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## Book Review: Rockin' in Red Square - Critical Approaches to International Education in the Age of Cyberculture.

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Grünzweig, Walter, and Rinehart, Nana. (Eds.) (2003) *Rockin' in Red Square: Critical Approaches to International Education in the Age of Cyberculture*. Hamburg, Germany: Lit Verlag. 264 pages. \$29.95.

In their contribution to the collected edition *Rockin' in Red Square: Critical Approaches to International Education in the Age of Cyberculture*, John and Lilli Engle offer a brief critique of the photograph and international studies website which gave rise to the phrase “Rockin’ in Red Square.” They describe a photograph on an international studies program website at a major university. The photograph depicts a young study abroad student holding a guitar in Red Square. The caption at the bottom of the photograph reads, “Rockin’ in Red Square,” and is hyperlinked to a brief first person account of the student, who joyfully describes being mistaken for a rock star. The photograph is offered by the website as an example of the fun one can have abroad. The Engles are quick to criticize it and the university website:

Granted, “Rockin” is just a hook for the university’s international programs, and if you click deeper into the site, you will at last come upon the traditional justifications of study abroad: seeing the world through other eyes, developing adaptability and self-confidence, and learning intercultural skills for the new economy. Admirable as they are, though, in the context created by the Lenin and McCartney lead-in these objectives sounded like little pious parental bromides. It’s tough to compete with the rock-on message right up there in front (30).

The Engles then ponder whether in this age of cyberculture and pop culture study abroad still encourages “seeing the world through other eyes, developing adaptability and self-confidence, and learning intercultural skills for the new economy” (30). Indeed, all of the essays that contribute to Walter Grünzweig and Nana Rinehart’s edition struggle to understand the role of international education, most often in the form of study abroad, in the twenty-first century. In short, the book asks us what international studies programs can do at a time when students hop off the plane to find the nearest internet café before journeying to experience that Big Mac abroad.

John and Lilli Engle are probably the most critical of the effects of globalization on international education, arguing that the globalization, especially Americanization, of the world leaves study abroad students with an experience that is neither international nor educative. However, they are not alone. James L. Citron and Walter Grünzweig are also critical of globalization. In his contribution to the collection, Citron reviews a study of students on a study abroad program

in Spain. The majority of American students in the study, he notes, tended to intermingle most with other Americans, while interacting very little with the Spanish host families and students in what Citron calls “third culture formation,” or the creation of a culture that is not quite the host or home culture. Walter Grünzweig takes a different approach, arguing that study abroad programs often fall prey to frontier narratives that are inherent in American culture. In the modern manifestation of these narratives, students venture out into the frontier of other countries to conquer the other. These three essays, arguably, form the strongest critiques within the collection.

In contrast, William W. Hoffa attempts to describe how study abroad has changed in the recent decades, arguing that the effects might not be as bad. In fact, he questions whether the pall cast by globalization is more apparent than real. While he acknowledges that students can no longer have that authentic experience that, say, the Engles desire—and he questions whether this sort of experience ever existed—they do have experiences that are different from what they might have at home. He notes:

Students seem to be concluding that conditions are indeed still different enough to matter; that life lived in other places can have a feel and meaning quite different from that they knew at home. . . . However much ‘Rome’ or ‘Berlin’ might be changed from the cities some of us knew in former times is to today’s student not fully relevant. They realize quickly that not only are they ‘not in Kansas anymore,’ nor in Oregon or Florida, but in someplace else not fully graspable on American terms alone. (68)

Still other contributors take up some of the more positive aspects of study abroad, even within today’s globalized climate. Sabine Klahr argues that international experiences, most notably study abroad, could help young engineers to understand the profession, which has historically been resistant to international education. Hartmut H. Holzmüller, Barbara Stöttinger, and Thomas Wittkop take similar steps in examining the internationalization of business education. They suggest that an international and global perspective is essential to the modern businessman—albeit one that is tempered with a critical eye toward globalization. Hanneke Teekens takes a different approach in “Thi’s Story: Growing Up in Mekong Delta and Studying Abroad: A Reflection on International Education and Development Cooperation.” He examines the story of a young woman who travels from Vietnam to receive an education in the Netherlands.

Probably the most comprehensive of these essays are those by Nana Rinehart, Skye Stephenson, and Josef A. Mestenhauser, all focusing on more programmatic aspects of study abroad, most notably assessing the international experiences of students. Rinehart examines how we might begin evaluating study abroad programs, especially in light of perceptions that the study abroad experience is often characterized as an easy grade for students seeking a spring

break experience in a foreign country. She examines several different instruments for measuring the impact of internationalized curriculums and programs on study abroad. Stephenson argues that study abroad programs must acknowledge the difficulties of achieving what he terms cross-cultural deepening, "the process of achieving true cross-cultural understanding [that it] is so profound in nature that it engenders a perceptual shift in the subject involved such that he/she is able, at the same time, to consider the same event, experience or belief from the vantage point of more than one cultural framework—both as members of the host culture might and as he/she already does" (87). To foster cross-cultural deepening, programs must acknowledge the personal factors related to the study abroad student; the host culture characteristics; events and relations with the home culture; and the study abroad program characteristics and personnel.

Mestenhauser concludes the collection by taking an even broader view, asserting that international programs cannot continue along the road they are on. Rather, they—and the universities that sponsor them—must make an active commitment to international education:

Only a strong commitment by universities to mainstream international education and accept internationalization as a mega-goal can provide the force necessary to overcome these barriers. Generating that commitment depends on the ability of international educators to create a knowledge for the field, on their understanding of the interdependence of all constituent parts, and, above all, on the awareness among all stakeholders that ignorance of the world is dangerous and partial knowledge even worse. (197)

His chapter takes into account the already changing nature of international programs by issuing a call to for these programs to address these changes fully.

What is especially strong about this collection is its ability to articulate in print the very issues that are being debated in international programs across the country. Most of these programs have already begun to question how students can experience other cultures when on study abroad trips they encounter a large amount of American culture through fast food restaurants, television programs imported from the United States, or natives who fluently speak English as a second language. Indeed, a number of programs, as the collection reminds us, have turned their attention to remote areas of the globe in order to remove these global effects from the study abroad student's experience. As the collection itself warns, there is danger in this type of solution because of the way that it essentializes certain cultures. These solutions, which several of the contributors contend, seek to halt change within these countries so that their students can have an "authentic experience." In searching for other solutions, this collection offers several theoretical arguments for different approaches, many of which remain original, though untried and untested. In fact, if there is a weakness to this collection, it

is the very weakness from which all study abroad literature suffers, namely, that most programs have not yet conducted nor published empirical research on the effects of study abroad on students. While the field of study abroad has shifted away from anecdotal evidence, it still needs to begin investigating empirically the results of international experiences. This collection offers ways to approach study abroad anew; however, it will finally be up to international programs to move to the next level.

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