

# Reflections on Experiences Abroad

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## Introduction

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# Introduction

**R**eflections on Experiences Abroad is a collection of essays authored by Ouachita Baptist University faculty and staff who have resided outside the United States. As the capstone project in the inaugural offering of a new course, ENGL 3383 Editing, this publication provided opportunities for students to sharpen their copyediting skills, establish a rapport with authors, and participate in the publishing process. Not only did students gain practical experience; they recognized how each essay contributes to Ouachita's rich legacy of international education.

Spanning seven countries, the essays feature a particular facet of living abroad and convey a passion for genuine growth that comes from experiencing other cultures. Ranging from the humorous and creative to the poignant and intellectual, each piece tells a unique story, but all focus on a personal connection with our remarkable world and its people.

## **Botswana and Namibia**

In "On the Trans-Kalahari Highway: Caught in the Middle of Two Spaces," Myra Houser shares her childhood experience of being uprooted from the only home she had known – Botswana – and relocating to Namibia. Houser eloquently reflects on how the Trans-Kalahari Highway served as both a literal and figurative connection between the two countries.

## **China**

Benjamin Utter's "American Dumpling Warrior" is a delightful recollection of his attempt to study martial arts while teaching in China. With wit and linguistic flair, Utter illustrates how long-lasting and meaningful such memories can be.

## **Columbia**

Short, funny, and forthright, Monica Hardin's "Of Course, I Live in a Tree House" recounts her experience as a missionary kid returning to the United States to explain her life and her family's impact to curious and uninformed youth groups. Her frustration got the better of her and a childish instinct led her to spin a tale of rainforests and jungles, much to the obliviousness of her young American audience.

## **Japan**

Ray Franklin's "The Land of Eight Million Gods: Communicating Christian Concepts of God into the Japanese Worldview" navigates a Japanese language barrier where the term *God* in English did not translate correctly. Based on his experience as a missionary to Japan, Franklin provides an insightful and instructive explanation of what he learned from native speakers on communicating the concept of *God* accurately to the Japanese people.

## **Nigeria**

Donnie Copeland's "Patient Long Enough: The Benin Bronzes and the Repatriation of Looted Art and Artifacts" is a stark contrast to the childhood anecdotes and wistful memories presented in the other essays. It takes an objective stance, carefully chronicling the debate over Western colonial powers' seizing Nigerian works of art. His lilting prose underscores the impact of Nigeria losing such powerful representations from its history.

## **Zimbabwe**

"Christmas Collage" by Susan Monroe highlights some of her most positive memories as a missionary kid in Zimbabwe. With warmth and grace, she reflects her family's Christian values and recalls safe, joyful moments during Zimbabwe's time at war.

Collectively, these essays advance an important aspect of Ouachita's mission – fostering a learning community of reasoned engagement with the world, not just the world at our fingertips but the realm beyond that teaches us about the unusual, the unknown, and the uncommon.

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