

(HER)STORIES: EMBODIED EXPERIENCES ABROAD AT THE ART MUSEUM

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Every summer, about ten US teachers of French enroll in a two-week training program at the Louvre Museum in Paris. During their apprenticeship at the Louvre, the participants are socialized into the fine arts' museum discourse and methods, and they discover the museum's collections through thematic visits, roundtables, and workshops.

In parallel, the participants also encounter issues of race and gender while abroad. Recent scholarship has acknowledged the emergence of such a hidden and embodied curriculum in study abroad (Kinging, 2009; 2010; Talburt & Stewart, 1995; Twombly, 1998). The central purpose of this communication is to make this embodied curriculum visible and to suggest ways of integrating the surfacing issues of race and gender into the program, and into the intercultural classroom. In this qualitative report, I selected a representative case study to locate and analyze the embodied narratives of one participant. I then suggest ways of using the Louvre Museum's collections to discuss race and gender issues, using the lesson plans created by one participant at the end of the program.

The present paper reports on a study of the experiences of world language educators enrolled in a short-term study abroad program, at the Louvre Museum in Paris, France. The Language and Culture at the Louvre program (LCL) is an in-service teacher professional development course, co-created by the Louvre Museum educational services and the Department of French of a large public university in the US in 2005. The LCL program is a 3-credit class to be applied towards a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) degree.

Every summer, about ten US teachers of French enroll in the LCL program and travel to Paris for two weeks. During their apprenticeship at the Louvre, the participants are socialized into the fine arts' museum discourse and methods, and they discover the museum's collections through thematic visits, roundtables, and workshops. Immersed in such settings, the participants are expected to learn about French visual culture, about the museum discourse, and about ways of looking at cultural artifacts. One can assume that their immersion experience at the foreign art museum would result in the expansion of their knowledge about French language, cultures, and discourses, but is that really all there is to such an experience? In immersion in Paris and at the Louvre, the participants encounter issues of identity (including race, gender, and religion). Recent scholarship has acknowledged the emergence of such a hidden and embodied curriculum in study abroad (Kinging, 2008, 2009; Talburt & Stewart, 1999; Twombly, 1995). In this study, I locate and investigate the embodied curriculum that emerged during the LCL program. I also suggest ways of integrating the surfacing issues of race, gender and religion into the program, and into the intercultural classroom.

In this paper, I first describe the context of the study through the examination of recent scholarship about study abroad. Kinginger (2009) offers an extensive and detailed review of the literature on study abroad, from early studies that focus on language acquisition to the recent scholarship that investigates students' experiences from a post-structural perspective. I build on her comprehensive work to provide an overview of the empirical studies that focus on the negotiation of identity in SA settings. Next, I briefly introduce the program itself and I provide an overview of the qualitative methods used to conduct the study. I then report on the findings through a selection of case studies. A summary of findings and a discussion conclude the paper.

The central purpose of this communication is to make this embodied curriculum visible and to suggest ways of integrating the surfacing issues of identity into the program, and into the intercultural classroom. In this qualitative report, I selected representative case studies to locate and analyze the embodied narratives of the participants. I then offer ways of using the Louvre Museum's collections to discuss identity issues, using the lesson plans created by the participants at the end of the program.

IDENTITY IN STUDY ABROAD: A HIDDEN CURRICULUM

Study abroad programs are academic initiatives by US educational institutions that provide the opportunity for students to spend various amounts of time in a different country. However, there is a great amount of variation between these programs, the students who choose to participate in them, their reasons for participating, and the outcomes of such programs (Engle and Engle, 2004; Kinginger, 2002, 2004, 2008; Wilkinson, 1998, 2002). In addition, beyond the advertised learning goals of study abroad programs lies a hidden, embodied curriculum that deserves further exploration.

The *Institute for International Education* (IIE) is an organization that monitors the international movements of US students and researchers, as well as that of international students who visit the US to study. In their annual report, they found that in 2009-2010, about 270,604 US students studied abroad (Open Doors, p. 2). Their number has increased by 150% in ten years, with an increase of 3.9% over 2008-2009 (p.2). Students' preferred destination is Europe, and in particular England (12.1%), followed by Italy (10.3%), Spain (9.4%), and France (6.3%) (p.2). Most participants are in their junior year (35.8%) and the majority of participants are female (63.5%) and White (78.5%). Two important facts are of interest to the language and culture educator: first, the majority of US students choose England as their destination (12.1%) and only 5.8% of SA students claim to go abroad to learn a foreign language. Clearly, language acquisition is not the goal of the vast majority of SA students. Second, the overwhelming majority of SA students are White females. This illustrates a race and gender gap in SA participation and experiences that could potentially lead to the emergence of a hidden, or alternative, curriculum, as explored by several scholars.

Gore (2005) examines the meaning of study abroad in the context of higher education and American society at large. At the macro-level of discourse analysis, she investigates "how a constellation of dominant beliefs [have defined] study abroad as academically weak and without significant functional purpose" (p. 24). She found contradictory discourses with respect to study abroad, which she calls *dominant beliefs* and *alternative beliefs*. Gore (2005) notes that the dominant beliefs about study abroad are characterized by the views that study abroad is a Grand Tour and a futile experience for wealthy White women, qualitatively inferior to a course of study in the US. However, she also presents the marginalized and alternative beliefs about study abroad held by teachers and students. In this alternative view, study abroad is a rigorous and beneficial endeavor. Overall, Gore (2005) contends that the gendered ideologies attached to study abroad in the US may impact the students' perception of and disposition towards experiences abroad. In some instances, the discursive contradictions inherent to study abroad may be embodied by the participants and impact their experience abroad.

Wilkinson's (1998, 2001, 2002) work highlights this discrepancy between the programmatic and academic expectations attached to SA programs and the students' actual experiences. Students who choose to spend some time abroad may believe in the "myths of study abroad magic" (p. 33), that include fast language acquisition and cultural learning, but these beliefs may

also “lead[s] to disillusionment and frustration” (p. 33). Gore and Wilkinson’s studies make the case for the complex nature of SA and SA experiences, and the multiple factors that may prevent students from fully benefiting from the environments they are immersed in. Identity is one of these factors. As the following scholarship illustrates, identity issues such as race, gender, and nationality often negatively impact students’ experiences.

Polanyi (1995) examined the diaries of female students during their stay in Russia. She found reports of significant gender-related incidents. Female students often reported self-doubt, unpleasantness, and worry about their interactions with Russian men. On the other hand, male students’ reports are in striking contrast, emphasizing pleasant and romantic conversations with female natives that led to understanding and increase use of the target language. However, Polanyi notes that woman-to-woman conversations shed light on the ways to cope with Russian male behaviors. For instance, Lucy, a Russian woman, spends time with Hilda, an American student. At Hilda’s request, Lucy points out strategies to avoid embarrassment and misunderstanding with Russian males. In turn, these intercultural conversations seem to be helpful for women who try to cope with gender issues in the program.

In their quantitative study, Brecht and Robinson (1995) identified a gender divide in terms of language learning outcomes, where male students seem to achieve better results than females. From these findings, it could be argued that females benefit less than males and that they are not learning as much in SA settings. However, a case could be made that the female participants are acquiring a different type of knowledge. According to the diaries collected, female students spent considerable time and energy negotiating awkward situations and learning from other females how to behave and what to say. Polanyi (1995) argues that

If that person [a learner] is gendered female, it seems that much of her most painfully learned lessons – lessons that represent knowledge which might quite literally have been inscribed in her body – are negated by remaining undiscussed (and undiscussable) in her formal language learning environment and are negated again by being unevaluated by the formal testing to which she is later subjected. (p. 287)

In other words, there seems to be another discrepancy between female experiences and formal classroom learning. Silence then appears as a salient characteristic of experience for women across settings (in-class and out-of-class) in SA context.

Twombly (1995) examines the experiences of female students in a SA program in Costa Rica, and noted similar experiences of alienation for female students as Polanyi (1995):

At least the first four months of the sojourn in the foreign country were not an immersion experience, but an alienating experience in which gender played a major role. To compound the situation, those responsible for study abroad were not fully aware of the seriousness of this ‘gender dynamic’ for female students. (Twombly, 1995, p.2)

Anderson (2003) also investigates the interplay of gender and identity for women in a SA program in Costa Rica, using ethnographic methods of inquiry. She conducted interviews and focus groups with ten students in two different SA programs in Costa Rica. She also collected students’ journal entries and interviewed male and female Costa Ricans in order to contrast perspectives on issues of female behavior. She found that “the theme of good persons versus bad persons and women in moral danger ran through several other conversations when discussing US students with Costa Ricans” as well as “male protectiveness towards females”

(p.36). From the students' perspective, however, this protectiveness appeared almost offensive, and in any case, very conservative.

While the students in Polanyi's study found comfort and advice with Russian women, Anderson (2003) reports difficulties to get access to, and form relationships with women in Costa Rica, for the researcher and the students alike. When she organized a focus group in Costa Rica to discuss gender relations, only men attended the focus group. However, their insights on gender issues proved interesting as they underlined cultural norms and expectations. For instance, one male participant characterized "the young women visitors as '*un poco libre*' [a little bit free—meaning a little bit too free], he observed that '*ellas no saben peligro*' [they don't know/recognize danger] when out in public, although he found it acceptable for young women to go out to restaurants and bars—but '*en grupo*' (*in groups*; his emphasis)" (p. 35). Anderson (2003) commented that this participant "restated an old-fashioned Latin American implication: unless a woman is regarded as belonging to a group or somehow escorted and therefore under someone's protection, she could be regarded as dangerously 'available.'" (pp.35-36). Anderson (2003) concludes that gender and culture are closely related, and she encourages the consideration of context to better understand gender issues.

Kinging (2004) reports on the identity negotiation of Alice, a student of French. This longitudinal case study covers four years of Alice's learning of French, from 1997 to 2000. The study takes into account Alice's negotiation of identity before, during and after her SA experiences in Quebec and then France. Alice's case appears different in comparison to the typical SA student: her background story is full of hardships and personal difficulties. Coming from a disadvantaged background, she had to work her way through college and to pay for the SA experience, thus highlighting her high motivation and perseverance during the three years prior to her departure for Quebec, and then, France. Kinginger (2004) reports on Alice's multiple identity negotiations, successes, and difficulties as a learner of French and as a woman.

To Alice, learning French and going to France constituted an opportunity for upward social mobility. Alice imagined and idealized France, the French language, and French people. Because of the prestigious appeal associated with the language and culture, she assumed native speakers would accept her and help her transform into an accomplished intellectual. Alice's experiences in France were, however, sometimes different from her expectations. Most of the time, she avoided other US students and, therefore, rejected the possibility to participate in a "hybrid culture" created in SA settings. Instead, and after a series of serious challenges to her identity as a learner of French, a woman, an American, and her social background, she chose to locate her learning experiences within social and informal settings. To Alice, this choice allowed her to practice her French but also to avoid any association with Americans. It turned out, however, that in some instances, her American identity weighted more than her learner of French identity.

The issue of nationality arose early in Alice's experience. Being American was the identity imposed on her by her French friends, an identity that Alice often rejected. For instance, the researcher relates an episode where Alice finds herself positioned as an American, regardless of her efforts to access French communities of practice. Being an American in France is an important theme for Kinginger (2008). In her extensive multimodal study, Kinginger (2008) investigates the language and culture learning experiences of US students in France. The global, political context of her study was quite sensitive. The investigation was conducted after a diplomatic crisis over the invasion of Iraq had divided the French and US governments. In these circumstances, Kinginger (2008) reports that participants expressed an acute identity

awareness in terms of nationality, where being an American in France could potentially have hindered participants' progress and prevented access to various communities. Using participants' comments as vignettes, Kinginger (2008) shows the extent to which study abroad is inscribed in a global context that, in turn, may impact the experience of students and their own negotiation of identity. In this instance, a diplomatic crisis amplifies some participants' own sense of national identity. Other scholars have examined how the issues of race, gender, and nationality interact with culture learning in study abroad settings.

Talbert and Stewart (1999) investigate the in- and out-of-class experiences of a group of five students in a five-week program in Spain. More specifically, they looked at the interplay of race, gender, and cultural learning inside and outside the classroom. To do so, their ethnography examined the experiences of the only African-American female student of the program, and how the group reacted to a class session in which issues of race and gender were openly debated. Mishaela, the only African-American student in the program reported her feelings of alienation during her stay in Spain. In order to address these issues of gender bias and racism, the instructor opened the classroom to a series of discussions, where race and gender took a central place. The Spanish culture and civilization class became the academic space where students could discuss and develop their cultural understanding. The pedagogical decision to address these issues as part of students' experiences stems from the instructor, who felt the need to challenge students in a safe environment, while encouraging them to make more connections between their experiences and social issues.

The class discussion reflected how students individually negotiated these issues of race and gender: "Race was overshadowed by gender, however, as the nature of the *piropos*, sexual harassment, and the ways an 'American mind-set' structures responses to *piropos* came to predominate the discussion" (Talbert & Stewart, 1999, p.170). The apparently formal space of the classroom also provided comfort, security and a sharing platform for students. The instructor and researcher noted that the formal integration of informal cultural experience within the SA curriculum permitted in-depth understanding of the phenomena and should be encouraged as a form of culture learning pedagogy in SA settings. In this classroom in Spain, race and gender were discussed and the outside-class experiences of participants used to reflect on issues of identity across cultures. The educator in this program encouraged participation and reflection, and the researcher highlighted the interactions of settings and learning experiences.

These studies underline how issues of identity may constitute a hidden and embodied curriculum in SA settings. In this study, I intend to explore the emergence of such an alternative curriculum during the LCL program at the Louvre. As an instructor in the program, I also want to show how we can integrate the participants' own intercultural learning curricula into the official agenda of the LCL program, and into the world language classroom. To do so, I used qualitative methods of investigation that included ethnography and discourse analysis.

METHODS

The present study aims at understanding the relationship between the identity and culture learning experiences of the participants in the LCL program. In this section, I explain the methodology behind the study and justify the procedure I designed and followed to answer the following research questions:

- 1) How do the participants negotiate identity issues during the LCL program?
- 2) How can identity experiences be integrated into the immersion program?

The present study is a qualitative case study of the culture and identity learning experiences of a group of US teachers enrolled in the LCL program at the Louvre Museum in Paris. This study is interpretive and empirical in nature, and based on data collected in naturalistic settings. For this study, I chose a collective, within-site case study to empirically examine the connections between identity experiences and intercultural learning and teaching practices (Stake, 1995). Most definitions of case study emphasize its bounded nature (Creswell, 1998). While this study is framed within the two-week time limit of the LCL program, it involves other types of boundaries, such as the timeline for the data collection process, the selection of cases, the background of the participants, the physical settings of the museum and the city of Paris, and the LCL program curriculum among others. The interconnectedness of these boundaries is part and parcel of the data under analysis in this qualitative investigation, but I shall discuss some of them individually to clarify the research design for the study.

Participants

The participants for this study were seven female US teachers of French enrolled in the 2009 LCL program. Throughout the study, I use the following pseudonyms to protect the confidentiality of the participants' personal data: Mrs. Agathe Richelieu (A), Mrs. Claire Perrault (C), Mrs. Jeanne Denon (Je), Mrs. Judith Daru (Ju), Mrs. Louise Androuet (L), Mrs. Rachel Turgot (R), Mrs. Solène Sully (S). The last names used for these pseudonyms are those of French male architects who contributed to the construction of the Louvre buildings. In this communication, I choose to use first names to show the role of the participants as women in the program, and last names when I emphasize the identity of the participants as teachers of French. For this article, I will primarily consider the data of one of the participants: Solène Sully (S).

Table 1. Participants' biographical and professional data

Teacher	Grade / School	Age	Teaching years	Major and degrees
Mrs. Agathe Richelieu	Public high school	Early 60s	30+	French. MA
Mrs. Claire Perrault	Public high school	Late 20's	2	Education. BA
Mrs. Jeanne Denon	Public middle school – Grades 7 & 8	Early 30's	8	French and Higher Education. ESL. BA
Mrs. Judith Daru	Retired teacher	60's	30+	French. MA
Mrs. Louise Androuet	Public middle-school	Late 50's	30	French. MA in education
Mrs. Rachel Turgot	Public middle-school	mid 40's	20 +	French MA. MAT
Mrs. Solène Sully	Private High School	mid 40's	3	Business. French minor. MAT

The gender demographics of the participants in the study are homogeneous: all seven participants are female. In this respect, these demographics are representative of the current landscape in study abroad (IIE, Open Doors, p. 2). There was, however, variation as to their personal biographies (i.e., age, educational background, years of studying French), and

professional biographies (i.e., years of experience, levels taught, other subjects taught, teaching as a first or second career). As a teacher in the program and a researcher, my role was that of participant observer. I was born and raised in France and I had been teaching French for five years at the college level, in the US, at the time of the study.

The LCL program: The official curriculum

The theoretical and pedagogical choices made for the LCL program bound the study and impact the data collection and analysis processes. They need to be clarified and explained. The curriculum of the LCL program was built around the three following questions: (1) What is the Louvre? (2) How do I take my class to a museum? (3) How can I teach French through art? The answers to these questions are both programmatic and pedagogical, and are motivated by theoretical and practical considerations about museums, education, and culture.

With its 60,000 square meters of exhibition space and more than 35,000 works of art displayed in eight departments, the Louvre Museum is the largest art museum in Europe. In the LCL program, we chose to present the art museum as a preserver of culture, a creator of cultural discourse, and as a place of authority and power (Roberts, 1997). The LCL program is also the result of pedagogical choices that aimed at balancing the art history discourse and knowledge provided by the museum staff, a French language-and-culture learning agenda, and a professional development component that emphasized the acquisition of intercultural skills.

That year, the focus of the curriculum was on the teachers/participants' capacity to "see" and "interpret" culture at the museum and abroad. To this end, the participants are given access to the French museum community and its collections. Every morning at the Louvre, they are offered the possibility to socialize with the art museum community and are offered guided tours of the collections. Second, the participants attend seminars and workshops led by the Louvre staff to acquire specific literacy skills, such as museum visiting, information seeking, art appreciation and interpretation, and so on. They also attend seminars and hands-on classes with the US university staff to reflect on intercultural education through the visual arts. They are required to reflect on these experiences everyday by completing a guided diary (Moon, 2004). Finally, after two weeks of intensive work, the participants are expected to develop a portfolio of lesson plans that will incorporate the Louvre Museum collections into their world language classrooms. Several afternoons with the US staff are devoted to the preparation of this portfolio and to discussions about the works of art and the LCL experience.

Data collection and analysis

For this study, the primary data was collected during a focus group discussion at the Louvre Museum. That day, the teachers and staff were gathered to discuss the possible integration of some artworks from the museum's collections into their teaching practices. The focus group discussion took place at mid-point of the program. The teachers had already had a week of instruction at the museum. The verbal and audio-taped data collected that day was then connected to other types of data, such as (1) my field notes; (2) the teachers' post-program interviews; and (3) the teachers' portfolios of lesson plans. These three data sources were used to identify and trace similar references to the art works in other contexts (such as the program and the teachers' US classrooms) and to trace emerging issues of identity across contexts.

Discourse analysis and ethnographic methods were used to collect, analyze, and interpret the interactions that took place at the art museum. A discourse approach to communication, in a general sense, is a tool of inquiry for investigating language-in-use (Gee, 2004). For this study,

I chose discourse analysis as a way to “take into account a situated, contextualized view of language use in social settings” (Kramsch & Whiteside, 2008, p. 655) and to embrace both the local and global contexts of the interaction. This is also aligned with Kramsch’s view of culture as discourse-based (2009, 2010). I adopted the methodological framework of mediated discourse analysis, as exemplified by the works of Scollon (2000) in intercultural communication. In this view, discourse analysis “presupposes that all situations are multi- or poly-discursive and, therefore, it presupposes that any action in the social world is interdiscursive. It is also intertextual and dialogic” (Scollon, 2000, p. 275).

Ethnographic methods were also used in conjunction with discourse analysis. I followed the participants from their enrollment to their post-program interview up to six months after the end of the program. I consistently collected qualitative and ethnographic data: field notes, participant-observation notes, reflective diary entries, critical incident reports, photographs, and transcriptions of the audiotaped interviews. This data was used to document the participants’ experience before, during, and after the program at the Louvre, and also allowed me to note changes in the teachers’ experiences as they advanced through the program. Throughout the data collection and analysis, I maintained both an “emic” (i.e., insider’s view) and an “etic” perspective, as common in this type of ethnographic project (Agar, 1994, 2006). Overall, these ethnographic techniques were used to document the context of the teachers’ cultural and embodied experiences at the museum, in Paris.

For the analysis, I first coded the transcription of the focus group discussion with labels related to identity issues, such as ‘race’, ‘gender’, nationality’, ‘religion’, and ‘body.’ I refined this initial coding scheme by using labels that describe the strategies used by the participants when discussing identity, such as ‘mediation’, ‘membership’, ‘negotiation’, ‘relevance’, ‘resistance’, and ‘silence’. I then followed up on this analysis by retrieving all the instances where the painting or the identity issue was mentioned in the rest of the data and across cases. I then organized all instances into cases that illuminate one or several aspects of the emergent embodied curriculum. The narrative data was treated similarly and I used the same codes to categorize subsequent narrative statements. To present the findings, I decided to maintain the chronological order of the interactions and to integrate my own interpretations of the events. I report on one specific encounter with identity and culture through the viewing of one painting (see Palpacuer, 2010 for additional findings). The report is organized in two parts: the first part addresses the emergence of an embodied curriculum during the program through the discourse analysis of an encounter with a work of art. The second part addresses the possible integration of identity issues into the world language curriculum, using the art works from the Louvre collections.

GENDERED EXPERIENCES AT THE ART MUSEUM AND IN PARIS

As I walked through the 18th century French painting gallery, I caught a glimpse of *Le Verrou* [The Bolt] (1777), a painting by Jean-Honoré Fragonard (1732-1806). After spending time with the artwork myself and getting familiar with some of its existing commentaries, I decided to submit *Le Verrou* to the participants’ scrutiny. The group had not formally encountered the painting during our previous tours of the galleries. However, I had noted that Rachel and Solène, two female participants that year, had stopped in front of *Le Verrou* (Fragonard, 1777) during a tour about French painters earlier that week.

An encounter with gender and sexuality at the museum

Le Verrou (Fragonard, 1777) can be divided in two parts. On the right, a man and a woman embrace in front of a door. The light falls on them, underlining the two characters' actions and movements. Facing each other, their bodies are stretched towards the door, their hands reaching for the lock. On the left, white drapes are ruffled on a canopy. A dark, red and velvet drape falls on the empty bed. That part of the painting is dimmer, except for a ray of light falling on an apple, placed on a nightstand. The scene takes place in a boudoir, or a bedroom, and immediately begs for a story: what happened or will happen? Who are these characters? What are they doing? When confronted with *Le Verrou* (Fragonard, 1777), the participants immediately picked up on the need for a narrative (Excerpt 1 in Table 2).

Table 2. Excerpt 1. A story of violence

16	Solène	je n'aime pas du tout ce tableau ↑ (.) Rachel et moi on s'est arrêtées quelques secondes devant le tableau et ↑ [mime surprise et consternation] c'était avant le viol ↑ (.) Oui ↑ C'est ça ↑	I really don't like this painting. Rachel and I, we stopped in front of it for a moment and [acts surprised and dismayed] it was before the rape! Yes ! That's it!
17	Louise + Agathe	Ah oui c'est ça ↑	Oh yes, that's it!
18	Solène	oui c'est ça ↑ Il est en train de fermer la porte pour qu'elle ne puisse pas s'échapper↑et la porte est fermée (.) et VRAIment je n'aime pas les images de violence contre les femmes et (.) je ne vais pas la montrer en classe et dire (.) aujourd'HUI on va regarder une image (.) oui rega:rde ↑ hou : ↑ regarde cette scène (.) regarde la lumière ↑ [rires] non .	Yes, that's it! He is closing down the door so that she can't escape! And the door is locked, and REALLY I don't like images of violence against women and I'm not going to show it in class and say 'today we're going to look at a picture, yes look, here, look at that scene, look at the lights! [laughs] no!
21	Agathe	J'ai un peu l'impression que la femme elle refuse mais :	I kind of feel that the woman, she refuses but...
22	Solène	Mais OUI elle refuse ↑ C'est un viol ↑	Of course YES she refuses! It's rape!
23	Jeanne	Et les deux qui : (2s.) [tend le bras]	And the two that (2s.) [extends her hand]
24	Christelle	Qu'est-ce que tu veux dire ↑	What are you trying to say?
25	Jeanne	Reach for	Reach for
26	Christelle	Attraper ↑ Atteindre (.) heu :	To grab to reach hum...
27	Jeanne	Attraper (.) pour la porte (.) les deux	Grab (.) to the door (.) the two
28	Louise	oui	yes
29	Jeanne	le garçon il ferme [mime mouvement] mais la femme attrape pour s'enfuir	The boy he closes [gestures] but... the woman grabs to flee
30	Christelle	Oui (.) c'est en effet une interprétation possible : (.) essayons tout de même de regarder ce tableau d'un peu plus près .	Yes. This is indeed a possible interpretation... but let's try nonetheless to look closely at this painting...

Solène dominates the beginning of the conversation, as she voices her strong personal and professional rejection of the painting (l.16; l.18). To her, *Le Verrou* is extremely violent (l.18) and tells the story of the rape of a woman (l.16; l.22). She justifies this view to the other participants (l.18; l.22) who adopt her interpretation (l.17; l.21; l.23). Solène and the group pieced together the following narrative: the painting represents a scene of “rape” (l.l.16; l.22). The man “is closing down the door so that she can’t escape! And the door is locked” (l.18). The woman “refuses” (l.21; l.22) and “reache[s]” (l.25) for the door but “the boy he closes [...] and the woman grabs to flee.” (l.29). At the end of the interaction, I intervene and suggest that there may be an alternative narrative (l.30).

The alternative story I construct is about seduction. I suggest that the man does not close the lock to prevent the woman from fleeing, but rather to ensure some privacy. I propose that the woman is not a victim of masculine violence, but a consenting lover. Her position in the arms of the man does not indicate fear or restraint, but instead a flirtatious pose that encourages seduction. I also emphasize ambiguities and inconsistencies. For instance, the linearity of time that characterizes the narratives described so far appears skewed. It is unclear if the moment captured in the painting represents the prelude, the interlude, or the aftermath of a love scene. For instance, I point at the characters’ garments and the fact that they are still half-dressed. This could indicate that something is about to happen. In contrast, the ruffled bed may signal that something already took place. The uncertainty of the timeframe of the painting seems staged on purpose, and so is the resulting confusion when viewing this scene. I then move on to discuss the apple standing on the nightstand. Asking questions to the participants, we all come to the conclusion that the apple symbolizes sexual temptation and profane love. I then add that this painting was created in parallel to another painting, representing the biblical scene of the birth of Jesus. When exhibited together, the two paintings present a portrait of love in its secular and sacred dimensions. Finally, I discuss the playfulness that perspires from *Le Verrou* (Fragonard, 1777) with the participants, and how the game of seduction is linked to the libertine philosophy of the French 18th century.

At the end of this exchange, Solène acknowledges the possibility of a different narrative but remains disconcerted: “okay... I don’t know anymore now.” The same is true for Agathe, who concludes the discussion by admitting that she “really thought it was about rape.” In this conversation, the female participants relate to the female character in the painting, describing her as a victim. Their female gaze on female figures is characterized by the idea of violence and inequality. This feminine narrative about gender deserves scrutiny.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

While the participants examine *Le Verrou* (Fragonard, 1777), they also negotiate linguistic meanings, visual symbols, and discourses. Interpreting the painting becomes a multi-layered discursive activity. Sexual tension is almost palpable in this painting, and brings up different reactions among participants. The painting becomes a starting point to examine how the motifs of gender and sexuality are negotiated across settings, from the viewing of a painting at the museum, to embodied experiences in the program, to classroom applications. Next, I examine those resonances.

Two Narratives

There are two competing narratives in the discussion about *Le Verrou* (Fragonard, 1777). The first narrative is a story of violence against women. The second narrative is a story of seduction between a man and a woman. In this excerpt, women are perceived as either powerless or

powerful. These two narratives are shaped by discursive and cultural constructions of femininity. In the context of the interaction, they also question the role and image of women as artistic subjects, as artists, and as museum visitors.

One significant characteristic of the interaction about *Le Verrou* is that it seems to echo previous cultural frames, narratives, subjectivities and experiences. Since the participants' discourse about femininity is so forcefully asserted in the interaction, I decided to investigate this motif further and to triangulate it with other types of data. Turning to the macro-level of analysis, I wondered if the educators' narrative of violence against women could be explained by cultural differences or by individual experiences.

Resonances

The extensive data collected during the program provides evidence of relationships between the participants' gendered experience abroad and their narrative about femininity, sexuality, and gender in *Le Verrou*. That day at the Louvre, Solène was very outspoken about *Le Verrou* and what she interpreted as a narrative of rape. In her diary and our post-program interviews, she frequently recalled unpleasant experiences with French men while in France. These encounters are described as irritating at best, or else crude if not offensive. The following examples, extracted from our post-program interview, illustrate Solène's gendered experiences during her stay in Paris (Table 3 and Table 4).

Table 3. Excerpt 2. Do you want to see my scars?

540	Researcher	I noted that you had uncomfortable encounters during the stay
541	Solène	(hhh) that's kind of my whole life! I don't know why people of all genders seem to want to tell me their personal stories! (hhh) It was weird that that man decided to show me where his scars were on the train but not (.) unusual (hhh) I thought what's going on? What should I do?
542	Researcher	So what did he tell you?
543	Solène	Oh ! My Goodness! He was telling me how he had a stroke he'd been a dentist in Paris and he'd had a stroke several years earlier and he was telling me he was in a coma and his (.) limbs had atrophied and they had to do pretty major surgery to (.) so (.) he wanted to show me where the incision was on his hip where he had surgery done and yop! The pants were coming down (hh) that was a little strange!

In Excerpt 2, a stranger on a train starts a conversation about the tragic accidents that left his body scarred. Solène attributes the man's readiness to share his tragedy to her own nature: she attracts storytellers. However, she also underlines her stupor when having to negotiate a whole new level of narrative performance! Solène humorously ridicules this lively scene, as well as herself and the male protagonist. However, her sense of humor seems to belie a strong grasp of her powerlessness. In Excerpt 3, Solène describes an offensive encounter with another French man in the streets of Paris.

Table 4. Excerpt 3. Are you pregnant?

596	Solène	I got into the habit of buying something there ((a pastry shop)) and then going over to hum it's just a few steps away from (2.0) Saint Eustache near les Halles that park ... and I was enjoying all my sandwiches and all my pastries there until that man asked me if I were pregnant hhh in the street
600	Researcher	So what happened? You were sitting on a bench and
601	Solène	<u>No</u> I was just walking down the street and he passed me and in said 'oh! Vous attendez un enfant?' [oh! You're expecting a child?] hhh and it took me a while to even process what he'd said! 'Vous attendez un bébé?' [you're expecting a baby?] the first word I processed was 'bébé' [baby] and I thought he was just being (.) fresh (.) and then I realized 'Oh my goodness' hhh so not only was he not hitting on me he was also it was ↑horrible It would have been better if he had been hitting on me and I could have ignored him but ↑no after that I thought all right, stop the 'pâtisseries' [pastries] that's ↑enough hhh

In Excerpt 3, Solène is the misunderstood victim of a random male gaze. The man casually asks Solène if she is pregnant. She first interprets this libelous remark as a failed attempt at seducing her. In similar instances, Solène would have “ignored him” as she “learnt to do in France.” Then, she attributes the man’s *faux pas* to her love for French pastries and the resulting weight she had been gaining during her stay in Paris. Only in retrospect did she blame her sweet tooth for this encounter. In an instant, Solène had to negotiate symbolic meaning, symbolic action, and symbolic power. She had to rely on her symbolic competence to review the possible interpretations and consequences of the man’s remark. Nevertheless, she was left speechless and powerless in that street in Paris.

Solène recounts her adventures in Paris with self-deprecating humor. However, the encounters she describes are quite bitter and harmful. Her embodied experience as a woman in Paris is characterized by awkward attempts at seduction and by unpleasant interactions. Although uniquely uncomfortable, Solène’s negative experiences with French men are not isolated. The literature on study abroad consistently reports on incidents involving female US students. According to these studies, American women feel harassed in Russia (Polanyi, 1995), France (Kinging, 2004, 2008), Costa Rica (Twombly, 1998; Anderson, 2003); Spain (Talbert & Stewart, 1999); and Mexico (Rodriguez, 2006). Along with these scholars, it is interesting to note how the US female participants to the Louvre program relate to sexuality and gender when observing *Le Verrou* and other artworks. Also, it is interesting that Solène confirms the findings of previous studies when it comes to describing the embodied experience of American women abroad. However, Solène also exemplifies a mode of resistance to the cultural norms associated with gender at the museum, abroad, and in the classroom. By the end of the program, she had designed a portfolio of activities about women painters.

Professional Echoes

At the beginning of her portfolio of classroom activities, Solène justifies her work as follows:

I chose the theme of 18th century French women painters. ... At the Louvre, I noted that very few women were represented among the 35,000 works of art. In addition, the majority of my

students are female, and I thought that a unit dedicated to women painters could be both interesting and empowering for them. (Portfolio, August 2009, p. 3, own translation).

Personal and professional motifs are interwoven in Solène's justification of her portfolio. Over many years, she has created connections between various images, times, places, and people. These associations, however, are tied together by a gender motif. With such a portfolio, which I describe in the following section, Solène resists cultural norms attached to gender across settings.

First, she noted a real and striking imbalance at the Louvre, where the artists exhibited are overwhelming male. Over the years, art historians have attempted to make women painters visible by dedicating monographs to individual artists, and by promoting feminine – and feminist – perspectives on museums (Pollock, 1998, 2007). Another focus of Solène's resistance to gender inequalities is her interest in the representation of women, by a female painter. Turning the gaze inward, Solène proposes to study the portraits of 18th century women executed by a female painter, Elisabeth Vigée-Lebrun. In doing so, Solène also challenges the canon, as exhibited at the Louvre Museum (Pollock, 1998, 2007).

Second, Solène's portfolio addresses gender imbalances in US schools. Most of Solène's students are female, and do not seem to be presented with a diverse French curriculum that brings awareness of gender. To counter what she perceives as a gap, Solène brings gender into her classroom. During our post-program interview, she argues that:

In the first semester we did Napoléon and we talked a lot about the wars and all and the boys were happy but then [in the second semester] I said 'we are a majority of women in this class and it's hard to name five women painters' [...] so all of them were grateful, the boys saw that there is a lack of information [...] and the most enthusiastic student was a boy! He loved the portrait of Vigée-Lebrun, the one with the fur sleeve (Post-program interview, 02/19/2010, own translation).

Third, Solène transcends her personal experience in a SA program in France through this portfolio. She is aware of the issues of being a woman in Paris. She noted: "it is definitely part of the experience. [...] I was definitely more careful. Careful not to go out late at night; it does affect the decisions I made regarding what to do with my time" (Post-program interview, 02/19/2010). Using her personal experience, she regains her voice and symbolic power through reflective practice and the development of her portfolio about the painter Elizabeth Vigée-Lebrun. Mrs. Solène Sully's example provides cues as to how educators can make the emerging embodied curriculum visible at the art museum abroad, and in the world language classroom.

AN EMBODIED AND INTERCULTURAL CURRICULUM IN THE WORLD LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

In her portfolio of classroom activities, Solène Sully designed activities around a series of portraits by the female painter Elizabeth Vigée-Lebrun. Her lesson plans are crafted for her Advanced Placement (AP) students and specifically target the development of speaking and writing skills.

The selected corpus of artwork is composed of one self-portrait by Vigée-Lebrun, and several portraits of men and women whom the painter met before the 1789 French Revolution. The following paintings are included: *Madame Vigée-Lebrun et sa fille* (1786); *Madame Molé-Reymond* (1786); *Madame Rousseau et sa fille* (1789); and *La Comtesse Skavronskaia* (1796).

Other works by Vigée-Lebrun are included in the portfolio, although they are not necessarily exhibited at the Louvre. In her activities, Mrs. Sully begins with a lecture on each painting, before moving on to student-centered activities. These activities entail the description of each painting and the contrasting of several portraits.

Mrs. Sully's portfolio opens several rich intercultural and critical avenues. Students are given opportunities to absorb new knowledge, and to use their critical skills. Implementing an embodied, intercultural, and critical approach to gender issues may be a way to enhance Mrs. Sully's intercultural lesson plans. Another possibility to increase the relevance of these activities for students would be to integrate literary and biographical texts as course materials, in order to promote the students' engagement with cultural and personal narratives. Maxine Greene (1995) and Claire Kramsch (1993, 2010) have long advocated for these two approaches. The following pedagogical suggestions rely on Kramsch (1993).

During our conversations at the Louvre and afterwards, Solène mentioned how much she enjoyed reading the memoirs of Elisabeth Vigée-Lebrun. These memoirs, titled *Souvenirs de Madame Vigée-Lebrun*, were first published in Paris in 1869. The first volume of the *Souvenirs* takes an epistolary form, and consists of letters written to Princess Kourakin. In these letters, the painter/writer chronologically recalls her personal and professional journeys. Her odyssey is punctuated by various encounters with artists and royal figures, of whom she brushes intimate portraits. At that time, Vigée-Le Brun also created visual portraits of these same people.

In class, the texts and the associated portraits could be juxtaposed. This would encourage students to understand the differences in "medium and genre" (Kramsch, 1993, p. 147) and to play with each discursive code. Students could create their own visual and verbal portraits, capturing motifs and themes in their lives that could be connected to that of the writer/painter. Second, students could work on the notion of point of view and how "the point of view chosen by the narrator affects the understanding of the story" (Kramsch, 1993, p. 149). Vigée-Le Brun writes her memoirs from the perspective of a woman artist, a friend of the royal family in revolutionary times, a mother, a traveler in exile, a friend and a witness of her times. As Kramsch (1993) suggests, "rewriting the story from the point of view of another character is one of the best ways of diversifying the students' context of reality" (p. 150). For instance, after viewing the mother-daughter portraits *Madame Vigée-Lebrun et sa fille, Jeanne-Lucie* and *Madame Rousseau et sa fille* and after reading Vigée-Le Brun's account of her daughter's birth (Letter IV, *Souvenirs*, 1869), the students could compose a letter and a picture written from the perspective of the daughter or of the absent father. The same exercise could be practiced from the perspective of Countess Skavronskaia, or of Princess Kourakin, two Russian women who witnessed the events in France from another cultural perspective.

Third, Mrs. Sully suggests "varying text time" (Kramsch, 1993, p. 150) in one activity. She asks students about today's celebrities and who would want to have her portrait painted by a renowned artist. Other ways of varying text time would be to "tell the story from another point in time, to continue the story [of a specific character]" or to imagine what happened between each letter, e.g., "to fill the 'zero textual spaces' within the narrative" (p. 150). Vigée-Le Brun, like many other artists, painted several self-portraits at different moments in her life. The students could imagine what happened between each portrait, or the various changes occurring in the painter's life. A textual alternative would be to focus solely on the first part of Vigée-Le Brun's memoirs and to ask students to write or discuss the end of the artist's life. The textual and visual portraits could then be connected.

Fourth, Vigée-Le Brun painted many portraits of Queen Marie-Antoinette before the French

Revolution. None of these portraits are at the Louvre, but Mrs. Sully used some of them in her portfolio. In addition, Letter V in her memoirs is dedicated to her memories of the royal family. Chapter XII of the *Souvenirs* is also a commentary of the tragic end of King Louis XVI, his wife and friends. Through Vigée-Le Brun visual and verbal portraits, a subjective account of the situation in France before and during the Revolution emerges. Students could examine different perspectives on the trial of the Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette. They could also be asked to rewrite their story or to play the roles of the defense and the prosecution during their trial. As Kramsch (1993) notes, “cultural differences are likely to emerge from such an exercise” (p. 152) where the referential world of the story is shifted. As various perspectives on justice may emerge in class, they can be further negotiated and contrasted.

Fifth, Mrs. Sully’s portfolio brushes on the theme of exile. This could be strengthened in referring to Vigée- Le Brun’s letters and chapters, e.g., Letter XII retraces her escape from Paris. In Chapter X, Vigée-Le Brun discusses “les émigrés” (the emigrants). At that time, the term designated the French nobles who had fled their country on the eve of the Revolution, and who journeyed through Europe to gain protection from other monarchs. Today, the term covers a different socioeconomic reality. The students could compare the experience of exile across times and spaces. The singular gaze of Vigée-Le Brun could be contrasted with other voices, such as the voices of various personalities the painter encountered during her European exile in Italy (Chapters I-X), Austria (Chapters XI-XIII), Prussia (Chapters XIV) and Russia (Chapters XV-XVIII). Transferring these embodied experiences to our contemporary worlds, the students could think about who are the exiles nowadays, who in the US are exiles and why. There are numerous other possibilities to integrate texts and images in an intercultural perspective. Mrs. Sully’s portfolio is already exploring many of these avenues. I have simply added ideas for new activities, or suggestions for more in-depth investigations. All of these activities contribute to the development of an embodied and intercultural curriculum in the French language classroom.

SUMMARY AND OPENINGS

The viewing of *Le Verrou* (Fragonard, 1777) yielded interesting personal and cultural narratives about gender and identity. Through the examination of this work of art, an embodied curriculum emerged as central to the experience of the program participants. In this respect, the study confirms previous findings: American women feel harassed wherever they go, across age groups and destinations. There are several studies that underlined this point and the women in my study are no exception. This finding, however, raises the question: Is this a global phenomenon or an American particularity? We cannot help but wonder, especially when we confront these claims to that of women from other parts of the world. For instance, in her study of French women in Australia, Patton (2005) found that some French women were feeling offended by the absence of male gazes upon them. They felt ugly and insecure because men were not looking at them. This intercultural issue would deserve further exploration. It would be interesting to turn the gaze inward and to investigate what it means to be an American woman in France.

There are several ways of negotiating gender and identity experiences in immersion. Solène Sully exemplifies such strategies: by rejecting the status quo and turning the gaze inwards, she resisted gender norms and discourses. Solène did so in several ways: first, she noted gender imbalances in the collection of the Louvre and purposefully chose to investigate the works and perspective of underrepresented female painters. Second, her portfolio of lesson plans also addresses gender imbalances in the world language classroom. Most of her students are female, and not always presented with a French curriculum that would bring awareness to gender issues in French cultures. To counter what she perceived as a gap, Solène brought

gender into her classroom. Finally, Solène also resisted gender norms by using her personal experience to develop her portfolio of lesson plans. Through reflective practice, she regained her voice and symbolic power. She thus provides cues as to how educators can make an embodied curriculum visible at the art museum abroad, and in the world language classroom.

This is also a lesson for the program at the Louvre. Since an embodied curriculum emerges during the stay in Paris, we should find ways to integrate identity into the official teacher-training curriculum. To facilitate a critical approach to gender and femininity in the program, and to open discursive possibilities and third places, scholarly articles about gender could supplement the viewing of *Le Verrou*. Griselda Pollock is a prominent art history scholar who, along with other women, has pioneered gender studies in her field. In her work, she questions the notions of femininity in the works of various artists (Pollock, 1999, 2007). She also challenges the gender bias in the making of art history (Pollock, 1999) and discusses the possibility of a feminist museum (Pollock, 2007). After reading some of these texts, the participants could address issues of gender, sexuality, and the role of women in the visual arts. They could also critically reflect on their language use, and how it is anchored in discourse and in *habitus* (Scollon, 2000). To bridge the gap between the informal and the formal learning environments in the program, the embodied curriculum must become part of the formal curriculum. Such back-and-forths between experience, discourse, and critical perspectives might enhance the participants' apprenticeship of difference by providing rich and varied opportunities for mediation.

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