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STUDENTS AS BRIDGES BETWEEN CULTURES

There are so many things we take for granted. Like thinking we know what a bridge is. Or a student. But as for culture — we know that we do not know, at least we are not sure about how to explain to others what we feel we know.

Of course you build a bridge to get across something: a valley, a river, a ditch. Perhaps you could have got across it even without that bridge, but it would have taken more time, more energy — it might even have been dangerous. By means of this bridge you reach that other side, you leave or return, and if you leave and return very frequently the bridge that perhaps used to be a dramatic reminder that there are two sides, this and the other, my side and theirs, is gradually forgotten: the bridge is just another part of that distance one has to walk, a part of the road almost like any other part. While a person who comes from afar and who has never seen a real bridge, he stops on it, looks around, wonders, listens, looks down if he has the courage, thinks perhaps what would happen if the bridge broke. How old is the bridge, who built it and how? — What did he want? To benefit from trade? To wage war further away more efficiently? To be remembered? What has happened here, on this bridge through history?

Is it appropriate to ask if students could function as bridges between cultures? After all, the question implies the notion that, between cultures, there is something that separates, something that makes communication difficult, dangerous, if not impossible. Something that reminds which side is which. But it also implies that whatever it be that separates, does not isolate, or bar communication: that it was possible to construct that bridge. The greater the distance, however, —

the more thought, skill and material had to go into its constructing the "bridging".

Can students play such a role? And what is it, in any case, that students are to span?

Cultures. The term refers to groups of people, or societies, that somehow differ. The differences are exposed when you look at what people have, how they evaluate it, what they do, and how they relate to each other. We might use entirely different concepts to denote values and their application to a wide range of phenomena, — both to actions and material objects; and in this abstract phrase we would need to include people who share an awareness that they share certain values and the ways in which they are applied.

Students, wherever they are, are engaged in acquiring knowledge beyond the elementary level, which means beyond the level which everybody in that society is supposed to reach. In some countries the term is used more restrictively, and it indicates that the person called a student is actually trying during a limited number of years to reach a level of competence in at least one field that brings him close to the border of knowledge, sometimes called "the research frontier" in that field. He also learns something from other fields — due to a formal requirement- or through association with other students who happen to concentrate their efforts in other fields.

Why do I mention what is so obvious to anyone living in a society where students are found and institutions are built around them? Simply because we do not consider this kind of activity — studying — to be in itself a kind of bridging. *The student relates past achievement in his field to the present.* He carries a tradition into the present, and hopefully, expects to contribute to that tradition by his own achievements, directly or indirectly. The first bridge is from the past, from the culture of yesterday into that of today. The next bridge is from the present into the future.

But many students are exactly like those persons mentioned in the introduction who walk the bridge without even noticing that they are on it.

They need to be reminded that they are using the efforts of others, that there is creative activity behind and ahead, that there is danger below, and that damage to the bridge could mean tragedy to many.

This is not intended as a conservative statement. But it is a statement implying that a sense of continuity, even of gratitude to those who con-

tributed in the past to our present achievements, is an important aspect of life, as well as a realistic frame of reference, background or whatever we want to call it.

There is another aspect to "studying" which is equally frequently forgotten: the fact that these *past as well as present achievements that constitute the body of knowledge in any one field have been made in different parts of the world*. Whether the individual student likes it or not, knows it or not, he owes something to people in other countries, in other cultures. He may be fully convinced for good reasons that the school where he is presently studying is now a good place for his field of study, but he will do well to consider contributions from elsewhere, in the past, as well as in the present.

In this sense also, the serious student spans cultures. Here we are perhaps closer to our topic — the international aspect of studying. The illusion of self-sufficiency and "we excel" should be counteracted, and can be counteracted by an honest search in the history of science. Most probably, in the years to come, we shall see much more evidence of knowledge created and applied both in other periods of human history, and in places far from the present centres of learning and scholarship. And today, even the schools that really and undoubtedly excel in their respective fields might look with less arrogance to other countries, other cultures. There may be parallel developments, there may be new advances, other approaches than those tried out in the school that presently has a high repute.

Let us move on to a third aspect of studying.

To most of us, a student is a person associated with an institution, usually a university. It is perhaps because the university is the place where knowledge is created "in him" that he will also think that the university is the place where knowledge is created *per se*. Of course he may be right. But just as we noted above that we shall have to increase our awareness of achievements made at other times and in other places, we must also remind ourselves that peoples, and social strata that are not counted today as major members of the community that contributes to "human knowledge", still have their share in it. Their contributions may have been made in the past, or they may be creating them now, yet they remain latent and uncommunicated because they were or are not created "at a proper place" or "by people properly trained".

There are several reasons why one may believe that in many fields, if not in all, there will be

an increased interest in contributions to "the body of knowledge" from unconventional quarters. In a way, this belief follows from a renewed, revitalized "populism", partly inspired by China. But it has a much longer tradition: ethnographers and social anthropologists have already assembled much evidence of contributions to science, technology, and knowledge in the widest sense by foreign and what is today called "underdeveloped" peoples. This latter characteristic — the „underdeveloped status" of some peoples, may be one of those factors in the present picture that substantiates the arrogance of those who feel that most of the important discoveries have been made in our own time, and in the presently well-known centres of learning: at universities and research institutes, by students and their masters — or by people who once were students. A British sociologist, Peter Worsley, made a relevant point some time ago in an elementary textbook, saying something like the following: the poor Indians of the Peruvian highlands today are not genetically or biologically different from the Incas whose contributions to science in many fields have been widely admired. But anyone who has today seen these Indians would not recognize in them the sons and daughters of a population known as the Incas. They would hardly dream of finding in the history of this people the contributions we happen to know they have made to "human civilization". Similarly, other peoples, today "downtrodden" may be shown to have lived under other circumstances, active, creative, contributing something to human knowledge.

Our image of how knowledge is created is today colored or even determined by the research traditions of some of the natural sciences and medicine. Persons who have spent a fair proportion of their lifetime — perhaps one third — as students have at their disposal the most intricate research technology, and work on a fraction of a problem that in itself is beyond our comprehension. How can anyone in his right mind at this point in the history of science expect that anyone who is not so trained can contribute to this highly specialized work? This feeling is perhaps one of the major barriers to communication between cultures, it is what arrogance feeds on in some quarters. The highly trained are separated from those who are not trained — or those trained differently. Three kinds of answers can be offered to the question raised:

1. it is only in *some fields* that knowledge is created in ways that correspond to our stated image of the research worker;

2. even in those fields, but most notably in others, knowledge is created in additional ways, — only a part of the research process proceeds in the way described above;

3. three types of questions are pertinent: they may be *initiating questions* — providing the topic for a research process, *practical questions* — asking what can one do with the knowledge that is created by research process, and *evaluative questions* — asking what the effects on our stated goals will be if we make use of such knowledge. Such questions are both provocative, useful, (and necessary?) in any research activity. They are not always asked by those who are engaged in research. Frequently they are vital contributions made from the outside.

Again, students may have some kind of a bridging function. They are not yet totally absorbed in the field they have chosen. Their choice was perhaps motivated by questions similar to those referred to above: a problem without an answer, a practical need not taken care of. The continuous influx of new students to established fields, or to centres of learning where new fields have a chance to be created, provides one bridge to the society of which the institutions of learning and research are but parts.

Unfortunately students may forget this relationship to the surrounding society. They may become so totally absorbed by their efforts to acquire professional status that isolation results. Single-mindedness is the word we use when the ability to concentrate overwhelms. Others talk of ivory towers, and still others of sand boxes. It all refers to the gulf that many experience as existing between students and the rest of the population. There is hardly a nation in the world where this is not a problem: the most highly trained do not function adequately as bridges to their own people. They may be admired they may be feared, they may be ridiculed, they may be ostracised. Again, there are many reasons for it, both psychological, cultural, political, and indeed economic. There is a paradox in all this: at the beginning of his studies, the student provides a bridge between society at large and the institution he enters; when he leaves the latter in order to reenter society, he does not fit. Clearly, this is an exaggeration. Yet, most graduates need some time to readjust to their own society.

In general, it is not easy to describe the relationship between students and society. The word ambivalent was already used. There is a strange combination of distance and involvement, a questioning analysis at a distance that gives

perspective, much the way a stranger proceeds, and varying in ability and desire to communicate the analysis. At the present time, there is a world-wide political commitment, to the point where one might refer to a political *world student culture*. Within this culture, across national frontiers, diffusion is rapid, and communication efficient. This efficiency does not imply or need an organizational network with rigid lines of command. All kinds of printed material, mass media reporting, private travel, in addition to organizational contacts contribute to this diffusion. Criticism of the social order, activism, change-orientation, reaction against dominance at all levels of organizations, a search for new, or other, perhaps even old qualities of life — these are some of the many and often incompatible trends and claims. When they appear in very different places, it is not necessarily due to the efficiency of communication in the student culture, but can also be conceived as a typical set of responses to a situation that has the same set of properties. Partly it is a reaction against the situation in the world at large, the fate of "spaceship earth", to use a popular phrase, and partly it is a reaction against rather similar organizational structures in the universities and schools around the world and the role and position of students in these structures. But, whatever it is, and whatever its rationale — the impact on society may be significant: the questioning attitude has spread beyond the circles of students, it is almost fashionable to raise doubts where consensus was previously equally fashionable — it is as if a new level of consciousness is being reached. And the next problem is, as always, the problem of action, of practical solutions that use and increase the insights won.

Students have always been under "foreign influence", and hence potentially a threat to the more stable and closeknit society around them. There have been regular battles fought between students and other citizens, sometimes over small things that we would not consider at all serious. Where other people have labored in order to survive, and have been compelled to prove their productivity in highly visible quantities, the challenge of students is obvious. The regular citizen does not see what the student does — he knows only that time is spent. If there is any product from this spending of time, more often than not the product is invisible: it rests within the student, in the form of a certain amount of knowledge, a certain set of techniques. No wonder non-students become suspicious. Add to this the fact that the student, simply by studying, links himself to other times and other places, to unseen and unknown peoples, that he mixes strange

words into the common language, that after he has studied for many years he either gets a position, purpose and content unknown, but with a salary much above what others may expect, — no position, or that he finds employment that renders his education useless, — and one will understand why persons who have not been students themselves may not automatically appreciate all this. These matters represent too much of a challenge to "fundamentals" in most societies. Even in societies where the role of students is well established and rather clearly defined, an ambivalence is likely to remain. And what is more, this ambivalence may remain in the students themselves: a kind of uncertainty of own worth, own usefulness. In such phases the original metaphor of this article's headline may be due: the student is perhaps a bridge, but for some time he resembles those bridges that are being constructed from pillars labouriously driven into the river — only when the work is almost completed is the bridge related to the shores, — and only after still more work can it function as a bridge. In the process of becoming a bridge it just looks odd, just as odd as students sometimes before they function as professionals in their respective societies, and before their many words have been tested as action.

This is perhaps one of the more serious of the bridging problems facing today's student populations: bridging their own ideological commitments, political insights, and their professional skills to the conditions of society around them.

A note of a slightly more sociological nature should be added to the speculations of how the student, through studying, bridges cultures. The focus of attention is the relationship between student and master. The serious student can either follow the master like the dog follows his: trying to heel, trying to pick up and obey. Some students start this way, and grow up only to discover that they remain dogs, that they remain in their place relative to their master. Of course we should not be unfair, some masters are good enough to deserve a faithful following, even at the cost, perhaps, of individual growth. And the followers may do a good job at building bridges from the body of knowledge created by that master, and on to another scholarly culture. Then, if they have good luck, they may even start a new life at the other side of the bridge, benefiting both from what the master taught and from the encounter with the other side.

But let us look at another student who listens to his master in another way, much more actively

and with more self-respect from the very beginning. He has very little to back him up against a clever, but dominant master. In this situation, there is at least one strategy he can use: he can see if there are not other masters in the field. In another culture, there may be another approach, a new and promising theory being developed that corresponds better to this particular student's motivation. After this discovery, very much depends on the social skills of student as well as master: the student may swim over to the other side, without building a bridge, he may advance his master in a way that makes the master throw him into the water — again there is probably no bridge being built. But these are drastic, and fortunately not too probable outcomes in most places. Let us hope that there is a fair chance the student's discovery is communicated to master and/or fellow students in a way that deserves the term "bridge building". And we may even add in fairness to many masters, that they may know about "that other place" of parallel, or relevant scholarship, they may even know of a bridge on to it. Only it was not yet drawn on the maps for the students. Or — the old master had forgotten about it, after having tried it some time in the past.

In general, however, it is more likely that students rather than masters will look for new areas of interest — even "at the other side", in foreign cultures. Among other reasons because they have more time to look, and still unused strength both to swim, and to construct "bridges". This combination of time, strength and curiosity is unfortunately not always combined with equally well developed skills in communication. If we say it within the framework of our metaphor — the skill to build a bridge, and the motive to walk between the sides is not always present at the time an attractive spot is discovered on the other side. This, on the other hand, is a kind of skill that can be trained, but probably more easily acquired within some intellectual traditions than others. In most sciences the student is supposed to receive some training in methods that reconcile data with theory, and combine one theory with another. Now and then, like presently in the social sciences, we have great debates over the procedures to follow when we sample our evidence and relate it to theory, and over which, or whether, theories can be synthesized. This is not the place to go into this debate, so let me rather confess that I believe those scientists who bother about empirical evidence, and those who have retained the ability to stumble over problems even unexpectedly — and confess they are puzzled, intrigued and provoked — those scientists will also most likely be

curious enough about "the other side" to build a number of bridges across, and walk those bridges to their own advantage, and to the advantage of others.

Ideally speaking, students as well as their masters have a role-obligation to look anywhere and everywhere for what is professionally relevant. They are supposed to be able and willing to communicate their own findings and theories to colleagues, and much has been done to build professional organizations where this communication can be taken care of. At times of international crisis the attempt to preserve and continue the tradition of international professional contacts has been difficult, but not without success. The interdependence of the scholarly cultures of the world is at least potentially a bridge between cultures even across conflict-borders.

The aspects of studying mentioned so far are general, in the sense that they refer to almost any, if not all students and fields of study. But in addition there are students who specialize in fields that in themselves relate them to another culture, — they simply study foreign cultures. The social sciences immediately come to mind, social anthropology, ethnography, history in its various forms, geography, international relations must be included, languages, art — a number of fields and a long list of subjects could be added.

Two different consequences follow from this: one being the obvious one that *to some students other cultures are like raw materials in industry* — they are a necessity if work shall be done, and through this work the raw materials are "refined", changed and put to use in a new context. This parallel: raw materials to industry like the objects of study to the student could be carried very far, and we could wonder about whether some of the problems presently found in the relations between those who produce raw materials and those who refine these raw materials are not latent, and sometimes create problems also in the relations between those who provide the objects of study and those who perform the studies. Prestige mostly goes to the "refiner", and the refined produce, "knowledge" continues to be used mainly by those who took part in transforming the object of study into knowledge, those who articulated theory on the basis of data, or drew a map on the basis of many separate observations. Those who provide the data are frequently lost in the process, and knowledge about them, about their condition is not necessarily brought back to them. In the social sciences, this is a much de-

bated question of professional ethics. In some cases the providers of data — individual as well as groups of people, refuse to enter a research process as "raw material" — they refuse to participate. On the national level, governments have reserved for themselves the right to issue research permits — partly to protect particular citizens from investigations from the outside — partly because they see the production and accumulation of knowledge about their social system by outsiders as politically threatening. Students may, due to a lack of research experience or professional identity, sometimes overlook these problems when they try to lay hands on "interesting material".

The other consequence is that *knowledge about foreign cultures, whether it is their social system, their language, or other isolated aspects of their culture, is a means of communication to that culture.* Just like a bridge, this kind of knowledge means some kind of access, and access, may mean impact. Impact may be in one or both directions — it may be one-sided or bilateral, balanced or unbalanced. This last point, the possibility of a one-sided or unbalanced impact is the rationale for the attitude mentioned above: refusal to cooperate in being studied.

The next aspect of studying that seems relevant from our point of view is the fact that *in some fields — the world is simply one — a global view is inherent in the field of study:* either because of claims to generality of findings, or because the division of the world into different cultures is simply an irrelevant fact: the natural sciences appear as relevant examples. This may, however, be an illusion if we should be led to overlook, in these sciences, the influence of man, through his culture, on the environment. Fortunately, the trend is in the opposite direction: there is an increasing concern for the impact of an expanding industrial culture and an expanding world population on the world as a whole. One of the reasons why it has been possible to advance these ideas fairly rapidly is probably that the evidence came from those sciences that "knew no frontiers" — the findings could be generalized, and had universal applicability, as far as we know. This is a fairly recent concern, although it may be an old problem. But it means that increasing numbers of students will be drawn to fields of studies and later into professions and occupations that relate them to the world as a whole, and thereby to different cultures. And, strangely enough, the problem of these students may be rather different from the problems some students face today when they may make their choices in

terms of loyalties: it is not a choice between loyalty to this or that nation, to this or that culture. Rather it may be a question of trying to relate a global orientation in the field of study to the other facts of life: a world divided into cultures, into conflicting interests, consisting of parts with highly variable resources and abilities to act. The students who engage in this kind of bridging: the global versus the divided world, have a difficult and serious task before them, increasingly important for man's future.

The paragraphs above have been a mixture of descriptive and normative statements, some may even view them as moralistic statements. The student has been seen as a person who combines in himself a diversity of influences, the metaphor was perhaps right in suggesting that he is a bridge. Even a bridge between cultures. But the cultures considered so far have been separated by time and space, and social distance.

The bridge to those who live outside the scholarly culture, those who are non-students or non-professionals, has been considered as particularly difficult to construct. These are intranational cultural cleavages across which communication is more difficult than between students of different nations. Professional, international contact, after all, is internalized and institutionalized.

In addition, the critical attitudes and political commitments of students around the world today provide another bridge between them, again across national frontiers.

As for their studies, some choose a foreign culture as their field of study, and relate themselves thereby, and possibly others to that particular foreign culture. Still others receive, through their training, a global perspective and see the world as one, and must somehow strive to combine this orientation with the reality of a divided world.

These have probably been other lines of thought than those envisaged in an international context: we should look at how *nations* relate to each other by means of that group of the population known as students, and more particularly, those students who pursue their studies in foreign countries.

This latter group is not small—today about half a million students are „foreign students”, and according to UNESCO sources this means about 2% of a total world student population of around 22 million. The strange thing is that

this has been a fairly stable percentage: for the last ten years the world foreign student population has been 2%: in absolute numbers, however, the increase has been from 1/4 million in the early sixties to the 1/2 million of today. Taking 1950 as the point of departure, the increase was 300% between 1950 and 1968. This is not a small number. On the other hand, it should not be exaggerated: it is a small proportion of the world's students who really span and bridge cultures in the restricted sense of studying in another country. Most students — 98% of them — study in their respective home countries, and if they span cultures — it is largely in the ways we have suggested. The 2% who do go abroad are composed of varying proportions of national student populations. If we look at the different regions of the world, we find that the Arab states have close to 20% of their students abroad — this figure includes Palestinian students, — Africa has 15% of all students in other countries, South America and Asia are both around 3%, Oceania almost 2%, while Europe, including the USSR has 1%, and the USA slightly below 1% of their students studying in other countries. Of course, this does not mean that they are studying outside the regions mentioned above, — just that they are not studying in their own country. They may well be located within the region. If we look at the world foreign student population as a whole, 1/3 are from nations classified as developed, and 2/3 from developing nations, which indicates that one aspect of being on the «road to development» is the inadequacy of their own centres of learning, and the need to send people abroad for professional training. But it also indicates the great differences among the developing nations themselves: it is particularly those who have become independent recently — the African states — that must send large proportions of their student populations abroad.

It is interesting to note, however, that an increasing proportion of foreign students study in developing countries. Today 1/4 of all foreign students are located in developing nations. If this means that students who cannot study at home have a chance to study in countries that at least are facing problems similar to those of their own country, it may make their foreign training more relevant for future work in their own nations. At the same time it may provide bridges within the region, lines of communication at least between one-time students, later local or national decision makers. Such facts should neither be exaggerated, nor overlooked.

The student culture everywhere is largely a male culture, and the foreign student culture is

no exception — only 20% are women. What is the implication of this? Of course, it tells that women receive less education than men, but it also tells that if a male student, foreign or not, shall establish a relation to a woman, he will not only bridge a male or female subculture, but at the same time most probably bridge different educational levels. The foreign students shall, in addition, bridge their own home culture, and a foreign, unknown, and therefore highly unpredictable culture. Family patterns and sex-roles are among the most slowly changing aspects of culture, again and again they are found to resist »foreign influence« much more efficiently than the more technological aspects of our respective cultures. This may also mean that roles of adult living are difficult to reconcile, changes take place at different rates for the different sectors of the life of an individual. Students experience this, but so may many others. It is a common problem.

Many foreign students have said that they experience their role while abroad as having three distinct components — they are *students*, trying to learn; they are *tourists*, trying to see; and they are *ambassadors* of their country, trying to teach. Both as tourists and as ambassadors they may discover new aspects of their own culture; comparisons are inevitably made, and from a distance the student may gain a *new perspective on his own culture*. They are asked questions about things they perhaps did not know, or things they never questioned. They may have to increase their knowledge about their home culture, and make up their opinions in new ways. Similarly, people in the country that receives these students and who listen to their comments, may gain new insight into their own culture. Through the eyes of strangers, a new bridge is built to one's own culture, not only to the foreign one. From all this communication more knowledge as well as more insight may be won, but this does not imply that differences are wiped out in the long run: knowledge, understanding, insight are not the same as acceptance. But they are a better basis for interaction.

2% of the world's students study abroad. They are registered as »foreign students«. This is not to say that only 2% of the world's students go abroad. We know that many more travel just to see, to learn in less systematic ways about foreign cultures. Students have always been highly mobile, and with today's means of transportation increasing proportions of students spend some time in foreign countries. Among students in richer countries some talk

of »taking my year off« — as if travelling for a year was itself part of one's education.

For those who organize foreign studies, that is for those who regularly receive students from other countries at a university or similar institution, this is sometimes a problem: some students come to learn »culture« — to see as much as possible of another society from the inside — others come for a well defined, specific purpose, their pursuit is strictly professional. Some combine the two motivations. The two groups of students are sometimes confused — the professionally dedicated information he never asked for, the culturally-minded gets too little, perhaps without knowing what they were looking for, or what they missed. Larger centres of learning sometimes undertake to separate the two groups of students, offering special programs to meet their needs. On the one hand courses, seminars, lectures and tours are arranged, related to a wide variety of subjects from that country's cultural achievements, past and present. On the other hand the specialized students, or those who come for regular studies, are taken care of either by special arrangements, or by preparing them to follow the regular activities for the nation's own students.

The richer countries have a greater capacity both to receive and produce students, and to create centres of learning. They also have a greater interaction capacity — hence students from everywhere go to the better known centers in Europe and the USA, and students from these countries go abroad in large numbers, even if the proportion is smaller. As regards where to go, there has been a shift from Europe towards the USA, and there may be other changes, perhaps differently motivated in the future. This may depend on whether students go to study an applied science — like engineering or medical science — or whether the interest is in other fields.

The »Liberal Arts«, very widely defined, have attracted around half of the foreign students. The other half has gone to learn »technologies«, »applied sciences«, etc. Again, nations differ, both in what they go for, and where they go: unnecessary to say, students from developing nations more frequently study the applied sciences.

Much more should be known about how this technology is brought back, and put into practice in the student's home country on his return. To use again our metaphor of the student as a bridge: one may fear that he builds a bridge

that would require a turnpike at home in order to function. For various reasons, that turnpike does not exist.

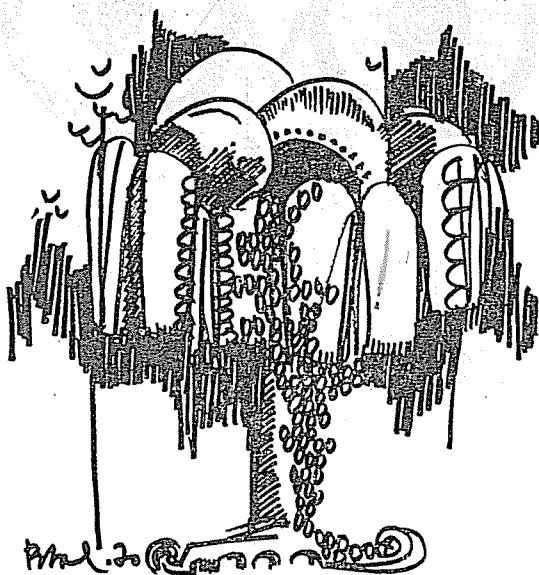
In this process of adjusting the needs of the foreign student to the possibilities of educational and research programs, many problems arise. We may well refer to them as »problems of bridge-building«. But in addition to the professional adjustments, other adjustments are required. The foreign student populations frequently feel isolated from the surrounding society. If they are in large enough numbers, they compensate their lack of involvement in society around them by creating their own, and a distinct, multicultural foreign student culture results. Strangely enough, after years of study in a foreign country the student who returns home may have more contact in other countries than in the country where he studied. His contacts are those who shared his fate of being a foreign student at the same time. Some universities or university-related organizations have actually institutionalized this type of contact: international housing facilities are built, international student clubs are started, and entire schools, colleges and parts of universities are established for the explicit purpose of attracting students from abroad. An international, or crossnational world in miniature is developing.

This is interesting in itself, and it may be useful for the world later in the sense that young people are better trained in international communication, they learn to function in international settings. Whichever way the world develops, this is a necessary skill, since all probable lines of development will continue to place each nation in a network of relations with other nations and international organizations. Today many people fear the dominance patterns built into these networks, and for good reason. But for most nations there is no possibility to break these patterns of dominance by means of isolation from the network altogether: the strategy must rather be one of more skillful, better organized participation. Training students in different fields for these roles is a necessary part of this strategy for any nation. To some extent, this training is accomplished in the international, multicultural student cultures around the world.

There is, however, another prerequisite for this strategy to function: the student trained abroad must not lose his identification with his own people, his own nation. No bridge is built unless there is a bridgehead at both sides. Unfortunately, many students who study abroad, and even students who received all their training in their

own countries undermine the bridgehead to their own nation, to their own people. In other cases, even if the students have tried hard to maintain that bridge, they are not allowed to reenter »at the other side«, there is simply no opening, no work for them to do. »Brain drain« is the word used to describe the fact that large numbers of professionally trained people work in other countries than their own.

There are many interesting aspects of this situation, but some are also tragic: when young people reach the age when their productive work can contribute to the welfare of the population that cared for them until this age — they perform that work elsewhere, with little or no benefit, perhaps even to the disadvantage of their own people. It is as if bridges were built between the cultures of the world, between all nations, but the traffic is characteristically heavier in one direction than in the other. One side prospers by this traffic, and this continues to make that side even more attractive. If students shall perform bridging functions between cultures, somehow these bridges must be constructed in ways that more clearly benefit the cultures bridged—both sides. But will the world automatically benefit from this? Not automatically, but there is a better chance that the world will benefit if the interests of the intra- as well as of international cultures are remembered when the bridging of cultures is discussed.



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