

00:00:13,340 --> 00:00:25,059

In the 50 years that I have been at ECU, I have been wanting for a long time to write a book

00:00:25,059 --> 00:00:31,260

about the experience of leading a study abroad program, something that I happened upon when

00:00:31,260 --> 00:00:37,099

I first got here and I stayed with, and it's been probably the most important aspect of my career,

00:00:37,279 --> 00:00:42,500

the thing that will stick with me the most, that's had the most impact on students.

00:00:44,159 --> 00:00:53,279

And I've never found a pretext or a frame or an excuse to get started, so maybe I have finally

00:00:53,279 --> 00:00:58,319

found a pretext to begin this project.

00:00:59,540 --> 00:01:06,660

I'm going to be referring frequently to two texts that I teach in London, which a lot of you

00:01:06,660 --> 00:01:14,419

might be familiar with, Sam Selvam's *The Lonely Londoners*, which was written in the year of my birth,

00:01:20,059 --> 00:01:33,639

1956, and concerns immigration to London of folks from Trinidad and also from Jamaica and some

00:01:33,639 --> 00:01:46,239

other places after World War II, and Andrea Levy's *Small but writing* about also the experience

00:01:46,239 --> 00:01:52,500

of Jamaicans, mostly, who came to the mother country, a phrase that you see frequently in book

00:01:52,500 --> 00:02:01,360

books, for patriotic reasons, to serve in the war, and then they were rather shocked by the

00:02:01,360 --> 00:02:08,660

treatment that they received and their relatives received when they came to join them in England after World War II.

00:02:09,460 --> 00:02:12,080  
So that's a bit of a frame.

00:02:13,839 --> 00:02:24,559  
Two of the aspects that I connect with most powerfully, emotionally, in Lonely Londoners, the

00:02:24,559 --> 00:02:32,240  
newcomers coming to Waterloo Station, which is their gateway, their entry point, and having

00:02:32,240 --> 00:02:40,720  
no experience of London or England other than this hazy, fantasy notion of what this place must

00:02:40,720 --> 00:02:47,279  
be like, and only this phrase, the mother country, and everything that goes with that phrase,

00:02:47,520 --> 00:02:55,600  
this place that will be nurturing, that is somehow a part of me, a part of where I belong, or whatever.

00:02:57,820 --> 00:03:09,160  
Similarly, in this story, Hortense comes from Jamaica, well-educated, capable, brave, comes

00:03:09,440 --> 00:03:15,160  
to London to join her husband, and he doesn't show up at the dock.

00:03:16,899 --> 00:03:25,220  
She's there by herself, and has to make her way to Earl's Court, where he's found a crappy little

00:03:25,220 --> 00:03:30,979  
hole in the wall for them to live, and he's sort of forgotten to show up at the dock.

00:03:32,020 --> 00:03:44,419  
So it's that experience of landing someplace new and terrifying and far in spite of our notions that inspired me.

00:03:45,860 --> 00:03:52,059  
I hope, let me read you a piece that I've written, and then I would like you to tell me what

00:03:52,059 --> 00:03:57,360  
you'd like to hear more about, where I can expand this and develop it.

00:03:59,360 --> 00:04:08,639

We come by plane rather than by boat, but we're a motley-looking group, leaning against a railing

00:04:08,639 --> 00:04:10,820

at the Coach Park area of Gatwick Airport.

00:04:11,880 --> 00:04:16,579

One of the group, unbeknownst to me, is a native of the Dominican Republic.

00:04:17,500 --> 00:04:21,260

Sadly enough, this part is absolutely true, and still gives me the shivers.

00:04:22,820 --> 00:04:26,760

One of our group, unbeknownst to me, is a native of the Dominican Republic, though a permanent

00:04:26,760 --> 00:04:28,059

resident of the United States.

00:04:28,440 --> 00:04:33,700

Somehow she had passed through every checkpoint at the university and all of its bureaucratic

00:04:34,179 --> 00:04:43,279

processes, and even with the airline, and made it to the point of London immigration where this little detail was discovered.

00:04:44,700 --> 00:04:49,299

If one is from the Dominican Republic, one needs a visa to enter the United Kingdom.

00:04:50,600 --> 00:04:55,279

It took a bureaucratic miracle, if one can believe in such things, to get her special permission

00:04:55,279 --> 00:05:00,079

to enter the United Kingdom without a visa for our three-week study abroad program.

00:05:01,040 --> 00:05:10,660

A torrent of tears and such persuasive powers as I could muster, both of our tears, along with

00:05:10,660 --> 00:05:16,299

a remarkably compassionate immigration official, affected this unforgettable, if still slightly

00:05:16,299 --> 00:05:18,559  
traumatic, entry into the country.

00:05:19,839 --> 00:05:25,640  
Our emergence from this harrowing process and reunion with the rest of the group, having passed

00:05:25,640 --> 00:05:32,279  
through immigration, waiting for our coach ride to central London, produced a raucous ovation

00:05:32,279 --> 00:05:36,399  
met by the locals and other travelers with a great deal of embarrassment.

00:05:37,350 --> 00:05:43,079  
But we had passed muster with the UK border agency and could begin our three-week adventure.

00:05:45,079 --> 00:05:50,119  
After a sleepless overnight plane ride, all of us feel and look a bit bedraggled.

00:05:50,940 --> 00:05:56,779  
There are two dozen of us, most having never traveled out of the country, some having never

00:05:56,779 --> 00:05:59,079  
left their own regions of the United States.

00:05:59,579 --> 00:06:02,839  
Although all of the students had been warned about culture shock.

00:06:03,700 --> 00:06:05,559  
It's England, what culture shock?

00:06:05,600 --> 00:06:06,720  
It's the same as the United States.

00:06:10,440 --> 00:06:17,540  
They are unprepared for the strangeness of the landscape, the damp chill of the June air, the

00:06:17,540 --> 00:06:21,160  
illegible billboards, and traffic on the wrong side of the road.

00:06:22,920 --> 00:06:30,600  
In each suitcase are copies of Sam Sullivan's book, The Lonely Londoners, and Andrea Leigh's Small Island.

00:06:31,359 --> 00:06:37,000

To prepare for this experience, they have read authors such as Davey Smith, a lot of you have

00:06:37,000 --> 00:06:46,540

read White Tea probably, Gucci Amichetta, Monica Ali, Elif Shafak, and Xiaolu Guo, representing

00:06:46,540 --> 00:06:51,959

a small portion of the stunning cultural variety they will witness and experience in London.

00:06:52,459 --> 00:07:00,440

They will consider imaginatively what it means to be an immigrant, what that perplexing theoretical term transnational means.

00:07:01,399 --> 00:07:06,600

They have struggled with the remoteness of these texts and their peculiar idioms, particularly

00:07:06,600 --> 00:07:10,200

this one's very difficult to read, I would say.

00:07:11,839 --> 00:07:19,320

But now they are on a coach, not a bus, driving on the left, heading for the Marble Arch area

00:07:19,320 --> 00:07:21,579

of Hyde Park in central London.

00:07:22,559 --> 00:07:29,720

A few of them have found Marble Arch on Google Earth, and if they've read ahead, they've noted

00:07:29,720 --> 00:07:35,420

that it was an important social location for the characters in Sullivan's novel, when they did

00:07:35,420 --> 00:07:39,859

something called Coasting Lime on a Saturday night.

00:07:41,899 --> 00:07:47,920

For the first time, many of them are beginning to experience what it means to be, quote, foreign.

00:07:49,179 --> 00:07:53,779

And they will read and understand these texts differently from now on.

00:07:54,779 --> 00:08:02,700

I fancy myself as Sullivan's Moses, their living Vade Makum, welcoming

these exhausted, culture-shocked,

00:08:03,040 --> 00:08:09,579

and literally alienated students to a place which is stunningly diverse and difficult to navigate.

00:08:10,260 --> 00:08:17,899

It's a place where their national origin suddenly signifies something quite different from what they've ever experienced.

00:08:19,440 --> 00:08:26,019

For our African-American students, it's a place where their skin color suddenly means something different.

00:08:27,600 --> 00:08:35,359

One of the most moving passages in *The Lonely Londoners* is the character Galahad's apostrophe to blackness.

00:08:37,159 --> 00:08:46,780

And Galahad watched the color of his hand and talked to it, saying, color, is you causing all this, you know?

00:08:46,780 --> 00:08:52,000

Why the hell can't you be blue or red or green if you can't be white?

00:08:53,739 --> 00:09:00,580

It is clear very quickly to our African-American students that their skin color is red differently here.

00:09:01,059 --> 00:09:10,799

And parsing that difference for many of them is a bit unnerving, but also certainly consciousness-raising. Who am I here?

00:09:12,799 --> 00:09:19,719

Andrew and Evie in *Small Island* also offers a sharp contrast between the manifestations of racial

00:09:19,719 --> 00:09:25,119

prejudice experienced in America and the form experienced in the UK.

00:09:26,239 --> 00:09:31,059

Perhaps the difference is in the level of familiarity between the US and the UK.

00:09:32,260 --> 00:09:38,979

The US version, I know who you are and I don't like you, as opposed to the somewhat more muted British version.

00:09:38,979 --> 00:09:43,419

I'm curious about who you are, but I probably won't like you when I

find out.

00:09:46,900 --> 00:09:51,760

Ladies, Gilbert has come from Jamaica to serve, quote, the mother country in World War II.

00:09:52,340 --> 00:09:58,700

His position as airman assigned to motor transport puts him at the bottom of the military hierarchy,

00:09:58,880 --> 00:10:00,599

and he's essentially a gopher.

00:10:01,640 --> 00:10:07,020

We see the intersection of British and American military cultures when American soldiers refused

00:10:07,020 --> 00:10:10,239

to deliver needed hardware to their British counterparts.

00:10:11,099 --> 00:10:15,979

Gilbert, who's assigned the task of driving to the American base, it's really kind of hazing

00:10:15,979 --> 00:10:22,080

that he's been given this assignment, hears his associates, his British associates, refer to

00:10:22,080 --> 00:10:26,859

the, quote, bloody yanks, arrogant sods, belligerent blighters.

00:10:28,000 --> 00:10:33,059

And then he's greeted by the Americans by racial anger and a stream of epithets.

00:10:33,059 --> 00:10:42,059

The American sergeant complains, quote, he, the British CO, sent that black just to piss me off. Fucking whinies.

00:10:44,039 --> 00:10:50,239

Seventy years on, even in a transmogrified landscape, there remains something of this old distinction

00:10:50,239 --> 00:10:56,419

that I think may inform the way our African American students are received, and our white students as well.

00:10:57,880 --> 00:11:04,880

Our white students are, perhaps to their surprise, not somehow instantly accepted and assimilated

00:11:04,880 --> 00:11:07,219  
by virtue of their privileged whiteness.

00:11:08,039 --> 00:11:12,679  
They must discover that their American-ness is as apparent as their skin color.

00:11:14,020 --> 00:11:19,679  
Even when they are sighted, the accent, of course, is telltale, uncanny as it seems, because

00:11:19,679 --> 00:11:29,219  
they're almost instantly recognized by dress, demeanor, gait, that aggregation of traits and

00:11:29,219 --> 00:11:32,119  
habits that somehow comprise homoamericanus.

00:11:33,500 --> 00:11:40,640  
They see that glint of recognition in the cashier's eye and in his smirk as he slowly and carefully

00:11:40,640 --> 00:11:47,039  
counts out change in the student's palms, i.e., you're a stupid American.

00:11:49,580 --> 00:11:53,359  
We are othered, status uncertain, suspect, resented.

00:11:55,020 --> 00:11:58,460  
For our gingers, I learned that term a couple of years ago, you know what that means?

00:11:59,500 --> 00:12:03,280  
For our gingers, there is an extra level of othering.

00:12:03,820 --> 00:12:07,359  
Red hair suddenly takes on a different cultural significance.

00:12:08,619 --> 00:12:16,739  
All the various markers of identity, many of which they've been completely unaware of, are reconsidered, reinterpreted. They're aliens.

00:12:18,260 --> 00:12:24,900  
Obviously, they are not as poor as Selden's fellers, although many have been borrowed and stolen

00:12:24,900 --> 00:12:26,460



to participate in this program.

00:12:27,080 --> 00:12:32,200

And they are temporary immigrants, with the knowledge that the comforts and relative safety

00:12:32,200 --> 00:12:34,640

of home await in less than a month.

00:12:35,440 --> 00:12:42,520

But for most of our students, three weeks is a long time to be genuinely away for the first time.

00:12:43,229 --> 00:12:49,739

The younger ones, especially, come into the experience malleable, impressionable, subject to

00:12:49,739 --> 00:12:54,159

cultural influence to a surprising degree. And they need change.

00:12:56,390 --> 00:13:02,799

As self-appointed Moses, part of my duty is to help them navigate their inevitable disillusion

00:13:03,659 --> 00:13:13,919

as they face the difference between the dream London of Hale, Britannia and Big Ben, Tower Bridge,

00:13:13,919 --> 00:13:16,359

and a real 21st century city.

00:13:17,179 --> 00:13:22,159

Perhaps the first disillusion that they've discovered in their reading is the distinctive racism

00:13:22,159 --> 00:13:23,760

faced by immigrants to the city.

00:13:24,440 --> 00:13:29,400

The Jamaicans denied housing and enduring incredible hardships in Small Island.

00:13:29,400 --> 00:13:35,619

The Trinidadians and others of Selden's multi-ethnic bands, eking out their survival at the

00:13:35,619 --> 00:13:36,900

bottom of the class structure.

00:13:38,000 --> 00:13:44,700

This London they're seeing for the first time through coach windows as endless rows of shops stream by.

00:13:45,460 --> 00:13:48,179

It's self-evidently a remarkably diverse place.

00:13:49,200 --> 00:13:55,440

And yet they have learned already, when they Google the words London and multicultural, it is

00:13:55,440 --> 00:14:01,380

also the center of a violent backlash against multiculturalism and a virulent xenophobia that

00:14:01,380 --> 00:14:07,440

somehow coexists with all the visible celebrations of London's many ethnic identities.

00:14:08,940 --> 00:14:12,739

The students stow their bags in our rather spartan flats.

00:14:13,859 --> 00:14:21,419

These are a far cry from the room Gilbert finds for himself and his newly arrived Jamaican wife Hortense in Earl's Court.

00:14:22,419 --> 00:14:29,640

A room rented to them by the shockingly unconventional Queenie, a white character, who violates

00:14:29,640 --> 00:14:34,979

neighborhood decorum and unwritten law by renting to, quote, darkies.

00:14:36,299 --> 00:14:42,320

Selden's character Cat also has incidentally found a room in Earl's Court, a district west of

00:14:42,320 --> 00:14:47,320

central London that has hosted a succession of different immigrant groups, as well as serving

00:14:47,320 --> 00:14:52,799

as the principal locale for the gay and lesbian community before being supplanted by Seldo.

00:14:54,260 --> 00:15:02,500

In subtle ways, students can relate to Queenie's shock at the cold, gloomy weather and her drastically

00:15:02,500 --> 00:15:09,119

uninviting quarters as the students try to figure out how to flush the

toilet and wonder whether

00:15:09,119 --> 00:15:14,340

the hot water will return in the morning or whether the elevator will be repaired.

00:15:15,780 --> 00:15:23,940

Still, they are a lot less inconvenienced than Hortense was in 1948, tasked by her husband to

00:15:23,940 --> 00:15:30,400

somehow make enough sense of a hot plate, sink, and basin to produce something called chips.

00:15:31,440 --> 00:15:38,520

She was a rather dramatic failure at producing a respectable chip, but I suppose she caught on to it eventually.

00:15:40,359 --> 00:15:45,619

Before the students have had a chance to crash from their long, sleepless night in a plane,

00:15:46,640 --> 00:15:53,020

I become Selden's Moses once more, rousing them from the flax and into the city, where they

00:15:53,020 --> 00:16:00,179

must purchase underground tickets and subject their aching bodies to a grueling geography lesson.

00:16:01,219 --> 00:16:08,859

For Selden's characters, and for Hortense, and for almost all the protagonists of these experiences

00:16:08,859 --> 00:16:15,599

of London immigration, to learn the tube is a kind of freedom, a survival strategy.

00:16:16,580 --> 00:16:22,340

Without that knowledge, without some basic understanding of the underground grid, one risks

00:16:22,340 --> 00:16:25,320

becoming terribly, if not irretrievably, lost.

00:16:26,880 --> 00:16:32,380

Learning the tube is a step toward independence, toward discovering the magic of popping up

00:16:32,380 --> 00:16:39,500

at an escalator and entering a different new world at every tube stop, an ethnic carnival of unimaginable variety.

00:16:40,780 --> 00:16:48,020

A few years ago, we had one student somewhat defiantly take off on the tube before understanding the system.

00:16:48,359 --> 00:16:57,299

It was a long and very frightening day, and when he returned, I sang to him a song that came from an A. A.

00:16:57,299 --> 00:17:00,219

Milne poem called James, James, Morrison, Morrison.

00:17:00,640 --> 00:17:06,239

I don't know how many of you know the poem, but it warns about the dangers of, quote, going

00:17:06,239 --> 00:17:08,780

to the end of the town by oneself.

00:17:10,479 --> 00:17:12,420

That was the last time he got lost.

00:17:15,300 --> 00:17:20,959

For the characters in The Lonely Londoners, the underground was a place of employment, one of

00:17:20,959 --> 00:17:26,619

the few places that will hire, quote, the fellers, who were given, of course, the most dreadful task to perform.

00:17:27,619 --> 00:17:33,579

But it's also a vital part of their social connection, their mobility, their avenue to connect

00:17:33,579 --> 00:17:37,119

with each other, and to coastline on a Saturday night.

00:17:38,520 --> 00:17:44,060

For me, on that first day, it's a strategy to defeat jet lag, to keep the students awake and

00:17:44,060 --> 00:17:47,040

moving until the early evening hours, when they can finally crash.

00:17:52,770 --> 00:17:55,560

In their fatigue, they're vulnerable, still carrying the smell of travel and useless American

00:17:55,680 --> 00:17:58,470

coins, all as bewilderingly unfamiliar until they emerge from the Westminster tube stop, look

00:18:04,979 --> 00:18:10,800

up, and immediately in front of them is that icon of all kinds, icons of the clock tower.

00:18:11,160 --> 00:18:13,739

That's my little tube trick, my little tube magic.

00:18:14,619 --> 00:18:19,239

There it is, and you have to go like this to get a picture of it. There's Big Ben.

00:18:20,160 --> 00:18:23,140

Some of them, in spite of themselves, get a bit watery-eyed.

00:18:24,380 --> 00:18:32,819

This place, never any stranger's warm, welcoming mother, nevertheless, retains for many of us a mystic hold.

00:18:35,540 --> 00:18:42,219

Location, location, location. Believe it or not, it took me many years to begin to understand

00:18:42,219 --> 00:18:47,219

the connection between where we were and what we were reading in London.

00:18:48,160 --> 00:18:55,560

In the early years, my curriculum included a packaged literary London volume of the type divided

00:18:55,560 --> 00:19:02,239

by districts and neighborhoods, with canned tour guide accounts of who was who, or perhaps who

00:19:02,239 --> 00:19:08,719

merited the ubiquitous blue plaques that you see on the houses designated someone famous, maybe

00:19:08,719 --> 00:19:12,160

someone worthy of being included in the Dictionary of National Biography.

00:19:13,680 --> 00:19:20,020

Not surprisingly, these handbooks are completely monocultural, a guide to the British literary canon.

00:19:21,479 --> 00:19:27,680

Then we read a bit of Dickens to accompany a visit to the Dickens House, some Defoe before a

00:19:27,680 --> 00:19:36,660

trip to the Barbican neighborhood where the author of Moll Flanders lived, some Samuel Blair.

00:19:37,739 --> 00:19:43,459

And we read whatever Shakespeare was being produced by the Reconstructed Globe, which seemed

00:19:43,459 --> 00:19:50,260

like a godsend when it was finished in my fourth year of running the program in 1993, although

00:19:50,260 --> 00:19:57,000

some scholars refer to it contemptuously as the winemaker globe, with its taint of vulgar American wealth.

00:19:58,199 --> 00:19:59,819

Because Americans are good for something.

00:20:02,859 --> 00:20:10,099

For five pounds, my students can approximate the experience of being a groundling, thrillingly

00:20:10,099 --> 00:20:16,560

close to the stage, and almost literally absorbed in the theatrical action, at least until their

00:20:16,560 --> 00:20:18,140

legs start to ache in the fourth act.

00:20:21,920 --> 00:20:29,300

It's the aching legs that is one of the keys to me, to what this experience means, and how it's

00:20:29,300 --> 00:20:32,699

so vitally important as a part of students' education.

00:20:32,959 --> 00:20:37,500

It's so different from the conventional classroom, where one's legs never ache.

00:20:40,920 --> 00:20:47,339

As the years passed, I never lost my love for the two, that sense of complete novelty waiting

00:20:47,339 --> 00:20:49,020

at each new stop along the line.

00:20:50,219 --> 00:20:54,339

Increasingly, though, what struck me about the neighborhoods was not the exciting activities

00:20:54,339 --> 00:20:57,459

that would be available in the different boroughs and districts.

00:20:57,459 --> 00:21:03,920

What struck me was the ethnic diversity represented by each shop, by each stop, restaurants

00:21:03,920 --> 00:21:09,800

and shops, the people dressed in very un-British riots of color and texture.

00:21:10,420 --> 00:21:20,699

I wanted to find the literature that reflected this London, and that's part of my transformation that you talked about.

00:21:21,599 --> 00:21:29,300

A literature that emerged dramatically amid conflict and partial reconciliation from the Thatcher

00:21:29,300 --> 00:21:35,939

years to the present, the span of my own skin as temporary immigrant and self-appointed Moses.

00:21:38,599 --> 00:21:46,699

Quote, he and Cap uses the coast phase water road from the arch to the gate nearly every night.

00:21:47,619 --> 00:21:49,599

What in the world does that mean?

00:21:50,380 --> 00:21:55,859

In the traditional classroom, that decontextualized space, it means very little.

00:21:56,880 --> 00:22:04,339

But now we are in Hyde Park, sitting in a circle in the shadow of Marble Arch, talking about

00:22:04,339 --> 00:22:07,119

Stelva's Marble Arch, the Marble Arch of the Fellers.

00:22:08,000 --> 00:22:15,780

In the air there are Frisbees, no, discs, and a homeless person nearby turns on his side.

00:22:15,780 --> 00:22:22,420

A retriever suddenly dashes past, and there is heavy pram traffic on the sidewalk.

00:22:24,520 --> 00:22:32,540

We close our eyes and we slip back a half century with ease, where Cap and Moses and the women

00:22:32,540 --> 00:22:39,979

to whom they say bonsoir, walking to Notting Hill Gate and the lazy incline of Portobello Road.

00:22:41,319 --> 00:22:50,040

There is a kind of alchemy made possible by dislocation or relocation that does not happen in the classroom background.

00:22:51,199 --> 00:22:57,459

It's the exhilarating juxtaposition of past and present that is everywhere in London, the beautiful

00:22:57,459 --> 00:23:01,459

array of people and cultures that lets us all coastline.

00:23:03,180 --> 00:23:05,959

Now what does coasting line mean?

00:23:06,060 --> 00:23:08,699

This is a pretty good research project. Google it.

00:23:09,380 --> 00:23:11,640

It's clearly something important in the book.

00:23:12,060 --> 00:23:16,459

I'm now quoting a student, I get this question all the time when students read this for the first time.

00:23:16,760 --> 00:23:20,300

It's clearly something important in the book, but I searched the term and found nothing.

00:23:22,040 --> 00:23:28,560

I had similar experience when I first read this book, and it's lovely, but puzzling idiom, a

00:23:28,560 --> 00:23:33,239

combination of beat poetry, Anglo-Caribbean argo, and literary modernism.

00:23:34,420 --> 00:23:39,900



There's mention of the phrase in one critical piece that I found,  
Linda Pugliese, The Voice

00:23:39,900 --> 00:23:47,260  
of the Foreigner, reproducing Caribbean English in a post-colonial  
novel, 2006, but she doesn't define the term.

00:23:48,119 --> 00:23:50,160  
And the student's instinct was valid.

00:23:50,380 --> 00:23:57,239  
It's a centrally important phrase and concept in the novel, a moment  
of bliss for those who

00:23:57,239 --> 00:24:05,079  
experience, an attitude that comes from freedom and brotherly love, a  
defiant expression of joy.

00:24:06,439 --> 00:24:14,579  
It's a kind of hanging out, but with a notion of expected pleasure and  
the mysteries of the evening hours.

00:24:14,780 --> 00:24:21,219  
For these Trinidadians and Jamaicans, it's a kind of epiphanic link  
for their characters to

00:24:21,219 --> 00:24:25,060  
home and past, a fusion of memory and the excitement of the moment.

00:24:26,219 --> 00:24:32,719  
I realize that's not a terribly functional definition, but I hope it  
suggests the idea that

00:24:32,719 --> 00:24:39,780  
coasting line is something that all of us aliens can experience,  
whether exiled by choice or

00:24:39,780 --> 00:24:42,900  
by poverty or by dream or some imagined ideal.

00:24:43,560 --> 00:24:52,180  
Even in this modernist hell, this cold, racist nightmare that brings  
its characters to a terrible moment of existential crisis.

00:24:52,180 --> 00:24:55,439  
Color, is this you that's causing all this?

00:24:56,540 --> 00:24:59,300  
There is love and youth and hope.

00:24:59,839 --> 00:25:05,920

For these immigrants, the power of coasting line transforms marble arch from a cold emblem of

00:25:05,920 --> 00:25:11,780

British imperialism to a totemic symbol of masculine sexuality, of brotherhood.

00:25:12,680 --> 00:25:20,420

It hints at the fact that these young men, with an incredibly tenuous toehold in a mostly cruel

00:25:20,420 --> 00:25:25,640

and unwelcoming landscape, will survive and thrive.

00:25:26,219 --> 00:25:30,760

Marble arch is still there, and so are the fellers, and so now are we.

00:25:31,800 --> 00:25:40,939

And we will toast them with our bottled water and rocket and prawn sandwiches from the Prêt-à-Manger and we will coastline.

00:25:45,459 --> 00:25:46,619

Thank you.

00:25:49,640 --> 00:26:02,359

What I want to get at further is more about pedagogy, more trying to explain and develop what

00:26:02,359 --> 00:26:05,900

I felt about the uniqueness and the importance of this.

00:26:08,199 --> 00:26:13,119

It's a constant thorn in my side that it's been so expensive.

00:26:13,239 --> 00:26:18,819

I've fought to try to make it cheap and to develop sources of funding and scholarships and so

00:26:18,819 --> 00:26:29,800

on, but it's expensive and that's a negative aspect of all study abroad programs really.

00:26:29,979 --> 00:26:32,119

But it's a transforming experience.

00:26:32,119 --> 00:26:34,959

And I want the ones least likely to go.

00:26:35,959 --> 00:26:37,680

That's always my recruiting call.

00:26:38,260 --> 00:26:39,859  
Get the ones who need it the most.

00:26:42,300 --> 00:26:46,560  
And once they're there, they'll find a way to pay for it.

00:26:46,579 --> 00:26:49,280  
They'll find a way to survive and make the most of it.

00:26:49,660 --> 00:26:53,140  
And to those students, I try to commend myself.

00:26:58,060 --> 00:27:08,680  
I like the way you put forward the concept in terms of your students being in London.

00:27:10,020 --> 00:27:16,560  
Have you ever talked to students or individuals coming from other countries on what they view

00:27:16,560 --> 00:27:18,079  
when they touch down in America?

00:27:19,339 --> 00:27:26,239  
I have a good view of your transformation and the things that went on.

00:27:26,660 --> 00:27:30,199  
I think a lot of the issues was in your head.

00:27:31,160 --> 00:27:33,920  
And when you got there, it was not that bad.

00:27:34,800 --> 00:27:42,400  
But I would be interested to hear about when, because foreigners have something in their head about America.

00:27:43,219 --> 00:27:50,660  
I would be interested to hear when they touch down, how do they view now America?

00:27:54,160 --> 00:27:57,619  
My own experience is so limited.

00:27:59,560 --> 00:28:07,780  
My beloved, as you know, came from Malaysia and wasn't here such a long time when we met and

00:28:07,780 --> 00:28:12,380

fell in love a few years ago.

00:28:15,439 --> 00:28:22,239

But through her and through that connection, I've heard the stories anyway from an awful lot

00:28:22,239 --> 00:28:25,640

of Chinese folks, ethnic Chinese folks coming to America.

00:28:26,000 --> 00:28:33,239

And I have a very, very limited experience with that and would like to hear more and learn more.

00:28:33,979 --> 00:28:37,400

Rick, may I add something here? Please.

00:28:38,140 --> 00:28:39,160

We have to speak up.

00:28:41,319 --> 00:28:48,459

In the English department, we do not get a whole lot of students who come from other places.

00:28:48,660 --> 00:28:50,619

But we've had one or two.

00:28:51,079 --> 00:28:53,099

We've had a number of them from Belize.

00:28:53,520 --> 00:28:56,260

That's what's so wonderful about our Belizeans.

00:28:56,380 --> 00:28:58,420

Any Belizeans in here, put your hand up, please.

00:29:01,680 --> 00:29:05,420

That's the latest goal there.

00:29:07,319 --> 00:29:14,959

But the few that we've had bring such an enriching experience and it's such a shock.

00:29:16,099 --> 00:29:20,180

One coming to America, but two coming to Greenville.

00:29:24,339 --> 00:29:28,680

But I think Jeff, he's the teacher here.

00:29:29,760 --> 00:29:36,140

Jeff, Lucy, and I, I don't know if anybody else is missing here, do

teach in a multidisciplinary

00:29:36,140 --> 00:29:41,439

program called the MAIS program, Masters of Arts in International Studies.

00:29:42,180 --> 00:29:47,140

And we get a number of students from foreign countries.

00:29:47,780 --> 00:29:49,260

Some of them will come in.

00:29:49,260 --> 00:29:54,079

Last semester, I had a Chinese student who just touched down.

00:29:54,439 --> 00:29:57,540

And he thought he knew about African Americans.

00:29:59,160 --> 00:30:05,119

And he decided to present on Martin Luther King Jr.

00:30:05,540 --> 00:30:07,560

I have a dream speech.

00:30:07,839 --> 00:30:12,939

And you should have heard the teaching moments of that talk.

00:30:12,939 --> 00:30:16,180

So I met him in the hallway yesterday.

00:30:16,680 --> 00:30:19,859

And I was asking him, what are you going to do after your Master's?

00:30:19,959 --> 00:30:21,199

Are you going to do a Ph.D. now?

00:30:21,420 --> 00:30:22,699

I want to go to New York City and work.

00:30:23,319 --> 00:30:31,780

And he started to imitate Robert De Niro and the Italian New Yorkers.

00:30:31,859 --> 00:30:33,680

And he was pretty good.

00:30:34,699 --> 00:30:37,540

He said, you see, I'm going to get a job in New York City.

00:30:38,760 --> 00:30:44,680

But it's a fascinating experience each one is going to bring from

abroad.

00:30:44,839 --> 00:30:46,180

But you know what I like about storytelling?

00:30:46,380 --> 00:30:51,560

It's something different, but you know, it's what I like about, you know, in the days in college,

00:30:51,619 --> 00:30:54,140

your students would feel how the characters feel.

00:30:55,040 --> 00:30:59,119

That's just the part I like about it. And it's so hard.

00:30:59,199 --> 00:31:05,060

I mean, the business of teaching multicultural literature, it seems to me, is at least beginning

00:31:05,060 --> 00:31:10,500

the process of feeling what other folks feel or seeing through their eyes.

00:31:10,900 --> 00:31:12,920

I mean, you only can ever approximate.

00:31:13,420 --> 00:31:15,800

This is a step in that direction.

00:31:15,880 --> 00:31:22,180

You know, another question I have, you know that sometimes American people, I mean, not everybody,

00:31:23,180 --> 00:31:28,280

but you know sometimes they have this attitude of superiority.

00:31:28,280 --> 00:31:34,920

I know some Americans that would say, they don't even want to know anything about other countries,

00:31:35,000 --> 00:31:38,300

and they think it in their head that they're the best in the world.

00:31:38,459 --> 00:31:39,900

You know, like they don't have an attitude.

00:31:40,219 --> 00:31:41,300

You know, like, oh, we're the best.

00:31:41,680 --> 00:31:44,800

Why don't we do normal things? Let's go. Eat some eggs. You know?

00:31:45,520 --> 00:31:49,040

So my question is, like, do they change this attitude?

00:31:49,319 --> 00:31:54,420

Some of your students, like, when they go to England, I mean, do they have this attitude before they go?

00:31:54,540 --> 00:31:56,699

Like, do they change it? Yes.

00:31:56,920 --> 00:32:01,099

I mean, it's remarkable to see them change in the three weeks that they're there.

00:32:01,439 --> 00:32:05,920

And part of the reason that they change is that they're so frightened at the beginning.

00:32:06,260 --> 00:32:13,199

I think from that sense of displacement and fear comes the kind of malleability that I was talking about.

00:32:13,400 --> 00:32:22,800

I mean, in rooms, in pubs, and start to talk to people, and they hear about typical attitudes. Americans are loud. They're obnoxious.

00:32:22,800 --> 00:32:27,939

They know it all, and all those other things that Americans are supposed to be.

00:32:28,219 --> 00:32:32,119

They hear all that, and they... I think that's enriching.

00:32:32,219 --> 00:32:35,979

It's so enriching for the student, like, personally, in terms of literature.

00:32:36,800 --> 00:32:38,300

I think it's a wonderful tool.

00:32:40,380 --> 00:32:43,699

It's dwarfed, for me, anything else I've been able to do.

00:32:46,780 --> 00:32:48,959

I have, I guess, a couple of questions.

00:32:48,959 --> 00:32:52,579

You said you wanted to know where you thought you should write more.

Right.

00:32:53,319 --> 00:33:00,180

And I understand that this is part of something that you're going to continue to work on, something like a larger piece? Yes. Okay.

00:33:00,300 --> 00:33:05,939

So I was looking for, or, you know, really liking the connections that you made between the

00:33:05,939 --> 00:33:11,359

text and the experience of the students, which I thought was, like, a really interesting combination

00:33:11,359 --> 00:33:15,260

of memoir and criticism, kind of.

00:33:15,260 --> 00:33:21,260

And I liked what you were talking about with the older curriculum you started with when you

00:33:21,260 --> 00:33:25,239

first did the program, with, like, Shakespeare and some Dickens and things like that.

00:33:25,260 --> 00:33:33,400

And I got the feeling that your curriculum changed, like, as you had more, had done it more times. Right.

00:33:33,400 --> 00:33:40,880

And so I was wondering if you were going to come back to that transformation of if that was

00:33:40,880 --> 00:33:42,599

something you were going to focus on more. I could.

00:33:42,599 --> 00:33:47,839

I mean, you've got sort of a ten-minute version of something that took 23 years to happen.

00:33:48,880 --> 00:33:56,800

So, I mean, I could talk more about the evolution in my own thinking and awareness and so on.

00:33:57,339 --> 00:34:03,020

Yeah, just my own personal opinion, but I think that that would lend to, you know, it wouldn't

00:34:03,020 --> 00:34:07,500

just be, like, this is what my students learned and this is how they



changed, but, like, your

00:34:07,500 --> 00:34:09,919  
own kind of transformation as well.

00:34:11,120 --> 00:34:13,560  
That's the next research project.

00:34:14,899 --> 00:34:17,699  
You've got one year of at least time to...