

Transnationals, Transculturals: Dilemmas of Identity in an International Age

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The most fundamental conflict of late 20th Century Man or Woman is that between an identity as a member of an ethnic/national community and a growing awareness of membership in a world community. Yet, in a very real sense, international understanding begins with the consciousness of individual and social identity.

What does this primary conflict mean when an individual's identity has been formed at the interface of cultures, when someone has had an extended experience in an international, cosmopolitan environment? What special dilemmas of identity are there for internationally-experienced people?

At least six million adults from the United States, Japan, and other developed countries (according to conservative estimates) have spent a significant part of their formative years in an international setting. They have lived in a setting apart from that of their culture or country of citizenship during a critical part of their lives. The rapid recovery and expansion of the world economy following World War II was also paralleled by the growth of a transnational culture to which many of these people belong, a culture with important implications for the roles of personal identity in cultural interaction.

Internationally-experienced people and international schools like the Columbia Academy of Kobe, Japan, which I have studied as an anthropologist since 1980, are focal points of this interaction. An examination of these key junctures can lead us to a new understanding of the dilemmas of identity in an international age.

Research Populations

The study of the many different perspectives found in this, one of the more exotic settings imaginable, presents the contours of a varied and sometimes striking landscape. The

students and alumni of Columbia Academy (CA) of Kobe, Japan, no ordinary high school, are the key subjects for this research project.

A blending of American and European curricula with doses of local Japanese color in language or cultural studies, students with multiple allegiances (linguistic, national, and cultural) and a faculty/staff that is bewildering in its variety and experience, are considered 'normal' at CA. The graduates of the school have had singular careers and life courses that are, both fascinating and impressive.

The role of language in this multilingual setting is of special interest, particularly as it offers an alternative vision concerning bilinguality and the fostering of a trans-cultural consciousness.

The transnational culture these people belong to can be defined as a shared pattern of learned, transmitted socialization (symbols, values and experiences) generated from a setting characterized by multiple participants, languages and ethnic backgrounds. Members of the transnational culture typically see themselves as belonging to a mixture of cultures, as bicultural or multicultural rather than monocultural.

At the outset, the phenomena of returnees (people who return to their native culture after some years abroad) and expatriates (people who live outside their native culture) deserve special mention. These two groups are opposite sides of the same multicultural or transnational coin. On one side of this coin are those expatriates who live in the midst of cross-cultural contact in exotic settings. In varying degrees many of these people join this 'transnational culture.' On the other side of the coin are those who have come back to a mainstream culture, the 'returnees.' Expatriates and returnees are found in all countries, making significant yet little understood contributions to those mainstream societies of which they are a part.

A New World System: New Meaning Systems

While it may be only too obvious to state that we live in an intensely interactive world system, what is new about this system is its character: The quality of this international interaction is actually strikingly different. The discourse which has recently emerged around the themes of transnational and transcultural flows may help us here. It is a discourse which reflects the effects of ethnographic scholarship on education and the social sciences.

Traditional visions of how the world was evolving saw the future as either continued

development of increasingly sophisticated nation-states or of nation-states giving way to a 'world community.' Both views seem simplistic and hopelessly naive when confronted with the facts of the early 1990s: ethnic, regional and interpersonal conflict abound. Instead of confirming a consolidation of nations or nation-states we find more and more discussion of either ethnic strife, rootlessness, alienation or malaise on the one hand or technological, consumer-oriented (transnational) processes on the other hand.

Caught between are individuals who bring various repertoires to address this new global cultural economy. It is an economy characterized by a series of complex, overlapping, and disjunctive cultural cross-roads. This shifting world can be viewed with special insight through the persona of the alumni of the international school in Japan who have been the subject of my research.

They, and other highly mobile groups like them, are an essential feature of our contemporary world, especially as more and more people are moving or have fantasies of doing so. Moreover, these highly mobile groups have had an influence on policy and politics far beyond what their numbers would suggest. As mobile groups, too, they have perhaps the most active of all contemporary imaginations. Their influence may be particularly significant in those places where new ideas, terms, and images are created.

As a new diaspora, transnationals/transculturals act as agents who 'continuously inject new meaning-streams' into the discourses of contemporary societies (Appadurai, 1990, p. 11). They also bring a central force to the modern world: deterritorialization. Their experiences and views can perhaps teach us about the conditions of growing social disjunctures. They may show us how the globalization of culture is not the same as its homogenization.

More concretely, how do these people view themselves and their own 'reproduction'? Trans-generational stability of knowledge, supposed to be the base of enculturation, can no longer be taken for granted. How, in other words, have people brought up in literally multiple worlds solved the human problem of reproducing their own cultural forms?

Globalization as a Phenomenon

By a global culture we are clear about one thing: it is not the nation-state 'writ large,' as Featherstone notes (1990, p. 1). As he points out, if we see culture as a series of processes we can refer to 'the globalization of culture.' These processes transcend the state-society level, operating at trans-national, trans-societal levels.

We can thus no longer see diverse cultural flows simply as bilateral exchanges or antagonisms. As Featherstone states (1990, p. 2), “The binary logic which seeks to comprehend culture via the mutually exclusive terms of homogeneity/heterogeneity, integration/disintegration, unity/diversity, must be discarded.”

Instead we can conceptualize global culture in terms beyond homogenizing processes, “more in terms of the diversity, variety and richness of popular and local discourses, codes and practices which resist and play-back systemicity and order.” (Featherstone, 1990, p. 2) The globe may be a single place, but it is also a sort of generative frame of unity where diversity can take place (Featherstone, 1990, p. 2). We should see BOTH particularities and differences as part of humanity.

What we are witnessing is a kind of ‘global compression’ which has resulted in the present high degree and persistence of global complexity as well as increased cultural conflicts. Among the contributing causes are the many and increasing international agencies, global communications, global time, global competitions and prizes, the standardization of ideas about citizenship and rights, and the move towards a single dominant economic system.

Globalization also entails – at the local and international levels – 1) reduced cultural homogeneity, 2) increased cultural disorder, and 3) the formation of true transnational cultures (sometimes called ‘third’ cultures). As cultures which were formerly isolated pockets of relative homogeneity are linked, increasingly diverse portraits of *The Other* are created as well as reactions that reinforce one’s own special identity (Featherstone, 1990, p. 6).

A variety of strategies are then produced, both for relating to outsiders (who are increasingly on the inside) and for re-constituting one’s own identity (which is seen to be more and more on the outside, on display to curious Others). Boundaries, cultural and national, are now easily re-drawn and even more easily crossed, letting us know in subtle (and some not-so-subtle) ways about the new era we have entered.

We can see a range of responses, from those of rigid local situations to those of cosmopolitanism, with a wide variety in between. Some of those people who have extensive international experience are cosmopolitans (and there are a variety of these people). Others with international experience are locals at heart who never really wanted to leave home.

Featherstone speaks of another example of cosmopolitanism as being “the transnational intellectuals who keep in touch via global cultural flows and who are not only at

home in other cultures, but seek out and adopt a reflexive, metacultural or aesthetic stance to divergent cultural experiences.” (Featherstone, 1990, p. 9)

Following Smith (1990, p. 179), I view cultural identity as being a sort of common denominator of subjective feelings and valuations of a population which shares common experiences and other characteristics (such as language, customs, religion, etc.). Smith points out that these feelings and values have to do with three components of their shared experience:

- 1) a sense of continuity between the experiences of succeeding generations
- 2) shared memories of specific people and events (especially those that have marked turning points in their collective history)
- 3) a feeling of a common destiny on the part of those sharing the experiences

The role of ethno-history in assuring collective (therefore, individual) dignity, notably for dispossessed/oppressed populations, means that the ‘nationalist project’ will be alive and well with us for a long time to come (Smith, 1990, p. 182). Smith points out that the problem of collective disintegration and individual oblivion is in fact becoming a more acute problem:

“Loss of social cohesion feeding off an increasing sense of individual meaninglessness, in a century when the old problem of ‘evil’ has been posed in unparalleled ways, drives more and more people to discover new ways of understanding and preserving ‘identity’ in the face of annihilation.” (*Ibid.*)

We should distinguish, of course, between the concepts of collective cultural identity and ‘situational’ individual identity (Smith, 1990, p. 189; Okamura, 1981). As Hannerz has said (1990, p. 237), the world culture today “is marked by an organization of diversity rather than by a replication of uniformity . . . the world has become one network of social relationships, and between its different regions there is a flow of meanings as well as of people and goods.”

The distinction between cosmopolitans and locals which Hannerz discusses (1990) needs further explication. Locals may carry a (nationalistic) air of provincialism with them in today’s world. For cosmopolitans, on the other hand, orientation and competence are key skills. Cosmopolitans are especially adept at ‘managing meaning.’

This competence is both generalized and specialized:

“There is the aspect of a state of readiness, a personal ability to make one’s way into other cultures, through listening, looking, intuiting and reflecting. And there is cultural competence in the stricter sense of the term, a built-up skill in manoeuvring more or less expertly with a particular system of meanings and meaningful forms.” (Hannerz, 1990, p. 239)

Rather than viewing transculturals as simply embodying a perspective or point of view (which makes them static or passive), I therefore see them as manifesting a process (which makes them dynamic and active, possessing a special perspective).

We can no longer view culture as having a meaning and form linked simply to territory (or of the people of that land as necessarily linked to that land culturally). What may be culture for locals (daily interaction anchored around one-on-one relationships in one place, without much moving around) is becoming less and less the norm in the world. Yet the truly dynamic cultures are those that transcend space and place. The anchor of their cultural identity is not in a place but in social relationships and interactions. Those cultures which are territorially defined are literally ‘losing ground’ to those which have collective networks of meaning extending into space and across time.

Hannerz (1990, p. 239) has noted that cultures should not be seen as the hard-edged, easily-separated pieces of a mosaic but as phenomena that tend to overlap and mingle. The boundaries we draw around them are frequently arbitrary.

A cosmopolitan has relationships with a plurality of cultures, the more the better. Such people see diversity as meaning the coexistence of cultures. To use Hannerz’s phrase (1990, p. 239), transculturalism is “first of all an orientation, a willingness to engage with *The Other*. It is an intellectual and aesthetic stance of openness toward divergent cultural experiences, a search for contrasts rather than uniformity.” Yet. . .

“Cosmopolitanism often has a narcissistic streak; the self is constructed in the space where cultures mirror one another. Competence with regard to alien cultures itself entails a sense of mastery, as an aspect of the self. One’s understandings have expanded, a little more of the world is somehow under control.

The cosmopolitan’s surrender to the alien culture implies personal autonomy vis-a-vis the culture where he originated. He has his obvious competence with regard to it, but he can choose to disengage from it. He possesses it, it does not possess him.

The cosmopolitan may embrace the alien culture, but he does not become commit-

ted to it. All the time he knows where the exit is.” (Hannerz, 1990, p. 240)

Some cultures are carried by territory (and cosmopolitans usually interact with one of these, too) but it is the transnational networks, particularly the growth and spread of these cultural and social networks in today’s world that has produced more cosmopolitans than the world has ever known.

Some tourists, exiles and expatriates are cosmopolitans and some are not. Those who are not are of the ‘home-plus’ variety, while true cosmopolitans want to immerse themselves in other cultures. Tourists are not participants, thus locals do not admit tourists into local reciprocities. “The exile . . . is often no real cosmopolitan either, for his involvement with a culture away from his homeland is something that has been forced on him” (Hannerz, 1990, p. 242). Many expatriate workers are also not cosmopolitan, seeing their extended overseas experience simply as added income and perhaps a chance to meet an exotic culture. But most of their daily life is spent in an encapsulated, rather isolated foreign ghetto.

Cosmopolitans, on the other hand, are “people who can afford to experiment, who do not stand to lose a treasured but threatened, uprooted sense of self” (Hannerz, 1990, p. 243). The real significance of the growth of transnational, cosmopolitan cultures lies in the mediating possibilities they offer (Hannerz, 1990, p. 245), since they are bridgeheads for entry into other territorial cultures. Another way of looking at transnationals, too, is to see them as “decontextualized cultural capital” (Hannerz, 1990, p. 246).

Theoretical Foundations

The theoretical basis of this study follows Geertz (1973, 1982, 1983), who stated that the task of an ethnographic study is hermeneutic or interpretive; Goodman (1978), who conceived of ‘world-making’ as the critical foundation of belief and action; Turner and Bruner (1986), who see experience(s) as identifying us as members of a given culture; Marcus and Fischer (1986), who stressed the role of anthropology in producing an interpretive cultural critique; and Arjun Appadurai (1990), whose original insights about transnational/transcultural flows are altering the way we see our world.

The conception of social life in these views is organized holistically in terms of symbols whose meanings must be grasped if culture and its principles are to be understood. Experience is one of the key symbolic concepts. As Turner and Bruner (1986) have noted,

there are both private and common experiences, but it is by definition the common experiences that identify us as members of a given culture. For those who once belonged to this particular international school and community in Japan, what is the substance and meaning of their common intercultural experience? What roles have education and language played in this experience?

Important methodological models for the research included Rohlen's account of Japanese high schools (1983), Cusick's study of an American public high school (1973), and Cookson and Persell's research on American private schools (1985). This study attempts what Geertz calls a systematic 'unpacking of performed meaning' (1982, p. 152). For symbolic action theorists, thinking and acting are considered an intentional manipulation of cultural forms. As Geertz noted,

We are all natives now, and everybody else not immediately one of us is an exotic. What looked once to be a matter of finding out whether savages could distinguish fact from fancy now looks to be a matter of finding out how others, across the seas or down the corridor, organize their significative world. (Geertz, 1973, p. 152)

Social life can thus be fundamentally conceived as a negotiation of meanings (Marcus and Fischer, 1986, p. 26). The context has above all been a global one, and it is here that I should note related research which has influenced this project. Visions of a globally-linked future are eloquently expressed by Kenneth Boulding (1985a, 1985b), Elise Boulding (1988), Reardon (1988), Enloe (1985), and Soedjatmoko (1984).

Princeton University scholar Richard Falk (1983) has noted 'the formation of a global constituency of persons who complement their national citizenship with identities as planetary citizens.' More than twenty years ago, Becker and Mehlinger also suggested (1968) that the world's population can be perceived as organized into horizontal layers of transnational elites as well as into vertical national units. They classified these elites as social, business, intellectual, and political. These transnational elites have regular communication and interaction among themselves, an interaction that may greatly exceed the intensity of contacts and degree of communication between them and non-elite groups within their own countries.

McNeill's discussion of polyethnicity as the norm rather than the exception in human history (1986) was also an important touchstone. The roles of expatriate communities (Cohen, 1977), strangers (Simmel, 1950), sojourners (Siu, 1952), and the marginal man

(Park, 1928, 1950) have previously been examined, but not in the context of international communities. General research on international schools has been reported by Leach (1969), Terwilliger (1972), Stoddart (1980), Willis (1983, 1984), Fox (1985), and Willis and Enloe (1990). Of special concern for the future of American education, both higher and secondary, is how multicultural education (Becker, 1979; Gollnick and Chinn, 1986; Banks and Banks, 1989) and global consciousness can be linked. This paper is a first step towards addressing these concerns in more depth by looking at a special case: those individuals who may have a truly multi/transcultural identity. Let us turn now to a discussion of the research questions and methodology.

Questions

We began with a set of questions which have guided our research. What is the life course of people who have had an international childhood? How is their special experience made a part of their subsequent lives?

What impact does a multicultural upbringing have on one's sense of self and one's social identity? How does one relate to the world? Or, put more precisely, what is the world view of internationally-experienced people?

What work roles have transculturals been led to? How many of these careers have had an international dimension? What social networks and family patterns have these people established and maintained? To what extent have these been international or global?

We were also interested in the special strategies these people use throughout their lives in adapting, adjusting, or coping with what may be an intense, even overwhelming experience. How has a global experience affected later stages in their life courses? How does having been raised internationally differ according to eras (the 1930s, the 1950s, etc.)? Do these people re-evaluate their formative experiences differently when they are young adults, in their middle and in their senior years?

Larger questions we wished to address included the differential effects of growing up in Japan, the impact of an intercultural experience (upon life course, self-concept, and value orientations), the relationship between biculturalism and bilingualism, the incorporation of a system (or systems) of meaning specific to culture (or cultures), the intermediary role of an international school in inculcating meaning (culture), whether having an intercultural experience facilitates a sense of worldmindedness, and the possible implications for the 'internationalizaion' of American and other countries' educational

systems (finding what facilitates or hinders intercultural maturity).

Methodology

Starting with idealistic assumptions about who was 'international' (a reflection partly of the raging discourse in Japan on 'internationalization') and drawing on my own research on expatriates and returnees (and that of Drs. Yasuko Minoura and Walter Enloe, my collaborators on this project), an extended longitudinal study of what seemed to be a unique population was constructed with the support of the Toyota Foundation (Grants 84-II-258 and 86-III-004).

Our research, built on a systematic base of examining returnees and international school students for over ten years, aims at understanding the life course implications for transculturals. Dr. Minoura has taken the perspectives of social psychology and anthropology, while I have utilized those of educational anthropology and comparative education. Dr. Enloe is a developmental psychologist and elementary school educator. Through extensive interviewing and statistical research we developed a conceptual framework which was then refined and elaborated in a six-page instrument. Now we believe we have answers to some of the questions which have been asked by transculturals themselves, their parents, teachers, counselors, administrators, and scholars.

In order to simplify this account of the impact of transnationals/transculturals our research team decided to focus on the graduates (1913-1983) of one international school in Japan. We further reduce possible variables here by looking only at the experience which Americans had with this particular setting (especially with Japan and their school). The common thread which these people have is an intercultural experience at a young age and an education in an international school. This paper will focus on a 'thick description' of the life course of typical members of this community as defined by cohorts, looking for evidence of where in these individuals' lives a formative cross-cultural experience has (and where it has not) been especially important. Along with extensive survey data results, we will utilize the fascinating reports of 38 extended interviews (2-4 hours each) of representative members of the alumni population. A control population raised in the United States and matched socio-economically provided suitable comparisons and a stable reference point.

The school, which we will call Columbia Academy (CA), has followed Canadian, then American, and most recently a mixture of American and International Baccalaureate cur-

ricula. Although the primary ethos has been North American, a student population of increasingly diverse cultural backgrounds has meant a growing shift towards a truly international environment.

Research Design

The present research is ongoing and consists of multi-instrument data collection, combining qualitative and longitudinal perspectives. Primary data-gathering is being undertaken through extended, structured interviews; field study in the international community of Kobe, Japan; and a six-page questionnaire sent to 1739 alumni (former students and teachers) world-wide. The questionnaire was constructed taking into consideration what we were told and observed in the first stage of our project. Interviews were conducted before the survey was sent (greatly aiding its construction) and are continuing on a follow-up basis.

Our instrument aims at studying 'human development in a multicultural context', especially the impact of transcultural experiences in childhood, adolescence, and young adulthood. Questions covered the subjects' perceptions of self and of their high school days. A scale for 'Worldmindedness' as well as items from the US 'High School and Beyond' study and extensive demographic data were also included. Parts of the survey were distributed as a control to middle-class Japanese and American communities.

The six-page questionnaire containing a nine-item-scale ("Being at CA international school. . .") and a 19-item-scale ("About yourself") was sent worldwide to all known alumni addresses as of March 1988 for the period 1913-1983.

The final return was 957 (782 non-return), or a return rate of 55.03%. We would stress, however, that this is a representative and not a sample population. Considering the nature of the population, the return rate is remarkable and can be attributed to persistence in the survey process. After accounting for returns that included bad addresses, deceased, etc., the data available totals 685 questionnaires, 573 student and 112 faculty questionnaires, covering the period 1913-1983. We will focus here only on our preliminary analyses of those American alumni who were former students.

Findings from Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis: Characteristics of Respondents

The first part of our analysis, to be presented in this paper, will concern the effects of era and family background on our subjects. Data will be presented based both on statistical tests that have been performed with an SPSS package and from the results of in-depth interviews. The subject's nationality and occupation, father's occupation, and the nature of their intercultural experience (whether or not it was a benefit) as well as other demographic characteristics will be explored.

Of special interest are the socio-historical transitions of populations that have attended Columbia Academy from 1913-1983. There have been four different cohorts:

1913-1942 (Pre-war, traditional school with a Canadian curriculum)

1953-1963 (Re-establishment of the school, 'the family period' and appearance of American hegemony)

1964-1972 ('Mature' American dominance in a Japan coming of age, social dislocation effects from America and elsewhere, loss of missionary population)

1973-1983 (Full-fledged admission of 'pure' Japanese and their first graduation; transition towards a school doubled in size, increased student diversity, Japanese and Americans as dominant cultural forces, the International Baccalaureate and 'European interim' prior to a partial shift towards Japanese cultural hegemony, then a return to US dominance)

These significant historical transitions have been detected by us as sub-groupings within the larger alumni population. A key finding is the shift of population from a school of primarily North Americans of missionary background (and some whose parents had a business or government background) towards a school of diverse nationalities, mainly from business backgrounds. The first period is from 1913-1972, the second from 1977-1983. A significant transition occurs between 1973-1975, when cultural symbols are a major focus of conflict.

American alumni who used to be students at CA and who responded to this survey total 328 (Male 139; Female 189). At the time of this survey, 86% of the respondents lived in the United States, many on the West Coast, while 24% lived in Japan. The latter had their elementary education in this international school and have lived most of their lives in Japan though they hold American citizenship. Many (212 of 328, or 64.6%) had most of their primary and secondary education in this international school and went back to the U.S. for their university education.

Ninety percent of the pre-war cohort (1913-1942) had stayed in Japan more than eleven years, 65% of this cohort consisting of missionary children. Fifty-five of those who came after the War stayed in Japan more than 11 years. About one-third of the 190 Americans who spent more than 11 years in Japan claimed that their culture is a combination of American and Japanese cultures, while 52% identified themselves culturally as 'American.' Forty-two of 328 had lived in foreign countries other than Japan, while for 280 Japan was the only foreign country in which they had ever lived.

One of our most important findings is the presence of common features which cross national, linguistic and class boundaries. The Columbia Academy rite of passage is infused with a peculiar sort of 'cultural capital' (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977; Apple, 1981), partly contextualized, partly decontextualized. Language is the primary vehicle of this 'cultural capital.'

It should be noted that this metaphor of 'cultural capital' describes an individual's relative success in the educational system. Cultural capital is largely a function of the extent to which individuals have absorbed or received a dominant culture. The cultural capital that the members of the international school community accumulate is a phenomenal collection of cross-cultural skills, languages, and symbols. These symbols can be associated with ideology, ethnic and group membership, and social status.

In joining the social and educational organization which is Columbia Academy we can see a process very much like the one Goffman (1961) described for the 'total institution' (his term for 'complete' organizations like hospitals, schools, etc.). This is a mortification process in which individual identities and past loyalties are abandoned. It is a stripping away of the self, intensified all the more in the crucible-like setting of an international school, a setting forged first of all by language.

Eventually, an awareness of a transcultural or transnational identity supersedes the other bonds that hold most individuals during and after their Columbia Academy experience. It is an awareness replete with larger symbols: the value of an education, the respect given to a teacher, the rewards of effort, and so forth; and it is an awareness mediated by the historical ties that accompany language. A unique situation exists where the different mediums people have grown up with or have adopted are recognized as identifying particular world views.

The dualism that encourages in-group/out-group is refashioned into a recognition of plurality, of many groups. It is readily apparent from the everyday environment that differences are historically related to and cued by language, yet the differences of language

that normally hinder communication are also recognized in an international school as avenues for wider shared meaning. All speakers are given an opportunity to reflect at length on their own language – and culture.

Multiple linguistic skills are a given. Aside from a small number of monolingual native English speakers, CA students are bilingual or multilingual. The meanings found separately in the two world views represented by two or more linguistic systems, in the sense of in-groups and out-groups, are present within many *individual* students and, to a lesser extent, faculty and staff.

The differences of language thus interact with the facts of an historical present. There is an awareness that these differences can be fused through language as well as further divided. The many ‘languages’ students pick up can be viewed in the wider sense as learned cultural competencies, as a shared grammar of interpersonal relationships (Minoura, 1979). It is true that cultures are different, but the very fact that people feel confident in attempting to communicate cross-culturally through language presupposes universally shared meanings, a recognition and acceptance of a plurality of cultures and identities.

Transnational/transcultural people are well-equipped for making choices and very flexible in changing their identity. “It’s natural to be international – why create a wall?” they ask. The globe as one in a period of tough economic competition makes these people sought-after by employers. Identities are seen as shifting and multiple: “Why do you have to belong to *somewhere*?” they ask.

The Characteristics of Intercultural Experience: Cognition, Behavior, and Affect at the Interface of Two Cultures

An important question which Yasuko Minoura has addressed in her research has signal importance for the present study: how and when are cultural meaning systems acquired by individuals? Minoura’s research, corroborated by the present project, is a challenge to dominant theories about the acquisition of cultural ethos. As she notes (Minoura, 1991, p. 1), the experiences of those who have lived temporarily in cultures other than their own “offer an invaluable opportunity to assess how and when culture-specific meaning systems are incorporated as part of the developmental process.” What it means to be brought up in America, for example, becomes clear in light of an American’s experience in Japan.

Minoura has found that there is a sensitive period for the incorporation of cultural meaning (identity) from about 9-14 years of age, and that peers “have more power in cultural learning than parents.” These findings, which are similar to those of the present study, are in sharp contrast to dominant theories about when a cultural meaning system is embedded. Traditional theories hold that cultural identity is formed and crystallized at a very early age, yet these theories seem to assume that

- a) an individual incorporates everything offered in terms of cultural learning
- b) once learned, a cultural meaning system stays with a person for the rest of their life, and
- c) child development is a continuous process whereby a cultural ethos is continually and ever-increasingly incorporated at all ages in cognitive, behavioral and affective ways.

Minoura’s findings (and those of the present study) indicate that individuals

- a) selectively modify what is offered to them in terms of cultural learning
- b) have a sensitive period during which a cultural meaning system for interpersonal relationships is incorporated, and
- c) learn culture in a series of distinct phases, with the cultural meaning systems about interpersonal relationships being integrated into their personality system during a sensitive period between 9-14 years of age.

Cultural meaning systems may be learned very early but the potency of their retention is not significant until the sensitive period. Before this period the incorporation of a cultural meaning system is fluid and flexible. This system loses its motivational force if one moves into another culture (especially another peer culture). As Minoura has found, the Japanese ethos which appears to be acquired in early childhood does not stay long with children once they have moved out from a Japanese cultural context.

Of course, each culture has a unique semiotic system which acts as an anchor for interpersonal behavior, but Minoura (1991) has made a major contribution to theory by noting the cultural disjunctures that are found between cognition, behavior and affect in individuals. She found that an individual could, for instance, be cognitively functioning as an American, but behaviorally and/or affectively still be a Japanese.

Affect, it should be particularly noted, is closely related to the evocative function of meaning systems. Many factors appear to have an impact on the biological and

psychological development of a person, but what Minoura has discovered is that cultural meaning systems become a salient part of the self only after they have been linked to the affective functionings of the person. "It is during the sensitive period that cultural meanings acquire the power to activate the affective system and thus become capable of evoking emotions." (Minoura, 1991, p. 38)

Minoura terms this incorporation the 'interiorization' of cultural meanings, as contrasted with the 'imitation' of cultural behavior associated with a cultural system which younger children may display. The cultural selves of these younger children have little to do with any meaning system. The 'steady cultural self' has not yet emerged, and if a child moves to another culture before the sensitive period, the cultural models to be used can be switched without much resistance.

Different combinations of cultural meaning systems are thus possible in the same person, depending (especially) on the age of subjects and their peer group relations when the intercultural contact takes place. In her research, which spans nearly fifteen years studying the same interculturally-experienced subjects, Minoura discovered five types of acculturative patterns in Japanese children raised in the United States:

Type I – Those who do not have a perception of differences between American and Japanese interpersonal behavior, yet have very Japanese ways of thinking despite living in the U.S.A.

Type II – Those who have an articulate perception about differences between American and Japanese cultural patterns, but whose feelings or behavior show almost no acculturation towards American patterns.

Type III – Those who have two sets of cognitive scripts, one Japanese, the other American. They use one depending on the demands of a given situation. Cognitively and behaviorally they are adept at code-switching, but affectively they are probably one or the other. There is also the possibility here of being a functioning bicultural.

Type IV – Those who adopt the American script for behavior and act like an American, but whose cultural meaning systems are not apparent. Like Type III they are behaviorally and cognitively American, but data fails to indicate to which cultural meaning system they ultimately subscribe.

Type V – Those who tend to believe the American way is the only way. These Japanese children tend to experience greater difficulties with their peers when they return to Japan.

Once acquired, usually during this sensitive period, cultural meaning systems constitute the core of cultural identity and have significant motivational and affective effects on behavior. For those raised abroad, there appears to be for some a point of no return, while for others it may take a long time for them to feel like they are Japanese (or American) after their return to their ‘home culture.’

These findings have special relevance for understanding the dilemmas of identity found among transnationals and transculturals.

Becoming International – Personal Impacts on Alumni

What about individual representatives? One of the most famous of the C. A. graduates is an astrophysicist from Canada who matriculated at C.A. in 1924. With an impressive career meriting a full page entry in *Who's Who in America*, his achievements have included numerous gold medals and scholarly awards as well as publication of major studies on meteorites. He is regarded as the leading world authority on this subject.

Some of our other subjects surprised us as well. More than one were highly-placed intelligence operatives. Although we thought our survey to be innocuous, some of our respondents gave answers like the following:

“Growing up in Japan when “dangerous thought” was rooted out by the police. Then living through the McCarthy period, and the Cultural Revolution in China, I find the request to answer certain of the questions inappropriate and offensive.”

There are many other stories which we will discuss in a later article, but here we would like to examine the general personal impacts we have observed among our subjects. The usual image of transculturals is a negative one, people who are constantly floating, left out by identity confusion, unable to properly respond to the cultural cues and artifacts of their native societies. Never rooted, never really ‘at home’, transculturals supposedly experience repeated re-entry shocks. At worst they are ‘international fools’ (*kokusai baka*) who never fit in anywhere. Moreover, they display a sometimes sharply expressed in-

tolerance – of narrow-minded people. Confronted with a wide range of choices, they are uncertain where to turn.

At least this is the picture frequently given us in the research literature. While such a portrait does characterize a small number of individuals, and may be true for most transculturals at some points in their lives, what we have found is something very different. *The wide range of responses we have received is overwhelmingly positive.* From our research the following are frequently reported traits of transculturals:

- adaptable
- open
- tolerant
- identity – multiple (from a multicultural view)
- acceptance
- sensitivity
- confidence
- insight
- no culture shock
- listening
- choices
- self-reliance
- make friends easily
- objectivity
- empathy
- broad-minded
- personal growth
- role playing skills
- cognitive flexibility
- tuning-in skills
- awareness

What do the members of our transcultural population view as the requirements for becoming international?

A strong personality, strong support network (especially parental support), independence, confidence, and a risk-taking view are all seen as indispensable. Of special importance is being taught to be broad-minded, preferably by one's parents, but with teachers playing a key role as well.

Over 50% of transculturals follow their parents into international jobs. Tolerance of

others is widespread: 83% would allow their daughter to marry a person of another race, religion or culture (31.9% for American adults in our control group). Self-image is powerful, too: 97% have great pride in themselves (75.3% for American adults). And, while 69% (Americans 39.2%) have felt alienated or left out at some time they feel this is the price to pay and would not trade their experience for any other. Perhaps most significantly for society, 80% are high achievers (American adults, 51.5%).

The development of capacities to benefit from diversity, to have meaningful interchanges with people who have different values, to resolve conflicts and to tolerate ambiguity are all part of the 'cultural capital' of transcultural people.

Multiple Cultural Identities

There are obviously a significant number of people who, having had an intercultural experience at a young age, view themselves as belonging to not one but a melange of cultures. The most important finding here is the existence of '*multiple cultural identities*.' Those of us from monolingual, monocultural backgrounds easily overlook the possibility of anything other than a '*monolithic identity*,' so absorbed are we in our own bias. Japanese, in particular, seem unable to conceive of (or accept) anyone who incorporates Japanese culture alongside another culture (note the term the Japanese government uses for naturalized Koreans: 'Shin Nihonjin,' new Japanese).

Yet the evidence from the present research is strong on this point: over one-third of international school alumni view themselves as having a mixed culture. Related to culture is the language or languages (dialect/dialects) used with family members/work-mates and while reading/writing. Over half the study population (55.5%) are bilingual or multilingual.

Are 'internationals' or transnationals somehow different, somehow special? The evidence we have amassed clearly suggests that the answer is an emphatic 'Yes.' The data collected in this study from questionnaires and interviews indicates that these people are, on the whole, unique, highly-integrated individuals who display characteristics essentially consonant with Maslow's 'self-realized' individual and the positive aspects of Erikson's last two developmental stages (generativity and integrity). Indeed, they have an extremely positive self-image, with over 97% feeling they have something of which they can be proud (vs. 75% for American adults).

These internationally-experienced people have a measured control over their lives,

with 91.4% of the mature transnationals agreeing that 'when I make plans I am almost certain I can make them work.' This contrasts with US adults (78.4%) and US students (81.7%) Surprisingly, only 63.8% of C. A. students agree with this statement and 26.8% disagree with it. Why? Again, the 'crucible effect.' C. A. students, usually through no choice of their own, have been thrown into a high-temperature furnace of sorts. This furnace tests their wills, their imaginations, and other faculties. Later in life the tools and skills acquired from this experience will likely enable them to make choices that will lead them to the same degree of confidence as C. A. alumni. The number of 'achievers' among C. A. adults is noticeable: 8 of 10 people (cf. US adults, 5 of 10).

'Culture shock' is an expression commonly used to describe an important experience which could be both positive and negative, yet it is often applied in a negative sense to transculturals/transnationals. Other important 'shocks' which anyone might have might be entering college, marriage, starting work; and so on. The conventional literature on our topic tends to focus mainly on the 'shock' aspect of the lives of these interculturally-experienced people.

I would posit, though, that instead of being seen as running a gauntlet of 'shocks', transculturals be viewed as having a special insight into people and relationships that others (those who were raised in a monocultural setting) do not have. After living in an intercultural context self-awareness increases. With it come more insights about identity, values structures, and communication patterns. Now let us turn to a similar study population which may give us additional insights along these lines: *Kikokushijo* (Japanese returnees).

Questions of Identity: The Case of Japanese Returnees

What effect does a returnee experience have on a person's cultural or ethnic identity over the long-term? As Walter Enloe found in his research on Japanese returnees, for returnees, "the single most lasting concern . . . was the question of the returnee child's sense of cultural identity." (Enloe, 1986)

In a research project conducted on these long-term effects, Eriko Onoda (1988) conducted 46 extensive interviews with returnees aged 18-29 who had more than two years experience abroad. Like the elements of ethnic minority identity described for Blacks and others in the West, there appear to be four stages. First is a denial of the minority status, then a meeting of novels and experiences that positively inform one about the experience,

followed by a change in consciousness towards valuing that status, and finally a wider concern about the social situation not only of one's own group but of other groups, too.

For returnees, at the first stage of denial there are two types: 1) one who denies the foreign cultural experience and idealizes Japan and 2) one who denies Japan and idealizes the foreign experience. One example at this stage was a young woman who hated America, kept the experience secret, and yet was thought to be a 'half' (a term for mixed children) because of her difficulty in keeping up in school. Another was a man born overseas who hid his inability to use chopsticks by eating *onigiri* (riceballs wrapped in seaweed, which can be eaten by hand).

On the other hand are those like the woman who idealized Canada and didn't like other Japanese or anything Japanese. For her, 'everything in Japan became so stupid.' Refusing to change herself, she said she enjoyed talking English in the bus with her sister. While these two types may appear to be opposites, they are in fact the same. Both identify 'true' culture as belonging to only one 'better' culture. There is no allowance made for an experience which integrates two or more cultures.

At the second stage are those returnees like the one who 'changed her mind . . . was proud to be a returnee' when she entered a company and had the benefits of her experience extolled to her by others. When other people value returnees for their ability at languages or understanding of other cultures they change their minds about the meaning of their experience. Moreover, when they meet other returnees or travel to other countries they often realize that the influence of foreign life was stronger than they had thought. Many become even more aware of being Japanese.

In the third stage returnees formulate their own identity based on their own cultural experience. As one said, "Now I feel I'm Japanese. I've been to four countries, but now I feel I'm Japanese at the bottom of my heart." Few, however, choose one culture. Most can't decide which is better and continue to worry and be troubled about which is superior or better. One of the interviewees said she was not proud of being a Japanese, but of being an 'Americanized Japanese.' She neither denies nor dislikes her Japaneseness, but wants 'to pick up the good things of Japan and America.' On close examination Onoda found that over half those interviewed have a clear progression through these three stages.

The next important step in the formation of cultural identity is returnees who realize they don't have to choose between countries or cultures. In addition, there is a growing awareness that the influence of different cultural experiences naturally changes as time goes on, as well as the danger of over-estimating the influence of the experience of other

cultures. Clearly, the returnee issue is a fluid one. It is also an important reflection of Japan's larger society coming to terms with questions of cultural identity. When will these people be accepted for what they really are – transnationals or transculturals?

Transnationals/Transculturals

What do these terms really mean? A few words about the status of transnationals/transculturals are in order after this extended discussion. These terms refer to people with a high degree of acculturation to the international world, the difference being a matter of degree. *Transnationals* move easily between some nations and cultures, mainly in terms of outward relations with others. *Transculturals* move with ease between many nations, cultures and ethnic groups, both inwardly and outwardly.

Unlike the children of immigrants or refugees, who have been forced by political, religious or economic difficulties to migrate, *transculturals* had parents whose life overseas was based on opportunity (economic, educational, social, cultural). The children themselves may have had no say in the decision to live abroad, but in contrast to refugee/immigrant communities *transculturals* are a privileged elite. Their actions and lives have likely had an important impact on international relations in that they have acted (personally, professionally, socially) in the spaces between cultures and countries. Part of my research has aimed at investigating the kinds of contributions these people have made to their local communities and to the larger world society.

It should be noted here that at least part of the study population has been called 'third-culture kids (TCKs)' by the researchers Ruth Useem and Richard Downie (Useem, 1973; Useem and Downie, 1976; Downie, 1976, and Downs, 1974). This expression (TCK) is inappropriate for a number of important reasons.

First, the word 'third,' as in discussions of the 'third world,' is outdated. Like 'third world,' 'third culture kid' carries pejorative, paternalistic connotations, implying the superiority of a (presumably) 'first culture.' Apparently we are to understand this 'first culture' as meaning American with the 'second culture' as a host, obviously inferior, culture. 'Third-Culture Kid' is a rhetorical device which makes the authors (Useem et al.) active, while leaving their subjects passive.

For some of these subjects their 'third culture' may actually be their (very active) primary culture (for example, the Japanese-American mixed culture encountered in the research). Or, as in the case of Korean children in an international school in Japan it may

be their second culture (priority being given to local Japanese culture as these Koreans operate mostly in that system, followed by the international school culture, then Korean and American cultures).

Much of the research about these people concerns adults, too, not 'kids.' Are we to continue calling them 'kids' after they have become adults? For others the question of whether what they have experienced is in fact actually a full-fledged 'culture' is raised. Finally, there are many people who have had a formative intercultural experience in an enriched environment, not just Americans or missionary children (as much of the TCK research seems to imply).

Clearly, the terms *transnational* and *transcultural* more accurately embrace the phenomena of those with significant global experience in their formative years.

Concluding Remarks

If transnationals/transculturals are viewed as catalysts (people who make us think of the larger picture of our own culture and education), we notice that their experience is important for all cultures. The transnational/transcultural is by definition an international person. These people can be viewed alternatively as social problem for today's society (in terms of re-integration into a homogeneous society) or as future resource (flexible operators in heterogeneous networks) for national cultures.

If we take the latter view of transnationals, we may then view them as potential agents for revolutionizing not only American or Japanese but all societies, as leaders for the 21st Century. At the very least they force us to redefine our societies in light of a world society.

What our study has shown us is at once more revealing and more challenging than we had expected. These people do indeed think globally and act locally, but they also show us that there is much cultural flux, especially at points of departure and arrival. Our findings seem to accord with the recent revolution in evolutionary theory, too, whereby the traditional gradualist, brick-by-brick approach to development has been challenged by the views of Stephen Gould and others, who speak for a 'punctuated equilibrium' of development. While most previous researchers have seen development as a continuous process, we have found it to occur, like the new evolutionary theorists, in a series of distinct developmental phases which can easily be altered.

Culture for transnationals or transculturals is clearly not a continuous developmental

process, nor is it a place or a state of mind. Rather, it is 'an arena for conscious choice, justification and representation' (Appadurai, p. 18). Deterritorialization and the re-negotiation of mutual understandings and spatial arrangements are 'old hat' for these people. For them, the shapes of cultures are less bounded, more fluid – and more of a daily challenge. In a word, they are radically context-dependent.

These people thus demonstrate an expansion of the concepts of identity and loyalty that are critical if we wish to see the transition to a humane world system. For them national identity is less important than what can be called *a transcultural identity*: they are more than simply *in the world* – they are *with the world*. International people like international school students, Japanese returnees, and others, embody in thought, feeling, and action what is needed to transform the status quo.

Multiple identity patterns are thus very important, beginning with a planetary identity and including national, class, ethnic, religious, local, and family identities. Each should be vivid and intense. If we want to understand the experiences of these people we should look at them through the larger perspective of multicultural rather than monocultural dynamics (multiple, not singular, patterns of change and growth). Those people socialized in international contexts should be seen not as the aberrant or deviant subjects of social pathologists, as 'marginal people' of ephemeral significance who can never fit into a mainstream culture, but as members of a newly emerging transnational culture.

Taking this larger perspective enables us to see the workings of a multicultural society like the United States in a new light. We might even venture that this transnational culture is a central catalyst for social change in national cultures. It is internationally-experienced people, more often than not, who hold up the social mirror for the rest of us, giving us a vision of ourselves and our culture, a vision sometimes fraught with a sense of peril and crisis.

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