

BOOK REVIEW

***Crossing borders, bridging cultures: The narratives of global scholars* by U. Gaulee, K. Bista, B. Zhang & B. Schreiber (Eds.) (2023). Baltimore, USA: STAR Scholars.**

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In an increasingly interconnected world, the importance of understanding and engaging with diverse cultures and perspectives cannot be overstated. As educators, researchers, and students strive to navigate the complexities of academic life in an ever-changing landscape, stories of resilience, adaptation, and growth are both inspiring and instructive. *Crossing Borders, Bridging Cultures: The Narratives of Global Scholars* provides a valuable and timely resource in this regard, offering a collection of firsthand accounts of international scholars as they traverse the boundaries of cultures, languages, and academic environments. The edited volume, comprising 20 chapters, is skillfully compiled by Uttam Gaulee, Krishna Bista, Bo Zhang, and Birgit Schreiber, all of whom have extensive experience in international education and research.

The book begins with a poignant reflection on the notion of ‘un/mooring’, exploring the dual sense of attachment and detachment that often accompanies individuals as they move between cultures and academic spaces. This theme resonates throughout the book, as the subsequent chapters delve into various aspects of the international scholars’ experiences, such as workplace cultures, relationships with colleagues, and the challenges of studying or working in a foreign language. Notably, the book emphasizes the power of small gestures, such as hugs, in fostering a sense of belonging and community among scholars, regardless of their cultural background.

One of the strengths of this collection lies in the diversity of the authors’ experiences and voices, as they hail from a wide array of countries and academic disciplines. This is evident in chapters such as ‘A Lotus Flower from the East’, which offers insights into the personal journey of a Chinese scholar in a Western academic environment, and ‘Moscow Never Sleeps’, which shares the unique perspective of a Russian scholar navigating the intricacies of a bustling metropolitan city. The book also addresses the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on academic life, with chapters such as ‘Pandemic Abroad’ and ‘Story of an Academic Advisor during COVID-19’ highlighting the challenges and opportunities that have arisen during these unprecedented times.

One particularly powerful aspect of the book is its engagement with issues of race and social justice, as exemplified by the chapter ‘Race Matters’. Here, the author shares

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their experience as a scholar of colour in a predominantly White academic environment, shedding light on the unique challenges they faced and the importance of representation and inclusivity within academia. This theme is further explored in the chapter ‘No One Culture is Superior!’, which underscores the value of embracing diversity and fostering mutual understanding among scholars from different backgrounds.

The book also includes several chapters written in German, such as ‘Wage den Schritt!’, ‘Sonne, Stärke und tausendundein Liter Sand!’, ‘„Voll“ er neuer Erfahrungen’, and ‘So nah, doch so fern’. These chapters not only contribute to the linguistic diversity of the collection but also provide an opportunity for readers to engage with the narratives of scholars from German-speaking countries. The editors are to be commended for their inclusive approach in curating this collection, which serves to underscore the importance of multilingualism and transcultural communication within the global academic community.

Crossing Borders, Bridging Cultures is a thought-provoking and inspiring read that invites readers to reflect on their own experiences and assumptions, while fostering empathy and understanding for the diverse stories and perspectives of others. The editors have succeeded in creating a cohesive and engaging collection that illuminates the myriad challenges and triumphs faced by international scholars, and in doing so, emphasizes the importance of cultivating a supportive and inclusive environment.

The Global Essay Project seeks to illuminate the myriad ways in which studying or working outside one’s country of birth can shape one’s personal and professional journey. Essay submissions are encouraged to focus on moments, encounters, and experiences that capture the essence of being an international student, scholar, or faculty member. Topics may include friendship, service, freedom, discrimination, injustice, activism, belonging, family, courage, resilience, citizenship, academics, spirituality, parenthood, discovery, inclusion, self-discovery, growth, and more.

In conclusion, *Crossing Borders, Bridging Cultures: The Narratives of Global Scholars* is a significant contribution to the field of international education, offering powerful insights into the experiences and perspectives of scholars from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. As a part of the broader Global Essay Project, this book exemplifies the power of storytelling in fostering understanding, empathy, and collaboration within the global academic community. Readers, be they students, researchers, or those simply interested in the human experience, will undoubtedly find inspiration and enlightenment in the pages of this compelling and thought-provoking collection.

Project link: <https://starscholars.org/lanterns-across-the-sky/>

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