

Assignment 3: Study Abroad Blog Analysis

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Emotions are an aspect of human life and present in every culture around the world. They can be described as biopsychosocial reactions to events which can have consequences, sometimes requiring behavioral changes (Juang and Matsumoto, 2017). There is more to emotion than just feelings. It can be difficult to imagine how different emotions can be in different parts of the world and how your emotions will compare to others and how they present them. Students who participate in a study abroad trip face the difficult challenge of confronting their own emotions regarding travel, as well as experiencing the emotions of the population of another culture. It is normal to experience different emotional challenges when travelling yet travelling to study in a new country may pose its own challenges to overcome.

Cahleb Derry traveled to Rome, Italy for his spring semester of studies at Temple University. He went through various emotions and emotional experiences during his time in a foreign country. One of Cahleb's biggest emotional challenges he faced as a study abroad student was before he even arrived in Rome. In his first blog post, he describes the emotions he is feeling about travelling and how anxiety can take on different meanings in different circumstances, suggesting it can be both positive and negative. As is typical to experience when traveling, Cahleb encountered the trials and tribulations associated with anxiety and packing to prepare for a semester abroad. However, Cahleb experienced what he considers the positive and exciting aspects associated with anxiety. His anxiety was more towards what is to come and what is yet to be expected in a different city and country with new people, food, locations, and surroundings.

Once Cahleb arrived in Rome, he experienced various other emotions other than anxiety. After a few busy weeks getting settled and starting to learn the area, true excitement started

setting in and feelings of eagerness began to develop while thinking about the future plans and activities to be done. Cahleb describes his first few stops in Italy as breathtaking and found himself getting lost in the views and experience. He recalls getting lost in the city with a few friends and how panic settled in, though they were in a beautiful town to continue to admire. Continuing with some of Cahleb's other emotional experiences in Rome, he experienced guilt concerning his trip to a different country. Though he was grateful for this trip and was aware of the privilege that came with it, he could not help but experience guilt with it since his family and friends were not there and not sharing his experiences with him. Cahleb experienced guilt when he felt as if he did not enjoy an experience while in Rome or when he felt as if he was not doing enough while abroad. Though he enjoyed and valued his time in Rome, guilt was eating away at him while he was away from home.

Cahleb could always feel the eyes of the people of Rome on him, as he is of a minority population in both the United States and Italy. Feeling the stares of others unknown to him allowed him to feel more emotions towards the people of Rome, as he is used to being of a minority population in his home country, but not a foreign one, displaying slightly different reactions that he typically would. Cahleb described this as exhausting, trying to look away from those who stared at him, but also trying to understand their points of view among differing populations. The people of Rome who watched or stared at him may not have understood the emotional impact that can come from being of a minority population and may not have realized the impact of their behaviors on a student studying abroad.

Since Cahleb was in a foreign country, he had to adjust to how Italians depict and use their emotions. People from other countries tend to stand out when in a foreign location, but as a student in a different country for a semester, Cahleb had to learn about emotional experiences

and expressions of the country. Cultural display rules are one way that culture can influence emotion, where an individual learns, or does not learn, to modify their emotions and emotional reactions in a new culture (Matsumoto and Juang, 2017). In Cahleb's case, he had to learn and understand that the culture of Italy and Rome is different than the United States, especially when it comes to minority populations. The way someone reacts to meeting or encountering a minority person is different in Rome than it is in the United States. Cahleb had to learn to adjust to their emotional reactions to seeing him, a student of color, in their country as Italy is predominantly Caucasian. Cahleb also had to determine how he should display his emotions when facing these encounters, should he confront the bystander about looking at him or ignore their stares and continue on his journey? Cahleb chose the latter and learned to understand why he may be looked at differently in a foreign country with a different population.

Continuing with emotion, self-conscious emotions, such as guilt, pride, or shame, focus on the self and apply to human nature (Matsumoto and Juang, 2017). Self-conscious emotions go beyond basic emotions and can be associated with self-reflective processes and cognitive representations (Matsumoto and Juang, 2017). Cahleb discussed his experiences dealing with guilt, a self-conscious emotion. He felt guilty about numerous aspects of his time in Rome, but eventually he had to use self-reflecting techniques to understand why he was feeling guilty and how to combat those feelings. It took him some time to combat the guilty emotions he was facing and he had the opportunity to speak with others who had similar experiences with guilt. Through his communication with others and self-reflection, Cahleb was able to combat the negative associations he developed with guilt and understand how he can use the guilt he was experiencing in a positive manner.

While studying abroad in Rome, Cahleb went through transformational experiences that changed his perspective and viewpoints of different emotions and aspects of life. He had to override his self-conscious emotions of guilt that he developed abroad. Communicating with others who went through bouts of guilt while studying abroad helped him realize a few aspects of being abroad that are acceptable, things that he should not feel bad about while away from home. Cahleb realized it was okay to take some time for yourself, such as an evening or weekend, and it is fine to not be doing something in your new city every waking moment. Taking time for yourself, even if it is only a few hours, is beneficial for your mental health as you are not overloading yourself with work or experiences. Since he was going to be there for an entire semester, Cahleb realized there was plenty of time for him to explore and travel around Rome, while still taking time for himself. Secondly, Cahleb felt guilty whenever he complained about being in Rome or having an unsatisfactory experience there, but realized having some complaints is okay, as well. Originally, he felt as if he should not be critical, but rather appreciate every moment in Italy. While he was grateful and appreciative of his experience, there were still new challenges and concerns that may warrant some complaints, which Cahleb needed to learn was okay to have and understand. One of his other realizations regarding guilt was that involving his family. Cahleb reported feeling guilty, as his family and friends may never know the experience he was given. He realized through communicating with his family that they wanted him to be there and supported his academics. He learned he could still share his experiences and involve his family in his semester in Rome through other ways.

Along with overcoming the challenges he faced with guilt, Cahleb went through the transformational experience of black ubiquity. One of his last experiences in Rome before traveling home was when he met a group of young, black Italians. Since he is of the same

minority population, this was an eye-opening encounter for him. Through this interaction, he learned about what it is like to be a permanent resident of Italy as a young adult of a minority population. Unfortunately, from communicating with the people he met, Cahleb discovered that his feelings of isolation as a young, minority man were not unheard of and were in fact commonly felt among those who lived there as residents. Though exclusion was commonplace for minority Italians, it does not mean that they let it affect their lives. They found new ways to enjoy Italy and Rome as minority adults and Cahleb discovered how they made themselves at home in their country with their ethnic and racial backgrounds. Cahleb learned more about black ubiquity and its presence and influence in other cultures. Meeting residents of Italy who were of the same racial background as him displayed to Cahleb the profound impacts of culture and black ubiquity, and how nothing can stop people of a minority race from coming together and living their lives.

I decided to read about Cahleb's time in Rome because Italy is a country I would love to visit. I do not have a bucket list, but if I were to ever make one, taking a trip to Italy would be high on the list. I love the architecture and art styles, plus I love Italian food and would love to try the authentic version versus the Americanized version. I read through and investigated a few different students' blogs who traveled to Rome, but ultimately settled on Cahleb Derry. What intrigued me about his time studying abroad was the fact that he is of a minority population. Though I am of the majority population, I found it interesting to read about the experiences from someone of a different background than me. Plus, he was very insightful, and he writes well, including humorous anecdotes in his posts, too.

Though I may never have the opportunity to visit Italy or Rome as Cahleb did, his blog entries and recordings were insightful of the country he studied in. I may not be of a minority

population and never be able to understand the personal experiences and challenges associated with it, but Cahleb's discussions were eye-opening as to how different people are in different countries and cultures regarding those of a dissimilar population than them. Traveling to Italy has been a dream of mine since I was in my late teen years and reading about another student's experiences in Italy was incredibly interesting to me and allowed me to understand some of the differences in cultures and not to feel discouraged about the emotions and emotional experiences I may have while there. Cahleb Derry's study abroad travels has encouraged me to pursue the opportunity to study abroad in a new location and experience a new culture.

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