

On Teaching

Creating Cross-Cultural Encounters in the American Studies Classroom

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Following World War II, the United States government funded the creation of American studies departments throughout Europe, Asia, and Latin America as a response to the Cold War. Funders, including the Carnegie Foundation and Fulbright program, provided grants to develop American studies programs in the United States and to support foreign travel by faculty specializing in the study of American history, literature, and culture (Davis 1990, 353-354; Ninkovich 1996). Due to the monetary contributions of and organizational structure provided by the Salzburg Seminar, the International Committee of the American Studies Association, and the United States Information Agency among others, international and United States-based scholars have long contributed to ongoing scholarly discussions about American history and culture (Lauter 2001, 25-28). In 1958, Sigmund Skard's *American Studies in Europe* detailed the growth of American studies in Europe. Skard's book became a template for other similar projects in the post-War period. For over forty years, *American Studies International* provided an essential forum for scholarship devoted to the internationalization of American studies. Numerous grant-funded conferences and publications also provided critical opportunities for fostering international conversations about American studies (Carter 1988; Lenz and Milich 1995). In 2001, Richard Horwitz, a long-time advocate of an international perspective on American studies, published his anthology for introductory Ameri-

can studies classes, specifically designed to bridge domestic and global perspectives (2001, xxxv-xxxvi). This anthology, in many respects, constituted a culmination of these international discussions about American culture.

Despite these deep roots of collaboration and connection, the cultural wars of the 1980s, along with a decline in government and foundation funding, came to eclipse the international and global aspects of American studies. As scholars trained in the early 1990s, the authors learned relatively little about the international collaborations that shaped the field during the height of the Cold War. With the burgeoning of new discourses in the 1990s, American studies scholars began the shift from cultural studies to global studies. In a seminal article, Jane Desmond and Virginia Dominguez argued for a "critical internationalism" to re-expand the scope of American studies and challenge "exceptionalist" paradigms that have dominated American studies scholarship, even after its focus on multiculturalism and popular culture during the 1980s and 1990s (1996, 475). The authors called for a "conceptual orientation that resituates the United States in a global context on a number of terrains simultaneously" (1996, 475). Desmond and Dominguez also highlighted the general absence of foreign scholars' contributions in American studies curricula and research (1996). In concluding their critique, they called for a decentering of U.S. scholarship that would, among other things, include the use of technology to "facilitate ongoing transnational discussions" (1996, 486).¹ Recent edited collections examining the relationship between American studies and postcolonial theory and studies of empire illustrate the trend towards a transnational approach to American culture (Sing and Schmidt 2000; King 2000). *American Studies* published a special issue in 2000 titled "Globalization, Transnationalism, and the End of the American Century" and *American Quarterly* recently commissioned an article to discuss the global reach of American studies journals (Giles 2005).

The annual American Studies Association (ASA) conference has also served as a site for the internationalization of American studies. Several recent presidential addresses assert that transnationalism allows for a deeper and broader understanding of American culture (Fishkin 2005; Halttunen 2006). Past presidents have also brought attention to the relative absence of discussion of the United States' imperial role, highlighted the contributions of foreign scholars, and questioned the very name American studies and the way that it has come to represent the United States rather than all of the Americas: North, Central, and South (Radway 1999). A 2005 issue of *American Quarterly* also explored the legal construction of American borders in the wake of the War on Terror and its affect on the study of American culture. These efforts have caused scholars in the field to interrogate the geography of American studies scholarship in which U.S. scholars occupy the center and marginalize the contributions of foreign academics. Textbooks, such as *Distant Mirrors: America as a Foreign Culture* (DeVita and Armstrong 2003) and *History Lessons: How Textbooks from around the World Portray U.S. History* (Lindaman and Ward 2006), which could help

de-familiarize American culture for our students, are underutilized within American studies classrooms.

We conceived this project at the 2005 ASA conference. The theme of that conference was Crossroads of Culture and it attracted a large international contingent, including Mary Lou O'Neil, assistant professor of American Culture and Literature at Kadir Has University in Istanbul, Turkey. Responding to the enthusiastic and sometimes contentious conference discussions about the globalization of American studies scholarship, we decided to re-create or re-enact this dialogue within our respective American studies classrooms, even if they were separated by eight time zones and five thousand miles. We hoped that this project would allow us and our students to get beyond their respective parochial perspectives and adopt more global understanding of American culture. In developing our project, we learned from the experiences of our American studies colleagues, including Bill Bryant (University of Iowa) and Eric Sandeen (University of Wyoming), who had already begun e-mail exchanges (Bryant). Concurrent with our work, the University of Kansas American Studies Program collaborated with students in Russia through teleconferencing. We also learned from experimental e-mail conversations developed by nursing and writing programs (Brandi 2003, Blase 2000).

Procedure

We conceived a fairly simple project: two American studies classes, one in Turkey and one in the United States would share a set of readings on the American dream and then the students would discuss the readings through an exchange of e-mails. We imagined that it would provide an interesting way for Turkish students to gain a sense of the American Dream and for American students to see this foundational belief or attitude through the eyes of outsiders. The American students were enrolled in a course entitled "Alpha Seminar: The American Experience" with Richard Schur at Drury University in Springfield, Missouri. All first-year Drury students are required to take this course, which explores key concepts in American history and culture, including democracy, diversity, and capitalism. This interdisciplinary examination of the United States lays the foundation for sophomore and junior-level courses, which explore world cultures and globalization. By encountering Turkish perspectives on American culture, this assignment asked students to begin reflecting upon the differences between domestic and external views of the American experience. The Turkish students, from Kadir Has University in Istanbul, were studying with Mary Lou O'Neil in her class "American Myths and Traditions" which is required for students majoring in American Culture and Literature.² The class examines the idea of America as an imagined community and the myths that Americans tell themselves about America in order to build and sustain the idea of the United States.

We selected readings from Studs Terkel's *American Dreams: Lost and Found* to provide the subject matter for the e-mail exchange and to augment regular class discussions about American culture.³ We decided to explore the theme of the American Dream because it is a frequently invoked but rarely examined rhetorical device within the United States without a clear analog in Turkish culture.⁴ The American Dream concept exemplifies the exceptionalist paradigm of American studies and is an idea that we thought could be fruitfully examined by insiders and outsiders alike. Terkel's presentation of ordinary people's stories in their own words, usually in brief readings of less than 10 pages, would allow the Turkish students to contribute to the discussion on a relatively even footing and it would allow the American students to consider how neither Terkel's subjects nor themselves spoke for all people in the United States.⁵ We also hypothesized that this subject matter would encourage students to compare and contrast their expectations and hopes for the future based on the cultures of origin. We assigned the same readings to both classes at approximately the same time. We then expected students to write four e-mails during the course of the project. Through a stroke of luck each class had 19 students so each student had one e-mail partner. Students thus discussed Terkel's collection both within their local classrooms and across the ocean with an e-mail partner. During class-time, we monitored the progress of the project, and students could ask questions, voice concerns about a lack of response from their partner or technical difficulties. We communicated with one another, tried to encourage students to be in touch with their partners, remind students about deadlines as well as solve any technical problems such as incorrect addresses. We also were able to provide some general and anonymous feedback about the other class's response to the project and the ongoing e-mail exchanges. The students submitted their e-mails in hard copy form, including their partners' responses, to their respective instructors at the completion of the exchange. We were not copied on each exchange as this would have proved too cumbersome for the instructors as well as inhibited the freedom students might have felt they had in their discussions.⁶ Moreover, from the instructor's point of view having each complete e-mail exchange helped retain the individual conversational aspect of the exchanges during the reading process.

It is important to note that the e-mail exchange was a required aspect of both classes. In the Turkish class the students received credit for the exchange itself and they were expected to use their own e-mails as well as the responses of their partners as part of discussions about the American Dream and as source material for a paper on that topic. The American students received credit for participating in the exchange itself. The e-mails exchanged constituted part of a larger project on the American Dream, in which students engaged in a critical analysis of the term and its contemporary usage. By participating in this e-mail exchange, the American students were able to begin to think about this supposedly defining characteristic of national identity in transnational terms. Because Drury University's general education curriculum focuses on global studies, there

has been a concerted effort to globalize its introductory American experience course and help students globalize their understanding of American culture.

In selecting an e-mail exchange over other possible modes of communication we had several motivations. First and foremost was the ease of communication. All of the students in our respective classes had e-mail addresses and knew how to use e-mail and all of our students had access to a computer either at home or at their respective university. The time difference of 8 hours also made e-mail more practical than real time technology, which would have required changes in class schedules resulting in awkward class times.

Perhaps more important than these rather practical concerns was that e-mail allowed for a communication exchange that seemed well suited to the needs and capabilities of both native and non-native speaker students (Blase 2000). An e-mail exchange as opposed to a message board or real-time chat allowed for the development of a kind of intimacy, however manufactured, between students. It also allowed students to be more open and frank in their discussions. Furthermore, for non-native speakers of English e-mail provides a more private space where students could take as much time as needed to compose their thoughts and express themselves. A message board or real time chat seemed far too much like a public performance that could prove frightening to students self-conscious about their language skills or to students who might have comments that would be perceived as controversial. Although only recently popular and generally unavailable when we began our experiment, websites, such as MySpace.com and YouTube.com, might prove too informal for students and make non-native English speakers too self-conscious. Finally devising the project around e-mail allowed for some student autonomy in organizing the project. Within the deadlines set for completion of the project, students could e-mail at a time and place of their choosing. They could also express themselves outside the watchful eyes of teachers and fellow students perhaps allowing for a more free exchange.

Outcomes

Much to our mutual surprise all of the students participated in the project and completed the required number of e-mails. In their opening e-mails many students, both Turkish and American, expressed their interest and excitement about corresponding with someone from another country. The American students at first seemed hesitant about engaging in this conversation. As the project's beginning drew near, they began asking more and more questions, quickly exceeding their professor's knowledge of Turkey. This, however, allowed Schur to demonstrate his interest in learning more about Turkey and serve as a model for engaging in ethical cross-cultural inquiry.⁷ Both Turkish and American students' interest spawned a seriousness that is reflected in part by the way in which the students shared a great deal of personal information about themselves and their families. The students opened up more with their e-mail partners than

they could or perhaps would have in the classroom or with their instructors. If nothing else, we, as teachers, learned a lot about our own students.

One of the issues that immediately arose in the beginning of the project was the issue of gender. The students could not easily determine the gender of their project partner and therefore struggled with how to correspond with someone of an undisclosed gender. Although this generated some anxiety for the students, it presented a nice opportunity to discuss how gender relations unconsciously shape our efforts at communication. This is a discussion that we will continue to have with our students in future versions of this project. The students, however, taking matters into their own hands, quickly resolved the gender issue for themselves by declaring their gender and if necessary asking their partners' gender.

Other issues that surfaced early on focused on age and life-stage. Almost all of the American students were traditional-aged college students while this was not true of all of the Turkish students. Students used the relative anonymity of e-mail to provide the information they wanted to and withhold that which they sought to keep private. In a way, this allowed students to construct themselves as they wished. Interestingly, only one pair discussed exchanging photographs.

In establishing landscape for discussions, a number of Turkish students felt the need to establish Turkey's "Western-ness" and similarities with the United States. One student wrote, "many people think that we are an underdeveloped country and that we wear turbans but that's all a lie. There isn't any difference. We listen to your music . . . we live like you" (TS1).⁸ Another expressed similar sentiments when she wrote that, "most foreign people have wrong ideas about Turkey. You can think that the women's clothes are different and we are all covered up. This is not true. The people wears [sic] the way you wear. Of course there are covered people too, but most of the people are not" (TS2). These sentiments are guided by the assumption that virtually all citizens of the United States share a uniform lifestyle and that the same is true in Turkey. In other words, "we" are like "you." These comments also reveal beliefs in a monolithic "we" and "you" that does not acknowledge the tremendous diversity in both countries.

In classroom discussions, Turkish students often presented a rather narrow view of the United States that was largely shaped by the mass media products of the United States and its presentation of the United States as a society which is white, class privileged, and not overtly religious. Similarly, the Drury students assumed that all Turks shared common religious attitudes, about the veil for instance, even though their own experiences in American culture should have prepared them to apply the lens of multiculturalism, which has become widely adopted within educational rhetoric, to another culture. Furthermore, the Turkish students assumed that, at the very least, their American counterparts did not cover their heads and perhaps that no one in the United States does so. At the same time the Turkish students presented Turkey's western credentials, they

also used the project as an opportunity to educate their partners about Turkey and correct any misinformation American students might have. This educational vein continued as Turkish students explained aspects of Turkish history and culture, the Turkish educational system, about Istanbul and Atatürk, the founder of the Republic of Turkey.⁹

Discussions of the American Dream and its counterpart the Turkish Dream, if there is one, revealed far more similarities than differences between the students. These similarities existed within the two groups of students as well as between them. Many of the students from the United States asserted the individual nature of the American dream, but, at the same time, the similarity of their themes was striking. The students most commonly articulated a desire for success and happiness, the importance of working hard and the need for an education. Turkish students largely agreed. Although Turkish students did not articulate an idea of a Turkish Dream as such, they shared many of the same hopes and desires as their exchange partners.

The largest area of agreement between Turkish and American students focused on the importance of education. For students in the United States education proved so important that most did not see any other option than getting a university education. One student remarked that, “the idea of going to college is almost expected in families today” (AS1). For many American students, economic anxiety created the desire for higher education as they feared a dim future without a college degree. A student expressed it this way: “To get a decent paying job we have to attend college and receive [sic] a degree. Therefore, college is not many kids [sic] dream but something they have to do” (AS2). Although Turkish students definitely agreed about the importance of education, they did not express the same sense of pressure and expectation to attend university. Part of the difference may lie in the Turkish educational system and the difficulties in being accepted to universities. In any given year less than one-quarter of the students who enter the university entrance exam will be accepted to a university. Currently in Turkey higher education is not so widely available for it to have risen to the level of expectation.

One topic that evoked some of the sharpest discussion focused on the issue of equality. Many Turkish students called on their counterparts to defend the historical and present-day actions of the United States. In particular, Turkish students were interested in the treatment of people of color. Invoking one of the founding documents in American history, one student wrote, “There is a passage in [the] Declaration of Independence. It says that ALL MEN ARE CREATED EQUAL [caps original]. Was there any equality between black and white people?” (TS3). While another asked, “Do you think that in America all the people are really equal?” (TS2).

Moving to the international plane another Turkish student commented that, “They [Americans] always speak about equality but they are not really [sic]. They just speak about it. They do not make [it] real for all the people [sic] and the world. Every people should be equal not only Americans” (TS4). It is important

to note that this project took place following the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. The detention of many Middle Eastern, Islamic, and Arab people in the aftermath of those attacks has been well publicized in Turkey. Turkish students pointed out the similarities between the treatment of Middle Eastern men after 9/11 and the internment of Japanese Americans following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.¹⁰

In responding to these questions a large number of the American students took the position that discrimination was largely in the past and that equality of opportunity existed today.¹¹ One student outlined the position particularly well:

I think they [African Americans] have the opportunity to achieve the American Dream just as much as everyone else. In the past, they were oppressed and discriminated against, and there was no one to stand up for their rights. Today, it is illegal to discriminate against someone for their race. Unfortunately, there is still prejudice in this country but it is no longer sanctioned by the majority. Discriminators are few and far between, and now the law is on the side of the African Americans (AS3).

While the majority shared the view that discrimination is not widespread and that when it does exist it is the work of individuals, several students recognized that there might be a more complicated reality to race relations in America. One shared his experience of growing up in a racially mixed neighborhood. He wrote, "Living in a half black, half white neighborhood isn't really different than living in an all white neighborhood. I guess the only thing I can tell different is that black people are outside more, but it's not even that noticeable because its not always like that" (AS4). Another commented that "I come from an area that doesn't have many blacks so I'm not sure if that conflict really still exists or not. I have never really noticed a conflict in reality from my experience. However, I do live [in] an area with people who are still very against black people" (AS5). It was interesting to observe that the predominately white American students, who had heretofore questioned the relevance of learning about racial and ethnic minorities, used the e-mail exchange as an occasion to articulate a much more multicultural view of American culture than they had previously displayed in other segments of and papers in the course. The relative ease with which the students from the United States discussed the issue of race was evident in their e-mails, a considerable departure from the tense classroom conversations we encountered. The e-mail assignment allowed the primarily white Drury students the space to reflect more fully and honestly about the history of race and racism in the United States.¹²

While the American students did acknowledge that difficulties might exist for some in the United States, they were very clear that hard work could overcome any obstacle and achieve the American Dream. The majority of the U.S.

students saw hard work as integral to the American Dream. One student put it this way: "If you work hard enough here, you can succeed in anything" (AS4) while another wrote, "I think you have to work hard to achieve what you want because things are not just given to you" (AS5). Some of the Turkish students, however, were skeptical about whether hard work was enough to pave the road to success. One student pointed out that, "There are specific jobs you can have after graduat[ing] from this department. Unless you want help from your acquaintance or know an influential person, you cannot have a different job" (TS5). Another pointed out the need for equality of condition in guaranteeing true equality for people. She wrote, "If [the] American Dream means equality, equality means having equal opportunity or condition with everybody. For example every child has to have the same conditions in schools. In Turkey, every school has not same conditions. . . . I think this is injustice. What about your schools?" (TS6). Using their own experiences, Turkish students seriously questioned the rhetoric of hard work and equality put forth by the American students.

Without a doubt, the exchanges between the students in the United States and Turkey enriched the classroom discussions and understandings of the American Dream for all those involved. Perhaps more than anything, the students learned that they had a lot in common. They shared common beliefs in education and a common desire to succeed in terms of career and family. In many respects, the American Dream and Turkish Dream look the same.

For the students in the States in particular, they were surprised and a bit overwhelmed by how much the Turkish students knew about the United States, especially about its popular culture. Because the Turkish students knew so much about American culture, the U.S. students learned that they did not possess the authentic and complete version of their cultural history and that Turkish culture was not hermetically sealed, but integrated within a global mediascape. Perhaps they also came to understand that people outside America also possess knowledge about the United States, knowledge different from their own, but valuable nonetheless. This knowledge might even help them better understand their own culture. It certainly convinced the American students that their Turkish counterparts were generally more traveled and better prepared for a globalized and interconnected world. It also created a much more complicated image of Turkish society for the American students. Because the Kadir Has students represented a fairly broad cross-section of Turkish life, the American students expressed their surprise about the diversity of their attitudes, beliefs, and popular culture practices. Pretty quickly, the American students gained a de-essentialized understanding of Turkish identity and found their stereotypes about Turkish Muslims frustrated.¹³ For their part in the exchange, Turkish students gained access to insider knowledge about the things that they had been reading and discussing. At the same time, they gained more confidence in the knowledge that they have about the United States and their abilities to analyze American culture.

This is a project that we plan to continue and we will also encourage others to do so. Our students reported that they enjoyed the e-mail exchange and that it provided a welcome alternative to regular course activities. We believe that it represents a relatively easy, low-cost way to create an international dialogue in the classroom. In order to make such exchanges more viable and accessible to people we suggest that various national American studies associations, in particular the American Studies Association in the United States, provide some sort of infrastructure to facilitate these links.

One suggestion is to provide web space for people to advertise for exchange partners. Another possible venue for making connections might be H-Net's American studies listserve (H-Amstudy). If there were locations where people could both place information about possible exchange that others could search and use to contact interested parties this could easily expand the possibilities for this type of project. While we focused on connecting undergraduates, this might be most useful in connecting graduate students, training to become teachers and scholars themselves. Graduate students are likely to be even more committed to an exchange than undergraduates and these connections might provide useful over entire academic careers. In addition, synchronizing graduate courses would offer a practical reason for international colleagues to talk about the future of graduate training in American studies. These exchanges would likely help disseminate foreign scholarship with United States-based scholarship and encourage an integration of the two.

Globalization is reshaping political, social, and cultural borders. Thomas Friedman, in his popular analysis of this restructuring, argues that the world is now flat and we need a new map to understand this new flow of human activity and economic exchange. The September 11 attacks and the War on Terror have also served as catalysts for an international debate about the role of the United States. Is it an empire promoting democracy, despite ongoing criticism of its tactics in nation-building and fighting terrorism, or is it part of a global supply chain, subject to market forces like any other economy? American studies pedagogy must transform itself in order to respond to these new sets of questions and to the broader range of scholars asking these questions. Our experiment suggests that using some of the very tools that have ushered in this era of globalization—e-mail, the web, and message boards—can also create moments of dialogue across national borders. They offer powerful tools to “globalize” the American studies classroom and provide a venue for fostering international connections between scholars.

Notes

1. Building on the work of Desmond and Dominguez, numerous scholars have examined the effects of internationalizing American studies and explored the intellectual foundations necessary for engaging scholars and students in a genuine international exchange of ideas (Maragou 2000, Montgomery 1999, Komins and Nicholls 2003).

2. There were large similarities in the student profiles in both classes. The Drury students were overwhelming white (90 percent), female (66 percent), and middle-class. Most of the stu-

dents had at least one parent with a college or university degree. The Kadir Has students were also overwhelmingly “white” (if one can apply this term to Turks) and female. In the Turkish classroom there was only one male student during our first iteration of the experiment. Many of the Turkish students were also middle class and had at least one parent who had a university degree. The vast majority of students in both classes were “traditional” university students with the students in the United States in their first year and the Turkish students in their second year. The schools themselves, Drury University and Kadir Has University, are also similar in some respects. They are both private, small, and relatively expensive. However, there is an enormous difference in how United States and Turkish students find their way to the university classroom. In the spring of each year, aspiring Turkish students enter the university exam. Their exam results combined with their high-school grades and the order in which they rank their choices, will determine not only whether or not they can attend university but also which school and department. Furthermore, for admittance to the Department of American Culture and Literature students are required to entire a separate foreign language exam. Many students who enter the Department of American Culture and Literature at Kadir Has therefore, do so not necessarily out of desire to study American culture but because their exam results dictated the school and department.

3. We assigned selections that discussed Japanese internment, a politician’s choice to run for mayor and ultimately Congress, a teenage girl’s difficult choice whether to pursue higher education despite financial and familial obstacles, and the everyday challenges faced by a police officer. Within these articles, the narrators emphasize how race, gender, and social class affect the content of their personal dreams and the realization of those goals.

4. Cullen’s *The American Dream: A Short History of an Idea That Shaped a Nation* (2003) provides one illustration of both the exceptionalism paradigm in action and demonstrates the currency of this idea as a ripe object of inquiry within contemporary American cultural studies.

5. We tried to select a topic that allow both insiders and outsiders to critically comment on American culture. In particular, we wanted to avoid the idea that somehow either the United States-based students or their faculty were engaging in some sort of colonizing project, attempting to persuade Turks to adopt American values, beliefs, or institutions.

6. Our review of the literature on e-mail and keypal exchanges indicated that some instructors shared our less intrusive approach (Bryant). Others have opted to include themselves more deeply in the individual conversations (Brandt 2003).

7. This article argues that the e-mail exchanges offer a model for ethical cross-cultural inquiry because it emphasizes intercultural dialogue about a topic, the American Dream, which could easily be seen as a uniquely American phenomenon. Moreover, students began to identify individual identities within the broader labels of Turk or Muslim. The project also encouraged Drury students to learn more about Turkey in order to possess a fuller sense of globalization and world cultures. A potentially ironic result of this project was the realization by the library at Drury University, prompted by the repeated request for background materials about Turkey, that it did not possess enough materials about Turkey. In conjunction with the university’s Middle Eastern Studies program, the library wrote and won a grant from the Institute for Turkish Studies to supplement the library’s collection of books about modern Turkey.

8. In order to protect the privacy of our students, we have assigned all students a number and they will be referenced as follows: Turkish Student 1 (TS1); American Student 1 (AS1). We decided to leave uncorrected any writing errors in the student e-mails in order to best reflect their voices and what was actually produced by the students.

9. It would appear that there is quite a bit of misinformation circulating, in the media at least, about Turkey. Early in 2005 two separate television programs broadcast anti-Turkish storylines. The Fox TV series *24* presented a story about a terror plot against the United States which originated in Turkey and was to be carried out by Turkish immigrants. The series *The West Wing* presented an episode in which a political crisis erupted due to the Turkish government’s desire to behead a woman for the alleged crime of adultery. This show presented a stereotyped image because adultery is not a crime in Turkey and at the time the episode aired in the United States, the death penalty was only applicable in times of war. As of November 2005, the Republic of Turkey has abolished the death penalty. In the last several years, both *24* and *The West Wing* have been aired in Turkey. At the time of the e-mail exchange *24* was on the air, but the series including the program about the terror plot had not yet broadcast and *The West Wing* had yet to start its run on Turkish television. Although the students did not know about the controversy, Schur mentioned it to his students. Instantly, the American students expressed some concern that the Turkish students would blame them for this representation. Unlike other failed attempts to engage students in a critical analysis of media portrayals of racial and ethnic others, students felt personally involved in this particular exoticized representation precisely because of their participation in the e-mail exchange and their budding relationship with a Turkish student.

10. One of the readings assigned for this project recounted the experience of a Japanese-American couple interned following the attack on Pearl Harbor.

11. The Drury University participants were all white students. In our current e-mail exchange project, two African American and one Asian American student will be participating. It will be interesting to see how this changes the nature of the e-mail dialogues.

12. Perhaps because of their rural Midwestern backgrounds, Drury students typically respond with some hostility toward questions of race. Despite their exposure to some tepid forms of multiculturalism, first-year Drury students frequently react with surprise or hostility that a course on the American experience would include a unit on diversity issues. This may be unique to Drury students and/or rural Midwesterners, not widely representative of student populations on other campuses.

13. While the exercise did challenge stereotypes about Turkish Muslims, the United States students expressed some doubts about how much from their e-mail counterparts they could generalize about Muslims in other countries. Because Schur participated in this e-mail exchange with the understanding that this was the beginning of a student's exploration of other cultures and globalization, his goal focused more on introducing concepts of multiculturalism and diversity.

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