Introduction

The Paradox of Difference

Introduction

Difference is not an absolute state; it is constructed. We are all different in many ways, even siblings with the same parents that grow up in the same household. Yet only certain differences are noticed, marked, and catered to. Such regimes of difference—called variously by diverse researchers, as I will discuss in this chapter—guide, if not force, us to identify differences, ignore certain differences, and act in light of such acknowledged differences. Such a construction and implementation of specific "differences" often has consequences, shaping institutional arrangements and people's worldviews, advantaging some, marginalizing others, and clouding our understanding of how social interactions work. Because such differences are constructed, there can exist paradoxes that are often so naturalized that we do not even notice them. This book is an attempt to investigate such paradoxes in (even widely popular) theoretical frameworks and daily activities in order to tease out how the politics of difference works, so that we can avoid pitfalls and revise such frameworks and thus daily activities.

This book investigates five kinds of paradoxes. The first one is the "paradox of mixing and border crossing" found in discourses that talk about overcoming difference, which end up actually emphasizing that difference. I discuss the discourses of "mixed race," "language mixing," and "border crossing" in global education, especially study abroad, and in volunteer and service work. This paradox is problematic because it does the opposite of what it claims to do—overcoming the difference—masking its problematic results.

The second one is the "paradox of standardization" in which, although standardization explicitly aims at homogenizing things, it always hierarchically differentiates them. I highlight this in the fields of education, language, and volunteer and service work. This paradox hides one of the problematic effects of standardization.

The third case is the "paradox of narrative" in which focusing on a new and transformative experience pushes one to not only notice difference but also highlight the difference through talking about it. In the context of study abroad, narratives of such transformative experiences focus on the encounter with difference, therefore highlighting that difference. This paradox conceals the self-fulfilling prophecy of such narratives, masking the prophecy's tautological performative effects, thus allowing possibly false claims of the efficacy of such transformative experiences.

The fourth case is the "paradox of proximity" in talking about difference: when your subject positions place you close to people or things that are considered different from you, you emphasize the difference and vice versa. I highlight cases of variously positioned students describing their study abroad destinations to showcase this paradox. This paradox challenges the notion of difference as something objective and observable.

The fifth case is the "paradox of tolerance" when cultural relativism is used: when a difference is seen as cultural, people are more tolerant of it than when a difference is seen as personal, which positions the doer of the former as different but the doer of the latter as the same. The paradox here is that the tolerance others those you are tolerant of, whereas the intolerance assumes shared belonging with them. I analyze this based on host families' treatment of their host students' behavior in Aotearoa/New Zealand. This paradox allows double moves of connecting and othering.

Examining these paradoxes allows us to investigate their unintended and unexpected effects so that we can reduce their impact. Each chapter will discuss one of these paradoxes by situating it in specific contexts and their own theoretical footings, such as unit thinking, the nation-state ideology, standardization, politics of narratives, subject positions, and cultural relativism.

This book is inspired by three theoretical frameworks. The first is the notion of difference that Ray McDermott and Hervé Varenne (1995) suggest, which has been guiding my research for many years: they ask what sociocultural environments push us to notice and mark certain differences out of many, as we are all different from each other in myriads of ways. This framework allows us not to start with a preconceived notion of difference but to focus on the process of the construction of difference, which helps us to imagine alternative ways in which to see relationships and differences. They use the case of deafness to illustrate: if everyone signed all the time, whether or not you could hear would not matter, so deafness would not be noticed or marked or seen as a disability. That is, it is the sociocultural environment in which we mainly use verbal communication, not the physical condition of "deaf people," that makes us notice deafness and mark it as a "disability." Using this example, McDermott and Varenne urge us to start with investigating the sociocultural environments that make us notice differ-

ence. This approach to see difference not as a permanent, preexisting condition but as something that is created underlies this book's analyses.

The second framework that guides this book is that of Ken Plummer (1995) on narratives. As I will describe in more detail later in this chapter, Plummer suggests that narratives are not an accurate description of the unchanging truth, but are socially constructed in specific contexts and shaped not only by the narrator but also by the people who ask specific kinds of questions—whom he calls "coaxers"—and the audience, as well as existing narratives and vocabulary that provide us with ways in which to think and talk about fragmented daily experiences. Plummer provides us with conceptual tools to understand "difference" so we can see the situatedness of narratives about difference and pay attention to wider as well as immediate contexts that shape such narratives.

The third framework on which this book is based is that of Roy Harris (1990) and his suggested approach—integrationist linguistics. As will also be elaborated on later in this chapter, integrationist linguistics views language as part of a communicative event that is an integrated whole made up not only of words but also bodily movements and an understanding of how things work in the world: contexts. That is, the meaning of a word always needs to be understood in the context of its utterance, making its meaning fluid and ephemeral. This approach allows us to see all categories that mark difference as having fluid and ephemeral meanings, which need to be understood in their specific contexts.

Applying these frameworks, this book examines the aforementioned five paradoxes and illustrates the paradoxical workings and effects of regimes of difference (or systems of categories) with a specific focus on the contextual aspects of how they play out. This book aims to open up new ways to think about these "differences" and generate alternative practices. In what follows, I will review the discussions on difference focused on the regimes of difference and introduce the arguments of Plummer and Harris mentioned above. I will end this chapter by introducing the structure of this book.

On Difference

Michel Foucault (1994) argues that thinkers of the sixteenth century's Renaissance viewed signs and signified as connected through their resemblances, but those of the seventeenth century's classical thought suggested that signs and signified are linked arbitrarily. This new view of representation created the "space of knowledge" for the "tabulated space" in which three fields of theories developed as part of a general theory of signs and representations (ibid.: 75). The fields were language (i.e., general grammar), classification (i.e., natural history), and money (i.e., economics), Foucault argues.

This classical thought created the system of a *mathesis*, a *taxonomia*, and a *genesis*, which together created the general configuration of knowledge. Mathesis is at one extreme, offering the science of the calculable order by utilizing symbols upon identities and differences. Genesis is at the other extreme, providing the analysis of the constitution of orders on the basis of the resemblances between things. Taxonomia exists between these two extremes of mathesis and genesis, creating the region of signs that span the whole domain of empirical representation, providing tables of identities and differences. This general theory of signs and representations continues to persist, providing the basis of how we think, despite classical thought being replaced at the end of the eighteenth century (Foucault 1994).

Researchers have theorized this view regarding representation. Louis Althusser (1971) connected categories of people to Ideology: individuals experience the world through categories, and they are also interpellated (that is, hailed, positioned) into these categories, which then shape their behavior and language, which then articulate perceived differences among people, thereby materializing ideology.

This understanding that systems of categories are themselves an ideology spawned by relations of power is shared by many researchers, who theorize it with various concepts: the structure of difference (Wilk 1995), the chain of signification (Hall 1985), the schemata of classification (Bourdieu 1989), the matrices of difference (Butler 1993), and the schemata of co-figuration (Sakai 1997). I have coined and used the notion "regimes of difference" (Doerr 2009a) to highlight the normative aspect of such systems of difference, which I continue to use in this book.

Researchers also investigate the ways in which various regimes of difference—race, class, gender—intersect to inform and shape meanings of categories in each system (Crenshaw 1992; Frankenberg 1993; hooks 1989, 1992; Lott 1995; McClintock 1995; Roediger 1991, 1994; Stoler 1995; Wiegman 1995). For example, Stuart Hall (1985) argues that each system of representation of race or ethnicity, class, and gender, with its own history and its own mode of operation for dividing the world, connotes or summons up others when articulating differences. Being of a certain race, for instance, connotes being of a certain class.

Another example is the notion of intersectionality. Kimberlé Crenshaw (1992) suggests a problem when points of intersection, such as black race and female gender, lack specific articulation—she calls this "intersectionality." For example, in the legal domain, there has been a discourse to talk about the black experience, which is usually that of the black male, and there has been a discourse to talk about the female experience, which is usually that of the white female, but no discourse of the black female experience. This lack of discourse about black women at the intersection of the regimes of difference of race and gender marginalized them by not providing a discourse that frames their experiences.

More recently, these intersections of such regimes of difference have been analyzed more as a way to connect with others—networks—in the theoretical framework of "multi-scalar networks" as suggested by Ayse Çağlar and Nina Glick Schiller (2017). These authors suggest seeing individuals as having diverse, sometimes contradictory, networks through their race, class, gender, religion, sexual orientation, and so on (i.e., similar to the notion of subject positions, though focused on the networks they forge). Focusing on these networks allows one to connect to diverse groups of people, avoiding polarization based on one regime of difference (see Doerr 2022a; Doerr and Kumagai 2022).

In these frameworks, the act of "crossing the border" is rarely discussed. When it is, it is in the context of the border being kept despite people crossing it—passing, policing, or guarding borders of different kinds, such as ethnic groups (Barth 1969), race, and nation (Lopez 1996)—in ways that highlight these borders. Chapter 1 of this book thus adds an analysis of mixing and border crossing and how that very act that seems to deny or transcend the border highlights the border itself, in the context of race, language, discussions of the global, and volunteer and service learning. These approaches also assume homogeneity within a category, or at least do not investigate what happens inside such a category in terms of seeking to uphold the category. Chapter 2 investigates such processes and shows the simultaneous homogenization and hierarchization occurred in the process of standardization based on such regimes of categories. Chapter 5 suggests "seeing difference in similarity" or assuming that there exist differences between people who apparently share the same subject positions, so that we can start by asking questions regarding their perceptions and actions rather than assuming their similarity.

Regarding individuals' relationships to categories, Louis Althusser (1971) argues that individuals are interpellated into the system of categories. This positioning of individuals as subjects—within systems of categories based on race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and so forth—turns individuals into subjects with a double meaning: on the one hand, individuals are subject to systems of categories because they are hailed or interpellated into them, while on the other hand, they have a sense of free will and act as subjects who are the authors of, and responsible for, their actions. That is, individuals are interpellated as subjects who subject themselves "freely" to a system of difference (ibid.; see also Hall 1985).

Althusser theorizes that individuals are *always already* interpellated into the system of categories. Other researchers modify this and argue that individuals are traversed and constituted as subjects by contradictory interpellations throughout their life, resulting in multiple and layered subject positions. Past interpellations affect present ones, structuring and limiting the repertoire of "decoding" strategies that are available to them. Individuals with diverse histories are thus interpellated differently by the same discourse (Frankenberg 1993; Hall 1985; hooks 1992; Morley 1980; Smith 1988).

Judith Butler (1993) further adds the role of individuals in the production of differences, modifying Althusser's theorization. Butler uses the notion of performativity suggested by a linguist, Austin: rather than describing the existing situation, a performative statement brings out what is said. An example of such a performative statement is "I name this ship Queen Elizabeth II" or "I end this class"; it does not describe the situation but brings forth a new state. Butler then argues that individuals' using a category is a performative act of suggesting that that system of category (she calls it the "matrix of difference")—a category always exists in relation to other categories within a system of categories—is a meaningful way to categorize people. She uses the notion of performativity "not as the act by which a subject brings into being what she/he names, but rather, as that reiterative power of discourse to produce the phenomena that it regulates and constrains" (ibid.: 2).

She calls this a performative act of "citing" a particular matrix of difference (i.e., system of categories or regime of difference) as the norm that keeps that matrix of difference naturalized and materialized as meaningful sets of categories with which to classify people. In reverse, people stop using a specific matrix of difference when that matrix becomes less relevant (for example, land ownership in the past was a more meaningful category with which to divide people and assign different rights and obligations in some societies), which then further makes that matrix less relevant.

That is, it is the "sedimentation" of these citational acts that supports the relevance and thus existence of a specific matrix of difference. There is also some room for individuals to cite alternative matrices of difference, thus creating changes, Butler (1993) argues. We do this daily, every time we use a particular category. However, the citing practices of influential people—politicians, celebrities, researchers, and so on—often have bigger effects.

It is worth noting here that certain categories are cited intentionally by marginalized groups for political ends: strategic essentialism. Usually applied to specific categories, essentialism is the belief in a pure and original essence that is outside the boundaries of the social and therefore is irreducible, unchanging, and constitutive of a given person or thing, ignoring its being historically constructed (Fuss 1989). However, despite its problematic assumptions, such essentialism is politically useful in resistance against domination (Epstein 1987; Hall 1996; Spivak 1993). Moving away from the discussion of whether essentialism is good or evil, Diana Fuss (1989) argues the need to understand essentialisms in plural and investigate what purpose or function each case of essentialism might play. However, in light of the politics of citation, such strategic essentialism continues to cite these categories that are theoretically unhelpful, thus ultimately keeping the marginalized group in the game that marginalized them to start with.

Yet the extent to which this contextuality and its surrounding sociocultural environment shape such an act of citing is still an underdeveloped aspect of this

line of research, which seems to have settled with these approaches that saw their heyday in the 1990s. This book is an attempt to resurrect this line of research and add more contextual approaches to this area by focusing on specific paradoxes.

Based on the aforementioned argument by Plummer (1995), Chapter 1 focuses on the context in which such regimes of difference have been critiqued as things that need to be overcome, showing that the very act of seeking to overcome them paradoxically keeps those regimes of difference intact, if not highlighted further. It becomes problematic to celebrate such overcoming of "difference" when it actually does the opposite. Chapter 2 is a case in which the narrative of standardization—the imposition of the standard—masks the actual hierarchical differentiation that always comes with it, because the narrative—"*standard*ization"—guides what we see. Chapter 3 investigates how the contexts of study abroad that focus on its uniqueness in comparison to other types of college learning push students to notice and talk about the "difference" of a study abroad experience—"immersion in culture"—which then pushes them to highlight the "difference" of the study abroad destination. By introducing a class assignment that applies the same study abroad vocabulary to daily experiences, I show the contextuality of the meaning of words, here categories, introduced by Harris (1990) as mentioned. Chapter 4 highlights the role of subject positions in context by drawing on Plummer's (1995) analyses of the narrator, coaxers, and audience, which will be described more in the next section. Drawing on Harris's argument, which will be elaborated on in the section that follows, Chapter 5 shows the arbitrary meanings given to each category—as "cultural" or otherwise—and their effects.

Overall, the discussions on the politics of difference in the 1990s nonetheless have had little impact, theoretically and practically, on various fields that came to deal with "difference" in the twenty-first century: language education that has been increasingly shaped by the theoretical framework of "translanguaging" (García and Li Wei 2014) in the last couple of decades, which seeks to overcome the notion of language as bounded units while teaching the standard language continues to be its default form; global education that expanded from the turn of the century (Burbules and Torres 2000) as the post-Cold War world came to be seen as becoming "global" (Appadurai 1990; Tsing 2000), supposedly necessitating individuals to cross national borders and negotiate differences, making study abroad an attractive selling point for colleges in the era of neoliberalism that turned education into business (Hickel 2013; Urciuoli 2016, 2018); and volunteer and service work that became prevalent from the late twentieth century due to the neoliberalist withdrawal of government services and investment in the moral self (Callanan and Thomas 2005; Conran 2011).

I have been working in such fields (Doerr 2017a, 2017b, 2017c, 2017d, 2018, 2019c, 2020a, 2022b, 2022c, 2023d, 2024a, 2024c; Doerr and Taïeb 2017) to bring in these discussions of the politics of difference. This book is part of this

effort, examining discussions and practices regarding how to engage with difference in the fields of language education, global education, specifically study abroad, and volunteer and service work, with a hope to expand other fields that deal with difference. In the next sections, I elaborate on the abovementioned theoretical frameworks that help such examination.

Socially Constructed Narratives: Plummer

Analyzing sexuality-related coming-out stories, Plummer (1995) argues that any self-narratives are about "socially constructed biographical objects." They are socially constructed because they are created not only by the narrator but also by coaxers and the audience as well as existing narratives and vocabulary, as mentioned earlier. This understanding of narratives applies to all narratives, including the ones I discuss in this book.

Coaxers here are those who guide the storyteller to tell a certain kind of story. For example, lawyers questioning a person who is testifying in court, ethnographers asking questions during their fieldwork, job interviewers asking candidates questions to see if they are qualified for the job, detectives interviewing a person at a police precinct about their alibi, and talk-show hosts, such as Oprah Winfrey, drawing stories out of their guests on TV all ask specific questions to arrive at certain types of narratives. For example, a person may tell the story of how they cooked their spaghetti very differently depending on which one of the above is their coaxer.

The audience also affects how someone tells a story. A judge and jury, family and friends at home, other job interviewees competing for the same job, additional detectives, the unknown people who will be watching the video recording of the storyteller's narrative, or a large TV audience all influence how people tell their stories.

Existing narratives and vocabularies also shape one's narratives, making them socially constructed. Listening to others' self-narratives helps our own fragmented experiences cohere into intelligible experiences. Plummer argues that the existence of publicly available coming-out stories or the narrative of victimhood via sexual assault prompts many to better understand their often-confusing experiences and retell them in a coherent way. The #MeToo movement is a good example of providing a narrative that persuaded many people to speak up and narrate their experience for the first time in their lives.

Listening to others' narratives not only allows one to understand and tell one's own experience coherently, but also guides one's future practices. For example, hearing others' coming-out stories may push one to come out. Similarly, seeing photos shot at well-known landmarks in specific ways (for example, pretending to hold up the Leaning Tower of Pisa) or seeing others post their lunch on social

media can encourage one to take similar photos and post them on social media as well. That is, existing stories provide one with models for ways to do things and talk about them, thus generating more such stories.

Some stories are accepted more than others. Certain stories lie dormant because society is not yet ready to hear them; they have to wait for their time. Stories of victimization by sexual assault are one such example that have come to be heard more often in recent years (Plummer 1995).

Vocabulary also helps us comprehend our experiences and talk about them. Recently formed words like "passive aggressive" or "gaslighting" give shape to experiences that were previously difficult to pinpoint, even notice, and allow one to communicate them. In addition, exoticizing words, such as "mystical" or "ritual," can make ordinary practices archaic, as Horace Miner demonstrated with his classic piece "Body Ritual among the Nacirema" (1956).

Chapter 1 of this book shows the grip that the notions of "race" and "language" as bounded units—serving as available vocabulary—have, even in the very effort to overcome them. Chapter 2's discussion of standardization illuminates the power of narrative—that standardization is about homogenizing to the standard—to hide its side effect that it always comes with a hierarchical differentiation. Chapter 3 shows the effects of the coaxer, the audience, and vocabulary in the context of study abroad, where daily experiences during the stay tend to be narrated with vocabulary that highlights adventurousness and self-transformation; applying the same vocabulary in mundane life "at home" can make it appear exciting and self-transformative. Chapter 4 illustrates the role of the audience in shaping the narrator's sense of difference, as they navigate the work of self-positioning through narrative practices. Chapter 5 suggests the existence of two divergent narratives about difference—some things are fundamentally different though understandable if we deploy cultural relativism (that is, seen as "cultural difference") and some things are regular behavior that needs to be corrected (that is, seen as "teenager problems")—and explores how they spawn paradoxical tolerance and intolerance, respectively.

In short, Plummer's framework allows us to think about why a narrator chooses a specific category through which to talk about specific content by focusing on the context of such utterances, which is further analyzed in terms of Harris's understanding of language, to which I turn now.

Integrationist Linguistics: Harris

Calling his perspective integrationist linguistics, Harris (1990) challenges our common sense that there is a system of language, differentiating one language from another clearly (such as English, Japanese, French, Arabic, and so on), and that we draw from such a system to create sentences. Harris argues that, instead,

what we have is merely communication between individuals that emerges with the use of not only words but also gestures, as well as assumptions about each other and the situation. However, linguists have abstracted grammatical rules and listed meanings of words to make them appear systematic and stable, whose results Harris views to be incorrect and misleading.

That is, Harris argues that language is not a stable system of representations (i.e., grammar structure, vocabulary and its meaning) that can be described and studied separate from specific contexts of utterance; rather, what is described as language is a by-product of communication in a specific context (Harris 1990; see also Harris 1998; Hutton 2011; Pennycook 2004). That is, we cannot think of language without thinking about the actual moment when the language is being used; language cannot be thought of in the abstract.

Harris uses the notion of "integration" because he understands that linguistic and nonlinguistic practices must be integrated for a communicative event to occur. For example, when you ask someone to shut a window, there need to be several components: an open window and an addressee who knows what a window is and how to shut it, and is in a position to do so. The actual words requesting to shut the window are merely a part of this bigger communicative practice that integrates various components. Even though it does not involve words, the addressee's act of shutting the window in response is a part of this sequence of communication. That is, words are merely one component of linguistic acts, which makes every utterance a new utterance, even if the same words are uttered each time, because each context is new and gives different roles and meanings to the uttered words. For example, the same "please close the window" can mean "please don't ignore me and close the window" when said the third time (Harris n.d.).

Integrationist linguistics investigates the communicational function of the sign (i.e., word) in context and how such a "context" gets constructed. Its basic premise is "no contextualization, no sign" because "the act of contextualization is the act by which the sign is identified as a sign" (Harris n.d.). In other words, the context is not given but constructed through distinguishing what is relevant and what is not for communication. This is the object of study for integrationist linguistics. For example, a person playing a computer game may not be an important context the first time someone asks them to close the window. But it may become part of the context when someone asks them to close the window for the third time. This is because, by the time this someone asks them to close the window for the third time, the asker interprets that they are ignoring them because they are busy playing a computer game: here, their playing the computer game has become an important context of the communication, affecting the sentence "please close the window" to mean "please don't ignore me and close the window." Each speaker contextualizes the words differently, informed by their personal experiences and knowledge—for example, some people get so preoccupied with computer games that they cannot hear others. This reliance on

individuals' personal experience and knowledge sometimes results in a misunderstanding (Harris n.d.).

Harris goes further to say that grammatical rules—and even the belief that every language has its own grammar—were invented by grammarians (Harris n.d.). That is, invented are the ideas that (1) grammar rules govern the "correct forms" of speech, (2) the "correct forms" of speech are approved by the "best" speakers, usually the educated upper class, and (3) grammar rules describe or underlie the actual linguistic practices of the majority of speakers of the language or the speakers of the standard language (another invention, as will be discussed in Chapter 2). Grammatical rules merely "lay down prescriptions" in the name of some authority and maintain "pedagogic fictions" for educational and political purposes (ibid.).

Overall, to Harris (1990: 45), the understandings that "there are languages" and that "words have meanings" are myths. The name of the language, such as "English" or "cockney," cannot be treated as predetermined and having secure correspondence to a specific system of linguistic "rules"; rather, it is an object of research about the popular use of language names (Harris n.d.).

While Harris's argument is about language and the use of words, it can be applied to our understanding of categories in regimes of difference. His focus on the fluidity and ephemerality of words and thus categories highlights the contextually constructed nature of categories, especially when categories are seen as becoming irrelevant, though such conceptualization itself relies on the existence of categories (Chapter 1) or seen as standardized thus homogenized, all the while their insides are hierarchically differentiated (Chapter 2). The use of words in specific contexts—when one is asked to use them with specific prompts—shows the importance of seeing the contexts in order to understand the meaning of the words (Chapter 3). In line with the narratives that are constructed in a specific context informed by existing narratives, including their vocabulary, Harris's view of the contextual nature of words helps us better understand the contextual expression of difference, as shaped by the subject positions in context (Chapter 4), and the meaning of difference, as deriving from "cultural difference" or not (Chapter 5).

These theoretical frameworks—McDermott and Varennes's, Plummer's, and Harris's—show how regimes of difference are constructed in ways that are full of paradoxes that need to be examined in given contexts, rather than imposing stable categories that skew our understanding of how such differentiation operates and what effects it has; they also show how understanding the fluidity of such categories leads us to challenge their negative effects. This book is an attempt to investigate such workings in order to avoid pitfalls and revise our frameworks to understand the situation in more nuanced ways to create better responses to the politics of difference. Each chapter does so in a different context, which I introduce below.

Structure of This Book

Chapter 1, "The Paradox of Mixing and Border Crossing: A Necessary Reliance on Unit Thinking," discusses the paradox of "mixing" and "border crossing" by focusing on unit thinking—a worldview that sees things as made of bounded units that are internally homogeneous. The notion of mixing or border crossing is often used to show that the bounded units in unit thinking are no longer relevant. However, paradoxically, such a notion further perpetuates the meaningfulness of units because mixing or border crossing is premised on having units to be mixed or crossed, respectively. This chapter discusses four cases. One is that of "race-mixing," which relies on the existence of "pure races" to be mixed. The second case is the framework of "translanguaging" in language that seeks to overcome the notion of language as bounded units (they call them "named languages"), while paradoxically relying on the very notion of language as bounded units to show how they are mixed. The third case, global education, specifically study abroad, celebrates the act of crossing the border of nation-states, all the while assuming and further emphasizing the meaningfulness of such borders by *citing* them (Butler 1993). Although not all study abroad programs do this, such celebration of border crossing to become familiar with "difference" is problematic when it actually paradoxically highlights that difference, thus perpetuating unit thinking. The fourth case is the field of volunteer and service work in which it is usually seen that doing such work allows the helpers to understand and become closer to the helped, who are often seen as of different class as well as race (Coles 1999; LaDousa 2014). This chapter shows that the setup of labeling certain unpaid work as "volunteer or service work" paradoxically distances the people they serve because, if the same kind of work was done for friends or family, it would not be called "volunteer or service work": it is more likely to be seen as expected acts, as an obligation rather than an act of altruism. By illustrating how the notions of "mixing" or "border crossing" paradoxically perpetuate unit thinking because their formulations are premised on the existence of units, this chapter suggests ways out of such unit thinking by offering some post-unit thinking approaches.

Chapter 2, "The Paradox of Standardization: Normative Unit Thinking and Its Simultaneous Homogenization and Hierarchical Differentiation," illustrates the paradox of "normalization" in which the move aimed at homogenizing people paradoxically differentiates people in hierarchical ways based on their differing proximity to the ideal model that is imposed on them. This chapter examines three cases. The first is that of education, which imposes "legitimate knowledge" on all students, all the while ranking them based on how close they are to knowing all of the legitimate knowledge. The second case is language standardization, which seeks to create language as an internally homogeneous unit that matches the nation-state boundary. This involves the paradoxical double move of seeking to create homogeneity in speech while hierarchically differentiating and high-

lighting different speeches in order to push people to abandon and change their own speech. The third case is that of volunteer and service work, which aims at eliminating poverty by helping those in poverty, yet highlights the hierarchy between the "helper," who can afford to volunteer or do service work, and the "helped," who are rendered helpless. Though the aim of volunteer or service work is to improve the living conditions of the "helped" to make them similar to the living conditions experienced by the "helper"—a homogenizing force—the structure of such work paradoxically highlights and further perpetuates the hierarchized gap between them (Henry and Breyfogle 2006; Sin 2009).

The chapters that follow address the paradoxical contours of difference seen in study abroad experiences. Chapter 3, "The Paradox of Narrative: The Self-Fulfilling Prophecy of the New and the Different," shows that, by expecting to encounter the difference that is its raison-d'être (see Doerr 2018 for critique), study abroad is a setup that constantly asks students what new experiences they have had and what they learned from them, which pushes students to notice new experiences in their daily life more than they do otherwise. In the meantime, the difference is highlighted, creating oxymoronic situations of difference talk: the narrative of difference not so much describes difference but seeks out and highlights difference. Pointing out this paradox of narratives of difference, this chapter illustrates how existing narratives as well as setups and language—the sequence of story and vocabulary—encourage study abroad students to talk about their life-transforming experience through encountering difference in the study abroad destination. This chapter thus introduces a class activity I designed called Daorba Yduts that applies a similar setup and vocabulary to mundane experience, which turns daily life into an experience as exciting and new as study abroad, as a way to illustrate the effects of vocabulary and attention.

Chapter 4, "The Paradox of Proximity: Subject Position Proximity and the Oppositional Articulation of Difference," introduces the study abroad narratives written by students to suggest that their proximity to the destination paradoxically pushed them to emphasize difference and vice versa, what I call *oppositional articulation of difference*. Calling this phenomenon "the paradox of proximity," this chapter suggests the notion of *subject position proximity* to analyze these paradoxical processes and investigate the ways in which these students constructed themselves in relation to their perceived subject position proximity to the people in question against the backdrop of wider cultural politics. Challenging the static view of difference inherent in unit thinking, this paradoxical practice is also a type of post-unit thinking. Although this paradox can happen outside the study abroad context, given study abroad's reliance on the binary of home–host society difference, emphasizing this complexity of difference to students would be useful.

Chapter 5, "The Paradox of Tolerance: Cultural Relativism, Othering, and 'Seeing Difference in Similarity,'" shows how study abroad students' differences can be tolerated if they are seen as "cultural" but not when they are seen as

"regular" differences. I argue that the act of tolerance is paradoxically the act of othering as "cultural difference." I also reverse it and say that when we are applying cultural relativism, the act of recognizing difference can lead to the will to understand and thus tolerance. Examining cases of seeing people as the same as yourself and thus assuming the reasons behind their actions without seeking to understand where they are coming from, I suggest a need to "see the difference in similarity." This is based on the understanding that the recognition of difference leads to the will to understand why someone does things the way they do. Such "seeing difference in similarity" can be post-unit thinking because it challenges the stable border of the unit and its meaning as well as its internal homogeneity. This adds to discussions on the regimes of difference in which, although multiple regimes of differences and their intersections are acknowledged, each category or subject position is still related as internally homogeneous: unit thinking.

The conclusion, "Challenging Paradoxes of Difference toward Post-Unit Thinking," synthesizes the discussions of these chapters and reviews assumptions behind the paradoxes and the post-unit thinking each chapter suggested.

From these examinations of paradoxes involved in the politics of difference, this book adds to the general discussion of the politics of difference a more fluid, contextual, and nuanced understanding of regimes of difference that can only be understood as situated articulation. Through these analyses, I hope to open up discussions of other ways that we can formulate our theoretical tools in understanding what we seem to continue to see as "differences."