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# Responsibility - A Foreign Perspective on Four Issues in the Master of Arts in Teaching Program

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*School for International Training*

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Responsibility - A Foreign Perspective on Four  
Issues in the Master of Arts in Teaching Program

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B.A. University of Delhi 1975

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the require-  
ments for the Master of Arts in Teaching degree  
at the School for International Training,  
Brattleboro, Vermont.

September 1981

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This project by Margaret McDonald is accepted in its present form.

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Principal Adviser \_\_\_\_\_

Project Adviser/Reader:

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## ABSTRACT

This paper is a foreign perspective on four issues: Responsibility and Student-Centered Learning, Group Process, Experiential Learning, and Culture and Individuality in the Master of Arts in Teaching program at the School for International Training, Brattleboro, Vermont. Personal Experiences as a student and student-teacher are combined to address these issues as they relate to foreign students at the school. The central theme is responsibility. Each section marks a distinct stage and describes the author's development of the ability to take responsibility for learning in a system that is fundamentally different from her own. The author concludes with the view that foreign students are in a position of greater vulnerability at the school.

## ERIC DESCRIPTORS

CROSS-CULTURAL STUDIES 100

RT Cultural Differences  
Cultural Education  
Culture Conflict  
Culture Contact

TEACHER-EDUCATION 140

UF Teacher Training Education

LEARNING 310

NT Adult Learning

## INTRODUCTION

To attempt to present a comprehensive analysis of my year as a foreign student in the Master of Arts in Teaching program is a task that is beyond my present capabilities. I am still too close to my experience to give it the wholeness that could only come when I am further away from it. What I do attempt to present are merely glimpses into a profound experience. It is my hope that in sharing these few experiences, thoughts, and conclusions, readers will be able to draw from them into their own experiences something of value.

In writing this account I have two particular audiences in mind--foreign students, both graduate and undergraduate, and the International Students of English. I know that the former will have easy access to the contents of this paper because of language ability. The latter I hope will also benefit through indirect avenues, namely, the administration and staff who were ever present in my mind as I wrote.

There are areas where I can speak only for myself, others where I have taken the risk of speaking collectively for foreign students based on the many experiences that I shared with them as peers and as a student-teacher in the English Language Office. Where I have quoted outside authorities I have done so to further substantiate my views and beliefs.

There are four sections to this paper: Responsibility and Student-Centered Learning, Group Process, Experiential Learning, and Culture and Individuality. These were the major issues that arose through the year and with which I dealt. The central theme that runs through each one of them is responsibility. Each section marks a distinct stage in the development of my ability to take responsibility for my own learning and growth. "Responsibility and Student-Centered Learning" offers an account of my development of inner freedom.

*We must support them in being able to take  
their own responsibility*

Through "Group Process" I began to feel responsible for others and to look to myself for answers. How I came to take responsibility for my own learning is traced in "Experiential Learning." "Culture and Individuality" contains my beliefs on responsibility in multi-cultural living situations which crystallized during the course of the year.

My conclusion contains a final statement that I wish to make to everyone at the School for International Training but especially to the administration and staff.

## RESPONSIBILITY AND STUDENT-CENTERED LEARNING

You can never know what it is to be me, and I can never know what it is to be you. Whether we wish to share ourselves quite fully, or hold large areas private, it is still true that our very uniqueness separates us. In that sense every man must live alone and die alone. How he comes to terms with that--whether he can accept and even glory in his separateness--whether he can use his aloneness as a base from which he can express himself creatively--or whether he fears and tries to escape from this fundamental condition--is an important issue but one on which I shall not dwell.

- Carl Rogers



## RESPONSIBILITY AND STUDENT-CENTERED LEARNING

An appreciation of a student experience at the School for International Training can only be arrived at with an understanding of the nature and scope of freedom at this school. This is fundamental to the experience one goes through here. Few foreign students initially recognize that they have to responsibly accept freedom of conduct and the freedom to learn if they are to adjust smoothly to the way of life here.

In the School for International Training there is no perceivable authoritarian "head" of the institution. In my experience, the Director made just one appearance after some days. The instructors set tasks that may or may not be done. Homework is given. You may do it or not. The resident assistants give you the few dormitory rules and leave the rest up to you. You may eat, if you choose to, whatever you like from what is offered. You may clean your room, change your linen, wash your clothes, etc. or not. You may drink yourself drunk every night at "The Other Side." You may also have sexual relationships.

What this can and often does translate to for many foreign students is that no one cares. What is hard to understand and accept is that if you don't take responsibility for your own actions, nobody else can. The result is that on a deeply personal level one realizes that lack of structure, rules and regulations are a burden. For many of us this is our first experience with freedom of this nature and scope. The absence of any perceivable limits or boundaries compels us to acknowledge our vulnerability. This is necessary if we are to mature to any psychological depth. Nevertheless, the necessity of a sense of limits, however indefinite, must be recognized.

According to Lifton:

Boundaries can be viewed, as neither permanent nor by definition false, but rather as essential.... We require images of limit and restraint, if only to help us grasp what we are transcending.<sup>1</sup>

At the School for International Training we have to create our own "images of limit and restraint."

Most of us come from fairly traditional cultural and educational backgrounds. Our expectations, we soon realize, are conditioned by our own value systems. We expect the school and the instructors to be responsible for our education. We expect rules and regulations to be external and impersonal. We expect to conform. We end by resisting conformity when what we are expected to conform to is alien to us. The truth is that theoretically we accept the concept of freedom in the United States. In practice it is difficult, at first, to function responsibly within this reality. This raises the issue of responsibility--institutional, group, individual, and personal. Students have to accept responsibility for their behavior but more importantly for their own learning in and outside the class. As I see it, for foreign students in particular, this is the issue at the heart of a happy learning experience in this school.

Theodore Gochenour and Anne Janeway explain this:

We feel that it is a clear indication of maturation as well as increased cross-cultural communication when a person grasps the reality of personal responsibility. This means that, while we are not responsible necessarily for the existence of a particular circumstance or event, we are responsible for its effect on us. In turn, we are therefore, responsible for our own effect, seen or not seen, conscious or unconscious, desired or not desired.... It is when we take appropriate responsibility for every event in which we are engaged, every response we make, every inward reaction we record, that we can truly be said to have begun to move out of the confinements of our acquired habits, attitudes, and acquired values. We have begun to look to ourselves for solutions to our problems and have decreased our tendency to excuse ourselves from further development by 'but, if....' and 'you should have....'<sup>2</sup>

Looking back, this was the most significant lesson for me. The significance lay in the fact that I did "grasp the reality of personal responsibility." I had to accept that "group process" and "experiential learning" were an integral part of the

course "Approaches to Second Language Teaching," that "responsibility," "feedback," and "student-centered learning" were more than campus jargon. If I were to remain at this school I had to learn the meaning behind these ideas. Unfortunately, I did not want to "take appropriate responsibility." I wanted to take the easy way out. I wanted to leave the program. However, practical considerations such as applying to another school, requesting the necessary visa alterations, and waiting another six months or possibly a year to start elsewhere forced me to decide to stay in the program and make the best of what appeared, at that point in time, to be the wrong thing for me to do. In despair, I decided I would "take appropriate responsibility." But how? Where was I to begin? What was "appropriate?" Who could I turn to for counsel? At about this time I encountered a fellow foreign student who was going through a somewhat different personal crisis. In sharing our respective griefs and conflicts we discovered a mutual compatibility. After hours of sharing and intellectualizing spread over two weeks, we "began to look to ourselves for solutions to our problems" and "decreased our tendency to excuse ourselves from further development."

Nevertheless, I would like to refer to Earl Stevick's statements on freedom, for I believe much of the initial discomfort in adjustment that is experienced at this school may be explained in his words:

The raw material for inner resource can come only from outside; that is why total external freedom would make further growth of internal freedom impossible. We may smother the internal kind by failing to allow enough of the external kind, ...we may also starve it by bestowing too much external freedom at the wrong time.<sup>3</sup>

While I do not dispute the fact that this school does not "smother" internal freedom I do question whether it "starves" the growth of internal freedom by "bestowing too much external freedom" all the time. For to further quote Stevick, even those

who spend their lives alive in growth and in search for inner freedom--even they have this searching and this growing as only part of their daily cycle.<sup>4</sup>

While the whole issue of responsibility and freedom is not new it still remains one of the principle lessons that we have to learn through experience--our own and that of others.

As a result of my experience in dealing with this issue I would say to students, if you have a problem that is beyond your reckoning, overcome your native or natural reserve and seek out your academic advisor or a staff member or peer who you think will empathize with you, and express your problem. To the staff I would like to say likewise: don't wait for students to come to you with problems during the early part of the program. Request them to meet with you, especially if you detect or even "feel" that all may not be well. To students and staff I say the road to inner freedom is long and inherently lonely, but we may travel part of the way together.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Robert Lifton, Boundaries (New York: Vintage Books, 1967).

<sup>2</sup> Donald Batchelder, Elizabeth G. Warner, eds., Beyond Experience (Brattleboro: The Experiment Press, 1977), pp. 19-20.

<sup>3</sup> Earl W. Stevick, Teaching Languages, A Way and Ways (Rowley: Newbury House Publishers, Inc., 1980), p. 292.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 293.

## GROUP PROCESS

Learning in a group is a dynamic interaction. Because values, assumptions, and beliefs are reflected in attitudes and actions, it is essential that each person take responsibility for his or her effect on others.

- MAT Program Educational Assumptions  
Spring 1981

## GROUP PROCESS

I came to the School for International Training wanting to learn, yet, in reality, I was expecting to be taught. The confusion that ensued in "Methods" (Approaches to Second Language Teaching) was painful and disturbing. I did not want to be in a small group. I wanted to be part of a large class. I wanted to be with everyone. I also noticed that my group was made up of the oldest people in the program, the ones with the most teaching experience, and I did not like this separation. The group represented teaching. I was interested in learning. I could not recognize or see the group as resources for my own learning or vice versa. The instructors were called "leaders" or "facilitators." They did not lecture. They set us tasks. We worked alone, in two's or in three's. Then we would group back together and "share."

[ Many of the tasks involved introspection. ] This was no problem. My early interest in religion, philosophy, psychology, and introspection had made my parents apprehensive. They were convinced I would either become a member of a religious organization or a psychoanalyst, both equally distasteful to them. When I chose teaching there were inaudible sighs of relief. I had no quarrel with introspection.

[ Sharing was different. It was an invasion of privacy-- more so when conducted by strangers. Feelings were for friends. Thoughts could be shared but only with individuals one wanted to share them with and only when sought. The truth was I did not want to find meaning in the group. The small number made it personal and intimate. I wanted an impersonal class atmosphere. I did not want my feelings involved in public. ]

In the words of Stevick, my

reaction was nothing but resistance and resentment...against being given opportunities to explore instead of rules and vocabulary lists--against being invited to explore one's own potential and to grow, rather than being immediately led to accrue some very specific communicative skills and repertoires for which one foresees a practical need. 1

*Statements*

I am amazed at how accurately he has described in the following paragraph my feelings, thoughts, and desires through the entire "Methods" course.

What of the teacher who, instead of offering (or claiming to offer) to the student exactly what he needs, offers instead to try to help him become able to get for himself five times as much? That teacher may be seen as undependable. What of the teacher who refuses to use the coercive kind of authority, who instead learns from her students what they can teach her, even as she invites them to learn what she knows but they do not. Such a teacher may provoke a feeling of uneasiness, for she is unlike the picture we have learned of what a teacher is. And what of the teacher who insists on telling her students that they have powers far beyond what they have dreamed about themselves? She will be punished for disturbing that safe dream, and for destabilizing a picture that had been learned at the cost of so much pain!<sup>2</sup>

I later learned through discussions with others that this was the experience of many students, foreign and American, during the course.

With no attempt to belittle these sentiments, for they were exactly what I felt, I would like to explain that I did not understand the shift of emphasis from teaching to learning. However, I do feel that when my expectations of how I should be taught were not met, and when numerous questions directed at the leader were opened and discussed instead of being answered (as I expected them to be), I felt thwarted and this created a psychological block to learning. I wanted to be given answers and did not see the value of the ability to find my own through the group process.

Group process and group dynamics were, therefore, difficult to deal with because I did not want them. I wanted to learn on my own. I wanted to be responsible for myself alone. The first and most significant idea for me in "Methods" was offered by my leader for me to think over: I had an obligation and a responsibility to the group. The very idea was strange. I disliked the time we had to spend together, and now I was obligated to and responsible for what would happen in and to the

group.

My learning was being influenced by the group and the process. I did not want to attend class nor did I want to stay in my room all morning, and if I was to study on my own in the library then it was better to leave the program altogether. Therefore, I had to consider the whole question of group process and responsibility. It was a question, however, that I was not prepared to consider or answer then. It was finally confronted and dealt with in the spring.

It was a combination of two courses and one event that helped me do what I had been unable to do in my "Methods" group. "Advanced English" was the first course. In talking over our problems with American pronunciation, intonation and stress, and the related problems of teaching them, we became involved in discussing larger problems and issues related to teaching, the most important of which was "group process." I found myself a very active participant and so were the other three. We were four foreign students. We were all friends and felt close to our instructor.

The event was the request by the MAT (Master of Arts in Teaching) students for an open dialogue with the staff because of dissatisfaction with a number of program issues. What should have been a dialogue began as a confrontation between staff and students. There was pain, disappointment, and hurt on both sides. But the sincere desire for communication was respected by both parties and finally much good came of this. By this time I was aware of group dynamics and could appreciate what I witnessed. I saw the need for respect and responsibility on the part of the students. While I could identify more closely with them, I could at the same time understand and sympathize with the staff position. For the most part, I was an interested spectator-observer, having already redressed my grievances through "Advanced English." Yet I felt involved, responsible, and motivated to do something.

"Teacher Training" found me actively engaged in the group process. We were dealing with the critiquing process" and I be-



lieve that this was ultimately responsible for helping me confront and deal with the problem of group dynamics and individual and group responsibility. I wanted to take part and I also felt responsible for everything that happened in our group, to whom it happened, and how it happened.

One of the rewards of participating responsibly in the group process was, in the words of Carl Rogers, "an incredible shift away from looking for answers and values and standards outside of the self."<sup>3</sup> Instead of depending on an authority figure I found that I could find value in what I was experiencing instead of looking for what I was told was valuable. I realized firstly that sometimes my learning would be a group learning experience. Secondly, this experience could be frustrating and slow, but if it is an integral part of the learning process then I must consider the group. Thirdly, in reality being able to work with a group is as valuable as being able to work with an individual or a few chosen individuals. Fourthly, the ability to work with a group develops a sense of confidence, community, and cooperation. Fifthly, this was a skill I had but did not want to share with "strangers." Sixthly, it is precisely this attitude that keeps people strangers.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Earl W. Stevick, Teaching Languages, A Way and Ways (Rowley: Newbury House Publishers, Inc., 1980), p. 289.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Carl Rogers, A Way of Being (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1980) Ch., "The Process of Education--and Its Future."

### EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Faced with the bewildering profusion of animated objects, we create an abstraction, an abstract image which conjures the welter of impressions into a fixed form. This image has the magical significance of a defense against the chaotic flux of experience. The abstracting type becomes so lost and submerged in this image that finally its abstract truth is set above the reality of life.

- C. G. Jung

## EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Experiential education was a concept I was familiar with from Training College days in India. It was an ideal that was difficult to realize in the examination-oriented education systems in India and Fiji. It was therefore, a worthwhile but near-impossible goal in those systems. At SIT (School for International Training) I did not realize that it was an integral part of the MAT program. Neither did I realize that what I was experiencing was indeed an attempt at experiential learning and that "processing" was an inherent part of it.

In fact, the greatest difficulty was the emphasis on process rather than content. I had come expecting content and could not see the link between process and learning. I appreciated the experiential learning of "shock" language, the experiential exposition and introduction of the five approaches to second language learning but then the focusing on the experience rather than the content of the approaches was disappointing.

It was only when doing research into experiential learning for my presentation for "Issues and Practices in Contemporary Education" that I began to see the semblance of logic behind what was going on in SIT. A student in the DIA (Department of Intercultural Administration) program explained the nature of education and learning in his program. He gave me a page, the contents of which I would like to include here:

Experiential learning can be conceived of as four stages:

1. concrete, personal experiences are followed by
2. observation of, reflection upon, and examination of one's experience which lead to
3. the formulation of abstract concepts and generalizations which lead to
4. hypotheses to be tested in future action in future experience.

This learning cycle (Figure 1.2) results in personal theories about effective behavior and is continuously recurring as you test and confirm or modify your theories and generalizations.

Experiential learning is based upon three assumptions: that you learn best when you are personally involved in the learning experience, that knowledge has to be discovered by yourself if it is to mean anything to you or make differences in your behavior, and that commitment to learning is highest when you are free to set your own learning goals and actively pursue them within a given framework. Experiential learning is a process of making generalizations and conclusions about your own direct experiences. It emphasizes directly experiencing what you are studying, building your own commitment to learn and your being partly responsible for organizing the conclusions drawn from your experience....

In experiential learning the responsibility for your learning is upon you--not the teacher or the coordinator of the exercise. In experiential learning you need to become active and aggressive in your learning role and give direction to constructing your conclusions. The experiential situation is structured so that you can experiment with your behavior, try things out, see what works, build skills, and generalize for yourself out of your own experience. Appropriate theory is then presented to help summarize your learning and to help you build a framework of knowledge that organizes what you know. While experiential learning is a stimulating and involving activity, it is important to always remember that experience alone is not beneficial; you learn from the combination of experience and the conceptualization of your experience.

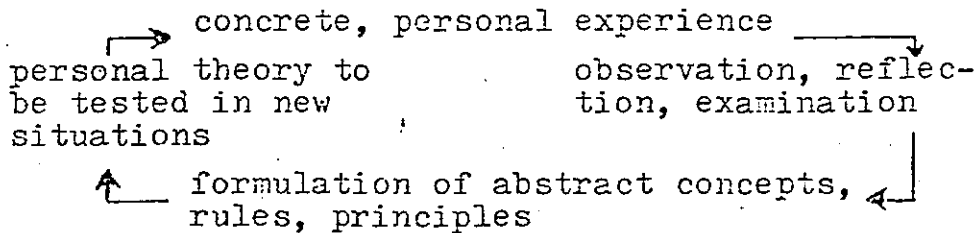


Figure 1.2 Experiential Learning Cycle<sup>1</sup>

I found that from almost passionate dislike I was swinzing to complete fascination and excitement. There was a reason behind it all and better still, the reason was worth it-- learning through experience at last! The MAT program made

sense. I no longer had to make the best of a bad decision-- coming to SIT. I could enjoy it. "Student-centered learning" and "subordination of teaching to learning" were finally phrases that were rich with meaning and potential. I wanted to go back to September and start over again. I wanted to study each of the "Approaches" again. I wanted to learn. I was happy to be at SIT. I was free to learn what I wanted. Nobody was going to teach me, and I did not mind!

In looking back, much of my confusion and frustration was derived from a lack of knowledge and understanding. In speaking of the educational values of experiential education John A. Wallace emphasized this point: "...I reiterate my earlier statement that affective education needs to be built upon a solid basis of cognitive knowledge."<sup>2</sup> "Experiential learning" and "humanistic education" had merely been terms that I had heard ridiculed on campus. Once I now understood what they meant, I could enjoy them in operation.

My understanding of experiential learning and appreciation of humanistic education as I had experienced them gave me the confidence to undertake a challenging internship in Mexico last winter and an equally challenging one in the English Language Office this summer. I now know what it is to learn through experience and to attempt to teach through it, too. In the words of no other than John Dewey: "There is no discipline in the world so severe as the discipline of experience subjected to the tests of intelligent development and direction."<sup>3</sup> My internship this summer brought home to me the truth of this statement as I tried "intelligently" to develop and direct the experiences I provided and watched the students do the same.

NOTES

<sup>1</sup> What is Experiential Learning? Experiment Handout.,  
Author unknown.

<sup>2</sup> John A. Wallace, Beyond Experience (Brattleboro: The  
Experiment Press, 1977), p. 27.

<sup>3</sup> John Dewey, Experience and Education (New York: Collier  
Books, 1977), p. 90.

### CULTURE AND INDIVIDUALITY

There is a new kind of man in the world, and there are more of that kind than is commonly recognized. He is a national citizen with international intuitions, conscious of the age that is past and aware of the one now in being, aware of the radical difference between the two, willing to accept the lack of precedents, willing to work on the problems of the future as a labour of love, unrewarded by governments, academies, prizes, and position. He forms part of an invisible world community of poets, writers, dancers, scientists, teachers, lawyers, scholars, philosophers, students, citizens who see the whole world and feel at one with all its parts.

- Harold Taylor

## CULTURE AND INDIVIDUALITY

One of the principle attractions of the School for International Training is its international campus. Beware of it. It has the potential to free an individual from the confines of a monocultural life pattern and to bring the world within arms' reach. It also has the potential to make one's experience here painful and frustrating. Many foreign students often fall into a trap of their own making. They begin to see themselves as culturally different--Asian, Latin, European, and American. While this is essential for a feeling of identity and a sense of belonging, it also creates barriers. It places an individual (or allows him to place himself) into a cultural pattern that can confine, restrict, and limit him.

For example, a Japanese student who left her country for the first time to study here spent the first three months painfully trying to be as "Japanese" as she could be. The reason in her own words: "I am Japanese. I do not want to be anything else." She avoided the company of two other persons--one a Japanese-American and the other a Japanese who was "too American." A month before leaving she cried. She cried because first, she realized that some of her actions had indeed become "American." She was romantically involved with a Swiss. She was visiting bars and drinking alcohol as openly as the other two. Secondly, it was difficult for her to be friends with them now. Her pride would not allow more than self-realization.

The concept of cultural identity, according to Adler,

specifically revolves around the identity of the individual in relation to his or her culture. Cultural identity, in the sense that it is a functioning aspect of individual personality, is a fundamental symbol of a person's existence.<sup>1</sup>

From reaffirming her individuality she came to what Erik Erikson calls "an unconscious striving for continuity of personal character."<sup>2</sup>

The tendency to over-emphasize cultural self-awareness and cultural group behavior, and to attempt to explain differences



in behavior patterns purely from the standpoint of collective cultural identity, is too narrow. I found this suffocating. For instance, my problems with group process were attributed to culture. I believed this until my relatives in Boston told me that I had always been reserved, quiet, and withdrawn even as a child. I was always distant with strangers. In addition, remarks such as the following often left me angry even if they were intended as compliments. "What! An Indian woman smoking!" "You don't like physical contact because you're Indian!" "You eat with a knife and fork better than I do." "You must have studied in England. Your English is so British." "You can never tell what Margaret is thinking or feeling. Indian women don't show emotion in public."

Three weeks ago someone told me: "It's hard to describe you as Indian. You're Margaret." I never thought I would hear such a statement at this school. It filled me with joy. I was more than a cultural entity--I was a person.

As foreign students in this country, we are in the fortunate position of transcending our respective cultures in a host culture that is free from many of the restrictions and social pressures of our home cultures. By the same token this lack of structure may lead us to total abandonment of all that is domestic while we reach for the foreign. Or else it may overwhelm us into a fearful retreat to all that is known and a rejection of what is new. Neither course is conducive to the growth of a transcultural mind or a multicultural personality.

For those of us who are in a foreign culture for the first time, this can be a period of conflict. For whether we welcome it or fight it, we will change in the course of our stay here. We will begin to see and understand the lure of the multicultural spirit and what this means for us. For those of us who must return home, the conflict is more immediate. Will we return to be strangers in our own home or will we be catalysts for contact between cultures? Like all else at this school, the final decision is up to the individual. Whatever our choice, neither alternative will be easy. For the man who has once seen can never

be truly blind and a man with a vision cannot rest.

The Experiment in International Living has adopted a German phrase, "Durch zusammenleben, lernt man zusammenleben": "By living together, men learn to live together." To this end cultural awareness and intercultural communication are given importance. However, there is an over-emphasis on cultural and ethnic diversity to the extent that in glorying in cultural differences, universal commonalities are either forgotten or of lesser importance. Furthermore, the need to overcome our differences and transcend our cultural identities if we are to live together harmoniously, is sadly neglected. Perhaps it is hoped that each individual will come to this realization and develop his multicultural personality in an on-going process during and after leaving the Experiment. It is my belief that in order to live together at this school one must be aware of the process of multicultural existence. Perhaps if this were better understood and manifest at the Experiment, it would become more than an awareness. It would become a way of life.

Adler describes the multicultural person as a

person whose essential identity is inclusive of life patterns different from his own and who has psychologically and socially come to grips with a multiplicity of realities. We call this new type of person multicultural because he embodies a core process of self-verification that is grounded in both the universality of the human condition and in the diversity of man's cultural forms.<sup>3</sup>

Since he is "neither totally a part of nor totally apart from his culture," he is a person who "lives, instead on the boundary."<sup>4</sup> Paul Tillich explains what this means:

It is in truth not standing still, but rather a crossing and return, a repetition of return and crossing, back-and-forth--the aim of which is to create a third area beyond the bounded territories, an area where one can stand for a time without being enclosed in something tightly bounded.<sup>5</sup>

In speaking of the transcultural mind Pierre Casse contends that "by its own nature and structure, the mind is cross-cultural, it has the capacity to understand other people, comprehend the

world in a meaningful way, and, even more, cope with its own internal dialectics."<sup>6</sup>

I would like to conclude this section with one of my favorite stories. It brings back my childhood and the memories of my first steps into the worlds, Indian and Burmese, of my father and mother respectively. They made me question and helped me appreciate the multicultural spirit and the transcultural mind. They helped me to "create a third area beyond the bounded territories" and to remain there many times "without being tightly bounded." They taught me the magic of magic.

### The Prince and the Magician

Once upon a time there was a young prince who believed in all things but three. He did not believe in princesses, he did not believe in islands, and he did not believe in God. His father, the king, told him that such things did not exist. As there were no princesses or islands in his father's domain, and no sign of God, the prince believed his father.

But then, one day, the prince ran away from his palace and came to the next land. There, to his amazement, from every coast he saw islands; and on these islands strange creatures whom he dared not name. As he was searching for a boat, a man in full evening dress approached him along the shore. "Are those real islands?" asked the young prince. "Of course they are," said the man in full evening dress. "And those strange creatures?" "They are all genuine and authentic princesses." "Then God must also exist!" cried the prince. "I am God," replied the man in evening dress, with a bow.

The young prince returned home as quickly as he could. "So, you are back," said his father, the king. "I have seen islands, I have seen princesses, I have seen God," said the young prince reproachfully.

The king was unmoved. "Neither real islands, nor real princesses, nor a real God exists." "I saw them!" "Tell me how

God was dressed." "God was in full evening dress." "Were the sleeves of his coat rolled back?" The prince remembered that they had been. The king smiled. "That is the uniform of a magician. You have been deceived."

At this, the prince returned to the next land and went to the same shore, where once again he came upon the man in full evening dress. "My father, the king, has told me who you are," said the prince indignantly. "You deceived me last time, but not again. Now I know that those are not real islands and real princesses, because you are a magician."

The man on the shore smiled. "It is you who are deceived, my boy. In your father's kingdom, there are many islands and many princesses. But you are under your father's spell, so you cannot see them."

The prince pensively returned home. When he saw his father he looked him in the eye. "Father, is it true that you are not a real king, but only a magician?" The king smiled and rolled back his sleeves. "Yes, son, I am only a magician." "Then the man on the other shore was God." "The man on the other shore was another magician." "I must know the truth--the truth beyond magic." "There is no truth beyond magic," said the king.

The prince was full of sadness. He said, "I will kill myself." The king, by magic, caused death to appear. Death stood in the door and beckoned to the prince. The prince shuddered. He remembered the beautiful but unreal islands and the unreal but beautiful princesses. "Very well," he said, "I can bear it."

"You see, my son," said the king, "you, too, begin to be a magician."<sup>7</sup>

-Like the young prince it is necessary to leave our palaces and see the "unreal but beautiful" and the "beautiful but unreal." We long to know "the truth--the truth beyond magic." And in the process, like the young prince, we learn in the words of Peter S. Adler that "Life is an on-going process of psychic death and rebirth"<sup>8</sup> if we are to break through our "spatial, temporal, relational, personal, value, affection, conscious-unconscious,

certainty-uncertainty, reality-unreality, and public-private dimensions."<sup>9</sup> When we understand this we begin to become magicians. We learn to work with magic. .

NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Beyond Cultural Identity: Reflections on Cultural and Multiculturalism, Peter S. Adler, p. 25.

<sup>2</sup> Erik Erikson, "The Problem of Ego Identity," Psychological Issues, 1959, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 101-164.

<sup>3</sup> Beyond Cultural Identity, Peter Adler, p. 24.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>5</sup> Paul Tillich, The Future of Religions (New York: Harper & Row, 1966).

<sup>6</sup> Pierre Casse, Training for the Cross-Cultural Mind (Washington D.C.: Society for Intercultural Education, Training & Research, 1981), p. IX.

<sup>7</sup> John Fowles, The Magus (New York: Dell Publishing Co.), pp. 499-500.

<sup>8</sup> Beyond Cultural Identity, Peter Adler, p. 29.

<sup>9</sup> Culture Shock, Peter Adler.

## CONCLUSION

This paper is a personal document of some of the more significant steps in the development of my ability to take responsibility for my own learning. I do not intend this paper to be taken as a comprehensive statement on the School for International Training or foreign students in it. Each person's experience is unique. / The process of realization and development that I went through may or may not be common to both foreign and American students.

It is my belief, however, that American students go through a different experience. / For the most part, they live off campus and do not experience the day-to-day living situations that foreign students who live on campus do. They do not have to adjust to the food, meal times, or living in dormitories that are small, that lack privacy, and are very noisy. They do not have to search for a quiet place to study.

/ The small group process of learning may be easier for them to adjust to. They are the majority in each group. (There were only one or two foreign students in each "Methods" group.) They are basically a vocal people. They are used to mixed (male and female) groups. Their attitude and relationship to teachers is more informal and has a sense of greater equality; they have functioned in, and with, greater freedom and democracy than most foreign students.

Most important of all they are being trained in their own country, in a system that is fundamentally American, i.e. free and democratic, by a staff that is American, to work in other countries. They, therefore, do not have to contend with the cross-cultural dimensions during training that foreign students have to. Because of these factors, as a foreign student I was in a position of greater vulnerability. /

It is the memory of this sense of vulnerability that has

prompted me to write this paper and to conclude with the following statement: I came to this school a sum total of my past. In order to survive here I made adjustments that were difficult and painful. I made them because I wanted to develop, through group process and experiential learning, skills that I needed. Now that the year is over I leave with much more. I leave with the knowledge that I can take responsibility for my learning and because of this I am stronger and more supple as I go to meet life outside the School for International Training.

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