here's your postcard
I would like to thank my thesis mentor, professor Jason Johnson, for his guidance and support in the creation of this booklet.

Also, I thank professors Rod Underwood and Les Smith for making Polyark17/WorldTour3 possible, as well as Dr. Barb Stedman for her continued guidance through the honors process. Thank you, Jessica Day, for lending your photography and companionship skills.

Finally, I would like to thank my mom and dad for supporting me throughout my education and making my experiences on the world tour possible.
the following is an exercise in exploration
application
experimentation
introspection
life

it is by no means and under no circumstances complete

it will be and by no means and under no circumstances ever be complete
It is my position that we inhabit a world with not one universal culture common to humanity, but rather many distinct methods of living that grant character to our differences. While in concept I would contend that most groups of people share in common key aspects of the definition of culture, such as a religion, arts, and social institutions, I argue that the vast array of ways of life today negates a uniform world culture. Culture is a morphing and ever changing entity, therefore, nothing remains constant for longer than it is upheld by the participants, but that which they leave behind greatly shapes the present and future.

It seems history dictates how one perceives “culture” in regards to appreciation of the past. With this in mind, today’s world faces a change in how people interact. Technological advances are clearly making “the world” more accessible and promote a certain cultural edification for everyone, for better or for worse. While we all maintain relatively isolated social backgrounds and customs, the availability of information about other cultures is becoming more easily shared among groups. However, I uphold the belief that regardless of a growing cultural knowledge-base, sub-cultures will continue to uphold the past while embracing an individualistic path for the future.

As part of human nature, we seek others to share in what we find comfortable and familiar, and many times without question. Social norms defined by a certain culture in the past may not be perceived similarly by an insider today even though one could argue it is the “same” culture. While we all share general instinctual cultural similarities as humans living within a society, “culture” remains defined as a particular form of civilization.
this is what i know
Q: how do seemingly unrelated thoughts trigger each other?
how did i get from one to six?

native american

santa fe

dr. hoilman

mahabharata

king suryavarman II

angkor wat

to understanding of self

close your eyes
After spending the past days in Venice, Florence, and Rome, my understanding of defining “culture” has been vastly expanded. From city to city, even street to street, I believe that the [environment one lives in shapes the “culture” of a person, and vice versa.] Our tour guide in Venice spoke of the hundreds of chance meetings that a local experiences while navigating through the city. An expanse of canals, pathways, and linked squares forces interaction while walking to work, school, or for leisure, and is a part of life that many Americans cannot experience. Even the geography of a place greatly influences the way in which people live: hills, for instance, when combined with narrow pedestrian streets, offer a level of interest and excitement that a flat landscape cannot. In Rome, the people reside in a bustling and quite modern city while also retaining the aura of ancient civilization, a segment of culture that I believe we, as Americans, cannot grasp in our youthful nation. We also learned while in Florence that it is the best region in which to learn the Italian language. Like most spoken language, dialects and accents sprout in different areas, and, according to our guide, Florence offers the most pure Italian. My belief is that this in itself proves that a global culture cannot exist: some part of culture as uniform as a means of communication varies so much from place to place in a single country, therefore, the cultural differences of the areas are defined by differences in speech. With this in mind, we depart tomorrow for Athens, a place in which we will have no familiarity with the language, and will rely on more globally uniform ways to communicate, such as nods and hand gestures. Our general “culture” as humans will allow us to interact, however, the new experiences will far outweigh our more intimate cultural connections to the Athenians.
In the past several weeks I have made a transition in travel from Europe, Eurasia, to the Middle-East, and to Southeast Asia. People remain the same throughout the world, with similar goals and aspirations, such as good education for their children, or seeking fulfillment in this life and the next. However, as we learned in Cambodia from the tuk-tuk drivers, we are "same same... but different," meaning humans share a common general existence, but the means in which we exercise it varies greatly due to cultural differences.

Our journey through the Muslim countries, such as Turkey, Egypt, and U.A.E. were definitely eye-opening in terms of observing cultural differences. Arranged marriages, for instance, are imbedded deeply into traditional Islamic practice, but seem absurd to people given so much freedom of choice like ourselves. Religion boasts an enormous range of cultural digression, spanning from the Greek Orthodox church we observed in Athens to the Buddhist and Confucian followers in southeast Asia. The differences in these religions is apparent and plays a great role in the lifestyles of people—even an icon as American as McDonald’s caters to Asia's cultural differences by offering "Prosperity burgers" during the Chinese New Year celebration.

An entity as powerful as a national government also dictates greatly how people live, as individuals and as a part of a whole. We have seen republics, "republics", monarchies, "dictatorships", socialism, political corruption—all of which determine how people function within a cultural region. In Cambodia, people are stuck in a deep hole dug by its leadership, trapping the common people into poverty with no way to socially ascend other than by force or by bribery. In Thailand, the figure-head king remains very powerful in the people's minds, as "long live the king: banners and yellow colored shirts may be seen in support everywhere. These observances are very different than our Western ideologies like political freedom of speech and a system of checks and balances.

One of the most obvious cues to the ways in which people live differently is to look to the architecture of the places people call home across the world. In southeast Asia, stilt-houses are quite prevalent, produced that way to satisfy the needs of the people per geographic region. This way of living is very different than the cave dwellings we saw in Grenada, or the skyscrapers in Dubai. Economy, occupation, and education are all linked with the "home" lifestyle, determining how people are able to live. Cultural differences like gender and race are still quite influential in how leisure, child-rearing, and eating are approached.

After analyzing my experiences traveling the world thus far, I have solidified my position that a "one world culture" goes against the definition of culture, and is negated. While people share common interests and characteristics, the environment in which we are shaped is a product of itself. **Blanket terms such as religion, government, and architecture are so geographically and socially specific that culture varies from door to door.**
"The overall number of victims of Auschwitz in the years 1940-1945 is estimated at between 1,100,000 and 1,500,000 people. The majority of them, and above all the mass transports of Jews who arrived beginning in 1942, died in the gas chambers."

: www.auschwitz.org.pl
to truly understand, one needs to know what is written in books.

to truly understand, one needs to see, to feel, to touch, smell, hear, and to taste.

to truly understand, one needs to develop a cognitive process linking knowledge with emotion.

to truly understand, one needs stop...and ponder.

why do i need to understand this?

A:
COLOR IS INSIDE
<perception>

reality
Main Entry: globalization
Function: noun
: the act or process of globalizing: the state of being globalized; especially: the development of an increasingly integrated global economy marked especially by free trade, free flow of capital, and the tapping of cheaper foreign labor markets

a man with an uzi escorts americans around cair

you can see a Pizza Hut from the Great Sphinx
As our journey has taken us through the rest of Asia and now back into Europe, I now reflect on the "world culture" issues that I have been observing throughout the trip. Based on my experiences to date, I now feel a stronger sense of an evolving culture that is distinct to a certain place. I have seen evidence that not only do people live in different cultures in the present, but that those will continue to change, giving and taking with other cultures as time progresses. While the basis of culture still remains the same, with religion, government, and traditions, the jumps that we have made strengthen my position that people’s lifestyles are too diverse to support a world culture.

Our stay in China was quite interesting because we were able to see first hand the growth that has taken place in their society in the past five years and where they will be in another five. Our tour guides provided us with very insightful personal stories that support the idea of a continuum of cultural development. In Beijing, our middle-aged guide spoke of how superstitiously he still follows Buddhist traditions, placing much emphasis on the Chinese Lunar Year and it was evident that he is still affected by the Maoist philosophies taught to him as a child. He also talked about how his parents still live in the countryside and, as the eldest, it will be his responsibility to care for them and to visit them as they age, according to tradition. On the contrary, our young guide in Xian was obviously quite progressive, denouncing his family for supporting communism. It was amazing to hear him talking about secretly buying Nike clothing on the black markets five years ago and now he is walking around in all American name brands. I now have a sense of why China is going to be a huge global issue as the culture develops within a few years and as my generation comes into power—I wonder what will be next.
Also important: Our tours through the former Soviet block have proven how culture may be controlled, changed, and made different from all others. It is unbelievable to think that Krakow had a strong Jewish population less than a century ago and now one would struggle to find a single person—the culture of that area will be changed forever as they still cope with the lasing effects of Nazi occupation. In Russia, I believe we all learned what a ‘cold’ environment it was, with dreary functionalist architecture and an isolated feeling for a society. Many of these smaller countries are now trying to find an economy after the Soviet collapse, and it is interesting to see the television commercials advertising for tourism in places that we, as Americans, would not think of visiting, as these places struggle to find an economic niche. 

Traveling has really made me realize how [unbelievably connected we are globally by a sales market of production and trade]. The flow of goods and services is a worldwide issue, but is very different from place to place. We have seen the control of labor in Vietnam, and a vision for them to move towards large-scale farming needing less labor. We have seen the resources available in Mongolia and now wait to see what powers try to exploit them (as Cambodia is exploited). In many places, the picture between urban and rural is night and day, as Kuala Lumpur is a super-modern hub, but the Malaysian countryside is still ruled by small jungle communities.

My position over the past three months as a tourist has placed an interesting label on my chest, another way to determine differences in culture. In many parts of Asia, I was seen as a VIP guest commodity, a walking dollar that needed to be harvested for survival. In Europe again, I feel more like a necessary nuisance, a culture that puts up with me but will be happy to see me go. All of these places and people continue to shape my views of culture in the world, but of this I am sure, there is no way to stamp out or to define culture because it will be different tomorrow.
"it is thrilling to not know where you're going"
[de]evolution of
architecture
Time back in the United States has allowed for reflection and digestion of all I have experienced over the past 4 months: a whirlwind journey across the world to observe first hand the many cultures of humanity. Groups of people are defined by their beliefs, customs, governments, and histories, and within these sub-categories lay the differences between them. Whether a line may be drawn or not, separating some people from others, a cross-over of societal belonging exists even among a closely knit faction. Due to even the most arbitrary of differences such as foods, transportation type, economy, and climate, there is an inherent fault in the validity of an argument for the existence of “one world culture.”

While my understanding of the definition of culture did not develop on my travels, the belief that humanity is comprised of countless cultural characterizations was proven by the vast scope of people observed across the world. In Venice, people travel by boat. In Istanbul, people wake up to a public call to Islamic prayer. In Hanoi, the Vietnam War is referred to as the “American War.” In Spain, the oranges are actually sweet. [\text{A dinner in Stockholm could buy a week's dinner in Phnom Penh}] and healthcare is provided rather than people left to the street. If anything, the world tour has provided me a much greater appreciation for seeing the differences in people and respecting and trying to understand how their lives compare and contrast to my own.
One of the most striking arguments against a world culture is the diversity of culture even within a single family; a group of people living in the same place, under the same government and economy, same religion, and many of the same keystones crucial to defining a culture. Within only this group, time has provided for three generations of social evolution: a wife may spend all day preparing food and watching children while a husband rides his scooter to the market to sell statues of King Tut. Their marriage has been arranged and family relationships are strictly regulated by custom and religion—the wife cannot even be in the same room in her home as her father-in-law. In a developing China, this same family may be split up as older generations stay in the countryside as the young move to the city for better quality of life and education.

An interesting point in the trip came as we crossed over from St. Petersburg into Helsinki. Several days in Scandinavia felt like home after the bizarre experiences of the prior month, especially trying to survive in a “cold” Russia. In another turn, our last few days in London were quite strange due to the re-emergence of the English language. Yes, it actually felt odd to walk down the street and to realize that I was able to understand the conversations going on around me. Upon arrival in Chicago what did I do but jump into a car, something I had not done for three and a half months, to travel via interstate (not Eurorail) to my home.

Interactions, conscious or not, with a multitude of people throughout the journey have solidified my appreciation for the absolute differences in culture across the globe. We live differently, period. Had I been born in Cambodia, I may be selling postcards this very instant at an ancient temple instead of analyzing how my culture has shaped me into a different person because A] who knew soccer could be so much fun, B] American Chinese food is much better than Chinese Chinese food, and C] I don’t need a television anymore except to gain knowledge about the people I now have a human connection with and to learn more about their culture because it is still so foreign to me.
everything is a commodity
this is a real photo however, what is depicted is a fabricated
what else lies hidden right beneath our feet
at what point does tourism become destructive

to this little boy demanding 5 bucks to take his picture with his cute donkey?
this is minimalism

it is in Mongolia
it is a way of life
how do you apply and react

RAFAEL IGLESIAS 2/3/08

lecture response

"Our cities are not made up of buildings...

but our cities are made up of everything else"

Architecture dominates... then what is left? Without architecture, culture is stripped down to the people that inhabit places. People make up communities and societies that create the buildings to house their culture. Ultimately, cities are made up of the rivers and valleys that make them acceptable places to live. At that point, a history is made & a reason to continue society there is solidified. As cities grow and die it is apparent that the "life" of a city is made up of the "everything else" because buildings alone cannot sustain a culture. A complex infrastructure of variables must be present to make up a livable city!
to the past... in the present

BRIAN BELL lecture 2.25.08

AID ARCHITECTURE

A bus stop CAN change a community (it's the little things, details!) i.e. lay down a stepping mat in muddy places!

This lecture was a inspiration in creating ACTION. As architects, we have an obligation to make people's lives better through design. We must direct attention to the economic and social aspects of design that affect how people live. In this manner, a little work and care can go a long way! Good design is possible to integrate with helping make our communities better... it just takes patience, creativity, and a vision to change the world.

LOOK AROUND FOR SOMETHING TO DO!
This is what I don't know.
This is what I don't know.
This is what I don't know.
This is what I don't know.
This is what I don't know.
This is what I don't know.
This is what I don't know.
This is what I don't know.
This is what I don't know.
This is what I don't know.
This is what I don't know.
This is what I don't know.
This is what I don't know.
This is what I don't know.
This is what I don't know.
This is what I don't know.
This is what I don't know.
This is what I don't know.
This is what I don't know.
This is what I don't know.
This is what I don't know.
This is what I don't know.
This is what I don't know.
This is what I don't know.
This is what I don't know.
This is what I don't know.
This is what I don't know.
This is what I don't know.
This is what I don't know.
This is what I don't know.
This is what I don't know.
It has been a year since returning from the journey of a lifetime; an intellectual and emotional immersion into a world that words cannot describe. I continue to find aspects of daily life that bring me back to the day I stood in awe in Pol Pot's killing fields or roamed through bustling Turkish markets. I continue to analyze my own culture and my role within with an open mind and, either through intense introspection or through a chance cognitive fumbling, I am able to make connections relating my World Tour experiences to life as it continues.

An internal discussion on the existence of a world culture continues as well. I have not seen a Buddhist stupa in a year. I have not seen an onion dome or been to a cobra show. The food that sustained me for 3 months, the lamb kabob, is not even legal to prepare in the US. I could not tell you where you could find a mosque; or what was in that soup that one night in China. I have been forever changed by all of the cultures I had the opportunity to experience.

I have come to realize that the single gesture that bridges all people is a smile. The unifying element of humanity is happiness, and that is apparent in my interaction with global people. The Russians are gruff, isolated, and stoic. The Turks are welcoming, friendly, and good-humored. The menacing Khmer Rouge still lurk in the jungles of Cambodia while the country's children peddle wares to tourists with faces beaming. These are my assumptions based on relatively no experience with the real people of any of these places--the people outside of the gem shops and cloth factories. A people's past has the ability to have such a powerful impact on culture that outsiders are blindly suckered into buying into phenomenon's like stereotyping and generalizations (and a t-shirt too).

What do you think? Do you think that each person is his/her own culture that is influenced and altered daily? I had the opportunity to travel the world to see these people with my own eyes.

I did this through the window of a tour bus. One small portal to my surrounding world... What do you think the guy on the other side of the bus saw? >
sources of inspiration used in the creation of this booket:

(pre- and post-trip)

www.archinect.com: cultural discussion forums
www.architectureforhumanity.org
Bell, Brian. CAP lecture series; 2.25.08
Bourdain, Anthony. No Reservations; The Travel Channel
Brown, Samantha. Passport to Europe; Travel Channel
Design Like You Give a Damn. ed. Arch. for Humanity
Dr. Dennis Hoilman: personal reflection on Honors 201.202.203 series
Dr. Barb Stedman: personal reflection on Honors 189 course
Iglesias, Rafael. CAP lecture series; 2.3.08

mongolia china singapore belgium
france vietnam poland greece england
eypt finland germany united arab
emirates czech republic sweden italy
austria turkey cambodia malaysia
netherlands thailand spain russia

ulaan bator beijing hong kong xian avignon paris amsterdam vienna
dubai abu dhabi prague istanbul madrid barcelona granada seville
istpetersburg siberia siberia siem reap mui ne warsaw krakow
athens patras ephesus singapore kuala lumpur helsinki stockholm
brussels bugge venice rome london florence hanoi halong bay
and the small girl pictured to the right
she was trained to extort money from me
we played instead
and we smiled
we are human