

**ENGLISH TRANSLATION**



The picture symbolizes all what Jacobs University stands for: cultural diversity and an education for global citizenship. It shows Indian analyst Mitul Jain and his Nigerian roommate, social scientist Franklin Ezeani, in front of the Campus Center. This Center is the heart of Jacobs University, in which the main library, also known as Information Resource Center, is located.

## In ten days around the world

Mitul performs the role of his life. The Indian bio-scientist becomes the Florentine Count, the analyst becomes the romantic. Mitul will be Claudio. Or vice versa. William Shakespeare's original lines of „Much Ado about Nothing“ are, however, of little interest for him now. With his powerful, dark voice and a hint of Hindi accent he recites his personal interpretation inside the University Theater. He has so much energy that the echo of his voice proudly reverberates from the theater walls. Claudio is shocked, angry, and disappointed, and thus Mitul is as well.

During rehearsal break of the wedding scene, in which Claudio has to accuse his betrothed Hero of infidelity, Mitul admits that today, his heart would break the same. He can understand how Claudio must have felt, even if he has not experienced it himself yet. Up until a few months ago, Mitul's Hero was Steffi, and for quite some time it looked as if he had found the love of his life at Jacobs University, just like his brother Premwir.

The relationship between the Indian and the German, who studies in the same year, lasted for eight months. But then it was over, not least because Mitul has high expectations regarding his future wife: „I need someone who works just as hard as myself, likes to spend as much time with the family and wouldn't mind moving to another country with me“, he says. Thus, Jacobs University had one couple less.

Family history does not always repeat itself: His brother Premwir will soon get married to Shradda, whom he met here exactly eight years ago in his first semester. An Indian who fell in love with a Nepali girl in Bremen-Nord. This is one of many stories taking place in the world where I will live for ten days now. The world of Jacobs University.

Mitul is the first person I meet here. He is wearing a t-shirt saying „Make love, not war“. The rest of his outfit does not fit your typical picture of an Indian IT-freak either. He has olive shorts on and walks barefoot across a field while reading out Shakespeare. At the elite university, Mitul is often called „eminence gray“ (due to his intelligence), or jokingly „MyTool“. Seeing this, you might have also expected a different roommate than Franklin Ezeani.



Who wants to get to know different people, foreign cultures and new ways of thinking does not have to travel around the world. A trip to the North of Bremen is sufficient. There, young people from 93 nations live together at Jacobs University. The language is English, thinking is global, and the night just as important as the day. It is about a better future, the big career or even true love. Jean-Charles Fays joined for ten days. Pictures by Florian Müller.

Most people call him Frank. With his six feet and four inches and 240 pounds he is about 8 inches taller and 90 pounds heavier than Mitul. The Nigerian giant used to be part of the rugby team but resigned after he checked an enemy so forcefully by accident that he had to be brought to hospital with broken ribs. Nowadays, Frank prefers strength training at the fitness center, located some meters away from the secured campus area. „It is healthier for me and for the others“, he says.

*„Always sitting in the labs is too boring for me. I want to become an entrepreneur. Just like Ratan Tata.“*

Together, Mitul and Frank seem like an Indian-African Version of Asterix and Obelix. At the beginning of their studies they were randomly assigned the same room (like all others). They got along well in spite of, or maybe even because of, their very different characters. By now they have long found common ground, for example in the long nights of studying for examinations.

„At night we find the quietness that we don't have during the day. The day is way too beautiful to study, especially in spring“, says Mitul. They catch up with their studying at night – and have developed a perfect system for this. If Mitul, for example, takes a nap at 2am, he tells Frank to wake him up after at most 20 minutes. He calls this procedure „power nap“: a nap to gain energy for as much studying as possible. Not until three, sometimes even five o'clock in the morning their work is done, and a few hours later they al-

ready have to sit in the next lecture. Who wants to sleep long hours should not go to Jacobs University.

As similar as the two are by night, during the day they could not be more different. While Frank relaxes with DVD's after a seminar, Mitul gets really active. He attends meetings of the student parliament where he is vice president, heads a student entrepreneur- and management society that he founded himself, and works for a Bremen IT and entrepreneur consulting firm ten hours a week. This explains what he means when he says that the day is too beautiful to study...

That his studies have nothing in common with his work is no big deal for Mitul. In „Computational Biology“ he researches genes, simulates the biological system on the computer and writes programs to analyze how the brain functions. „In this major I am learning analytical thinking. And that is what counts later“, he says. „Everything else I can read.“

Nonetheless, he does not want to go into research. „Always sitting in the labs is too boring for me. I want to become entrepreneur.“ In ten or fifteen years he wants to return to India as a successful man, have a family, and help develop the Indian economy. „Just like Ratan Tata“, he says.

The Indian Top-Manager and inventor of the first 1700 euro car is his example.

Shinta Harsana, a German-Indonesian friend, does not have a definite idea of her future yet. Mitul thinks that the business plan she handed in at his student organization's competition is „excellent“. Shinta plans to found an advertising agency at Jacobs University. After her high-school diploma she gained layout

and art work experiences during a three-month internship. She calculated the costs for an advertising agency „very realistically“, appreciates Mitul. „You have to talk to her“, he tells me.

When I ask Shinta for an interview at a soccer game, she makes stipulations. Before I talk to her, I should attend a talk on „Fair Trade“ in the Campus Center that was organized by her. The officer casino that was reconstructed ten years ago is the showpiece of Jacobs University, giving it a hint of Harvard. The talk is due to start at 11.30am, but apart from Shinta, two students, the lecturers and I there is no one. This seems to be normal to me, on a Saturday. Shinta explains why: „The academic fifteen minutes are part of the life-style at Jacobs.“ And really, exactly after a quarter of an hour ten or twelve late-comers arrive and excuse their delay and hung-over looks with the fact that they did not make it through the qualifying rounds of the inter-continental soccer competition the day before. They drowned their frustration at a spontaneous party right after. Shinta is the only one who is fascinated by the lecturers. She would like to work for a non-profit organization such as „Fair Trade“ in the future.

She tells me that she did a three-month internship at a marketing firm in Münster after her high-school diploma. „I found it too dull. It is an impertinence that they ask for money for that kind of work“. Back then she realized: „Business does not further the development of the world.“ Management and business administration are one-dimensional. It is only about selling oneself in a good way and gaining advantages through social networks. „The current global economic situation is the best evidence for the failure of econo-

mics“, she says. You have to look at things from different angles to find the best solution, just like culture theory tells you. The maximization of profit for a few cannot be the primary goal. It has to be possible that everyone wins through company profits. Or? I nod.

With an average of 1,6 (GPA 3,3 / B+) in the German Abitur, Shinta came to study at Jacobs University with the help of a full scholarship by the Vodafone Foundation. The program for young people with migration background at German private universities pays Shinta's study fees that amount to 18000 Euros a year. The 20-year-old studies „Integrated Social Sciences“, a major that unites everything what she ever found interesting: Political science, Social science, Communication science and Economics. Shinta is especially fascinated by the seminar „Comparing Communication Systems“ where she learns how the political system translates into mass communication systems. Everything in English, of course.

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She is sensitive to this topic due to the situation in the home country of her grandparents: „Indonesia unfortunately is one of the most corrupt countries on this planet.“ Already as a child she had to suffer from this, when she went on visits to her home country with her family. Dictator Suharto took the Indonesian citizenship away from her father, just after he had spent more than 20 years in political exile in the communist Soviet Union, studying and working.

Nevertheless, her father is still an influential man in the biggest Muslim country of the world, with good contacts to Indonesian members of parliament. „He is someone who uses the possibility to change something in life.“ For this courage she admires him, so Shinta says, and her eyes shine: „My dad is my example.“ He is her incentive to use all the knowledge she gains at Jacobs University to make something better of the big world out there.



Imnet Edossa (center) normally is the relaxed sunny boy of the African Soccer team, but right before the finals of the intercontinental soccer competition against enemy „Europe Pink“ he too is a bundle of nerves. At half-time he wants to talk his team members out of an abandonment of the game, but is overruled.

The African soccer player Imnet Edossa sees this differently. After the loss of a big chance of his team member Tobi Oni at a score of 3:3 shortly before the end of the game, he is worried. Imnet has a big Afro, making his slim figure 20 centimeters taller. Penalties! Tension, great suspense, that only releases as defense giant „Ike“ scores 8:7 with the last shot. Afterwards Imnet dances with his team and 30 fans. They shout „Yes, we did!“ just like Barack Obama did after his electoral victory in the US. And they dance wildly in a circle.

Only after some happy cheering can the heavy-breathing Ethiopian spare some time for me. I ask him about his hairstyle, THE HAIRSTYLE, and Imnet says: „I grew up with my Afro in Ethiopia and I am wearing it with pride.“ Furthermore he enjoys the protection his hair grants him while playing soccer: „It's like a helmet with which I dive into each duel without fear“, he says and laughs.

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A little later Imnet already dreams of the finals at the party that concludes the „African Heritage Week“: „Tomorrow, that's not just some game. We have been practicing for three months. We want revenge.“ Rivalry between the African and Bulgarian teams has been there for years. In 2007, the Africans won the international soccer competition in the finale against Bulgaria. In 2008, Africa lost against team „Europe Pink“, consisting mainly of Bulgarians, in the semi-finals. „Now it's our turn again“, says the normally so relaxed Imnet with sparkling eyes.

Imnet's wild determination of the night before reflects also in the faces of his team members the following day. Fifteen minutes before the finale, during the last discussion of the tactics, Imnet's friend Tobi Oni senses that the tension could get dangerous. The Nigerian warns the players: „Do not talk to the enemy. We only concentrate on ourselves!“

An hour later it is visible: Tobi's warning has not reached the others. After „Europe Pink“ takes the lead with two goals by the German Maurizio Rauschenbach, the situation blows up during half-time. Not even Alexander Ziegler-Jöns, vice

president of Jacobs University, can prevent the confrontation.

The African team decides to boycott the second half of the game. It is to protest against the referee by who they feel treats them in an unfair manner. Ziegler-Jöns reacts ashamed: „If the Africans think that they are discriminated against, only because they are black, then we have to take care of this differently and maybe do without this soccer competition.“

Rauschenbach, who scored the two goals for „Europe Pink“, also shakes his head concerning the demeanor of his enemy: „Here on this campus prejudices against other cultures are reconfirmed in many ways. In positive ways, because the Africans are cool guys that celebrate awesome parties, but also in negative ways, because they are very emotional and tend to form closed groups. Us Germans, we probably confirm the stereotype to be relatively serious and well-organized.“ While the cup for the second place cannot be handed over at the presentation ceremony, the Africans cheer at the side of the soccer field as if they had won the competition. Inside Tobi's head it looks different: „I wanted to play on in spite of the bad referee, but I was overruled during half-time. I am trying to forget this now and concentrate on my studies. That is more important than this stupid game. What will become of my life is not decided on the soccer field.“

Kristin Fedeler, who is one of the few whites standing next to me with the African fans, tries to explain the abandonment of the game: „The Africans have a lot of pride and they do not like to be humiliated. Of course, sometimes they are too emotional and overshoot the mark. But you just simply have to try to understand that.“ In situations like these, you learn how important tolerance is and also to act diplomatically. The campus in Bremen-Nord is the best preparation for a life in a globalised and multicultural world.

Tolerance and diplomacy: Exactly these character traits are needed in Kristin's seminar „Law and justice in comparative perspectives“. Here, the 20-year-old does not play her party piece as defense, but that of the prosecutor.

In the simulated trial against Osama bin Laden she tries to convince the 16 judges of the United Nations of his responsibility for the attack on the World Trade Center in New York on September 11, 2001. More than 3000 people lost their lives in the attack. Opposite to her is Tariq Tobias

Omarshah from Zimbabwe, who has to defend the defendant.

The problem in the hearing: Osama bin Laden does not state in front of the judges that he himself was behind the attacks. He says only that the Muslims of this world have acted „in the name of Allah“. The American visiting law professor, James E. Lennertz, is satisfied after the first day of the trial that has been prepared for weeks: „The students adjust their roles and behavior quite well to the respective situations“, he says and continues looking at the special atmosphere of Jacobs University: „It is a privilege to be able to teach people from all over the world, because they are capable of representing the special viewpoints of their own countries. This is a wonderful experience.“

The only 18-year-old Tariq takes me to the debating society after the seminar. Even though most students there do not have English as their mother tongue, they express themselves much more eloquently than many of the Americans I heard during my studies abroad. And myself, of course.

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Tariq has the task to back the unpopular standpoint that the police should be able to control the press and force it to make its sources known. One of his arguments is that campaigns conducted to increase circulation could thus be prevented. A Canadian and a Chinese from Hong Kong take sides for the press as independent fourth estate: it should keep the state authority in check and therefore it needs to have the freedom to keep its sources secret.

Tariq and his German partner Jakob win the debate in spite of their unfortunate starting position because they argue more convincingly. I am not surprised. Tariq has told me that he is the son of a diplomat. And also other than that he is someone special. Not only because he skipped a grade during high school and thus belongs to the youngest, even at Jacobs University.

Tariq likes to be „different from the others“. It has become one of his personality traits. While others play soccer, have parties or play with their computers the

18-year-old teaches children English, looks after seniors in old people's homes, visits museums, acts, or reads historical novels. His favorite book is „The Odyssey“ by Homer. „I am fascinated by reading, because it enables me to relate to authors like Homer who have written their stories thousands of years ago.“ The challenge to find out „which interesting viewpoints people already had back then“ appeals to him very much.

The African, who graduated with distinction from the United World College (UWC) in Wales, seems to be more of a rascal than a pushy type with his wild black hair, hoodie, and baby face. He came to Jacobs University on account of Jan Eichhorn. The blonde German who graduated from UWC two years earlier, told Tariq of the elite university that had over 75% foreign students – similar to UWC. Jan, as president of the Undergraduate Student Parliament, has become Tariq's idol. Sometime in the future the youngest member of the Student Parliament wants to follow Jan's footsteps. But those are big.

Jan does not like to talk about the fact that others look up to him: „Everyone has weak points.“ Take him for example: sometimes too much of a perfectionist, he asks too much of himself and others – what else do you expect at Jacobs University? „A hundred percent does not always work. I have to learn to deal with that“, says he, who was born in a country in which his current career and the contact to so many nations would have been impossible. Jan was born in the GDR in 1987. His parents have fostered his curiosity for the world and taught him to look at things critically. His dad is managing director at a firm in the packaging industry, his mother a public servant in the city of Magdeburg.

From time to time he overestimates himself, Jan continues, and takes up too many positions at once. And he has to learn to arrange himself with it that not everybody „is in the habit of working like me“ as he puts it diplomatically. A fellow student puts it differently, more direct, and in form of praise: „Jan is a real leader, works hard, is perfectly organized and gets done a million things a day.“

Early on Jan proved his leadership qualities: When he was 14 he was student representative at his high-school in Magdeburg, then student representative of the state, became student representative at the BAFöG-Council of the former State-Minister of Education Edelgard Bulmahn. With her he worked on the implementa-

tion of a new BAFöG law for foreign countries that has indirectly enabled me to go on my semester abroad in the US five years ago. I am very grateful for the work of this man who is six years younger than me.

The 22-year-old, who celebrates his Bachelor of Arts as one of the best of his year today at Jacobs University, will already be doctor of the social sciences in three years time, if everything goes well. To this end he starts his PhD studies at the University of Edinburgh this fall, which allows highly intelligent people like Jan to skip the Master studies on the basis of excellent academic standing.

Even if this life-style appears to be that of a one-dimensionally oriented careerist, Jan is actually searching for the opposite: for equilibrium through variety.

*„It's all a question of time-management. If things get tight, I simply cut off on sleep. There is always some you can spare.“*

Everything finds its place in his tight appointments book: scientific theory, creativity while singing in a choir or acting, physical balance through tennis as well as relaxing at parties with friends. „It's all a question of time-management“, Jan says matter-of-factly and adds grinning: „If things get tight, I simply cut off on sleep. There is always some you can spare.“ I already know that.

After he submitted his bachelor thesis we go to his room. If you consider what the entrance area of his two-room apartment looks like he must have lied to me earlier when he talked about time-management. In reality it should have been: „I simply cut off on sleep, cleaning, and returning of bottles.“ In the hallway there are four crates of beer, next to them about a dozen empty bottles.

Altogether it does not make Jan less appealing. And his room is tidy. The pictures on his walls bring to mind an adventurous but down-to-earth personality. A poster of the sunset in the savannah for example reminds him of his visits as English teacher to Tanzania. He undertakes such travels almost each summer. Other destinations included Nigeria, where he taught disabled children for a month, and Russia, where he supported an environmental project for two months.



Jan Eichhorn is reading in Jacobs University's library, one of the most modern libraries in Germany.

Jan financed the flights with money that was originally planned for his driver's license. But he does not care much about cars. His mainly used means of transportation are trains and planes.

Apart from travelling Jan loves music: „Music is an emotional window for me – it allows me to release my feelings that are suppressed by the torturing daily routine“, he says and does not sound like an elite student but like a philosopher. I am once more impressed, and I am just in the process of coming up with a smart response when his phone rings.

„That is why I prefer studying in the library“, says Jan, and I understand what he must have meant by the torturing daily routine. His voice has changed, it sounds annoyed. With this pitch he has also tried once to call the members of the Student Parliament to order when they went into fits of laughter because a ladybird had landed on his head and did not want to go away.

It should not be the only interruption of our talk. One friend after the other calls. From three meters away I pick up an excited cheer. Two female students scream into the phone that they have just submitted their thesis – the work you have to hand in to finish your studies. Jan already mailed his to his professor 15 hours before it was due.

Actually nothing else was expected of the four social scientists of his year, for the image of the Germans on campus consists of punctuality, sense of duty, strong sense of orderliness and structure as well as fried sausages and potatoes. In this regard the small world in here does not differ much from the big one outside. With one difference, namely that prejudices are much more easily dissolved in this small space.

At midnight, Jan and I join the unofficial bachelor thesis party. Mitul's ex-girlfriend Steffi has invited us to her room and we clink our glasses filled with sparkling wine. Afterwards the discussion circles around prejudices against Jacobs University, more precisely around those that study at university and the big cliché that they can afford it.

„It is not true that only rich kids can study here“, says Steffi. The opposite is true: „Most have scholarships and only some have to pay the 18000 Euros a year.“ Of course there are students from rich families, but you cannot really tell who they are: „Nobody puts this on display here.“ And that is not what counts at Jacobs University either.

Nonetheless, the students have high ex-

pectations of the university due to the expensive fees. The Undergraduate Student Parliament for example is known for its marked culture of debate – and the university president is even proud of it: „If you are at a university where students do not complain, something is going wrong“, says Joachim Treusch. „There is always something to improve.“

For example the standard of the students that rises year after year. Steffi proudly remarks: „The University's reputation is improving continuously.“ Because of that the selection procedures become stricter and hand in hand with that the students become more exclusive – it is the circle of an elite university that works. What kind of people will you meet here in five to ten years? Probably only men like Jan.

Steffi does not want to study or work in Germany after her BA. Studying at a German university is already impossible because she does not know the German technical terms. Jan agrees: „For a doctor title you have to publish in English anyway.“

*„The problems in this world can only be solved with knowledge from multiple disciplines.“*

Steffi's friend Martha, sitting next to Jan, remembers that she still has to do her homework for a seminar the next morning. The next morning? It is already 2am and she only has six hours left to work through 50 pages. That is not much here; it is just the normal amount of homework.

Of course it is not called homework here but „readings“. Jan has the same seminar and obviously already read for it. How does he do that? And more importantly, when does he do that? Probably during the night as well.

„Oh, Martha, it did not take me more than an hour“, he says now. „Just read the introduction and the conclusion. That is enough.“ Maybe for Jan. Martha, just to be on the safe side, returns to her room shortly after two. Jan stays and discusses the „annoying remarks“ before, while, and after Steffi's relationship with Mitul. An hour later we leave College IV. I am tired. Possibly my time-management is just not the best.

While I am still sleeping Jan arrives at his seminar on time, 8.15am. For my part, I still feel the lack of sleep at 10am and miss breakfast, since the cafeteria of my college is already closed at that time. Two hours later I meet a very chirpy Jan, again

with a glass of sparkling wine in his hand. Happily he hugs his fellow students, some of whom worked the entire night and submitted their thesis only minutes before it was due. A Romanian wants me to drink some vodka with him, but I refuse politely: „Thanks. This is not my time, not my drink, and not my party.“

Instead I sit down with Christian Mesaros, who is also, like many others, from Romania, and Eva Bentcheva from Bulgaria. They are currently talking about effective treatment after a rugby game and the political situation in Zimbabwe. Christian is pale and looks exhausted. His tray is full of food containing carbohydrates: doughnuts, sweet biscuits, bananas and coffee.

„The problems in this world can only be solved with knowledge from multiple disciplines.“ One encounters this sentence everywhere on campus.

I ask him if he is hung-over. The physics student replies in a serious manner: „No“, he says and I counter: „But you look like it.“ He laughs and admits: „Well, there was this rugby tournament. It was really tough.“ First on the field and then afterwards... Jacobs style as well, possibly.

Mesaros talents are not only limited to rugby and after-rugby parties however. Before he came to Jacobs University, he took part in the Romanian national finals of the Physics Olympiad for three consecutive years. He was always among the top 20.

He studies at Jacobs University in his first year. Surprisingly enough he does not want to go into research after his studies, but rather into economics. „Many economists underestimate that the financial market is very complex and that it has much to do with analytical thinking and mathematical knowledge. I learn both here during my studies.“ This is going to give him an advantage over the economists, and it will make him rich. This, his philosophy is reflected by the transdisciplinary professors at Jacobs University: „The problems in this world can only be solved with knowledge from multiple disciplines.“ Everyone I met on campus has explained this to me, even if in different ways.

So did Eva Bentcheva. The Bulgarian that grew up in Zimbabwe studies History of Art. When she came to Germany two years ago, everything was new for her: Reliable public transport, even more reliable currency and the feeling to be able to drive through the city center without fear of an attack. In Zimbabwe this is unthinka-

ble. „Since the men around Robert Mugabe hold all the important political and economic positions the situation has deteriorated. Inflation and corruption rule.“

Mugabe also drove away the Bentcheva family. Her father, a doctor, moved back to Bulgaria. Eva has found a new home at Jacobs University. She works in the „Mercator College“ office, as oriental dance teacher and as an artist that decorates the common room with wall paintings.

I would love to talk to her some more to learn how one of the showpiece countries of Africa developed into one of the most hopeless cases in such a short period of time, and how life has changed for her and her friends. Gaining first-hand information is nowhere as easy as at Jacobs University, in a simple talk between two young people. Everyone likes to talk about his homeland, and everyone likes to listen.

But I, the traveler, do not have time. Suddenly Jan snatches me away from Eva and Christian: „If you want to attend the student assembly we have to go now.“ I thank the two Eastern Europeans for the exciting talk, before set out on our way to the Campus Center where president Treusch speaks to the students.

*„Uefa-Cup Game, Soccer, Werder- HSV, Derby, here in Bremen.“*

He reports that while private universities have economic problems due to the financial crisis, Jacobs University is still doing quite well. Exact numbers he could not name, however. Nevertheless, three majors have to be compromised to the major „Integrated Cultural Studies“. The new major could be very interesting for incoming students, says Treusch, and that sounds plausible to me as they always want to establish connections here at Jacobs.

Tariq, sitting two seats away from me, says nonetheless: „I would not want to study that. What do you think this would be? It just sounds like a little bit of everything.“ The American Kathleen Frazier thinks the same thing exactly this moment and asks aloud: „But is that not a little vague? The subject sounds as if it gets you nowhere.“ Treusch replies: „Well, that depends very much on you. If you are intelligent enough to divide the various disciplines then that is not the case.“

At night, far away from the grey social

science theories, I am getting a unique idea of how different cultures can get along perfectly in practical terms. Jan took me, after yesterday's unofficial „warm-up“ party, to the official and international „Thesis“-party in the room of the two Americans Caecilia Kleemann and Glenna Mowry. When I arrive at 11pm in room MD 202 of Mercator College, the table is already full of goodies and Jan, the only male, is already surrounded by Martha and host Glenna.

Jan, who is so strict and structured at student parliament sessions, is a totally different person. He jokes on the couch with Martha and host Glenna, the secretary of the parliament. He apparently also leads at parties. He is the party comedian and animates us to play the drinking game Kings, in which everyone has to draw a card and drink beer according to the rules of the respective one. Jan also comes up with the idea that everyone has to say, sing or grunt „I love swine flu“ before he or she drinks. Even the humor is global here. More drastic rules including the combination of the sentence with funny, gymnastic moves follow on my account. Because the beers are empty I go to the student shop „Pulse express“ at 0.50am to buy everyone a drink.

Getting back 20 minutes later I realize with dismay that it took me too long. The atmosphere is totally different. Many guests have left the party. The 1,60 meters tall American bundle of energy Caecilia Kleemann says only: „They are tired of playing Kings.“

She apparently is not. I do not know if this is really one of my duties but I am just asking her what interests her in a man while giving a meaningful glance over to the handsome Mexican next to me. She smiles and says: „I'm interested in men with big egos.“ Then she thinks this over a bit more: „Actually they only have to be like me: attractive, clever and smart.“

The not even 1,60 meters tall Japanese Amina Sugimoto tells me that she has enough of men with big egos. Some central European student on campus has way too much of that, she says in a melancholic tone and leaves quietly. Yet another disappointed love at Jacobs University.

At 3.30am I leave the party as the second last male. Only the Mexican stays back with the girls. Grinning I walk back to my room and think to myself: Who needs Integrated Social Sciences if a party can already lead to understanding among nations?



Zimbabwean Tariq Tobias Omarshah (left) and Norwegian Kristin Fedeler do not study according to syllabus, but also take seniors for walks.



Canadian Taylor Hartrick does not care about clothing, but a lot more about his guitar. He can play Metallica's „Nothing Else Matters“ as well as „For whom the bell tolls“.



Indonesian Shinta Harsana walks through the holy halls of the Campus Center at Jacobs University.

Before we get to the College-Nordmetall-Opening-Party and Shinta's birthday party, I have to make sacrifices: I am parting with my ticket for the Uefa-Cup game between Werder and HSV. First work, then fun. Unfortunately.

I leave campus for the first time after one week and it is not easy for me. At Schönebeck station I realize why the students sometimes refer to Jacobs University as „bubble“. I am back on German ground where you speak in German and think in German; maybe even think the Bremen way. It is as if I was coming back from a long journey, from a different country. This already becomes obvious with the people waiting on the platform who are dressed in green and white. I have made an appointment with an acquaintance at the stadium and thus squeeze into a bus with a number of HSV fans that takes longer than half an hour between central station and Weser-Stadium. State of emergency in the city center. Nothing works anymore. And what do I do? I am trying to find someone who wants to have my ticket. Crazy. My excursion takes more than four hours. It is already 9 o'clock when I pass the private security at Jacobs University's gates. The game has already started fifteen minutes ago. Nervously I walk to the first residence on the way.

Already two days ago I watched the Champions League game between FC Barcelona and Chelsea London on a big screen in „Krupp College“. The day before yesterday, the TV Room hosted at least 20 students cramped on 20 square meters. More than 90 percent were of African descent, shouting at each other as if they had bet their entire inheritance on the outcome of the game. Today I am experiencing a disappointment. Inside the TV room there are only two students watching a pointless DVD. They did not hear anything of a Werder-game. Sorry, what?

Disappointed I stomp over to Mercator College. I, dressed in my Werder outfit, ask some guys in front of the locked TV room: „Don't you watch the game?“ They just point outside: „The field is over there“. I point towards the Werder symbol on my shirt: „Uefa-Cup-Game, Soccer, Werder-HSV, Derby, here in Bremen.“ The students shake their heads. My pulse rises. My hands turn into fists. This cannot be true, not in this city, not in Werder's hometown. Are we not all green and white in Bremen? This can not be true.

Last try is College 3. It was there that I watched the second Champions League semi-finals between Manchester United and Arsenal London with about 30 Eastern European and Latin American students the night before. I shake the door, but the bad feeling I have turns into reality: The TV room is locked again. Why did I make this trip into this different world that obviously is not interested in one of the most important games between Northern German cities right now?

A desperate glance into the common room next door leads to a final success. In a common room that is about 20 square meters in size I am relieved of the torturing thought that Werder could lead the game without me having seen a single one of the cheerful pictures. A female student from

Darmstadt and a student from Munich sit in front of a TV the size of a crate of beer without taking sides for any of the teams: „To arrange a big screen just for the game would have been too much work“, says the 21-year-old Nadine Bode. The only highlight of the second half is that we are joined by a Bulgarian in Werder outfit. That is it.

Here in the „bubble“ one seems to be somewhere in the world at all times: Sometimes in Africa, sometimes in America, sometimes in Spain, sometimes in England, but apparently only rarely in Germany and basically never in Bremen. Nothing appears as far away as the daily routine that takes place outside of the Bremen campus. The HSV wins the game with 1:0, matching the depressing evening. I can only cheer myself up with Shinta's invitation to her birthday party. Afterwards we will go to the opening ceremony of the new „College Nordmetall“, financially supported by the employer's association of the same name.

I write some happy lines into the diary of the do-gooder. Her friends want to move on to the party with the theme „Nerd-metall“. Therefore, many guests look like the American comedian Steve Urkel, who is seen to be the nerd prototype. His style – jeans pulled up to the belly button by suspenders, white socks pulled up to the knees, pants that are too short as well as a pair of over-dimensional glasses – is deemed especially fitting. A Bulgarian explains: „The new college residents have to first acquire a certain status. Until then they have to make do with some jokes.“

The rivalry between residences can be compared to the rivalry between soccer clubs, only that it is almost always funny and harmless. Vice-president of Jacobs University, Alexander Ziegler-Jöns, reacts calmly to the nerd-denigration of the sponsor who after all paid 10 million Euros so that the college would be named after them: „On the one hand no one will talk about this after a short period of time, and on the other hand it shows that there is life here at the university.“ Oh yes. I experience this once more while asking a German female student at 3am about what she likes about Jacobs University. We have only talked for a minute when her boyfriend acts annoyed. He runs towards me and only stops two meters in front of me because four fellow students hold him back.

Red-faced he stares at my face while I, shocked, ask the German: „Do you know him?“ Pointing at the exit she tells me: „Sorry, ok. He drank too much. It is probably better if you leave now.“ Even if the situation does not clear up for me I leave the party escorted by a German. The Peruvian runs after me and my bodyguard, threatens me and breaks a window while passing by, all in the company of the people that try to keep him under control. Having gained another experience I return to my room: cultural and scientific lessons can also be bad for the understanding among nations.

When I report the story to Lukas Friedemann, another German, at breakfast in the

servery the next morning he tells me of his experiences in Bolivia during his one-year visit to Bolivia after high school. Lukas says: „Jealousy is a part of Latin American culture. Many people there see their wives as property. In combination with alcohol this can lead easily to such a situation.“ I had not looked at the situation from this angle before and I thank him for the culture-theoretical lecture number three. By the way: The same could have happened to me on a journey to any part of the world – and it probably would not have ended this well.

My journey approaches its end. And even though I try to avoid further physical duels on the last day before I move out, there still is one unsolved challenge. At the „Nerd-metall“-party I promised the Turkmen Arslan Berdimuradov that we would compete in a game of table tennis the following evening. After all, the logistics student holds the title „Jacobs University Table Tennis Champion 2008“. I could not miss to challenge him, being a former table tennis club member. At midnight, a usual time for Jacobs' students, we move to the table tennis table. I am not tired at all. Did my body already get used to the new rhythm after only nine days? Will I have to get used to the normal rhythm again when I return to Bremen? Is this the Jacobs University version of time change? I have to concentrate, as the table tennis champion is waiting.

Even though we fight hard over every ball and play on the same level I am surprised how calm Arslan is. I do not hear him scream once, and he praises every single one of my scores – while I make my frustration over almost every other mistake of mine known. Arslan's Muslim faith probably grants him what I am missing: inner peace. After one and a half hours and a just score of 2:2 it is finally very quiet between us. We congratulate each other for our achievements. And then, the only thing I still want to do is go to bed.

As I drag myself around Mercator College to my room I bump into Jan and his Norwegian friend Lina. They are going to a nightly hookah-guitar-singing club. On a table in the middle there is the Arabic water pipe, and the German Jan, Norwegian Lina, American Glenna, Venezuelan Andrés, and Canadian Taylor smoke alternately. It is Taylor who plays songs of the American metal-band Metallica on his guitar – songs he learned as a teenager in a Canadian Rock band. Sitting in a circle around him the others join in with the singing.

Without a word I move behind the guitarist. It is a unique moment; the voices and the atmosphere are touching. I would love to join the singing but I cannot. I listen and yes, I am getting sad that everything will be over tomorrow. Motionless I watch the five of them. Each one represents the culture of his country. The American Glenna has pulled her cap down to her nose as well as the hood of her red pullover. Andrés Navarrete-Berges from Venezuela

has wrapped himself into a thick, blue pullover and wears a Kikoi, a multifunctional scarf, around his head. Kikois are also used as kilts in African and South American areas.

Nature-loving Canadian Taylor wears simple blue jeans and a grey sweater. In his home country fashion is not that important. Music is very popular with his fellow citizens though. He has few friends who do not play an instrument. „Notably, many Canadians play the guitar. It is my emotional window“, he says. Didn't Jan say that before? The two different people seem to work in similar ways.

When Taylor plays „Nothing Else Matters“ in the moonlight I am getting goose bumps. Lina adds the soft, high tones, Jan joins with his deep basso, and Andrés Navarrete-Berges with his rough, but not as dark baritone. This creates a piece of art, a certain magic that takes a hold of me and makes me forget that my sweat is slowly drying on my skin and that my body is getting cold. The only thing I am feeling is warmth surrounding my heart.

After I have watched the magical show for fifteen minutes, standing and with my mouth wide open, I get myself a chair and join the circle. Without speaking Jan hands me the hookah. The tobacco we are smoking was imported by a friend from Africa. „That is why it is so soft and mild and does not irritate your throat“, Jan says. Then Andrés puts a box on the table that looks like a card-index box, but in reality it is an over-dimensional mp3-player. Again the three start to sing together, the president of the student parliament as basso, the UN-worker Lina as soprano and the laid-back Andrés Navarrete-Berges in baritone. But this time they do not sing in English but in languages that my ear has never been exposed to before. When Jan sees the question marks on my face he explains: „These are songs that we learned in seven different languages when we were in Wales: from tribal languages such as Swahili to Ukrainian to Latin.“

Up-standing hair on my back signalsizes the magic of this moment. It is as if Klaus Johann Jacobs is watching us from heaven and smiling on his heritage. During these minutes I realize how beautiful this world is. My eyes get wet, my throat dry, and I am happy that the darkness of the night shields me from the eyes of the others. I look up to the moon and say to myself: It must have been this. The creation of unique moments is what the saint after whom this University is named must have wished for. He donated 200 million Euros three years ago. This „diving into diversity“, this jump right into the variety and complexity of this world that can only be solved through the cooperation with other cultures, must have been the motive of the Bremen coffee lord. It is his spirit that shines on the university in moments like these.

Jacobs himself put it like this when he gave his speech after his donation: „He who experiences the incredible international and intercultural atmosphere, as well as the peaceful and motivated cohabitation on this campus, notices that here future is created in a way that we can only wish for for the generations to come.“ Every other word would be too much.

## JACOBS UNIVERSITY

### Elite in numbers

Today we celebrate

By Jean-Charles Fays

**Bremen.** Today, the largest graduating class of Jacobs University celebrates its graduation in Bremen's „Theater am Goetheplatz“. 184 students have earned a BA, 90 a MA, and 91 a PhD. The graduates come from 65 nations. Their average age is 21,8 years.

1200 students from 93 nations study at Jacobs University. In order to maintain its international character the leadership around President Joachim Treusch has decided that only every fourth admission can be a German student. Every fifth is Asian, every tenth from Africa. The elite university in the North of Bremen is German's only university where courses are held solely in English.

With the construction of the new „College Nordmetall“ the foundation has been created to admit about 1300 students this September. In two years time 1500 elite students will be admitted. The employer's association Nordmetall paid 10 million Euros in April so that the new residence would carry its name. A maximum of 257 students can live there.

Ten years ago the university was founded on the 30 ha big area of the former military base Roland. In September 2001 it admitted 130 students. It is the vision of the elite institution to educate world citizens with social responsibility. Former chancellor Helmut Schmidt wrote into the register of the then-called International University Bremen that it should grow an „elite with responsibility“. This elite multiplied by 10 within the last eight years. The number of professors almost tripled from 35 to 100. Thus, the institution shines through its fantastic professor-student ratio of 1:10. In the 2009 „Center for Higher Education (CHE) University Ranking“ Jacobs University received excellent marks. It is at the top of all ranked schools in the fields Geosciences and Biology.

The Coffee lord Klaus J. Jacobs saved the institution from bankruptcy through his internationally noted donation over 200 million Euros in 2006. Even the New York Times published about it the next day. With a donation this grand Jacobs University reached the dimensions of its idols Harvard and Yale.



President Joachim Treusch



The Author Jean-Charles Fays