known function, to one’s place in a hierarchy which is thoroughly and instinctively understood... the hierarchy still holds good... the urban uniform, whose sole function is differentiation and arbitrary variety, is an important symptom of that condition of seemingly meaningless flux which Wordsworth diagnosed as the great disease of the city... (Raban, 1974, p. 55)

To be part of the city, you needed a city style—an economic grammar of identity through which you could project yourself. (Raban, 1974, p. 63)

To observe and reflect on the meaning of culture and style in a new environment, students need to consider what their own cultural style and body language means or connotes. We are usually unconscious about our body language and surroundings. As Hertmans writes, “Home is the place where the world around us becomes invisible; that gives us the peace that we need to be able to think about things that are further away. At home, things hide beneath their familiarity” (2001, p. 206). Therefore, once the students trust each other and me, I facilitate drama-based workshops to make them conscious of their unconscious behavior and aid their understanding of the cultural context of human interaction.

In one workshop, I ask the students to walk around the room as they would in familiar, comfortable spaces. Their walks are assigned a number of 5 or 6. They then are asked to walk in the mode of a person who is nervous.

The walk changes; it is usually slower and accompanied by quick looks around the room and receives a number of 3 or 4. When the students walk in the mode of a person who is confident, their walks are faster, authoritative and numbered 7 or 8. I then call out numbers between 1 and 10 and the students change their walks accordingly. Interestingly, most students adopt the same mode when each number is called out, thus illustrating the cultural codes that they consciously and unconsciously adopt.

Edward Hall (1966) gave the term proxemics to the distances people keep from each other, depending on whether the spaces are intimate, personal, social, or public. To illustrate Hall’s work, I ask the students to enter the room as if attending an interview, shake hands, and then sit down; each has a partner who acts as the interviewer. The students resemble each other in the proxemics they use and how they sit. They have fun silently simulating different scenarios, such as a first date, and mostly know exactly what each person’s body language is saying, because they share the same culture. We then talk about how their body language and cultural norms might be “read” quite differently in another culture.

In the mode of flânerie and rhythmanalysis, the students are encouraged to slow down when exploring Dublin. They are assigned and choose places to observe such as parks, malls, train stations, pubs, and cafés. For many students this can be difficult because they want to be doing, consuming, and running rather than sitting, watching, and reflecting. Also, compared with the Irish, the students tend to be loud and alienate themselves in public spaces, as in Ireland in general the speakers’ volume is only loud enough for their interlocutors to hear. Furthermore, the students fail to notice that Ireland has a high-context culture in which directness can seem rude. That is, they are in a world whose signs are difficult for them to read, and their own behaviors and appearance are being judged based on a set of codes they do not understand:

The greenhorn lurches forward into myopic destiny... (Raban, 1974, p. 47)

To be initiated, the newcomer must first be stripped of his past; he has to become a child again, innocent of everything except a humbling consciousness of his own innocence and vulnerability... (Raban, 1974, p. 49)

He finds himself in a world of symbols and signals, every one arcane... You become a walking legible code, to be read, and as often
misinterpreted, by strangers . . . a coat stand of symbols . . . my own dim paller was a dishonourable badge of my blistering newness in the city.
(Raban, 1974, p. 51)

The students' success in absorbing and applying the lessons of their theoretical studies becomes clear to them when parents and friends come to visit them in Ireland. They find themselves training their parents in local customs, such as not talking too loudly, and realize they themselves have gained the intercultural competence needed to adapt to their Irish surroundings.

**Reading Culture and Space**

*Flânerie* and the Chicago School and Birmingham School research methods shape a number of assignments in the course in which students learn to read culture and space. For example, a walking tour teaches the students that in Dublin subcultures that are not popular or "in" but rather culturally "out" are also spatially "out," that is, located on the periphery. Although this periphery may be only a few streets away from the most popular streets, students new to the city do not immediately find them. The walking tour therefore follows along a long, winding street that is used by different subcultural populations. Along the street are second-hand clothes and thrift stores, adult shops, small casinos, alternative medicine stores, Dublin's largest and iconic gay bar, nongovernmental organizations, and volunteer organizations.

Through the entrance of a Walter Benjamin-like arcade, the students find stalls containing memorabilia such as stamps and coins; a fortune teller; an ear piercing and tattoo service; organic produce; local arts, crafts, and jewelry; as well as secondhand clothing and Asian clothing importers.

Recent changes in cultural classifications of what is "in" and "out" have turned the street and arcade into a "zone in transition." Secondhand clothes, vinyl records, alternative medicine, as well as gay bars are now in vogue in Dublin, affecting the street and arcade as the businesses associated with these become more expensive and trendy cafes replace the tea and coffee stands. With this "culturification," fed in part by gentrification, activities now deemed less desirable are moving farther to the periphery, and rent increases have forced some of the long-term stall holders to also move. Interviews with the stall holders about the changes give the students insight into ways in which Dublin and other cities culturally morphologize over time.

**Returning to Semiotics: Linking the Social Sciences With Literature**

This chapter began with the theory of semiotics and how students learn to deconstruct physical signs, monuments, and language. To use this tool, the students, as outlined in the second section, are encouraged to walk and observe the city as flâneurs with the critical insight of social science theory and research methodologies. In essence the students go out of the classroom to scan the streets "as if they were written pages," to return to the Calvino quote opening the chapter (1997, pp. 13-14). The centrality of the city and landscape in literature highlights a connection among literature, social science, and cultural theory. "Just as a book is written by an author and is in turn subject to the critique of the literary critic, similarly the landscape or space is 'written' by a set of agents and is subject to the critique of the geographer" (Whelan, 2003, p. 13).

Humanities and social science texts can aid the students' understanding of the study abroad site and develop their appreciation of different disciplinary lenses and critical thinking skills. For example, a text such as Jonathan Lethem's *Fortress of Solitude* (2003) can complement Neil Smith's *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City* (1996). Both discuss inner-city gentrification and the politics of identity, space, and power in New York. Smith's work explicitly discusses the power of language to legitimate expansion by the middle classes into the new "frontier" of the city, in the same ways the "great" western expansion into the American West was legitimated through language. Literature can tap into the emotional, physical, and spiritual realities of a given space in a way that hard science struggles to achieve. Sibley writes that the "oddness of the ordinary, which is examined microscopically by authors and playwrights from Jane Austen to Mike Leigh, [has been] neglected in social geography" (1995, p. xv).

Highmore (2009) and Jenks (1993) argue that the turning by cultural geographers and cultural theorists, particularly the Birmingham School, toward the humanities rather than the sciences increased the pace at which landscape was interpreted as text. In *Cultural Geography*, Crang writes,

> Literary landscapes are best thought of as a combination of culture and landscape, not with literature as a separate lens or mirror reflecting or distorting an outside world. . . . To say it is subjective is to miss a key point. It is a social product. . . . The ideologies and beliefs of peoples and epochs
both shape and are shaped by these texts... Here we may... ask whether
geographical accounts are so different from literature. We should not see
geography and literature as two different orders of knowledge (one imagi-
native and one factual) but rather as a field of textual genres, in order to
highlight both the "worldliness of literary texts and the imaginativeness of
geographical texts." (1998, p. 57)

Close readings of excerpts from seminal texts that have an exploration
of the city at their core, such as James Joyce's Ulysses (1922) and Virginia
Woolf's Mrs. Dalloway (1925), give the students a concrete understanding of
how the city can be read as, and is, a text. In chapter 2, James Joyce's Ulysses
is cited as an example of a spatial narrative, whereby the route that Leopold
Bloom takes on June 16, 1904, provides a major building block for the plot.
Joyce's modernist device is similar to that employed by Virginia Woolf in
Mrs. Dalloway, which follows Clarissa Dalloway's route through London
during the course of one day. To quote Crang,

The plurality of the city is shown where narrative lines relating to different
places unexpectedly collide or cross-cut, enacting the rhythm of daily life
in the form of the text. Reading the text becomes like walking on the side-
walk itself, not watching someone else do so. In this way the work goes
beyond being a text on the city to being a fusion of urban experience and
text itself. It stops being a single account and takes into itself the plurality
of experiences in the city. (1998, p. 57)

The city of Dublin is not simply the stage upon which Leopold Bloom
struts, but becomes the inciting force driving his internal narrative. Indeed,
the city is a multitude of signs and symbols, which Bloom observes with
the forensic eye of the semiotician. Understanding the relationship between
Bloom and the city facilitates the students' self-conscious examination of the
sights and sites that drive their understanding of Dublin. A close analysis of
literature ranging from Baudelaire to Joyce makes the students aware of the
role (methodology) of walking (flânerie) in the city, the use of semiotics and
the brilliance of these authors' craft to translate the vibrancy, color, sounds,
smells, tastes, and rhythms of the city through language. The texts encourage
the students to "read" Dublin with a critical and self-reflective eye and
"write" about (show) their experiences with as much life and feeling as
possible.

Conclusion

By combining their understanding of semiotics with the practice of photo-
ography and flânerie, the urban research methods of the Chicago and Bir-
ingham Schools, the philosophy of the production and practice of everyday
life and literature, students can not only deconstruct their study abroad site
but also construct their own personal city and experience. As Calvino writes,
"You take delight not in a city's seven or seventy wonders, but in the answer
it gives to a question of yours... Or the question it asks you, forcing you
to answer, like Thebes through the mouth of the Sphinx" (1997, p. 44). To
quote a student:

By the end of the semester I gained an understanding of all the different
Dublins that existed through space and time but I loved this course most
of all because in the end Dublin became my city, based on how I read it,
saw it, and experienced it through juxtapositions and semiotics etc :) and
I have my maps and photo essay as a great reminder!

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COOL CITIES

Kalamazoo and Carthage—The Intersection of Service-Learning and Intercultural Learning

Anne E. Haeckl and Elizabeth A. Manwell

One of the challenges of teaching the history, literature, and material culture of the ancient world is the perception among many that the study of antiquity has nothing to say about the modern world and its concerns. As classicists, we believe that ancient texts and remains continue to speak to us in powerful ways about how peoples of varying beliefs, practices, and values can learn from and live with each other. Our own work and careers, in fact, have been shaped by this belief. Elizabeth’s research on masculine identity in the Roman Republic initially stemmed from her observation of curiously similar forms of male gender performance that seem to pervade contemporary American culture. Anne’s work on sexuality and ethnicity in Roman sculpture and portraiture relies on both the historical contexts in which these works were produced, and on contemporary discussions about ways in which we represent gender, ethnicity, and race. Though our own passion for the ancient world has been sustained and reinforced by the connections we see among these various cultures, students in our courses not infrequently are shocked to find that modern artists and writers consciously or unconsciously respond to ancient artistic and literary motifs. More importantly, students realize as equally compelling and relevant to their own lives the same questions that ancient Greeks and Romans struggled to answer: How does one best manage an empire? How do you know if you are fighting a just war? Can one serve divine and governmental