Professor of Sociology Aaron Thompson, and co-author (with Joe Cuseo) of a book on *Diversity and the College Experience* lists eight reasons why diversity is important in college: According to Thomson, it 1) Expands worldliness; 2) Enhances social development; 3) Prepares students for future success; 4) Prepares students for work in a global society; 5) Increases knowledge base (“research consistently shows that we learn more from people who are different from us than we do from people that are similar to us”); 6) Promotes creative thinking; 7) Enhances self-awareness; 8) and enriches the multiple perspectives offered by [...] education. These are all legitimate and compelling reasons, supported by research.

But what this brief glimpse into Thompson & Cuseo’s work does not show is what happens when diversity is not “taught.” When diversity is not taught, when critical thinking is put on hold, and not vigorously exerted to understand difference, we become distracted, we tend not to listen, and we tend not to see. It is easier to see and understand people who are like “us.” It is more comforting, certainly, and less challenging, to listen to old, familiar, reassuring “truths.” And it is also much more dangerous.

Since the Moreno Report came to our Graduate Council table last year (I was then Chair of GC), I have been pondering how frantically and anxiously we try to reassure ourselves that incidents like the ones brought up in the Moreno Report are “only” “isolated” incidents. When colleagues point out again and again, that in “their” unit, in “their” Division, these things don’t happen, I am torn between feeling happy (for them, and for us), and remaining utterly unconvinced: in order for even “isolated” incidents to happen, there needs to be a breeding ground, insidiously, invisibly (not quite) growing and thickening. If we don’t see it, it is because our eyes are not as open as they should be, and then our voices are not as loud as they could be, and our minds cannot be as alert as we need them to be. Worst still, by closing our eyes, and lowering our voices, and mollifying our intellects, we do the same thing to the eyes, voices, and intellects of students. When students come to our campus, it is our moral and
intellectual responsibility to vigorously shake the complacent 
  fundaments of (pseudo)knowledge, a knowledge often precariously 
built upon sameness, instead of resting firmly on difference. Students 
  themselves know that, to their credit, and that is why they have 
fought long and hard for a diversity requirement. I see all the 
  “technical” and administrative difficulties that come along with 
instituting a wide-reaching curricular measure, who would not? But, 
  frankly, against the towering background and crucial need for a 
campus proudly diverse, inclusive, and tolerant, technicalities are just 
  that. Peruvian writer Ciro Alegría wrote a novel with a wonderful 
title: *El mundo es ancho y ajeno, Broad and Alien is the World.* And it 
will save us.

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