Chapter Two

Citizens of the World

When anyone asked him where he came from, he said, "I am a citizen of the world."

Diogenes Laertius, *Life of Diogenes the Cynic*

Anna was a political science major at a large state university in the Midwest. Upon graduation she went into business, getting a promising job with a large firm. After twelve years she had risen to a middle-management position. One day, her firm assigned her to the newly opened Beijing office. What did she need to know, and how well did her education prepare her for success in her new role? In a middle-management position, Anna is working with both Chinese and American employees, both male and female. She needs to know how Chinese people think about work (and not to assume there is just one way); she needs to know how cooperative networks are formed, and what misunderstandings might arise in interactions between Chinese and American workers. Knowledge of recent Chinese history is important, since the disruptions of the Cultural Revolution still shape workers' attitudes. Anna also needs to consider her response to the recent policy of urging women to return to the home, and to associated practices of laying off women first. This means she should know something about Chinese gender relations, both in the Confucian tradition and more recently. She should probably know something about academic women's studies in the United States, which have influenced the women's studies movement in
Chinese universities. She certainly needs a more general view about human rights, and about to what extent it is either legitimate or wise to criticize another nation’s ways of life. In the future, Anna may find herself dealing with problems of anti-African racism, and with recent government attempts to exclude immigrants who test positive for the human immunodeficiency virus. Doing this will require her to know something about the history of Chinese attitudes about race and sexuality. It will also mean being able to keep her moral bearings even when she knows that the society around her will not accept her view.

The real-life Anna had only a small part of this preparation—some courses in world history, but none that dealt with the general issue of cultural variety and how to justify moral judgments in a context of diversity; none that dealt with the variety of understandings of gender roles or family structures; none that dealt with sexual diversity and its relationship to human rights. More important, she had no courses that prepared her for the shock of discovering that other places treated as natural what she found strange, and as strange what she found natural. Her imaginative capacity to enter into the lives of people of other nations had been blunted by lack of practice. The real-life Anna had a rough time getting settled in China, and the firm’s dealings with its new context were not always very successful. A persistent and curious person, however, she stayed on and has made herself a good interpreter of cultural difference. She now plans to spend her life in Beijing, and she feels is making a valuable contribution to the firm.

Two years ago, after several years in China, already in her late thirties, Anna decided to adopt a baby. Through her by then extensive knowledge of the Chinese bureaucracy, she bypassed a number of obstacles and quickly found an infant girl in an orphanage in Beijing. She then faced challenges of a very different kind. Even in the most apparently universal activities of daily life, cultural difference colors her day. Her Chinese nurse follows the common Chinese practice of wrapping the baby’s limbs in swaddling bands to immobilize it. As is customary, the nurse interacts little with the child, either facially or vocally, and brings the child immediately anything it appears to want, without encouraging its own efforts. Anna’s instincts are entirely different: she smiles at the baby, encourages her to wave her hands about, talks to her constantly, wants her to act for herself. The nurse thinks Anna is encouraging nervous tension by this hyperactive American behavior; Anna thinks the nurse is stunting the baby’s cognitive development. Anna’s
mother, visiting, is appalled by the nurse and wants to move in, but Anna, by now a sensitive cross-cultural interpreter, is able to negotiate between mother and nurse and devise some plan for the baby’s development that is agreeable to all. To do this she has had to think hard about the nonuniversality and nonnaturalness of such small matters as playing with a baby. But she has also had to think of the common needs and aims that link her with the nurse, and the nurse with her own mother. Her university education gave her no preparation at all for these challenges.

Had Anna been a student at today’s St. Lawrence University, or at many other colleges and universities around the United States, she would have had a better basis for her international role, a role U.S. citizens must increasingly play (whether at home or abroad) if our efforts in business are to be successful, if international debates about human rights, medical and agricultural problems, ethnic and gender relations, are to make progress as we enter the new century. As Connie Ellis, a forty-three-year-old waitress at Marion’s Restaurant in Sycamore, Illinois, put it on the Fourth of July, 1996, “You can’t narrow it down to just our country anymore—it’s the whole planet.”

We must educate people who can operate as world citizens with sensitivity and understanding.

Asked where he came from, the ancient Greek Cynic philosopher Diogenes replied, “I am a citizen of the world.” He meant by this that he refused to be defined simply by his local origins and group memberships, associations central to the self-image of a conventional Greek male; he insisted on defining himself in terms of more universal aspirations and concerns. The Stoics who followed his lead developed his image of the kosmopolitès, or world citizen, more fully, arguing that each of us dwells, in effect, in two communities—the local community of our birth, and the community of human argument and aspiration that “is truly great and truly common.” It is the latter community that is, most fundamentally, the source of our moral and social obligations. With respect to fundamental moral values such as justice, “we should regard all human beings as our fellow citizens and local residents.” This attitude deeply influenced the subsequent philosophical and political tradition, especially as mediated through the writings of Cicero, who reworked it so as to allow a special degree of loyalty to one’s own local region or group. Stoic ideas influenced the American republic through the writings of Thomas Paine, and also through Adam Smith and Immanuel
Kant, who themselves influenced the Founders. Later on, Stoic thought was a major formative influence on both Emerson and Thoreau.

This form of cosmopolitanism is not peculiar to Western traditions. It is, for example, the view that animates the work of the influential Indian philosopher, poet, and educational leader Rabindranath Tagore. Tagore drew his own cosmopolitan views from older Bengali traditions, although he self-consciously melded them with Western cosmopolitanism. It is also the view recommended by Ghanaian philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah, when he writes, concerning African identity: "We will only solve our problems if we see them as human problems arising out of a special situation, and we shall not solve them if we see them as African problems generated by our being somehow unlike others." But for people who have grown up in the Western tradition it is useful to understand the roots of this cosmopolitanism in ancient Greek and Roman thought. These ideas are an essential resource for democratic citizenship. Like Socrates' ideal of critical inquiry, they should be at the core of today's higher education.

The Idea of World Citizenship in Greek and Roman Antiquity

Contemporary debates about the curriculum frequently imply that the idea of a "multicultural" education is a new fad, with no antecedents in long-standing educational traditions. In fact, Socrates grew up in an Athens already influenced by such ideas in the fifth century B.C. Ethnographic writers such as the historian Herodotus examined the customs of distant countries, both in order to understand their ways of life and in order to attain a critical perspective on their own society. Herodotus took seriously the possibility that Egypt and Persia might have something to teach Athens about social values. A cross-cultural inquiry, he realized, may reveal that what we take to be natural and normal is merely parochial and habitual. One cultural group thinks that corpses must be buried; another, that they must be burnt; another, that they must be left in the air to be plucked clean by the birds. Each is shocked by the practices of the other, and each, in the process, starts to realize that its habitual ways may not be the ways designed by nature for all times and persons.

Awareness of cultural difference gave rise to a rich and complex debate about whether our central moral and political values exist in the nature of
things (by physis), or merely by convention (nomos). That Greek debate illustrates most of the positions now familiar in debates about cultural relativism and the source of moral norms. It also contains a crucial insight: if we should conclude that our norms are human and historical rather than immutable and eternal, it does not follow that the search for a rational justification of moral norms is futile.

In the conventional culture of fifth-century B.C. Athens, recognition that Athenian customs were not universal became a crucial precondition of Socratic searching. So long as young men were educated in the manner of Aristophanes’ Old Education, an education stressing uncritical assimilation of traditional values, so long as they marched to school in rows and sang the old songs without discussion of alternatives, ethical questioning could not get going. Ethical inquiry requires a climate in which the young are encouraged to be critical of their habits and conventions; and such critical inquiry, in turn, requires awareness that life contains other possibilities.

Pursuing these comparisons, fifth-century Athenians were especially fascinated by the example of Sparta, Athens’ primary rival, a hierarchical and nondemocratic culture that understood the goal of civic education in a very un-Athenian way. As the historian Thucydides depicts them, Spartan educators carried to an extreme the preference for uniformity and rule-following that characterized the Old Education of Athens in Aristophanes’ nostalgic portrait. Conceiving the good citizen as an obedient follower of traditions, they preferred uncritical subservience to Athenian public argument and debate. Denying the importance of free speech and thought, they preferred authoritarian to democratic politics.

Athenians, looking at this example, saw new reasons to praise the freedom of inquiry and debate that by this time flourished in their political life. They saw Spartan citizens as people who did not choose to serve their city, and whose loyalty was therefore in a crucial way unreliable, since they had never really thought about what they were doing. They noted that once Spartans were abroad and free from the narrow constraint of law and rule, they often acted badly, since they had never learned to choose for themselves. The best education, they held, was one that equips a citizen for genuine choice of a way of life; this form of education requires active inquiry and the ability to contrast alternatives. Athenians denied the Spartan charge that their own concern with critical inquiry and free expression would give rise to decadence. “We cultivate the arts without extravagance,” they proudly proclaimed, “and we devote ourselves to inquiry without becoming soft.” In-
deed, they insisted that Sparta’s high reputation for courage was ill based: for citizens could not be truly courageous if they never chose from among alternatives. True courage, they held, requires freedom, and freedom is best cultivated by an education that awakens critical thinking. Cross-cultural inquiry thus proved not only illuminating but also self-reinforcing to Athenians: by showing them regimes that did not practice such inquiry and what those regimes lacked in consequence, it gave Athenians reasons why they should continue to criticize and to compare cultures.

Plato, writing in the early to mid-fourth century B.C., alludes frequently to the study of other cultures, especially those of Sparta, Crete, and Egypt. In his Republic, which alludes often to Spartan practices, the plan for an ideal city is plainly influenced by reflection about customs elsewhere. One particularly fascinating example of the way in which reflection about history and other cultures awakens critical reflection occurs in the fifth book of that work, where Plato’s character Socrates produces the first serious argument known to us in the Western tradition for the equal education of women. Here Socrates begins by acknowledging that the idea of women’s receiving both physical and intellectual education equal to that of men will strike most Athenians as very weird and laughable. (Athenians who were interested in cultural comparison would know, however, that such ideas were not peculiar in Sparta, where women, less confined than at Athens, did receive extensive athletic training.) But he then reminds Glaucon that many good things once seemed weird in just this way. For example, the unclothed public exercise that Athenians now prize as a norm of manliness once seemed foreign, and the heavy clothing that they think barbaric once seemed natural. However, he continues, when the practice of stripping for athletic contests had been in effect for some time, its advantages were clearly seen—and then “the appearance of absurdity ebbed away under the influence of reason’s judgment about the best.” So it is with women’s education, Socrates argues. Right now it seems absurd, but once we realize that our conventions don’t by themselves supply reasons for what we ought to do, we will be forced to ask ourselves whether we really do have good reasons for denying women the chance to develop their intellectual and physical capacities. Socrates argues that we find no such good reasons, and many good reasons why those capacities should be developed. Therefore, a comparative cultural study, by removing the false air of naturalness and inevitability that surrounds our practices, can make our society a more truly reasonable one.

Cross-cultural inquiry up until this time had been relatively unsystematic,
using examples that the philosopher or historian in question happened to know through personal travel or local familiarity. Later in the fourth century, however, the practice was rendered systematic and made a staple of the curriculum, as Aristotle apparently instructed his students to gather information about 153 forms of political organization, encompassing the entire known world, and to write up historical and constitutional descriptions of these regimes. The *Athenian Constitution*, which was written either by Aristotle or by one of his students, is our only surviving example of the project; it shows an intention to record everything relevant to critical reflection about that constitution and its suitability. When Aristotle himself writes political philosophy, his project is extensively cross-cultural. In his *Politics*, before describing his own views about the best form of government, he works through and criticizes many known historical examples, prominently including Crete and Sparta, and also a number of theoretical proposals, including those of Plato. As a result of this inquiry, Aristotle develops a model of good government that is in many respects critical of Athenian traditions, though he follows no single model.

By the beginning of the so-called Hellenistic era in Greek philosophy, then, cross-cultural inquiry was firmly established, both in Athenian public discourse and in the writings of the philosophers, as a necessary part of good deliberation about citizenship and political order.10

But it was neither Plato nor Aristotle who coined the term "citizen of the world." It was Diogenes the Cynic. Diogenes (404–323 B.C.) led a life stripped of the usual protections that habit and status supply. Choosing exile from his own native city, he defiantly refused protection from the rich and powerful for fear of losing his freedom, and lived in poverty, famously choosing a tub set up the marketplace as his "home" in order to indicate his disdain for convention and comfort. He connected poverty with independence of mind and speech, calling freedom of speech "the finest thing in human life."11 Once, they say, Plato saw him washing some lettuce and said, "If you had paid court to Dionysius, you would not be washing lettuce."12 Diogenes replied, "If you had washed lettuce, you would not have paid court to Dionysius." This freedom from subservience, he held, was essential to a philosophical life. "When someone reproached him for being an exile, he said that it was on that account that he came to be a philosopher."

Diogenes left no written work behind, and it is difficult to know how to classify him. "A Socrates gone mad" was allegedly Plato's description—and
a good one, it seems. For Diogenes clearly followed the lead of Socrates in disdaining external markers of status and focusing on the inner life of virtue and thought. His search for a genuinely honest and virtuous person, and his use of philosophical arguments to promote that search, are recognizably Socratic. What was “mad” about him was the public assault on convention that accompanied his quest. Socrates provoked people only by his questions. He lived a conventional life. But Diogenes provoked people by his behavior as well, spitting in a rich man’s face, even masturbating in public. What was the meaning of this shocking behavior?

It appears likely that the point of his unseemly behavior was itself Socratic—to get people to question their prejudices by making them consider how difficult it is to give good reasons for many of our deeply held feelings. Feelings about the respect due to status and rank and feelings of shame associated with sexual practices are assailed by this behavior—as Herodotus’ feelings about burial were assailed by his contact with Persian and Egyptian customs. The question is whether one can then go on to find a good argument for one’s own conventions and against the behavior of the Cynic.

As readers of the Life of Diogenes, we ourselves quickly become aware of the cultural relativity of what is thought shocking. For one of the most shocking things about Diogenes, to his Athenian contemporaries, was his habit of eating in the public marketplace. It was this habit that gave him the name “dog,” κύων, from which our English label Cynic derives. Only dogs, in this culture, tore away at their food in the full view of all. Athenians evidently found this just about as outrageous as public masturbation; in fact his biographer joins the two offenses together, saying, “He used to do everything in public, both the deeds of Demeter and those of Aphrodite.” Crowds, they say, gathered around to taunt him as he munched on his breakfast of beets, behaving in what the American reader feels to be an unremarkable fashion. On the other hand, there is no mention in the Life of shock occasioned by public urination or even defecation. The reason for this, it may be conjectured, is that Athenians, like people in many parts of the world today, did not in fact find public excretion shocking. We are amazed by a culture that condemns public snacking while permitting such practices. Diogenes asks us to look hard at the conventional origins of these judgments and to ask which ones can be connected by a sound argument to important moral goals. (So far as we can tell, Cynics supplied no answers to this question.)

Set in this context, the invitation to consider ourselves citizens of the
world is the invitation to become, to a certain extent, philosophical exiles from our own ways of life, seeing them from the vantage point of the outsider and asking the questions an outsider is likely to ask about their meaning and function. Only this critical distance, Diogenes argued, makes one a philosopher. In other words, a stance of detachment from uncritical loyalty to one’s own ways promotes the kind of evaluation that is truly reason based. When we see in how many different ways people can organize their lives we will recognize, he seems to think, what is deep and what is shallow in our own ways, and will consider that “the only real community is one that embraces the entire world.” In other words, the true basis for human association is not the arbitrary or the merely habitual; it is that which we can defend as good for human beings—and Diogenes believes that these evaluations know no national boundaries.

The confrontational tactics Diogenes chose unsettle and awaken. They do not contain good argument, however, and they can even get in the way of thought. Diogenes’ disdain for more low-key and academic methods of scrutinizing customs, for example the study of literature and history, seems most unwise. It is hard to know whether to grant Diogenes the title “philosopher” at all, given his apparent preference for a kind of street theater over Socratic questioning. But his example, flawed as it was, had importance for the Greek philosophical tradition. Behind the theater lay an important idea: that the life of reason must take a hard look at local conventions and assumptions, in the light of more general human needs and aspirations.

The Stoic philosophers, over the next few centuries, made Diogenes’ insight respectable and culturally fruitful. They developed the idea of cross-cultural study and world citizenship much further in their own morally and philosophically rigorous way, making the concept of the “world citizen,” kosmou politēs, a centerpiece of their educational program. As Seneca writes, summarizing older Greek Stoic views, education should make us aware that each of us is a member of “two communities: one that is truly great and truly common . . . in which we look neither to this corner nor to that, but measure the boundaries of our nation by the sun; the other, the one to which we have been assigned by birth.” The accident of where one is born is just that, an accident; any human being might have been born in any nation. Recognizing this, we should not allow differences of nationality or class or ethnic membership or even gender to erect barriers between us and our fellow human beings. We should recognize humanity—and its fun-
damental ingredients, reason and moral capacity—wherever it occurs, and
give that community of humanity our first allegiance.

This does not mean that the Stoics proposed the abolition of local and
national forms of political organization and the creation of a world state.
The Greek Stoics did propose an ideal city, and the Roman Stoics did put
ideas of world citizenship into practice in some ways in the governance of
the empire. But the Stoics' basic point is more radical still: that we should
give our first allegiance to no mere form of government, no temporal power,
but to the moral community made up by the humanity of all human beings.
The idea of the world citizen is in this way the ancestor and source of Kant's
idea of the "kingdom of ends," and has a similar function in inspiring and
regulating a certain mode of political and personal conduct. One should
always behave so as to treat with respect the dignity of reason and moral
choice in every human being, no matter where that person was born, no
matter what that person's rank or gender or status may be. It is less a political
idea than a moral idea that constrains and regulates political life.

The meaning of the idea for political life is made especially clear in Cic-
ero's work On Duties (De Officiis), written in 44 B.C. and based in part on
the writings of the slightly earlier Greek Stoic thinker Panaetius. Cicero ar-
Suggest that the duty to treat humanity with respect requires us to treat aliens
on our soil with honor and hospitality. It requires us never to engage in
wars of aggression, and to view wars based on group hatred and wars of
extermination as especially pernicious. It requires us to behave honorably
in the conduct of war, shunning treachery even toward the enemy. In gen-
eral, it requires us to place justice above political expediency, and to under-
stand that we form part of a universal community of humanity whose ends
are the moral ends of justice and human well-being. Cicero's book has been
among the most influential in the entire Western philosophical tradition. In
particular, it influenced the just-war doctrine of Grotius and the political
thought of Immanuel Kant; their views about world understanding and the
containment of global aggression are crucial for the formation of modern
international law.

Stoics hold, then, that the good citizen is a "citizen of the world." They
hold that thinking about humanity as it is realized in the whole world is
valuable for self-knowledge: we see ourselves and our customs more clearly
when we see our own ways in relation to those of other reasonable people.
They insist, furthermore, that we really will be better able to solve our prob-
lems if we face them in this broader context, our imaginations unconstrained by narrow partisanship. No theme is deeper in Stoicism than the damage done by faction and local allegiances to the political life of a group. Stoic texts show repeatedly how easy it is for local or national identities and their associated hatreds to be manipulated by self-seeking individuals for their own gain—whereas reason is hard to fake, and its language is open to the critical scrutiny of all. Roman political life in Seneca’s day was dominated by divisions of many kinds, from those of class and rank and ethnic origin to the division between parties at the public games and gladiatorial shows. Part of the self-education of the Stoic Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius, as he tells the reader of his *Meditations*, was “not to be a Green or Blue partisan at the races, or a supporter of the lightly armed or heavily armed gladiators at the Circus.” 15 Politics is sabotaged again and again by these partisan loyalties, and by the search for honor and fame that accompanies them. Stoics argue that a style of citizenship that recognizes the moral/rational community as fundamental promises a more reasonable style of political deliberation and problem-solving.

But Stoics do not recommend world citizenship only for reasons of expediency. They insist that the stance of the *kosmou politei* is intrinsically valuable: for it recognizes in people what is especially fundamental about them, most worthy of reverence and acknowledgment, namely their aspirations to justice and goodness and their capacities for reasoning in this connection. This essential aspect may be less colorful than local tradition and local identity, but it is, the Stoics argue, both lasting and deep.

To be a citizen of the world, one does not, the Stoics stress, need to give up local affiliations, which can frequently be a source of great richness in life. They suggest instead that we think of ourselves as surrounded by a series of concentric circles. 16 The first one is drawn around the self; the next takes in one’s immediate family; then follows the extended family; then, in order, one’s neighbors or local group, one’s fellow city-dwellers, one’s fellow countrymen—and we can easily add to this list groups formed on the basis of ethnic, religious, linguistic, historical, professional, and gender identities. Beyond all these circles is the largest one, that of humanity as a whole. Our task as citizens of the world, and as educators who prepare people to be citizens of the world, will be to “draw the circles somehow toward the center,” making all human beings like our fellow city-dwellers. In other words, we need not give up our special affections and identifications, whether national or ethnic or religious; but we should work to make all
human beings part of our community of dialogue and concern, showing respect for the human wherever it occurs, and allowing that respect to constrain our national or local politics.

This Stoic attitude, then, does not require that we disregard the importance of local loves and loyalties or their salience in education. Adam Smith made a serious error when he objected to Stoicism on those grounds, and modern critics of related Kantian and Enlightenment conceptions make a similar error when they charge them with neglect of group differences. The Stoic, in fact, must be conversant with local differences, since knowledge of these is inextricably linked to our ability to discern and respect the dignity of humanity in each person. Stoics recognize love for what is near as a fundamental human trait, and a highly rational way to comport oneself as a citizen. If each parent has a special love for his or her own children, society will do better than if all parents try to have an equal love for all children. Much the same is true for citizenship of town or city or nation: each of us should take our stand where life has placed us, and devote to our immediate surroundings a special affection and attention. Stoics, then, do not want us to behave as if differences between male and female, or between African and Roman, are morally insignificant. These differences can and do enjoin special obligations that all of us should execute, since we should all do our duties in the life we happen to have, rather than imagining that we are beings without location or memory.

Stoics vary in the degree of concession they make to these special obligations. Cicero, for example, takes a wise course when he urges the Roman citizen to favor the near and dear on many occasions, though always in ways that manifest respect for human dignity. These special local obligations have educational consequences: the world citizen will legitimately spend a disproportionate amount of time learning about the history and problems of her or his own part of the world. But at the same time we recognize that there is something more fundamental about us than the place where we happen to find ourselves, and that this more fundamental basis of citizenship is shared across all divisions.

This general point emerges clearly if we consider the relationship each of us has to a native language. We each have a language (in some cases more than one) in which we are at home, which we have usually known from infancy. We naturally feel a special affection for this language. It defines our possibilities of communication and expression. The works of literature that move us most deeply are those that exploit well the resources of that lan-
guage. On the other hand, we should not suppose—and most of us do not suppose—that English is best just because it is our own, that works of literature written in English are superior to those written in other languages, and so forth. We know that it is more or less by chance that we are English speakers rather than speakers of Chinese or German or Bengali. We know that any infant might have learned any language, because there is a fundamental language-learning capacity that is shared by all humans. Nothing in our innate equipment disposes us to speak Hindi rather than Norwegian.

In school, then, it will be proper for us to spend a disproportionate amount of time mastering our native language and its literature. A human being who tried to learn all the world’s languages would master none, and it seems reasonable for children to focus on one, or in some cases two, languages when they are small. On the other hand, it is also very important for students to understand what it is like to see the world through the perspective of another language, an experience that quickly shows that human complexity and rationality are not the monopoly of a single linguistic community.

This same point can be made about other aspects of culture that should figure in a higher education. In ethics, in historical knowledge, in knowledge of politics, in literary, artistic, and musical learning, we are all inclined to be parochial, taking our own habits for that which defines humanity. In these areas as in the case of language, it is reasonable to immerse oneself in a single tradition at an early age. But even then it is well to become acquainted with the facts of cultural variety, and this can be done very easily, for example through myths and stories that invite identification with people whose form of life is different from one’s own. As education progresses, a more sophisticated grasp of human variety can show students that what is theirs is not better simply because it is familiar.

The education of the kosmou politês is thus closely connected to Socratic inquiry and the goal of an examined life. For attaining membership in the world community entails a willingness to doubt the goodness of one’s own way and to enter into the give-and-take of critical argument about ethical and political choices. By an increasingly refined exchange of both experience and argument, participants in such arguments should gradually take on the ability to distinguish, within their own traditions, what is parochial from what may be commended as a norm for others, what is arbitrary and unjustified from that which may be justified by reasoned argument.
Since any living tradition is already a plurality and contains within itself aspects of resistance, criticism, and contestation, the appeal to reason frequently does not require us to take a stand outside the culture from which we begin. The Stoics are correct to find in all human beings the world over a capacity for critical searching and a love of truth. "Any soul is deprived of truth against its will," says Marcus Aurelius, quoting Plato. In this sense, any and every human tradition is a tradition of reason, and the transition from these more ordinary and intracultural exercises to a more global exercise of critical argument need not be an abrupt transition. Indeed, in the world today it is clear that internal critique very frequently takes the form of invoking what is found to be fine and just in other traditions.

People from diverse backgrounds sometimes have difficulty recognizing one another as fellow citizens in the community of reason. This is so, frequently, because actions and motives require, and do not always receive, a patient effort of interpretation. The task of world citizenship requires the would-be world citizen to become a sensitive and empathic interpreter. Education at all ages should cultivate the capacity for such interpreting. This aspect of the Stoic idea is developed most fully by Marcus Aurelius, who dealt with many different cultures in his role as emperor; he presents, in his Meditations, a poignantly personal account of his own efforts to be a good world citizen. "Accustom yourself not to be inattentive to what another person says, and as far as possible enter into his mind," he writes (6.53); and again, "When things are being said, one should follow every word, when things are being done, every impulse; in the latter case, to see straightaway to what object the impulse is directed, in the former, to watch what meaning is expressed" (7.4). Given that Marcus routinely associated with people from every part of the Roman Empire, this idea imposes a daunting task of learning and understanding, which he confronts by reading a great deal of history and literature, and by studying closely the individual characters of those around him in the manner of a literary narrator. "Generally," he concludes, "one must first learn many things before one can judge another's action with understanding" (11.18).

Above all, Marcus finds that he has to struggle not to allow his privileged station (an obstacle to real thought, as he continually points out) to sever him, in thought, from his fellow human beings. "See to it that you do not become Caesarized," he tells himself, "or dyed with that coloring" (6.30). A
favorite exercise toward keeping such accidents of station in their proper place is to imagine that all human beings are limbs of a single body, cooperating for the sake of common purposes. Referring to the fact that it takes only the change of a single letter in Greek to convert the word “limb” (melos) into the word “(detached) part” (meros), he concludes: “if, changing the word, you call yourself merely a (detached) part instead of a limb, you do not yet love your fellow men from the heart, nor derive complete joy from doing good; you will do it merely as a duty, not as doing good to yourself” (7.13). The organic imagery underscores the Stoic ideal of cooperation.

Can anyone really think like a world citizen in a life so full of factionalism and political conflict? Marcus gives himself the following syllogism: “Whenever it is possible to live, it is also possible to live a virtuous life; it is possible to live in a palace; therefore it is also possible to live a virtuous life in a palace” (5.16). And, recognizing that he himself has sometimes failed in citizenship because of impatience and the desire for solitude: “Let no one, not even yourself, any longer hear you placing the blame on palace life” (8.9). In fact, his account of his own difficulties being a world citizen in the turmoil of Roman politics yields some important advice for anyone who attempts to reconcile this high ideal with the realities of political involvement:

Say to yourself in the morning: I shall meet people who are interfering, ungracious, insolent, full of guile, deceitful and antisocial; they have all become like that because they have no understanding of good and evil. But I who have contemplated the essential beauty of good and the essential ugliness of evil, who know that the nature of the wrong-doer is of one kin with mine—not indeed of the same blood or seed but sharing the same kind, the same portion of the divine—I cannot be harmed by any one of them, and no one can involve me in shame. I cannot feel anger against him who is of my kin, nor hate him. We were born to labor together, like the feet, the hands, the eyes, and the rows of upper and lower teeth. To work against one another is therefore contrary to nature, and to be angry against a man or turn one’s back on him is to work against him. (2.1)

One who becomes involved in politics in our time might find this paragraph comforting. It shows a way in which the attitude of world citizenship gets to the root of one of the deepest political problems in all times and places, the problem of anger. Marcus is inclined to intense anger at his
political adversaries. Sometimes the anger is personal, and sometimes it is directed against a group. His claim, however, is that such anger can be mitigated, or even removed, by the attitude of empathy that the ideal of the kosmou politês promotes. If one comes to see one’s adversaries as not impossibly alien and other, but as sharing certain general human goals and purposes, if one understands that they are not monsters but people who share with us certain general goals and purposes, this understanding will lead toward a diminution of anger and the beginning of rational exchange.

World citizenship does not, and should not, require that we suspend criticism toward other individuals and cultures. Marcus continues to refer to his enemies as “deceitful and antisocial,” expressing strong criticism of their conduct. The world citizen may be very critical of unjust actions or policies, and of the character of people who promote them. But at the same time Marcus refuses to think of the opponents as simply alien, as members of a different and inferior species. He refuses to criticize until he respects and understands. He carefully chooses images that reflect his desire to see them as close to him and similarly human. This careful scrutiny of the imagery and speech one uses when speaking about people who are different is one of the Stoic’s central recommendations for the undoing of political hatred.

Stoics write extensively on the nature of anger and hatred. It is their well-supported view that these destructive emotions are not innate, but learned by children from their society. In part, they hold, people directly absorb negative evaluations of individuals and groups from their culture, in part they absorb excessively high evaluations of their own honor and status. These high evaluations give rise to hostility when another person or group appears to threaten their honor or status. Anger and hatred are not unreasoning instincts; they have to do with the way we think and imagine, the images we use, the language we find it habitual to employ. They can therefore be opposed by the patient critical scrutiny of the imagery and speech we employ when we confront those our tradition has depicted as unequal.

It is fashionable by now to be very skeptical of “political correctness,” by which the critic usually means a careful attention to the speech we use in talking about minorities, or foreigners, or women. Such scrutiny might in some forms pose dangers to free speech, and of course these freedoms should be carefully defended. But the scrutiny of speech and imagery need not be inspired by totalitarian motives, and it need not lead to the creation of an antidemocratic “thought police.” The Stoic demand for such scrutiny
is based on the plausible view that hatred of individuals and groups is personally and politically pernicious, that it ought to be resisted by educators, and that the inner world of thought and speech is the place where, ultimately, hatred must be resisted. These ideas about the scrutiny of the inner world are familiar to Christians also, and the biblical injunction against sinning in one’s heart has close historical links to Stoicism. All parents know that it is possible to shape a child’s attitudes toward other races and nationalities by the selection of stories one tells and by the way one speaks about other people in the home. There are few parents who do not seek to influence their children’s views in these ways. Stoics propose, however, that the process of coming to recognize the humanity of all people should be a lifelong process, encompassing all levels of education—especially since, in a culture suffused with group hatred, one cannot rely on parents to perform this task.

What this means in higher education is that an attitude of mutual respect should be nourished both in the classroom itself and in its reading material. Although in America we should have no sympathy with the outright censoring of reading material, we also make many selections as educators, both in assigning material and in presenting it for our students. Few of us, for example, would present anti-Semitic propaganda in a university classroom in a way that conveyed sympathy with the point of view expressed. The Stoic proposal is that we should seek out curricula that foster respect and mutual solidarity and correct the ignorance that is often an essential prop of hatred. This effort is perfectly compatible with maintaining freedom of speech and the openness of a genuinely critical and deliberative culture.

In our own time, few countries have been more rigidly divided, more corroded by group hatred, than South Africa. In spelling out its goals for society in its draft for the new Constitution, the African National Congress (ANC) recognized the need to address hatred through education, and specified the goal of education as the overcoming of these differences:

Education shall be directed towards the development of the human personality and a sense of personal dignity, and shall aim at strengthening respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and promoting understanding, tolerance and friendship amongst South Africans and between nations.17

Some of this language would have been new to Marcus Aurelius—and it would have been a good thing for Roman Stoics to have reflected more about the connections between the human dignity they prized and the political
rights they frequently neglected. But the language of dignity, humanity, freedom, understanding, tolerance, and friendship would not have been strange to Marcus. (He speaks of his goal as “the idea of a Commonwealth with the same laws for all, governed on the basis of equality and free speech”; this goal is to be pursued with “beneficence, eager generosity, and optimism”.)

The ANC draft, like the Stoic norm of world citizenship, insists that understanding of various nations and groups is a goal for every citizen, not only for those who wish to affirm a minority identity. It insists that the goal of education should not be separation of one group from another, but respect, tolerance, and friendship—both within a nation and among nations. It insists that this goal should be fostered in a way that respects the dignity of humanity in each person and citizen.

Above all, education for world citizenship requires transcending the inclination of both students and educators to define themselves primarily in terms of local group loyalties and identities. World citizens will therefore not argue for the inclusion of cross-cultural study in a curriculum primarily on the grounds that it is a way in which members of minority groups can affirm such an identity. This approach, common though it is, is divisive and subversive of the aims of world community. This problem vexes many curricular debates. Frequently, groups who press for the recognition of their group think of their struggle as connected with goals of human respect and social justice. And yet their way of focusing their demands, because it neglects commonalities and portrays people as above all members of identity groups, tends to subvert the demand for equal respect and love, and even the demand for attention to diversity itself. As David Glidden, philosopher at the University of California at Riverside, expressed the point, “the ability to admire and love the diversity of human beings gets lost” when one bases the demand for inclusion on notions of local group identity. Why should one love or attend to a Hispanic fellow citizen, on this view, if one is oneself most fundamentally an Irish-American? Why should one care about India, if one defines oneself as above all an American? Only a human identity that transcends these divisions shows us why we should look at one another with respect across them.

World Citizenship in Contemporary Education

What would an education for world citizenship look like in a modern university curriculum? What should Anna, the future businesswoman in Bei-
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jing, learn as an undergraduate if she is to be prepared for her role? What should all students learn—since we all interact as citizens with issues and people from a wide variety of traditions?

This education must be a multicultural education, by which I mean one that acquaints students with some fundamentals about the histories and cultures of many different groups. These should include the major religious and cultural groups of each part of the world, and also ethnic and racial, social and sexual minorities within their own nation. Language learning, history, religious studies, and philosophy all play a role in pursuing these ideas. Awareness of cultural difference is essential in order to promote the respect for another that is the essential underpinning for dialogue. There are no surer sources of disdain than ignorance and the sense of the inevitable naturalness of one's own way. No liberal education can offer students adequate understanding of all they should know about the world; but a detailed understanding of one unfamiliar tradition and some rudiments about others will suffice to engender Socratic knowledge of one's own limitations. It would have helped Anna to have learned a great deal about China; but to have studied the culture of India would have been almost as valuable, since it would have showed her how to inquire and the limitations of her experience.

World citizens will legitimately devote more attention and time to their own region and its history, since it is above all in that sphere that they must operate. This need for local knowledge has important educational consequences. We would be absurdly misguided if we aimed at giving our students an equal knowledge of all histories and cultures, just as we would be if we attempted to provide a bit of knowledge of all languages. Besides the fact that this would produce a ridiculously superficial result, it would also fail in the task of giving students a detailed acquaintance with the local sphere in which most of their actions will be undertaken. Education at all levels, including higher education, should therefore strongly emphasize the history of American constitutional traditions and their background in the tradition of Western political philosophy. In a similar way, literary education should focus disproportionately on the literature of Anglo-American traditions—which, however, are themselves highly complex and include the contributions of many different groups.

On the other hand, it is also extremely important that this material be presented in a way that reminds the student of the broader world of which
the Western traditions are a part. This may be done with good educational results in the Western tradition courses themselves, where one can emphasize what is distinctive about this tradition through judicious and illuminating contrasts with developments elsewhere. But it must above all be done by the design of the curriculum as a whole, which should offer students the rudiments of knowledge about the major world traditions of thought and art, and the history that surrounds them, and, even more important, make them aware how much important material they do not know.

Education for world citizenship needs to begin early. As soon as children engage in storytelling, they can tell stories about other lands and other peoples. A curriculum for world citizenship would do well to begin with the first grade, where children can learn in an entertaining and painless way that religions other than Judaism and Christianity exist, that people have many traditions and ways of thinking. (One such curriculum has been developed by E. D. Hirsch Jr. and is being used in a number of elementary-school districts around the country: first-graders tell stories of Buddha under the bodhi tree; they think about Hindu myths of the gods, about African folktales, about the life of Confucius.) By the time students reach college or university, they should be well equipped to face demanding courses in areas of human diversity outside the dominant Western traditions.

This exposure to foreign and minority cultures is not only, and not primarily, a source of confirmation for the foreign or minority student’s personal sense of dignity—though of course this will be one important function such exposure can often serve. It is an education for all students, so that as judges, as legislators, as citizens in whatever role, they will learn to deal with one another with respect and understanding. And this understanding and respect entail recognizing not only difference but also, at the same time, commonality, not only a unique history but also common rights and aspirations and problems.

The world citizen must develop sympathetic understanding of distant cultures and of ethnic, racial, and religious minorities within her own. She must also develop an understanding of the history and variety of human ideas of gender and sexuality. As a citizen one is called upon frequently to make judgments in controversial matters relating to sex and gender—whether as a judge, deciding a case that affects the civil rights of millions, or simply as a democratic voter, deciding, for example, whether to support a referendum like Colorado’s Amendment 2, declared unconstitutional by
the U.S. Supreme Court in 1996, which restricted the abilities of local communities to pass laws protecting the civil rights of gays and lesbians. To function well as a citizen today, one needs to be able to assess the arguments put forward on both sides; and to do so one needs an education that studies these issues. There are complex connections between cross-cultural study and the study of gender and sexuality. Cross-cultural study reveals many ways of organizing concepts of gender and sexuality; and thinking about gender and sex is essential to thinking critically about a culture. A good undergraduate education should prepare students to be informed and sensitive interpreters of these questions.

Building a curriculum for world citizenship has multiple aspects: the construction of basic required courses of a "multicultural" nature; the infusion of diverse perspectives throughout the curriculum; support for the development of more specialized elective courses in areas connected with human diversity; and, finally, attention to the teaching of foreign languages, a part of the multicultural story that has received too little emphasis.

Basic "diversity" requirements come in two varieties. There are elective requirements that allow the student to choose one or two courses from among a wide range of offerings. Such, for example, is the requirement at the University of Nevada at Reno, where students, in addition to completing a "World Civilizations" core course, must elect a course focusing on at least one area of human diversity outside the dominant culture of her own society. Areas included are the history and culture of non-Western peoples, the history and culture of minorities in the United States, women's studies, and the study of the varieties of human sexuality. Reno, like many institutions, cannot afford to hire new faculty to create integrative courses or to free existing faculty from many of their other commitments. Making a menu of what is on hand, and then giving students a choice from that menu, is these institutions' only option if they wish to diversify their curricula.

Such requirements can fulfill basic Socratic functions, showing students the possible narrowness and limitedness of their own perspective and inviting them to engage in critical reflection. And they can frequently impart methodological tools that will prove valuable in approaching another area of diversity. But this is not always the case: a student who has taken a course on American women writers of the nineteenth century is still likely to be in a weak position with respect to the sort of cultural diversity she will encounter if she finds herself in dialogue with people from China and the
Middle East. Even a course in non-Western literature may leave the student blankly ignorant of non-Western history and religion. A student who has studied the history and literature of China may remain unaware of the variety and diversity of minorities within her own nation. It is odd and arbitrary to put all these different topics together in an area called “diversity,” as if the grasp of any part of any one of them would somehow yield a person the breadth of learning that could be yielded only by some grasp of each area. This problem will be especially grave if, as at Reno, the courses listed as satisfying the “diversity” requirement are unrelated to one another by any common discussion about methodology, beyond the deliberations of the faculty group that put the requirement together in the first place. Such courses may not even produce a student who knows how to inquire about diversity in a new context.

One can make a still stronger criticism of the amorphous elective requirement: that the failure to confront all the areas of diversity undercuts the encounter with each of them. A student of Chinese history who does not have some awareness of the history of women and the family, and of the different ways of understanding gender roles, will be likely to miss a good deal that is of urgent importance to the person who gets involved with China today, whether through politics or through business. If Anna hears the political rhetoric in today’s China about the “natural” suitability of a situation in which women leave the workplace to return home, she will need to evaluate these statements and policies. It would be best to evaluate them against the background not only of the Confucian tradition but also of a critical awareness of gender roles and their variety. Successful and fair business dealings with China require such an awareness, which will not be provided by courses on Chinese history alone.

For these many reasons, an amorphous elective diversity requirement does not adequately prepare students for the complex world they will confront. It is better than no diversity program at all, and it may well be the best that many institutions can do. But it does not provide sufficient direction to fulfill completely the goals of world citizenship.

Despite these drawbacks, the particular version of an elective diversity requirement that was designed at Reno has some strong virtues. Particularly admirable is the reasoning that justified the requirement when it was publicly presented to faculty, students, and the community. The argument crafted by the faculty committee focuses on goals of world citizenship rather
than on identity politics. Deborah Achtenberg, professor of philosophy, expert on Aristotle's ethics, and chair of the Diversity Committee, reflects that her approach to curricular politics was colored by her own particular history, as "a woman, a Jew, a former sixties activist, a St. John's College alumna, a philosopher." From St. John's, she says, she learned respect for the intrinsic value of great texts; the diversity requirement strongly emphasizes these values. From the civil-rights movement she learned "how exclusion of groups leaves the dominant culture unable to benefit from the perspectives and contributions of those groups"; this experience gave her a strong motivation to work for inclusion of those perspectives in the curriculum. As a woman, she knows how difficult it is to speak when one wonders whether the terms of the debate have been set by someone else; the courses in which she is involved focus on these issues of voice and methodology. As a Jew, she knows how easy it is for excluded groups to internalize demeaning stereotypes of themselves; she therefore urges questioning of all stereotypes, including those fostered by identity politics. Finally, as a philosopher, she is committed to making the continual attempt to "transcend all this particularity towards commonality," communicating what she perceives to others whose perspectives and experiences are different from her own. The curriculum she helped design draws inspiration both from Greek ideas of world citizenship and from biblical demands for equality of attention and love.

For a university that is skeptical of the elective approach and can support a more ambitious undertaking, a more arduous, but potentially more satisfying, approach is to design a single basic "multicultural" course, or a small number of such courses, to acquaint all students with some basic conceptions and methods. A very successful example of such a course, in a nonelite institution with a mixed student body, is "American Pluralism and the Search for Equality," developed at the State University of New York at Buffalo in 1992. This course is required in addition to a two-semester world civilization sequence that provides basic instruction in non-Western religions and cultures. The pluralism course complements the primarily historical world civilization course by enhancing students' awareness of the many groups that make up their own nation, and of the struggle of each for respect and equality. Since these moral issues arise in the international context as well, reflection about them retrospectively enriches the other course.

The outstanding feature of the pluralism course is its careful design. In
striking contrast to the catch-as-catch-can approach to diversity that one often finds, the faculty designing this course met for months to work out a coherent set of goals and methodologies. They justified their plan in documents available not only to the university community but also to the general public. The statement of goals and purposes shows the relation of the course to the goals of citizenship:

A goal of the course is to develop within students a sense of informed, active citizenship as they enter an American society of increasing diversity by focusing on contemporary and historical issues of race, ethnicity, gender, social class, and religious sectarianism in American life. A goal of the course is to provide students with an intellectual awareness of the causes and effects of structured inequalities and prejudicial exclusion in American society. A goal of the course is to provide students with increased self-awareness of what it means in our culture to be a person of their own gender, race, class, ethnicity, and religion as well as an understanding of how these categories affect those who are different from themselves . . . A goal of the course is to expand students' ability to think critically, and with an open mind, about controversial contemporary issues that stem from the gender, race, class, ethnic, and religious differences that pervade American society.

John Meacham, a professor of psychology who is among its architects, enunciates several principles that contributed to the success of the Buffalo course and that should, in his view, guide the development of other such courses.

1. "Design multicultural courses with broad content." The Buffalo course is designed to acquaint students with five categories of diversity: race, gender, ethnicity, social class, and religious sectarianism. Each section of the course must cover all five and must focus in depth on three. This approach gives the advantage of breadth and also ensures that students see one category in its relation to the others. Meacham argues persuasively that such a course contributes a deeper understanding of each of its topics than would a narrower course focusing on a single topic.

2. "Base multicultural courses on faculty disciplinary expertise." Faculty staffing the course are drawn from ten different disciplines. Meacham comments:
“For example, an intelligent discussion of affirmative action should be grounded at least in history, biology, law, economics, political science, psychology, and sociology.” Nothing was included in the course that faculty were not equipped to teach expertly; and different faculty groups in different years approached the basic course plan differently, in accordance with their preparation and training. This allowance for flexibility is very important. Interdisciplinary courses frequently falter if they lack a strong disciplinary base, and faculty cannot do a good job if they are asked to stretch far beyond their training.

The difficulty of finding enough faculty with the relevant expertise is frequently cited as a point against such multicultural courses, as if they were bound to be specially problematic from this point of view. But “great books” courses, for example the countless courses focusing on ancient Greece and Rome, are hardly free of similar problems. The classics department of any university is small, comprising only a few of the faculty who will be teaching such courses. A large proportion of those who routinely teach Euripides and Sophocles and Plato lack disciplinary expertise in classics and never learn either Greek or Latin. They often do a remarkable job within these limits, and sometimes can bring new life to the material in a way that specialists may not. But they do have limits, and need to rely for guidance on secondary literature prepared by specialists. It would therefore be entirely unfair to mention these problems when criticizing new multicultural courses and not to bring the same objections against standard Western civilization courses.

There are, of course, special problems involved in teaching any area in which the relevant scholarly literature is small and still evolving. The nonspecialist teaching Plato can choose from among a wide range of translations and annotated editions of the dialogues, and can prepare by using the many helpful and rigorous books and articles that are easily available. The nonspecialist who wishes to teach the history of women in antiquity, or the history of slavery, would have had a much more difficult time twenty years ago, since the materials for such a study were available only to specialists who knew Greek and Latin—and not easily to these, since many documents had not been edited. But by now this is far less a problem in all the areas of human diversity. In most areas, outstanding volumes responsibly present the results of specialist research to nonspecialist academics. In the areas covered by Meacham’s course there is no problem at all, since there is no language barrier, and the topics of the course have by now generated an enormous, excellent, and easily available literature.
3. "Design programs for faculty development." Faculty should not be asked to teach material that lies to some extent outside their prior expertise without being given financial support for the time spent in retraining. Retraining involves time taken away from their course preparation in their own original areas, and also from the research that is an integral part of an active scholar's life. First-rate faculty will not choose to get involved in such new courses unless they are compensated for these sacrifices. It is standard practice to pay faculty summer salary for undertaking new course development projects. Where, in addition to retraining, the course will require extensive cooperation among faculty in different fields, such compensation is particularly important. SUNY Buffalo was able to provide funds for four-week faculty development seminars during two consecutive summers. These seminars were absolutely crucial to the program's success, since even faculty who bring a disciplinary expertise to the course are ill prepared for a complex interdisciplinary exchange without concerted preparation, reading, and dialogue. In the seminars the faculty learned about one another's approaches and methods, discussed common readings, and designed readings and methods that were appropriate for the students in their institution.

4. Spend time reflecting about methodological and pedagogical issues. Faculty drawn from literature, economics, political science, and philosophy will not intuitively approach a problem such as voting rights or affirmative action with the same set of questions in mind or the same standards of argument and inquiry. This heterogeneity is basically a good thing, since they can complement one another. But careful thought needs to be given to the methods and concerns that will be built into the course. How much, for example, will the course focus on general philosophical questions, such as the nature of rights and the contrast between relativism and universalism? How much empirical information about the history of the relevant issues will students be expected to master? How will quantitative analyses deriving from economics be presented, if at all? If these questions are not settled beforehand, the course will be a grab-bag of issues, with no intellectual cohesion.

Faculty need to devote extra consideration to problems that arise when we approach issues on which people in our society have conflicting and strongly held views. Such issues—and these constitute most of the course—raise particular problems for classroom methodology. Here there is a particular need to be aware of the background and character of one's students.
and to design classroom methods to elicit the best sort of active critical participation. Buffalo students, Meacham argues, tend to be submissive and deferential. Faculty need to discourage them from simply following authority if the benefits of the course for citizenship are to be gained. In this course more than in others, then, instructors carefully withhold their own personal views, designing strategies for evenhanded classroom debate and not seeking to bring debate to a conclusion prematurely. As one instructor in the course said, it is important "to give students permission to be confused."

The Buffalo course is a success because of the careful thought that went into its design and the availability of funding to support faculty development. One should also commend the determination of faculty to criticize themselves and to monitor carefully the development of the course, insisting on high standards of both expertise and teaching. SUNY Buffalo faculty are under substantial public pressure to justify the development of a multicultural course, since their constituency is aware of many criticisms of such courses. Part of their success is explained by the fact that they have devoted a good deal of thought to public relations both in the university and in the community. They publicize the course and discuss it in a variety of public media, focusing in particular on answering the criticism that such courses are "ideological." They articulate the relation of the course to the goals of democratic citizenship in a convincing way, satisfying the public that the effort contributes to public reasoning, not simply to the affirmation of various groups' identity. This is a legitimate area of public concern, and Buffalo has done more to address it than have many comparable institutions.

A different but equally promising basic core course is the newly designed humanities core course at Scripps College, in Pomona, California. The college enrolls around 700 students, all female; although it shares courses with the other Claremont Colleges, the freshman core course is designed for the entire Scripps entering class, and for them alone. It replaces an earlier Western civilization sequence, which was thought to be too amorphous and unfocused. Called "Culture, Knowledge, and Representation," the course studies the central ideas of the European Enlightenment—in political thought, history, and philosophy, in literature, in religion, to some extent in art and music. Sixteen instructors from all departments in the humanities take turns giving lectures, and each leads a small discussion section. The study of the Enlightenment is followed by a study of critical responses to it—by formerly
colonized populations, by feminists, by non-Western philosophy, by Western postmodernist thought. The course ends with an examination of Enlightenment responses to these criticisms. (I was invited to lecture to the group on the ways in which feminists could defend liberalism against the criticisms made by other feminists, and on the responses of the international human rights movement to postcolonial critiques of universal categories.)

This course has produced excitement and lively debate among students. Its clear focus, its emphasis on cross-cultural argument rather than simply on a collection of facts, and its introduction of non-Western materials via a structured focus on a central group of issues all make it a good paradigm of the introductory course. Its ambitious interdisciplinary character has been successful in lecture, less so in sections—where students report that some faculty sections deal far more helpfully with the philosophical texts and issues than do others. This unevenness is to be expected in the first year of such a cooperative venture (the course was instituted in 1995–96) and should not be taken to negate the worth of the experiment. Above all, the course has merit because it plunges students right into the most urgent questions they need to ask today as world citizens, questions about the universal validity of the language of rights, the appropriate ways to respond to the just claims of the oppressed. The college community becomes from the very beginning a community of argument focused on these issues of urgent relevance. (It seemed especially commendable that postmodernism was not given the last word, as though it had eclipsed Enlightenment thinking: students were left with a vigorous debate, as instructors sympathetic to postmodernism welcomed my highly critical challenge to those views.)

Infusing world citizenship into the curriculum is a much larger project than the designing of one or two required courses. Its goals can and should pervade the curriculum as a whole, as multinational, minority, and gender perspectives can illuminate the teaching of many standard parts of the curriculum, from American history to economics to art history to ancient Greek literature. There are countless examples of the successful transformation of familiar courses to incorporate those perspectives. Some involve the redesigning of a basic introductory course. At the University of New Hampshire, a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities produced a new Western civilization course, team-taught in an interdisciplinary manner by four excellent young faculty hired primarily for this course, from philosophy,
the history of science, art history, and comparative literature. The four were
given time and support to work together designing a course that integrated
all these disciplinary perspectives with a focus on ancient Greece and Rome,
at the same time incorporating a comparative dimension that correlated
Greek achievements in art, literature, science, and politics with those in
China at the same period. (The historian of science specialized in Chinese
science; the others were supported in doing research into the comparative
dimension of their own discipline.) From the beginning, then, students
learned to see familiar landmarks of the Western tradition in a broader world
context, understanding what was distinctive about Greek science, for exa-
ample, in part through the Chinese contrast. As a result of the support and
stimulation provided by the program, one of the original four teachers,
Charlotte Witt, has gone on to produce not only outstanding scholarship
on Aristotle’s metaphysics but also admirable discussions of the role of ra-
tional argument in feminist criticism. 19

Some transformations involve the redesigning of a standard departmental
course offering. At Brown University, a standard moral problems course has
recently taken as its focus the feminist critique of pornography and related
issues of free speech. In this way students learn to confront these divisive
issues and learn basic facts about them while learning the techniques of
philosophical analysis and debate. At Bentley College, Krishna Mallick offers
a non-Western philosophy class, focusing on the philosophy of nonviolent
resistance. At Harvard University, Amartya Sen offers a course called “Hun-
ger and Famine.” Standard topics in development economics are given a
new twist, as students learn to think about the relationship of hunger to
gender and also to democratic political institutions in areas of the world
ranging from Africa to China to India. At the University of Chicago, his-
torian David Cohen has developed a comparative course on war crimes that
brings current events in Bosnia and Rwanda together with historical ex-
amples from many cultures. Other topics that invite a global perspective,
such as environmental studies and climatology, world population, and re-
ligious and ethnic violence, are increasingly taking center stage in the social
sciences and are an increasing focus of student interest.

Such integrative courses acknowledge that we are citizens of a world that
is diverse through and through—whose moral problems do prominently
include the problems of women seeking to avoid violence, whose history
does include a complex international history of both nonviolence and war,
whose thought about hunger and agriculture must take cognizance of the unequal hunger of women and of the special circumstances of developing nations. This way of incorporating diversity has the advantage of relying on the disciplinary expertise of the instructor. Students who study Indian famines with Sen probably learn more that is important about India than will those who take a broad and general introduction to world civilization, although they will profit more from Sen’s course if they have already had such an introduction. They will learn about religious and economic diversity in the process of thinking about hunger, but in a way that will be focused and made more vivid by being connected to a specific problem analyzed with rigor and detail. Such focused courses, taught by expert faculty, should be strongly encouraged, whatever else we also encourage.

In many institutions, however, there are few faculty available to teach such international courses, at least beyond the introductory level. If even the introductory level requires combining existing expertise with new interdisciplinary training, as the Buffalo course shows, the generation of more advanced elective courses integrating the perspective of world citizenship requires even more planning and institutional support. One particularly imaginative and successful example of a program for faculty development has recently been designed at St. Lawrence University. Called “Cultural Encounters: An Intercultural General Education,” the program exemplifies the values of world citizenship both in its plan and in its execution. Cultural Encounters is a program containing courses at both the introductory and the more advanced levels. But its focus has been on redesigning disciplinary courses toward an emphasis on the student’s encounter with a non-Western culture.

St. Lawrence is a small liberal arts college. It is a relatively wealthy institution, able to attract a high-quality young faculty. It is well known for the high quality of its study-abroad programs, and 33 percent of its students do study in a foreign country at some point. Its students are a mixed group. The 70 percent who receive financial aid tend to be stronger academically than the other 30 percent, many of whom are intellectually unaggressive. This circumstance required careful thought by the faculty as they tried to design a program that would awaken critical and independent thinking about cultural diversity, and about the more general question whether values are universal or culturally relative. Since 1987 the college has had a requirement that all students take one course on a non-Western or Third World
culture; the Cultural Encounters program is intended to supplement the strong offerings in these areas by promoting rigorous foundational questioning.

The program began when St. Lawrence received faculty and curriculum development grants from the Andrew Mellon Foundation and the Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education. In its initial phase, grants were given to a group of seventeen humanities faculty from different departments, enabling them to meet in a weekly seminar throughout the year, discussing common readings and eventually generating new courses, each in their separate disciplines. The course was informed from the beginning by three decisions. The first was to put philosophy at the heart of the matter, in the sense that all participants did a lot of serious discussing of issues of cultural relativism, along with whatever cross-cultural readings they also did. Grant Cornwell of Philosophy and Eve Stoddard of English, the two directors of the program, shared an orientation to the material that stressed the universal aspect of human needs and strivings and was critical of cultural relativism. They did not wish, however, to impose this perspective on the program as a whole; they wished to use the issue as a basis for faculty dialogue.

Cornwell and Stoddard’s second decision was to focus on just two areas of diversity, by selecting two non-Western cultures, the cultures of India and Kenya. They decided to start from these two concrete areas in raising issues about ethnic and religious diversity, gender, race, and sexuality. They decided that they had a reasonable shot at understanding something of the history and traditions of these two places if they used the grant-supported faculty seminar to spend an entire year doing common research on each, but that they would have no chance at all of achieving responsible coverage if they cast their net more widely. Faculty in the group were drawn from philosophy, art history, anthropology, English, religious studies, biology, government, geology, economics, and Spanish.

The group’s third decision was its most surprising. This was that all ten faculty involved should live for a month in the regions they studied, after a year of intensive seminar preparation, so that their teaching would be informed by a firsthand sense of what it was like to live the life of ordinary women and men in these countries. This undertaking was made financially possible because of the grant, and it proved to be the crucial point in the program. During each of the two visits, the group kept a public diary to exchange and refine views. It is clear that this experience permitted a level
of insight into controversial issues such as female circumcision and population control that would not easily have been available from reading alone. It also infused the abstract readings with vividness and made the instructors feel that, for a brief time at least, they had been actual participants in the foreign culture.

Returning to St. Lawrence, the group designed courses reflecting their own disciplinary expertise. David Hornung of Biology and Catherine Shady of Geology teach a seminar called “Cross-Cultural Perspectives of Healing,” comparing the Western medical tradition with Islamic, Hindu, and traditional African approaches. Economics professor Robert Blewett teaches “African Economies,” comparing several African economic institutions with their North American counterparts, and focusing on the impact of cultural difference on economic structure. “Students,” Blewett writes, “will learn not only of the diversity and complexity of economic relationships in African societies but will increase their understanding of economics in their own society.” Codirector Eve Stoddard teaches a comparative course on the discipline and management of the female body, studying practices ranging from female circumcision to veiling to plastic surgery, dieting, and exercise. There is no naive assumption that all these practices are on a par—indeed, one of the aims of the course is to get students to make increasingly refined evaluations. Stoddard’s teaching was informed by lengthy, complicated discussions with women in the regions she visited; she is therefore able to give an informed account of the societies’ internal debates about these practices. Student writing is encouraged to analyze issues of cultural relativism in a rigorous way.

At the same time, the group required that students who chose the Cultural Encounters “track,” taking both introductory and advanced courses within the program, should have a foreign language requirement. If at all possible, they must live and study abroad for their junior year. Two-thirds of the students who go abroad go to Europe, the other third to Costa Rica, Kenya, India, and Japan. Not all the programs, then, directly support the intellectual aims of the Cultural Encounters course material. But even the apparently unrelated exposure to a European culture and its language indirectly serves the program’s goals, since mastery of a foreign language and the ability to make oneself at home in a foreign culture are essential abilities of the world citizen, and build an understanding that can be used to approach a further and even more remote culture.
The Cultural Encounters program is a model of responsible teaching in several areas of human diversity. By design, it encompasses not only the encounter with a foreign culture but also related issues of gender, ethnic and religious pluralism, and sexuality, presenting issues of American pluralism in relation to those of global cultural diversity. Its interdisciplinary character ensures that these issues will be faced from many interlocking perspectives, including those of literary study and anthropology, long prominent in multicultural teaching, but also those of economics, biology, philosophy, and foreign language teaching. Where faculty are concerned, the program’s focus on intensive training and dialogue and its demand for actual immersion in the culture sets it apart from many programs of this sort, as does its focus on foundational philosophical questions of relativism and universality. On the side of the student, the requirement to learn a foreign language and, where possible, to visit a foreign culture makes the “encounter” serious and prolonged, while critical discussion of basic issues about culture and values in the classroom ensures that the encounter will be conducted in the spirit of Socratic searching rather than of mere tourism, and will prompt dialectical reflection on the beliefs and practices of the student’s own culture while the student explores a foreign culture.

Cornwell and Stoddard write that they prefer the term interculturalism to the terms multiculturalism and diversity, since the latter are associated with relativism and identity politics, suggesting a pedagogy "limited to an uncritical recognition or celebration of difference, as if all cultural practices were morally neutral or legitimate."20 Interculturalism, by contrast, connotes the sort of comparative searching that they have in mind, which, they argue, should prominently include the recognition of common human needs across cultures and of dissonance and critical dialogue within cultures. The interculturalist, they argue, has reason to reject the claim of identity politics that only members of a particular group have the ability to understand the perspective of that group. In fact, understanding is achieved in many different ways, and being born a member of a certain group is neither sufficient nor necessary. Knowledge is frequently enhanced by an awareness of difference.

The Cultural Encounters program has had an influence beyond St. Lawrence. Its success has spawned imitations in a wide range of colleges and universities, including Northern Arizona University, the University of Tulsa, Towson State University, Colgate University, Mount St. Mary’s College, and Bowling Green State University. In 1995 a national conference brought the
many participants in this movement together for an institute to discuss experiences and methodology. Much thought needs to be given to how such a program, designed for a small, prosperous college, can be adapted to colleges with larger student populations and fewer resources.

Meanwhile, at St. Lawrence itself, the program received a major grant from the Christian Johnson Endeavor Foundation in 1995 to support further curricular development of “intercultural studies.” Over four years, the faculty group will focus on interdisciplinary study of four themes: transmission of culture across boundaries; gender and culture; questioning development: equity and the environment; and health across cultures. Expanding its focus to include Latin America, the faculty group spent the summer of 1996 doing research in the Caribbean. Cheerfully describing the group’s members as “pathological workaholics,” Stoddard expresses keen excitement about their new task.

The Cultural Encounters program brings us back to the issues raised by the Stoics. Its designers firmly reject an approach to “multiculturalism” that conceives of it as a type of identity politics, in which the student receives the impression of a marketplace of cultures, each asserting its own claim. They insist on the importance of teaching that the imagination can cross cultural boundaries, and that cross-cultural understanding rests on the acknowledgment of certain common human needs and goals amid the many local differences that divide us. Like much of the ancient Greek tradition, beginning with Herodotus, Stoics suggest that the encounter with other cultures is an essential part of an examined life. Like that tradition, they believe that education must promote the ability to doubt the unqualified goodness of one’s own ways, as we search for what is good in human life the world over.

Becoming a citizen of the world is often a lonely business. It is, in effect, a kind of exile—from the comfort of assured truths, from the warm nestling feeling of being surrounded by people who share one’s convictions and passions. In the writings of Marcus Aurelius (as in those of his American followers Emerson and Thoreau) one sometimes feels a boundless loneliness, as if the removal of the props of habit and convention, the decision to trust no authority but moral reasoning, had left life bereft of a certain sort of warmth and security. If one begins life as a child who loves and trusts its
parents, it is tempting to want to reconstruct citizenship along the same lines, finding in an idealized image of nation or leader a surrogate parent who will do our thinking for us. It is up to us, as educators, to show our students the beauty and interest of a life that is open to the whole world, to show them that there is after all more joy in the kind of citizenship that questions than in the kind that simply applauds, more fascination in the study of human beings in all their real variety and complexity than in the zealous pursuit of superficial stereotypes, more genuine love and friendship in the life of questioning and self-government than in submission to authority. We had better show them this, or the future of democracy in this nation and in the world is bleak.