

CROSSING BORDERS: DISCIPLINES, CULTURES, AND HISTORIES:

A roundtable series initiated by Professors Craig Lockard and Edward Farmer

Edited by the Chief Editor, Assistant Editors for Articles, and Contributing Editors.

We gratefully acknowledge the generosity of Professor Lockard, who not only contributed the keynote article for this roundtable, but also expended considerable time and energy responding to the other contributors. Professor Edward Farmer's equally generous and thoughtful article in response to Professor Lockard's essay will serve as the keynote to the continuation of this roundtable series in our next issue. I began this roundtable by inviting all of the assistant editors, as well as those who have worked closely to guide the formation of this new journal, to participate because I wanted this as a forum to introduce the editorial team of the Middle Ground. As we continue this series, we will invite and encourage participation from everyone – the general public, teachers, students, and scholars -- interested in the promotion and studying of world history.

Crossing Borders: Disciplines, Cultures, and Histories*

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ABSTRACT: Based on the author's long career as a university teacher and scholar, this essay discusses how interdisciplinarity, studying other cultures, and learning world history offer paths and insights to help us as teachers and our students to better understand the multicultural, globalized, and rapidly changing world we live in.

KEY WORDS: Borders, China, Connections, Cultures, Globalization, History, Interdisciplinary, Malaysia, Travel, World

Several related themes have influenced my world view, animated my scholarship, and shaped my forty years of teaching Asian, African, and world history at the college level. The idea that ties these themes together is crossing borders— intellectual and geographical— and how doing so can prepare students and faculty to flourish in the twenty-first century. I will first offer remarks on crossing disciplinary borders, and how doing so has enriched my own career while encouraging many students and faculty to think outside the box. I will then discuss crossing borders between cultures and the kinds of insights and satisfactions that this can bring. Students at many colleges, as at UWGB, are required to take at least one course on another culture as part of general education, a necessary start, but acquiring first-hand knowledge of another culture or cultures through travel, residence, and/or intensive study can be even more rewarding as well as fostering deeper understanding of American society and the U.S. role in the world. One of our goals as secondary school and college teachers is to encourage and prepare students for informed

and engaged citizenship. Finally, I will stress globalizing the study of history. Many students already take a course on world history as part of general education or departmental requirements. Understanding the patterns of world history can offer insights as we move into the future.

CROSSING DISCIPLINARY BORDERS

From its formation in 1967 UWGB has had an innovative interdisciplinary curriculum based largely on problem-centered departments with faculty drawn from several disciplines and hence sharing insights from diverse academic traditions. Not locked into a narrow disciplinary structure, UWGB fosters more flexibility than most universities enjoy. Having diverse intellectual interests I appreciated the wider scope interdisciplinarity provided to a teacher and scholar, especially to a world historian. Borders between bodies of knowledge became less rigid and more permeable. My department includes historians, anthropologists, sociologists, economists, and political scientists. This makes for a robust exchange of knowledge and academic approaches. Some faculty members studied the United States and some studied other societies or the international dimensions of change, reflecting the fact that all nations, including the U.S., exist in a wider world of multiple but interconnected cultures in which people, products, ideas, finance, etc. cross national borders.

Although trained as a historian I have learned a great deal from my colleagues in other disciplines, shaping both my teaching and scholarship in ways that might not be possible where such interdisciplinary mixing is less common. Hence, I learned from anthropologists the value of

cultural analysis and participant observation, from sociologists insights into social forces and theories, and from economists the linkages between economies and politics as well as the urgency of fostering sustainable development. I could pursue topics, methodologies, and sources often ignored by more conventional historians [1]. This transcending narrow disciplinary approaches also enriches teaching.

There has been a lively debate in recent years in U.S. higher education circles about the need for more interdisciplinarity and border crossing, spearheaded by a Consortium on Fostering Interdisciplinary Inquiry, which believes this is essential if Americans are to flourish intellectually in the twenty-first century. Several universities have recently altered tenure policies to reward scholars who pursue an interdisciplinary approach. And a variety of colleges and universities are developing interdisciplinary, problem-focused programs on subjects such as war, water, energy, artificial intelligence, future studies, global studies, international development, and comparative cultures. In the real world outside the ivory tower, life more often poses essay questions, for which interdisciplinarity is good preparation, than multiple choice questions (or what many years ago Sally in a *Peanuts* comic strip called mystical choice). People need to be flexible, adaptive, and multi-dimensional to flourish in this new millennium.

CROSSING CULTURAL BORDERS

Given the need to be flexible and multi-dimensional, the second point in the border crossing theme is the necessity for Americans to understand and connect with other cultures and the

diverse world that shapes our own lives directly or indirectly. Taking a college course for general education helps to cross a cultural border but is only the first step. To rephrase a song from the 1960s musical “The King and I,” about Westerners blundering around in nineteenth century Thailand, getting to know you may or may not result in getting to like you, but it does help to break down barriers and connect people from vastly different backgrounds. No cultures or countries have a monopoly on values such as peace, justice, charity, tolerance, public discussion, and goodwill, something one learns from crossing borders into other cultures and ways of thinking.

All Americans can greatly benefit from this cultural border-crossing. Carlos Fuentes, the acclaimed Mexican writer, diplomat, and frequent U.S. resident, wrote a few years ago that what Americans do best is understand themselves; what they do worst is understand any other countries. Americans are good at dissecting our own society— its strengths and weaknesses-- but too often are poor at figuring out how other peoples think and act. Observers in other countries often perceive Americans as assuming that American cultural norms, political views, and economic expectations are, or should be, universal, and hence believe Americans want to remake the world in our own image rather than trying to understand other cultures on their own terms. If you sit in Stockholm or Cairo or Buenos Aires or Bombay the world often looks very different than it does in Green Bay, Hollywood, or New York. Americans have much to be proud of and should vigorously defend values like human rights, freedom of speech, and accountable government, which we have not always done when the U.S. government allied the nation with, and sometimes even installed, brutal dictators and corrupt regimes during the Cold War. Given

the often dysfunctional American electoral system, politics, economy, health care system, and other problems, Americans should be modest in preaching to the world.

Misunderstanding or ignorance of other societies has been responsible for some of the many foreign policy blunders that Americans have made in the world, including during the wars in Vietnam and Iraq, as countless studies have documented. For example, most American leaders, civilian and military, knew very little of Vietnamese history and culture or understood why many (but certainly not all) Vietnamese opposed the U.S. effort and had a quite different dream for Vietnam's future. As a result, the U.S. got bogged down in what many historians conclude was an unwinnable quagmire that cost many American and Vietnamese, not to mention Cambodian and Laotian, lives. Too often U.S. leaders were unable to see Vietnamese or Cambodians as people with their own hopes and dreams rather than as pawns to be manipulated in geostrategic conflicts. [2]

Americans have repeated some of the same Vietnam mistakes in the Middle East. When U.S. troops invaded Iraq in 2003 many top American leaders, from the president on down, apparently did not know the differences between Sunni and Shia Muslims or how Iraqi society worked, resulting in another long and frustrating quagmire with many casualties. Americans have also faced a similar cultural clash in Afghanistan. Fortunately, many in the U.S. military understand the need for more awareness of other cultures and world history; both the U.S. Naval and Air Force Academies offer various foreign languages and have required that students take world history. The army, needing cross-cultural expertise, has also recruited anthropologists to advise U.S. troops in Iraq and Afghanistan; indeed, several have been killed doing this service. These

programs are rightly controversial among academics but they indicate the great value some in the U.S. military places on crossing cultural borders. Such knowledge for a soldier could be the difference between life and death, success or failure.

Alas, what little foreign coverage still exists in the downsizing mainstream media, even on CNN, is more about U.S. foreign policy interests and obsessions abroad than about the foreign countries and cultures themselves. Thirty years ago most leading U.S. newspapers, news magazines, and TV networks had full-time correspondents all over the world. Not now. Among the U.S. mainstream media, perhaps only the *New York Times* and National Public Radio (and several programs on Public Broadcasting) make much effort to examine world affairs much beyond the latest crises or foreign policy challenge for the U.S.. The only daily newspaper in Green Bay reflects this myopia, offering just one page (and sometimes 2 pages) of national and world news buried deep in the paper after pages of local and business news. This conveys to readers that national and world news are unimportant. Of course, Americans are not the only self-absorbed nation. But the U.S., however well-intentioned, has been the 800 pound gorilla in the world for over sixty years. American actions today, for good or ill, affect everyone else; when the U.S. sneezes, the world catches cold. Hence, like the Great Depression of the 1930s, the 2008-2009 global recession began in the U.S. before spreading to the rest of the world.

In recent decades the world has come to American doorsteps with immigration, which many experts contend produces many economic benefits for the U.S.. The great majority of Americans live in communities where they can encounter Asian restaurants, Latin American grocery stores, African and Caribbean musics, and foreign-owned factories. These newcomers and their

traditions often mystify Americans. Furthermore, virtually every study in the past several decades finds that large numbers of Americans have little knowledge of world geography, with many even unable to locate on a map of the world countries where Americans have fought wars in the past half century, such as Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan. Some cannot locate the Pacific Ocean! This makes it harder for citizens to evaluate U.S. foreign policies or media coverage. After one of these discouraging map knowledge surveys, one witty observer proposed that the U.S. government should be prevented by law from invading or overthrowing the government of any country that a majority of adult Americans cannot locate on a map.

Like me, many young Americans in the 1960s and 1970s had opportunities to travel, study, or work in foreign countries, some through the Peace Corps or voluntary service organizations. Of course, many other Americans faced another more dangerous foreign assignment, voluntarily or involuntarily, by serving with U.S. military forces in the Vietnam War or, as many Vietnamese call it, the American War. Alas, for many students today, study abroad and casual travel may be unaffordable and the Peace Corps unrealistic. For those who serve the country in the military, life abroad, especially in Iraq and Afghanistan, can be very dangerous. It is probably hard to develop much empathy for local people when you are dodging IEDs, artillery, and suicide bombers. Yet, it is interesting that many American veterans of the Vietnam conflict developed a deep interest in that country and have traveled back to visit Vietnam. Today thousands of them, for a variety of reasons, are living and working there, sometimes in partnership with former Viet Cong soldiers.

Some of our students may spend time abroad as part of their careers. My advice to young

people who have the means and the time and are unburdened by mortgages and family responsibilities is to travel abroad while you are young: hitch-hike through Europe, teach English in Japan or China, study Spanish in Mexico or art in Paris, volunteer for an environmental or health project in Africa, or escape to a South Sea island and become a beach bum, my goal when I was about 16 and maybe even now! While travel is broadening, it is possible to stay at home and learn something about foreign cultures through classes, books, supporting international organizations, working with refugees and immigrants, and meeting foreign visitors and students.

Historians should also go beyond their comfort zone too and cross borders to enhance their own intellectual tools and overcome parochial viewpoints. Specialists on the U.S. ought to learn something about the histories of, and historical approaches favored by, other cultures or pursue comparative studies of the U.S. and another country. Similarly, historians of East Asia or Africa or Europe or any region or country should acquire some familiarity with another part of the world and some certainly do. This border crossing gives us new perspectives while allowing us to see our own specialization in new ways. Critics here and abroad have often viewed American approaches to the study of psychology, political science, and economics as shaped by ethnocentric biases that assume that American attitudes and behaviors are universal, even as anthropologists have richly shown that they are not. This criticism, while perhaps overly general, supports the Carlos Fuentes argument that Americans are much better at understanding their own society than others. Just as I would encourage students to travel, I would urge faculty in any field to pursue opportunities to teach or study or work abroad for awhile and gain a broader perspective.

My personal experiences contributed to my appreciation for connecting with other cultures. I was fortunate to grow up in the 1940s and 1950s in Pasadena, a multicultural suburb of Los Angeles. Thanks to a local Asian art museum, I became fascinated by the gorgeous Chinese landscape paintings showing misty mountains, dramatic waterfalls, and placid waters, and vowed I would someday see those enchanting scenes for myself. While an undergraduate I had a chance to begin crossing cultural boundaries, spending a semester studying in historic Salzburg, Austria, and traveling widely in Western and Eastern Europe. It was eye-opening to meet people of varied ages and backgrounds in Europe whose political or religious views were often different, sometimes radically so, from those of most Americans I knew. Lesson: Not everyone thinks like Americans and has the same assumptions about the world.

I then enjoyed a junior year abroad at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, whose campus is just a few miles from the border with China, an experience that deepened my interest in China and Asia. Hong Kong also had some misty mountains that resembled the landscape paintings I had so loved in that Pasadena museum. In Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Japan I encountered even more cultural and intellectual differences than I saw in Europe, from people heirs to ancient traditions unfamiliar and exotic to most Americans. China and the Chinese diaspora became for me a life-long interest. China, with its huge population, political clout, and rapidly growing economy closely intertwined with ours, will remain important for a long time and Americans need to learn much more about this dynamic nation, warts and all. For a thousand years China was a main engine of the Eurasian economy and often at the cutting edge in government, science, and technology. Although the Chinese today face serious challenges and problems, and experts

are divided on the future of the Peoples Republic, it can at least be said that now, after two centuries of disarray, China has once again regained its key place in the world. Yet, there was plenty of Western culture in Asia too. Clearly, then, we needed to understand other cultures but also how they were reshaped by the forces of globalization and what some critics consider cultural imperialism by Western nations. In Japan I stayed with a university student from Osaka who played flamenco guitar and introduced me to local bluegrass, country, and Hawaiian music groups, none of whose members had ever traveled outside of Japan. They learned by listening to imported records.

Pursuing an M.A. in Asian Studies at the East-West Center of the University of Hawaii brought me into an even more multicultural environment, with students from all over Asia and the Pacific. Thanks to the EWC, I was able to spend a year in Malaysia, working on my MA thesis on the history of the large Chinese immigrant community (a third of the state's population) in Sarawak (located in northwest Borneo). Finally I completed a PhD in Southeast Asian and Comparative World History at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, allowing me another year-long research sojourn in Sarawak and then spent a year in East Africa, mostly Uganda. I have since also twice spent a year teaching and researching Malaysian history as a Fulbright-Hays professor at the University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur. I could not claim the same amount of local familiarity and language fluency as my Malaysian colleagues, but I could bring an outsider's perspective on Malaysia and a greater knowledge of world history. Americans could benefit if more professors of U.S. history in the U.S. came from countries with different intellectual traditions. They would not necessarily be more or less insightful and capable

historians than their American counterparts but they might bring fresh perspectives similar to my teaching Malaysian history in Malaysia.

By exploring other cultures Americans can see their own culture in new ways, appreciating some things more, including its many strengths and pleasures, while also recognizing some of the problems and drawbacks more clearly while learning how Americans are perceived, and sometimes misperceived, by other societies. It is also immensely rewarding to learn something of other languages, belief systems, foods, political attitudes, family structures, musics, and the rhythms of daily life. Thanks to all these experiences, and provided with a coherent intellectual framework by the innovative Comparative World History Program at Madison (the first world history graduate program in the U.S.), I was open to an historical approach that was noncentric, comprehensive, integrative, and incorporated ideas from Asian, European, Latin American, and African as well as North America-based scholars. Americans or, for that matter, Malaysians or Chinese or any people, including historians, need to gain knowledge not only of other cultures but the larger global context as well.

CROSSING BORDERS: WORLD HISTORY

The third border crossing then is the widening of our horizon from the cultural, national, and regional to the global. Everywhere the local and the global interact, bringing change that is often exciting but sometimes painful and disorienting. All of us live in a world in which developments in one country can affect societies on the other side of the globe, a transnational Global Village

in which ideas, products, finance, weapons, and people routinely cross borders. A century ago it used to be said that “the sun never sets on the British Empire.” Today it never sets on McDonald’s.

Over the past five decades many historians have become more aware of the value of understanding something of world history, the widest angle of vision, in order to comprehend their own regional specialization. Studying countries as if they are completely independent of international connections is misleading and that has been true for many centuries. More historians are writing books or articles on world history subjects, and even some prominent specialists on U.S. history have published work that places U.S. history into a world context. Yet, the point of world history as an academic specialization is to try to rise above centrism and a main focus on the role of any one society, whether that be the U.S. or Britain or China or the Islamic world or whatever, to look at the world as a whole. World history embraces all societies and the connections between them. The case for world history and for a more global awareness became more urgent. The World History Association was founded in 1982 to foster the study and writing of world history and today offers national and regional conferences while gaining members or affiliates all over the world, from China to Morocco, the Netherlands to South Africa, Mexico to Australia. [3] Furthermore, all over the United States, college courses on world history are becoming more popular while AP World History is the fastest growing AP field in high schools.

The rise of world history as a teaching and scholarly field is rooted in the past half century of dramatic changes in the world. Since the 1960s the emphasis on U.S. and European history,

which dominated history teaching in the U.S. for generations, no longer seemed sufficient to prepare American students for life in a pluralistic, globalizing world as well as an increasingly multicultural nation. As scholars learned more about East Asia, Islam, classical Africa, Pre-Columbian America, etc. it was no longer intellectually defensible to view the mainstream of history as restricted largely to Europe and, in modern times, North America. For example, when the Portuguese and Spanish mariners began their voyages of discovery in the 1400s, they made good use of Chinese and Arab naval and military technologies and were seeking the sources of the fabulous riches of the East-- Chinese silks, Southeast Asian spices, Indian textiles, African gold-- that they had long been acquiring through the Arabs. Confirming the importance of world history, in several surveys at the end of the last millennium some world historians named Genghiz Khan, the thirteenth century founder of the Mongol Empire, as the most significant figure of the millennium, rather than a Western figure like Lincoln or Shakespeare or Columbus. Under the Mongol Empire, which stretched from Korea to Germany, important Chinese technologies reached Europe over the trade routes, establishing a foundation for the later rise of Europe. Furthermore, the Mongols reshaped the political and economic landscape of Eurasia. Clearly world history was complex, with major contributions from and achievements attributed to many different peoples.

I ended my recent book on Southeast Asia in world history with an old and much-loved Indonesian folk song about the Solo River on the island of Java; the song related the land and people to the wider world: "Solo River, ancient your histories span. Linking present to past, linking the life of the soil and man. Now you flow on through fertile rice fields, down to the sea

at last. Here are ships of trade, and when your journey's over, sailors brave the ocean wide, seeking some far distant shore." [4] As they have for several thousand years the Indonesians traded and exchanged ideas with the wider world, only today it is huge ships and jet airplanes that carry most of the people and products. In recent years countries like Indonesia, Japan, China, Taiwan, South Korea, India, and Brazil became major players in the world economy. Americans need to know as much about them as they know about the European nations and Russia. Americans also need to know something about Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Confucianism, ways of thought which shape the views of over half of the world's people. After all, for most of history the great majority of all the world's people lived in Asia, especially in China and India, and still do.

FROM PAST TO FUTURE [5]

How can understanding world history prepare students for the future? Twenty-five hundred years ago the Greek thinker Heraclitus wrote that there is nothing permanent except change, and human societies have demonstrated this for over 10,000 years. Over the past five or six centuries the world's people have built a human web, or networked society-- a global system that today encompasses most of the world's 6.5 billion people. And the U.S. and the world have certainly changed dramatically since World War II. There is an old Chinese saying: "may you be condemned to live in interesting times." The past few decades have been interesting but also, at times, distressing, sometimes leaving a sense of *deja vu* all over again. History may not exactly

repeat itself but, as Mark Twain noted, it can rhyme. When I started teaching college in 1969 the U.S. was bogged down in an unpopular and probably unwinnable war, our economy was faltering, and U.S. society was deeply divided. It looked a lot like today but with more student protests and, dare I introduce some generational chauvinism, much better rock and roll.

The contemporary world has become a global unity within a large diversity. We are still Americans or Malaysians or Danes or Ecuadorians but also citizens of a global village. Globalization has fostered or intensified networks of exchange and communication; international trade pacts and electronic fund transfers; jet-speed travel and fax machines; the internet and YouTube. Even Facebook now has more members outside the U.S. than within it. These networks link distant societies. You can buy Miller Beer in China, follow Brazilian soap operas on TV in Africa, worship in Buddhist temples in London, enjoy reggae music in New Guinea, and eat Thai food in Green Bay. These changes have brought much promise and also much peril. We must master change to flourish in it, a task made easier by crossing disciplinary and cultural borders and taking a global view. There is much wisdom in the adage: “think globally, act locally.”

The study of history helps us understand today’s news and views as they are reported, or sometimes misreported, in daily newspapers and on radio and television, and disseminated, with varying degrees of accuracy, on the World Wide Web and social networking sites. Historians often describe their work as involving a dialogue between past, present, and future. Current global problems have their roots in the patterns of world history such as the rise of agriculture, cities, states, empires, trade routes, technologies, science, capitalism, colonialism, the global economy, communism, world wars, decolonization, the Cold War, environmental change, and

globalization. While seeking to understand how the past shaped the present, historians also speculate on how current trends may shape the future.

Humanity created the present world from the materials of the past and is now laying the foundation for the future, raising the question of what kind of future. In a 1974 book the American economic historian Robert Heilbroner posed an uncomfortable question: "is there hope for humanity?" [6] He doubted the permanence of modern industrial society and even democracy in the face of population explosion, environmental degradation, resource depletion, militarization, and the desperation of some poor countries. Today we can add climate change and one billion people without enough food to eat. Hence his question remains highly relevant in the early twenty-first century. Heilbroner drew a gloomy conclusion. He believed most people, especially Americans, were not willing to sacrifice for the good of future generations. The current heated debates in the U.S. and abroad over how, or even whether, to deal with global warming show that many people are not willing to make sacrifices today for future generations. Whatever the causes and rapidity, climate change will have profound consequences for every person, animal, and plant on Earth. Like Heilbroner, many experts despair for the future. Examining the long history of great progress but also of war, exploitation, and environmental abuse does not necessarily foster optimism about the future. Indeed, some respected experts predict human extinction if people do not adopt more sustainable ways, and many scientific studies are very pessimistic about the future. One scientific study concluded that: "Our generation is the first to be faced with decisions that will determine whether the Earth our children inherit will be habitable." [7]

Yet, as they have for millennia, humanity produced many green shoots of hope since World War II. There have been many bumps along the road but Western Europe has moved rapidly to political and economic unity, defusing centuries of conflict. The Scandinavian nations, a hundred years ago among the poorest European societies, virtually eliminated poverty and have the world's highest living standards and the most social and gender equality. Most industrialized nations, except the U.S., found ways to achieve universal health care. Sixty years ago who would have predicted that France and Germany would be allies today? That Eastern Europe and Russia would overturn dogmatic and repressive communist regimes? That the long Cold War that shaped the first five decades of my life would end, fortunately with a whimper rather than a bang? For someone who grew up in the 1950's with basement bomb shelters, air raid drills, and "duck and cover" practice in the schools, the end of the Cold War was a welcome change indeed. Many nations, alas not always including the U.S., signed agreements to improve the world, such as banning weapons of mass destruction, condemning genocide, and reducing ozone destroying chemicals and other contributors to global warming.

There are lots of other green shoots. Over two dozen nations, including some in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean, elected women presidents or prime ministers. Women gained more power over their lives in many countries. Several Asian nations, including Malaysia, rapidly developed economically and dramatically improved living standards, although some of their people were still left behind. Once desperate China became able to feed and clothe its huge population and a Kentucky Fried Chicken outlet stands near the late communist leader Mao Zedong's mausoleum in Beijing. Now a Disney World will be built near Shanghai. And my son

Colin teaches English to prospective software developers at Peking University, where a young Mao Zedong once worked in the library. Human rights groups around the world worked courageously to promote civil liberties and the release of political prisoners. Thanks in part to global efforts, black majority rule came to South Africa. Local non-governmental organizations become an active presence in many nations, working for the rights of women, children, workers, peasants, consumers, and the environment. The growing information superhighway instantly links millions of office or home computers with people, libraries, and information sources around the world. A few years ago few people would have predicted most of these changes.

A history not only of cruelty and exploitation but also of compassion, sacrifice, courage, and kindness provides some hope in navigating troubled times. Remembering when and where people behaved magnificently may foster inspiration to resolve the many challenges. The contemporary age offers many examples of inspiring people around the world, to name just five: Nelson Mandela (South African freedom fighter), Aung San Suu Kyi (Burmese democracy activist), Rosa Parks (civil rights pioneer who refused to give up her bus seat to a white man), Vaclav Havel (who led the anticommunist struggle in Czechoslovakia), and Mohammed Yunus (the founder of the microlending Grameen Bank in Bangladesh). Historians have tended to view the past as a stream with banks. The stream is sometimes filled with people killing, waging war, stealing, shouting, and doing things historians usually recorded, while on the banks, unnoticed, people built homes, made love, raised children, sang songs, wrote poetry, exchanged products, greeted travelers, even whittled statues. We often ignore the banks for the stream but what happened on the banks may be more reassuring.

Four centuries ago William Shakespeare wrote that the past is prologue to the present. The study of world history allows us to ask questions about the global future because we understand the changing patterns of the global past, including the building of unique societies, their interactions through networks of exchange, and the great transitions that reshaped humanity (such as the Agricultural, Urban, Industrial, and Computer Revolutions). The contemporary age has been marked by a complex mix of unifying and dividing forces. People today cannot yet know with certainty where the path will lead but they can help make it. In the nineteenth century the British novelist Lewis Carroll posed the essential question in *Through the Looking Glass*. Lost and perplexed in Wonderland, Alice asked the Cheshire Cat: "Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?" The enigmatic cat replied: "That depends a great deal on where you want to get to." [8] Societies, working together, must chart that course into the future, a task that may be aided if more people cross disciplinary, cultural, and historical borders. We as teachers and prospective teachers of world history can help students to reach this goal.

ENDNOTES

* This essay is based on a public lecture I gave to faculty colleagues, academic staff, students, former students, and the wider community in December, 2009 to mark my retirement as the Ben and Joyce Rosenberg Professor of History in the interdisciplinary Social Change and Development Department at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, where I had taught since 1975. I want to thank the SCD chair, Kim Nielsen, for urging me to do a last lecture, my colleagues at UWGB and in the World History Association for all of their support and

inspiration over the decades, and several colleagues who suggested that I revise the talk for publication since my experiences might be of interest to other current and prospective teachers of world history.

1. I was pleased that a book I published on popular music and politics in Southeast Asia was used as a text in various universities in courses ranging from history to politics to ethnomusicology to cultural studies. I even saw the book for sale in the bookstore of the Freer Gallery at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. See *'Dance of Life': Popular Music and Politics in Southeast Asia* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press: 1998).

2. See, eg., Craig A. Lockard, "Meeting History Head-on: The Vietnam War in Vietnamese, American, and World History," *Journal of World History*, 5/2 (Fall, 1994), 227-270.

3. In the interest of full disclosure, I admit to bias in favor of the WHA and its' agenda since I was a founder and the first Secretary of the WHA, the first Book Review Editor of the *World History Bulletin*, and currently sit on the WHA Executive Council. It should also be noted that the WHA helped foster journals such as the *Journal of World History*, *Journal of Global History*, *World History Connected*, and *The World History Bulletin*, as well as internet listserves such as H-World, that allow world history teachers to keep up with the latest academic scholarship and teaching strategies. WHA members were also prominent in establishing and shaping AP World History. The annual reading, which attracted some 900 readers (secondary and college teachers) in 2010, provides another venue for discussing world history issues.

4. *Southeast Asia in World History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 205.

5. This section was adapted and expanded from Craig A. Lockard, *Societies, Networks, and*

Transitions: A Global History, 2nd ed.(Boston: Wadsworth, 2010), pp. 934-944.

6. *An Inquiry into the Human Prospect* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1974; revised edition in 1980).

7. Lester Brown, in *State of the World 1989* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1989), p. 3.

8. Lewis Carroll, Alice's Adventures in Wonderland," in *The Complete Works of Lewis Carroll* (New York: Modern Library), pp. 71-72.

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