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**Beyond the Grand Tour: re-thinking the education abroad narrative for US higher education in the 1920s**

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**Abstract:** This paper utilises primary source documents from the first officially sanctioned US study abroad programs in the 1920s to argue that the discourse about the first study abroad programs for US students was a break from the Grand Tour tradition of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Instead, this paper suggests that study abroad represented an experimental and innovative approach to the acquisition of knowledge for US undergraduates. The discourse of those who created these programs and those who participated was distinct from the Grand Tour in three ways that are described in the paper as, distinct by design, distinct by omission and distinct by experience. These three areas of distinction refute the contemporary narrative that conflates the Grand Tour with study abroad.

**Keywords:** study abroad; Grand Tour; travel; education; tourism; US higher education; education abroad.

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**Biographical notes:** Eduardo Contreras Jr. is the Director of Studies Abroad at the University of Portland. His research focuses on the history of US undergraduate study abroad programmes and the internationalisation of higher education at US colleges and universities. He completed his dissertation, *Rhetoric and Reality in Study Abroad: The Aims of Overseas Study for US Higher Education in the Twentieth Century* (2015), at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

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## 1 Introduction

It is common in the USA today to compare the experiences of US college students studying abroad to the experiences of Europeans on the Grand Tours of the eighteenth century. Although the discourse emphasizing the 'Study abroad as Grand Tour' is currently pervasive, this dominant narrative did not exist in the early twentieth century when US colleges first introduced formalized study abroad programs for undergraduate students. Using historical research methods, this paper considers primary source documents from the first officially sanctioned US study abroad programs in the 1920s to reconsider this dominant contemporary discourse. My research will show how the discourse about the first study abroad programs for US students from the 1920s had little to do with the Grand Tour, and instead represented a novel and 'experimental' approach to the acquisition of knowledge. More precisely, the education abroad discourse of those who created these

programs and those who participated was distinct from the Grand Tour in three ways that I describe as, *distinct by design, distinct by omission* and *distinct by experience*. These three areas of distinction are demonstrated in the study abroad discourse of the 1920s and they offer a convincing counter-argument to the contemporary narrative that conflates the Grand Tour with study abroad.

To demonstrate how the Grand Tour narrative was absent from study abroad discourse in the 1920s, this paper considers the following. First, I demonstrate the pervasiveness of the ‘Study abroad as Grand Tour’ narrative in twenty-first century discourse. Using examples from publications about higher education, this paper opens by establishing the dominant, twenty-first century narrative that study abroad is an extension of the Grand Tour. Next, I offer a brief history of the European Grand Tour using secondary source literature. This section will provide a working definition for the Grand Tour and will outline some of the establishing characteristics of this primarily eighteenth century endeavour so that they can be compared to the first US study abroad programs in the twentieth century. I will then describe the early history of the first experiments in education abroad at US institutions of higher education in the 1920s. This final section will focus on the design of these programs, as well as the discourse about overseas study by its organisers, supporters and participants.

## **2 Establishing the ‘Study abroad as Grand Tour’ narrative**

The ‘Study abroad as Grand Tour’ narrative looms large in contemporary discourse. In the most complete work of scholarship articulating the extent to which US study abroad programs are linked with the European Grand Tour, Joan Elias Gore (2005) explains:

“Over and over, US study abroad has been described as a Grand Tour experience. Each such discursive event further associates travel and cultural acquisition with leisure. Study abroad is portrayed as a personal experience designed not to gain purposeful knowledge so much as to gain social standing and enjoy private pleasure” [p.32].

Gore is especially mindful of this narrative’s dual-natured impact on contemporary study abroad practices. Building from the work of Michel Foucault, Gore considers the ‘Study abroad as Grand Tour’ narrative to be the basis for a powerful, contemporary, episteme that shapes opinions about study abroad and reinforces the notion that the endeavour is a leisurely experience, without academic merit, that is reserved for the wealthy. Gore (2005) argues that this dominant narrative both marginalises overseas study within US higher education, and also influences the administration and design of study abroad programming today. For example, in an evaluation of overseas studies programs, Goodwin and Nacht (1988) argue that scepticism about study abroad is based on “...a rather careless assumption that it is still simply the grand tour for the well-to-do (‘fine for a rich private college, but not for us’) rather than a valuable, or even vital, feature of higher education” [p.5]. One year later, in a national study of US international efforts for undergraduate students by the American Council on Education, Lambert (1989) found that, “In all but the most prestigious private liberal arts colleges, the overall proportion of US students who study abroad is far too low” [p.159]. These examples emphasise Gore’s (2005) assertion that the ‘Study abroad as Grand Tour’ narrative is more than a mere cliché.

Other scholarship and policy reports also perpetuate the connections between study abroad and the Grand Tour. In particular, there is a view that study abroad is a way for US students to consume knowledge from the bygone relics of Europe. Lewin (2009) exemplifies this notion when he writes, “Our study abroad pedagogy indeed still follows in the tradition of the European grand tour, whereby aristocratic students traveled to European capitals

to supplement their liberal arts education and to accumulate the treasures of the 'Old World' [p.8]. Michael Vande Berg (2004) also supports the idea that the Grand Tour served as the foundation of US study abroad in its earliest period by arguing that the first junior year abroad programs embraced, "...the values of the Grand Tour, [and] offered a unified vision of study abroad that informed decisions both about what sorts of students should study abroad and what kinds of things they should study" [p.xii]. Moreover, Vande Berg et al. (2012, p.16) suggest that "...the European Grand Tour provides the signature program model..." for this first era of US study abroad. Ultimately, Vande Berg's work describes a shift in perspectives and a change in paradigms about study abroad away from the Grand Tour foundation; however, he notes that the resonance of the Grand Tour narrative remains with the field to this day.

Journalistic reports about study abroad also include references to the Grand Tour narrative as a superficial learning endeavour for the wealthy. In a *Business Insider* article about costly study abroad programs, Ribot (2010) begins by writing, "The Grand Tour of Europe, junior year in France, that exotic and romantic semester in South America – we cherish these as a bourgeois expectation for the American College Experience." Ribot (2010) then provides examples of decadent study abroad programs around the world that emphasise the often prohibitively expensive nature of certain overseas experiences for US students. In the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, a comprehensive daily newspaper about US colleges and universities, the discourse of study abroad as Grand Tour is also perpetuated when Deresiewicz (2009) describes how the destinations for Americans studying abroad had expanded beyond Europe, but the early programs were like finishing schools that "...descended from the Grand Tour..." and allowed students to enhance their primary learning in a superficial manner, where, "You'd get to feel a little European for a while, having baptized yourself in the springs of authenticity, you'd come back a person of culture." In another *Chronicle of Higher Education* article, Fischer (2012) explains that, "From its inception, more than a century ago, study abroad has had a reputation as a female pursuit, the lasting image one of Seven Sisters students steaming overseas for a grand European tour of art and culture, a refining gloss for a marriageable young woman." These examples underscore the prevailing narrative today that equates the European Grand Tour to US study abroad programs.

### **3 Brief history of the Grand Tour and travel from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries**

The term 'Grand Tour' is applied most typically to a type of travel and tourism that took place in Europe and reached its peak in the mid-eighteenth century (Black, 1985, 1992; Delaforce, 1990; Sweet, 2012; Towner, 1985). In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, a small but growing number of British elites travelled to several cities in Italy and France. The term 'tour' is appropriate for this type of travel since travellers followed established itineraries that included stops in a number of different cities. Essential cities on the tour included Paris, Florence, Venice, Naples and Rome; however, occasionally tourists visited the Low Countries (now often referred to as 'Benelux' for Belgium, Netherlands and Luxemburg) (Delaforce, 1985; Towner, 1985). Although there were German, French, Polish and Russian travellers who also toured across Europe, the British outnumbered all other tourists in this period (Black, 1992). Black (1992) credits the rise of the Grand Tour to a number of factors, but two of the most influential forces were the rise of consumerism and an information revolution. Black (1992) argues that the rise in consumerism amongst British elite established a context where the demand for non-essential items drove tourism. Moreover, the information revolution of this period mass-produced a number of printed sources of information like newspapers, magazines and books that included information about travel in Europe. Travel literature became popular and was another item of consumption for wealthy individuals with the leisure time to read. The appeal of these travel accounts and an

increasingly consumerist society set the stage for the Grand Tour.

The motivations and experiences of the participants of the Grand Tour were varied. Although the rationale for the Grand Tour differed from traveller to traveller, Black (1985) contends that, “The principal motives advanced for foreign travel were that it equipped the traveller socially and provided him with useful knowledge and attainments” [p. 234]. Some travellers sought to formalise their attainment of knowledge by enrolling in classes at European universities, or hiring tutors and guides (often called bear-leaders) to lead them through museums and other popular sites. Still other travellers worked on their language acquisition or took lessons in other pursuits such as dancing or fencing. There was often a focus on acquiring knowledge about the arts by attending operas, theatre and visiting museums throughout Italy and France (Black, 1985). Whilst on the Grand Tour, well-connected, male travellers often arranged visits to political courts in Europe where they socialised with members of the local elite. Travellers commented on the differences between political discussions from country to country. For example, in 1777, the Earl of Chichester, Thomas Pelham embarked on his own Grand Tour to meet various political elites in Europe. On the tour, Pelham noted that the Austrian first minister ‘carefully avoided’ all political discussions, but the Portuguese minister Marquis de Pombal, “talked a great deal of the expulsion of the Jesuits out of Portugal...” [cited in Black (1985) p.169]. Perhaps as a result of this inconsistency in gaining political knowledge, Jeremy Black (1985) suggests that the purpose of these visits was more about obtaining social skills than about learning the political machinations of other countries.

Beyond obtaining varying amounts of education, travellers, who mostly stayed in a network of inns and hotels along the established tourist routes, also pursued a number of extra-curricular activities. Put simply, travellers engaged in a certain amount of sexual activities, drinking and gambling while abroad. According to Black (1985), the Grand Tour, allowed young men the chance to sow their wild oats abroad between completing their formal schooling and inheriting their family wealth. The words of eighteenth century, British traveller, Philip Thicknesse typify the phenomenon of philandering young men in Paris: “It is certain that men of large fortunes can in no city in the world indulge their passions in every respect more amply than in Paris; and that is the lure which decoys such numbers, and in particular Englishmen, to this city of love and folly” [cited in Black (1985) p.111]. Even though there were a range of motivating factors for the Grand Tour, and many distinct individual experiences, it is fair to say that, the majority of travellers were British, wealthy and male; there were disparate educational aims and varying degrees of educational attainment; and there was minimal supervision and ample opportunities for youthful indiscretion.

The nature of the Grand Tour changed over time in many different ways. Throughout the early history of the Grand Tour, the experience represented a type of rite of passage for wealthy men; however, as Sweet (2012) and Towner (1985) have shown, in the last third of the eighteenth century, the prototypical Grand Tourist began to change. The social status and age of travellers transformed when older men with different professions (e.g., writers, merchants, artists, architects) began to go on their own tours of Europe (Towner, 1985). Additionally, by the end of the eighteenth century, women also began to travel abroad independently. Italy was an especially popular destination for women. As Sweet (2012) explains, “Thus, women travelled to Italy as companions, for their health, to escape the domestic embarrassment at home, but also because they too, like men, were fascinated by Italy and subscribed to the same canons of taste and the same understanding of history that made it so important a destination for male travellers” [p.27]. In addition to a change in the type of person who went on the Grand Tour, the length of time spent abroad also changed. In the mid-eighteenth century, Grand Tours averaged 20 months, but by the 1830s, the journeys lasted less than four months [Towner, (1985) p.316].

The ways in which travellers recorded their experiences also changed over time. In the earlier part of the eighteenth century travellers' accounts of the cities they visited included lists and descriptions of the places they visited. Sweet (2012) suggests that travellers made sense of their experiences by recording their observations and describing their surroundings. The nature of these descriptions changed over time from 'dry and empirical' lists, to more introspective reflections of their travels that included inner feelings with emotional responses and additional observations about social and domestic behaviours [Sweet, (2012), p.273]. This changing discourse about the Grand Tour may be attributed to the fact that there were more women on tours whose sensibilities and interests differed from men, and to the broader ideas of the Enlightenment, which placed a greater emphasis on 'one's own impressions' and rational response to the environment [Sweet, (2012), p.273]. Towner (1985) also describes the broad changes in travellers' sensibilities, noting that those who travelled in the early eighteenth century were mainly interested in the wonders of the ancient and classical world, but by the beginning of the nineteenth century, travellers were more guided by "romantic and picturesque sensibilities" [Towner, (1985), p.313]. By the end of the 1820s, the heyday of the Grand Tour had past. With the rise of railway networks, the development of professional travel agencies, and the publication of new and more reliable guidebooks, travel continued throughout Europe in the nineteenth century in new ways (Buzard, 1993; Schriber, 1997; Siegel, 2005; Stowe, 1994).

#### **4 Experiments in education abroad in US higher education in the 1920s: the discourse of an emergent genre**

By the start of the 1920s, colleges and universities in the USA were expanding to serve multiple purposes, but no institution had established a fully sanctioned way for US students to study abroad for college credit. In 1879, Indiana University biology professor David Starr Jordan introduced the first faculty-led, short-term, study abroad program for undergraduates; however, students did not receive credit for these summer programs (Indiana University, 2013). Beyond the Indiana University program, US students in the nineteenth century typically studied abroad independently and without the support of their home universities (Singer, 2003). In 1923, the University of Delaware established the first fully sanctioned year abroad program for undergraduates and Smith College followed in 1925 with a similar program for its students. The university leaders, students and external proponents of overseas study at these institutions all contributed to an emergent genre of discourse on education abroad in the 1920s that was distinct from the European Grand Tour narrative. Here, I use Jaworski and Pritchard's (2005) definition of 'genre' as a term that is 'inextricably linked' to discourse that captures and promotes ideals and behaviours in different social practices [p.7]. In this way, the groups described in this section – organisers, proponents and participants – were responsible for the first type of education abroad discourse in US higher education.

The discourse of this community of practice should be considered highly influential for multiple reasons. First, discourse "not only reflects but also shapes social reality" [Jaworski and Pritchard, (2005), p.5]. Thus, at the time these groups were creating study abroad programs and participating in them, their language about these programs both described their experiences and shaped the popular conception of study abroad. Even though the discourse shared by the groups (e.g., students, faculty, external advocates for study abroad) used different voices, their heteroglossic nature does not belie the point that they were all a part of the common endeavour of formalised overseas study. Utilising Foucault's (2002a) notion of archaeology, analysing the discourse of this group will provide an opportunity to dig into the systems of power and belief of study abroad proponents, participants and practitioners. The archaeology of knowledge provided by the discourse of this group will

provide insights into the dominant structures of power that set the foundations for thought that Foucault (2002b) describes as the episteme. Another reason this education abroad genre from the 1920s is influential is because it represents the original guiding ideologies of this now institutionalised practice in US higher education. Stinchcombe (1965) argues that the origins of organisations are influenced by specific historical circumstances, and the institutional practices established during these critical moments determine central aspects of the organisation's future. Thus, given the foundational nature of this period for the history of education abroad in the USA, the discourse from the 1920s is of vital importance to understanding the ideologies and practices that still inform this endeavour today.

#### *4.1 Experiments at The University of Delaware and Smith College: the discourse of organisers and supporters of study abroad*

The discourse of the organisers and supporters of study abroad is distinguished from the Grand Tour narrative in two ways that I describe as, *distinction by omission* and *distinction by design*. To explain these categorical differences, it is necessary to describe the origins of these programs in greater detail. In 1920, Raymond Watson Kirkbride, an assistant professor of French at the University of Delaware, approached his university president, Walter Hullahen (1920–1944) with an innovative proposal that he called, “The Foreign Study Plan.” Kirkbride was one of the several thousand US soldiers who, after serving in France in World War I, stayed in Paris after the armistice of 11 November 1918 and enrolled in special classes designed for US soldiers at the University of Paris (Walton, 2010). In addition to enrolling in language and culture classes at the Sorbonne, Kirkbride and other US soldiers on the program were hosted by French families. After Kirkbride returned to the USA, the University of Delaware hired him to teach French. Inspired by his experience abroad, Kirkbride proposed to send a group of University of Delaware students to live in France for their junior year with French host families. In its basic design, Kirkbride's plan was distinct from the Grand Tour. First, unlike Grand Tourists who travelled from city to city and rarely enrolled in full-time programs of study, the US students would study language and culture at specially designed courses by the Sorbonne and they would receive US university credit when they returned home after spending a full academic year in Paris. Next, a US faculty member would join the students and supervise their activities and weekend excursions for the duration of the program. In these structural ways, Kirkbride's program design was distinct from the unsupervised and transitory nature of the Grand Tour, where travellers moved from city to city with limited adult oversight.

The broad aims of Kirkbride's plan were fourfold. It sought to, improve ‘international understanding’ in the students, increase US ‘effectiveness/efficiency’ in foreign trade, ‘broaden US vision of world affairs,’ and to stimulate and ‘liberalise’ US college education [Kirkbride, (1921b), p.1]. Absent from the proposal were any references to the Grand Tour; instead, Kirkbride emphasised the long-term business benefits of the program for students and he outlined potential employment opportunities for graduates who studied abroad in this new way. Although Kirkbride acknowledged that not all students would participate on the program for business aims, he suggested that some study abroad students would, “...have some knowledge of the French market conditions thru having seen them, and some acquaintance with prominent men of France thru having met them” [Kirkbride, (1921a), p.5]. Moreover, Kirkbride (1921a) emphasised the possibilities for future employment of study abroad participants in importing and exporting at various US companies including several he mentioned by name such as, Wanamaker's, Macy's, Gillette Safety Razor, Eastman Kodak, Singer Sewing Machine, and Waterman Fountain Pens. These professional aims were more of a priority for Kirkbride than were quests for superficial acquisition of knowledge from cultural treasures of Europe's past. By emphasising business aims

and including specific references to US companies, Kirkbride's discourse distanced his proposal from the type of knowledge typically associated with Grand Tour. This distinction by omission is another example of how the discourse of the early study abroad programs were not concerned with the Grand Tour narrative.

Although there were overlapping goals between the Grand Tour and study abroad, Kirkbride envisioned his plan as a new endeavour. For example, in describing what a student should expect following a year abroad on the Delaware Foreign Study Plan, Kirkbride wrote,

“He will be familiar with the literature, history, and geography of France, and will have some acquaintance with its products, markets, politics and leading men....He will return to finish his studies at Delaware with an increased maturity of judgment and of intellectual power that could hardly be attained in so short a time in any other way” [Kirkbride, (1921a), p.5].

Here Kirkbride's reference to the acquisition of cultural knowledge and the potential development of diplomatic acumen invokes similar Grand Tour aims. These aspects of study abroad were in fact aligned with some of the goals of the Grand Tour where travellers often sought both cultural knowledge and access to political relationships with the ruling elite of Europe; however, Kirkbride made it clear that the design of the Delaware plan, which he often called the ‘Delaware experiment’ would be unique since the students would return to the USA to complete their formal undergraduate education. Whereas the Grand Tour experience was the culminating educational endeavour for those travellers, formal schooling would resume after the year abroad for the Delaware students. Thus, even if there were overlapping aims between the Grand Tour and Kirkbride's proposal, the design of the University of Delaware's Foreign Study Plan was in fact distinct from the Grand Tour and envisioned as a new educational practice.

The discourse of the supporters of the Foreign Study Plan also stressed the business aspects of this proposal. For example, in 1922, the president of the University of Delaware, Walter Hullihen, explained his rationale for supporting the program to a potential donor, “The plan appeals to me – and I have given it much thought – chiefly because it seems to offer a possible solution to what I conceive to be one of the chief obstacles to this country's gaining its proper place in the commerce of the world” (Hullihen, 1922). Thus, privately, the commercial aspect of the plan was of particular interest to Hullihen. In the spring of 1922, the University of Delaware Board of Trustees approved Kirkbride's proposal, and in 1923 the French professor led eight men to France for the inaugural year of the Foreign Study Plan. In promoting the benefits of the program to the public, president Hullihen stressed the business potential of study abroad to the *New York Times* in 1923,

“The need of America for men who have had such training as this plan proposes was strikingly illustrated by a statement made by Mr. [Herbert] Hoover only a few days before the plan was brought to his attention. He said that he knew of no greater need of the United States at this very time than that of 5,000 young men with training which would fit them for positions with firms engaged in foreign commerce” (*The New York Times*, 1923)

In addition to the support of the US Secretary of Commerce, Herbert Hoover, the Republican Senator Irvin L. Lenroot of Wisconsin also endorsed the Foreign Study Plan by saying that the USA would owe a ‘standing debt of gratitude’ to the University of Delaware for its plan, which he described as, “... one of the most progressive steps ever made in the history of education, and while only an *experiment* inasmuch as it has never been tried, there can be little or no doubt as to the success that it will attain [emphasis added]” (Lenroot, 1922). Local business magnate, Pierre S. du Pont also supported the program and was responsible for providing numerous



financial gifts to the University to support the early years of the Foreign Study Plan (Munroe, 1986). Supporters like Du Pont and Lenroot never mentioned the Grand Tour in their public and private discourse about study abroad; therefore, their discourse was distinct by omission.

During this same period, Smith College administrators also introduced a study abroad program. Like the University of Delaware, the organisers and promoters of overseas study at Smith College omitted connections to the European Grand Tour and designed new strategies for learning that would be beneficial to Smith students. At Smith College, the study abroad discourse was less preoccupied with using experimental overseas study to promote business aims or institutional prestige. Instead, Smith College was more concerned with meeting the expectations of parents, establishing a rigorous curriculum, and providing safe and careful supervision for its female students.

Hélène Cattànès, a professor of French at Smith College, was the driving force behind the study abroad program for undergraduate students at her institution. Her program's academically focused design certainly did not replicate the Grand Tour tradition. As a faculty member in the French department, Cattànès had received numerous petitions from parents for official credit for independent language studies conducted overseas (mostly in France) by their daughters. Since the college did not have a formal procedure for awarding foreign credit, Cattànès devised a plan wherein the college would organise and supervise the instruction of a group of Smith women in France. Cattànès approached Smith's president, William Allan Neilson, with her proposal in 1924 and he encouraged her to submit it to a faculty committee review. Like the University of Delaware's Foreign Study Plan, the 'Smith Junior Year in France' was designed for students with advanced knowledge of French language to spend their junior year living in France studying special language and culture courses at the Sorbonne in Paris and living with local host families (Smith College, 1925). Smith students also would receive official Smith College course credit for their Sorbonne coursework. Like the Delaware Plan, the decision to base the Smith Junior Year in France in one city was a design choice that was distinct from the Grand Tour.

Although some faculty members raised objections about the safety of women in 'wicked Paris' and the academic integrity of the course work abroad, the committee ultimately approved the proposal and the Smith Junior Year in France was set to launch for the 1925–1926 academic-year with Cattànès as the faculty leader [Cattànès, (1951), p.74]. Despite the concerns, the president of Smith College William Neilson, expressed his optimism about study abroad in a Smith College Annual Report (1925), "This year is necessarily *experimental*, but the plan is full of promise and capable of extension [emphasis added]" [p.11]. The attention to curriculum and language instruction was a major shift from the limited curricular supervision and lack of formal training for travellers on the Grand Tour. Finally, like the Delaware Plan, the use of the word 'experimental' indicated that the endeavour was believed to be a significant break from the past.

The emphasis on academics for women on the Smith Junior Year in France was a major distinction from the Grand Tour. In 1925, the year the program launched, 32 women were selected for their French language ability, high academic standing, and upstanding character. In the first year of the Smith program, William Neilson visited the group of women in Paris and publically extolled the language learning aspects of the *experiment*, when he said, "The comparative inefficiency of any method of trying to instruct students in a foreign language while they are living in a country where that language is not generally spoken is the primary reason for the experiment which Smith College is trying this year" [Smith Alumni Quarterly May, (1926), p.288]. Neilson also emphasised the careful selection of students on the group to underscore the serious nature of the Junior Year in France by saying, "The girls who want to go to Paris because they have heard of Montmartre are not

going with our group” [Smith Alumni Quarterly May, (1926), p.291]. Thus, Neilson made it clear that in order to participate on the program, the students had to be French majors of the highest quality and therefore capable of handling the academic rigors of life abroad. The emphasis on the academic merits was a major step beyond the less-structured learning environments of the Grand Tour.

In addition to the undergraduate Junior Year in France, two members of the art faculty at Smith College proposed a study abroad program for graduate students in art in Europe in 1925. Clarence and Ruth Kennedy were especially mindful of the academic benefits of studying art *in situ*, and were concerned about the limitations of conducting effective studies of European masterpieces in the USA. As Clarence Kennedy explained,

“In spite of the large number of paintings and sculpture of high artistic merit in the museums and private collections in the United States, the works which must form the basis for the study of the most important artists are in the majority of cases in Europe. Paintings which can be identified by documents or signatures are in the museums or churches of Italy or other European countries, and the documents which refer to them, often unpublished, are likewise inaccessible in America” [Kennedy, (1925) p.1].

Kennedy’s idea of studying art in its authentic environment touched on a broader phenomenon in US higher education at the time. Namely, accumulating knowledge about Europe for Americans in the early 1900s often coincided with new foreign language departments, which in turn led to interactions with different countries and increased knowledge for many liberal arts students [Trommler, (2011), p.3]. Although language was not Kennedy’s primary concern, the increased knowledge gained by his students for professional purposes in European settings was a critical component of his proposal. Even though Kennedy’s program was based in two of the main cities on most Grand Tour itineraries (Florence and Paris), Kennedy made no references to this outdated mode of travel.

Instead, the design of the program focused on the practical difficulties in arranging space for US students at museums like Uffizi Gallery in Florence. Kennedy worried about assuring museum officials in Italy that his students would not disturb others. After explaining the logistics of adding scaffolding for his students to study the artwork in close detail, Kennedy wrote, “I fear we are not very popular with the tourists” indicating his intention to distinguish his students from the tourists who visited the same sites [Kennedy, (1925) p.1]. The administration at Smith College ultimately approved the Kennedys’ plan and with the cooperation of officials in France and Italy, the Kennedys began leading graduate students to Europe in 1926 in yet another experiment in study abroad. Thus, even in an art history program where the aim was to study the masterpieces of Italy’s past, the emphasis was not on superficial knowledge, but on practical and ultimately professional aims.

#### *4.2 Student discourse at The University of Delaware and Smith College: distinction by experience*

The student discourse in the 1920s is distinguished from the Grand Tour *by experience*. Unlike the travellers on the Grand Tour, life abroad for students in the 1920s was highly supervised and the US students were especially mindful of academic matters. Additionally, participant discourse for these students reflected strong connections to their surroundings and new feelings about their own identities as citizens of the USA. Many US students expressed deeper appreciation for their host nation, and often reconsidered their own place in the world in ways not often seen in Grand Tour narratives.

Student discourse conveyed the many challenges and anxieties associated with the students' formal studies

while living abroad. For example, on 15 September 1929, a student on the University of Delaware Foreign Study Plan, Henry H. Kirkpatrick (1929), wrote the following in a letter to his parents, “Well, the work here is jolly hard...I work my head off, and without favorable results. Frankly, I do get a bit discouraged now and then. Going to college in America is a comparative snap.” Another University of Delaware student, Louis Blum (1929), wrote, “Am I learning? I've never learned so much and so well in 8 months as I have in these past 2. Am I satisfied? What a question! Would I advise others to come here? I should insist that they do.” The University of Delaware students were not the only students worried about grades. Laura Lillian Brandt (1926), a Smith College student, expressed anxiety about her class’s French examinations. “You should have seen the panic we have been in. None of us expected to pass even the written (the hardest part) and though the college will give us credit anyway even if we don’t get the Sorbonne Diploma we all have a hankering for that special piece of paper!” For these students, the pressures of academic success were evident in their writing, which suggests that the course work abroad was rigorous, and that the students took seriously the pragmatic outcomes of their year abroad. These experiences therefore represent a distinction from the experiences of most of the individuals on the Grand Tour.

Undergraduate students also expressed the depth of their experiences in their writings. University of Delaware student Katherine M. Pratt (undated) studied abroad circa 1929 and during her time in France she reflected upon the First World War. In an undated letter she wrote, “You know, I think we do not quite appreciate the war. We have forgotten it too soon. I know that I never thought of it at all when I was home.” It was only after Pratt (Undated) and her classmates toured the battlefields of Verdun that she was confronted with the horrors of war, “One feels so queer walking over the fields. It is ten years since this dreadful war – yet one sees a shoe here, another there, a helmet yonder and even occasionally human bones. Oh, my dear, it is perfectly terrible.” Laura Brandt reflected on a visit she took with her classmates to the WWI Armistice Memorial in Compiègne. In a letter she wrote to her parents, Brandt (1926) referred to the 1918 memorial as a ‘most unpleasant’, flat grey stone that seemed ill suited to ‘cauterise’ the wounds of war. “I’ll admit that they were wounded for their own good,” Brandt (1926) continued, “but afterwards that wound should be properly healed.” With the fresh memories of the world’s first Great War still stinging in the minds of many in the USA and Europe, this participant discourse demonstrates how these students personalised this international event on their study abroad programs.

Identity formation was another dominant aspect of participant discourse on these programs that suggest that students were learning from their environment and constructing their reality in meaningful ways. For example, as Laura Brandt approached her return home, she felt immersed in French culture, comfortable about speaking the language, but leery about her own ties to the USA.

“Here I’ve been burying myself more thoroughly than ever in French—where all of the sudden it came over me that in a month, I’d be home!! I’ve never said anything to myself that was harder to grasp. Perhaps because, for the first time since I’ve been away, I’ve been completely cut off from everything American and not only have Jean and Nadine and their friends to talk French with but a whole crowd of other young people besides. It makes America seem very far off and unreal...It’s a very funny feeling. I’m apt to forget I’m Laura Brandt and begin to wonder just what sort of person is walking around loose and whether she has a family or a native land somewhere” (Brandt, 1926).

Brandt’s observations demonstrate that she was aware of both her distance from the USA, and her new connection to France. Her own identity was very much in flux as she processed her transformation in the words

she shared in this letter with her family. Other students also described their feelings of personal growth. Esther Dudley, a participant on the 1927–1928 Smith College Junior Year in France wrote, “I feel that my Junior Year in France has meant more to me in personal development, broadening of outlook, and happy memories than any other year of my life. I realize, however, that its meaning was to a great extent enhanced by the other three years in Northampton” [Murphy, (1935), p.244]. Students on the University of Delaware Foreign Study Plan expressed similar sentiments. After studying in France for eight months as part of the Foreign Study Plan, Louis Blum (1929) wrote, “One learns to see and to judge for one's self, to have broad ideas and tolerance; one understands his country better in light of the history and doings of another. I feel that I've acquired that much here already.” For many students on these programs, study abroad came with a newfound sense of identity and affinity with their host country. Whitney Walton has argued that this transformation occurred as a “...process of dismantling stereotypes, accepting and appreciating national differences, reassessing one's national identity, and constructing a more cosmopolitan self” [Walton, (2010), p.3]. Undoubtedly, not every study abroad student experienced the same process described by Walton; however, the historical evidence available suggests that many students did have such transformations. The discourse of the study abroad students mentioned above therefore represents the ways in which they were constructing their own reality as Foucault (2002b) and Jaworski and Pritchard (2005) would suggest.

## 5 Conclusions

That the Grand Tour narrative is conflated with study abroad in the USA today is undeniable. As Gore (2005) argues, this narrative continues to inform the belief that US students who study abroad engage in an academically weak, ornamental, extra-curricular activity. Historical evidence from the 1920s however shows a discourse that was very distinct from the European Grand Tour. The administrators and financial supporters of the first study abroad programs distinguished study abroad from the Grand Tour by the design of their overseas study plans and the omission of references to the outdated mode of travel. The fact that the term ‘experiment’ was utilised so often in the descriptions of these programs is an indication that the organisers and supporters of early US study abroad programs imagined that they were doing something that was a break from the past and thus distinct from the Grand Tour. Of those who left records, the participant discourse of the first study abroad students demonstrated experiences that were also distinct from the experiences of the Grand Tourists. The discourse of US study abroad students in the 1920s reflected experiences that were structured and filled with both anxiety about academics and newfound understandings of self. Thus, the evidence left by organisers, supporters and participants in the first study abroad programs in the 1920s demonstrates that the pioneering years of study abroad were not grounded in the European Grand Tour.

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