No one who has read this weekend’s *New York Times*, and the article by Suzanne Daley about experiments with possible forms of the global university, can escape the fact that, today, the university, and more particularly the American university, appears in need of direction. It is disoriented and reoriented by the fact of globalization, although the nature and dimensions of this phenomenon, globalization, remain opaque. A plethora of institutional forms and structures attest to the complexity of the problem that it poses for the university. Indeed, the range of forms is astonishing: satellite campuses and off-shore degree-granting programs, extended study-abroad programs, and partnerships with national universities elsewhere. Some welcome local residents, some serve as magnets for international students who do not wish to or cannot travel to, and enter the United States. There is no shortage of approaches to what feels like an imperative, one that is summed up by the title of this conference: ‘Go Global.’

The imperative bespeaks a sense of crisis. But the university is that kind of institution which often seems perpetually in crisis. One might think back, for example, to Jean-François Lyotard’s 1979 volume, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, as a particularly significant address to the transformations of the university and its forms of knowledge production. That landmark text was commissioned by the Conseil des Universités of the government of Quebec at the beginning of the digital age. But one could go much further back, to Immanuel Kant’s *Conflict of the Faculties*, published in 1798, to get a sense of the depth of this perpetual crisis. That would be more than we could address here, except that Kant published
a little book in the same year entitled *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*. And, due to my own disciplinary affiliation, I am interested in the ways in which the crisis of the university has affected and been inflected by the question of anthropology.

Philosophers are fond of invoking the *Conflict of the Faculties*, but most people are embarrassed by the *Anthropology*. How can the man who authored the magisterial Critiques of Pure and Practical reason, among other things, have generated this little assemblage of bigotries? Yet, at the opening of Kant’s embarrassing little book is a statement that must give us pause: “All cultural progress, which represents the education of man, aims at putting acquired knowledge and skill to use in the world. The most important object of culture, to whom such knowledge and skill can be applied is Man because he is his own ultimate purpose.” Kant continues, “To recognize him according to his species, as an earthly creature endowed with reason deserves to be called *knowledge of the world*, even though he is only one of the all the creatures on earth” (3) Now, for Kant, anthropology was something to be pursued after formal education. In 1798, it exceeded the concept of the university and it would be another hundred years before the discipline could be established here at Columbia. Beyond the university, in Kant’s time, anthropology’s function was “to seek knowledge of Man as a citizen of the world” (4). The rhetoric appears uncannily contemporary, and as did the strategy by which it was to be fulfilled. Kant advocated travel and reading as a means to access this necessary *universal knowledge*, which he said, would “always precede local knowledge” (5).

Now, the *Conflict of the Faculties* claims that the university should be governed by an “idea of reason” in such a manner that it would be possible to separate out two ends of scholarly activity: those “that give rise to basic science” and those which inform “the incidental and empirical ends that can be systematized” (Derrida, 143). In other words, he advocated a radical
separation of pure and applied sciences. If it were ever conceivable, this opposition is no longer tenable, not least, as Jacques Derrida reminds us, in his revisiting of Kant’s text, because knowledge production in the sciences—even basic sciences—is increasingly subject to military ends. Long before Derrida, our own University President, and former Commander in Chief, Dwight D. Eisenhower, had coined the term ‘military industrial complex,’ to recognize this imbrication. But it acquires new salience now, when national and international security demand that “research programs…encompass the entire field of information, the stockpiling of knowledge, the workings and thus the essence of language and of all semiotic systems, translation, coding and decoding, the play of presence and absence…hermeneutics, semantics, structural and generative linguistics, pragmatics, rhetoric” (Derrida, 143). I am quoting Derrida here to demonstrate that the humanities are not exempt from this re-orientation. What he attributed, in 1983, to a certain militarization, we now speak of as a function of globalization—and we may wonder at this lexical shift. Yet, at either end of this brief period, which Lyotard christened postmodern, there is the question of the function of the university. And the question of anthropology. What is its purpose? And, in view of what? Not incidentally, Derrida posed this question in response to an essay written 2 years previously, by the anthropologist James Siegel, about the relationship between Cornell and its world. I can only second his call for a rigorous anthropology of the university and its systems of evaluation, which he called “indispensable to the exercise of academic responsibility” (145).

For many anthropologists, Kant’s rhetoric is improbably relevant today: prepare students to be citizens of the world. Indeed, that is often the stated goal of the Global University. But what does it mean to be a citizen of the world? This is an urgent question for those who are attempting, and rightly so, to conceive of the pedagogical task that confronts the Global
University seeking to train students for global citizenship. But time is short, so I shall be extremely schematic.

The first model is one in which we train students for a globality conceived along the model of cosmopolitanism, in which individuals are brought together in shared recognition of the same structures of personhood, rights and obligations. It holds out an image of universality as that which is superimposed on cultural difference, and grants a relatively determining function to legal and juridical institutions. The question of culture, by which I mean historically particular forms of ordering social life, becomes a problem of management from within this paradigm. And ‘cultural literacy’, or familiarity with local language-made worlds, constitutes a technique in the managerial apparatus. Basically, it posits homogeneous systems of thought that can be conceived in terms of rules and principles on which basis one could learn to decode and predict future behaviors. In a context where management is also a military task, it often generates discourses about the ‘mind’ of x or y culture. This is the kind of discourse that, quite famously, produces military policy on the basis of a fantasized ‘Arab Mind.’ But it also gave us the work of the ‘culture at a distance’ school, most famously represented by Columbia’s own Ruth Benedict. Her *Chrysanthemum and the Sword* was to mid-century US military policy in Japan what *Raphael Patai’s* book is to our own moment.

The second model prepares students for globality on the basis of a presumed universal translatability. It treats all cultures as comparable, but conceives of comparison as a question of parallelism, encouraging students to find similar principles everywhere, albeit in different forms. This essentially multicultural model is often useful for capital insofar as capital needs to move, and has increasingly made culture and cultural difference a site of value. With respect to the
latter, I am thinking of both cultural tourism and those dimensions of the commodity economy that mobilize the idea of indigenous knowledge as a means of creating surplus value.

A third model teaches globality as the telos of capital, and reads cultural difference as a vanishing trace within a system that tends toward homogenization. This model implies a trajectory of de-localization, and makes historicization the primary instrument of anthropology. In this case, culture is not that to be managed but that in need of memorialization. A very considerable element of the international culture industry is premised on this vision.

There is a fourth model that arises at the point where these three intersect, but to grasp it we need to understand the order of knowledge production in the world more generally, and perhaps most especially in those areas which have typically been the terrain of anthropology—namely the places marginalized and minoritized within globality. At a workshop I recently attended at the Max Planck Institute in Berlin, this mode of knowledge production was entitled ‘experimentalization.’ Experimentalization resembles what Derrida had called ‘finalisation,’ by which he meant ends-oriented science, but is characterized by a structure that distributes the means and ends of knowledge along the lines of geopolitical history, and class difference. It refers to the subjection of certain, impoverished populations to the role of scene for knowledge-production. By virtue of colonial histories, these polities have infrastructures that are sufficiently coherent to permit the operationalization of experiment. They have also have sovereignties capable of managing populations and creating spaces that are exempt them from the rules that typically bind science in metropolitan centers. Hastened pharmaceutical trials, authorized in the name of epidemic, are perhaps the most obvious example here. In the regime of experimentalization, anthropologists are often asked to ‘control for culture.’ This does not mean they do so, but it is the task most frequently fantasized for them.
What these four models—neither exclusive nor exhaustive—share is a particular understanding of anthropology as the discipline that produces knowledge about others. Many understandings of the Global University tacitly approve this idea, and seek to capitalize on it. They make cultural literacy their center-piece, as though knowledge of other cultures, on any one of these models, could prepare one for globality. But the truth is, we don’t know what globalization will bring. And it is for this unknown future that we must prepare. What the Global University needs to produce is a pedagogy in which students not only learn about other ways of doing and being, but learn to learn from them. This is a task for anthropology as much as the Global University, and the only one that, in my mind, escapes the Faustian bargain by which the Global University would merely become the instrument for training a global elite, for which everything and everyone else is means to its privileged ends.

Now, let me be clear, this re-orientation is enormous, and enormously challenging. It entails nothing less than a reversal of the entire philosophical tradition within which anthropology has been assigned the task of ‘knowing others’ in order to know something called ‘man’ in his generality. It is this task that constitutes the real ‘crisis’ of anthropology, as it has since Edmund Husserl wrote his late, desperate Philosophy and the Crisis of European Man, in 1934. Husserl, the great phenomenologist, wrote this piece after having been evicted, as a Jew, from his place in the university, and it was his attempt to think of Europe as a spiritual rather than a racial formation, and thereby as a possible home for himself. I cannot begin to address the complexity of this important work, so I will summarize it briefly as an argument that the essence of spirit of Europe consists in its devotion to universal philosophy and to a kind of thought which makes infinity and unconditionality central: “scientific truth [including philosophy] claims to be unconditional truth, which involves infinity….Extra-scientific culture, not yet touched by
science, is a task accomplished in finitude” (162-3). The European heirs to Greek philosophy thus possessed for Husserl a ‘theoretical attitude.’ This attitude, with its aspiration to unconditionality and infinity was not to be confused, for him, with the universal but mythico-practical attitude of ‘so-called’ Chinese or Indian philosophy (171). These latter remained mired in the category of what he termed ‘anthropological types.’

Now, this disturbing gesture, at the end of a great and victimized philosopher’s life, must be understood in its own terms, as an effort to argue against the fascist discourses of volk and spirit that had evicted him and that would soon evict so many more. And this turn to the volk which was, for Husserl, an anthropologization of Europe, was conceivable only as a reaction against the aberration by which the Enlightenment distorted the idea of reason in a “one-sided” manner. Yet, the awful limitations of Husserl’s discourse cannot be turned aside—and for two reasons. The first is that Husserlian phenomenology was a major influence in the transformation of anthropology during the period that would later be called the ‘linguistic turn’—that development which coincides with the opening of globalization. The second is that the basic structure, by which Europe has theory and the rest of the world is merely an object of anthropological knowledge, still dominates the idea of the discipline, as it is seen from without, and as it is invoked by many advocates of the Global University.

This double jeopardy can be seen most visibly, in the work of Clifford Geertz, the anthropologist most known outside of the field. Between 1962 and 1970, Geertz was devoted to studying the emergence of new nations out of the process of decolonization, as part of the Committee for the Comparative Study of New Nations at the University of Chicago. In opposition to the political scientists, who dominated the group, Geertz increasingly insisted on culture as the crucial factor in determining the future history of decolonization. In 1973, he
published *The Interpretation of Cultures*, wherein his famous essay, “Thick Description” appeared. There, Geertz acknowledged the importance of Husserl for his own thought and for anthropology. It was against the privacy theory of meaning that Geertz and anthropology revolted, arguing for intersubjectivity against both psychologism and empiricism. In this respect, they were following Husserl back to Kant, who had said that knowing ‘man’ meant knowing the world. But Husserl had thought that knowing the world meant knowing how it was perceived. Geertz then took phenomenological descriptive method and turned it in to a means of accessing the thought of people who, as members of a public culture, shared objects of perception. In 1983, Geertz published a follow-up volume called ‘*Local Knowledge,*’ ironically echoing Kant, who had thought local knowledge was incapable of generating science. Entitled “From the Native’s Point of View’: On Anthropological Understanding,” this essay argued that local knowledge could be discerned in local perceptions of objects and events, if they were situated in terms of the concepts (of, for example, personhood) that governed that cultural universe. By means of symbols, institutions, words and behavior, he wanted to understand the world as it would be seen from elsewhere. This is a legitimate project, but it is not a sufficient one. And it remains within the scheme that makes others mere anthropological types for a European theory that seeks to escape the bounds of its own locality. A better question, at least for the task of globalization concerns not: ‘What is the content of another’s thought?’ but ‘How do they pose their questions?’ The task of anthropology is not merely to thickly describe the way things are, as seen within one or another language-made world. It is to grasp how and by what means that worlds is questioned and transformed, problematized and surpassed.

Let me put this quite simply, the task of globalization is a task of transformation for anthropology which requires the acknowledgment that theory is not exclusive purview of
Europe. And the task of the Global University cannot not simply be to produce and reproduce a
global elite in its own image. It must be to cultivate new forms of learning, which can prepare us
for the not-yet-known forms that globalization will foster. In this context, it seems to me that the
Global Centers may offer an opportunity for re-conceiving the practice by which we have
prepared our students to be citizens in the world. Formerly, we have done so by sending them
‘abroad’ to learn first hand about other places and people. It is, of course, good to travel, as Kant
well said. But it is good to travel because, elsewhere, others are also thinking the problem of
globality. We must dislodge the binary structure in which the global centers are sites for us to
merely expand our own knowledge about that site. There is an opportunity here to re-appropriate
this possibility as one in which we put ourselves into expanding circles of knowledge-
production, and engage different traditions of posing questions. The capacity to pose questions
is, I believe, inscribed in every work of culture everywhere, and at all times. But it can only be
accessed through the slow and meticulous learning to learn from others that occurs in and
through language. And this learning to learn is, I think, available through the practice of
anthropology reconceived in a conversation with other disciplines. I will give one brief example
to conclude. I am part of a multi-national collective that comprises scholars of China in Italy,
scholars of India in China, scholars of China in India, scholars of Korea in Canada, and so forth.
Our task is to think about the re-regionalization of Asia and its consequences for conceptions of
class and culture in the context of financialization. There is no structure of the native informant
here, no confinement of Asia to the status of object. There is only the hope that a patient
learning will enable us to grasp better some of the dimensions of the transformation we call
globalization.