

## Internationalisation of Post-Graduate Level in Theatre Studies

### Abstract

The aim of the project is to develop an international tutor network on the post-graduate level in Theatre studies and to try out different models for teaching and tuition. In order to prepare post-graduate students for an international option and thereby to facilitate the passage from undergraduate to post-graduate level we suggest trying out a model for an extended Master's course with an international profile.

As the European countries have got nearer to each other through their collaboration within the European Community, there has been a growing need for an internationalisation of academic studies. On the undergraduate level the Erasmus and Socrates networks have provided this. On the post-graduate level there are different forms of exchange in many of the central countries in Europe, such as the so-called "divided tutorship" (or co-tutelle), which has so far been experienced in Sweden only to a small extent. This model, which is currently applied in at least France, Germany, Great Britain and Italy, means that the student spends year 1 of the post-graduate studies at the mother university, year 2 at the target university abroad under the tutorship of a foreign scholar, and year 3 at the mother university where the dissertation takes place. This model provides the student with a double qualification in the mother country and in the target country.

This project should be seen as a "pilot project", i.e. the trying out of a model, which later on can be integrated in the post-graduate studies programme within the existing financial framework. Contacts have been established with universities in Paris, Berlin, Bern, Milan, and London. Agreements are currently negotiated. We expect the project to provide a broadening scope for our post-graduate programme, an increase of critical attitudes of the students as well as intensified contacts with the leading departments on theatre studies in Europe. In addition to our own interests, we also hope that this model can be applied to studies in other disciplines.

To:  
 The National Agency for Higher Education  
 Council for Renewal of Higher Education

**Project Report:**  
**“Internationalisation of Post-graduate Level in Theatre Studies”**  
**Record Number 010/F2000**

This final project report contains three parts and two appendices. Part I is a brief summary of the implementation of the project and its results in the form of agreements and certain collected knowledge. Part II outlines discussions with the tutors in Berlin and Paris. Göran Gademan compiled the first and second parts. Part III presents a pedagogical evaluation of the experiences of students who studied in Berlin and Paris within the framework of the project. The evaluation was performed by Birgitta Sandström, pro-vice-chancellor at the Stockholm Institute of Education. The appendices include a sample of an agreement with a foreign university and a financial report.

The project began with an inaugural meeting of the project steering committee on 20 December 2000. Members of the steering committee were Professor Willmar Sauter (project manager), Senior Lecturer Lena Hamnergren (head of department), Professor Sven Åke Heed (then acting head of department), and the student representatives at that time, Yael Feiler (post-graduate education) and Lina Christensson (undergraduate education).

In brief, the project aim is to develop an international tutor network at the post-graduate level and to examine various models of teaching and tuition in post-graduate studies, primarily “divided tutorship” (“co-tutelle”), which is meant to lead to a dual doctorate. An expanded 20-credit master’s level course with an international profile was established to prepare doctoral students for an international concentration in post-graduate studies and to facilitate the transition from undergraduate to graduate studies. Students earn the 20 credits at one of the Department of Theatre Studies’ partner institutions, which is their initial contact with the future target university. Thereafter, the intent is for students to apply to the graduate programme, in which studies are pursued alternately at Stockholm University and the chosen foreign university.

Partnership agreements were entered into after extensive negotiations with two universities in Paris, two in Milan, one in Berlin and one in Turin: Université de Paris 8, Paris 10, Università degli studi di Milano, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore (Milan), Freie Universität Berlin and Università degli studi di Torino. We also negotiated with the University of London, but to no avail because that university can only accept doctoral students who pay full fees, and with the university in Lancaster, which has thus far not led to any concrete results.

The negotiations were based on existing contracts between the French and Italian universities. The difficulties with regard to Swedish participation consisted of the following issues.

- Composition of the examination committee. Tutors are normally members of the examination committee at the foreign universities, which is prohibited for Swedish examination committees. But since tutors do have the right to be present at meetings of the examination committee, two decisions can be taken at the same time – one for the Swedish part excluding the tutors and one for the cases where tutors are to be

included. Berlin also requires a written assessment from the tutors, which does not entail any conflict with Swedish rules.

- Administrative procedures in relation to execution of the agreements vary widely from one university to the next. International agencies, faculty or research boards or department boards of directors may in certain cases have opinions on how the contract is drafted. Despite the good results, it is noteworthy that the administrative management of agreements can be time-consuming.
- It can present a minor problem if either party wishes to set a minimum time that the doctoral student must spend at the target university. In our opinion, the time spent at the partner university should be no less than one year to make it possible for both universities to approve the dual doctorate degree.

The exchange programme began when a male master's degree student finished his expanded master's level term at Freie Universität in Berlin in spring 2002. He was thereafter accepted to the post-graduate programme in theatre studies and will be returning to Berlin as a doctoral student in spring 2005. His tutors are Professor Willmar Sauter in Stockholm and Professor Erika Fischer-Lichte in Berlin. A female doctoral student pursued post-graduate studies at Université de Paris 8 from spring 2002 through spring 2004 and has now returned to the Department of Theatre Studies at Stockholm University to complete her dissertation under divided tutorship (Professor Jean-Marie Pradier and Professor Sven Åke Heed). A female student completed the international master's level course in Berlin in spring 2004 and another female student is doing the same this term. A contract has also been entered into with a male doctoral student at the University of Turin, who is currently pursuing his post-graduate studies at our department. He will be completing 15 months of doctoral studies in Stockholm and 21 months at the University of Turin, with divided tutorship under Professor Sven Åke Heed and Franco Perrelli, professor of the History of Scandinavian Theatre. We would also like to add that professors from essentially all universities involved in the exchange programme have visited our department within the framework of Erasmus and several of them gave guest lectures.

All practical information, syllabi, etc., is available to interested students on the department's web page, [www.teater.su.se](http://www.teater.su.se). There are also links to the web pages of all universities so far included in the agreement. Contacts with the foreign university are arranged via our office and the student pays his or her own expenses for travel, lodging, etc., often by means of some kind of grant. The practical matters and contacts that the student has to take care of have proven to vary widely from one university to the next. The helpful advice we have been able to give to the people who are interested in the programme is that they should be prepared for that there are significant administrative differences among the universities and that they should always take care of matters well in advance.

We have negotiated a template for a divided tutorship contract with the various universities. It was based on the first contract with Université de Paris 8. Following diverse discussions concerning how the examination committee should be composed and how it will be appointed, we reached agreement on a final draft that applies to all universities covered by the agreement. It is noteworthy that several of the universities also have agreements with each other. The wording of the contract is shown in Appendix 1, which includes a sample contract with a doctoral student at the University of Turin. In addition to the native languages at each foreign university, the dissertation may also be written in English.

To provide a thorough evaluation of opinions about the project, we asked Birgitta Sandström from the Stockholm Institute of Education to interview the three Swedish students who pursued their studies at Freie Universität in Berlin and Université de Paris 8. She processed and compiled the material, which is reviewed at the end of this report. The report refers to the students who concluded their stay abroad at the end of the spring term 2004.

We also wanted to see how well the partnership worked from the perspective of the foreign tutors. For that reason, we took two trips in June 2004. Professor Willmar Sauter and Senior Lecturer Tiina Rosenberg went to Berlin to interview Professor Erika Fischer-Lichte, while Professor Sven Åke Heed, Senior Lecturer Lena Hammergren and Göran Gademan, PhD (responsible for writing the report) spoke with Professor Jean-Marie Pradier in Paris. Their remarks and opinions are reported below.

## **Reports from the meetings held with the target institutions, Université de Paris 8 and Freie Universität in Berlin**

### *Berlin*

Willmar Sauter and Tiina Rosenberg spoke with Erika Fischer-Lichte in Berlin on 24 June 2004. Matthias Warstet also participated in the discussion. Earlier in April, Willmar Sauter had discussed the Swedish students' stays in Berlin with Christel Weiler. The conversation had to do with the experiences of two master's degree students, a man who completed his international master's level course there in spring 2002 and a woman who was in the final stage of her term.

As the exchange programme thus far had applied only to master's students, Fischer-Lichte found it difficult to express any opinion about the educational impact of the doctoral programme. The programme worked well at the master's level from the Berlin perspective. Both students fit in well with their groups and the male student had produced high-quality submissions and other essays. It was too early to judge with respect to the female student as she had not yet reached the submissions stage.

It is a good sign for the Bologna process that these students were in Berlin already at the master's level. In the future, there will be master's level courses in theatre studies and dance studies in Berlin as well. Fischer-Lichte said that the students can come both for master's level studies for at least one term and as doctoral students to receive tutorship, participate in seminars and possibly to search for material in Germany. The student visits that have been carried out have shown that this combination could work superbly.

With regard to divided tutorship, Fischer-Lichte said that when she knows the other tutor, she would never question the doctoral student's fundamental ideas. She only wanted to "add" theoretical/methodical suggestions and assist with acquiring material in Germany. According to her, any other approach is impossible as it would require direct contact between the tutors (which should not, however, be necessary).

It is a good thing if the student has access to teachers other than just the tutor, which the other teachers from Berlin confirmed. They can also help create other networks outside the department.

When the male student returns in spring 2005 with a fellowship at Stockholm University, Fischer-Lichte is going to place him immediately in the Graduiertenkolleg without further testing or examination. That he has been accepted in Stockholm is sufficient guarantee. The Graduiertenkolleg includes twelve to fourteen students from Berlin and about eight visiting students, which should suit our students.

[Also noteworthy is that work is in progress on a Nordic graduate school to be called “Interart – International Graduate School for Transdisciplinary Studies in Art and Culture.” The school will span the entire humanist field and Stockholm and Helsinki will be jointly represented by seven professors, along with seven from Berlin and seven from Copenhagen.]

### *Paris 8*

Jean-Marie Pradier spoke with Lena Hammergren, Sven Åke Heed and Göran Gademan at Maison des Sciences de l’Homme, Université de Paris 8, on 21 June 2004. The conditions were the reverse there, as the university has not hosted any master’s students but has hosted a female doctoral student who was in her fourth and final term in Paris at the time. There was, however, a corresponding transition from master’s studies to doctoral studies at Paris 8, as they have a level that results in the DEA (*Diplôme d’Etudes Approfondies*), a kind of advanced programme that initiates doctoral studies. In Jean-Marie Pradier’s opinion, this transition is useful, as the students otherwise become suddenly very isolated in their existence as doctoral students.

When we discussed various seminar cultures, Pradier related that they have a Latin seminar culture in contrast to an Anglo-Saxon one, that is, the professors most often lecture, rather than discuss with the students. The seminars are based on a laboratory group, which is a network within a defined framework. Pradier’s group is very active and arranges seminars, conferences, etc. They take an international, transdisciplinary approach and are in contact with both European and non-European universities. Maison des Sciences de l’Homme can be regarded as a kind of research pool that can provide students with an office, fax machine, computer, phone, etc., which would also apply to the Swedish doctoral student. Students are able to meet several high-level researchers. The good ones take advantage of this to a great extent, according to Pradier, while those who are more conventional in their views do not. If they wish to arrange a seminar, a conference or even a research project in cooperation with another French or foreign university, there are grants available that they can apply for if, for instance, they wish to connect to anthropological, historical, biological or other aspects outside those within their own tradition. Thus, this should be seen as a research project – not a teaching project – which is also encouraged by the authorities. They have better conditions for such arrangements on the premises of Maison des Sciences de l’Homme than at the rest of Paris 8 next door, which is overpopulated and crowded, according to Pradier.

At the seminars, the doctoral students should discuss a text presented by one of them, which is mandatory, as well as discuss the subject with invited scholars. These scholars also give lectures and are invited by the doctoral students. There is an educational purpose behind inviting the outside speakers, which is aimed at compelling the post-graduate students to talk and present something in front of others. The language is a problem, of course, since everything is in French. Pradier would like to see allocation of funds for language courses that the students should complete before they start in order to refine and improve their French. Such courses are not obligatory, but Pradier pointed out that the best students take such courses anyway.

Most doctoral students do not, however, develop the post-graduate culture in the form of alternative private seminars and they are not mandatory, although the department encourages such initiatives. According to Pradier, only the most highly motivated doctoral students do this. The laboratory group to which the Swedish doctoral student belongs could almost be described as a kind of family, something he is very favourable towards – the important thing is actually not what is provided by the department, but that which emerges through the collective spirit in the post-graduate group. The group has a very strong identity and arranges seminars, conferences, trips abroad, etc., which are a very important complement to the obligatory instruction. Participants in this group have similar research focus, so they can understand each other and each other's research – they have a lot to discuss and to share with each other.

In Pradier's view, a good post-graduate student is highly committed, is fluent in at least one foreign language, likes to read, attends regularly and gets involved in both seminars and the laboratory group. The dissertations that come up for discussions several times at the seminars usually turn out to be the best. Pradier is thus more process-oriented than results-oriented. A good student is never a prisoner of his or her own consciousness but is instead open to outside influences, including in other disciplines. Opening the senses can take several years and as a tutor Pradier does not sit back and allow them to entirely go their own way if they do not have a very strong and innovative idea that works. He also believes strongly in treating the language with respect and he encourages students who cannot capture the complexity and elegance of the language to read many major authors of fiction as inspiration.

In common with Fischer-Lichte, Pradier emphasised the importance of having other teachers in addition to the tutor, sometimes even outside the student's own department. The faculty is made up of many different personalities with diverse orientations and if a doctoral student wishes to work based on an orientation far removed from Pradier's own, he encourages the student to seek out someone who is extremely familiar with that orientation. Students can discuss many different special research areas at the seminars and obtain good insight into various theories.

Maison des Sciences de l'Homme does not have annual contracts between the doctoral student and the tutor, as in Stockholm. But Pradier found the idea intriguing, as the lack of such contracts means that some post-graduate students at their institution do not always achieve what they have promised orally.

Pradier has found the Swedish doctoral student to be somewhat reserved. She talks a great deal with the others in the group, but she does not approach him very often. When he met her in Stockholm, he found her more open, which made him ponder the difficulties involved in encountering a different university culture as a new student. It is not easy to divine the thoughts of a foreign student, he says, but he is convinced that she has gained a great deal out of her time in Paris on a deeper level and that not everything can be seen on the surface. He has found her presentations excellent and highly interesting.

Finally, Pradier would very much like to see further expansion of the partnership with Paris 8 and is open to suggestions as to what they can do to encourage that. He would like to see more foreign teachers, e.g., from Stockholm, come more often and lecture if the money is available, perhaps within the Erasmus programme. It is always important for students to get

advisers from other countries and other disciplines. As an example, he mentioned that teachers from certain countries come to them during their sabbatical years.

## “It is hard to separate your self from what you know”

*Birgitta Sandström, PhD*<sup>1</sup>

Pinpointing what Swedish students who have studied at an academic institution abroad have learned is a difficult task. How can we differentiate what came out of the stay abroad from experience and knowledge acquired before and how do we separate those from that which comes afterwards? It is also difficult for students to assess what is important knowledge in the context before they have achieved their goals.

The aim of this study was to describe and analyse what three Swedish students at the Department of Theatre Studies at Stockholm University felt their studies abroad had meant to them, both on the personal level and with regard to their studies at the master's and doctoral level.

I interviewed three students, who are called by the fictitious names of Anders, Anna and Lisa in this report, for about one hour each. Anna was in the final phase of her master's degree studies and Anders was just starting his doctoral studies. Both of them had studied for one term at Freie Universität in Berlin. Lisa, who was in her second year of doctoral studies, had studied at Paris 8 and was there to formulate a PM and gather source material. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. I began processing the interview statements by performing a content analysis that resulted in four themes: *language; sex/gender and knowledge; traditions of education and thought; and educational structure*. Based on that division into themes, I interpreted what the stay abroad meant to these three individuals.<sup>2</sup> I sorted the thematic analysis into two categories: personal development and development of knowledge and scholarly theory. The two aspects of knowledge development integrate with one another and I have entwined them in the interpretation because “it is hard to separate your self from what you know,” as Anna puts it.

### **On being thrust into new cultures of knowledge**

The statements provide a persuasive impression that the three students have learnt something essential during their studies abroad. All maintain that they expanded and deepened their theoretical understanding. In that they “lived” in a different culture of knowledge, they have gained access to other traditions of thought and theory in a manner they believe would have been impossible in a Swedish context.

My interpretation is that one important factor in this development of knowledge is that the students were thrust into and compelled to relate to a new culture of knowledge, one that was not always easy to interpret.<sup>3</sup> How quickly one is able to interpret it depends on an array of circumstances, including the circumstances under which one enters an unfamiliar educational structure. It also depends on one's sex and based on these three cases, it seems to be an advantage to be a man.<sup>4</sup> Also significant is whether the home institution has an

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<sup>1</sup> Birgitta Sandström is a pro-vice-rector and lecturer in education theory at the Department of Society, Culture and Learning at the Stockholm Institute of Education.

<sup>2</sup> As the author, I am solely responsible for the interpretations. The interview subjects have read and provided nuance to my interpretations and corrected errors of fact. See Anders Gustavsson (1996), “Att förstå människor – tillämpning av den formella datastrukturanalysen” in *Texter om Forskningsmetod* Issue 1, 1996, Department of Education, Stockholm University.

<sup>3</sup> I use the term “culture of knowledge” to describe that which essentially unites members of a group in how they perceive, assess and ascribe value in matters of knowledge and learning.

<sup>4</sup> See Fredrik Bondestam (2003), *Könsmedveten pedagogik för universitetslärare*, Uppsala University.

established international network and strong connections to research. This contributes to making the academic discourse recognisable. The personal contact among tutors at the respective institutions is also meaningful, as is having a few trusting relationships outside school. And last but not least, foreign language skill has an impact on the ability to interpret and relate to a new culture of knowledge.

#### *Language as asset and barrier*

Anna and Anders describe the muteness of the initial period due to imperfect language skills as painful but educational. “Language is important and language is difficult,” says Anders, who says that his German skills were sketchy when we began his studies. He says “/...familiarity with the academic context made it easier to overcome the linguistic barriers.” He emphasises that the Department of Theatre Studies’ international network helped facilitate understanding.

Anna, who felt like she simply wanted to go home the first two weeks because, as she puts it, she “understood nothing,” describes it by saying that her other senses and means of communication were activated. According to her, you learn to observe and communicate with the entire body – and to remain silent because no one other than you expects you to talk. “/...It is perfectly OK to never say a word, which I don’t feel is the case in Sweden,” she says, referring to the academic culture. There is tremendous satisfaction in little by little gaining the ability to first understand what people are saying and then later to read and finally to speak and write. You grow as an individual and in your self-confidence as a student, according to Anders. But Anna still says, somewhat hesitantly, “the constant feeling was that I was a bit thicker and that feeling did not wane the longer I was there.”

If, like Lisa, you have good French language skills and have been a visiting student before in Sweden and abroad, you know that you will eventually master the language. For Lisa, the language was not a primary barrier, but she describes that her French was not good enough to interpret the meaning of certain expressions, jokes and insinuations. She ended up being at what I interpret as a linguistic disadvantage vis-à-vis her tutor and it took time and effort for her to understand and to relate to.

Instruction at both Paris 8 and Freie Universität is described as being much more teacher-controlled than in Sweden. The combination of mass teaching and, as I interpret it, a dominant idea that the teacher is regarded as an uncontested authority in his or her subject makes the teacher/student relationship both anonymous and tightly bound to the individual, paradoxically enough. As a student, you have to first crack the code and then be able to manage it.

#### *Cultures of knowledge and sex*

“Class, sex and ethnicity are constantly on the agenda in Sweden, but those issues are not problematised there (Freie Universität),” says Anna. She gives an example from a seminar that she finds illustrative, in which a friend of hers started by saying “Not that I am a fanatical feminist,” while in Sweden the equivalent opening would more likely have been something like “As a feminist, I would never.../”. Anna’s and Lisa’s statements both make it clear that the educational structure is unfair to women. They have also been discriminated against on the basis of their sex on a more personal level. Expectations concerning what Swedish women students should look like and how they should behave collided with their self-images and past experience. This sometimes led to painful conflicts, but first and foremost, it consumed time and energy.

Anders does not say whether he felt that sex mattered during his stay abroad, and I did not actively ask him whether it did. As I see it, he is the most positive about his studies of the three. He provides several examples of how he was able to make his voice heard and acquire

new knowledge. Anna, who brings up the sex-blindness of the educational situation, emphasises that studies abroad are a transitory period. She says “It is not a big problem; I know that I will be coming home with the sense that I am not going to live there, I’ll be going home.” Lisa also regards Sweden as home and that is perhaps why she was able to manage what seemed to me to be a rather painful experience of being negatively discriminated against on the basis of sex. The seminar tradition was different from her Swedish experience. Breaking the code for how contacts with the academic teachers should take place in order to get support in her studies was not easy. When she observed how teachers criticised the work of other students, she perceived it to be hard and insensitive. She also says that there is risk that a cultural conflict will lead to a personal conflict if one is unable to distance oneself from events. She also reflects over where the boundaries of assimilation should be drawn – a question that she has never before asked in the context of education.

Anna and Lisa give examples of how they expended a great deal of energy on understanding and finding an approach to the new study environment that they feel offers both positive and negative resistance. Anders points out the good side of the resistance to a greater extent.

Based on these narratives, one may ask: what have they learnt? Obviously, Anna and Lisa’s experiences and observations differed from Anders’. There are of course many possible explanations for those disparities, such as personal dissimilarities. My interpretation is that the education system seems to favour men and that is what emerges in these three narratives. It is thus not a matter of personal characteristics or shortcomings, but rather of a structural system that promotes or impedes learning based on sex. Owing to previous experience of structural subordination, women are more accustomed to seeing sex-related patterns, which may be one explanation of Lisa and Anna’s observations. But there are also obvious elements of surprise when sex-based oppression manifests in forms they have not previously encountered – which is not to say that one manifestation is better or worse than the other. But as Lisa says “...I wasn’t prepared for it; it came as a surprise.”

#### *Staircase, canal or relay race in disparate educational traditions*

Anders and Anna point out completely different advantages and drawbacks to the German way of organising education. Several courses run in parallel and students have a wide range of options among the courses offered. Anna thought it was difficult to know *how* and *what* and *when* she should choose. She says “/...I didn’t understand the system fast enough, that you could jump around and switch courses if you didn’t like one.” Anders, albeit he already had a set study order, didn’t see the large course catalogue as a problem. On the contrary, he thinks the responsibility put on students is a good thing. “In Sweden, you progress from one course to the next, more as a set process. It is like a canal in which everyone floats along at the same pace, but here there may be ten courses among which students may freely choose.”

This type of mass education results in large and anonymous institutions. There are few teachers for a large number of students. If you want to see a teacher you must make an appointment and if the teacher is the department professor, you have to make the appointment via a secretary. Anders did not see any immediate drawbacks to that system. He believes that being compelled to think things through and prepare for a meeting creates respect for the academic situation. Once he had navigated all the bureaucracy, the relationship with the teacher was “like it is in Sweden.” He also liked it that standards were high and that the students, unlike in his experience of Swedish university studies, devoted a great deal of time to preparing for their examinations. The fear of being failed by the professor contributed strongly to the students’ high level of ambition. Anna, on the other hand, was troubled by what she believes was a hierarchical and conservative attitude that required teachers to be addressed by their titles and surnames. She also criticises the German educational system for

leading to socially skewed recruitment. She points out that class differences were more apparent than sex differences. One of her observations was that students have incredible respect for teachers even as many students could sit and eat, talk and whisper to one another during lectures in a way that would be unthinkable in Sweden. According to Anna, that is because many students are at university as a way to kill time. Their parents pay for their education and they actually have no demands on them to earn credits. She did not describe standards as being notably high compared with Swedish conditions and, like Anders, she earned all the course credits she had planned.

Lisa describes the relationship between the tutor and the doctoral student as one in which the student is always chasing the tutor – a kind of relay race in competition with other doctoral students. The French tutor had limited time and many doctoral students. Lisa wanted to be well-prepared and to “have something ready” before the tutorship. And once it finally happened, there were few remarks on the text. I also interpret this to mean that the fear of not being good enough controls learning. “You learn to be independent and strong,” she says, “and the more deeply you penetrate your source material, the more confident you become.” So far, she has received most tutorship from her Swedish tutor, who was intermittently in Paris.

Having a few good social relationships was of great value to Lisa, Anders and Anna alike. The vulnerable situation and the fact that the students did not know very many people I interpret to mean that they were anxious to acquire and develop deep relationships. There was a great and requisite need to reflect over events, to try and understand the new culture of knowledge and a new social situation. “Every time I came home from a seminar I talked about it for two hours because I simply had to get it out somehow,” says Lisa.

My interpretation is that what controls learning on a more mental plane is uncertainty as to the height of the bar, how I am perceived, the practices that apply and therewith fear of not being good enough. A type of immanent theory of education that seems particularly tangible to women.<sup>5</sup>

#### *Traditions of education and thought*

After her stay at Freie Universität, Anna advised a classmate: “You must read Kant and Adorno, everybody has read Kant and Adorno, they are quoted constantly .../.” Anders reports a similar picture and relates that there are certain fundamental texts in the air. “If you are in Berlin, Kant is important regardless of whether you find him interesting or not.” The German tradition of thought was strongly present and you do not have time in a single term to familiarise yourself with this tradition of thought, which acts as a frame of reference for all texts that are produced. The majority of the literature is in German and that is one of the major advantages to studying abroad – learning about a tradition of thought that has not been translated to English or Swedish. Anders is very pleased that he can now read scholarly articles in the original language. It has given him access to an entire world of new perspectives and theories, a world previously unknown to him.

Anna’s description is similar. She found what she had long been searching for. A conceptual apparatus for sensing/perceiving that entailed a new way of looking at things. She found this in the original language and it would probably have been much more difficult to come into contact with if she had not been physically there.

Lisa says “I learned an incredible amount that I would not have been able to learn in any other way” and says that she has acquired an approach to the French tradition of thought and gained access to material not available anywhere else. For at Paris 8 as well, there is a

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<sup>5</sup> See Per-Johan Ödman (1995), *Kontrasternas spel I – en svensk mentalitets- och pedagogikhistoria*, Norstedts.

dominant discourse, a mode of thought within the field she is studying that provided new perspectives and opportunities to re-examine ideas.

My interpretation is that it is easier to see other dominant ways of thinking when they are constantly going on all around one and become visible in relation to that previously learnt. Based on that argument, the prerequisite for this type of knowledge development is that one has been present in and can refer to another tradition of knowledge.

### **Conclusions**

The interviews with Anna, Anders and Lisa clearly illustrate the value of “living” in a different culture of knowledge. Being compelled to understand and manage a culture of knowledge other than the one already familiar promotes personal and intellectual development. All development of knowledge contains elements of resistance and involves the entire personality. Acquiring new experience and knowledge involves re-examination and loss and is sometimes painful. We seldom have control over external conditions for studies. But if we are able to take control over our own situation, step aside and ponder what we are involved in, which Anna, Lisa and Anders have clearly done, we amass greater knowledge about ourselves, others and the world: that is, we develop the capacity “to see ourselves in others”, to use Sven-Erik Liedman’s vocabulary.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Sven-Erik Liedman (1999), *Att se sig själv i andra: om solidaritet*, Albert Bonniers Förlag.